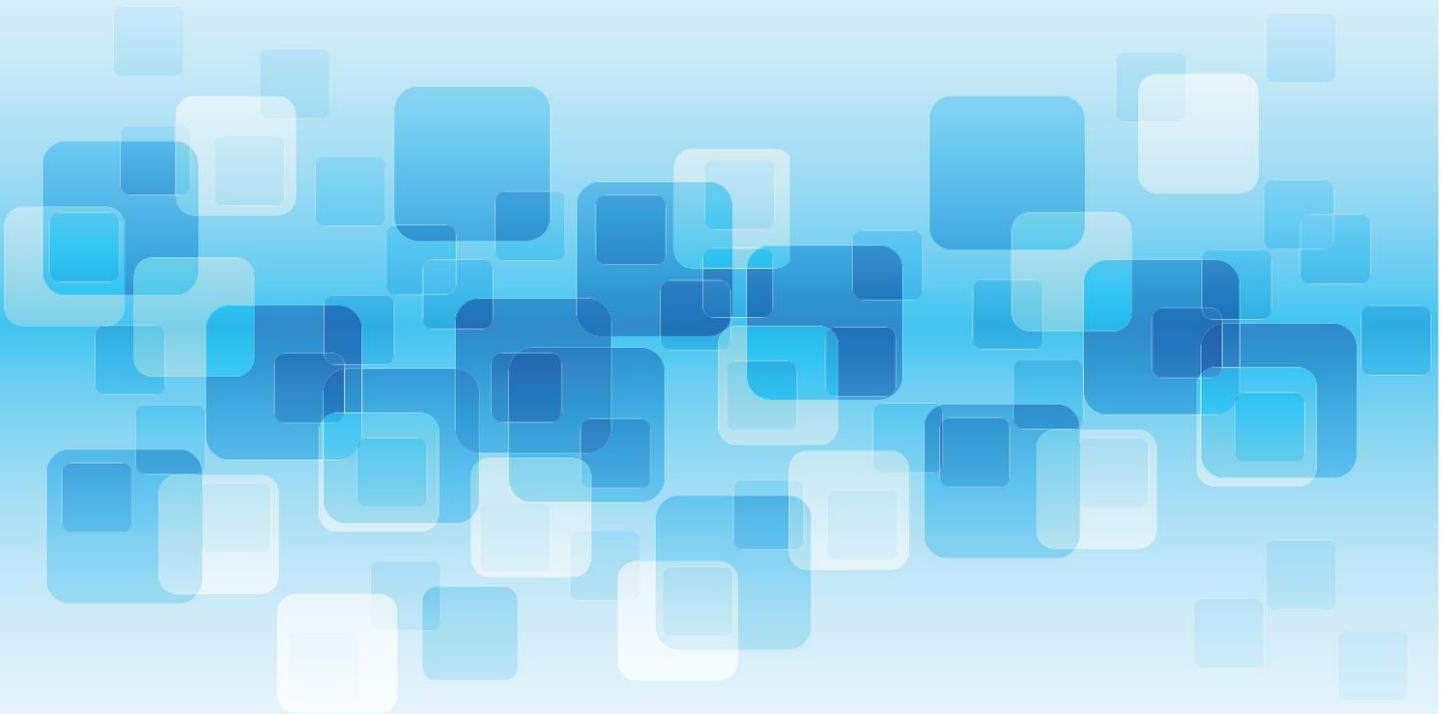




# School Improvement Unit Report

## Kowanyama State School Executive Summary



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Kowanyama State School from 16 to 19 March 2015. It provides 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 review and report were completed by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU). For more information about the SIU and the new reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the Department of Education and Training (DET) [website](#).

## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Kowanyama Street, Kowanyama
<b>Education region:</b>	Far North Queensland
<b>The school opened in:</b>	1978
<b>Year levels:</b>	Pre-Prep to Year 10
<b>Current school enrolment:</b>	184
<b>Indigenous enrolments:</b>	98.4 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolments:</b>	7.6 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	648
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2015 Acting Principal Term 1
<b>Number of teachers:</b>	10 classroom teachers and 2 specialist teachers
<b>Nearby schools:</b>	Aurukun State School, Pormpuraaw State School
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Remote Indigenous Area Assistance Scheme, Indigenous Schooling Support Unit, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Kowanyama Council, Kowanyama General Store
<b>Unique school programs:</b>	Indigenous playgroup



### 1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school's performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school's assistant regional director
- a school visit of four days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal
  - Five members of the leadership team
  - 19 classroom teachers and specialist teachers
  - Chairman of the Local Community Council
  - Ten non-teaching staff
  - 12 parents
  - Students in their classrooms and in the playground

### 1.4 Review team

Glenn McGowan	Internal Reviewer, SIU (Review Chair)
Christopher Eveans	External Reviewer
Bert Barbe	Internal Reviewer, SIU



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

- There is a clear narrow focus for school improvement.

Students, staff and parents are aware of the school improvement priorities of student attendance and behaviour, explicit teaching, improvement in reading and community engagement.

- There has been modest but consistent improvement in student learning outcomes and attendance.

Student performance in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is comparable with similar schools nationally for school's mean performance. It is 'above' similar schools in 6 strands, 'close to' in 13 strands and 'below' in 1 strand.

- Kowanyama State School has significant issues in staffing key positions which impacts student outcomes.

The school experiences significant changeover of staff in both leadership and teaching positions on an annual basis as a result of its remote location. Approximately 50 per cent of the classroom teachers are both new to teaching and the school this year. The majority of other teaching staff are in their second or third year of teaching. Both the Principal and Deputy Principal are acting in their roles.

The Principal has developed a human resources Workforce Plan to manage staff turnover and support proactive recruitment of personnel for key positions with Regional Office.

- The school promotes high behavioural and learning expectations.

This has been achieved through the implementation of School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning (SWPBL) processes. Attendance, disruptive behaviour and learning engagement are an issue however, for a number of students. The use of rewards to encourage positive learning behaviour is inconsistent across the school.

- There are many students who have significant ongoing mental health and welfare needs.

These needs are major impediments to student learning engagement and are the cause of a significant amount of challenging and disruptive behaviour.

- Overarching curriculum and pedagogical frameworks are in need of renewal.

Internal and external school curriculum leaders are building teacher capability in regards to priority whole-school programs at an individual level. Discussions with curriculum leaders and teachers reveal that the documentation which supports how these programs come together as a package (Kowanyama Curriculum and



Procedures Folder) is in need of some updating and renewal with teaching staff to reflect current practice.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Renew the whole school curriculum framework and pedagogical framework to build teachers' understanding of how the components of key school programs contribute to an overall package for school improvement.
- Work closely with regional personnel to activate the new human resources Workforce Plan. Co-develop innovative solutions to staff vacant key positions in order to maximise continuity of support for students. Formalise long term regional support through the Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (ISSU) team.
- Review the school rewards systems within the SWPBL process to develop motivating and creative ways of rewarding appropriate behaviour which suit the unique school context.
- Establish a welfare committee which utilises the expertise of external health and welfare personnel to implement proactive case management of students and families with high level needs.
- Consider the development of another arm of the ISSU which provides direct support and sets up sustainable partnerships for the delivery of welfare and mental health programs for students, families and staff through formal agreements.