Executive Summary

Date of Audit: 1 November 2013

Background:
Taroom SS is a Prep – Year 10 school situated in an isolated rural area of South-West Queensland in the shire of Banana. The school has a current enrolment of approximately 150 students.

Commendations:
- Since the previous Teaching and Learning Audit, there has been improvement in the domains of An Expert Teaching Team, Differentiated Classroom Learning and Effective Teaching Practices, with significant improvement in the domain of Analysis and Discussion of Data.
- Teachers are highly committed to the progress of each student and students speak consistently of the care, support and encouragement they receive from their teachers and teacher aides.
- Behaviour is excellent. Classrooms are very orderly and have a clear focus on learning. Teachers are optimistic and confident that they can achieve even higher results for students.
- The school has a comprehensive range of regular diagnostic testing in reading, writing and numeracy, which is used to monitor student progress against targets, often set above regional benchmarks. Teachers keep very detailed records on each student’s current testing results which has provided a focus on moving each individual student higher on the achievement ladder.
- Partnerships with the community, universities, vocational and other providers are providing extra opportunities for students, expanding their awareness and preparing them for life beyond school.

Affirmations:
- The school is using regional personnel, resources and networks to accelerate the implementation of its improvement agenda, especially in reading and pedagogy. Explicit instruction is being emphasised, with warm up and opening aspects being implemented by many teachers.
- Individual learning plans are provided for relevant target group students. These plans include quite specific information about skill gaps to be addressed.
- Parents are welcomed as partners in their child’s learning.
- Teachers keep clear records and discuss their planning on a regular basis with the Principal.
- Many teachers have received support and feedback from the Pedagogy Coach.
- Teachers have engaged carefully and reflectively with the Australian Curriculum.
- The school continues to implement a coherent approach to Junior Secondary education.

Recommendations:
- Narrow and sharpen the school’s explicit agenda, communicating it succinctly and regularly, so that all staff members, students and parents are clear about the school’s key priorities.
- Ensure that curriculum planning is kept in a central place and is monitored to ensure it is compliant with the relevant syllabus, makes clear each unit’s literacy/numeracy, higher-order thinking and assessment demands and is sufficiently detailed to meet with needs of any incoming teacher.
- Conduct a review of current literacy and numeracy strategies to ensure teaching practices are consistent across the school. Ensure that incoming teachers are well inducted in the school’s approaches.
- To sharpen the school’s focus on high achieving students, consider setting literacy and numeracy targets at both ends of the performance range. Expand differentiation for more able students by providing different work to them at appropriate times within lessons or units. Select this work based on the missing skills or content which will further enhance their already high performance.
- Ensure that, as non-teaching staff members join teachers in completing the Developing Performance Framework, there is alignment with school priorities and professional development.
- Ensure that all teachers receive feedback on their teaching by implementing systematic classroom observation and facilitating the routine sharing of expert pedagogical practice.
- Consider the place of OneSchool for data storage and analysis.