

# Ipswich Special School

## Executive Summary





## Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the state.

A better understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures develops an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and can lead to reconciliation. This is essential to the maturity of Australia as a nation and fundamental to the development of an Australian identity.





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## 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Ipswich Special School** from **22 to 24 July 2019**.

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 SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU [website](#).

### 1.1 Review team

Jenny Hart	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Laurelle Allen	Internal reviewer
David Curran	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Milford Street, Ipswich
<b>Education region:</b>	Metropolitan East Region
<b>Year opened:</b>	1976
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 12
<b>Enrolment:</b>	91
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	18.1 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolment percentage:</b>	100.0 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	n/a
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2011
<b>Day 8 staffing teacher full-time equivalent (FTE):</b>	22.5
<b>Significant partner schools:</b>	St Edmund's College, Ipswich Girls' Grammar School, Ipswich West Special School
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	MyTime Playgroup Queensland, Focal Community Services, State Member for Ipswich
<b>Significant school programs:</b>	Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems, Mobility Opportunities Via Education (MOVE), Intensive Interaction (II), Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, deputy principal, three Heads of Curriculum (HOC), five pedagogical coaches, 18 teachers, 15 teacher aides, guidance officer, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, nurse, chaplain, Business Manager (BM), three Parent and Citizens' Association (P&C) executive members, 16 parents and 40 students.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Ipswich Central State School Early Childhood Developmental Program, MyTime, Focal Community Services and Ipswich Girls' Grammar School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State Member for Ipswich and ARD.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2019	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2019
Investing for Success 2019	Strategic Plan 2016-2019
Headline Indicators (April 2019 release)	School Data Profile (Semester 1, 2019)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2019	Curriculum planning documents
Advancing Partnerships	Student Data and Information Folder
Feedback and Coaching Framework	School newsletters and website
School Opinion Survey 2018	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
Whole-School Curriculum, Assessment, Reporting with Data Plan	School pedagogical framework revised 2019



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

**The school demonstrates a strong commitment to the belief that all students are able to learn.**

High expectations for learning are supported by considered and varied strategies that enable maximum access to all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers and teacher aides demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the specific individual needs of students in addition to their learning needs.

**Teaching staff members and teacher aides are appreciative of the school focus on student achievement and professional learning and support.**

The leadership team prioritises processes that are building a culture of ongoing school-wide professional learning that contributes to the development of a highly capable workforce. Teachers describe high levels of collaboration and informal support from colleagues who are experts in aspects of their field. High expectations for learning are building in the school particularly in relation to the delivery of the Australian Curriculum (AC).

**The Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) outlines strategies for the delivery of priority areas of improvement in the school.**

The majority of strategies and actions within the plan refer to building staff capability and supporting classroom practice to achieve desired student outcomes. The AIP is yet to articulate specific targets and processes for monitoring and evaluating staff capability and student outcomes.

**The school leadership team recognises that highly effective teaching is required to improve student learning outcomes.**

School leaders are committed to supporting the capability of teachers to implement the identified signature pedagogical practices of the school. A number of coaches are available to support teachers. The coaching process is new to staff and request for support is yet to build across the school. Protocols for coaching are in the early stages of implementation and are yet to be fully shared and understood by teachers. Most teachers articulate they are open to coaching and receiving feedback in relation to areas of self-identified practice from respected experts in the school.

**The school has developed a range of communication avenues to impart school and student information to staff and parents.**

Staff communication includes staff meetings, teacher aide meetings and staff newsletters. Communication with parents and the community occurs through student communication books, newsletters, Facebook and teacher parent meetings. Staff and parents report that the sharing of information through these avenues could be further enhanced to ensure timely communication is received and understood by all. School leaders acknowledge there could yet be further opportunities to connect with parents as genuine partners in learning.



**The school has a whole-school overview document that is drawn from the AC and delineates the units of work to be delivered over a four-year cycle.**

Teachers are released from class to work with their sector groups under the guidance of Heads of Curriculum (HOC) to plan for curriculum delivery. Teachers appreciate the support and guidance provided by curriculum leaders. Processes to quality assure the delivery of agreed curriculum across the school are yet to be developed and implemented.

**School leaders articulate the need to collect and use a range of student achievement and school data sets to improve the learning outcomes of students and the performance of the school.**

The school has utilised a range of processes and systems to track student achievement over past years. Data collection tools have been reviewed and changed in an effort to meet the diverse learning needs of students. School leaders and staff have reflected on the purpose of data and the use of data including the relevance of data to inform teaching and learning. A digital data wall is developed and utilised to support data conversations. School leaders acknowledge this as new practice requiring further development and staff capability building.

**Staff members acknowledge the importance of the partnership between teachers and teacher aides.**

Teachers describe the essential role teacher aides play in supporting the individual learning needs of students within classrooms. Many teacher aides speak with confidence regarding the most successful strategies to engage individual students in their learning and value the opportunity to support teachers to deliver the curriculum.

**The school is a well-respected hub within the local community.**

School leaders make deliberate and strategic use of partnerships with families, local businesses and community organisations to access resources not available within the school for the purposes of improving student outcomes. The school is held in high regard by parents and the wider community.





## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Refine school strategic documentation including inquiry cycles to ensure that explicit targets for student achievement and staff capability are documented and implemented to allow for monitoring of progress and evaluation of outcomes.

Share and enact the documented feedback and coaching framework.

Review and identify opportunities for improved communication and collaboration within and external to the school to enhance the timely sharing of information in formats that meet the needs of staff and the community and contribute to improved student learning outcomes.

Implement Quality Assurance (QA) processes to provide oversight of agreed curriculum planning and implementation across the school.

Provide ongoing professional learning to deepen teacher knowledge regarding the use of agreed data tools and the analysis of student results.