



# School Improvement Unit Report

## Thallon State School Executive Summary





## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at **Thallon State School** from **29 to 30 August 2016**. 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

<b>Location:</b>	Henry St, Thallon
<b>Education region:</b>	Darling Downs South West Region
<b>The school opened in:</b>	1911
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 6
<b>Current school enrolment:</b>	42
<b>Indigenous enrolments:</b>	33 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolments:</b>	2.6 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	933
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2016 (Term 2, week 5)
<b>Number of teachers:</b>	2.8 (full-time equivalent)
<b>Nearby schools:</b>	Dirranbandi State School, Bollon State School, St George State School, Hebel State School, Begonia State School
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Thallon Progress Association, Cluster Schools – Small School Sports
<b>Significant school programs:</b>	You Can Do It!, Thallon State School Spelling program, Thallon State School Reading program



### 1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of two reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school's performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school's Assistant Regional Director (ARD)
- a school visit of two days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal
  - Three teachers
  - Three teacher aides
  - Administration officer
  - 11 students
  - Grounds person
  - Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) two members of the executive
  - Seven parents
  - Four community members
  - Two neighbouring schools

### 1.4 Review team

Alison Welch	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Sarah Beaufoy	Peer Reviewer

### 1.5 Reading the report

The executive summary outlines key findings from the review. The key improvement strategies prioritise future direction for improvement. The executive summary should be read along with the findings and improvement strategies outlined in the nine domains which provide a strategic view for improvement.



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

- A high priority is given to developing positive, caring and supportive relationships with all members of the school community.

Interactions between students, staff members and parents are caring, inclusive and respectful. The school considers parents and families as integral members of the school community and authentic partners in their child's learning.

- The school is implementing Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) across the school.

The school has four key school expectations – 'Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe and Be an Active Learner'. A positive rewards system is developed to encourage and reward positive behaviour. The students are able to articulate the school expectations.

- The principal and staff members have established and are driving an Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) which includes a number of school priorities.

The school's improvement priorities of reading, mathematics, purposeful use of data and Structured Tier Two Robust Instruction of Vocabulary Experiences (STRIVE) are set and communicated to students, staff members and parents. Explicit targets and timelines for student achievement levels are yet to be developed.

- The pedagogical framework is underpinned by explicit teaching based on the research evidence of Archer and Hughes 2011<sup>1</sup>.

The school's pedagogical framework is a comprehensive document which is commonly aligned with two research, validated approaches, the Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (DoTL) and productive pedagogies. Consistent, school-wide approaches and understanding of appropriate pedagogical content knowledge is developing. Agreed pedagogical practices are developing across the school.

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<sup>1</sup> Archer, A. L., & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching*. Guilford Press



- The school has a culture of collaboration and teamwork between teachers and teacher aides, with some teachers utilising informal processes to learn from each other's practices.

Staff members actively seek opportunities for capability development. All staff members contribute to the development of a culture of professional improvement focusing on student growth. Formal coaching, observation and feedback processes aligned with the school's improvement agenda are yet to be established.

- The school's curriculum delivery is aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC).

Classroom teachers adapt Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) units using two year cycles. A range of approaches are used to adapt the C2C resource curriculum plans for implementation in the multi-age settings. A school-wide approach is yet to be developed.

- A yearly and term curriculum overview, and intended implementation in learning cycles, to make clear what units, and when, teachers should teach, is developed.

Planning processes are conducted informally by classroom teachers with some informal co-operative planning occurring. Adaptations and modifications to unit plans are not yet recorded or stored in a shared location. Collaborative planning is acknowledged as the next step for systematic, curriculum delivery.

- Differentiation is a priority of the school and a feature of every teacher's practice.

A differentiation and adjustment document which identifies the planning adjustments required for each student in the school is developed. Explicit strategies and ongoing monitoring of differentiation are yet to be established.

- The school has identified and can demonstrate that it is using a variety of assessment tools to monitor school-wide achievement in the priority areas of reading and number facts.

Data is used to inform discussions regarding interventions for students, and to develop streamed ability groups for reading, spelling and mathematics. Teachers collect student data routinely to understand where students are at in their learning, monitor progress and identify starting points for teaching. Teachers use this data to modify practice and programming to address the individual learning needs of students.

- Community members speak highly of the inclusive practices that are embedded within the school.

Parents and community members speak highly of the way in which the school staff support their students, and of the positive relationships within the school. A number of students, from schools across the border, have enrolled at the school due to the positive reputation of the school in the local area. The school accesses a range of allied health professionals and specialist staff to support student needs.



- The school has a positive reputation in the broader community.

The school builds partnerships with parents, families, local businesses and community organisations. The school has a supportive Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) whose focus is to improve the educational resources of the school.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Collaboratively develop a sharp and narrow improvement agenda which identifies priorities with associated strategies, achievable and measurable targets, timelines, monitoring and appropriate budget.
- Collaboratively review the pedagogical framework to identify the school's signature pedagogies.
- Implement a systematic, whole-school approach to coaching, modelling and feedback to build consistency of delivery of teaching practice.
- Formalise and implement a whole-school curriculum plan, with processes for storage and the evaluation of classroom planning, to provide tracking of curriculum cycles and modifications.
- Provide regular opportunities for facilitated, collaborative planning sessions for teachers.
- Develop the capacity of teachers to assign strategies for improvement in the differentiation process, in order to monitor the learning outcomes of students.