

# Highfields State Secondary College

## Executive Summary



School  
Improvement  
Unit





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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 **Highfields State Secondary College** from **12 to 14 September 2017**.

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 consider in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies which prioritise future directions for improvement.

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

### 1.1 Review team

Mr Jeff Major	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Ms Jo Soothill	Peer reviewer
Mr Paul Herschell	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	O'Brien Road, Highfields
<b>Education region:</b>	Darling Downs South West Region
<b>Year opened:</b>	2015
<b>Year levels:</b>	Year 7 to Year 10
<b>Enrolment:</b>	671
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	7 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolment percentage:</b>	6 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	1011
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2014
<b>Full-time equivalent staff:</b>	46.98
<b>Significant partner schools:</b>	Highfields State School, Meringandan State School, Goombungee State School, Geham State School
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Hampton Food Festival, Highfields and District Business Connections, University of Southern Queensland (USQ)
<b>Significant school programs:</b>	Highfields Heroes - Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), STEP (Sporting Talent, Excellence and Potential), Focus



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, two deputy principals, Business Manager (BM), eight Heads of Department (HOD), Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), guidance officer, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) coordinator, 24 teachers, six teacher aides, two administration officers, two facilities officers, four cleaners, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, secretary and treasurer, five parents and 52 students.

Community and business groups:

- President Highfields and District Business Connections, Advocate Highfields Community Heart: Project 2020, Dr Danielle Stebbins - executive coach, Senior Constable Highfields Police and Hampton Food Festival contact.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principals of feeder schools – Highfields State School, Meringandan State School, Geham State School, Goombungee State School and University of Southern Queensland (USQ) representative.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD, Member for Toowoomba North and Councillor of Toowoomba Regional Council.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017	Responsible Behaviour Plan
Investing for Success 2017	Curriculum Plan
Headline Indicators (2016 release)	School Data Profile (Semester 2, 2017)
OneSchool	School budget overview
School data plan 2017	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	School Opinion Survey 2016
School pedagogical framework	Professional development sessions
School newsletters, website and face-book	School Annual Report 2016



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

**There is a strong and optimistic commitment by staff members to the school's improvement strategy and a clear belief that further improvement is possible.**

The school and community have high expectations and have a deep commitment to the school's ongoing success, having lobbied government for many years to establish a secondary school in the local area. All staff members make a strong contribution to the success and reputation of the school. This is apparent in discussions with community members, local primary schools, parents, students and staff members of the school.

**Community partnerships are valued by the school and its community and viewed by the whole school community as a real strength of the school.**

The partnership between Highfields and District Business Connections group and the school demonstrates the quality of the partnerships in which the school has invested. This partnership is characterised by high levels of mutual benefit for all parties, exceptional communication processes and proven sustainability. The school is engaged in monthly breakfast meetings.

**The leadership team identifies three components of the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) - writing, pedagogical framework implementation, and student and staff wellbeing.**

The full agenda of the school is documented in the school's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2017. There is a range of priorities listed in some detail in this plan under the four focus areas of strategic direction, accountability, capability and collaboration. The three improvement priorities of the EIA are not yet always consistently embraced in faculty action plans. All teachers are not yet able to articulate every element of the improvement agenda and the targets associated with these are not yet clearly understood.

**The school leadership team views reliable and timely student data as essential to the effective leadership of the school.**

The school has recently invested time in developing an overview and timeline for data collection and analysis. It is planned to share this more broadly with staff members. The end of semester, student achievement data is analysed by Heads of Department (HOD). Teachers are required to discuss achievement data for each of their classes at faculty meetings and to identify targets for improvement.

**School leaders explicitly encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to student needs and readiness.**

Year 10 English and mathematics classes are grouped by ability as are literacy and numeracy classes in Year 7 and Year 8 to extend students. Ways to further support gifted and talented students are currently being explored.



**The school's recently developed whole-school curriculum plan is aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC).**

The plan utilises school developed and Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resources to guide unit and lesson structure and sequence, and for assessment and reporting purposes. The school has yet to develop a rigorous, school-wide Quality Assurance (QA) and shared curriculum planning process to monitor the implementation of the school's curriculum plan to ensure that all students are consistently and effectively provided with opportunities to demonstrate their learning against the AC achievement standards.

**The school's values of 'Kindness, Persistence, Responsibility, Resilience and Respect' are clearly displayed across the school and staff members and students can describe how these values drive high behaviour expectations.**

The school has adopted the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) framework branded as *Highfields Heroes*. There is a documented sequence of student wellbeing topics that are taught each week and these are responsive to emerging changes in student behaviour data. Some staff and parents express concern regarding the consistency of behavioural consequences and incident follow up.

**The school leadership team and teachers recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning throughout the school.**

A research-based pedagogical framework based on Archer and Hughes'<sup>1</sup> Explicit Instruction (EI) and linked to five other pedagogical approaches was collaboratively developed in 2016. The framework includes reference to PBL including the use of Essential Skills for Classroom Management (ESCM). The school is yet to develop clear criteria to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the pedagogical approaches are delivering improvement in student learning.

**The school leadership team clearly recognises the importance of providing strong instructional leadership.**

The school has a program of observation, coaching, feedback and reflection. All teachers are observed by a member of the leadership team at least four times per year, with the process including pre- and post-observation meetings to discuss in detail the teacher's classroom practices and pedagogies. At this stage, there is not always a clear alignment between the observation and feedback processes and the implementation of the school's pedagogical framework.

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



**A culture of high expectations is apparent across the school and, in conjunction with this, student and staff wellbeing, a sense of belonging and clear behavioural strategies are focus areas of the school.**

The school presents as calm and orderly and is focused on learning. Relationships between staff members and students are positive and respectful. Parents speak of collaborative and transparent communication with school staff members and articulate that their contribution is valued. Students communicate that they feel cared for by the staff and that positive relationships exist within the school between students and staff members.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Ensure the key improvement agenda is well known by all staff members and that their role in contributing to school targets is explicit.

Ensure the school's data management plan is well known to all staff members and how it should be utilised in guiding their teaching and target setting.

Establish a systematic QA process to support teachers to consistently implement the whole-school curriculum plan.

Expand opportunities to accelerate learning for gifted and talented and high achieving students.

Further develop communication protocols to improve perceptions regarding consistency of consequences for student behaviour.

Continue to implement the pedagogical framework across the school with accompanying timelines.

Review the school's processes for observation, coaching, feedback and reflection to ensure they are aligned to the school's pedagogical framework.