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MUSEC SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

ABN 90 952 801 237

Macquarie University Special Education Centre
Building X5A
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109

A registered non-government primary school: Kindergarten to Year Six for children with disabilities.

MUSEC ADVISORY BOARD

Professor Richard Henry (Chair) Executive Dean, Faculty of Human Sciences
Professor Sakkie Pretorius Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Dr Peter Whiteman Head of Department, Institute of Early Childhood
Dr Mark Carter Associate Professor and Director, MUSEC
Dr Trevor Clark Director, Education and Research, Autism Spectrum Australia
Ms Geraldine Gray State Coordinator, Special Learning Needs, Catholic Education Commission NSW
Mr Jason Miezis Director, Educational Services, NSW Department of Education and Communities
Dr Alison Madeleine Lecturer, Postgraduate Co-ordinator and Academic Staff representative, MUSEC
Dr Sally Howell Principal, MUSEC School
Ms Anne Murdoch Business Manager and Professional Staff representative, MUSEC

The MUSEC Governing Rules and Advisory Board Charter (replacing the previous constitution) were approved in October 2012 and the Advisory Board was re-established in 2013. The Advisory Board meets twice per year.

MUSEC CENTRE STAFF

Academic Staff
Dr Mark Carter Associate Professor, Director
Dr Jennifer Stephenson Associate Professor (p/t)
Dr Alison Madeleine Lecturer
Dr Kathleen Tait Lecturer
Dr Toni Hopper Lecturer (p/t)
A MESSAGE FROM MUSEC ADVISORY BOARD

Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) School is a community outreach activity of MUSEC that receives advice from the MUSEC Advisory Board, MUSEC Management Committee and MUSEC academics. This annual report fulfils statutory reporting requirements specified in Schedule 2 of the Australian Government’s Schools Assistance (Learning Together-Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) regulation 2005 and the educational and financial reporting requirements for the 2015 reporting year, as laid out in Section 3.10 of the Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual available from the Board of Studies.

The MUSEC School Principal was responsible for co-ordinating the final preparation and distribution of the Annual Report. For all reporting areas the Principal was responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of the data and has provided the relevant information for inclusion in the report. Financial information in the report has been provided by the School Business Manager. The report has been prepared electronic format to send to the Board of Studies and is available for download on the MUSEC School website.

From the end of 2015 the MUSEC Advisory Board has been disestablished in its current form, pending the amalgamation of MUSEC’s parent department (The Institute of Early Childhood) with the School of Education into a combined department within the University’s Faculty of Human Sciences. A separate School Board has been established from the beginning of 2016 to oversee the operation of the school.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Through its programs MUSEC School:

- Optimised students’ development across developmental domains
- Accelerated progress in Literacy and Numeracy
- Provided successful learning experiences for students
- Worked collaboratively with parents in the education of their children
- Supported parents through information sessions
- Developed assessments and programs for students K-6 with disabilities
- Worked collaboratively with therapists and other professionals for the benefit of students.

From the beginning of 2013 the school has operated with four classes of 10-12 students per class. Typically two classes cater for years K-3 and two classes cater for years 3-6. Staffing for each class comprises a Master Special Education Teacher, Special Education Teacher and Classroom Assistant. Additional support across classes is provided by the school’s part time Speech Pathologist, the MUSEC Senior Technology Officer and a Teachers’ Assistant. The school is registered with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Education Standards (BOSTE) as both a K-6 School and a School for Students of a Kind.

At MUSEC School we adopt a non-categorical approach to teaching. This means that all instructional decisions are made on the basis of a student’s demonstrated skill level rather than according to their diagnosed disability.

Curriculum based assessments are employed in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy for the purposes of formative evaluation to guide instructional decision-making.

To ensure effective classroom behaviour management and to facilitate high levels of student academic engagement the principles and procedures of Positive Teaching are practised.
At MUSEC School the major focus is on literacy and numeracy learning. The six key learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and Creative Arts provide a context in which the students’ learning experiences are provided. The generalisation of literacy and numeracy skills is embedded across the curriculum. Individual student needs are identified and addressed through the Individual Education Plan process and the development of student’s communication skills, social skills and independent work habits is a priority.

Features of the school program include:
- Intensive, individualised small group instruction in literacy and numeracy by specialist teachers;
- Research-based practice;
- Close monitoring of student progress involving curriculum-based assessment;
- Program adjustment based on progress ensuring a truly individualised program;
- Parent education in helping the student at home;
- A comprehensive Individual Learning Plan process;
- Transition to the student’s next educational setting.

The educational programs within the MUSEC School have three major functions. Firstly, they operate as models demonstrating the most effective forms of special education practice. These facilities allow for the demonstration of exemplary Special Education programs whereby students of the University and persons from outside may observe those working with students with special education needs. Secondly, university students completing Special Education teacher education courses directly benefit from involvement in the programs and have first hand experience of working with these children as part of their course requirements. Thirdly, research and development of effective instructional procedures are on-going features of the school.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE OR EQUIVALENT TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

As we are a special school, students may be withdrawn or exempted from statewide tests and examinations at their parents’ request.

At the time of the NAPLAN 2015 there were ten (10) students enrolled in Year 3 and seven (7) students enrolled in Year 5. Four (4) Year 3 students and two (2) Year 5 students sat the NAPLAN.

The Year 3 students achieved results in the range of Bands 1 to 4 in the Literacy assessments, and Bands 1 to 2 in the Numeracy assessment.

The Year 5 students achieved results in the range of Bands 3 to 4 in the Literacy assessments, and Bands 3 to 4 in the Numeracy assessment.

Comparison with benchmark data is not appropriate for students in this school.

As we are a special school, students may be withdrawn or exempted from statewide tests and examinations at their parents’ request.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHER STANDARDS

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teachers at MUSEC School have access to a wide range of resources and professional expertise, at no cost. In addition to the high level of in-house professional development conducted, an average amount of $147 per teacher was spent on professional development.

Post-graduate studies
One teacher completed the Masters in Special Education during 2015. Two teachers completed the Masters of Research. Both Masters of Research studies were implemented in the MUSEC School.

Conferences
One teacher attended the two-day CHERI Conference and one teacher attended and presented at the two-day SEPLA Conference. One teacher attended the two-day AUC Macintosh Conference. 5 teachers attended a MultiLit Conference.

MUSEC SCHOOL 2015 Annual Report 23/8/16
Curriculum Development
Teachers attended a variety of Macquarie University Seminars and Macquarie University Public Lectures. The focus of some of these included teaching comprehension to students with reading difficulties and teaching expressive writing. One teacher attended a two day MiniLit training course and one teacher attended a workshop entitled “The App Guide to Emotions and Autism”.

Teachers undertook online modules relating to the new BOSTES History and Science syllabi.

Epilepsy Awareness
All school staff attended a half-day Epilepsy Awareness course presented by the Epilepsy Association.

First Aid Training
All school staff attended a half-day First Aid course.

School Governance
The School Principal and the Business Manager attended a one-day symposium on school governance conducted by the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

TEACHER STANDARDS
The staff of MUSEC School in 2015 included a principal, four master special education teachers, five special education teachers, classroom and teachers’ assistants and a speech and language pathologist, backed by technical, administrative and research support staff. In 2015 there were four classes: Primary 1, Primary 2, Primary 3 and Primary 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines or</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who have qualifications as graduates from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications or</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourteen of the teachers in the first two categories have a Masters in Special Education. Two teachers have a Postgraduate Diploma in Special Education.

STAFF OF MUSEC SCHOOL

Sally Howell Principal
Sally Huck Master Special Education Teacher
Marie James Master Special Education Teacher
Sara Mills Master Special Education Teacher
Anna Schneider Master Special Education Teacher
Catherine Favot Speech Pathologist (p/t)
Robert Davies Senior Technology Officer
Candice Mariz Special Education Teacher
Rebecca Dark Special Education Teacher
Sarah Kirkwood Special Education Teacher
Nicola Berrick Special Education Teacher (p/t)
Ying Sng Special Education Teacher (p/t)
Betty Ho Research/Classroom Officer (p/t)
Ann George Teachers’ Assistant
Danielle Burrett Classroom Assistant
Dominique Gibb Classroom Assistant
Avice Renouf Classroom Assistant
Ping Shu Classroom Assistant
TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION RATES
In 2015 the average daily staff attendance rate was 98.4%. The percentage of staff retained from 2014 was 100%.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE
Ninety-five percent of students attended school on average each school day in 2015. The average attendance in 2014 was 95%.

MUSEC SCHOOL ENROLMENT POLICIES AND PROFILES

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY
Students of primary school age (Kindergarten to Year 6) satisfying, at least one of the disability criteria below, are considered for admission to MUSEC School. Parents seeking enrolment for their child, submit a completed application form (including all necessary documentation). If the child is considered a suitable candidate, an interview between parents, child and MUSEC personnel will follow. Placement on the Eligibility List is based on the application and interview. Consideration of the existing class structure is an additional factor determining whether or not an application can be accommodated. Continuing enrolment is subject to the student’s adherence to the school rules and the payment of all school fees.

Please note that all students are required to provide a psychologist’s report stating Full IQ score regardless of disability.

Disabilities – Documentation Required
Disability categories are listed below. Disability documentation must be provided at the time of application and should be recent, an assessment having been conducted within the last 12 months.

Intellectual Disability: A report from a registered psychologist/educational psychologist stating that the student has a full-scale IQ score of approximately two standard deviations or more below the mean on an approved individual test of intelligence (e.g. a score of 70 or below on the WISC). There must be information on the assessment of adaptive skills and school performance (where applicable) consistent with this range of scores.

Language Disability: A report from a speech pathologist that indicates the student has an assessed receptive or expressive language disorder. The report must include the results of at least one relevant standardised language test that allows for the reporting of both receptive and expressive language skills. At least one of the scales (receptive or expressive) must indicate a standard score of 70 (2nd percentile) or less. The report must indicate that the disorder significantly affects communication and diminishes the capacity to achieve academically. There must be documented evidence of the development and delivery of an intensive learning program assisted by a support teacher, or relevant specialist in the prior-to-school setting in the case of a student entering kindergarten. Difficulties in communication and academic achievement must be the direct result of the disorder.

Autism: A current report from a specialist medical practitioner or registered psychologist with appropriate clinical experience. The report must detail the nature of the student’s disorder. Documented evidence must indicate a developmental disability affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, that significantly affects the child’s ability to learn. There must be information of a functional assessment consistent with the student’s disorder.

In Receipt of Special Education Services / Integration Funding: Students who are currently enrolled in special education services in a special school or unit provided by the NSW Government (i.e. IM/IO, Autism, Multicategorical classes), or who receive integration funding, may be considered eligible. In such cases, a letter from the school where the child is enrolled indicating this to be the case is sufficient for the purposes of documentation.
PROFILES: STUDENT POPULATION

In 2015, there were forty-four (44) students from Kindergarten to Year 6, enrolled at MUSEC School. All students had a documented disability. The students came from a wide geographical area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>No. Students</th>
<th>Adults per classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STUDENT POLICIES

**STUDENT WELFARE POLICIES**

All MUSEC POLICIES, PROCEDURES and GUIDELINES are written in the context of the student’s special educational needs.

#### STUDENT WELFARE POLICIES

Student welfare in MUSEC School:
- encompasses everything the school community does to meet the personal, social and learning needs of students
- creates a safe, caring school environment in which students are nurtured as they learn
- is achieved through the total school curriculum and the way it is delivered
- incorporates effective discipline
- incorporates preventive health and social skills programs
- stresses the value of collaborative appropriate intervention when problems are identified
- provides ongoing educational services to support students
- recognises the diversity within the school community and provides programs and support which acknowledge difference and promote harmony
- recognises the role that the school plays as a resource to link families with community support services

MUSEC School will provide effective learning and teaching within a secure, well-managed environment, in partnership with parents and the wider school community. The objectives and outcomes pertaining to the student welfare policies therefore relate to:
- Effective learning and teaching
- Positive climate and good discipline
- Community participation.

#### SUMMARY STATEMENT ON POLICIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGES TO POLICY</th>
<th>ACCESS TO POLICY</th>
<th>STAFF RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DATE DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During 2013 all School Policies, Procedures and Guidelines were reviewed in preparation for, Board of Studies (BOSTES) Registration requirements. In 2014 adjustments were made to policies as requested by BOSTES</td>
<td>MUSEC SCHOOL POLICIES, PROCEDURES and GUIDELINES MANUAL (2014) All Master Special Education Teachers and staff are provided with a folder containing all school policies. A School Policy folder is available at the MUSEC reception desk. Copies of all school policies are available from the School Business Manager.</td>
<td>All staff.</td>
<td>Revised policies were signed off by the Vice-Chancellor in Term 1, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCIPLINE POLICIES
MUSEC School recognises that in many instances inappropriate behaviour has a communicative function.

As such ‘discipline’ means responding to inappropriate behaviour through a process of interpretation and positive intervention. Under no circumstances is corporal punishment to be used.

At MUSEC School, students are taught about: what is good to do, what is not good, what is safe, what pleases other people, what angers or hurts other people. The classroom program encourages students to cooperate and enhances their self-esteem and ability to interact with others, thereby providing a positive classroom environment that fosters appropriate behaviour.

Self-discipline can only be achieved if the students are aware of the limits of acceptable behaviour. Rules are established and vary across the school depending on the age of the students. They are expressed positively, displayed in a visual format, few in number and are consistently reinforced by each staff member.

REPORTING COMPLAINTS, RESOLVING GRIEVANCES POLICIES
A professional response to suggestions, complaints and allegations promotes fairness, leads to improvements and creates confidence in the outcome. Complaints, as well as compliments and other constructive feedback, create opportunities for an organisation to improve its services and prevent future problems.

In relation to parents: In the first instance all parent concerns should be directed to the child’s teacher. If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome following a complaint, an appointment should be made with the Principal to discuss the grievance.

In relation to staff: The Macquarie University Human Resources Website provides details of the Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures, the staff Grievances Policy and Procedures.
### SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

#### ACHIEVEMENT OF PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE SCHOOL’S 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Teaching & Learning   | • Involvement of the teaching staff and students in research projects, which inform classroom practice.  
• Registration of the school as a School for Children of a Kind for a further 4 years (to align with K-6 registration)  
• Further develop IEP database for developing IEPS and reporting to parents  
• Refinement of monitoring procedures to inform teaching of all IEP goals  
• Development of scope and sequences of vocabulary and concepts within KLA units (HSIE, PDHPE, Science)  
• Provide greater support to parents in terms of future education options | • Three research projects conducted in 2015  
• School registered as a School for Students of a Kind for 4 years  
• IEP goals and strategies developed and refined for literacy numeracy, language, classroom skills, social/play skills, self help skills, ICT and transition  
• Monitoring procedures and templates developed and/or refined  
• Language and Vocabulary Scope and Sequences developed  
• Hosted an information afternoon on High School options |
| Staff Development     | • Introduction of NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum Science  
• Epilepsy training  
• CPR training | • Teachers have undertaken the module: Planning and Programming: NSW Science and Technology Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum K-6 online 2015  
• All teachers participated in Epilepsy and CPR Training |
| Facilities & Resources| • Introduce specific Apps to support numeracy  
• Computer upgrades in classrooms  
• iPads purchased for Master Special Education Teachers  
• Review of existing library and teaching resources in line with scope and sequence work  
• Develop new library data base/lending system  
• Upgrade library books to match KLA scope and sequences | • A number of Apps have been evaluated and are in use in the classrooms.  
• Parents have been provided with information about specific Apps that support early numeracy concepts  
• Scheduled classroom computer upgrade completed  
• Additional iPads for teachers purchased  
• New library database established  
• Books purchased to align with various KLA units |
### SUMMARY: 2016 PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
<td>• Involvement of the teaching staff and students in research projects, which inform classroom practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review and update Numeracy Goals and Strategies within IEP database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consolidate numeracy teaching resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Refine numeracy assessment and monitoring procedures to inform teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop teaching resources to support scope and sequences of vocabulary and concepts within KLA units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop play/social skills lessons and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Development</strong></td>
<td>• Introduction of NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Align existing HSIE and Science KLA units with new History, Geography and Science syllabus documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop new History, Geography and Science units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teaching functional numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teaching expressive writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• CPR training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School visits to future education options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities &amp; Resources</strong></td>
<td>• Evaluation of Apps to support literacy and numeracy IEP goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Computer upgrades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Purchase reading materials including non-fiction texts to support KLA scope and sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Upgrade classroom furniture as required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Renovate school playgrounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

The School Social Skills program forms the major context in which respect and responsibility are explicitly taught.

PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

A survey of parent satisfaction with MUSEC School was conducted. This was in relation to the following:

- Leadership and management of the school
- The attention to the particular learning needs of students
- The quality of the teaching and learning experiences
- The scope of the curriculum
- The individual educational plan process
- The communication between staff and parents
- The relationship between staff and parents
- The availability of technology in the classroom
- Student behaviour and discipline
- The support provided for future education options

Parents were asked to rate school performance by indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with a range of statements in relation to the above areas. 19 survey forms were returned to the school from 19 families. Overall the results were positive, with all parents who responded agreeing or strongly agreeing that the Individual Education Plan addressed their child’s learning needs. All but 1 parent agree or strongly agree that the school provides good teaching and learning programs, and provides sufficient opportunity for parents to contribute to the individual planning process. All parents agreed or strongly agreed that the Master Special Educator Teachers are approachable, that the school is well run, that Master Special Educator Teachers take time to respond to parents’ concerns, that concerns and suggestions are responded to appropriately and in a timely manner, that the classrooms provide an excellent working environment.

On the basis of parental feedback the area of future schooling options was one of concern in 2014 and in 2015 we hosted and videoed an information session for parents. We invited parents of past MUSEC School students to attend and share their experiences. We also provided an overview of high school options of which we are aware. This event was well attended and parents expressed their thanks. Results of the school survey indicate that this is still an area about which parents would like more information, with 3 parents ticking ‘disagree’ in response to the statement ‘Adequate support is provided in relation to future options’.

Three respondents disagreed that the homework system was easy to implement and two disagreed that behaviour management practices are effective and consistent. Two parents responded that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement ‘My child is happy to go to school in the morning’. All other parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child is happy to come to school.

Some comments written by parents as part of the survey were a pleasure to read. For example, “Thank you for another great year. We are amazed at our son’s progress and proud of his growing interest in learning.” “Thank you for your commitment, patience and professionalism.” “The teachers have always been excellent in providing the best education for xxx to grow into who she is today, Thank you so much”

MUSEC School provides a unique working environment for Special Educators. The staff attendance and retention rates are indicative of high staff satisfaction.
SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Income & Expenditure 2015

Income - %
Fees & Private Income 45
State Recurrent Grants 24
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants 31

Expenditure -
Salaries, Allowances & Related Expenses 90
Non-Salary Expenses 8
Capital Expenditure 2

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2015