



Research into Action

AN ANXIOUS CHILD IS NOT A LEARNING CHILD

**Specialized Staff, Facilities and Learning Experiences
Excellence in Education Facilitation for Learners with Complex Multifaceted Disabilities**

Murray Bridge Special School 2018 annual report to the school community



**Government
of South Australia**
Department for Education

Murray Bridge Special School Number: 116

Partnership: Murraylands

Name of school principal:

Vicki Smith

Name of governing council chair:

Suzanne Moss

Date of endorsement:

07/03/2019

School context and highlights

Murray Bridge Special School is a specialist public Reception to Year Seven school which provides specialist staff and a specialist learning environment for learners with complex multifaceted disabilities. Collectively these learners are referred to as having Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. (CLDD)

"Children and young people with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD) include those with co-existing conditions (for example autism and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder) or profound and multiple learning disabilities. However, they also include children who have newly begun to populate our schools – among them those who have difficulties arising from premature birth, have survived infancy due to advanced medical interventions, have disabilities arising from parental substance and alcohol abuse, and/or have rare chromosomal disorders.

Many may also be affected by compounding factors such as multi-sensory impairment or mental ill-health, or require invasive procedures, such as supported nutrition, assisted ventilation and rescue medication. Children and young people with CLDD are a distinctive group of learners requiring educators to make personalized professional responses to their profile of learning need. We have to equip teaching professionals to offer high quality education to these young people to prevent their disenfranchisement from the school system. We need to remodel our pedagogy and generate teaching strategies which will embrace them as learners." (Professor Barry Carpenter)

Highlights for the 2018 year include:

- *Continued refining school pedagogy to clearly reflect the global research practitioners such as Carpenter, Greenspan, McDonald, Nielsen and Barber

- *Steady movement forward embedding the Australian Curriculum into our assessment, recording, reporting and review processes

- *Recognition of ANOTHER year of Excellence in Participation in the Premier's Reading Challenge with whole of school participation.

- *The continued development of a range of specifically designed and bespoke learning tools to support literacy and numeracy achievement.

- *The successful achievement of one of our Learning Facilitators becoming a Nationally Accredited Highly Accomplished Teacher.

- *The Department External School Review process and outcomes.

Governing council report

Creative ways to keep Council members and all families connected still remains a challenge. However being a small Special school requires and enables direct connection to families around all school business.

It can be challenging to get attendance at meetings as members often have other family commitments that clash with meetings. Many families prefer not to be pressured by another meeting or commitment.

A major decision in 2018 was to continue site funding over Department allocation of additional learning facilitator and school services officer time. This decision has been made to make class sizes smaller and give more individual support to learners.

A successful program that will be continued on in 2019 is the additional School Services Officer time to support individual children with communication and social development.

The additional Learning Facilitator and SSO support comes directly out of our school budget savings and reserves.

Another major decision has been continued purchases of very specialized pieces of equipment to help our children learn to the best of their capabilities. As this is a specialist market the equipment required is extraordinarily expensive.

The school was awarded another year of 'Excellence in Participation' in the Premier's Reading Challenge with the whole school participating. It demonstrates the importance of reading for all children no matter what their disability.

The school was reviewed in 2018 and it gave the school community opportunity to feed back directly to the review team how they felt about their school. The feedback about the school has been overwhelmingly supportive and positive. There are good directions for moving forward in the report.

The Graduation of our year sevens who have been at the school since starting either in reception grade or year two has been a very proud yet anxious time. It was a special occasion and they were handed on to the next stage of their schooling with a tinge of sadness and best wishes for the future.

Improvement planning and outcomes

Our young people are continuously learning how to make decisions about their own care and learning. School staffs must explicitly teach these skills. In 2019 a priority in our Site Improvement Plan is the exploration of the social communication application 'See-Saw' to enhance student voice and sharing in literacy and numeracy.

In 2019 Communication (literacy) will again be a priority for improvement in our Site Improvement Plan. Our goal is to increase number of learners using comprehensive communication systems such as 'Boardmaker' to participate in two way communications.

In order to identify clear learning pathways every learner has a current One Plan. Our school community collaborates to set individual learning aims and develop short term goals to successfully achieve them. Setting aims and goals is a complex task and we will continue to focus on our young people's active participation wherever possible in the process.

In 2018 data has shown all learners have made progress toward achieving the goals identified in their One Plans. The challenge will continue to be identifying the relationship between the specialist programs used by the school and the content of the Australian Curriculum.

As a school community we continue to analyse and incorporate feedback to improve on the methods we use to report back to our school community regarding our learners progress toward learning aims, short term goals and the activities used to achieve these goals. In 2019 there will be changes to the reporting format to best reflect and mesh community feedback and Department requirements.

To support Literacy and Numeracy outcomes in 2019 the school will focus on increasing staff understanding of learning programs that develop concepts and understandings in our learners so they can successfully access the content of the Australian Curriculum.

Our research based success orientated learning programs have proven to be appropriate for all our learners with complex multifaceted disabilities. Annual data collection and analysis for 2018 of individual learner achievement in literacy and numeracy indicates improvement.

To continue improvement in 2019 the school will continue to use programs from both Autism Australia and Learning4all to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for learners.

A focus area for professional learning for 2019 will be ensuring staff are able to make clear connections between programs for learners with complex multifaceted disabilities and connections to the content of the Australian Curriculum.

2019 will also involve professional learning in 'Boardmaker' and 'See-Saw' in order to support the goals in our Site Improvement Plan.

In 2019 a continued focus will be to promote to our families and school community the importance of being literate and developing a love of reading in our learners.

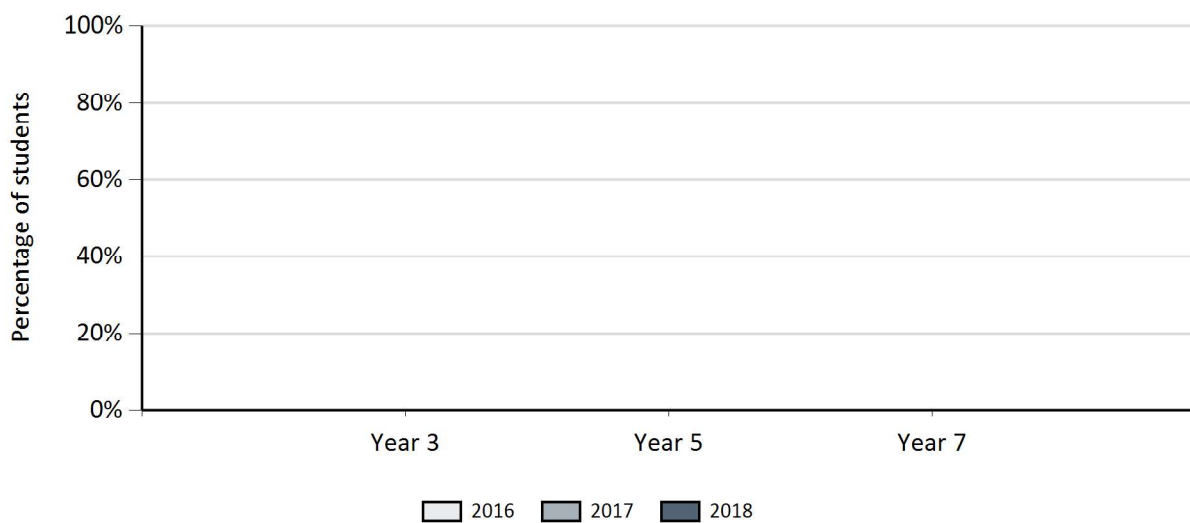
In 2018 all learners continued to participate in the Child Protection program 'Right To Know'. All of our learners are currently working within Level One -All About Me. Keeping our learners safe is a school priority, so the program will continue to be a part of each learners program in 2019.

Performance Summary

NAPLAN Proficiency

The Dept. for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) is defined as children and young people progressing and achieving at or above their appropriate year level. For NAPLAN, this is students achieving in proficiency bands 1 or more above the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy. The graph below identifies the percentage of non-exempt students enrolled in the school at the time of NAPLAN testing, who have demonstrated achievement in NAPLAN proficiency bands at or above the SEA for reading and numeracy.

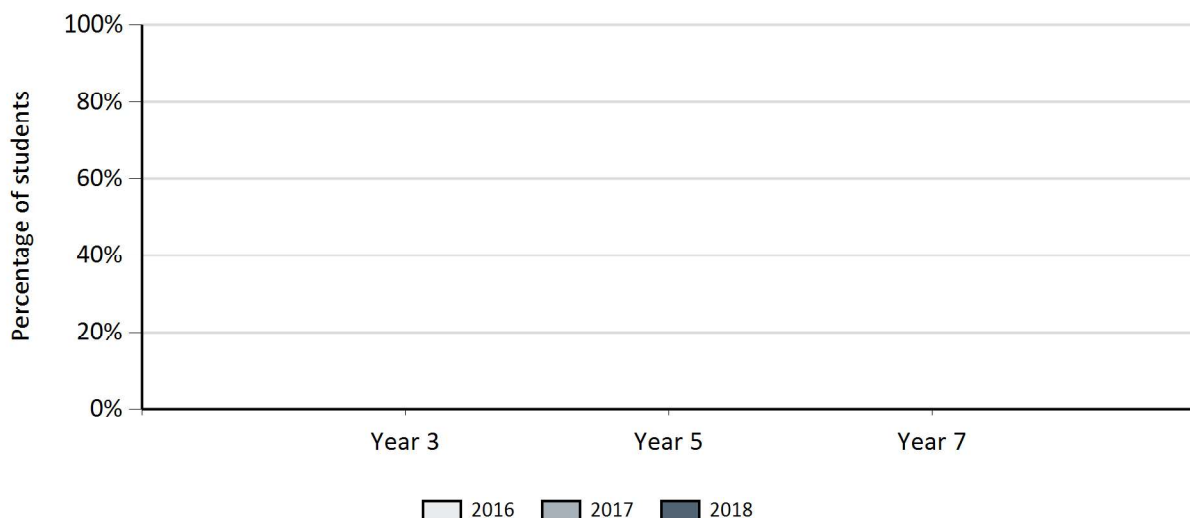
Reading



Data Source: Dept. for Education special extract from National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) SA TAA data holdings, August 2018.

*NOTE: Reporting of data not provided when less than six students in the respective cohort. A blank graph may imply student count being less than six across all cohorts.

Numeracy



Data Source: Dept. for Education special extract from National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) SA TAA data holdings, August 2018.

*NOTE: Reporting of data not provided when less than six students in the respective cohort. A blank graph may imply student count being less than six across all cohorts.

NAPLAN progress

The data below represents the growth of students from 2016 to 2018 in the NAPLAN test relative to students with the same original score, presented in quartiles.

Reading

NAPLAN progression	Year 3-5	Year 5-7	State (average)
Upper progress group	*	*	25%
Middle progress group	*	*	50%
Lower progress group	*	*	25%

Data Source: Dept. for Education special extract from Student DataWarehouse, August 2018.

*NOTE: Reporting of data not provided when less than six students in the respective cohort. Due to rounding of percentages, data may not add up to 100%.

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Data Source: Dept. for Education special extract from Student DataWarehouse, August 2018.

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NAPLAN upper two bands achievement

This measure shows the number of non-exempt students enrolled at the time of NAPLAN testing who have demonstrated achievement in the relevant NAPLAN higher bands.

	No. of students who sat the test [^]		No. of students achieving in the upper two bands		% of students achieving in the upper two bands ^{**}	
	Reading	Numeracy	Reading	Numeracy	Reading	Numeracy
Year 3 2018	*	*	*	*	*	*
Year 3 2016-18 average	*	*	*	*	*	*
Year 5 2018	*	*	*	*	*	*
Year 5 2016-18 average	*	*	*	*	*	*
Year 7 2018	*	*	*	*	*	*
Year 7 2016-18 average	*	*	*	*	*	*

Data Source: Dept. for Education special extract from NAPLAN SA TAA data holdings, August 2018.

[^]includes absent and withdrawn students.

*Reporting of data not provided when less than six students in the respective cohort.

^{**}Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

School performance comment

To track and monitor every learners growth all learners enrolled at Murray Bridge Special School receive vigorous, appropriate and ongoing assessment to specifically pinpoint their entry into learning and to provide the most challenging and relevant experiences for learning. In most cases an assessment for learning takes a minimum of approximately 10 weeks to complete before draft One Plans can be developed.

To value, respect and accommodate our learners' learning and achievement, the staffs at Murray Bridge Special School use the Murray Bridge Special School Individual Learner Developmental Checklist and Record Book. (collated from: SERU Developmental scales and Resource Folder; The Macquarie Program for Developmentally Delayed Children; The Carolina Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs; HELP Strands Curriculum-Based Developmental Assessment and Down Syndrome South Australia Programs)

The Brigance Inventory of Early Development 11 (an assessment tool used by Educational Psychologists) may be used at points of transition i.e. reception, year two to three and year seven as a tool of moderation.

Regardless of learner complexity, by using the Murray Bridge Special School Individual Learner Developmental Checklist and Record Book we are able to obtain an entry point to learning for all of our learners.

Regardless of learner complexity, by using the Murray Bridge Special School Individual Learner Developmental Checklist and Record Book we are able to measure quite specifically learner improvement.

Learning Facilitators are able to clearly track and monitor our learners learning by using the Murray Bridge Individual Learners Developmental Checklist and Record Book.

In 2018 ABLES began a roll-out across the State as the mandated assessment tool for Special Education. Our site participated in professional learning sessions in ABLES to support staffs understanding. Feedback from our site External School review has suggested we continue to use the Murray Bridge Special Individual Learner Developmental Checklist, and use ABLES to value add if required.

Global research provides clear direction to enact changes in pedagogical practice and identify and enact clear intervention processes for learners with multifaceted, complex learning challenges. All noteworthy researchers in the field of young people with complex multifaceted learning challenges (Carpenter, Nielsen, Greenspan, Barber, and MacDonald) agree a carefully considered engineered environment must be the number one priority for a site to enable enhanced learning opportunities. Therefore based on evidence from current research and school data collection and analysis around the current and projected student cohort, our school improvement cycle includes continued work toward engineering our learning environments to continuously improve learning outcomes.

Risk assessments in all areas of learning and care plan facilitation are regularly completed and reviewed. This is done to assist in selecting the most appropriate facilitation strategy to achieve improved learning outcomes.

Attendance

Year level	2015	2016	2017	2018
Reception	80.0%	100.0%		
Primary other	82.5%	87.3%	87.1%	88.2%
Secondary other	62.5%			
Total	82.4%	87.4%	87.1%	88.2%

Data Source: Site Performance Reporting System (SPER), Semester 1 attendance.

Note: A blank cell indicates there were no students enrolled.

Attendance comment

Analysis of attendance data reflects the overwhelming majority of absenteeism in 2018 is the result of illness and/or hospitalization.

For many of our learners illness and/or hospitalization has been major and of great significance to themselves and their families.

We have worked extremely hard with families over the years to encourage them to keep their child at home when they are unwell, rather than send them to school where duty of care is then compromised and quality nursing care cannot be provided. This is reflected in the data.

An increase in appropriate attendance is evident.

Behaviour management comment

The Department Guidelines of Suspension, Exclusion and Expulsion apply to all of our learners.

The school has clearly documented and published policies and practice regarding Anti Bullying, and inappropriate behaviour between learners, or learners/staff.

The school acknowledges the relationship between complex multifaceted learning disabilities, communication and behaviour.

In 2018 there were no suspensions, exclusions or expulsions.

Much of the success is attributed to research which is reflected in our school pedagogies e.g. strategically engineered adult responses to learner communications and strategically engineered physical environments to reduce anxiety and increase focus to learn.

Client opinion summary

The surveys returned to the school in 2018 and the results from interviews conducted during the External review indicate a high level of satisfaction of families with the service provided by our school.

Families demonstrate frustration at the school with processes not controlled by the school, for example the Department transport assistance scheme. There is still a strong perception enrolment in a Special setting should automatically entitle a learner and their family to particular services.

Some families believe the Department special options staffing allocation in general should be much higher.

Some families would like private providers (funded through the NDIS) to be able to provide their service from the school rather than visit the family home, or families having to pick their child up and take them to the individual therapist or service purchased through NDIS funding.

Ongoing discussion and exploration with school staff continues to indicate they cannot meet the Department guidelines (based on the Nylan report) set for hosting private providers on site.

It is an indicator of the high quality staff at the school, as presenting challenges have been embraced with professionalism, deep inquiry and improved learning outcomes for all our learners.

All Learning Facilitators and most School Services Officers positively acknowledge the research based approach to learning, and whole school agreements such as the "Holding the Line" around minimal speech which relate to pedagogy used by the school, have had a significant positive effect on our learners development.

Staff acknowledge the personal (psychological) and professional impact of delivering learning and care to our young people and their families.

Intended destination

Leave Reason	School	
	Number	%
Employment	0	NA
Interstate/Overseas	0	NA
Other	0	NA
Seeking Employment	0	NA
Tertiary/TAFE/Training	0	NA
Transfer to Non-Govt School	0	NA
Transfer to SA Govt School	6	100.0%
Unknown	0	NA
Unknown (TG - Not Found)	0	NA

Data Source: Education Department School Administration System (EDSAS) Data extract Term 3 2018.

Relevant history screening

At two separate 'random' Department audits our site received an 'outstanding' rating for compliance with screening verification responsibilities.

Our site continues to sight and record clearance information on HRS systems and maintain copies of clearances if workers are not connected to these systems, for example CYH workers.

Staff verify the identity of first time visiting Department or Women's and Children's Health Network employees and note verification next to their name in the site's sign in book.

Our site maintains the accuracy of screening information on HRS and in site files.

Teacher qualifications and workforce composition

All teachers at this school are qualified and registered with the SA Teachers Registration Board.

Qualification Level	Number of Qualifications
Bachelor Degrees or Diplomas	12
Post Graduate Qualifications	6

Data Source: Dept. for Education HR Management Reporting System, extracted Term 3 2018.

Please note: Staff who have more than 1 qualification will be counted more than once in the above qualification table. Therefore the total number of staff by qualification type may be more than the total number of teaching staff.

Workforce composition including Indigenous staff

	Teaching Staff		Non-Teaching Staff	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Full-Time Equivalents	0.0	5.6	0.9	3.5
Persons	0	6	1	5

Data Source: Dept. for Education HR Management Reporting System, extracted Term 3 2018.

Financial statement

Funding Source	Amount
Grants: State	\$493,025.87
Grants: Commonwealth	
Parent Contributions	\$5,170.00
Fund Raising	
Other	

Data Source: Education Department School Administration System (EDSAS).

2018 school annual report: Tier 2 funding report*

*Tier 2 funding provides additional resources to support students who are unlikely to obtain the desired outcomes without further support.

Tier 2 funding section	Tier 2 category (where applicable to the site)	Briefly describe how the 2018 funding was used to improve the relevant Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) outcomes	Outcomes achieved or progress made towards these outcomes
Targeted funding for individual students	Improved behaviour management and engagement	Additional School Services Officer time was allocated to support school programs in the areas of Communication and Relationship development	A measurable reduction in anxiety related learner communications
	Improved outcomes for students with an additional language or dialect	N/A	
	Improved outcomes for students with disabilities	DSF was used to support individual learners as described in goals negotiated with local Support Services.	Goals negotiated for individual learners with local Support Services achieved.
Targeted funding for groups of students	Improved outcomes for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rural and isolated students Aboriginal students numeracy and literacy including early years support First language maintenance and development Students taking alternative pathways Students with learning difficulties grant	Professional learning in achieving continuous improvement for our learners in Literacy and Numeracy outcomes was provided for all staff. Specific learning opportunities were made available to all Learning Facilitators to improve their skills and understanding in delivering targeted learning programs in Literacy and Numeracy and the relationship to the Content of the Australian Curriculum. Continued learning was provided to all staff in refining 'One Plan' processes. Professional learning and additional time resources was provided to Learning Facilitators regarding the ICT skills required to complete 'One Plan' processes.	Achievement of literacy and numeracy short term goals in all Learning Plans. One Plans for all learners all completed within time frames and on-line.
	Australian Curriculum		
Other discretionary funding	Aboriginal languages programs initiatives	N/A	
	Better schools funding	Additional Learning Facilitator and School Services Officer time targeted toward the development of specialized literacy and numeracy learning activities.	Achievement of literacy and numeracy short term goals in all One Plans
	Specialist school reporting (as required)	N/A	
	Improved outcomes for gifted students	N/A	
	Primary school counsellor (if applicable)	Additional School Services Officer time was allocated to support school programs in the areas of Communication and Relationship development	A measurable reduction in anxiety related learner communications