School Improvement Unit
Report

Calamvale Special School
Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Calamvale Special School from 23 to 27 October 2015. It provides an evaluation of the school’s performance against the nine domains of the National School Improvement Tool. It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to consider in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The review and report were completed by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU). For more information about the SIU and the new reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the Department of Education and Training (DET) website.

1.2 School context

| Location: | Nottingham Road, Calamvale |
| Education region: | Metropolitan |
| The school opened in: | January 1985 |
| Year levels: | Prep to Year 12 |
| Current school enrolment: | 131 |
| Indigenous enrolments: | 3.82 per cent |
| Students with disability enrolments: | n/a |
| Year principal appointed: | 2000 |
| Number of teachers: | 31 |
| Nearby schools: | Calamvale Community College, Stretton Community College |
| Significant community partnerships: | Algester Sports Club, Greenbank Returned and Services League (RSL), Forest Lake Commonwealth Bank, Substation 33, Endeavour |
| Unique school programs: | Intensive interactions coaching, Communication programs for students, Four Blocks Literacy Model, science specialist, Sporting Schools Program |
1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school’s performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school’s Principal’s Supervisor
- a school visit of three days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Curriculum (HOC)
  - Guidance officer, literacy coach and intensive interaction coach
  - 28 teachers
  - Occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech language pathologist
  - Positive behaviour for learning coordinator and case manager
  - Chaplain
  - 13 teacher-aides
  - Business Services Manager (BSM) and administration officer
  - 17 students
  - Principal of Calamvale Community College
  - Eight community partners
  - Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) secretary and treasurer, and five other parents

1.4 Review team

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<tr>
<th>Patricia Thiedeman</th>
<th>Internal Reviewer, SIU (review chair)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ray Hack</td>
<td>Internal Reviewer, SIU</td>
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<td>Kate Russ</td>
<td>Peer Reviewer</td>
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2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- School staff describe the role of the leaders as positive, inclusive and highly involved.
  
  Staff feel valued and able to contribute to school decision-making processes. Most staff members are supportive of the current leadership team’s role in promoting a new approach to student management.

- There is evidence of positive, caring relationships between staff and students.
  
  This is demonstrated by the manner in which staff and students interact across the school. The school presents as calm and positive and classes are orderly and purposeful. There is evidence of a whole-school approach to establishing high expectations for learning, teaching and student wellbeing.

- School staff and community representatives indicate there is variable understanding of the current improvement agenda.
  
  The school has revised the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2015 to promote fewer improvement priorities. These include communication for learning, curriculum for learning, and quality teaching for learning. Each priority contains a goal, a large number of activities and roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders.

- The school has introduced a range of leadership positions aimed at developing leadership density in the school.
  
  These leadership positions are valued by the teachers. The newly appointed teacher leaders indicate that they would benefit from ongoing professional learning to develop their leadership capacity. Teachers and leaders report the need for more opportunities to meet collaboratively in their learning teams.

- Teachers are open to receiving more regular and targeted feedback from school leaders.
  
  The school has limited formal processes in place to inform teacher practice and build teacher capacity through feedback, mentoring or instructional coaching. Some teachers identify that regular opportunities should be scheduled to share effective teacher practice and/or resources at staff meetings. While classroom visits have been introduced, these are not yet linked to a formalised feedback loop or an identified set of agreed goals or actions.
• The school offers a broad range of opportunities to support the transition of senior school students moving into the community.

The school is investigating the implementation of additional certification courses and programs for students in the senior school. The need for a senior school program coordinator to support curriculum development and implementation has been identified.

• All staff report there has been a noticeable increase in student skill acquisition in the area of communication.

The school has implemented an effective school-based, multi-modal approach to supporting the development of student communication. The approach is well supported by the school leaders and staff to ensure all students have an effective communication system.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Narrow and sharpen the focus of the school improvement agenda to enhance understanding of and commitment to identified teaching and learning priorities and targets. Communicate the improvement agenda to staff, parents and the wider school community.

- Refine the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team to ensure all leaders are engaged in driving improvement linked to the explicit improvement agenda.

- Provide opportunities for leaders to further develop their skills in coaching and instructional leadership.

- Develop a whole-school approach to building teacher capacity which includes a formalised program of teacher observation and feedback.

- Review, develop and implement a relevant student-centred senior school curriculum, which caters for the diversity of students’ needs, ability levels and transition pathways, investigates an array of certification courses and school-based programs, and is inclusive of relevant systemic curriculum initiatives and processes.

- Develop teachers’ skills in data literacy so that all staff can administer assessment items, record findings and analyse student results to adjust their teaching and learning strategies.