

# Merrimac State School

## 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 **Merrimac State School** from **15 to 17 March 2022**.

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

Keith Graham	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Louise Wilkinson	Internal reviewer
David Hinton	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Indigenous land name:</b>	Yugambah
<b>Location:</b>	Boowaggan Road Merrimac
<b>Education region:</b>	South East Region
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 6
<b>Enrolment:</b>	725
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	4 per cent
<b>Students with disability percentage:</b>	20.1 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	1022
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2021 – permanent



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, three deputy principals, Head of Inclusive Learning (HOIL), Business Manager (BM), 23 teachers, 12 teacher aides, guidance officer, grounds officer, administration officer, three cleaners, 55 students, seven Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) members and 26 parents.

Community and business groups:

- Two directors from Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) – Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) provider and principal of Gold Coast Reality.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Director of Learning Avenues Early Education Centre, principal of Merrimac State High School and principal of Robina State High School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State Member for Mudgeeraba and ARD.



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

**The school is defined by positive and caring relationships between students, staff and parents, creating a welcoming school environment.**

A great sense of team and a strong level of professional commitment by school staff members are apparent. The school is known for value adding to students and making a difference to their lives. Parents articulate staff members are welcoming, approachable, supportive and demonstrate care and concern for students.

**Parents and families are viewed by the school as integral members of the school community.**

Parents and families are offered opportunities to be involved in a range of events designed to enhance their understanding of their child's education and to celebrate their successes. The school website, Facebook page, newsletter and year level newsletters promote student achievements and provide information to parents regarding the current school focus areas and upcoming special events.

**The school strives to have every student feel valued and safe, so that they are able to learn and achieve.**

The school leadership team is driving the school's expectation that every student should feel valued and safe, so they are able to learn and achieve. This expectation is articulated by parents, staff members and students. It is reflected in the school's vision statement and statement of purpose. Students, parents, staff, and community members have a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school, with many having an intergenerational connection.

**The leadership team and staff are united in a commitment to improve the outcomes for all students.**

Staff and school leaders proudly articulate that the school welcomes all students with a caring and nurturing culture. Parents speak highly of the school and its staff. The school expresses a commitment to the core objective of improving learning outcomes for all students and uses data to inform learning practice. School leaders acknowledge that the next step is to develop precise class and year level targets for student learning outcomes in writing. It is envisioned that these targets will provide a narrow focus for informing future teaching and learning, and opportunities for evaluating the impact of the improvement agenda and a process for tracking identified and priority students.



**School leaders and staff members express the belief that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning.**

Staff members describe a range of understanding, experience in, and use of a range of pedagogical approaches. School leaders indicate a desire to dedicate a sharper focus on enhancing student academic outcomes through the process of articulating expected pedagogical practices in the teaching of writing within the Australian Curriculum (AC). To develop a consistent pedagogical approach to writing, school leaders acknowledge the need to collaboratively identify, document and communicate the school's key Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) pedagogical approaches to define what good writing pedagogy looks like and the signature practices to be implemented.

**Student wellbeing is viewed as an intricate component of academic success.**

Teaching staff present their classrooms as inviting places in which to learn. Artefacts to support student learning and displays of student work are apparent in classrooms. Classrooms are orderly, with most students readily engaging in the learning process. Students articulate enjoying school and express the belief that teachers care for them. The school is currently revising its approach to Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL). The school has shifted the focus from the behavioural levels system to the minor and major behaviours platform focused on positive behaviours. Most staff acknowledge that this shift in focus is in a transitional phase and indicate it requires further communication regarding ensuring clarity in relation to procedures and systems of support.

**Staff consider inclusion at the school as 'everyone's business'.**

Parents articulate appreciating how the school constantly seeks ways to best respond to the needs of students. Inclusion staff are well respected and valued for the skills and support they bring to the classroom. The school has undergone a transformational shift towards an inclusive model of student support in classrooms. The school is working to sharpen whole of school differentiation practices with, and for, teachers. Teachers express that appropriate challenge and extension opportunities for high achieving students requires greater attention.

**School leaders articulate the belief that every teacher is able to teach to high standards and that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning.**

The school is cognisant of the importance of developing an expert teaching team and creating opportunities to build the pedagogical skills and knowledge of teachers. Staff comment that they appreciate the investment the school makes with them. The school uses the supporting structures of strategic groups and 'power hour' to help support the school's EIA, support teacher collaboration and to build teacher capability. School leaders are integral members of these groups and model being caring, professional learners to staff who have a willingness to 'dare to fail' alongside them.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop precise school writing targets and regularly analyse to inform future teaching and learning, track priority students, and monitor the impact of the EIA.

Collaboratively identify, document and communicate the school's key EIA pedagogical approaches to define what good writing pedagogy looks like, identifying the signature pedagogical practices.

Strengthen the whole-school approaches to effectively managing student behaviour through ensuring PBL processes are embedded across the school, consistently implemented, and communicated to stakeholders.

Collaboratively refine the design of classroom learning programs that will serve to differentiate, challenge and engage all students, including higher achieving students.