

Charters Towers School of Distance Education

Executive Summary





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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 **Charters Towers School of Distance Education** from **19 to 22 October 2020**.

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

Wayne Troyahn	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Paul Pickering	Peer reviewer
Taylor Haley	Peer reviewer
Trevor Gordon	External reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	Brisk Street, Millchester	
Education region:	North Queensland Region	
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12	
Enrolment:	1368.3 – Full-time equivalent (FTE) including: 940 – full-time 1616 – part-time	
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	17.6 per cent	
Students with disability:	Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:	12 per cent
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:	23.7 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	973	
Year principal appointed:	1989	



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, four deputy principals, nine Heads of Department (HOD), Head of Special Education Services (HOSSES), 60 teachers, four teachers for Flexible Learning Initiatives Queensland (FLIQ), two guidance officers, truancy officer, two teacher aides, five front office staff, three support office staff, schools officer, two cleaners, school council chair, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, Parent Liaison Officer (PLO), 12 parents, two student council members, two members of student leader group and 11 students.

Community and business groups:

- Partners in Learning.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal Charters Towers State High School, and deputy principal and head of Dalrymple Trade Training Centre (TTC).

Government and departmental representatives:

- Mayor Charters Towers Regional Council and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2020	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2020
Investing for Success 2020	Strategic Plan 2020-2023
Headline Indicators (May 2020 release)	School Data Profile (Semester 1 2020)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2020	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	Capabilities Framework
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
School Opinion Survey 2019	Student Code of Conduct
School newsletters, Facebook page and website	



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

Parents, outside agencies and community members express a high level of satisfaction with the school and the high level of care and support provided to students.

Community partners speak positively regarding the school and its well-established culture. They report strong relationships with the school with an openness and willingness to work in partnership. A positive image and reputation of the school exist amongst the community across geographically isolated learners, itinerant learners, learners with medical conditions, youth disengaged from formal education, adults with limited literacy and numeracy capabilities, and adults seeking prerequisites for work or tertiary pathways. Underpinning this is significant support and investment in building the capacity of home and school-based tutors as partners in delivering successful student outcomes.

Beginning teachers and teachers new to the school are supported by a comprehensive induction program.

The teaching staff of the school includes teachers who are experts in their fields and who have developed a set of specific skills required to be highly successful teachers in distance education. Teachers new to the school highly value the support that these teachers provide.

The school's purpose is to *'provide multiple pathways for, and to work with, students to become productive citizens of the world'*.

The background of students has changed over recent years with many students now coming to the school with medical challenges and/or after becoming disengaged with learning in mainstream schools. Strategies aimed at reengaging students include building stronger relationship between teachers and students, and all classes in Year 7 to Year 9 have just two teachers. Disengagement remains a concern for the school with significant numbers of students in Year 7 to Year 10 not returning sufficient assessment to gain a rating.

Student wellbeing support, for the significantly diverse cohort of students, forms a priority for the school leadership team.

The aligned organisational processes and systems related to academic teaching and learning continue to evolve within the context of rapidly expanding enrolments and commitment to systemic directions and initiatives. To meet this need the school is continually seeking to refine, align and redesign policies, practices and programs to identify and address student needs and improve outcomes. Some staff members articulate, and a range of school and systemic data supports, a need to consider a realignment of resources to meet the changing needs, varying demographic and the significant growth in the junior secondary area.



The school purpose is clearly articulated by both the school and stakeholders.

Meaningful relationships between students, parents, home tutors and teachers are a key element in the character of the school. Parents and home tutors indicate that communication is predominantly effective, timely and responsive to their needs. The strong focus on ensuring that families are valued as partners in student learning is embedded with a high degree of support for the home tutoring partnership between parents and teachers. There is celebration by all stakeholders regarding the Mini School and Outreach program. Parents, staff and school leaders indicate further investigation into field services to the outlying geographical locations of large enrolment areas should be investigated.

The leadership team and staff articulate their belief that all students, in the widely diverse student body, will succeed in their learning.

The school principal has led the collaborative development of clear and consistent strategic planning that is communicated to the school community. The principal has led the collaborative development of an Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) aligned to the strategic plan. School leaders identify that target setting is challenging in a School of Distance Education (SDE) if based on whole-cohort outcome statements. Teaching staff express support for school targets and the narrowed focus that they provide. Some teachers articulate they are yet to be certain regarding procedures for determining the key school targets.

The leadership team understands and prioritises the importance of developing the capability of teachers to improve student learning.

All staff members demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm to improving student learning outcomes. The school is experiencing strong enrolment growth from students that are disengaged from learning. A significant number of these students have been diagnosed with mental health challenges. Teachers comment that Professional Development (PD) focused on skilling staff to enhance their support for these students would be beneficial.

The leadership team articulates the belief that the use of reliable student data is essential for supporting student learning.

The school has a Data and Assessment Schedule published in the school's curriculum plan. The school has a documented process for reviews of academic outcomes data in a moderation process conducted each week. Some teachers praise the outcomes of the moderation process to determine new directions for learning. This work is led by the Heads of Department (HOD) and is designed to support consistent practice across all areas of the school.

Staff members are committed to the success of all students and they express a belief that every student can learn and achieve, although they may progress at different rates.

Teaching staff outline an awareness of the complex challenges some students face in order to engage effectively in learning. The leadership team, parents and school staff describe the wide diversity in the school's student body. Many students have special programs with



reasonable adjustments based on a medical recommendation to support their learning. Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) programs, an internationally recognised approach purchased by the school, are provided for students with disability. Teachers and the wider community speak highly of the Flexible Learning Initiatives Queensland (FLIQ) program. In this approach some students are provided with programs to assist them to re-engage in their learning at Pathways Centres and detention centres in Queensland.

School leaders are explicit regarding their desire to see effective teaching occurring throughout the school.

School leaders have worked together to design and develop a well-researched pedagogical framework unique to the school that guides teaching practices and supports student engagement across the school. Teachers describe how they adopt a range of pedagogy guided by the research to support distance learning and online learning.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop a systematic and embedded whole of school focus on engagement that includes teachers sharing engaging curriculum and documenting successful engagement teaching strategies into units of work and Independent Learning Materials (ILM).

Generate a solution that meets the changing needs, varying demographic and the significant growth in the junior secondary area.

Review the current field services program and develop greater coverage of support for the wider school community.

Collaboratively review AIP targets and develop new measurable outcomes, with targets, timelines and checkpoints for monitoring.

Implement PD for teachers focused on strategies to support students with mental health challenges.