Brisbane School of Distance Education

# School review report

# Acknowledgement of Country



The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands 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.

*The Landscape of Learning* is a custom embodied design for the Queensland Department of Education, produced in collaboration through a co-design process with Iscariot Media (IM) in 2022.

# 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a school review carried out by the School and Region Reviews (SRR) branch at **Brisbane School of Distance Education** from **17** to **21 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 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

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|---|---|
| Alan Smith | Internal Reviewer, SRR (review chair) |
| Trevor Buchanan | Internal Reviewer, SRR |
| David Cramb | Internal Reviewer, SRR |
| Tim Moes | External Reviewer |
| Wayne Troyahn | External Reviewer |

## 1.3 Contributing stakeholders



Consultation

Total of 199 interviews

18 community members and stakeholders

136 school staff

29 students

16 parents and carers

## 1.4 School context

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|---|---|
| **Indigenous land name:** | Yuggera and Turrbal |
| | We acknowledge the Yuggera and Turrbal people, the Aboriginal Owners of the land where we gather and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise their connection to Country and role in caring for and maintaining Country over thousands of years. May their strength and wisdom be with us today. |
| **Education region:** | Metropolitan South Region |
| **Year levels:** | Kindergarten to Year 12 |
| **Enrolment:** | 3512 |
| **Indigenous enrolment percentage:** | 5.85% |
| **Students with disability percentage:** | 27.81% |
| **Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:** | 1035 |

## 1.5 Snapshot of previous school review

The last review carried out at the school was conducted from **16** to **20 September 2019**. The school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) at the time of the 2019 review was identified as 1035 and the school enrolment was 3430 with an Indigenous enrolment of 5.7% and a student with disability enrolment of 23.6%.

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

- Reflect the school's commitment to 'Innovation, Inspiration and Inclusion' in development of agreed signature school-wide pedagogical practices to inform 21st Century learning within the context of the 'School of the Future'. (Domain 8)

- Further refine and clarify the scope of the identified Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) and its measurement in terms of improved student outcomes, to enhance school-wide understanding of, commitment to, and communication of identified priorities. (Domain 1)

- Quality assure a systematic approach to school-wide observation and feedback, coaching and mentoring, as a key driver for implementation of the agreed 'School of the Future' pedagogies. (Domain 5)

- Further enhance the capability of teachers and teacher aides to understand the implications of the specific medical, psychological, and learning needs of students, to design appropriate adjustments and to utilise the most effective online learning tools in their delivery. (Domain 7)

## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key affirmations

**Many staff members express affinity with the school's imperative of 'each student succeeding'.**

Staff recognise that students have a diverse range of cultural, social, emotional and academic backgrounds. They speak of being responsive to the needs of each student in order to support success in learning. The importance of a positive learning culture is emphasised by executive leaders, with staff members speaking of forging positive relationships with students and families. Longer-serving members of staff speak with pride of the school's extensive history of providing a unique learning environment.

**Positive and caring relationships are promoted by staff through a school priority of engagement.**

Teachers articulate a focus on providing a safe, and inclusive learning environment that promotes intellectual rigour. Leaders and teachers articulate that a high degree of professionalism and collegiality is displayed by staff. Teachers comment that students give positive feedback and encouragement to their peers through online chat forums during lessons. 2022 School Opinion Survey (SOS) data shows that 94.5% of parents, 95% of students, and 94.4% of staff agree with the statement, 'This is a good school'.

**Leaders articulate the importance of establishing an expert teaching team to develop and implement the most suitable programs to meet student needs.**

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members describe a range of innovative practices to attract staff. Most members of staff praise the collegial environment and the support they receive each day in the workplace. They suggest this is one of the best aspects of working in the school. A shared understanding of workplace culture for teachers, teacher aides, and public servants is apparent, centred around pillars of collaboration, respect, communication, trust and integrity.

**Staff and parents comment that the school caters effectively for a diverse range of students to provide quality educational opportunities.**

Many staff members concur with the sentiments that the school 'offers a very unique choice for students who need it'. Leaders articulate that significant processes have been implemented to support students, particularly those considered vulnerable, in both social and academic areas. Teachers suggest that building confidence and self-efficacy of students, and providing educational pathways for students exhibiting specific needs such as anxiety and trauma, has led to improved student performance in learning.

## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

**Domain 1:** An explicit improvement agenda

Communicate higher levels of specificity, including precise actions and milestones, to support staff members to fully understand and commit to the school's vision of '*Excellence in virtual learning*'.

**Domain 8:** Effective pedagogical practices

Consolidate teachers' understanding of the Teaching and Learning Model through further capability development together with a systematic approach to observation and feedback, to foster the consistent use of high-quality pedagogical practices aligned to excellence in virtual learning.

**Domain 6:** Systematic curriculum delivery

Align units to the Australian Curriculum (AC) across faculties and cohorts, using agreed tools and the participation of leaders, to ensure students access their full entitlement to the curriculum.

**Domain 1:** An explicit improvement agenda

Sharpen and communicate explicit improvement targets for student learning and engagement, and determine school-wide mechanisms to focus attention on, and progress towards, improving Levels of Achievement (LOA).

**Domain 2:** Analysis and discussion of data

Systematically enact agreed processes for the consistent and rigorous analysis of relevant data sets at sector and faculty levels, to inform strategies that target improvement in LOAs.

## 2.3 Improvement strategies summary

*Domain 1: An explicit improvement agenda*

**Communicate higher levels of specificity, including precise actions and milestones, to support staff members to fully understand and commit to the school's vision of 'Excellence in virtual learning'.**

**Sharpen and communicate explicit improvement targets for student learning and engagement, and determine school-wide mechanisms to focus attention on, and progress towards, improving LOAs.**

Collaboratively develop a school-wide understanding of engagement, and determine research-informed approaches to improve student engagement and attendance to further support active involvement and participation in lessons.

*Domain 2: Analysis and discussion of data*

**Systematically enact agreed processes for the consistent and rigorous analysis of relevant data sets at sector and faculty levels, to inform strategies that target improvement in LOAs.**

Collaboratively develop data practices that support teachers to readily 'know their students' and create responsive teaching and learning practices for the large number of students enrolling after the start of the school year.

*Domain 3: A culture that promotes learning*

Refine communication processes across the school to promote clarity of messaging and decisions for staff, with a focus on enhancing consultative practices.

*Domain 4: Targeted use of school resources*

Review facility use in the context of emerging challenges, maximising efficiencies to strengthen teacher pedagogy and outcomes for students.

Investigate asynchronous learning options, complementing the school's model of synchronous learning, to meet the diverse needs of enrolled students and their skill sets.

*Domain 5: An expert teaching team*

Collaboratively review roles and responsibilities across the school to meet emerging challenges and promote clarity and consistency of work roles.

Investigate strategic, mutually beneficial relationships with the tertiary sector to enhance preservice teacher education, with a focus on excellence in virtual learning.

*Domain 6: Systematic curriculum delivery*

**Align units to the AC across faculties and cohorts, using agreed tools and the participation of leaders, to ensure students access their full entitlement to the curriculum.**

Strengthen moderation practices across the school, with specific attention given to greater collaboration at the Before juncture, to deepen teachers' understanding of what is to be taught and assessed.

Strengthen moderation processes by externally moderating student work and folios to support consistency of teacher judgments across schools.

*Domain 7: Differentiated teaching and learning*

Formalise opportunities for robust collaboration between differentiation teachers and class teachers to devise responsive teaching and learning strategies that allow all students to access, participate, and progress in their learning.

Sharpen staff members' understanding of inclusive practices to foster shared ownership and accountability of outcomes for all learners.

*Domain 8: Effective pedagogical practices*

**Consolidate teachers' understanding of the Teaching and Learning Model through further capability development together with a systematic approach to observation and feedback, to foster the consistent use of high-quality pedagogical practices aligned to excellence in virtual learning.**

*Domain 9: School-community partnerships*

Investigate avenues to enhance the active involvement of home supervisors in the learning process, to maximise support for student engagement and progress.

# 3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

## 3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

### Findings

Many staff members describe their affinity with the school's imperative of 'each student succeeding'. They recognise that students have a diverse range of cultural, social, emotional, and academic backgrounds. Staff speak of being responsive to the needs of each student in order to support success in learning. The importance of a positive learning culture is emphasised by executive leaders, with staff members speaking of forging positive relationships with students and families.

The strategic plan (2020–2023) describes the aspiration to be a 'world-leading hub for synchronous online learning'. The executive principal reflects that online pedagogy is no longer the point of difference for the school. Subsequently, an updated vision statement – '*Excellence in virtual learning*' – was collaboratively developed by members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with some input from other staff members. Together with a mission statement, school values and priorities, the vision statement is displayed prominently throughout the campus. Conversations with staff members reveal that many are yet to clearly understand how they are able to contribute to realising the vision. Some identify a need to collaboratively review the mission statement and whole-school values to foster greater ownership and understanding.

A range of planning documents have been developed. At the whole-school level, these include an Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), data plan and calendar, Indigenous education plan, and professional learning plan. In addition, action plans have been developed by Heads of School (HOS) and Heads of Department (HOD). Practice varies across the school in regard to the headings and focus points used to organise these plans. Some staff members identify an opportunity to align future documents to a common set of foci. They comment that this would better support them to understand the school's improvement priorities.

The AIP includes quantitative, student-focused goals for improvements in attendance, Levels of Achievement (LOA), submission of work and effort. Staff are yet to consistently reference whole-school targets. Differentiated targets for sectors, faculties, and other program areas are yet to be established. Many staff are yet to express an understanding of how targets are monitored, or how they support ongoing improvement with regard to student learning and wellbeing outcomes.

The principal articulates that the 'greatest challenge and focus in the school is engagement'. Staff members identify that many students have a history of disengagement and high absenteeism. They highlight the importance of student engagement, acknowledging it underpins success in all areas. The principal indicates that engagement is the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA). Leaders and teachers identify factors requiring attention: reducing the number of 'N' ratings; increasing the regularity of students' attendance at lessons; and enhancing students' active involvement and participation in lessons. Teachers express an awareness of the pivotal role they play in consistently and rigorously supporting student engagement.

The SLT comprises the executive principal, 6 deputy principals (known locally as HOS), the Business Manager (BM), 22 HODs, 6 administrative (non-teaching) team leaders, and the guidance officers. Each HOS has responsibilities associated with their student cohort in addition to whole-school remits related to high-quality pedagogical strategies, student wellbeing, inclusion and differentiation, Vocational Education and Training (VET), and Australian Curriculum (AC). Detailed processes, procedures and frameworks are documented across all areas of the school. Some staff

articulate a perception that executive leaders 'work in silos', commenting that this impedes a sharp focus on delivering school-wide priorities.

150 children are registered in the State Delivered Kindergarten (SDK) program. The SDK is identified in the school's strategic planning documents and is particularly referenced in both HOS and HOD action plans.

'The Story of Four Schools', written by a volunteer historian, documents the school's evolution from correspondence education in 1922 to the present day. Longer-serving members of staff speak with pride of the school's extensive history of providing a unique learning environment. A widely held commitment to providing highly engaging online learning is apparent.

## Improvement strategies

**Communicate higher levels of specificity, including precise actions and milestones, to support staff members to fully understand and commit to the school's vision of '*Excellence in virtual learning'*.**

**Sharpen and communicate explicit improvement targets for student learning and engagement, and determine school-wide mechanisms to focus attention on, and progress towards, improving LOAs.**

Collaboratively develop a school-wide understanding of engagement, and determine research-informed approaches to improve student engagement and attendance to further support active involvement and participation in lessons.

## 3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

### Findings

Members of the SLT discuss the importance of school-wide data analysis and how it effectively drives decision-making in the school. They describe processes used to examine student outcomes, including analysing academic, attendance and wellbeing data, to drive the school's current and future directions. The data plan outlines key data sets used by the staff. Leaders indicate this is a summary document to guide staff to collect data, monitor student progress, identify learning gaps, strengthen differentiation, inform next steps for teaching and learning, and ensure effective use of resources.

Leaders articulate their work in developing teacher data literacy includes sessions on using class dashboard. Some teachers identify varying levels of ability in using data. Many teachers check on student learning progress with programs including Stile and Education Perfect.

A range of data tools including TRAX, TrackEd and Compass are employed. Leaders articulate that School Online Reporting Dashboard (SORD) and OneSchool data sets do not provide the up-to-date data needed. New practices based on developments with Microsoft Power BI are being created. SLT members outline a need to establish consistent data practices across the whole school. They acknowledge that each faculty is at different stages in their use of data.

Teachers highlight the importance of establishing the best learning programs to meet student needs. They describe processes for each teacher to 'know your student'. Many teachers articulate that they analyse student outcomes at the start of the year to differentiate student support. They highlight the challenge of enrolment fluctuations during the year. Some indicate that they examine OneSchool data together with standardised tests such as PAT-M to determine performance levels to guide development of programs to meet student needs.

The SLT places high priority on tracking Year 12 outcomes. The school's highest ATARs in recent years were 99.45 (2022), 99.7 (2021), and 99.5 (2020), achievements which are celebrated by leaders. Staff proudly articulate that 100% of students attained either a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA) last year.

Data walls are displayed physically in several areas in addition to online. They are used for faculty-based discussions. In the Mathematics faculty, data walls support tracking of First Nations students' progress and outcomes. Members of the SLT indicate that this practice may be expanded in future semesters.

Some processes are in place for monitoring student performance from priority equity cohorts, including those in Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) and students with disability. Teachers comment that the data highlights success for these students who have not previously been successful in other schools.

Teachers identify 2 data cycles: case management, and data conversations. Academic and attendance data is updated weekly. Data conversations involve HODs and teachers focusing on summative assessment outcomes. Leaders indicate that case management involves guiding students to success.

Kindergarten staff discuss practices for observing, documenting and monitoring children's learning and development. Teachers use observations and the Queensland kindergarten learning guideline (QKLG) continua of learning and development to document evidence of learning and support future teaching. Documentation and observations are developed and shared between Kindergarten staff and parents to effectively communicate responsive learning experiences for children.

Analysis and use of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is included in the school's data plan. This analysis provides information regarding developmental outcomes for early years students, and supports monitoring of student development and identification of trends over time. Kindergarten learning and development data is yet to be included in the whole-school data plan and whole-school data conversations.

When available, teachers use transition statements to support planning for children's transition into Prep. Transition statements are completed for all children transitioning from the school's eKindy to Prep. Leaders are aware that Prep enrolments come from a significant number of early childhood environments across the state and make every effort to access transition statements. In 2022, 5 of the 17 students who transitioned into Prep were supported with transition statements. In 2021, 3 of 13 students were supported with transition statements. Transition statements are used by Prep teachers to support planning for children's transition into Prep. Leaders comment that staff are working to approach transitions statements in a more consistent way.

SLT members articulate that increasing attendance and engagement in online lessons is a major focus. To support this direction, leaders describe analysing data which shows the relationship between student attendance and academic achievement, in particular the correlation between A to C academic outcomes and the level of attendance and completion of work.

## Improvement strategies

**Systematically enact agreed processes for the consistent and rigorous analysis of relevant data sets at sector and faculty levels, to inform strategies that target improvement in LOAs.**

Collaboratively develop data practices that support teachers to readily 'know their students' and create responsive teaching and learning practices for the large number of students enrolling after the start of the school year.

## 3.3 A culture that promotes learning

### Findings

Staff promote positive and caring relationships in alignment with the school priority of engagement. Teachers articulate a focus on providing a safe and inclusive learning environment that promotes intellectual rigour. Leaders and teachers communicate that colleagues display a high degree of professionalism and collegiality. Teachers comment that students provide positive feedback and encouragement to their peers through online chat forums during lessons. 2022 School Opinion Survey (SOS) data shows that 94.5% of parents, 95% of students and 94.4% of staff agree with the statement, 'This is a good school'.

The Connect program has been introduced to focus on developing the wellbeing of students and to provide an avenue for pastoral care. The program provides teachers an opportunity to know their students and respond to their diverse needs. Leaders suggest that Connect supports school goals of increased student participation and engagement in learning, and involvement in the school community more broadly. Regular surveys of students and teachers provide leaders with feedback on the program. Many teachers comment that Connect is a positive initiative at the school to improve student confidence, self-esteem and mental health.

Leaders suggest that improved student attendance is one effective measure of student engagement and aligns to student learning improvement. They articulate an intention to continue to focus on improving student attendance. Teachers encourage attendance at lessons through modifying learning to align to student interests, and through valuing student voice. Other staff, including an attendance officer and deans, support teachers and families to promote and monitor student attendance.

Student clubs, carnivals, e-sports, Connect days, Y-Lead and enrichment activities support student participation and the development of the school's learning culture. A student representative council, comprising representatives from Years 4 to 12, is active at the school. The council encourages students to contribute to school operations and organise events. Online assemblies are well attended by students. Assemblies include staff and student messages, and provide opportunities for student interaction through videos, chat and live polls.

Two HODs – Pathways and Engagement – and a number of year-level dean positions have been created to help support student pathways and transitions, personal and social capability, and attendance and engagement. Deans provide tiered case management, using attendance and engagement data to target support. A youth support worker assists in linking families to other agencies.

Staff at the eKindy share information about children's learning with families through regular informal and formal messages through email and Microsoft OneNote. Parents and children are interviewed at the start of the program to build knowledge and understanding of children's interests and learning styles. Parents in remote and rural areas express the importance of the Kindergarten program in providing benefits for their child, including successful transitions into Prep. Staff indicate that eKindy parents are valued as partners in their child's learning, particularly given the virtual nature of program delivery.

Parents, carers and students participate in an induction process upon enrolment. This process outlines responsibilities, school operations and opportunities to assist in transition to the school. Some teachers and parents desire more consistent practices across faculties regarding expectations of online behaviours.

Staff comment that leaders use a range of options for communication across the school. Communications are described by teachers as regular and include a wealth of procedure information. Teachers comment that they would appreciate a review of communication processes across the school to ensure messages are delivered clearly and staff are given opportunities to fully understand decisions made by leaders. Some staff identify a need to enhance consultative practices.

Staff articulate that wellbeing is supported through a range of initiatives, including Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA), a walking group, and a social club. 2022 SOS feedback shows that 80.7% of staff agree with the statement, 'I feel that staff morale is positive at this school'. Teachers comment that the school learning culture and processes allow the delivery of a quality education to students despite the physical barrier of distance through the celebration of their diversity.

Leaders describe a continued emphasis in building consistent team culture to ensure guaranteed service delivery. Positive connections to families in alignment with the school's focus on learning engagement is a priority for leaders and teachers.

### Improvement strategy

Refine communication processes across the school to promote clarity of messaging and decisions for staff, with a focus on enhancing consultative practices.

## 3.4 Targeted use of school resources

### Findings

Leaders employ a range of strategies to target resources to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of students. They use these strategies to assist in the management of complex enrolment patterns, including high levels of student transition in and out of the school. At the time of the review, leaders identify that more than 2100 students have been accepted as new enrolments for 2023.

An annual budget is developed in consultation with school leaders and parents. Members of the SLT identify that they use a weekly Budget Overview Report (BOR) to monitor planned expenditure and undertake a formal budget review in Term 2. Staff explain that new initiatives to improve student outcomes are able to be submitted by HODs through the review process.

Executive leaders indicate that they invest approximately one-fifth of the planned $9.1m budget to increase teaching and non-teaching staff beyond the allocative model. Many staff identify that this investment in additional staffing supports career pathways within the school for teaching and non-teaching staff. They discuss the opportunities it provides for succession planning; Teacher Connect Time (TCT) to engage in planning, moderation and discussions of data; and further academic and wellbeing support for students.

Leaders articulate that teams associated with key administration functions – community and engagement, enrolments, facilities, finance, information technology and production – are established to support the operations of the school.

A synchronous model of delivery of virtual learning is timetabled across the school. Staff discuss that lessons are recorded, providing asynchronous learning opportunities for students who attend outside scheduled class times, such as international students and school-based enrolments. Some staff suggest a need to review sufficient flexibility in the delivery and timetabling of the curriculum to ensure it is reflective of the needs and skill sets of learners, such as students enrolled in senior secondary.

Some staff indicate that enrolment processes typically take 7 to 10 days and can extend to one month. Administration staff are seeking ways to become more efficient in their practices. One initiative is their implementation of Inquiry Tracker to support enrolment management. A number of administration staff involved in frontline communication with parents express a desire to further enhance efficiencies in enrolment management processes by strengthening communication with leaders to ensure decisions regarding enrolments are clearly understood.

Leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff comment that workspaces can be challenging. Staff explain that noise from multiple lessons running in the same area can sometimes be distracting. Teachers indicate that FWAs assist in addressing this challenge. Some staff suggest that additional purpose-built learning environments such as art studios, music spaces, and physical education facilities would assist their pedagogical approaches and enable further opportunities to fully engage students in their learning.

Leaders and teachers acknowledge that classes are sometimes over-enrolled, largely due to an influx of student enrolments after 'Day 20'. The executive principal identifies a need to increase the number of teaching staff to address this issue. They acknowledge that this may add to the challenges of space and noise in teaching areas.

Many staff describe the school as innovative in terms of practices and investment. They describe responsive practices such as FWA and explorations of opportunities to transition to digital archiving to minimise the footprint required for storing student records.

The eKindy program provides 15 hours of teaching per week for each student. One hour is delivered by a teacher (30 minutes in a group and 30 minutes individual tuition). The remaining 14 hours are delivered by parents. Leaders articulate that there are currently 150 children registered in this SDK, with each teacher allocated 5 students per 0.2 Full-time equivalent (FTE). The continuity of staff is prioritised to support consistent relationships with children and families. The program is delivered in a quiet, enclosed studio away from the main teaching area to support student engagement and minimise distractions. Staff discuss a focus on equity for families by delivering face-to-face 'play days' across regional areas each term. These days are highly valued by staff, parents, and students.

## Improvement strategies

Review facility use in the context of emerging challenges, maximising efficiencies to strengthen teacher pedagogy and outcomes for students.

Investigate asynchronous learning options, complementing the school's model of synchronous learning, to meet the diverse needs of enrolled students and their skill sets.

## 3.5 An expert teaching team

### Findings

SLT members articulate the importance of establishing an expert teaching team to develop and implement the most suitable programs to meet student needs. They describe a range of innovative practices to attract staff. Most members of staff praise the collegial culture and the support they receive each day in the workplace. They suggest this is one of the best aspects of working in the school.

HODs describe the challenge of attracting new teachers while enrolments continue to rise during the school year. They describe how this is even more challenging with the reduced number of available teachers. Some HODs and teachers raise the possibility that revised workforce planning may assist to address issues. SLT members outline the current detailed workforce planning, and suggest that improved communication regarding this could be enacted.

Leaders articulate that, for an expert teaching team, a shared understanding of workplace culture for teachers, teacher aides, and public servants is essential. They convey this understanding is centered around the pillars of collaboration, respect, communication, trust and integrity. A HOS articulates that all staff contributed to a workplace culture statement, with its message reinforced in whole-school communications.

Staff have negotiated FWAs to work from home 2 days per week. Teachers express their support for these arrangements, expressing that they feel acknowledged and trusted, which enhances their growth as teachers.

A detailed professional learning plan is documented. It provides a differentiated approach to professional learning to meet staff needs. Teachers readily reference an ability to access Professional Development (PD) activities.

SLT members recognise the value and importance of teachers collaborating with their colleagues. Teachers express their appreciation for designated time twice per week in TCT to work with colleagues on faculty and whole-school priorities. A clear process to quality assure the success of TCTs is yet to be developed.

SLT members articulate a goal to improve teacher capability to support the diverse learning needs of all students. Teachers express their support for continued growth in this area.

All teaching staff are involved in a lesson observation process. Teachers articulate the steps in the process. Some teachers and HODs express a lack of consistency in the way the process is implemented. Lesson observation outcomes are yet to be collated and shared to guide future growth and capability development.

All teachers participate in an Annual Performance Review (APR) process which supports them to work towards goals linked to whole-school priorities. Teaching staff identify an aspect of the teaching and learning model as a goal, ensuring a sharp pedagogy focus. This is supported by lesson observations.

Teaching loads of HODs, and perceived inequities in terms of responsibilities of curriculum and non-curriculum HODs respectively, are identified by a number of leaders and teachers as an area for further attention. Some teachers and leaders express a desire for clearer role statements to enhance consistent school-wide practice. Some teachers outline concerns with increased workloads linked to administrative aspects to support their work.

A defined induction process is established for all new teaching and non-teaching staff. Teachers praise online, just-in-time, and face-to-face sessions developed by the induction teacher. Some

teachers indicate they would like to see improved approaches in faculty induction. Beginning teachers articulate support for the beginning teacher program, which includes meetings, lesson observations and support from mentors led by the capability teacher.

Developing mutually beneficial relationships with the pre-service teacher tertiary sector is identified by some staff members as a future consideration. They envisage that the school could offer courses and then placements to preservice teachers to build beginning teacher capability in a virtual setting.

Leaders provide support to assist staff in developing key school initiatives, including the appointment of a QLearn champion to support teachers to use the new learning management platform. A group of teachers is trialling the program as an innovative project supported by leaders.

Leaders describe strengthening partnerships with other Schools of Distance Education (SDE) to provide significant opportunities to grow the capability of all staff in the delivery of the QKLG. Teachers are involved in action-research projects to explore different technologies and innovation, supported by the QLearn champion. A process to formalise the sharing of eKindy practices to increase consistency and teacher expertise has been implemented during faculty meetings. The eKindy structure has been included in the timetable to support teachers in accessing professional learning opportunities through the TCT. Parents are enrolled in QLearn courses to develop their capability to support their child in learning tasks at home.

### Improvement strategies

Collaboratively review roles and responsibilities across the school to meet emerging challenges and promote clarity and consistency of work roles.

Investigate strategic, mutually beneficial relationships with the tertiary sector to enhance preservice teacher education, with a focus on excellence in virtual learning.

## 3.6 Systematic curriculum delivery

### Findings

Leaders identify the importance of a systematic approach to curriculum delivery. A Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum overview is shared with the community through a link on the school website. It references the QKLG, the AC, QCAA syllabi, and VET training packages. Leaders describe an awareness of the requirements of the P–12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework (P-12 CARF). Teachers speak with pride regarding the array of subjects and programs provided and developed across the school to cater for learners from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Leaders and teachers acknowledge the QKLG as the learning framework that underpins the Kindergarten program and the basis for curriculum delivery. Teachers display a deep knowledge of the eKindy learning materials. Evidence of children's leaning is included in portfolios on OneNote to assist in measuring their learning and provide parents opportunity for input.

Parents are provided on-going curriculum support through USB files and OneNote. The eKindy teachers engage children through a range of learning that includes spontaneous, co-constructed, child-centred, and focused experiences using the virtual format. Children are given agency for learning through selecting from a series of choices to be covered during one-on-one learning time.

Across Prep to Year 10, 3 levels of planning are documented. Teaching staff discuss practices undertaken through TCT to review units of work and associated assessment tasks, and build their curriculum knowledge. Common templates for year/band plans and unit plans are used across the school. Some teachers and leaders comment that responsibility for developing, maintaining and reviewing units of work is often assigned to individuals. They identify an opportunity for greater collaboration to strengthen consistency and alignment prior to teaching.

Executive leaders identify a need for ensuring alignment across the 3 levels of planning and express a focus on strengthening understanding and incorporation of literacy across all learning areas. Some teachers discuss that members of the literacy team are working across cohorts (in the primary sector) and faculties (in the secondary sector) to build teacher capability in ensuring alignment of units of work, assessment tasks, and marking guides. A locally developed 'scan and assess tool' is used to support work in this area. A further aspect of their work is addressing the AC general capability of literacy.

In senior secondary, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plans (TLAP) are documented and assessment items validated and endorsed as per QCAA requirements.

A moderation framework describes the why, what, and how of the school's approach to Before After After End moderation. The framework is referenced by most leaders and teachers. Across the school, moderation practices at the After junctures are consistently discussed by staff, who indicate this mainly occurs during TCT. Some leaders and teachers describe a level of variability regarding enactment of agreed practices at the Before and End junctures. In primary, leaders acknowledge that using End moderation of a folio of work to make judgements for reporting overall LOA is a practice requiring further focus. In junior secondary, they identify a need to make full and consistent use of agreed moderation protocols to ensure teachers understand what is to be taught and what will be assessed, and to promote consideration of effective pedagogical strategies.

Some teachers and leaders express interest in engaging in external moderation activities with other schools, whether locally or other SDEs. They envisage that this will strengthen reliability of decision-making for reported LOA.

A consistent approach to timetable design is established across Prep to Year 12. Leaders discuss the intention to maintain a consistent timetable structure for both primary and secondary sectors to

maximise opportunities for teacher collaboration. Some primary teachers note that the rigid nature of the timetable can impede the flexibility normally available in a primary school setting for teachers to be responsive to the level of student engagement in a lesson. They acknowledge benefits related to increased teacher collaboration.

Work Rate Calendars (WRC) are consistently developed across the school to assist students in understanding the submission timeline requirements for draft and final summative assessment tasks. Parents are complimentary of the structural elements of the school and its curriculum design, including the WRC that assist students and home supervisors to remain organised and aware of subject requirements.

A guiding coalition has been established at the school to support familiarisation with, and planning for, Australian Curriculum Version 9 (AC V9). An AC V9 implementation plan is documented.

## Improvement strategies

**Align units to the AC across faculties and cohorts, using agreed tools and the participation of leaders, to ensure students access their full entitlement to the curriculum.**

Strengthen moderation practices across the school, with specific attention given to greater collaboration at the Before juncture, to deepen teachers' understanding of what is to be taught and assessed.

Strengthen moderation processes by externally moderating student work and folios to support consistency of teacher judgments across schools.

## 3.7 Differentiated teaching and learning

### Findings

Staff and parents comment that the school caters effectively for a diverse range of students to provide quality educational opportunities. Many staff members concur with the sentiments of one teacher who comments that the school 'offers a very unique choice for students who need it'. Leaders articulate that significant processes have been implemented to support students, particularly those from priority equity cohorts, in both social and academic areas. Teachers suggest that building confidence and self-efficacy of students, and providing educational pathways for students exhibiting specific needs such as anxiety and trauma, has led to improved student performance in learning.

Student support and intervention is led by the Inclusion and Student Support (ISS) team which comprises the HOS – Inclusion, HOD-ISS, inclusion support coordinator, differentiation teachers, and teacher aides. This team is highly valued by staff. These staff provide a range of support options, including working with students in groups or one-on-one in online break-out rooms during live lessons, direct teaching of students in 'intensive classes' for those working on a Highly Individualised Curriculum (HIC), case management of targeted students, and assisting teachers to contact home supervisors for students identified as disengaged from learning. Some teachers and leaders comment that they would value additional formal opportunities for collaborative planning and conversations about student learning. They articulate that this needs to occur prior to commencement of teaching and should involve differentiation teachers and class teachers planning for variability of learning and linking targeted support.

Teachers comment that teaching and learning practices are modified to support effective student engagement. Lessons include wellbeing surveys and online polls to check for understanding. Teachers use a range of communication devices, such as the microphone chat and private chat, to support students so they can respond to learning tasks in the manner in which they feel most comfortable. Physical activity and regular 'brain breaks' are used as strategies to support students' diverse needs, attention, and engagement. Teachers work in partnership with home supervisors in supporting differentiated teaching of students with disability. This involves providing alternatives to participation and uploading videos of student work to OneNote.

Many teachers, particularly in the secondary setting, articulate that the planning responsibility and delivery of support for students with a disability lies with ISS staff. Leaders agree that further strengthening of processes aligned to the school's priority of engagement to establish a shared ownership of staff in differentiation practices for all learners is an important next step.

Teachers highly value small class sizes in the eKindy to support an ongoing, differentiated learning model. Staff provide one-on-one, small group and specialist support to all children as well as the Play Day each term. Teachers explain a balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated learning experiences are aligned to identified aspects of the QKLG. Kindergarten staff indicate they use the QKLG continua of learning and development to plan individual children's next steps for learning.

Live virtual learning in real time is valued by eKindy teachers. Leaders acknowledge the strategic use of the online platform of virtual learning to bring quality early years learning to students may not otherwise have access. Kindergarten staff explore ways to incorporate children's emerging interests and ideas in the program. A differentiated Acknowledgement of Country incorporates photographs of each child's local area and is included at the start of each lesson to include First Nations perspectives.

Staff comment that support for high-performing students is developing. In some cases, students are on an Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP) and are assessed on achievement standards above

their enrolled year. Some senior secondary students have been linked with universities to commence studying tertiary courses.

High-level differentiation practices evoke significant appreciation from students and parents. Programs such as 'Brain Hack' allow students to meet each other face-to-face and learn about growth mindset; building healthy and unhealthy friendships; and brain neuroplasticity. Teachers articulate that they 'love the online style of teaching and learning', as it provides opportunities for a more personalised learning experience and better connections with each student. Staff comment that establishing positive relationships, getting to know each student, and making connections are consistent and effective teaching practices leading to improved learning involvement for students who may not have been otherwise able to access quality teaching. One teacher comments, 'I love the support that I can give to help students.'

## Improvement strategies

Formalise opportunities for robust collaboration between differentiation teachers and class teachers to devise responsive teaching and learning strategies that allow all students to access, participate, and progress in their learning.

Sharpen staff members' understanding of inclusive practices to foster shared ownership and accountability of outcomes for all learners.

## 3.8 Effective pedagogical practices

### Findings

Leaders are explicit regarding their desire to see high levels of student engagement through highly effective online teaching pedagogy. Many staff are committed to continuous improvement in teaching practices to meet the diverse needs of learners across different categories of enrolment. The 'Brisbane SDE Teaching and Learning Model' documents beliefs, structures and practices informing the 'how' and 'why' of effective online teaching and learning.

The model presents 6 phases for effective online learning and 10 practices that have the greatest impact on student learning. Example formats for lessons are provided for learning new concepts and skills, practicing or applying knowledge and skills, and collaborative learning before practising. Each lesson links phases of the pedagogical models to effective pedagogical practices.

Many staff are able to clearly articulate the model. They agree it provides an accurate and valuable description of the pedagogical approaches and priorities of the school. Effective pedagogical practices are encouraged and promoted by knowledgeable staff modelling practice, teachers informally watching each other work, sharing of practice in TCT and SLT meetings, and formal observations. Leaders articulate that the success of these strategies is reflected in consistency of planning, a shared language aligned to expected practice, and its use in TCT. The pedagogical approach is yet to be fully embedded by all teachers.

Many teachers express a desire to increase the engagement of students in their virtual lessons. A Hierarchy of Engagement is available for teachers across the school with responsive strategies to build and measure student engagement. Teachers express a level of variability regarding knowledge and use of these strategies. Some teachers actively seek to increase students' level of engagement using this hierarchy. A commonly understood definition of engagement, and how to effectively monitor this during lessons, is yet to be apparent.

The role of the home supervisor, and the impact they have on effective pedagogical practice, is deemed vitally important by most staff. Most teachers acknowledge that the level of support provided by home supervisors is variable, and indicate that attendance of home supervisors during learning is inconsistent. Leaders concur that promoting and enhancing the active involvement of home supervisors is warranted.

Teachers present the eKindy classroom as a learner friendly environment which supports high levels of engagement. Staff provide individual activities for Kindergarten children to access and encourage self-selection of resources to support their own learning. Teachers support inclusion and use intentional teaching strategies aligned to the QKLG to build on children's strengths, interests, and ideas. A range of pedagogical approaches are used in the online environment including hands-on learning. Staff demonstrate a strong understanding of intentional teaching practices and early years pedagogies that support and extend children's learning in the early years.

A recent process for observations of lessons has been designed to ensure consistent implementation of key elements of the teaching and learning model. An agreed observation tool has been developed. Leaders and most teachers note that observation processes could be strengthened to further improve pedagogical effectiveness.

Teachers articulate that they are well supported technically. They speak confidently of their ability to use the many platforms required to teach in a virtual environment. The implementation of QLearn and its effectiveness as a platform are highly regarded by most teachers.

Beginning, new and returning teachers express gratitude that they are supported by an induction program that focuses on ensuring their pedagogical practice aligns to the school's expectations and operations.

Feedback to students is provided by teachers during lessons, and through OneNote and emails. Parents and students express high satisfaction with the level of feedback received.

Improvement strategy

**Consolidate teachers' understanding of the Teaching and Learning Model through further capability development together with a systematic approach to observation and feedback, to foster the consistent use of high-quality pedagogical practices aligned to excellence in virtual learning.**

## 3.9 School-community partnerships

### Findings

Leaders recognise the importance of strategic partnerships and relationships. Connections with parents and families, other educational institutions, VET providers, professional organisations, representatives from Department of Education (DoE) regional and central offices, and QCAA, have been forged with a view to enhance the learning and wellbeing of the school's large and diverse student cohort.

Leaders value the eKindy program to support children and their families prior to the commencement of formal schooling to reduce the vulnerability of children aged zero to five. The program aligns with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and QKLG. The majority of eKindy students access other learning options depending on their location, such as face-to-face schooling and SDE delivered by other providers.

A school-based Quality Transitions planning document, including collaborative strategies for teachers and parents, provides a formalised transition plan for each student as they move to Prep. Teacher and leaders engage regularly with Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provider networks and schools from across Queensland to share practice and engage in PD. Leaders promote the unique opportunity the eKindy structure presents for rural and remote children to support learning equity.

Parents and caregivers are recognised as an essential part of the education process. Some collective responsibility is apparent with parents and home supervisors, with deliberate actions taken to engage them. These include regular parent information nights, parent sessions on Connect days, specific content sessions, access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) support, parental access to Class OneNote, and videos to support learning. Teachers express that increased home supervisor and student induction at the point of enrolment to orientate them to virtual learning may assist students to more quickly understand the nuances of learning in this context. Most teachers express that many home supervisors are not present during lessons which adversely affects students' engagement in lessons. Educating, encouraging, and building the confidence of home supervisors to be more active in their students' learning is considered by many to be important next step.

An Indigenous support coordinator and teacher aide are engaged to support First Nations students. These staff members work with deans and teaching staff to identify barriers to learning. Teachers and leaders acknowledge the importance of culturally safe practices to engage Indigenous students. Many staff articulate a desire to further embed First Nations perspectives within the school to support the learning and attendance of Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students. Teachers are yet to consistently identify particular strategies to differentiate teaching and learning practices for Indigenous students.

Subject offerings are provided to approximately 1300 school-based students in 200 partner state and non-state schools across Queensland. Partnerships give school-based students opportunities to access subjects, particularly in Years 11 and 12, expand students' learning options. Staff from partner schools express appreciation for the extended subject offerings and the opportunity afforded for students to catch up via the recorded lessons. Some partner school staff express a desire for greater flexibility around timetable restrictions. Staff at partner schools comment that the opportunity to enrol in a virtual subject is well received by students and considered a viable option.

Established partnerships with external Registered Training Organisations (RTO) provide students with additional programs, along with VET course offerings. School staff assist students to select

and enrol into certificate level courses, supporting them to reach their personal career goals and transition into employment.

Communication with parents and the broader community is undertaken using a range of media. A community engagement team maintains links with the wider school community to ensure all stakeholders receive courteous, timely and accurate information and service delivery. This team is a single point of contact for students and the school community and also coordinates key school events, both face-to-face and online. Parents comment that communication is excellent.

Currently, the school does not have a functioning Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) or school council. The principal is establishing alternative ways to share information with the school community and to give parents a voice regarding the operations and strategic direction of the school.

The school is a strong participant and contributor to the Queensland Schools of Distance Education Network, and the Australasian Association of Distance Education Schools.

### Improvement strategy

Investigate avenues to enhance the active involvement of home supervisors in the learning process, to maximise support for student engagement and progress.