

# Mount Isa School of the Air

## 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 **Mount Isa School of the Air** from **7 to 9 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)
Robert Van den Heuvel	Peer reviewer
Jo Diessel	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Abel Smith Parade, Pioneer	
<b>Education region:</b>	North Queensland Region	
<b>Year levels:</b>	eKindy to Year 10	
<b>Enrolment:</b>	164	
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	11 per cent	
<b>Students with disability:</b>	<b>Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:</b>	2.6 per cent
	<b>Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:</b>	7 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	999	
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2020	



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, deputy principal, two Heads of Department (HOD), one Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), two Support Teachers Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN), 17 teachers, Business Manager (BM), field team representative, guidance officer, three teacher aides, two administration officers, community wellbeing officer, technical officer, 12 home tutors/parents, five governesses ('govies'), three student council members, 13 students, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) treasurer and secretary.

Community and business groups:

- Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA), ICPA Sports for Bush Kids (SFBK) and Outback Futures.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal Charleville School of Distance Education (SDE) and spokesperson for Western Alliance (WA), principal Longreach SDE and lead principal Mount Isa Centre for Learning and Wellbeing (CLAW).

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2020	Priority Areas 2017 - 2020
Investing for Success 2020	Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020
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	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
School Opinion Surveys	School newsletters, Facebook and website
Inquiry Cycle Sample Documents	School data plan
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

**A strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support is apparent amongst teachers and school leaders.**

The school is committed to ensuring parents, home tutors, and governesses ('govies') are partners in the teaching process. The tone of the school reflects a commitment to purposeful, successful learning. The school's physical environment is well maintained and well resourced.

**The school places a high priority on student, family, home tutor, govie and school staff wellbeing.**

The 'Mount Isa School of the Air (MISOTA) Wellbeing Framework' has been finalised through a process of community consultation. The framework incorporates student and staff wellbeing and includes parent and community engagement. A strong alliance is developed with Outback Futures that provides mental and allied health and wellbeing services through a multi-team approach to rural and remote Queenslanders. Parents and staff speak highly of the support provided from this partnership.

**The school is undertaking a range of strategies to respond to changes in the online technology platform to support on-air lessons and activities.**

Teaching staff are utilising Class Notebook and other strategies to address these changes. The school is seeking advice and undertaking revisions to curriculum design and lesson formats to ensure the best use of these platforms. Stakeholders appreciate the efforts undertaken by the school within the changed environment.

**School staff work collaboratively to develop an explicit and formalised strategic planning process setting targets for priorities.**

School leaders document focus areas and targets in an improvement agenda referred to as the 'blue football'. Targets align with Annual Improvement Plan (AIP) priority areas. Targets are based on a review of baseline data in addition to annual reviews, to determine whether the work regarding pedagogical practice and developing an assessment literate school community is providing the desired outcomes. Some staff and some members of the wider school community indicate that they would appreciate key focus areas to be more explicitly articulated, with a narrowed number of areas to guide school direction.

**The school acknowledges the importance of implementing an effective distance education curriculum aligned to all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum (AC).**

The school is currently deepening the three levels of planning to support the consistent teaching and learning delivery of the AC across year levels. This process involves the school working closely with other distance education providers and curriculum experts from the Department of Education (DoE). All staff outline that much work is being completed to





rewrite support materials for units in a range of subjects moving from version 7.5 to version 8 of the AC. School leaders and teachers articulate the importance of this work.

**The school is committed to developing an expert teaching team as central to improving student outcomes.**

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are utilised to further staff knowledge of educational research. This year staff have reviewed readings focused on the work of Lyn Sharratt<sup>1</sup> to deepen their understanding of teaching and learning. This process involved whole-group examination of research articles and provided opportunities for teachers and reading teacher aides to respond to this new knowledge. Some staff members express keen interest to extend this practice by sharing ideas and strategies across year levels to build school-wide knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogy.

**The school leadership team recognises that highly effective teaching strategies are the key to supporting student learning.**

Staff are united and committed to continuous improvement of teaching practices that meet the needs of students accessing distance education. The school provides Professional Development (PD) opportunities to build teacher capability that includes mentoring for beginning teachers and co-planning/co-teaching sessions open to all teachers. The tracking and monitoring of teacher involvement and outcomes is developing. Some teaching staff indicate they are interested in participating in coaching and modelling sessions. Teachers express their appreciation of the quality opportunities that are provided by curriculum leaders.

**School leaders and teachers express a belief that all students will succeed in their learning.**

School staff promote the use of differentiated teaching as a strategy to ensure students are engaged and learning successfully. Teachers identify and implement differentiated strategies and adjustments for whole-class teaching. The level of detail and use of high-yield differentiation strategies provided by teachers in planning for, and incorporating differentiation strategies in their teaching for students requiring more focused and intensive support levels are developing.

**The school leadership team has prioritised the learning needs of students through targeted allocation of human and physical resources.**

School leaders place priority on understanding and addressing the needs of students in a school whereby students come from a wide range of geographical locations. The analysis of systemic and school data informs the allocation of resources to address priority areas for school improvement. The principal identifies innovative staffing practices to meet student

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<sup>1</sup> Sharratt, L. (2019). Sharratt Educational Services (SEG Inc.). Retrieved from <https://www.lynsharratt.com/>



needs. Teachers speak positively regarding the planning time provided in approaches organised by the leadership team.

**Staff express a common belief that the appropriate use of student data is essential to support improvements in learning for all students.**

Staff identify the importance of an assessment literate community. School leaders employ an inquiry planning approach to address this area. Data walls are visible in the school.

Teachers and school leaders outline the discussions held to review data and develop the best way to support each student's development. Teaching staff praise the use of the data wall. School decisions are based on data discussions.

**The school strategically partners with parents and families, other education institutions, local businesses and community organisations.**

The school is a strong participant and contributor to the three Schools of Distance Education (SDE) alliances across Queensland. The Western Alliance (WA) has enabled the school to provide extended secondary schooling options for its students by strategically sharing resources and teacher expertise. Long-standing partnerships with the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA), Outback Futures, Centre of Learning and Wellbeing (CLAW) and McKinlay Shire Council are viewed as essential. Community partners speak positively of their interactions with the school leadership team and staff. These partnerships and the close relationships between the school and homes are a celebrated feature of the school.





## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Review the school improvement agenda as shown in the blue football and make changes where required to clarify and sharpen the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA).

Review and ensure coverage of the AC for all banded and non-banded learning areas including online and offline support materials for students and home tutors.

Complement year level PLCs with vertical teams that analyse and align curriculum expectations, pedagogical practices and differentiation.

Deepen Quality Assurance (QA), confidence and rigour of key pedagogical practices across the school through further promotion of peer observations, coaching and modelling.

Build teacher capability in best practice high-yield differentiation practices to meet the needs of all students including students with diverse and complex learning needs.