Somerset Hills State School

Action Plan Final Report

**School
Improvement
Unit**

Queensland
Government

Contents

1. Introduction

This report is a product of a 12-month check-in review at **Somerset Hills State School** on **20 June 2017**. It provides an evaluation of the school's performance against the 12 month action plan developed by the school in consultation with the Lead Principal. The 12 month check-in was completed by staff from the School Improvement Unit (SIU). For more information about the SIU and the school reviews please visit the [website](#).

1.1 School context

Location:	Cnr Webster and Kitchener Roads, Stafford Heights
Education region:	Metropolitan Region
Year opened:	1966
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Enrolment:	130
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	17.6 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	17.6 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	972
Year principal appointed:	2014
Full-time equivalent teachers:	7
Significant partner schools:	Everton Park State High School, Bunyaville Environmental Education Centre
Significant community partnerships:	Prince Charles Hospital Early Childhood Centre, Somerset Hills State School Swimming Club, Nexus Care, Queensland University of Technology (QUT)
Significant school programs:	Artist in Residence, Infrastructure re-development program, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), Reading Program and Reading Club, Special Education Program (SEP)

1.2 Review team

The review was conducted by:

Jennifer Hart   Senior review officer, SIU (case manager)

Valerie Hadgelias   Senior review officer

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the 12-month review:

- a desktop review of the school's performance data and other school information;

- consultation with the school's Lead Principal;

- a school visit of up to one day; and

- interviews with relevant staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:

    o Six teachers

    o Three teacher aides

    o 18 students

2. SIU monitoring

2.1 Action plan improvement strategies

The 12-month review looked at how the school implemented the improvement strategies from the action plan with the support of the region.

- Development of whole-school curriculum with a priority focus on a whole-school reading framework as per the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP).

- Implement Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL).

- Engage the school and broader community in the development and implementation of a Communication Plan that identifies actions opportunities and modes to improve communication between staff and students, school and local community and school and families.

2.2 Action plan check-ins

The 12-month review was preceded by the following visits:

Three month   July 2016

Six month   November 2016

Nine month   March 2017

3. Findings

3.1 School performance data

At the time of this report the school is 130 students. This compares to an enrolment of 126 in 2016 and 108 in 2015. Student attendance in 2016 was 92.0 per cent, an improvement from the 2015 attendance rate of 89.2 per cent.

The percentage of students attending less than 85 per cent of the school year improved from 21.5 per cent in 2015 to 19.2 per cent in 2016. The attendance rate of Indigenous students improved from 83.0 per cent in 2015 to 86.7 per cent in 2016. The percentage of Indigenous students attending less than 85 per cent of the school year improved from 48.0 per cent to 36.7 per cent from 2015 to 2016 respectively.

The percentage of students attending more than 95 per cent of the school year increased significantly from 2015 to 2016. In 2015, 32.2 per cent of students attended greater than 95 per cent of the school year. This increased to 50.8 per cent in 2016.

School Disciplinary Absences (SDAs) in 2015 included 43 short-term and six long-term suspensions. In 2016 there was a reduction in SDAs with 29 short-term suspensions and one long-term suspension.

2016 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data indicates the Mean Scale Score (MSS) achievement of Year 3 students in the priority area of reading increased from 376.6 in 2015 to 384.3 in 2016. Year 5 MSS achievement in reading is 534.1 in 2016. This is an improvement from 476.7 in 2015. In 2016 NAPLAN, Year 3 MSS achievement in reading is similar to Similar Queensland State Schools. Year 5 MSS achievement in reading is above SQSS.

The percentage of Year 3 students achieving in the Upper Two Bands in reading increased from 18.2 per cent in 2015 to 31.3 per cent in 2016. Year 5 U2B achievement in reading increased from 33.3 per cent to 66.7 per cent from 2015 to 2016 respectively. Year 3 U2B performance in reading is below SQSS and Year 5 U2B achievement is above SQSS.

In 2016 NAPLAN over 93 per cent of Year 3 students achieved at or above the National Minimum Standard (NMS) in the strand of reading. All Year 5 students achieved at or above NMS in reading.

Relative gain 2014-2016 Year 3 to Year 5 is above SQSS in reading.

The 2016 School Opinion Survey (SOS) data indicates parents' and staff members' satisfaction in the priority area of student behaviour has improved. In 2015, 83.3 per cent of parents agreed with the statement 'Student behaviour is well managed at this school'. This compares to a 2016 agreement rate of 90.5 per cent which is above the State Primary schools' rate. Staff satisfaction with the management of student behaviour in 2015 was 88.2 percent and in the 2016 SOS it is 100.0 per cent. This is above the Like Schools Group and State Primary schools' satisfaction rate.

3.2 Regional support

The school's Lead Principal has provided ongoing and intensive support to the principal and the school. This support has focused on the key improvement actions as stated in the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) and in areas agreed in discussions between the principal and the Lead Principal. The main area of support has been around reading and PBL. The support provided by the Lead Principal included:

- conversations, questioning, suggestions and support for the EIA;

- reviewing the data wall to ensure teachers are able to discuss individual student data and its purpose;

- discussion regarding the role of the PBL coach;

- reviewing the tracking of students with the principal;

- assisting the principal to be explicit in expectations around reading and PBL;

- assistance in setting timelines for work to be completed;

- support for implementation of plans into the classroom;

- working towards the effective implementation of case management;

- classroom visits and discussions with teachers regarding the improvement agenda;

- clarity around a sharp focus for improvement;

- assisting with and participating in the Critical Friends Network; and,

- observations and feedback regarding lessons in teaching reading.

Regional Support:

- Cluster meetings;

- Critical Friends Network; and,

- Professional readings.

Other Support:

- Principal Education Advisor – Australian Curriculum (PEA-AC) support has been provided.

- Head of Curriculum (HOC) provided support that included:

  o the support of the Critical Friends Network; and,

  o provision of support to the principal in the school.

3.3 Observations and general findings

The principal is driving the school improvement agenda aligned to the action plan. The principal has taken personal accountability of this plan, staff capacity and improved student learning outcomes whilst managing a change agenda maintaining the positivity and accountability of all stakeholders.

A school vision has been set through collaborative processes with staff members, students, parents and the wider community. A commitment to the improvement agenda is apparent by all stakeholders. Staff members speak of the clear focus of improving student learning outcomes.

The principal utilised existing school data sets including NAPLAN, SOS, Headline Data Indicators and student achievement to create a sense of collective urgency to improve student learning outcomes in the focus area of reading.

Surveys of staff members, students and parents have provided feedback to inform improvement strategies.

The principal has researched and sought advice from networks and regional personnel to set the reading agenda. Staff members speak of the collective decision-making processes in the school.

Staff members speak positively of the reading journey in the school that has led to a documented whole-school reading framework. This framework sets the expected teaching and learning practices for reading. All staff members acknowledge this document as significantly impacting on the consistent teaching of reading in the school.

Teaching staff members including teacher aides are able to discuss the Big 6 reading strategies, the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model of guided, shared, modelled and independent reading, Beanie Baby decoding strategies and Sheena Cameron[1] comprehension strategies as the consistent strategies employed in all classrooms. Artefacts to support these strategies are apparent in classrooms. Students are able to discuss these strategies and how they are used to support their reading.

A common reading group structure is apparent across the school. Trained teacher aides are timetabled into classrooms to support reading rotations. These teacher aides attest to the consistent practice in implementing reading rotations in classrooms.

A focus is the delivery of guided and shared reading. The principal and teaching staff members acknowledge the need to shift this focus to shared reading.

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[1] Cameron, S. (2009). *Teaching reading comprehension strategies: A practical classroom guide.* Pearson.

A reading assessment culture is building in the school. Common reading assessments are scheduled and include reading data conversations every five weeks. Staff members have been provided with Professional Development (PD) in reading assessment including the analysis of this data. Teachers are able to discuss how reading data informs student reading goals and the next steps for reading rotations. Staff Annual Performance Development Plans (APDP) are linked to school priorities and include reading goals. A whole-school professional learning plan is established.

A documented vocabulary program is apparent and is based on Structured Tier Two Robust Instruction of Vocabulary Experiences (STRIVE). Artefacts to support the program are evident as are data sets to inform teachers and students of progress. Teaching staff members comment on how the focus on vocabulary prior to reading instruction has improved student learning outcomes.

A common reading planning template is developed. This plan provides details regarding how reading is being taught and assessed in each classroom including the explicit teaching of reading strategies and the GRR model. Teachers comment on how this plan ensures that reading instruction continues in a consistent, systematic fashion despite teacher or teacher aide absence.

Student data folios are in all classrooms and include reading goals, reading assessments STRIVE data and current strategy focus areas. Students are able to talk about these folders and are responsible for updating their assessment and learning. Student reading goals are yet to be consistent across the school. Goals in the senior grades provide the next steps for learning.

Reading Club is valued by students and provides opportunities for students who are not able to read with an adult at home with an opportunity to enhance their reading skills. Students talk about their reading goals and the rewards systems developed to motivate them to read.

Observation and feedback processes including protocols and templates are developed and implemented. Teachers find these processes valuable and comment on the opportunities to visit each other's classrooms and watch each other work. These practices have enhanced professional conversations and the sharing of resources. A teacher is creating a common resource bank of comprehension tasks and activities to support the agreed strategies.

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is being systematically implemented in the school. Staff and students speak of a whole-school approach. The school is supported by the regional behaviour coach and has identified a key staff member to be the PBL champion in the school.

Behaviour expectations are clearly displayed throughout the school. Consistent approaches for the teaching of strategies are developed and include explicit lessons. Common language and reward systems are established and include the school-based STARS program. Common behaviour ladders are in all classrooms. Students are able to discuss how these ladders monitor and reward behaviour. These ladders have been adjusted as a result of student feedback to include a 'Superstar' level.

Teachers and teacher aides are developing consistency in the recoding of behaviour incidents and positive behaviours on OneSchool. This data is shared and discussed with staff members at PBL meetings once a fortnight and determines the behaviour focus for the next week.

PBL is shared with parents and the community through the school newsletter, school events, website and Facebook page. The PBL launch was a significant celebration for the school.

Students requiring additional supports have documented behaviour management plans that are developed in OneSchool and are regularly monitored and reviewed.

The regional coach has used the Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET) and Effective Behaviour Support (EBS) tools to collect data and has acknowledged the consistent implementation of PBL to move the school from Tier 1 to Tier 2.

Staff members articulate that communication systems within and outside of the school have improved. Surveys of staff and parents have assisted the school to understand the improvements that needed to occur. A Parent and Community Engagement Framework (PaCE) is developed. The information led to improving the public face of the school including new uniforms, signage, website update and the introduction of a Facebook page. An infrastructure program including the building of new classrooms and learning areas is about to commence in the school. Staff members are looking forward to these new facilities to enhance teaching and learning, particularly improved technology access.

The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) is paying for a part-time communications officer. The role of this officer is to investigate ways of improving communication between the school and families including strategies to increase parent engagement.

Teachers are developing curriculum newsletters to share with families the learning occurring in their child's classroom. A school calendar is provided to all families and highlights the scheduled important events for the school. The principal has developed a parent friendly version of the strategic plan to inform parents of school priorities, strategies and actions.

Teachers comment that internal communications have improved and appreciate the Term Overview To Do List for teachers that sets clear expectations for the term.

The principal has created and further developed community partnerships with a range of businesses, educational providers and community organisations to improve community perception of the school and provide strong links for students and families.

4. Outcomes

The SIU recognises the emerging school improvements that have been initiated over the past twelve months.

There is a strong sense of trust in the school and a positive morale is apparent in all staff members. Staff members are able to articulate a clear strategic direction that is being developed and supported through collaborative processes.

The reading framework, PBL and the focus on communication are apparent across the school with a range of documented processes, artefacts and support structures. A clear focus is the improved learning outcomes of students.

Staff are able discuss with a range of evidence improved reading outcomes for students including anecdotes of individual student success. Staff members are able to discuss their own improved pedagogical practice in the teaching of reading.

Staff members share examples of how improved student behaviour has led to greater student attendance and engagement.

The principal and staff have recognised the next steps within their improvement agenda including the induction of new staff in the reading framework and PBL program.

The next steps for reading improvement include shifting focus across the range of the GRR, using the Literacy Continuum to strengthen student reading goals, unpacking the Australian Curriculum's (AC) reading demands, and strengthening observation and feedback processes.

Ongoing work will include refining the PBL program to include a specific focus on wellbeing including introducing the Zones of Proximity, and undertaking professional learning in Applied Behaviour Analysis.

The principal acknowledges that further work is required to engage parents as partners in their child's learning with a focus on supporting reading and sharing student reading goals with parents.

The Regional Director and Lead Principal are committed to continuing their close support and guidance for the leadership team at the school.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings from the 12-month review, and information gathered at the previous three-month check-ins, the SIU concludes:

There is sufficient implementation of the key improvement strategies for the SIU to finalise its support and monitoring of **Somerset Hills State School**.