Blackall State School

Action Plan Final Report

Education Improvement Branch

Queensland Government

Contents

1. Introduction

This report is a product of a 12-month check-in review at **Blackall State School** on **7 September 2021**. It provides an evaluation of the school's performance against the 12-month action plan developed by the school in consultation with the Assistant Regional Director (ARD).

The 12-month check-in was completed by staff from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB). For more information regarding the EIB and school reviews please visit the [website](#).

1.2 Review team

The Phase 4 visit and 12-month review was conducted by:

Anthony Palmer   Senior reviewer, EIB (case manager)

Shaun Kanowski   Peer reviewer

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following contributed to the 12-month check-in and final report:

- a desktop review of the school's performance data and other school information

- consultation with the school's ARD

- a school visit of up to one day, and

- interviews with relevant staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:

  o Principal

  o Head of Department (HOD)

  o Inclusion teacher

  o 10 teachers

  o Three teacher aides

  o Business Manager (BM)

  o Grounds person

  o Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president

  o 16 students

  o Three parents

2. EIB monitoring

2.1 Action plan improvement strategies

The 12-month check-in looked at how the school implemented the improvement strategies from the action plan.

- Define and develop an Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) to reflect the guiding direction of a 'Culture of Inclusion' across the school to promote increased clarity, consistency and sustainability of inclusive practices.

- Narrow and refine practices and approaches to ensure high levels of teacher understanding to embed the use of appropriate differentiation strategies.

2.2 Action plan check-ins

The Phase 4 visit and 12-month review were preceded by the following visits:

Phase 1   November 2020
Phase 2   March 2021
Phase 3   June 2021

3. Findings

Improvement Strategy 1 – Define and develop an EIA to reflect the guiding direction of a 'Culture of Inclusion' across the school to promote increased clarity, consistency and sustainability of inclusive practices.

Improvement Strategy 2 – Narrow and refine practices and approaches to ensure high levels of teacher understanding to embed the use of appropriate differentiation strategies.

Key observations and discussions

- School leaders discuss the value of the action plan as a tool to track and support collegial discussions regarding school improvement. The ARD has utilised the action plan as the basis for discussions during school visits. Staff members share the impact the action plan has had on making the work clear, specific and understood.

- Teachers articulate the open and collaborative approach of school leaders in sharing and unpacking the improvement agenda and elements, including new concepts and data. They express appreciation for the opportunities to engage in reflection and conversations in an open, trustful and non-threatening forum. Deeper staff discussions regarding the agenda have become a key tenet in the inclusive culture being cultivated at the school.

- The development of the collaborative professional learning space, 'The Bunker', has continued to evolve, including data displays and artefacts. This has provided an engaging space for staff members to undertake professional conversations and reflections, review and consider data and participate in planning sessions, staff meetings and professional learning.

- School leaders and staff members share their understanding and use expertise of the literacy continuum is continuing to develop. The use of additional programs to support student foundational oral language learning, including Oral Language in the Early Years (OLEY) and Michael Heggerty's[1] Phonemic Awareness, have been introduced with associated professional learning for staff members.

- A student data wall is located in The Bunker and is utilised to monitor student progress utilising the literacy continuum strand of 'Reading Texts'. Marker students are regularly discussed in whole staff meetings and in planning meetings with school leaders. Strategies are shared between staff members to assist colleagues in selecting suitable teacher approaches to support students.

- School leaders and staff members share the positive impact and engagement with the 'Reading Skills Morning' held each Monday. Students are grouped beyond year level cohorts in 'like reading' clusters, supporting targeted reading instruction and skill development.

- Staff members have reflected regularly on their inclusive practices utilising the indicators from the Department of Education (DoE) 'Signposts for Inclusion' document, provided in

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[1] Heggerty, M. (2005). *Phonemic awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! (Kindergarten Version).* Literacy Resources, Incorporated.

large format in The Bunker. They detail continuing discussion and learnings, and an increasing understanding of inclusive practices as articulated through the school's collaboratively developed 'Culture of Inclusion' statement.

- Planning meetings provide the opportunity for teachers to share and discuss units of work. The Head of Department – Curriculum (HOD-C) has worked with key staff members to develop A-B units of work, including the mapping of achievement standards and the writing of appropriate Guides to Making Judgement (GTMJ). This work has been supported through the engagement with regional project for middle leaders, developing the capability of leaders to analyse different levels of curriculum planning.

- The principal has continued to strive to provide access to quality professional learning for all staff members. Staff were engaged in a book study of Linda Graham's[2] 'Inclusive Education for the 21st Century'. Professional Development (PD) opportunities have included those delivered by the Centre for Learning and Wellbeing (CLAW), Autism Hub, Reading and Writing Centre, Caroline McCarty[3], cluster Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), and the Resilience Project/Smiling Minds.

- The work of, and support provided by, the cluster HOSES are acknowledged and celebrated by school leaders and staff members. The inclusion teacher and cluster HOSES assist teachers to formulate Individual Curriculum Plans (ICP), with the process involving consultation with students and parents.

- School leaders identify the continuing influence of the work of Lyn Sharratt[4], including the '5 questions' approach and the 'assessment waterfall' as a key element of the whole-school approach to student learning goals. Staff members detail this work continues to be emerging. Some staff members have pursued innovative approaches to learning goals and learning walls, including the use of scrapbooks.

- Data meetings are undertaken twice a term, in Weeks 3 and 8, with teachers meeting with the principal to discuss data. Teachers are provided with release time to attend these meetings.

- In addition to walkthroughs and formal observations, classroom profiling has been offered to all teachers. Many staff discuss the positive benefit and reflective learning opportunity classroom profiling has provided.

- The school has continued to administer, collect and collate data from surveys linked to identified School Opinion Survey (SOS) questions. Staff, parents and students are invited to participate in these surveys each term, with the results displayed in The Bunker. Some staff members express a degree of concern at the request for names to be added to surveys for the most recent round of collection. Survey results have demonstrated the continuing improvement in satisfaction levels of staff and students.

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[2] Graham, L. (Ed.). (2020). *Inclusive Education for the 21st Century: Theory, policy and practice*. Routledge.

[3] McCarty, C. (2020). *Caroline McCarty – 4D*. https://caroline-mccarty.com/

[4] Sharratt, L. (2020). *Sharratt Educational Group Inc.* https://www.lynsharratt.com/

Measurable outcomes and success criteria

Measurable outcomes and targets	Baseline	Achievement at 12 months
SOS measures Q1 This is a good school. Staff: 85 per cent Students: 85 per cent Parents: 90 per cent Q2 Staff morale is positive. 95 per cent Q3 Behaviour is well Managed. Staff: 100 per cent Students: 90 per cent Parents: 85 per cent Q4 Access to quality PD. 95 per cent	2019 SOS Q1 This is a good school. Staff: 70.6 per cent Students: 73.8 per cent Parents: 67.7 per cent Q2 Staff morale is positive. 29.4 per cent Q3 Behaviour is well managed. Staff: 70 per cent Students: 82 per cent Parents: 76 per cent Q4 Access to quality PD. 76.5 per cent	2021 SOS data was not available at the time of the Phase 4 check-in. School-collected data from September 2021 utilising the same questions is provided below. Q1 This is a good school. Staff: 100 per cent Students: 80 per cent Parents: 69.57 per cent Q2 Staff morale is positive. 92.31 per cent Q3 Behaviour is well managed. Staff: 92.31 per cent Students: 80 per cent Parents: 45.83 per cent Q4 Access to quality PD. 100 per cent
34 identified marker students meet the school reading benchmarks.	Nil – no marker students identified.	School leaders indicate a number of marker students no longer attend the school. Of the 24 marker students being tracked, 88 per cent have moved one cluster. Additionally, 88 per cent of all students have moved one cluster, with 25 per cent of students moving more than one cluster.
100 per cent of teachers are implementing an agreed planning framework that identifies inclusive practices and pedagogical approaches that are appropriate to the age, nature and diversity of learners.	Development of agreed framework.	All teachers share their use of the agreed planning template. Teachers discuss the developing use of a range of pedagogical approaches and inclusive practices in their teaching. There is a developing understanding of the Universal Design for

		Learning (UDL) approach and the three elements of representation, engagement and action.
100 per cent of teachers implementing differentiation strategies and receiving documented feedback on their practice – a minimum of one observation/feedback cycle per term.	Development of coaching/ feedback process.	School leaders detail having designated teachers for walkthroughs. A formal observation is undertaken once a term by the principal. Professional feedback is provided after all observations and some walkthroughs.

Success Criteria	Progress at 12 months
• All staff articulate a shared understanding of what a 'Culture of Inclusion' means at Blackall State School evidenced through progression on the Inclusion signpost.	A 'Culture of Inclusion' statement has been collaboratively developed by staff members, supporting a shared understanding and informed by DoE resources. The signpost document is provided in large format in The Bunker, and is collaboratively reflected upon each term. A deepening understanding of inclusion is apparent across staff members.
• All students will be able to articulate their learning goals and next steps for learning using class learning walls.	The understanding and use of student learning goals are identified as emerging and continuing work, and varies across the school. Most students are able to articulate their learning goals, and how they utilise the learning wall to identify the next steps in their learning. Staff members express interest and enthusiasm to further develop their understanding and practice with these visible learning elements.
• Every student will be successfully transitioned into the next year level as evidenced by attendance, School Disciplinary Absences (SDAs) and academic achievement in English.	Leaders acknowledge this as a long-term goal for beyond the priority support review process. The key transition points of entry into Prep, Year 7, and Year 11 have been identified. School processes to support all year-on-year transitions have been developed.
• Implementation of a collaboratively developed whole-school approach to differentiation at Blackall State School.	School leaders and staff members express the strength of the collaborative approach taken with regards to differentiation at the school. This work has been underpinned through the development of the 'Whole School Approach to Support Student

	Learning' document. The work and efforts of the HOSES are acknowledged, as is the willingness of many staff to engage in new ways of working. This includes the understanding and use of UDL, 'Know and Do' charts and assistive technology. Staff members discuss improving at discussing and documenting differentiation in planning, and uploading to OneSchool.
• All teachers implementing differentiation strategies and receiving documented feedback on their practice – a minimum of one observation/ feedback cycle per term.	Professional feedback through learning walkthroughs and formal observations is provided to all teachers. Many teachers share their desire for further opportunities for feedback, including from peers. A buddy approach is identified to be taken next term, with a teacher joining a school leader on some walkthroughs.
• All teachers engaging in moderation of student work at all four phases that is informed by student data.	Teachers discuss the benefits of engaging in the four phases of moderation. They express appreciation for the professional conversations that take place, supporting planning, assessment and differentiation. Staff identify the support provided by the CLAW regarding developing moderation processes and building staff capability. Staff members discuss their confidence in being able to self-manage and lead moderation at the school.
• All students accessing the curriculum at their level evidenced through marker class students discussing their learning progress and next steps in learning.	Leaders and teachers discuss the marker student process and impact. Teachers express a greater sense of ownership of all students. This has been supported through collaboratively reviewing data, including reflecting on and utilising the data wall in The Bunker. Some marker students are able to discuss their learning progress and identify the next steps in their learning.

4. General comments

- Staff members share the increasing sense of team, honouring of staff voice, improved communication and building of relationships that have all contributed to an increasingly positive feel across the school, lifting staff morale.

- Many staff members reflect on the significant amount of change achieved in a short space of time. The majority of staff members share their sense of pride and achievement in working with the school's collaboratively agreed approaches to address the elements and achieve the successes as detailed and sought through the action plan.

- School leaders have demonstrated unity and commitment, and have worked collaboratively with staff to address the challenges and issues presented by some members of the community.

- Staff members proudly discuss their care for students, and their learning and wellbeing. Students express appreciation for the efforts of staff members.

- The school engages positively with the community through a wide range of activities to provide educational information, community events and curriculum activities. Staff members discuss increased parent engagement, including through Year 7 2022 Information Session, Book Week Dress Up Parade, Father's Day Games Afternoon, Year 10 Parent Pathways Session, Triple P Raising Resilient Children online session, Better in Blackall Festival, transition interviews, parent/teacher interviews, and Coffee and Parade on Fridays.

- The school's 'Be Kind' agenda has seen the development of T-shirts for staff be sought after in the community, and by students who are able to purchase them through Blackall Bucks positive rewards.

- The principal expresses pride in the efforts and enthusiasm of staff members, and their 'never give up' spirit. Teamwork, collaboration and authentic voice are identified as valued elements of the work and efforts towards the action plan.

5. Next steps

The next steps in the strategic planning processes of the school will include the examination of the 2020 school review report to identify which improvement strategies need to be scheduled for action over the next few years. This process needs to be conducted collaboratively by all members of the teaching team, in partnership with the ARD to inform the school's next steps.

As you move forward, consider the following in your planning:

- Continue to reflect on and embed inclusive practices for every student to succeed, supporting every staff member to develop their capability and repertoire of practice to contribute to this work.

- Further support the capability building of all staff members, including the opportunity to participate in a range of collegial engagement and collaborative learning experiences, such as the planned 'walkthrough buddy' approach.

- Leverage the work undertaken to 'know your learner' to further strengthen the 'know you curriculum' element, deepening staff members' understanding of pedagogy, curriculum and differentiation – and the links between, to monitor student progress, identify next steps for teaching, and reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching practice.

- Collaboratively discuss, determine and develop whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading, documented through a whole-school reading framework.

- Strengthen and embed visible learning concepts, including learning walls and learning goals and utilising learning intentions and success criteria, further considering student voice and supporting all students to develop as successful assessment-literate learners.

The Regional Director and ARD are committed to continuing their close support and guidance for the leadership team at the school.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings from the 12-month review and information gathered at the previous termly visits, the EIB concludes:

The school has successfully implemented the agreed actions. No further EIB support is required.