

Ipswich Special School

Executive summary

1. Introduction

This report is a product of a school review carried out by the School and Region Reviews (SRR) branch at **Ipswich Special School** from **17 to 19 July 2023**.

The report presents an evaluation of the school's performance against the 9 domains of the [National School Improvement Tool](#). From this, the school identified affirmations – the achievements, successes and celebrations over the previous 4 years; and improvement strategies – the next steps for the improvement, to inform the school's next 4-year strategic planning cycle. For more information regarding the SRR and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SRR [website](#).

1.1 Timelines and next steps

School reviews play an important role in each school's planning and improvement cycle. They inform and complement the work of the school in leading continuous improvement and ensuring quality learning outcomes for children and young people in Queensland.

Findings from the school review can be used to inform school planning processes. The [School Performance](#) policy and resources provide further information regarding the development of strategic and annual implementation plans.

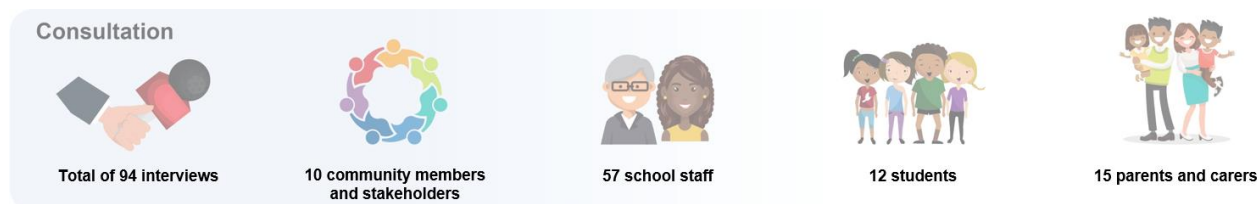
Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within 2 weeks of the school receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their School Supervisor to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies, and discuss next steps in planning for continuous improvement.

1.2 Review team

Kim Kelly	Internal Reviewer, SRR (review chair)
Peter Abernethy	Peer Reviewer
Paul Herschell	External Reviewer

1.3 Contributing stakeholders



1.4 School context

Indigenous land name:	Tulmur We acknowledge the shared lands of the Yuggera, Jagara, and Ugurapul nation and the Yuggera people of the Yuggera language region.
Education region:	Metropolitan South Region
Year levels:	ECDP to Year 12 extension
Enrolment:	99
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	16.2
Students with disability percentage:	100%
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	982

1.5 Snapshot of previous school review

The last review carried out at the school was conducted from **22 to 24 July 2019**. The school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) at the time of the 2019 review was identified as n/a and the school enrolment was 91 with an Indigenous enrolment of 18.1% and a student with disability enrolment of 100%.

The key improvement strategies recommended in the review are listed below.

- 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.

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key affirmations

Positive school culture that has a student-centred focus.

Leaders and staff speak proudly of the school and share a strong commitment to the school's motto, '*Together we can*'. The principal has established high expectations for staff to work collaboratively to do 'whatever it takes' to support students' learning and wellbeing. Leaders emphasise the importance of each student experiencing success as a learner. Parents comment that the supportiveness of staff and their work to go 'above and beyond' in their efforts to engage students in learning and create a sense of belonging are key incentives for choosing the school for their child. Students communicate that they like the school and 'try to improve'.

Strong collegial relationships based on trust, collaboration, mutual respect and teamwork.

A culture of collaboration and teamwork is nurtured and highly valued across the school. Staff speak consistently of the supportive and collegial culture and staff identify that leaders are highly visible and respond promptly to requests. Staff describe working cohesively with high levels of trust and treating everyone with respect. Teacher aides are highly valued in the school and are dedicated to supporting the educational outcomes of students. They describe a feeling of belonging and feeling valued.

Clear expectations for every student to realise their potential.

Leaders and staff express a strong commitment to providing learning opportunities that promote students' abilities to live a life of 'choice not chance'. The principal articulates a vision of students leaving the school to live an ordinary life with hope, confidence, voice and agency. Teachers and teacher aides articulate commitment to understanding the unique learning capabilities of each student, personalising learning experiences and maintaining high expectations for their students. Parents comment that staff understand their child and help them to succeed. Students articulate teachers care for them and help them to learn.

Highly regarded in the community and the school of choice for many parents.

Parents and members of the broader community note that the school is their 'school of choice' and that staff place students 'first and foremost' in everyday operations. School community members highlight the positive regard and reputation that the school has established. This is reflected in the increased enrolments and the high levels of satisfaction of parents, staff and students. Parents describe feeling welcomed and able to share their knowledge of their child. Parents express appreciation for the support that staff provide beyond the school gate to advocate for services and connection with community agencies. The principal and many parents indicate that the 'hallmark' of the school is its connection with families.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Domain 8: Effective pedagogical practices

Collaboratively formalise the school's agreed pedagogical approaches, providing professional learning to ensure teachers have a deep understanding of expected ways of teaching to engage and challenge students in their learning.

Domain 5: An expert teaching team

Implement systematic processes for observation and feedback to provide teachers with timely and relevant feedback on their teaching practice, aligned to the school's agreed curriculum and pedagogical priorities.

Domain 6: Systematic curriculum delivery

Build teachers' knowledge and understanding of the purposes and processes of moderation to inform curriculum alignment, ensure every student's learning is on track and plan for next steps in teaching.

Domain 7: Differentiated teaching and learning

Strengthen staff capability to understand and apply disability-specific knowledge and skills and use research-informed, differentiated teaching practices to support the learning of all students.

Domain 4: Targeted use of school resources

Review current facilities, in collaboration with regional personnel, to develop strategies to accommodate additional growth and ensure accessibility, safety and equitable access for all students.