

Atherton State High School

Executive Summary





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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Atherton State High School** from **24 to 26 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

Wayne Troyahn	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Robert Slater	Peer reviewer
Valerie Hadgelias	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Maunds Road, Atherton	
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region	
Year levels:	Year 7 to Year 12	
Enrolment:	964	
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	20.16 per cent	
Students with disability:	Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:	8.3 per cent
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:	20 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	982	
Year principal appointed:	2008	



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, two deputy principals, acting cluster Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), nine Heads of Department (HOD), guidance officer, agriculture science coordinator, head of Online College of Advanced STEM (OCAS), 21 teachers, two intervention specialist teachers, highly capable learners specialist teachers, two positive behaviour specialists, instrumental music teacher, Community Education Counsellor (CEC), Business Manager – Finance and Facilities (BM–F&F), BM – Human Resources (BM–HR), four members of administration officer team, Vocational Education and Training (VET) administration officer, seven teacher aides, 10 non-teaching staff from the Hub, five cleaners, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, eight parents, five members of student executive and 46 students.

Community and business groups:

- Fresh St Market Independent Grocers of Australia (IGA), Yungaburra FoodWorks, MiHaven Training, Australasian Drilling Institute and Australian Retail College.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal Kairi State School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State Member for Hill and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2021
Investing for Success 2021	Strategic Plan 2018–2021
OneSchool	2021 School budget overview
Planning Accountability Procedures	Budget Procedures and Flowchart
Professional learning plan 2021	Whole School Curriculum Plan
School pedagogical framework	Principal Role Description
School Data Analysis Cycle	Professional development plans
2021–2024 Student Code of Conduct	Teacher Professional Learning System
School newsletters and website	Organisational Chart
2019 School Opinion Survey	Staff Handbook
Headline Indicators (October 2020 release)	School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
School Data Profile (Semester 1 and Semester 2, 2020)	School improvement targets



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The school has a long and proud tradition of providing high quality education to students from the communities of the Tablelands and beyond.

School staff members articulate that positive teacher-student relationships are extremely important to their role. Students express their appreciation for the work of teachers and their dedication to helping them to succeed. Parents speak highly of the school and feel valued as partners in their child's education. Most parents are appreciative of the care and support that staff have for students and articulate that teachers are welcoming and approachable in discussing their child's progress.

The leadership team expresses a united belief that the systematic use of data is essential as a driver for student improvement.

The school has a published data system that indicates the 'who, what, when, where, why and how' of data collection so that immediate and/or scheduled analysis and reflection are completed to ensure student learning progress. Data systems are outlined in the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA). The data examined includes school-based academic data, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), attendance data and behaviour data. The data system was originally written in 2013 and reviewed in 2020 by a team consisting of the deputy principal–teaching and learning, two Heads of Department (HOD) and two teachers, followed by implementation in 2021. HODs and teachers speak of the many data discussions that they are conducting at regular intervals.

The principal and staff members are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment to support all students in achieving success in their learning.

The school began exploring Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) in 2019 and, after consultation, a decision was made to adopt this approach as the behaviour management framework. The desired outcome is to develop a school-wide positive, proactive culture and behaviours that support learning, and to develop socially skilled and engaged students. Many staff express the belief that there is a need to review the Responsible Thinking Classroom and develop greater clarity regarding the implementation of PBL. Some staff express the perception that there is a lack of consistency in some teachers' expectations for student behaviour and in their implementation of behaviour management processes.

The '*Atherton High Way*' reflects a commitment to respectful relationships.

The school supports the position that everybody will speak to and listen to others with dignity, even when feedback and ideas differ. The school has a meeting system as a mechanism for two-way communication. A system of protocols is established for team and committee meetings. Many staff indicate that they would appreciate more personal interaction in the communication of key information across the school. A perceived lack of clarity regarding the communication of decisions is articulated by some staff.



The principal and the management team are united in their belief in ‘Every student succeeding’ as stated in the school vision.

The principal outlines collaborative processes used to develop the EIA for 2021. The EIA is linked to the school's Strategic Plan and emerging issues. The key EIA strategy areas include attendance system, implement PBL, data system, Student Support Services (SSS), and teaching and learning. Some teachers express a degree of concern regarding the significant number of areas in the EIA. They identify attendance and PBL as key areas.

The leadership team and staff members are committed to an inclusive culture to maximise the engagement, learning and outcomes for the full range of students.

The leadership team promotes the use of differentiated teaching as a strategy for ensuring that every student's learning needs are met in ways appropriate to their age, the context in which they are learning, and the nature of the curriculum. Some leaders indicate the level of teacher capability in relation to the implementation of high-yield strategies to differentiate for the full range of students varies. The teaching staff comprises some highly capable practitioners and many teachers indicate that they are keen to further strengthen their skills in differentiation practice to better support students. Hub staff work with teachers in relation to adjustments and modifications to the curriculum and assessment for students. Many staff articulate a desire for further opportunities to build understanding of specific disabilities and how to adjust curriculum programs to meet specific student needs.

School leaders identify the impact that high quality teaching and learning has on student achievement.

Leaders recognise the importance of a consistent approach to pedagogy within the school. Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) is the signature pedagogy of the school. There is an expectation that teachers have a learning intent and success criteria for every lesson. Students and teachers articulate that the learning intent of a lesson assists students to recognise the purpose of the learning and helps them to focus on the requirements of the lesson. Teachers indicate there is a lack of consistency in the use of learning intent and success criteria. Feedback to teachers regarding their use of pedagogies varies across faculty areas. Regular feedback to all teachers regarding their work in relation to the effective use of pedagogical practices is yet to be provided by school leaders.

The principal and key leaders articulate the importance of an expert teaching team to guide student learning.

Comprehensive mentoring and induction processes for beginning teachers are apparent. These processes are formal for the first six months of a teacher's appointment to the school, and less formal in the following six months. In addition to a formalised mentoring process and induction, beginning teachers are profiled and have access to regionally provided Professional Development (PD). Mentors of beginning staff undertake a classroom walkthrough process to professionally support the teacher to reflect and build on their practice. Experienced teaching staff may request a similar walkthrough process.



The school has established productive relationships and partnerships across the wider community to enhance student learning opportunities, student wellbeing, student leadership and successful post-school destinations.

The school has a strong connection to local businesses that provide opportunities for students to be involved in School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SATs). Businesses articulate the ease in working with the school, and strong personal connections to staff that have developed over a number of years. They articulate the belief that the school is doing 'an excellent job' in preparing students for their futures. A local community partnership involves the school hosting a Career Showcase. Over 20 employers have agreed to attend the showcase thus far, with a goal of 30 this year. This event is praised by students, parents and community members.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop consistency of practice regarding expectations for appropriate behaviour that are communicated to all staff, parents and students, supported by clarity regarding agreed rules and consequences, with Quality Assurance (QA) of the implementation of agreed practices.

Collaboratively investigate communication processes and develop practices that promote informed collegial engagement and sense of team.

Collaboratively develop a concise EIA.

Deepen classroom teachers' knowledge, understanding and capability in best practice high-yield differentiation to meet the diverse needs of all students.

Rigorously implement the school's agreed pedagogical approach and quality assure the provision of feedback on teaching with increased involvement of school leaders.