



School Improvement Unit Report

Alger State School Executive Summary





1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Algester State School** from **18 to 21 October 2016**.

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

Garry Lacey	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Alan Whitfield	Internal reviewer, SIU
David Teale	Peer reviewer
Clare Grant	External reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	Endiandra Street, Algester
Education region:	Metropolitan Region
Year opened:	1977
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Enrolment:	969
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	2.5 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	4 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1027
Year principal appointed:	2015
Full-time equivalent staff:	55
Significant partner schools:	Calamvale Community College, St Stephen's Primary School
Significant community partnerships:	Before & After School Care Group, GoodStart Algester, Algester Lions Club, Algester Sports Club, Algester Anglican Church, Griffith University, Apple Computers
Significant school programs:	Bring Your Own Device (iPad) Classes, STEM Robotics Program, Transition Program, Algester Teacher Capacity Building Model, Student Leadership Program, Instrumental Music Program, Evidence-based Intervention Programs, Flying Squad Reading Program

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, three deputy principals, Head of Curriculum (HOC), Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), two Support Teachers – Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN), master teacher, guidance officer, 41 classroom teachers, teacher librarian, two Health and Physical Education (HPE) teachers, science teacher, music teacher, two Special Education Program (SEP) teachers, English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) teacher, Business Services Manager (BSM), Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), three administration officers, schools officer, president Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), 28 parents, 120 students and 24 teacher aides



Community and business groups:

- Parent liaison officer, Anglican minister, Algester Sports club representative, LJ Hooker real estate representative, State development executive for Apple and tuckshop convenor

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Placement officer – Griffith University and deputy principal local high school

Government and departmental representatives:

- Assistant Regional Director/Principal Supervisor

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2016	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2016
Investing for Success 2016	Strategic Plan 2013-2016
Headline Indicators (2015 release)	School Data Profile (Semester 2, 2016)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2016	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	School differentiation planners
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
School data plan	School newsletters and website
Responsible Behaviour Plan	School Opinion Survey
Curriculum, assessment and reporting overviews	



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

Staff members, parents and students express a strong sense of pride in the school and consider positive and productive relationships as central to the school's ethos and sense of community.

There is an outstanding culture of staff collegiality, based on high levels of trust, throughout the school. This is particularly apparent in the school's model of collaborative curriculum planning, which is well resourced, strategically supported and based on a distributed curriculum leadership approach across learning areas and year levels. The year level team structure is highly valued with teaching staff members working collaboratively to enhance their professional practice and the learning of students.

An explicit, coherent and sequenced curriculum, assessment and reporting plan aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC) is collaboratively developed.


This plan makes clear what and when teachers should teach and students should learn across all learning areas and the years of school. Teachers engage in collaborative planning processes with the support of the Head of Curriculum (HOC), master teacher and their year level colleagues each term. Teaching staff members have a planning day and leave this with a comprehensive range of documents enabling consistency of curriculum implementation across the school. Teachers report they appreciate the 'gift of time' to plan with their colleagues and commit to implementing curriculum units.

The leadership team drives a strong agenda for all teachers to be highly committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching practices.

The school has developed a teacher capacity building model which includes instructional coaching, beginning mentor programs, watching others work and Professional Development (PD) and training sessions. This model is complemented by a broad range of other professional learning opportunities including full day release for collaborative planning in year levels each term, a focus on building digital pedagogy for staff members, moderation sessions, case management meetings, optional Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and regular data discussions. Most teachers are readily engaging with the range of professional learning experiences offered to them.

The school has a positive community standing and is valued by the broader community.

Parents and families are recognised as integral members of the school community and as partners in student learning. School leaders seek to build relationships with businesses and community organisations that assist families and students to remain engaged with the school and learning. The establishment of links that build a positive image of the school through connections with universities, church groups and local businesses are encouraged by school leaders. Mutually beneficial relationships have grown over time that satisfy the needs of the school and community organisations.



School leaders recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning throughout the school.

They provide strong leadership by encouraging the use of research-based, high-yield practices in all classrooms. The school's pedagogical framework promotes the consistent use of the high-yield strategies including the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR), student goal setting, student feedback, and differentiated teaching and learning as key pedagogies for use by all teaching staff members. Teachers are continuing to develop their repertoires of practice with these pedagogies.

A clear vision is established for the school which is expressed and enacted through the school's motto '*Creating futures together*'.

The school's principal and staff members are committed to implementing an Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) which has two key priorities - improving learning outcomes for students in reading and spelling. Three maintenance priorities are articulated for action in the EIA which include writing, numeracy - problem solving, and digital pedagogies. The combination of these priority areas means teaching staff members are endeavouring to implement an agenda which is broad in nature. Teachers report that more time to effectively embed collaboratively agreed strategies in focus areas would assist in consolidating their practice.

The school culture is supported by the school values of *Respect for Self, Respect for Others and Respect for Place*.

School rules are developed and are linked to these values. Gotchas, success key cards, class awards on parade, and positive behaviour awards are used as incentives to recognise positive behaviour. Strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour are developed. A cohesive whole-school approach to effectively managing misbehaviour and rewarding positive behaviour ensuring a consistency of practice from all staff members is an area for continued development.

School staff members are committed to success for all students and drive a strong agenda to assess and identify the individual learning needs of students.

Differentiated teaching is viewed as a method to ensure that the needs of all learners are considered appropriately in the teaching and learning process. The school has a strong focus on intervention practices to support the learning of students with additional needs. The school caters effectively for Students with Disability (SWD) through the development of Individual Education Plans (IEP). Planning differentiated learning experiences for high achieving students to ensure they are appropriately engaged, challenged and extended in their classroom learning is yet to be fully developed.



The school has commenced its journey with Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM).

A whole-school focus is developing in the areas of higher order thinking, the use of digital pedagogies, problem solving in mathematics and investigations in science and technology. Programs such as Scratch, Lego We Do 2.0 and Ozobots are part of the school's digital pedagogy development that includes coding and robotics activities in Years 2 and 5. The promotion of a whole-school culture of inquiry and innovation, where creative exploration and independent learning are valued, is an area for continued development across the school.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Narrow and sharpen the focus of the school's improvement agenda to support classroom teachers to embed collaboratively agreed teaching strategies.

Ensure the whole-school approach for managing student behaviour enables consistent implementation of agreed strategies to support effective learning and behaviour.

Support classroom teachers in planning differentiated learning experiences for high achieving students to ensure they are appropriately engaged, challenged and extended in their classroom learning.

Promote a culture of inquiry and innovation where creative exploration and independent learning are valued.