Annual Report
2011
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Mission Statement

*We work as a team to meet the needs of the whole child in partnership with the family. We recognise each child as unique and special therefore we deliver individualised programs. We use current and innovative teaching and learning strategies to help the child take their place in society.*

Our Values

We strive to achieve the following school values:

- We use new ideas and innovate to enhance learning.
- We will solve problems creatively.
- We will deliver quality work for our students, parents and our co-workers.
- We will deliver consistent and dependable services that exceed expectations.
- We will communicate openly and honestly and share ideas.
- We are professional.
- We will work collaboratively.
- We will inspire others to elevate their performance and contribute to the success of the school.
- We will continue learning and developing new skills.
- We will encourage a work environment that is respectful, welcoming and safe.
- We will encourage, recognise and reward innovative behaviour.
- We will encourage a work environment that promotes involvement and a sense of participation.
- We will recognise and reward achievement.
School Priorities 2011

Our School Development for 2011 encouraged the development of teaching and learning strategies and experiences that were outcomes focused and responsive to the needs of students.

The plan had four focus areas

**Literacy & Numeracy:** Continue to develop and enhance teachers’ skills and resources to improve outcomes for students. Develop a whole school approach to improving literacy and numeracy.

**Behaviour:** Develop and enhance staff skills in the development of sound behaviour management practice and implementation of individual plans.

**Communication:** Focussing on communication is a shared goal for all staff with many working on specific strategies e.g. Aided Language Displays and Pragmatic Organization Dynamic Display books (PODD) to enhance communication for particular groups of students. Around the school there is an increasing range of effective information and communication technologies to support and develop communication skills and more purposeful participation in learning.

Introduction

Carson Street is the State’s only Primary Education Support School and it educates students whose needs are such that they are not presently being integrated into the regular school system. All require extensive therapy and educational services. Students have a wide variety of medical conditions which are handled sensitively by the nursing staff. The School is located within the Town of Victoria Park but the catchment extends from the Swan River to Carmel in the surrounding hills. Students graduate in the year they turn 13 and most then transfer to Kensington Secondary School. Currently we have 77 K-7 students, 17 in the My Time program and 20 in the Conductive Education Parent & Child program who attend for sessions during the week.

With the general movement towards inclusion, early intervention has become a priority and staff believe that they can play a valuable role in preparing many young children with disabilities for inclusive learning environments, as well as providing an exemplary program for those who remain with us for their primary schooling. Early Intervention opportunities, including our unique Conductive Education (Parent & Child) and My Time programs are highly effective due to the expertise of our staff, the quality of the learning opportunities and the way we work with other professionals and parents.

Independent Public School (IPS)

In 2010 our school was granted Independent Public School status. It was one of the 34 schools chosen to pioneer the way for this new system of school management in Western Australia. We are proud of our school, and acceptance into the program was an acknowledgement by the Department of Education of our programs, initiatives and practices.
**Teacher Development School**
Recently we were selected as one of the first Teacher Development Schools in Western Australia, as part of the policy of Classrooms First. Director General Sharyn O’Neill stated: “The key focus for Teacher Development Schools will be to provide support for the successful implementation of the Australian Curriculum. They will partner with the Institute of Professional Learning to deliver curriculum related professional learning”.

**Teaching & Learning**

**Student Learning – Engagement, Progress and Achievement.**

**School Performance**
The school provides students with learning opportunities appropriate to their needs and the requirements of the Department of Education. We use assessment tools to accurately ascertain student achievement, monitoring these levels effectively. Evaluation and assessment of school programs is linked to each student’s IEP and individual profile to enable us to set realistic goals. Progress and achievement is monitored by:

- Providing a base-line check for each student upon entry
- Reporting formally and informally to parents and the school community
- Providing behaviour assessments as required
- Maintaining individual records
- Maintaining central records

Students continue to make good progress towards individual and holistic goals which are set, monitored and reviewed regularly. Parents, teachers and specialists work together to set IEP goals that are developmentally appropriate to the individual learner and that are achievable within the given time frame. It is noticeable that as students develop communication skills, so their anxiety reduces and their participation in learning and general behaviour improves. There are suitably high, yet realistic expectations for students academically, socially and emotionally. Teachers prepare school-wide whole-class thematic programs that incorporate learning outcomes from a range of curriculum areas. Detailed attention is paid to individual needs. Planning, monitoring and assessment of students using Individual Education Plans and high quality teaching and learning programs result in maximising outcomes for our students. High
expectations drive improvements and the school aims at providing a happy, safe and caring environment for students and staff.

The major professional development initiatives were as follows:

- Positive Behaviour Support, presented by Dolly Bhargava
- Manual Handling & Risk Management, presented by the Risk Assessment Team
- Building Leadership Skills, presented by BEAM Consulting
- Continence Advisory: Toilet training for children with disabilities.
- Dysphagia, presented by Therapy Focus
- Seizure Management
- Communication: Language Acquisition and Using AAC
- Building Strong Teams, presented by BEAM Consulting

**Communication**

Communication is always a priority and students make good gains in communicating their preferences and needs to those around them. Staff are skilled in promoting communication through the use of Alternative and Augmentative Communication strategies, including, Aided Language Stimulation and the use of PODD (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Displays). The introduction of PODD assists staff to accurately and consistently interpret the responses of non-verbal students across the school day. Computers and other assistive technologies are often used as a means of promoting independent learning.

**Information Communication Technology (ICT)**

The coordination of information and communication technology has been strengthened with the appointment of a specialist trouble shooter along with an Education Assistant who is available to assist the Learning Area Coordinator and allow her to concentrate more on improving its use in the classroom. Electronic whiteboards are used to motivate and enhance learning in every classroom. A number of staff attended the More Than Gadgets Conference and returned with ideas for further enhancing ICT provision including the introduction of IPADS for some students. At the Conference, Speech Pathologist Yvette Theodorsen presented her paper entitled “Language for Life: Addressing children’s ‘real-life’ communication challenges and developing truly autonomous, independent communicators”.


Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

On a number of occasions our staff have been invited to participate in feedback and to have input into the design of the new Australian Curriculum for students with special needs. Several staff attended an ACARA Working Group Meeting which was held at Carson Street on Monday 22nd August with presenters Helen Barrett, Curriculum Manager, ACARA and Karen Underwood, Manager, Student Wellbeing, DEECD Vic.

Conductive Education Coordinator, Shona Ballantyne and Teacher Conductor, Natalie Fitzpatrick, were invited to Sydney to attend a teacher forum as part of ACARA’s consultation on the Australian Curriculum for students with disabilities. The purpose of the forum was to gain qualitative and quantitative feedback on the draft curriculum materials from the perspectives of practising classroom teachers, and to provide information about ACARA’s broader curriculum development activity for students with disability.

Deputy Ros Hamling has been involved at the state level in developing a coherent response to the National approach. Staff from Glenroy Specialist School in Victoria and Cranleigh School in the ACT have visited the school to investigate the development of CE and the model of implementation we are operating.

Education Networks

Permission has been given for education support facilities south of the river to form a network with the aim of collaborating to enhance education, and planning has started. We are also an associate member of the Curtin Education Community network.

Attendance

The level of attendance by individual students depends to a marked degree on their medical conditions and some students are absent for long periods due to their medical fragility and complications, but unauthorised absences are low.

Several students have a degenerative or life-limiting condition. To help minimise these absences the school nursing professionals and school staff work closely together to ensure high levels of care and that disability is not allowed to be a constant barrier to learning for students. Similar to previous years there have been no exclusions but the percentage of students in the Regular Attendance category has dropped and ways to improve this, if possible, will be investigated in 2012.

Individual Behaviour Plans

The school promotes the use of individual behaviour plans (IBP’s) for students where a more structured approach to their behaviour is judged to be necessary. Professional help is sought for
behavioural strategies when this is deemed necessary. For instance one class team attended Team Teach training and are a resource to all staff in promoting positive interventions to manage student behaviours. Throughout the school, Individual Behaviour Plans are used to guide how staff minimise disruption and re-engage students in learning.

Suitable arrangements are in place to transition students to their next phase of schooling.

**Specialist Teaching**

The use of specialist teachers for Music, Hydrotherapy/ Swimming and Physical Education is making a valuable contribution to the overall quality of teaching.

Music is a motivating and fun way to teach all children because music strategies can be an effective way to stimulate speech development, provide organization for cognitive and motor development, and create a meaningful environment for socialization and leisure pursuits. Our music resources are rich and varied.

Increasing students’ physical wellbeing is a major focus at our school. In order to achieve this and improve motor skills and increase fitness levels, students participate in a variety of activities such as bike riding, games, swimming/hydrotherapy. All activities and equipment are adapted and modified to meet the individual needs of the student. It is paramount that all students experience success and self respect through the activities that they partake in, with the assistance of our supportive and dedicated school staff.

Swimming/Hydrotherapy also has a high profile in the school.

All students based in the school have a minimum of two lessons per week. This is not only enjoyable and relaxing but students are able to increase their mobility in the water and gain confidence in floating and moving around independently with buoyancy aids in the hydro pool. A number of students have gained sufficient skills and confidence to move to swimming lessons in the local leisure centre pool.

**Monitoring Student Achievement**

The whole school monitoring of more precise computerised record keeping and Individual Education Plans based on the ‘B Squared’ system has contributed to improved information for parents on how their children are progressing.

Introduction of the Gross Motor Functional Measure. In order to more effectively assess data on the efficacy of CE and the progress of individual students, we have commenced using the GMFM which was developed to evaluate gross motor changes in children with physical impairments over time.
Opportunities for appropriate professional development ensure that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to meet student’s needs. This has included, for example, the promotion of PODD, Conductive Education and the pursuit of ever-improving strategies for assessing student progress.

Teacher aides (a number of whom have Level 3 or 4 certification) skilfully support students and form an integral part of classroom program delivery.

Staff are self-reflective and share a common purpose and clear vision, defined by a commitment to achieving the best for all students which means the school has the capacity to improve even further.

Regular monitoring of teaching and learning highlights strengths and areas of development for all staff. The excellent training program addresses staff needs, including mentoring, and involves therapy staff in enhancing pupils’ independence and love of learning.

Class team meetings are held each fortnight to share information and professional judgements in order to support each other and the students in their class. Staff work collaboratively to provide a caring environment for our students, in which they can feel valued and emotionally secure.

Governance

Leading and Managing the School

The school’s stable and experienced board which assists in the governance and strategic direction of the school is comprised of Les Ozsdolay (Chairman), City of South Perth Council (Community); Liz Green, P&C President; John Exeter, Principal; Ros Hamling, Deputy Principal; Mim Little, Education Assistant (Staff); Shona Ballantyne, Conductive Education Coordinator (Staff), Lois Hall, Conductive Education Centre WA; Julie Holding (Secretary); Ben Wyatt, MLA (Community); Nichola Tomkins, Town of Victoria Park (Community); Darryll Ashworth, Executive Director, Metier Consulting; Kate Burton, Local Area Coordinator, Disability Services Commission (Community); and Sue Carpenter, Project Officer Attraction and Retention, Department of Education (Community).

Board members support the school leadership, have a developing view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses, and are actively involved with helping plan future initiatives. A Principal’s Report containing information on all aspects of school life is presented to the Board to help inform their decisions at each of the meetings held once each term.

The shared commitment of board and staff to meeting individual student needs is clearly articulated in school documentation. The school staff and Board has a good understanding of its potential to develop further and areas needing improvement. The three year business plan is approved and reviewed by the Board.
Prudent financial management lead by the Finance Committee and careful strategic planning promote student outcomes and ensure excellent value for money. The total funds expended on teacher/staff professional development in 2011 was $16,702. This amount includes funds which were used to replace staff during PD. However the requirement that most funding is based on the processing of Schools Plus applications and the subsequent difficulty meeting established timeframes can lead to a great deal of uncertainty and hinder planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Actual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Voluntary Contributions</td>
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<td>2 Charges and Fees</td>
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<td>3 Repairs and Maintenance</td>
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<td>4 Capital Works</td>
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<td>6 Leases</td>
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<td>Bank Balance</td>
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<td><strong>Total Bank Balance</strong></td>
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Principal John Exeter was fortunate to be able to attend “The Second National Conversation with Principals” as a representative of The Australian Special Education Principals Association (ASEPA) which was held in Canberra on 7 and 8 April 2011. Delegates, including 140 school principals from across Australia and representatives from Principal Associations, Unions and parent groups, met with the Minister for School Education, Peter Garrett, to discuss the key topics at the forefront of the schools reform agenda. Topics at the forum included empowering local schools, Indigenous education and quality teaching.

The school has successfully delegated leadership to key staff who take on new challenges like Learning Area co-ordination with enthusiasm and expertise.

The learning environment is well resourced and stimulating. Senior staff are clear about how to develop the school. They listen to the views of staff at whole-school and teacher meetings, and respond to outcomes of the School Self Assessment completed by all teaching staff carried out annually. These are included in a comprehensive and prioritised School Business Plan which leads to improvements and spending decisions.

The senior management team has participated in professional development and has moved towards a distributed leadership model. This initiative means developing the skills of the senior staff and by recognising individual strengths and delegating responsibility, encourages the development of leadership capacity across the entire staff.

**Quality Teachers**

Local Merit Selection and our status as an Independent Public School has lead to the employment of high-quality teaching staff. This process has four components:

- keeping good teachers
- recruiting good teachers
- helping teachers develop their skills
- not re-employing contract teachers who do not meet our standards.

**The Environment**

**Safe and Inclusive Environment**

**Child Protection:** During the year the school has reviewed its procedures for ensuring child protection and student welfare. Staff understand the need for vigilance and safety issues are monitored effectively by regular risk assessments, routine checks and an active approach to checking and revising school procedures to ensure student and staff safety.
The school has joined the school Chaplaincy program with regular visits from Gary Hamilton. Staff and families are able to schedule pastoral care appointments with him.

**Risk Assessment Team:** We have established a Risk Assessment Team of 3 staff who have received intensive training in manutention and are able to impart this information to the school workforce. Our Risk Assessment Team has also completed forms to be used for Risk Assessment in the workplace and staff are being encouraged to use them.

All teaching and non-teaching staff have received training in Risk Assessment and the need to take care of themselves.

**Playground Improvements:** Specialised outdoor play areas with a range of large play equipment have been established and in 2011 his has included the addition of an area designed specifically for students in wheelchairs and a Liberty Swing which challenge students to be more active during their breaks.

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**Partnerships**

**Engaging Families and the Community**
The staff believe that the influence of a student’s family is extremely important to a child’s progress and achievement, therefore co-operation between home and school is important. Home-school communication books, regular newsletters and special activity days keep parents informed and involved in their child’s learning program. Portfolio assessment is used and an annual report is provided to parents at the end of the year.

A recent survey of our parent community confirmed that parents and carers are delighted with what the school achieves for their children. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very positive about the quality of education provided. A number took the opportunity to write some additional comments on the questionnaire, all of which praised the school and its staff for the quality of support and care provided, and the ongoing benefit that this was having for their children. ‘I am very happy with everything the school provides — lots of stimulation and fun in a safe environment’ are typical views. They stated they are comfortable about approaching school administration and that they are kept well informed about their child’s progress. They feel listened to and highly valued as partners in promoting their children’s learning and development.

The school provides work experience or training placements for students from metropolitan Secondary Schools, Curtin University Bachelor of Education students and people studying for Levels 3 and 4 Education Assistant status.

**Out of School Care**
Every effort is made to provide a rich variety of educational experiences throughout the school day and beyond. The majority of students live a good distance from school so that after school
activities are not easy to arrange. In response to parent requests for OSHC a survey of need was carried out but the service provider deemed the cost of provision as being too expensive. They suggested we look for alternate funding sources.

**Extra Curricular Activities**

Despite the tyranny of distance our Active After School programs on Tuesday and Thursday have continued to be well supported by a number of our students and families.

In January there were two program options for students with the annual Summer Holiday Program (sponsored by the Town of Victoria Park, the City of South Perth and the staff of the Commonwealth Bank) attended by 14 children. We were grateful to have the input from the WA Disabled Sports Association which provided activities for two of the days. Feedback was very positive and parents indicated that they would like more. Two week long programs were also offered by the Conductive Education Association of WA attended by a parent with their child.

**Conductive Education**

Continued funding of the early intervention Parent & Child program by the Department of Education has been confirmed. The program continues to be extremely well supported by families across the metropolitan area with early intervention, school aged and holiday programs being offered. The school works in partnership with the Conductive Education Centre of WA who have made generous donations to improve services for all those families requesting this educational program.

**Satellite Classes**

The development of the satellite class provision has been further enhanced with the relocation of one class in another Education Support School in the Northern Suburbs in 2012. We are most grateful to the Burbridge School community who, similar to Belmay Primary, have offered this unique opportunity. This allows families experiencing transport difficulties to continue in the Conductive Education program. It is interesting to note that Burbridge School shares a campus with Koondoola Primary School and there may be opportunities for inclusive activities.

**Parents and Citizens’ Association**

There is a small but active P&C Association lead by a hard working President which organises social and fundraising events. The P&C offers support to families and is the major fund raising arm of the school, leading to improvements in equipment and facilities.
Value Added or Highlights

AIR (Artists in Residence) Grant ($30,000): This grant allowed us to work with a team of performing artists to produce a performance called the Jub Jub Tree and explore the benefits of sensory theatre for our students. This innovative project was very well received by staff and students alike. The artists involved in this ground breaking project have successfully adapted the experiences to the needs of our students. The outcome is a credit to all who were involved.

Admin Awards: The school community congratulated Deputy Principal, Ros Hamling on receiving recognition for her Leadership from the West Australian Education Support Principals and Administrators Association at their annual awards night. Parents and staff appreciate how hard she works on behalf of the school and its students. This is recognition from her peers on her contribution to the education support sector as a whole.

School Principal, Mr John Exeter was named as one of the winners of the inaugural Murdoch University Distinguished Alumni Awards. These awards were presented to 4 recipients in recognition of their professional and community service achievements. John was chosen from a field of more than 100 exceptional candidates. John has spent many years at the forefront of Special Education in Western Australia, and the school community is very proud of his outstanding service and achievements.

Innovations Grant – Tech for Tots ($27,600): This grant enabled us to engage experts from the Independent Living Centre to work with parents and our staff on enhancing access to ICT particularly in the early intervention area.

Our school was successful in obtaining funding from the Australian Government’s National Solar Schools program. We have used this funding along with $12,000 from the State Government to install a 10.75 kw system.

The Administration Area and Medical Centre have had an upgrade of the air conditioning system.
Board member Darryll Ashworth’s contribution to the school and its students was recognised at a Town of Victoria Park’s Volunteers Night. Darryll was presented with a plaque and thanked for his extremely valuable ongoing commitment.

Our School joined forces with the Independent Living Centre to sponsor a Workshop lead by Gayle Porter on Pragmatically Organised Dynamic Display (PODD), and a large number of staff members were able to attend because of generous funding received from CECWA.

**Capital works:** The conversion of an old toilet block into a laundry has just commenced and we are expecting an additional transportable building to house the library.

The exemplary provision for students in the 0-4 years age group, with Parent & Child and My Time programs operating ensures they have the earliest possible intervention and a positive start to school life.

With the assistance of the P&C, a number of iPads have been purchased and staff have been researching and being professionally developed on their application for students.

School staff have completed a major review of contemporary resources and materials for the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy which will guide budget expenditure and program development in these two Learning Areas in 2012.

Our annual Quiz Night was a credit to all those involved and ably lead by P&C President Liz Green, and raised a sum over $7,200.

Students from the Belmay Satellite Class provided weather readings to Channel Nine for the week August 29th to September 2nd.

An artist from the community has helped students to produce a tile mural which is to be situated in the playground.
The school web site is regularly updated and a source of information to families.

Staff have had access to appropriate national and international professional learning and development conferences.

The Conductive Education Centre of WA has donated almost $28,000 for an upgrade of the sensory room. This will make it more interactive and challenging for students.

The second booklet in the Getting Started series focussing on Using Visual Systems to promote PLAY has been completed. We are distributing copies and a PDF can be downloaded from the web page.

The parent car park has been completed.

Two classes regularly participated in Riding for the Disabled (RDA) during which time they were taught specific skills such as mounting and dismounting a horse safely, riding with control and maintaining focus. The program also assisted in developing coordination, balance and posture whilst promoting muscle development.

Bike Week activities, with the support of staff from the Town of Victoria Park and the West Australian Disabled Sports Association (WADSA), continue to be a very popular annual event that promotes independence, exercise and healthy living.
Areas for Improvement

DIMENSION 1: Student Learning – Engagement, Progress and Achievement

*The school acts to improve performance based on the appropriate analysis of quality data gathered about the standards of student achievement.*

- A more cohesive approach to evaluation and assessment will ensure a whole school system and build on good practice in this area.
- Continue to refine whole-school target setting so that it is more consistent and rigorous throughout the school.
- Where appropriate, make better use of comparative assessment information so the school can demonstrate more clearly how well students make progress.

DIMENSION 2: Effective Teaching

*The school delivers learning experiences that are outcome focused and responsive to the needs of students.*

- Further increase non-verbal students' capacity for communicating with others through the increasing use of AAC including electronic whiteboards and IPADS.
- To embed literacy learning strategies (like 4 blocks) and practices across the school.
- Enhance staff expertise in the use of the equipment in the sensory room so that students gain the maximum benefit.

DIMENSION 3: Leading and Managing the School

*School leadership is committed, responsive and collaborative.*

- Teacher performance management to focus on leadership, classroom management and assessment and evaluation.

DIMENSION 4: Safe and Inclusive Environment

*The school offers a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment*

- To further improve student behaviour and whole school behaviour management by training staff members to recognise, interpret and respond to challenging behaviours in proactive ways. (Positive Behaviour Support).
- Both Music and Physical Education subjects do not have a specialist room and therefore teachers have to undertake the time consuming chore of transporting equipment to and
from sessions around the school. The lack of specialist space is an acknowledged problem and something the school would like to solve.

- Likewise due to the growth in student numbers we do not have a suitable covered area for school assemblies.

**DIMENSION 5: Governance and Accountability**

5a) *School staff are motivated, engaged and competent.*

- Provide support and encouragement for an increase to the number of qualified Level 3 teachers at the school.

5b) *The school’s financial and physical resources are managed to optimize learning outcomes*

- To work collaboratively with Schools Resourcing Branch on ways to fine tune the Schools Plus application and consequent allocation of funds process.

5c) *The school responds to the strategic directions of the Plan for Government School Education.*

**DIMENSION 6: Engaging Families and Community**

*The school operates in partnership with the community.*

- To further investigate the Hub School model whereby our staff expertise can be a resource to other schools — both education support and mainstream — through the Teacher Development School process.

- Continue to expand the capability of the Conductive Education program and develop and maintain its integrity by seeking relevant professional development for staff including the Teacher Conductors.

- In 2012 we move to 3 days of Kindergarten provision and a number of families have shown interest in the provision being provided in a more inclusive setting. We are following several possible options.

- To set up processes and procedures so that Board members rely less on information provided by the Principal when evaluating the school’s effectiveness and find out more for themselves. E.g. Assign each member a particular responsibility to check and report back on to the committee once a year.
• Search for possible funding options so that students can have the option of Out of School Care.

In Summary

As a result of the school’s rigorous self-evaluation and the commitment of all staff and the School Board to wanting the best for students, the school is extremely well placed to improve in future.

Discover more about Carson Street School at:

www.carsonst.wa.edu.au or www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolonline/home.do
Carson Street School is an independent public school.