

# Benowa State High School

## School Review Report





## Acknowledgment of Country

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





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## 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Benowa State High School** from **11 to 15 October 2021**.

During this review a team from the Council of International Schools (CIS) conducted a virtual CIS accreditation visit. A team from the International Baccalaureate (IB) also conducted a virtual IB evaluation visit.

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 implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

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

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 regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB [website](#).

### 1.1 Review team

Cameron Hodges	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Joel Buchholz	Peer reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Mediterranean Drive, Benowa	
<b>Education region:</b>	South East Region	
<b>Year levels:</b>	Year 7 to Year 12	
<b>Enrolment:</b>	1978	
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	1.9 per cent	
<b>Students with disability:</b>	<b>Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:</b>	3.9 per cent
	<b>Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:</b>	11 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	1059	
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2004	



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Executive principal, five deputy principals, two deans of students, Business Manager (BM), 12 Heads of Department (HOD), 46 teachers, two guidance officers, seven administrative officers, two Information Technology (IT) technicians, scientific operations officer, schools officer, five teacher aides, three cleaners, 118 students, 17 parents, three Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) employees – canteen and uniform store, and P&C president.

Community and business groups:

- Five school council representatives, school council chair, representative of Reconnect, representative of Youth Outreach Drug & Alcohol (YODA) – Gold Coast and representative of Top Blokes Foundation.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal of Benowa State School and principal of Bellevue Park State School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- Councillor for Division 6 City of Gold Coast, State Member for Southport and ARD.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

School pedagogical framework	Strategic Plan 2021–2024
Investing for Success 2021	School Data Profile (Semester 1 2021)
Headline Indicators (April 2021 release)	School budget overview
OneSchool	Student Code of Conduct 2021
Professional learning plan 2021	2021 Governance Model
Annual data plan 2021	School newsletters and website
School Opinion Survey 2019	Faculty Handbooks
Teaching & Learning Policy	Diversity Policy
Benowa SHS curriculum, assessment and reporting plan	Whole school approach to Differentiated Teaching & Learning
Curriculum planning documents – 3 levels & IB EE exemplars	Professional Development and Mentoring Plan (PDMP)
Communication & Decision Making Matrix	Annual Implementation Plan & School improvement targets 2021
Precision Leadership Playbooks – Reading, Writing, Numeracy, Wellbeing, Pedagogy & Curriculum, Safe & Supportive Environment	

## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

#### Domain 1. An explicit improvement agenda

**The united school leadership team articulates an unwavering commitment to driving a precise school improvement agenda, focusing on maximising student achievement through support of student wellbeing, high quality teaching and the provision of multiple pathways for all students.**

Staff members clearly articulate the specific role that each school leader plays in implementing and monitoring the school's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) and express appreciation for the support they receive in developing and implementing high quality teaching and learning. The executive leadership team utilises intentional collaboration in multiple formats to assist in delivering the outcomes of the AIP with precision. There is a strong sense of collegiality and pride amongst all staff members who consistently strive to provide every student with *'Many pathways – No limits'*.

The school has a published School Strategic Plan (SSP) outlining the four key foci of varied and engaging curriculum, fostering independent lifelong learners, knowledge and skills, and productive relationships. The plan outlines the four key school values of *'integrity, diligence, compassion and respect'*.


This SSP details actions and key performance indicators for the junior secondary and senior secondary sectors. A range of strategies and targets is also documented for the Council of International Schools (CIS), International Baccalaureate (IB), wellbeing, pastoral care and the Student Code of Conduct. The SSP was developed collaboratively with input from all stakeholders and is endorsed by the school council. The SSP outlines a range of targets for attendance and senior certification across all curriculum pathways offered.

The implementation of the SSP is supported through the 2021 AIP. Established line management practices provide consistent monitoring of strategic planning at all levels. The 2021 AIP outlines school improvement targets for National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) achievement, and Year 7 to Year 9 Level of Achievement (LOA), in addition to a range of staff, student and parent questions from the annual School Opinion Survey (SOS). Individual Heads of Department (HOD) develop, implement and monitor faculty action plans containing faculty-specific strategies to support implementation of the AIP.

#### Domain 5. An expert teaching team

**A strong sense of collegial trust and support underpins the development of a dedicated and professional teaching team.**

The executive principal plays a visible and central role in ensuring that agreed pedagogical practices are implemented across the school. Leadership of key aspects of the school's pedagogical approach is distributed to other senior leaders, with each deputy principal



leading the implementation of signature pedagogical practices in strategic priorities across writing, reading, numeracy and wellbeing. Inquiry cycles built on a model of precision leadership are utilised by school leaders to enhance pedagogical practice across these strategic priorities.

The school has published a teaching and learning policy and has a well-documented and embedded approach to teacher capability development and intentional collaboration.

The school uses professional learning days at the start of each school year to provide teaching staff with an overview of agreed signature pedagogical practices. A clearly delineated schedule of weekly meetings makes provision for regular whole-of-staff and department-based opportunities for Professional Development (PD) and professional dialogue regarding planning, moderation and discussions focused on student outcomes and identifying improvement strategies. Regular voluntary PD sessions provide further opportunities for teachers to both share their expertise and learn from colleagues. Staff members indicate a willingness to engage in activities to support their professional growth and the continuous improvement of their skills.

Teachers' implementation of the school's agreed pedagogical practices is supported through extensive resources in a centralised repository accessed via SharePoint. Resources include playbooks and vignettes of practice including a newly established QR code initiative. Many teachers comment positively on the collegiate support provided by peers and the comprehensive materials provided by the school to support their mastery of agreed pedagogical practices. An 'Every Lesson, Every Teacher, Every Day' document is frequently referenced by teachers and outlines clear expectations for consistent classroom practice.

Staff members express a high level of support for the strategy employed by school leaders in staging the implementation of the New Art and Science of Teaching<sup>1</sup> (NASOT) over several years. Teachers and school leaders reflect that this has enabled a deeper and more authentic embedding of NASOT elements into teacher practice. Some teachers and school leaders identify benefits in more systematically and comprehensively revisiting elements of NASOT, particularly for teachers who have joined the school subsequent to the initial introduction of specific NASOT elements.

Teachers participate in an Annual Performance Review (APR) process and develop Professional Development and Mentoring Plans (PDMP). As part of the PDMP process, teachers' classroom practice is observed and individualised feedback is provided. The development and enactment of teachers' PDMPs are monitored, supported and reviewed by school leaders. School leaders comment positively on the distributed responsibility for PDMPs across school leaders, including HODs, deans, deputy principals and the executive principal. Some staff members identify variability in the degree to which teachers engage authentically with the PDMP process. Most teachers articulate valuing the opportunity to reflect on and develop their professional practice. Some teachers and school leaders identify the opportunity to incorporate coaching as an additional mechanism for supporting teachers in further enhancing their teaching practice and attaining the goals set in their PDMPs.

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<sup>1</sup> Marzano, R. J. (2017). *The new art and science of teaching*. Solution Tree Press.





Beginning teachers are supported through an induction program with the allocation of a trained mentor. Teachers acknowledge the program and the support provided in developing their understanding of the school's expectations and approaches in relation to pedagogy. Staff members' understanding of induction processes varies, including for experienced teachers new to the school. Some HODs are yet to be clear as to what topics are covered in whole-of-school induction processes, as distinct from the support provided for new and beginning teachers at a faculty level. Staff members identify the opportunity to further align whole-of-school and faculty-specific induction processes.

The school provides a structured program to support the development of aspiring leaders and plays a lead role in supporting aspiring leaders across the local cluster of schools.

## **Domain 2. Analysis and discussion of data**

**The analysis, monitoring and sharing of whole-school, cohort and individual student data to inform school improvement priorities and strategic initiatives is an established practice.**

The school leadership team places a high priority on the systematic collection of data including academic, attendance, behaviour and staff/student wellbeing data as outlined in the school's annual data plan.

The academic progress and wellbeing of all students are monitored through their allocated pastoral care house and in fortnightly Student Welfare Academic Progress (SWAP) meetings where relevant support and intervention are prioritised for identified students.

Individual academic conferencing from school leaders plays an important role towards students attaining their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), obtaining their IB diploma and completing their vocational education qualifications. Some students express appreciation for the support provided through academic conferencing that has led to a more achievable and appropriate pathway.

The academic progress of students with disability is tracked and monitored by an assigned case manager. Special Education Program (SEP) teachers identify the monitoring of students on an Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP) or completing the Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA), in addition to the progress of students with disability, as key responsibilities.

## **Domain 3. A culture that promotes learning**

**A high priority is afforded to creating and sustaining a supportive and welcoming culture that embraces diversity and student voice.**

The school exudes a positive, welcoming and caring tone for staff and students. Staff members, students and parents express pride in the school and its diverse and inclusive culture. Students universally articulate that teaching and support staff members care about them and are highly supportive of their learning needs and aspirations. Students express valuing the opportunity to interact, learn and collaborate with like-minded peers through the school's extensive excellence programs whilst also being part of a diverse and vibrant



broader school community. Parents express a high level of satisfaction with, and confidence in, the school.

Classrooms are engaged, orderly and focused environments for learning. The school has a documented Student Code of Conduct. The school's values are utilised to establish and maintain a clear foundation for respectful behaviours and interactions, and a positive school culture. A philosophy of restorative practice is embedded in key aspects of the school's approach to supporting positive student behaviour.

Through a workplace reform the school has invested in two additional deputy principal-level dean of students roles to support a sustainable and responsive approach to the maintenance of a positive and supportive learning environment. School staff members are strongly supportive of the positive impact of these roles.

School leaders and staff members place a high priority on the promotion and development of student wellbeing. The school has implemented a vertical house structure to foster an enhanced sense of belonging and connection amongst students. Heads of house actively monitor the attendance and engagement of students. Student attendance rates are above the state average and have been steadily increasing each year. Parents indicate strong satisfaction with the manner in which the house structure ensures that students are known, cared for and supported. The school has undertaken a comprehensive and systematic review of the pastoral care system to evaluate the impact of the revised structure and to identify opportunities for further refinement. The review process has drawn on a range of data and feedback mechanisms from students.

Student voice is used powerfully, systematically and authentically to inform the development and review of school policies and programs. Students engage in a wide range of leadership and extracurricular opportunities, and highly value the recent and ongoing expansion of the school's clubs program. Students additionally provide support to fellow students through a well-established peer support program.

The school has clearly defined processes for referral to an extensive student support services team. School leaders have worked proactively with external partners to expand the range of support services available to students.

The SWAP process is utilised to identify and monitor students requiring additional support and informs a systematic case management approach implemented by a range of wellbeing and student support staff. The school has implemented a responsive approach to external agency support for identified students, with a range of partnerships providing targeted support across junior and senior secondary, and male and female students.

A weekly Personal Development Program (PDP) lesson is used to deliver a structured and developmentally sequenced wellbeing curriculum. Most teachers speak positively of the value and impact of the PDP. Many teachers additionally identify the need to strengthen student engagement with the program. Students' perceptions of the impact and level of engagement with the PDP vary. Student leaders articulate valuing the opportunity for input into the selection of topics within the program. School leaders identify the need to further refine the PDP.



The school's diverse range of interconnected programs and initiatives for supporting student wellbeing and engagement is yet to be integrated into a documented framework. Some staff members and school leaders identify the consolidation of these elements into an overarching whole-of-school wellbeing framework as an enabler for embedding a systematic, coordinated and sustainable approach to student wellbeing.

## **Domain 8. Effective pedagogical practices**

### **Effective teaching is informed by an evidence-based, contextualised, and clearly articulated approach to pedagogical practice.**

School leaders recognise the central role of highly effective teaching in the enhancement of student learning. A strong focus on the use of evidence-based pedagogical practice is apparent across the school. The school's approach to teaching and learning is aligned to NASOT, alongside locally identified signature practices in relation to reading, writing and numeracy.

Teachers consistently demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the school's pedagogical approach and related expectations for teaching practice. Teachers consistently and explicitly reference the elements of the school's agreed practices in professional reflection and capability development processes.

The school's signature pedagogical practices include Eagle and Wolf, Cornell Note Taking, Collins Writing Program and the school-developed See-Investigate-Model (SIM) approach to numeracy. These strategies are embedded in teacher planning and some are supported by artefacts in classrooms. Students express strong knowledge and frequent utilisation of most of these strategies. Knowledge in relation to SIM varies and students frequently refer to the Collins Writing Program as 'OESC'. Teachers comment that the use of most of these strategies is embedded in practice across the school, with some teachers identifying stronger and more meaningful alignment between particular strategies and different curriculum areas. Curriculum departments utilise their own contextualised unit planning templates that each ensure the intended curriculum is explicitly aligned to the school's agreed pedagogical practices.

School leaders utilise a systematic approach to walkthroughs to monitor and provide feedback to teachers regarding the consistency, extent and quality of implementation of signature practices. The involvement of HODs in these walkthrough processes is continuing to evolve.

Additional and clearly defined pedagogical approaches are used within specific specialised areas of the school's extensive and differentiated curriculum offerings.

Direct Instruction (DI) is utilised to support the enhancement of literacy and numeracy skills for identified students in the school's intervention programs. School leaders identify comprehensive processes for monitoring the positive impact of the DI model including weekly reports to an external coach. The Steiner method is utilised within the school's specialist Waldorf Excellence Program. Within the school's IB Diploma Program (IBDP), teachers draw on the IB Approaches to Teaching (ATT) and Approaches to Learning (ATL).



Most teachers indicate that ATT and ATL are yet to influence broader pedagogical practices beyond the IBDP.

The school's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program is embedded across all year levels, supporting the utilisation of digital resources and learning tools across all curriculum areas. Some students and teachers identify opportunities to maximise the impact of the BYOD program through the use of more varied digital pedagogical practices. Some teachers additionally identify the variable level of students' Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills as a challenge to the effective utilisation of ICTs in the classroom. The identification and incorporation of signature digital pedagogical practices into the school's pedagogical approach are yet to be developed.

### **Domain 6. Systematic curriculum delivery**

**A diverse range of curriculum offerings supports the full range of students across Year 7 to Year 12. The school's curriculum offerings reflect the school vision of '*Many pathways – No limits*'.**


The school has a sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that supports consistent teaching and learning expectations and provides a reference for monitoring learning across the year levels. The school website provides an extensive outline for parents and the wider community of the scope of curriculum offerings including the school's extensive suite of excellence programs. Teachers express appreciation of the PD opportunities that they have access to in relation to the delivery of specific curriculum programs, in particular the implementation of the IBDP.

Each faculty at the school has a rigorous approach to curriculum planning to ensure teaching and learning is systematically aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC), Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) senior syllabuses, IB courses and/or Vocational Education and Training (VET) certificates.

In Years 7 to 10, three levels of curriculum plans are developed and include a whole-school curriculum plan, year or band level plans and unit plans. Unit plans are developed at a faculty level and all contain agreed whole-school elements and reference to agreed school-wide pedagogical practices. Cross-curriculum priorities form a component of the school's faculty unit plans and some aspects are delivered through PDPs.

There is a collaborative approach to curriculum planning across the school that ensures the curriculum meets all systemic requirements, whilst at the same time being adapted to meet the learning needs of students and of the local school context. Unit planning at a local level ensures a locally relevant curriculum is delivered in alignment with the various pedagogical approaches including the Academic French Immersion Program (AFIP) and Waldorf Steiner.

The school has a published school moderation framework. All faculties engage in some moderation of student work in Years 7 to 12. HODs and teachers express that the moderation processes enacted are faculty-specific with common elements across the school. Consistent participation in a program of external moderation with other schools is yet to occur. Some staff members express a willingness to engage in external moderation of the



AC across Years 1 to 10. Some teachers express valuing opportunities to engage with other schools undertaking similar curriculum experiences in order to check for consistency of judgement.

Formalised reporting to parents is provided twice a year and is supported with parent teacher interviews. Students express that teachers provide ongoing quality feedback in relation to their progress within their individual subject selection.

#### **Domain 4. Targeted use of school resources**

##### **The school leadership team prioritises the learning needs of students through the targeted allocation of human, financial and physical resources.**

The school has strategically recruited 'second career' teachers across a range of industry backgrounds. Staff members express that access to industry standard knowledge enhances their instruction and that of their peers.

The school's budget is developed collaboratively by the principal, Business Manager (BM) and HODs. Resource allocations reflect a needs-based approach to support the educational outcomes and wellbeing of all students. There are established processes to monitor the school and faculty budgets throughout the year. The school's bank balance at the time of the review is \$1 791 558. Staff members express that the school provides appropriate resourcing to support teaching and learning including the provision of additional staffing.

The school utilises Investing for Success (I4S) funding to support key evidence-based intervention programs in literacy and numeracy including additional teaching staff and resources. These programs are aligned to the school's AIP and SSP, and the impact on student achievement is reviewed regularly.

The school has developed a School Strategic Infrastructure Plan (SSIP) that prioritises major facility refurbishments, enhancements and identified additional specialist teaching and learning spaces to cater for the diverse school enrolment. School leaders and the school community are actively seeking external support to implement the school's SSIP and enhance the school's facilities.

The school has recently implemented the Compass software package that has streamlined internal school and parent communication with positive feedback from staff members, students and some parents.

The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) is active in supporting the school. The main source of income for the P&C is the canteen and the uniform store. The P&C has funded a number of significant facility projects including full air conditioning of all classrooms and has commenced redevelopment of the school's canteen. The P&C supports a number of key student wellbeing initiatives including the provision of a school chaplaincy program.



## **Domain 7. Differentiated teaching and learning**

**School leaders and teachers articulate the belief that although students may be at different stages of their learning and progressing at different rates, they are able to all be successful learners with tailored intervention.**

The school has a number of structural differentiation and gifted and talented programs to support and accelerate student learning across year levels. Parents and students praise the quality of the school's excellence programs including AFIP, dance, music, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Waldorf Steiner and sports, with all programs attracting enrolment interest from within and outside the school's catchment. Intense Focus lessons, the Study Centre Tutoring Program and the evidence-based DI program provide tailored intervention including the development of key literacy and numeracy skills for students in junior secondary.

The school has a published 2021 Four-Tiered Differentiation/Intervention strategy that outlines the range of interventions available to support and extend the full range of students. Staff members are able to articulate the varied options to support students and key programs available. Teachers express a willingness to engage in differentiated PD on specific strategies to support students with diverse learning needs across the school.

A documented process to collect evidence, consult with parents and develop ICPs to assist students in accessing the appropriate curriculum level for their abilities is apparent. These plans are developed and monitored by allocated case managers in consultation with parents and recorded on OneSchool. Currently, 30 students are accessing the curriculum via an ICP either partially or below year level. The school currently has 16 students accessing their curriculum via an ICP above level in their English studies.

Allocated case managers provide support to class teachers in the development of differentiation strategies and rigorous monitoring of students' progress against Personalised Learning Plans (PLP), ICPs or completion of the QCIA. There are currently seven students across Years 11 and 12 completing their QCIA. Parents and students express appreciation of the range of tailored support programs provided, and the opportunity to contribute to decision making regarding the most appropriate intervention. A range of specialist intervention and transition programs is offered for the full range of students requiring additional support.

## **Domain 9. School-community partnerships**

**An extensive range of educational, industry and community partnerships is utilised to enhance students' learning and wellbeing.**

Parents, students and community partners overwhelmingly communicate positive support for the school, staff members and school leaders. They articulate appreciation for the school's receptive, open and welcoming tone and the varied pathways for all learners. Parents and students universally believe that the school authentically lives out its mantra of '*Many pathways – No limits*' through the diverse opportunities and responsive support provided to students.



The school has established a productive partnership with the P&C. The P&C operates the school's canteen and uniform store and supports projects and initiatives to enhance the learning environment for students. The school council provides a mechanism for parent and student input in relation to the school's strategic direction and planning. The school council identifies an important function in monitoring the school's progress and impact in enacting its mission. The school council chair is actively engaged in the school's STEM program and has assisted in strengthening partnerships with Griffith University.

The school has an extensive enrolment from local state and primary schools with a significant out-of-catchment enrolment. Principals of local state schools within the Benowa cluster appreciate the support provided by the school in wellbeing initiatives and transitioning students with complex needs. Some local principals describe the school as the school of choice for their parent communities. The recently developed cluster action plan is viewed as a proactive step in developing more consistent transition practices across all cluster schools.

The school's extensive excellence programs, extensive curriculum offerings and engaging educational experiences are supported by a broad range of ongoing community and industry partnerships. A range of partnerships support the school's wellbeing programs, VET courses, curricular programs and extracurricular offerings, providing access to valuable experiences, support and resources beyond the school.

Significant partnerships are established with Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (GCIT) and a range of private Registered Training Organisations (RTO), coupled with the school's own RTO status to deliver an extensive range of VET offerings ranging from Certificate II level courses to a number of diploma-level programs. Students and parents express appreciation for the variety of programs available and the multiple modes of delivery. At the time of the review 112 students are involved in School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SATs) with employers and trainers from across the Gold Coast.

Staff articulate the value and impact of a range of embedded partnerships with external agencies in supporting student wellbeing and engagement. These include partnerships with specialist programs delivered by Youth Outreach Drug & Alcohol (YODA), Reconnect, Top Blokes Foundation, Chase the Sun, Wesley Mission Queensland and innovative partnerships with Griffith University and Bond University to provide additional psychological and counselling support. Many of these partners speak highly of the systematic and responsive manner in which the school utilises targeted programs to support students.

Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of key partnerships occur within the relevant departments and program areas, drawing on analysis of student outcomes and consideration of student feedback.

The school's focus on global citizenship and internationalism is supported by active partnerships with CIS and the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO).



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Collaboratively develop a whole-of-school wellbeing framework to enhance a systematic, coordinated and sustainable approach across the school's extensive wellbeing programs and initiatives.

Collaboratively identify signature digital pedagogical practices and underpinning student ICT skills to be incorporated systematically into the school's agreed pedagogical approach.

Review the current moderation framework with consideration for the inclusion of external moderation opportunities for AC programs from Years 1 to 10.

Review and monitor the SSIP to maximise potential facility enhancements.