

The Willows State School

Executive Summary





Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Review team.....	3
1.2 School context.....	4
1.3 Contributing stakeholders	5
1.4 Supporting documentary evidence.....	5
2. Executive summary.....	6
2.1 Key findings.....	6
2.2 Key improvement strategies	9



1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **The Willows State School** from **10 to 12 May 2021**.

The report presents 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 implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Greg Brand	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Noel Baggs	Peer reviewer
Judi Hanke	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Bilberry Street, Kirwan	
Education region:	North Queensland Region	
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6	
Enrolment:	910	
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	15.9 per cent	
Students with disability:	Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:	4 per cent
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:	21 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	974	
Year principal appointed:	2017	



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, three deputy principals, Business Manager (BM), two Heads of Department (HOD) – Teaching and Learning, HOD – Student Services, Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), Head of Special Education – Inclusion, guidance officer, 46 teachers, 17 teacher aides, chaplain, Defence School Mentor (DSM), four administration assistants, 76 students, 56 parents, grounds staff and six cleaners.

Community and business groups:

- Two Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) representatives.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal Weir State School and deputy principal Thuringowa State High School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2021
Investing for Success 2021	Strategic Plan 2018-2021
School improvement targets	School Data Profile (Semester 2 2020)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Teaching and Learning Handbook	Curriculum planning documents
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
School Opinion Survey 2019	Student Code of Conduct 2021– 2023
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting frameworks	Teacher Development and Capability Building Framework 2020
Models and frameworks supporting instructional coaching and mentoring	School newsletters, website and Facebook pages
School inclusive education frameworks and policy documents	Headline Indicators (October 2020 release)



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

School leaders exemplify a strong moral purpose, and embody the school's motto '*Excellence is the Standard*'.

The school's motto permeates a whole-school approach to teaching and learning, setting high expectations and fostering positive and successful partnerships between students, staff, parents and the wider school community. Staff express the belief that students can learn successfully, and are universally committed to providing a caring, inclusive and nurturing educational environment where everyone counts, with measures in place to support and promote student wellbeing. The commitment and dedication of the principal are widely acknowledged by staff, who speak positively regarding the improvements and gains the school has made since its last school review in 2017.

School leaders and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful student learning and wellbeing.

A significant piece of work is the school's engagement with and embedding of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) across the school. Staff express the influence and dedication of the principal in their commitment to PBL have greatly enhanced the culture of the school. The school's mascots of Willow, Olive and Waldo are an integral feature in how the school promotes, recognises and celebrates positive behaviours, and student and school achievements. Parents indicate a culture of trust and optimism has been fostered across the school by leaders. Students articulate they feel supported and cared for by staff members and that positive relationships exist between students and staff.

The principal is driving a clear and focused Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA).

Staff members recognise every student is a reader and writer – aim for the 'A' as being the school's significant EIA focus. Teachers express a genuine commitment to realising improvements in reading and writing for students and to authentically engage in the work of Student Work at the Table (SWAT) forums. Some teachers articulate they would appreciate greater input into reviewing the effectiveness of SWAT forums to ensure they achieve positive outcomes for teachers in their own professional growth and impact on their daily practice. School leaders acknowledge the need to review the SWAT process at key junctures for improvements in student learning outcomes. A number of teachers express the belief that further time is required to embed this key aspect of the school's EIA.

Staff are committed to the school and have a high level of professional integrity and respect for school leaders.

Teachers comment positively on the personal and professional support they receive from colleagues. There are high levels of mutual trust and support within teaching teams and a sense of pride in the work they undertake in the school. Some teachers indicate a desire for a broader range of strategies be established to enhance their resilience in the management of change. Some staff express a desire for more collaboration regarding the pace of change



and the implementation of new practices. School leaders articulate the need to explore a range of strategies to support the authentic wellbeing of staff as part of the school's ongoing improvement journey.

School leaders are committed to continuous improvement of effective teaching practices across the school.

Many teachers consider the development, experience and characteristics of the learner, select appropriately from a repertoire of pedagogical approaches, and then tailor the delivery accordingly to ensure all students are engaged in their learning. School leaders actively promote a range of evidence-based teaching strategies and model research processes as they strive for continuous improvement in teaching practices. School leaders acknowledge that a collaborative review of the current pedagogical approaches and practices is timely and necessary given the number of new and beginning teachers at the school and the professional learning that is required to ensure effective approaches are being consistently adopted across all classrooms.

A focus on inclusivity where everyone counts is recognised by staff as a key aspect of the school's EIA.

The school is currently part of a regional project to promote and embed inclusive practices in schools. The practice of co-teaching sees teachers jointly deliver core instruction in conjunction with specialised instruction, as required, to equitably meet the needs of the diverse range of learners in a single teaching space. Teachers who have engaged authentically in the co-teaching model articulate the positive outcomes that have resulted in meeting the needs of students and their own professional growth. Some teachers articulate they would appreciate time to collaboratively plan with and engage in recognised school forums with their co-teaching partners. School leaders acknowledge the need to further strengthen the capability of all staff to work effectively within a co-teaching model.

The school is deeply embedded in the local community and enjoys high levels of parent and community confidence.

The school enjoys the support of an active and well respected Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C). The P&C manages the school's Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program and the school tuckshop that operates five days per week. These two operations generate significant funds that are used to support the school's key programs and priorities. The P&C makes significant contributions to improve aspects of school life including student access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), resources to support teaching and learning, student engagement in the Fanfare musical experience and significant facilities and grounds improvements. Members of the P&C express the genuine purpose of their efforts is to support the endeavours of the school and appreciate the authentic and trusting relationship they have with the principal.



The school is proud of its work with children in the early years, their families and the local community.

The school has a well-established Willows Warriors pre-Prep program, conducted one day per week for the majority of the school year. A dedicated early years teacher delivers an engaging program with a focus on Kindergarten and Foundation capabilities, specifically focused on oral language development. Parent engagement is promoted during the program with workshops to build parent knowledge in preparing their child for school. In addition to Willows Warriors, a 'Peek at Prep' program enables members of the community to view Prep in action. A member of the Prep teaching team visits 10 feeder early childhood centres and kindergartens to foster a partnership with providers and assist in the smooth transition to school.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Sustain a deep focus on the EIA, with collaborative cycles of review to ensure key approaches are producing desired improvements in student learning outcomes.

Build a collective understanding of authentic wellbeing practices for all staff members and ensure there is a positive relationship between high expectations for school improvement and work/life balance.

Collaboratively review the school's agreed pedagogical approaches and practices, providing ongoing professional learning opportunities and experiences to strengthen teaching practice.

Further strengthen a culture of inclusion, agreed whole-school inclusive practices, and collaborative planning so all teachers make the Australian Curriculum (AC) accessible for all learners.