

2014 Annual School Report WOODBERRY LEARNING CENTRE

SENSE OF SELF, SENSE OF DIRECTION

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way

Principal's message

It's all about RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS!

Do you have strong connections with your children and your partners? Can your children tell you anything without fear of punishment? This doesn't mean you approve of or agree with whatever they are telling you but it does mean you love them enough to listen and to want to guide and help them. Do you use the CONNECTING HABITS daily – listen, encourage, care, support, respect and negotiate rather than trying to control? Do you help your children to evaluate what they choose to do to help them decide whether it is getting them closer to what they want or further away? Do you speak to them mainly in questions so they have to figure it out rather than being told all the time what they should do? Do you allow them to experience the full range of emotions – not just happy, sad or depressed but also disappointed, upset, embarrassed, anxious, afraid, joyful, grief and loss etc while supporting them and telling them that life will continually throw up curve balls and you know that with time and practice, they will learn how to handle them?

Do you criticize, blame, complain, threaten, nag and bribe (to control)? These are the DISCONNECTING HABITS and being habits, they are hard to give up but until we do, we can say goodbye to meaningful, trusting relationships with our kids – or anyone else for that matter.

At WLC, we try our utmost to only use the CONNECTING HABITS. We need positive trusting relationships with our students so we can have influence to help them make better educational, behavioural and life choices. We try to create a needs-satisfying environment where we can all feel like we belong, have fun, feel valued and listened to and be given the

opportunity to make choices about what we want to learn, how we want to learn it and how we want to behave – while knowing that every choice has a consequence and that we need to accept responsibility for, and the consequences of, the choices we make.

In a rapidly changing world, all students and ours in particular, need to know how to get along with others, to communicate effectively and to be able to manage themselves. Managing ourselves means controlling our negative feelings, respecting others and others' points of view and above all accepting responsibility for ALL our behaviours – our thoughts, our feelings AND our actions - and NOT blaming something or someone else for whatever has happened.

This seems to be one of the hardest things for our students to learn. They are always blaming someone else (or something else) for their behaviours – “I did what I did because s/he, you, they - made me by calling me” OR “I did it because HE told me to!” We all need to accept that we are totally responsible for the behavioural choices we make. Every behaviour has a consequence – often a good one, sometimes not so good. As you know, we, at WLC, believe that all behaviour is purposeful and is an attempt to meet one or more of our 5 basic needs – 1) to love and be loved and to connect and belong; 2) to feel in control of our lives, to feel important and capable; 3) to be physically and emotionally safe and to feel secure; 4) to be playful and have fun and enjoy ourselves and 5) to have freedom to choose. We believe that everything we do is an attempt to get what we want because we believe these “wants” will meet one or more of these needs.

Our students who understand and accept these ideas transform themselves, They give up the ineffective, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours and replace them with ones that work for them and do not interfere with others meeting their needs. Four examples (and there are many):



One of our students transitioned back to high school and was top of Year 9 Maths. Another student is now in Year 12, has a traineeship and a licence. The three other girls who were in her group when she came to WLC have not fared so well. Two have had babies and the third is pregnant. Another student (who is now 18), has a full time job, a motorbike licence and a lovely girlfriend, and another is excelling in year 11. You can imagine the pleasure and pride we feel when our students turn themselves around and develop a real sense of who they are and what they can achieve! To see the parents of these students beaming with joy and calm, after surviving the earlier stress of the difficult and challenging relationship with their child, is priceless! If you can imagine it, you can achieve it! We believe in our students until they believe in themselves and then there is no stopping them.

Nancy Snow
Principal



P&C and/or School Council Message

WLC does not have a P&C or School Council. We are constantly looking for ways we can make some money to support our programs. Unfortunately the Active After Schools Community Program (AASCP) ceases at the end of this year. This program has been invaluable to us and our students – offering experiences and opportunities that would never have occurred otherwise. We will always be indebted to **Eduardo Figueroa**, our AASC co-ordinator for his enthusiasm, help and patience and for being such a nice guy!

Fortunately as one shadow looms, there is a light shining brightly! Next year we will receive money from the RAM (Resources Allocation Model) where funding is based on need. This is determined by the FOEI (Family Occupation

Education Index) – the higher the FOEI, the greater the level of funding. This year when the index was first established, WLC had a FOEI of 254. The highest in NSW was 300 so you can see we have some very needy students. Apart from a base level of funding for each student in every school, there are need loadings such as Low socio-economic and Aboriginal student loadings – both of which WLC receives.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies

Student enrolment profile

In 2014 WLC operated close to capacity i.e. max 21 students. They ranged in age from 10 -14 years. There were 3 female students.

Student attendance profile

No data available. We were very pleased with the majority of students' attendance. Generally, most students came every day except for sickness or occasional leave. We do have a couple of students who are away from school too much. It is vital that our students attend regularly as we only have them for a short time and we need to get them back into the habit of going to school each day. You can't learn or learn how to change if you are not at school.



Class sizes

In March 2003, the Government announced its commitment to publish primary class sizes in annual school reports to provide parents with as much local information as possible. Class sizes were reported at the 2014 class size audit conducted in March 2014. We had 3 classes. Each class had a maximum of 7 students.

Structure of classes

Class structure can vary from one placement meeting to the next. Generally we have a class of the physically smaller students in together. These students tend to be younger but the bulk of our students are in Year 5 and 6 with a few in Year 7. We try to place students as compatibly as possible.

Staff information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies

Staff establishment

Position	Number
Principal	1.0
Assistant Principal	1.0
SSP Teacher	2.0
SSP Teacher RFF	0.252
SSP Teacher Librarian	0.168
SSP Careers Advisor	0.2
SSP Part-time Teacher	0.168
Total	4.788
SSP School Administrative Manager Level 1	0.976
SSP School Learning Support Officer (Behaviour Disorder)	3.0
SSP General Assistant	0.2
Total	4.176

Staff retention

During term 2, 2014, Angus Draffan was selected on an EOI to be acting Assistant Principal at Kotara SSP in Newcastle for approximately a term. However, this position continued on and his position was filled by Haillie Giles. Haillie did a wonderful job with our students and we were sorry to see her go at the end the year.

Since its inception, we have had only one change to the original staff. We have maintained

the same staff for the last 6 years, showing that WLC meets the needs of staff as well as students!

Staff attendance

Staff has access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. In 2014, the average daily attendance rate for staff, as determined by the



Department, was not applicable as the cohort was below the reporting threshold.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Qualifications	% of staff
Degree or Diploma	100%
Postgraduate	75%



Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school

Balance brought forward	165 768.11
Global funds	51 280.66
Tied funds	51 280.66
School & Community sources	902.73
Interest	4 945.58
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	284 286.53
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	4 705.63
Excursions	0.00
Extracurricular dissections	0.00
Library	414.48
Training & development	798.96
Tied funds	37 191.01
Casual relief teachers	3 540.37
Administration & office	9 152.85
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	11 305.82
Maintenance	11 658.14
Trust accounts	0.00
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	78 767.26
Balance carried forward	205 519.27



SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2014

Achievements

Academic

Literacy

Our programs emphasise numeracy and literacy and human behaviour but in a way that does not seem like “school work” as our students have not generally succeeded at their own school because of their behavioural choices. We are always trying to think of innovative ways and ideas to engage our students in the learning process while putting a major emphasis on how they choose to behave.

We have had some great times this year and learnt more and more about our students and ourselves. Our job is to teach and learn from each other.

All the students who attend WLC have behavioural and emotional difficulties. This has often meant frequent absences from their mainstream classroom through in-school or out-of-school suspension and missing much of the teaching even when in class because of attention and behavioural problems. Often the result of this is that some students operate well below the expected stage average. Being able to read effectively is a necessity in our society and we place a lot of emphasis on helping our students to make large gains in their reading.

This is done by providing:

- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each student.
- Intensive support in the classroom and provision of work at which they can succeed.
- Encouragement to do their best and to shed their failure identity.
- Interesting readers/library books.



Initially this year we continued to use the Fast Forward Reading Scheme. It is a program where each student's entry level is assessed and s/he can move as fast or as slowly as they choose through the levels. However, we found that the students did not really take to Fast Forward and so instead we developed integrated units of work around the students' interests. We spent some time researching evidence-based ways of improving reading and decided to run with Focus on Reading in 2015. Our students also need social literacy. They



often have problems with listening, expressing themselves, reading social cues and patience. To improve these skills, staff have meetings with students, students are taken to local shopping centres and to the beach where they must follow instructions and behave appropriately in public.



Numeracy

Numeracy skills are emphasised at WLC. As is often the case, children with literacy and behavioural difficulties can sometimes excel in Maths. We have some students who are very competent in the mechanics of Maths but lack problem-solving skills. We use all kinds of activities to engage our students in Maths such as online maths programs, games requiring numerical computations and problem solving activities, activities demonstrating the use of



space, time and measurement, and explicit skills based lessons. Often our students have been disengaged from learning for a long time and find it difficult to attempt anything that they perceive as "school work". Hence the staff put in a lot of time thinking of ways to engage the students through tasks that address curriculum outcomes but are not perceived as "school work" - such as woodworking, cooking and building projects.



ESES

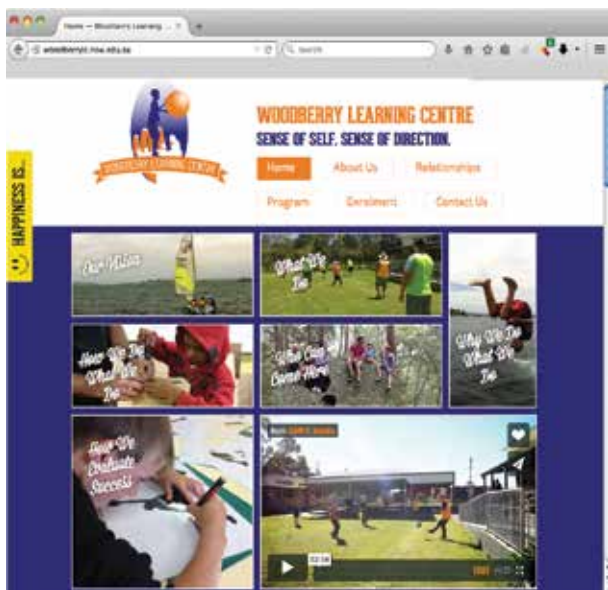
Every Student, Every School

We are very pleased with the results of our ESES funding. We have run 5 teacher trainings courses in behaviour management delivered to staff from many schools around the district. Some of the smaller schools have now sent all their staff over the past 2 years. The evaluations we get on the Teacher Professional Learning site are what keeps us going. We couldn't ask for better and follow-up of teachers 6 months after doing the program show that they are still using the skills and knowledge and are far less stressed and managing challenging kids much better than they were before.

We will receive this funding again next year and will use it to continue doing the training, update our brochure and provide release time for staff to write more content for our website which is up and running. Please visit it at

www.woodberrylc.nsw.edu.au

We hope to make it as visitor friendly as possible and have links and information that will help you with all your significant relationships.



Sport

We were again lucky to be involved in the federally funded Active After Schools Program (our 6th year!). The program allowed us, as it has in the previous five years, to provide a wider range of physical activities for our students and inspire them to participate in out of school sporting activities. These activities included surfing, trampolining, tennis, orienteering, bush walking, indoor soccer and indoor rock climbing. It never ceases to amaze the WLC

staff how willing many of our students are to try something different, step out of their comfort zone and commit to doing their best on the sporting field.

One such example was our Sporting Star for 2014 Brittany Cruickshank (below) who enjoyed our Orienteering sessions so much that she became involved in after school Orienteering sessions. Her obvious talent and dedication to the sport led to her participating in the Orienteering Regional Finals where she won her age division. This from a girl who hadn't heard of Orienteering months earlier!



As part of a State sporting initiative all DEC schools were allocated sporting achievement awards for students showing excellent or improved sporting prowess and the qualities of fair play and team work. At WLC we voted on these awards as a whole school and our Best And Fairest award went to Eli Carter and Most Improved went to Coby Boyle.

Unfortunately, due to funding cuts, the Active After Schools Program has been concluded and is due to be replaced with a different initiative later this year. We all share happy memories of our time in the program and will be forever grateful to our AASP coordinator Eduardo Figueroa for his assistance and commitment to finding us the most diverse and engaging sporting experiences.



Electives

In 2014 we continued to discover the many talents of our students through our electives program. Our electives, woodworking, fishing, cooking and T-shirt design, have allowed our students to demonstrate a whole range of skills many didn't know they had.

T-Shirt Design

Tie-Dyeing is back! And thanks to Lisa and Pauline the students have been able to create on-trend clothes that they can show off to their family and friends. It seems like anything at WLC that hasn't been tied down has been tie-dyed with the students dyeing shirts, hats, socks, shorts, hoodies and shoes. The students amazing creative capacity has been demonstrated through experimenting with shape and colour.

Other

We know all our students are unique and each has his/her own special talent or 'gift'. For one it may be excellent computer skills, for another – cooking, for another – art or maybe being caring and compassionate and helping others and some have the gift of being good at any sport and didn't know it. We encourage all our students to have a go for if they don't they may never discover their 'gifts'.





Fishing

Many of our students enter WLC with a love of fishing. While Sean and Darren and the students enjoy sharing some peace and quiet for a couple of hours a week, thanks to Darren's expertise, our students have been catching the odd fish! It's hard to describe the pride on the faces of the students who return to school with a bream or a flathead to take home for their dinner.



Woodwork

The students have completed some fantastic woodwork projects that have included bird-feeders, cutlery holders, spice racks and storage boxes that they are able to take home and use themselves. Through the support and expertise of our chief woodworkers Mark and Haillie, students were even able to design their own projects that they then produced.



Cooking

Our students continuously amaze us with their abilities in the kitchen. Students often enter our kitchen with limited abilities in cooking and leave 4 weeks later having taken on technical skills and being able to work in a cooking team without the need for staff direction. What is the most satisfying for Tony and Geoff is the reports from some students (and their families) that they are cooking meals for their families at home.



“Special Days”

Again this year, we had Susie Blackwood, a nurse and sex educator, talk to our boys (and our girls separately) about their physical development, respect in relationships and personal hygiene. She gave them correct knowledge about a whole range of things in which they were interested but are often misinformed.

After the success of our ‘Pizza Party’ Christmas Lunch last year, we again organised for our local mobile pizza chefs to visit WLC. The pizza ovens arrived on the back of a van and the students had the opportunity to personalise their pizzas, AND we could eat as much as we wanted! Suffice to say WLC was a very quiet place once the pizza van went on its way. We will definitely be making this an annual event.



As a part of our school’s participation in the ‘Smarter Stronger’ program, we decided to hold an Indigenous Day in Term 3. In planning this day our students organised the food, created their own name tags, helped coordinate the outdoor areas into spaces where people could eat, play and socialise and, on the day, welcomed our guests and assisted wherever they were needed. In short, they did us and themselves proud. The day was a great success with everyone who attended having a great time. After a smoking ceremony the Indigenous Dancers from Rutherford Technology HS led by Michael Heitmeyer performed and they were even able to coax some staff and students to join them in a dance. As usual our dance skills were outstanding!



Our family BBQs have continued to be a success and provide an opportunity to catch up with our students’ families over a sausage sandwich and Tony’s wife, Penny’s yummy slices. It also gives our kids a chance to share their achievements from the term and to get their report and for parent(s) to converse with staff. Sometimes it is the only time each term we see our families due to distance, work commitments and other aspects of life.



This year we have had to say goodbye to Brittany Cruickshank, Jacob Philip, Mikey Gesell, Mackenzie Dennis, Ben Saxby and Jayden Dixon. We wish them well and want them to know that if they use the skills and knowledge learnt at WLC, they will do well in their next phase of life and education.

2014 Targets

Target 1

80% of students will achieve their IEP outcomes in literacy, based on the DEC Literacy continuum.

- 80% of our students achieved their IEPs and most students improved their reading age by 12 months.
- We found the Fast Forward reading program did not suit our students as it is more of a mainstream program that doesn't work with students who have such poor beliefs about their capacity to read. Fast Forward required the ability to decode and this is one of the skills with which our students struggle. We instead continued to develop and implement integrated units of work that catered to the students' interests.
- Throughout the year we continued researching evidence-based ways of improving literacy that will be more suited to our students and decided to see about staff being trained in Focus on Reading in early 2015.
- All teaching staff continued to be upskilled in the new National English curriculum.
- A measurable increase in student engagement in their literacy program was evident using our school-developed, daily assessment program

Target 2

70% of students will achieve their behavioural targets evidenced by graphing data. This percentage has been lowered because in 2014, WLC has some students who possibly would have benefited from an ED placement but as there were none available – came to us.

- ED students (Emotionally Disturbed) are students who have a diagnosis, BD students (Behaviourally Disordered) can display the same challenging behaviours but do not have a diagnosis. At WLC we choose to use the international nomenclature of EBD and Severe EBD. Challenging behaviours can be seen to be on a continuum, from behaviours that have a high overt emotional component, to behaviours with a lesser overt emotional component. Our students tend to have more externalizing

behaviours (acting out) which often hide their underlying internalizing behaviours (turning in e.g. being anxious or feeling depressed). There are very few children with challenging behaviours who would not benefit from engaging with the WLC program. Students who are at the severe end of the EBD spectrum are the ones who generally require an alternate placement.

- Overall 70% of the students achieved their behavioural targets. Some students achieved some of their targets quite quickly while taking much longer to meet others. Some students struggled to manage their own behaviour because they refused to be inclusive and not discriminate against others..
- Throughout 2014 students were taught Choice Theory and the effective use of Reality Therapy (Responsibility Training) questions and were constantly reminded that there is always a choice.
- We continued to use our SPPS, Student Performance Profile System, to provide evidence of students' performance and achievement.

Target 3

80% of students will still be enrolled in and attending their mainstream school or other educational facility twelve months after exiting WLC.

- Although we didn't quite reach our target of 80% of students still enrolled in a mainstream school, we are still pleased with a result of 77%. These students are either enrolled and attending their home school or have an alternate educational placement.
- Considering the challenges our students face and their history of school attendance, we feel that this data just proves the efficacy of teaching students that they are in control of their lives and that everything has a consequence and they can make better choices for better consequences.

Key Evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct annual evaluations of aspects of the school. However, in September this year WLC had an external program review. School reviews are held to look at current practices and processes and see what would

need to be put in place, changed or left the same. The benefit of a review is that you have others' eyes looking at what you do and gathering information from all the stakeholders of WLC. The evaluation of all this information allows for ongoing growth and improvement.

The review panel comprised: the Director, Public Schools; a Secondary School Principal; 2 Primary School Principals, a Learning & Engagement Officer from Maitland Office and the Assistant Principal from WLC.

The review involved the panel interviewing past and present parents, past and present students, principals who have or have had students at WLC, guidance personnel, staff from other schools, and the staff at WLC. It included observations and access to Individual Educational Programs and school policies and practices.

Recommendations

Principals and parents saw benefit in taking Stage 2 students (Years 3 & 4) to fit in with the evidence-based research on the earlier the intervention, the greater the success of programs. There are no intervention programs for Stage 2 students unless they have a mental health diagnosis and so this became a review recommendation – to look at taking Stage 2 students into the program.

Our behaviour program was seen as extremely positive and successful. Of the students who left 12 months ago, 77% of them are enrolled and attending their mainstream school or an alternate educational setting. This is a fantastic result and is due to the dedicated staff at WLC, the support of our parents and the support from those schools receiving their students back after the program.

Another recommendation from the review was that students with a diagnosis - Emotionally Disturbed (ED), should be able to be considered for placement at WLC rather than not considered, because they have a diagnosis. This is confounded by the DSM 5 (Diagnostic Manual) having discrete categories of disorders rather than disorders with combined aspects of others. As a Behaviour School, you do not have to have a diagnosis to come here but the review panel recommended that if the observable behaviour from the referral fits in with the students at WLC, a student should be able to be considered for placement here

even with a diagnosis. We offer an intervention program of up to 40 weeks and then our students return to their home schools. If at the end of the program, a student has not learnt enough from the program to be able to return to their home school, then placement in an ED class/school could be considered.

Professional Learning

The funds for PL were used:

- To update staff with their CPR skills.
- For staff to attend the biennial Behaviour Schools Conference.
- For the principal to attend conferences.
- For the principal to participate in the on-line Women in Leadership Training in 2015.
- For airfares for an WGIA Instructor to attend WLC on the last two Staff Development Days at the end of 2014 to refresh all staff in knowledge and skills enhanced by Choice Theory & Reality Therapy.

2015 Targets

We have come to the end of our current School Plan 3 year cycle. This year schools are embarking on a new planning process, the aim of which is to achieve substantial, sustainable growth and improved learning performance. It is both capacity building and future focused so as to deliver an impact which is transformative. The new approach to school planning is the first part of a new approach to school excellence. It is a streamlined and strategic approach to school planning, reporting and self-assessment to better support schools.

The two Strategic Directions for WLC for 2015-2017 are:

1. Increasing student motivation, re-engagement and learning
2. Building student responsibility for behaviour through Choice Theory.

Target 1

Promote quality teaching and learning and engagement through Professional Development (Focus on Reading)

Strategies to achieve this include:

- Train one staff member to be a Focus on Reading trainer

- Intensive 2 day training for teaching staff in term 1
- Staff to complete Focus on Reading learning modules with Lisa Townley who will become our Focus on Reading Trainer

Target 2

Review and refine the WLC reporting and assessment structures and practices in alignment with the 2014 WLC Program Review.

Strategies to achieve this include:

- Review and revise our reporting structures as per recommendations from the 2014 program review. Develop and pilot a new WLC School Report that will be delivered to students twice a year.
- Review our academic assessment procedures and practices as per the 2014 program review.
- Develop and trial a whole school academic assessment proforma to be used by all teaching staff.

Target 3

Improve our students' social skills through implementing Goldstein's Skillstreaming program.

Strategies to achieve this include:

- Students assessing what social skills they do well and what they would like to improve
- Parents assessing what social skills they believe their child needs to improve.
- Two staff members to take responsibility for the program and decide when and how to run the program.

Target 4

To continue to promote WLC as a Centre of Expertise through Professional Development in Behaviour Management.

Strategies to achieve this include:

- Achieve 100% enrolment for each training course.
- Attempt to get school leaders from the schools which have staff involved in the course to sit in on session(s) to show support for their staff and a belief in lifelong learning.
- Continued positive assessment of the program from the participants.

About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

Staff 2014

Nancy Snow	Principal
Geoff Stevenson	Assistant Principal
Sean Mussett	Teacher
Angus Draffan	Teacher
Hailie Giles	Teacher
Lisa Townley	Teacher (0.4)
Maureen Sansom	School Admin. Manager
Mark Williams	SLSO
Darren Mitchell	SLSO
Tony Wilks	SLSO
Pauline Mitchell	SLSO
Mark Williams	General Assistant
Sue MacKenzie	School Counsellor/DGO

School contact information

WOODBERRY LEARNING CENTRE

Cnr Lawson Ave & Woodberry Rd
Woodberry NSW 2322
Ph: 02 4964 1473
Fax: 02 4964 1563
Email: woodbrylc-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 5764

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr>

