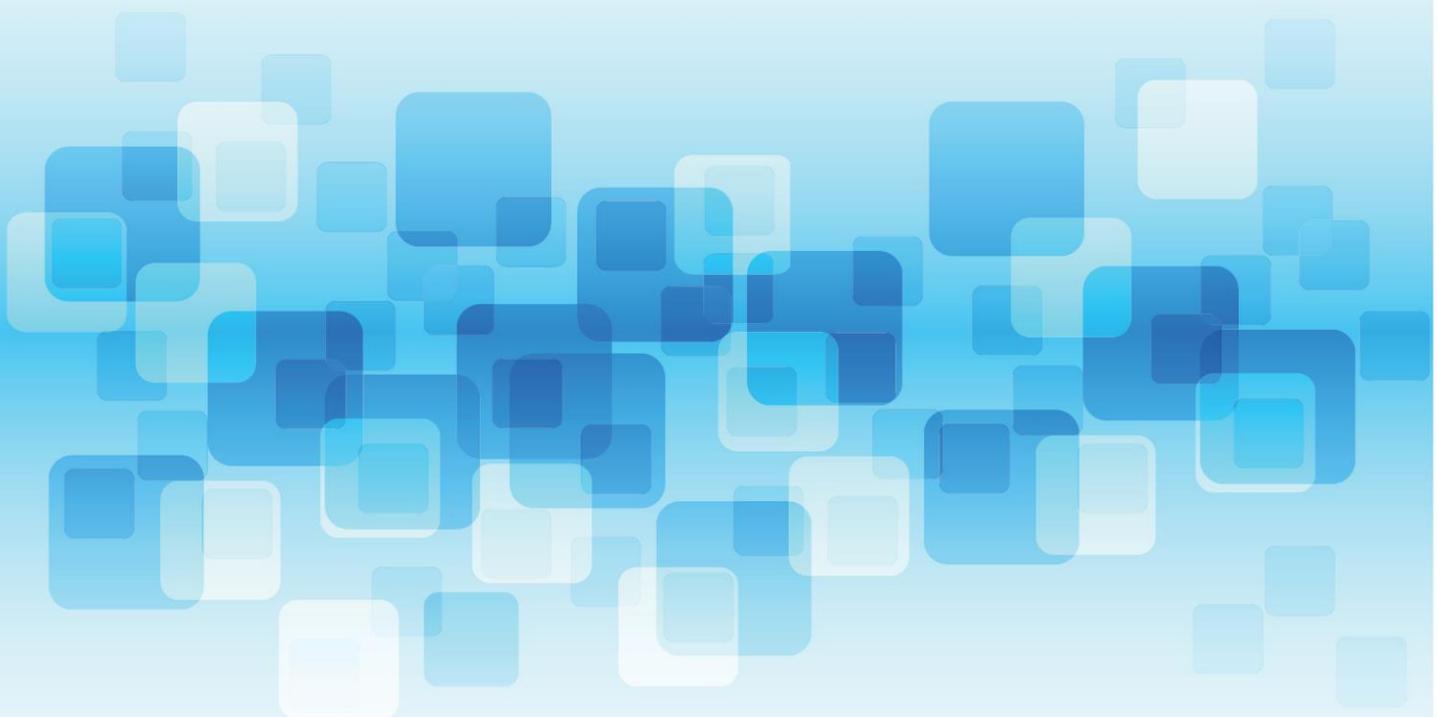




School Improvement Unit Report

Toohey Forest Environmental Education Centre

Executive Summary



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Toohey Forest Environmental Education Centre from the 26 to 27 October 2015. It provides 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 review and report were completed by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU). For more information about the SIU and the new reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the Department of Education and Training (DET) [website](#).

1.2 School context

Location:	Griffith University EcoCentre, South Ring Road, Nathan
Education region:	Metropolitan
The school opened in:	2001
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Current school enrolment:	100 per cent day visit
Indigenous enrolments:	n/a
Students with disability enrolments:	n/a
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a
Year principal appointed:	2012
Number of teachers:	2
Nearby schools:	Holland Park State High School, Nursery Road State Special School, Mount Gravatt State High School, Mount Gravatt State School, Robertson State School, MacGregor State High School
Significant community partnerships:	
Unique school programs:	



1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers.

- a pre-review audit of the school's performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school's Assistant Regional Director
- a school visit of two days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
 - Principal
 - One teacher
 - Business Manager (BM)
 - A selection of visiting school co-ordinators, teachers and students

1.4 Review team

Peter McKenna	Internal reviewer, SIU (Review chair)
Cameron McKenzie	Peer reviewer
Norm Hunter	External reviewer



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- Human, financial and physical resources are applied in a strategic and targeted manner across the centre to meet the learning needs of students and staff.

Toohy Forest Environmental Education Centre is a tenant of the Nathan Campus of Griffith University and located in the sustainably designed and exceptionally well-appointed Griffith University EcoCentre. A range of specialised equipment and teaching resources have been developed to engage students in high quality science-based learning experiences.

- Student visitation numbers have grown steadily over the last four years

The centre has taken an entrepreneurial approach to establishing and maintaining strong relationships with schools. The centre focus over the past four years on raising student visitation numbers has resulted in an increase from 4067 students in 2012 to a predicted 7753 students in 2015. This increase has been achieved in the absence of a current, documented strategic plan. There is an opportunity for the centre to add clarity to the centre's improvement agenda through more detailed action planning.

- The centre's ethos is built around a commitment to student learning through high quality science-based environmental education programs.

The centre has developed a range of programs designed to engage and inspire students in science. The programs have been specifically developed to target the areas of the science curriculum that schools find challenging to deliver. Feedback from teachers from visiting schools indicates high levels of satisfaction with the curriculum offered.

Teachers are supported to develop the skills and knowledge required to be successful and discuss their teaching in a professional informed manner. The centre framework for effective teaching practice is not referenced in teacher discussions and is not used to inform professional growth.

- Data is collected, collated and shared to monitor student visitations and visiting staff satisfaction.

The centre reviews and responds to visiting teacher satisfaction data to ensure high program standards are maintained. Information about student visitation numbers is shared with all staff and discussed at staff meetings. A centre data plan is yet to be developed.



- Centre teachers actively seek to improve their teaching through professional learning, observation and feedback processes.

The teaching staff at the centre are committed to developing their expertise. The principal works with teachers, providing feedback on teaching and, where appropriate, modelling effective teaching strategies as evidenced by the peer review process and the feedback given to all teachers from their peers. A professional learning plan aligned to improvement agenda is yet to be formally developed.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Develop and implement a whole-centre explicit improvement agenda that is accompanied by targets and timelines, appropriate resourcing and professional development for all staff.
- Review the current framework for effective teaching to develop a pedagogical framework that is supported by research and identifies the shared language and understanding of high quality teaching practice at the centre.
- Develop and implement a documented data plan for the centre which ensures data is collected consistently, analysed and used in a timely, responsive manner and is aligned to the centre's improvement agenda.
- Develop a professional learning plan that aligns professional learning opportunities to each staff members' individual performance development plan and the centre improvement agenda.