

Showcase

Woorabinda State School

Bevan Brennan 'Every Child Needs a Champion': Realising the potential for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student

Woorabinda State School, located in a discrete Indigenous community, is driving academic achievement and empowering students to thrive. The school plays a vital role in supporting their students, many of them with complex needs. Recently, the school realised they needed to challenge staff perceptions and instil high expectations for students across the school. Guided by the motto, "whatever it takes", the school was determined to shift focus from educate (caring for students) to educating (high expectations in teaching and learning).

Central
Queensland



194
P to 6 students
39
Kindy



Kindy to Year 6



Action

Some of the actions that led Woorabinda State School to be showcased in this category:

- Staff set clear standards for student behaviour. This includes arriving on time and representing the school with pride at events.
- Teachers reinforce high academic expectations through explicit teaching and constructive feedback.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff guide classroom teachers to plan and deliver culturally relevant and appropriate curriculum. This supports students' academic, social and cultural needs.
- The school introduced mid-term "warm tasks" to gain early insights into student progress. This allows teachers to adjust teaching before final assessments.
- Teachers differentiate lessons to meet individual learning needs. They provide scaffolding to help students progress and achieve their best.
- The school addresses basic student needs through free food programs and a bus service, ensuring students are nourished, ready to learn and can attend regularly.
- The school has an open-door policy, creating a safe, welcoming environment where students and families feel supported and valued.
- The school partners with local agencies and police to support students with complex needs.

Impact



Improved student behaviour

An 85% decrease in School Disciplinary Absences from 2022 to 2024



Improved motivation

An 18% increase in students reporting their teachers motivate them to learn, from 2022 to 2024



Increased students' pride

Students take pride in their achievements and represent the school with dignity

Effectiveness

Research into highly effective schools supports Woorabinda State School's actions.

Highly effective schools:

- prioritise and promote student wellbeing
- work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families
- partner with support services
- plan locally relevant curriculum
- address individual student needs.

Teachers and leaders in highly effective schools:

- promote an orderly learning environment to support and encourage learning
- communicate high expectations of students while providing high support
- plan curriculum collaboratively
- scaffold learning and tailor learning experiences for students
- monitor student learning through assessment
- build trusting relationships with students.



'We can't just do educate, we have to do the educate bit to maximise their life chances and choices.'

Ms Jo Ross, Principal