

Showcase

Currumbin Community Special School

Jack Pizzey Leadership Team of the Year

At Currumbin Community Special School, strong instructional leadership has driven improvement in students' reading. In 2023, the school identified that their balanced literacy approach was not meeting the needs of their diverse learners with intellectual disability. The leadership team adopted a new research-based approach grounded in the science of reading. By partnering with other schools and external partners, they strategically implemented a new model, leading to success and inspiring others to follow their example.

South East
Queensland



96
students



Prep to Year 12



Action

Some actions that led to Currumbin Community Special School to be showcased in this category:

- Leaders and teachers partnered with La Trobe University, the Reading League and Lake Colac School to access reading research and expertise.
- The school adapted evidence-based reading frameworks and research, including explicit instruction. This helped differentiate teaching of reading to meet the needs of all students.
- Leaders prioritised building staff capability through external and internal professional learning and coaching to deepen their understanding of evidence-based reading practices.
- Leaders invested in targeted hands-on, differentiated teaching and learning resources to support phonemic awareness and phoneme manipulation.
- Leaders worked with teachers to deliver assessments for students with diverse learning needs. They introduced monitoring tools such as spelling inventories to inform instruction of spelling patterns.
- The school implemented daily phonics instruction for all students. This was protected time from 9:00am to 9:50am.
- Leaders work alongside teachers in Professional Learning Communities to share knowledge and refine practices.
- Students are now enjoying the new way of teaching of reading. Low-tech resources help them engage more with their reading.

Impact



Improved teacher capability

A deep understanding of evidence-based practices for teaching of reading



Enhanced learning culture

Teachers support one another and share knowledge



Improved English achievement

A 133% increase in As and Bs from 2022 to 2024



Enhanced school reputation

The school is considered a leader in teaching of reading for students with intellectual disabilities

Effectiveness

Research into highly effective schools supports Currumbin Community Special School's actions.

Highly effective schools:

- prioritise literacy
- promote the use of effective, evidence-based pedagogy
- build purposeful partnerships
- resource evidence-informed strategies
- align staff learning with school priorities
- use resources that are supported by evidence-informed strategies.

Teachers and leaders in highly effective schools:

- stay up-to-date with pedagogical research
- make appropriate adjustments to assessments
- lead and model professional learning
- promote a school-wide culture of learning, collective responsibility, and continuous improvement
- use explicit instruction and create a safe and orderly environment for students to learn.



'It is leadership walking alongside the reading team and the teachers, learning together. We have built collective efficacy, and that has been key to embedding the practice across the school.'

Ms Nicky Aiken, Principal