

Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre

Executive Summary





Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Review team.....	3
1.2 School context.....	4
1.3 Contributing stakeholders	5
1.4 Supporting documentary evidence.....	5
2. Executive summary.....	6
2.1 Key findings.....	6
2.2 Key improvement strategies	9



1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre** from **18 to 19 November 2021**.

The report presents an evaluation of the centre's performance against the nine domains of the [National School Improvement Tool](#). It also recommends improvement strategies for the centre 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

Lesley Vogan	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Ray Bloxham	Internal reviewer
Mark Cridland	Peer reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Grandview Road, Pullenvale	
Education region:	Metropolitan Region	
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6	
Enrolment:	n/a	
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	n/a	
Students with disability:	Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:	n/a
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:	n/a
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a	
Year principal appointed:	1982	



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, acting principal, Business Manager (BM), six teachers, unit support officer, two administration officers and cleaner.

Community and business groups:

- First Nations Elder and president of the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal of Greenbank State School, principal of Moorooka State School, principal of Ferny Grove State School and teacher of Holland Park State School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2021
Investing for Success 2021	Strategic Plan 2018–2021
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2021	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	School website and Facebook Page
School pedagogical framework	Student Code of Conduct
School data plan	Research papers and ARC publications
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	School Opinion Survey



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The centre provides a unique learning environment that has been developed and nurtured over time through an appreciation of the natural world and pedagogies that place students at the centre of learning.

At the heart of the centre is storytelling, and from the stories of the local people regarding the rich history of the land, environment and cultures, the centre's ethos and environment have evolved and flourished. Centre staff have a shared moral purpose and an emotional and professional investment in their practice and programs that utilise story, inquiry and performance to enrich student learning and wellbeing. Staff members describe the centre as having a collaborative culture where expertise is valued and readily shared, and feedback is regularly provided and appreciated. Staff are optimistic regarding the centre and their work, continually striving for improvement.

The principal has placed the centre in the international spotlight with research on environmental education and place-responsive pedagogy.

Through an Australian Research Council (ARC) grant the centre is partnering with the University of Queensland (UQ) and University of Helsinki to explore the impact of pedagogies of enchantment. Storythread is a structured approach to teaching and learning that creates opportunities for 'enchantment and change' and is central to the programs and work of the centre. Over time, this research, has honed and shaped centre programs, influencing the connectedness, wellbeing and learning of thousands of students, teachers and schools across Queensland. The vision of '*Connected Teachers Growing Connected Learners*' is fundamental to the work of the centre and threaded throughout their programs.

Education services provided by the centre are consistently in high demand.

The leadership team indicates that managing human resources has become more complex and the increasing demand for Professional Development (PD) workshops by school leaders and classroom teachers will place increased pressure on finite resourcing. The principal identifies that managing to finance innovation and staffing is a continual challenge for the centre. The 2021 Budget Overview Report (BOR) indicates the majority of school funds are expended on additional teaching staff to support program delivery, innovation and PD for classroom teachers and school leaders.

Strong partnerships exist with a number of schools that provide significant patronage to the centre.

A number of local primary schools choose to build strong whole-of-school partnerships with the centre. These schools articulate high levels of satisfaction regarding the quality of learning outcomes achieved as a result of their engagement with the centre. The centre is effectively utilised by these schools as an extension campus or nature campus for continuous learning across the relevant curriculum areas and year levels. It is articulated that this strong relationship built with partner schools will enable some students to participate in



Storythread programs throughout their primary school education through annual visits to the centre and the extension of centre ethos and pedagogy into the school setting. The evolution of program development and delivery as a result of student immersion in centre ways of working is identified by centre staff as a future consideration.

‘PEEC TV’ is a recent addition to the centre’s suite of learning resources.

Through small video vignettes students are introduced to their learning story and the centre team prior to their visit. Teachers articulate that these vignettes build excitement and relationships, enriching students’ experience of their visit. The centre’s work in the UQ ARC research study is enabling the exploration of post-excursion strategies to maintain the emotional engagement of students as they revisit and review their experiences back in their classrooms, school environment and backyards.

Strong relationships exist between an interested group of First Nations Elders and the centre.

These relationships enable staff to provide authentic learning and understanding for students regarding First Nations culture whilst participating in learning sessions and events at the centre. This is the key group with whom the centre collaborates regarding decisions in relation to connecting to each other, listening to the land, learning from nature and creating place. Elders speak of the centre and the principal in relation to friendship, sharing histories and providing a First Nations voice in teaching and learning activities. The principal is acknowledged by Elders as someone who is harmoniously grounded in the land and as integral to the fabric of the centre. Some Elders articulate a desire for the continuation of the centre’s shared vision and an enhancement of the current partnership to include further opportunities for First Nations people to be integral in the centre’s operations.

Leaders and staff members express their deep and abiding belief that all who engage with the centre are able to be learners and place the learner at the centre of all that they do.

A clear priority is the authenticity and high expectations regarding learning experiences for visiting students. Well-documented curriculum plans and overviews meticulously outline the explicit learning outcomes for students. A commitment to excellence in teaching and learning by staff is readily apparent. Staff members are committed learners and have a continuous improvement mindset that drives their desire for self-improvement. Centre staff engage in a debrief process that continuously refines programs and scripts, processes and actions to ensure each learner’s experience is the best it can be. Collegial observation, feedback and rehearsal are central to continuous personal professional improvement. A strong sense of belonging, pride and collegiality at the centre is clearly apparent.



Key to success at the centre in achieving the vision is consistency of teaching practice that is focused on the student.

The education programs have been crafted, including ecological hooks and scripted performances that ensure moments of enchantment or ‘perezhivanie’¹ are embedded throughout the planned learning experiences. Storythread is an approach to teaching and learning that focuses on providing opportunities beyond the classroom whereby students reconnect to places in nature. This approach incorporates the concepts of storying place, Blanket Role in place and embodying place enacted through specialised teaching practices that utilise story, drama, games and play, attentiveness in nature and deep reflective responding. Teaching staff place a high value on the perspectives of First Nations people and embed these in their teaching practice through the 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning framework and authentic acknowledgement to country protocols. Age-appropriate pedagogies (AAP) are acknowledged as another informing approach to centre teaching practice.

¹ Vygotsky, L. S. (1998). *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky*. Volume 5: Child psychology (R. W. Rieber, Ed.). New York: Plenum.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Access expertise to introduce business modelling processes to sustain innovation PD and sharing of expertise through additional income streams.

Consider differentiation opportunities within programs for students that have repeat exposure to the centre's pedagogy and curriculum to deepen and sustain their agency, learning and wellbeing.

Investigate opportunities to enrich the post-program student application to learning through personal agency and advocacy for the natural environment.

Explore opportunities for enhancement of the current First Nations partnerships to include opportunities for members of the broader Indigenous community to become integral to the centre's operations.