

Woodberry Learning Centre Annual Report



2016



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Introduction

Message from the Principal

Message from the Principal

This is our 10th year of operation! We have had many students undertake our program. We have seen miraculous transformations in some students when they realize that the only person they can control is themselves; that they are responsible for the choices they make and the consequences of those choices; that new knowledge and skills can change your life for the better if you want to change. Most of our students certainly show behavioural and academic improvements while they are with us. Some go back to their mainstream schools and continue on with their education – something that was looking unlikely before they came to Woodberry LC. Some, however, never perceive a need to change. Their inappropriate and socially unacceptable behaviours have nearly always got them what they want and so they refuse to give them up and learn better ways of behaving and therefore having more satisfying relationships – whether with family or friends. As parent(s)/carer(s) or school staff, we need to model the behaviours we want our children/students to learn and demonstrate. If we wish them to be kind, caring, responsible, accept the consequences of their actions, have a love of learning, be honest and respectful, then we need to be all of these as well. Otherwise it reminds us of the old adage: "Do as I say, (not as I do)!" Domestic violence in all its forms – physical, emotional, financial – is extremely damaging to children and the younger the child is when s/he has witnessed the violence, the harder it is for them to not repeat the pattern of violence when older. Our children learn at an early age that we cannot control them. Fortunately most children allow adults that control. Our children need to learn at an early age that they cannot control their parents. So often we see parents tell their child that if they behave in a certain way that they will not do.....for them. The child does the behaviour and still gets whatever they want. It becomes a vicious cycle because the child learns that violent behaviour – breaking things, hurting siblings, punching holes in walls, using abusive language – will get them what they want because they have seen how it works with adults.. Once you decide enough is enough, be prepared for the behaviour to escalate as your child tests your resolve. Do not say you will do things that you are not really prepared to do no matter what your child does to get you to change your mind. You have to hang in there until the wind has gone from the sails of your child. Only then can some real unlearning of old behaviours and learning of new behaviours begin to occur. Are you demonstrating the behaviours you would like your child to use or are you sometimes behaving the way your child behaves? We, like you, only want the best for your child and we need your help. If we all make a real effort to be the person we want your child to be – then there is a real hope for long lasting behavioural change. Nancy Snow

School background

School vision statement

School context

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework and participated in an external validation. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading. During the external validation process, an independent panel of peer principals considered our evidence and assessment of the school's progress, aligned with the standards articulated in the School Excellence Framework.

The results of this process indicated:

LEARNING

Learning Culture Over the years we have established a culture of learning in an environment where we care for each other, where we all feel safe, have fun, are respectful of each other, accept responsibility for our behavioural choices and value personal freedom to take risks and try new ideas – **Sustaining & Growing**

Wellbeing Staff and student wellbeing is paramount at WLC. The school consistently implements a whole-school approach to wellbeing that has clearly defined behavioural expectations and creates a positive teaching and learning environment – **Sustaining & Growing**

Curriculum & Learning Our programs and teaching practices effectively develop the knowledge, skills and understandings of all students through the use of innovative, evidence-based teaching methods – **Sustaining & Growing**

Assessment & Reporting The school has developed explicit processes to collect, analyse and report internal student academic and behavioural data – **Sustaining & Growing**

Student Performance Measures Student performance measure show improvement over the 40 week program both academically and on targeted behaviours – **Sustaining & Growing**

Achievements in 2016:

We have embedded the concepts and practices of Focus on Reading (FOR) throughout the year, as our in-school

trainer Lisa Townley took the staff through the FOR learning modules and the staff introduced the 'Super 6' strategies to students. A transition proforma, to better manage communication and transition plans between mainstream schools, was developed and piloted throughout the year. We found that the documentation was beneficial for school who haven't had students placed at WLC before and was less useful and required for school who have worked with WLC before and understand the routines and expectations around transitioning students successfully to their mainstream school. We created and developed a behaviour rubric that allowed staff and students to work together to plot their progress towards more appropriate and effective behaviours. We found that some of the rubric was too wordy for the students to deeply understand the most appropriate place to plot themselves on the rubric. We plan to simplify some of the language and make the rubric more age appropriate. We also planned to develop an academic rubric, however we decided that fully utilizing the Literacy and Numeracy Continuums will allow us to effectively plot our students academic progress.

Areas for further focus in 2017:

We will spend 2017 refining our behaviour rubric to ensure students find it easy to use and to understand. We also plan to utilise the Students with Additional Needs Survey (SWAN) an online program that has been developed by the University of Melbourne. This survey is more geared towards students with significant learning difficulties, however it also focuses on student with deficiencies in social skills. Our aim is to use these sections of the survey to collect a baseline of our students' behaviour and then measure and report on their behaviour progress throughout their time at WLC.

After piloting the Focus on Reading program for one year we found that it was a beneficial program and that it can be difficult for our students to fully engage with the Super 6 reading strategies. Consequently we have decided to focus on 3 of the Super 6 strategies this year and assess whether reducing the number of strategies the students are exposed to will lead to students having a deeper understanding of these strategies.

We also plan to use the Literacy Continuum more deeply in 2017 to track our students progress and assess our classroom and whole school programs.

TEACHING

Effective classroom practice Quality Teaching practices are demonstrated through differentiated learning programs, adjustments and accommodations. Teachers use student feedback to evaluate effectiveness of their own teaching practices – **Sustaining & Growing**

Data skills and use Assessment instruments are used regularly to help monitor a student's learning progress and to identify skill gaps for improvement – **Sustaining & Growing**

Collaborative practice Teachers work together to improve teaching and learning and believe in continuous improvement through self- and co-evaluation with their peers – **Sustaining & Growing**

Learning & development Professional learning is aligned with the school plan and evaluated for its effectiveness – **Sustaining & Growing**

Professional standards The school promotes and maintains an environment reflective of its positive beliefs and high expectations for all students and staff. Regular feedback between stakeholders and personal responsibility maintain professional

Achievements in 2016:

We were successful in creating a parent and student survey to assess our program and areas for improvement. We found 77% of overall students and parents were Satisfied or Highly Satisfied with the WLC program. Some of the responses from parents/carers included their satisfaction with the "caring and understanding environment", that "staff are understanding and willing to help" and are "passionate about their roles".

Staff have attempted to regularly visit their colleagues classrooms in an attempt to share teaching techniques and receive relevant feedback. Finding the time to do this became difficult as teaching staff found themselves extremely busy running the various programs within the school.

Areas for further focus in 2017:

Staff decided the opportunity to observe other classrooms is of value and a plan needs to be formalised so it takes place. Consequently two staff members are planning to participate in the Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR), a program developed by the University of Newcastle that focusses on peer-to-peer observations in the classroom setting. The two staff that participate in the QTR will up-skill other staff in the practices of the program and adapt the program to our setting.

WLC staff gained a better understanding of our impact through the surveying of parents and students in 2016. We will to further collaborate with parents./carers and the school community and look to survey more specific elements of our program.

We are always open to engaging with new programs that can compliment our program. The 'Rock and Water' program is a 10 week program that is popular in our region and focuses on boys education and developing social competency amongst students using hands on activities and group discussions. We plan to have two members of our teaching staff to be trained in 'Rock and Water' and have them implement this program at WLC during 2017. As this program is rolled out throughout the school, we plan to record and report on the students acquisition of 'Rock and Water' strategies and assess how they influenced on the students achievement of their overall behaviour targets and how this impacted on their transition to their mainstream setting.

LEADING

Leadership There is an emphasis on school capacity building through Professional Learning in Leadership development – **Sustaining& Growing**

School planning, implementation and reporting School staff are committed to and can articulate the purpose of each Strategic Direction in the school plan – **Sustaining& Growing**

School resources Succession planning is designed to aid whole-school improvement and to deeply embed our philosophy so we can have continued success. With the RAM funding we have been able to provide resources to best meet our students' needs – **Sustaining& Growing**

Management practices and processes Formal and informal opportunities exist for our parents and students to provide constructive feedback on school practices and policies so influencing ongoing

Achievements in 2016:

We have continued to focus on up–skilling of leadership and succession planning with Assistant Principal Geoff Stevenson participating in a series of mentoring sessions with two local Principals. Much of the focus for WLC leadership in 2016 was our participation in External Validation which involved the staff collecting and analysing data and evidence and then developing a document that assesses the impact of our program. This document was presented to an independent panel who found almost all of our practices to be 'Sustaining and Growing'. We found through our evidence collecting that it is extremely hard for specialist settings like WLC to evidence our practices as 'Excelling' without the use of NAPLAN data or other formalised testing that can be difficult to deliver to students with behaviour difficulties.

As a leadership group we have commenced training in the XXXX (LMBR) and the ongoing issues around our school going 'live' in the new system in June 2017. We have also taken the opportunity to visit a local school who has trialed the new system over the past two years to get some feedback on the advantages of the system and the challenges involved in transitioning into the new system. We continue to deliver our 8 week, 16 hour training for school staff in managing students with behaviour difficulties. We trained 35 DEC staff last year and have now trained over 200 staff members from 40 schools. We also delivered training in Choice Theory to up–skill interested teachers in ways to manage their students and themselves in connecting, non–coercive practices.

Areas for further focus in 2017:

The external validation process has assisted the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students. Through the EV process, we have developed our capacity to collect data and use this data strategically to develop our practises and feedback progress to students and their parents and carers.

As WLC moves towards going 'live' in the LMBR system, much of our focus in 2017 will be ensuring the school is prepared for the new, more efficient way of managing school budgets and finances. We will also continue to use our Principal network to gain an understanding of how the LMBR operates on the ground.

We will continue to conduct training for school staff who teach student with behaviour difficulties and offer Basic Training in Choice Theory for interested teachers. Staff will also be presenting workshops at the 2017 William Glasser Institute of Australia Conference in October. We will use this opportunity to promote our practices to a wider audience. Our presentations, as well as our involvement in the planning and coordination of the conference will also benefit the school in developing whole school leadership capacity.

Geoff Stevenson will continue to participate in mentor sessions and seek training in building leadership capacity.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

Strategic Direction 1

Increasing student motivation, re-engagement and learning

Purpose

To increase student motivation and re-engagement through Quality Teaching, authentic feedback, and rubrics which are aligned to personalised and differentiated learning and behavioural needs of our students.

Overall summary of progress

During 2016 WLC teaching staff continued to be trained in the Focus on Reading (FOR) strategies by our in-school FOR trainer, Lisa Townley. FOR is a research based literacy program where students are taught the strategies that good readers use and is popular with school in our catchment area. Lisa has delivered three learning modules to WLC staff who have introduced FOR content to WLC students throughout the year. Students are now cognizant with all of the Super 6 reading strategies and have a deeper understanding of three of the strategies. There has been a significant improvement in the students' capacity to engage with text with one class finishing reading a whole novel. Some students have reflected that this was the first time they had read a whole novel.

Our Healthy Lifestyle program has continued to successfully engage students with physical activity and provide them with opportunities to eat healthy meals. Our cooking elective has continued to provide students with the opportunity to learn the skills required to cook healthy meals and has educated these students about what kinds of ingredients can go into the food they eat. Some students have even reported that they are now cooking meals for their families at home!

Breakfast club is open every day, providing students with an opportunity to have something on their stomach to start their school day. Data collected throughout the year demonstrated that 76% of WLC students use the breakfast club at least once a week. Likewise a healthy lunch is provided to all WLC students once a week with 88% of students taking up the opportunity to eat a nutritious meal.

Woodberry Learning Centre is an active school and staff strive to engage all students with one session of in-school physical activity, such as soccer, cricket or basketball, a day. As well as this in-school activity, WLC uses funding from the 'Sporting Schools' program to engage our students with a range of out of school sports such as surfing, tennis, bushwalking, skateboarding and trampolining. This program has enabled many of our students to discover sporting talents they never knew they had!

We have found the net affect of the implementation of this strategic direction is the improved attendance rates of most of our students and a deeper engagement in their learning. WLC students love coming to school and are willing to have a go at anything!

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
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Next Steps

We will continue to develop WLC staff understanding of the Focus on Reading (FOR) strategies as we work through the remaining three modules. Due to the time constraints and the our ever changing clientele, we have decided to focus more deeply on one of the Super 6 strategies per semester.

Our Healthy Lifestyle program has highlighted to staff the vast quantity of unhealthy, junk food our students eat and the ubiquitous nature of junk food advertising and packaging. Consequently we have decided to develop and deliver a whole school Junk Food unit covering the packaging, advertising, nutritional value and alternatives to junk food.

Our students often struggle to connect with their peers, work in a team and rarely participate in big projects that take weeks of application. With a focus on projects that require commitment and teamwork, we have decided to create another school mural, with the overall benefit of having a quality piece of artwork that will be a legacy piece for all students who have involved themselves in the project. The school will employ graffiti artists to facilitate the artwork and develop our students artistic talents while teaching them about commitment, responsibility and maintaining focus.

We will continue to develop and deliver programs that re-engage our students in schooling and cater these programs to their interests and needs. These programs include:

- Social Skills Training
- Explicit teaching of Choice Theory
- The Electives Program
- Transition Program
- Succession Program
- School staff skills-based training program in Behaviour Management.



Strategic Direction 2

Building student responsibility for behaviour through the positive psychology– Choice Theory.

Purpose

To promote and build student responsibility for their behaviour through the use of Choice Theory methodology, which is aligned to the development and delivery of thoughtful, fun, relevant, interesting, and age appropriate programs.

Overall summary of progress

At WLC we can influence our students so they can develop socially appropriate behaviours that will allow them to integrate successfully into their mainstream school. We operate under the internal psychology of Choice Theory that underpins all that we do. Students receive explicit training in the concepts and practices of Choice Theory throughout their time at WLC and are given opportunities to practice, and provided with guidance, in applying Choice Theory strategies.

WLC students understand they are the only person they can control and that they have the power to choose effective and appropriate behaviours that meet their needs in a socially responsible way. Over their time in the program students develop new strategies and transition into their mainstream schools confident they can cope with any situation.

Staff at WLC are highly trained in the Theory and Practices of Choice Theory. All staff have completed Basic Training in Choice Theory and Reality Therapy while most teaching staff have advanced to Certification level.

WLC also regularly offers Choice Theory training and training in behaviour management for all teachers in the region.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
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Next Steps

We have found our program to be highly successful in engaging students and influencing them to make better choices both at school and in their communities. We will continue to deliver Choice Theory content to students and provide them with a set of strategies they can use to get what they want in an effective and appropriate way.

We have developed and refined a in-school behaviour assessment system, which includes daily behaviour reflections and a performance matrix which can track our students performance. As a staff we have decided to trial the Students With Additional Needs (SWAN) survey in 2017. This program, designed by the Melbourne University, is a behaviour tracking program that will allow us to better track and report on their behaviour progress.

As of 2017, all WLC students will participate in the SWAN assessment and will be reassessed every six months with the data measured and reported on.

WLC staff will also continue to deliver programs that develop students capacity to take responsibility for their behaviour and make more effective choices. These include:

- Explicit teaching of Choice Theory to all WLC students.
- Continue to run training for school staff focusing on Behaviour Strategies to better deal with students with challenging behaviours
- Offer school staff training in Choice Theory.
- Implement the 'Rock and Water' program.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background loading		



Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	11	16	14	14
Girls	1	3	1	2

WLC has maintained a stable enrolment in 2016. We have had a number of students complete the WLC and successfully move on to their mainstream school. A number of new students have commenced their WLC placement late in 2016 and several new students will start at WLC early in 2017.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	2
Assistant Principal(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	2.42
Teacher Librarian	0.17
School Administration & Support Staff	4.18
Other Positions	0.2

*Full Time Equivalent

The Australian Education Regulation, 2014 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

There is one Aboriginal School Learning Support Officer currently working at WLC.

Teacher qualifications

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

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	60

Staff undertook mandatory and other Professional Learning activities. These included Child Protection Awareness Training, CPR, e-FirstAid, Focus on Reading, Teacher, Proficient Teacher Accreditation, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher Accreditation, Business Intelligence in Schools, School Communities Working Together and Focus on Reading – Train the Trainer.

Financial information (for schools using OASIS for the whole year)

Financial information

This summary financial information covers funds for operating costs to <insert date> and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	246 949.34
Global funds	63 784.14
Tied funds	83 107.26
School & community sources	23 703.80
Interest	5 175.15
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	422 719.69
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	7 962.74
Excursions	260.39
Extracurricular dissections	1 422.51
Library	423.47
Training & development	4 577.12
Tied funds	64 172.75
Short term relief	2 291.92
Administration & office	8 425.06
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	15 294.03
Maintenance	16 981.83
Trust accounts	0.00
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	121 811.82
Balance carried forward	300 907.87

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

Other assessment data

<You may choose to use this text box to comment on other assessment data including:

- Best Start
- Literacy and numeracy achievement against the literacy and numeracy continuums>

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Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. A survey conducted during 2016 found that 77% of parents and students are either satisfied or highly satisfied with the WLC program. Parent were particularly pleased with the performance of WLC staff who nurture a "caring and understanding environment".



Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Woodberry Learning Centre continues in its commitment to Aboriginal Education and celebrating the history and achievements of Indigenous people – past and present.

Highlights in 2016 include:

- As of 2016 all WLC teaching and support staff have completed the local Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group's 'Connecting to Country' program. This program runs over 3 days and allows participants to immerse themselves in the

customs and history of the local Wonnarua people. Principal Nancy Snow and SLSO Pauline Mitchell continue to be involved in the organizing committee for the 'CTC' program.

- Teaching staff use the extensive knowledge of Pauline Mitchell to present an Indigenous perspective across academic and social programs.
- The provision of an Indigenous role model which allows students to chance to ask questions and gain a deeper understanding of local and broader Aboriginal perspectives and issues.
- The WLC NAIDOC Day celebration included a BBQ, a visit by a local Indigenous police officer with his Highway Patrol car, weaving and basket making lessons from Debbie Elliott and a didgeridoo performance.
- Regular attendance at local AECG meetings.



Multicultural and anti-racism education

Currently at WLC there are only Anglo-Saxon background and Aboriginal students. Multicultural perspectives are taught through stories, games, movies and discussions.

All staff have an understanding of what constitutes racism, are always aware of what students are saying to each other and quickly respond to any racist comments.