Merriwa Education Support Centre

Annual Report 2014

‘LEARNING FOR LIFE’
PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE

Building upon Merriwa ESC’s reputation as a great facility for students with special needs has again been very rewarding this year. Student success, as confirmed by achievement of individual outcomes, is due to the hardworking teams who ensured that all students were engaged in authentic and purposeful educational programs. It has been a productive year with many success stories to share, particularly in the development of skills in our focus areas of functional literacy and numeracy. Merriwa ESC has professional staff who work in collaboration with various therapists to ensure success for all students. We expect high standards in learning and behaviour design programs to enable all children to achieve according to their capability.
We will see a decline in enrolments for 2015 as our Year 6 and 7 students move on to Secondary School. The ESC has a substantial number of students in the junior grades and will have a significant focus on meeting sensory needs and learning through play based activities as outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework. Plans to create a dedicated block for our Centre, utilising specialist classrooms, are underway for 2015. I extend my heartfelt thanks to my dedicated staff for their outstanding efforts this year and to our parents and students whose positive contribution ensures that our Centre is such a vibrant place of community learning.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Merriwa ESC caters for children with a diverse range of intellectual and physical disabilities and is situated within the Merriwa Primary School. This model provides a least restrictive and age appropriate environment for the students in accordance with Social Justice. Individual learning programs are created to allow all students to participate in a curriculum that is designed to provide for their specific needs and are monitored by school administration, teaching staff, therapists and parents.

The highly dedicated, specialist staff takes pride in curriculum delivery and our inclusive programs and continue to ensure the provision of a safe, happy learning environment in which children are supported and encouraged to try their very best to achieve their individual goals. We work closely with our partner school offering reciprocal programs to mainstream students with particular learning needs. In return, students are integrated into mainstream classes to support the development of social and academic skills where it is considered to be beneficial and appropriate. System performance data show student attendance is within the acceptable range. Student behaviour is monitored effectively due to regular reflection on whole school Behaviour Management practices and, where necessary, the implementation of Individual Behaviour Management Plans.

OUR BELIEFS AND VALUES

Merriwa ESC is guided by the core values of Learning, Excellence, Equity and Care and believes that all students are capable of learning.

- We support students by scaffolding concepts and adapting programs to give the best opportunities to grow in confidence and to achieve at a level that is developmentally appropriate.
- By providing a safe, welcoming environment with challenging and engaging programs the students are able to move along their continuum of learning.
- With encouragement and support, students are able to participate in all learning areas and achieve their individual outcomes with increasing independence.
- Opportunities to learn relevant life skills are provided to enable students to participate and contribute in the wider community with confidence and dignity.
- We ensure that teachers are held accountable for the progress of students in their care and the principal for overall performance of the Centre.

SCHOOL PRIORITIES

Numeracy, Literacy, ICT and Social Skills are an ongoing focus of the Centre’s curriculum.

The Priorities for 2013 - 2015 are:
- Focus on Functional Literacy, Functional Numeracy and Independent use of ICT
- Development of Independence, Self Management, Interpersonal and Social Skills
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing for Staff and Students

‘LEARNING FOR LIFE’
Here at Merriwa ESC we successfully provide a learning environment that supports students with diverse learning needs to develop the academic, creative, physical and social skills that will enable them to participate in, and actively contribute to, the wider community.

Having an excellent relationship with our host school Merriwa Primary School, we are able to promote shared values of learning, excellence, equity and care.

We are proud to highlight the following achievements:

- Provision of a secure, safe and positive environment.
- Specially trained and highly skilled staff.
- Highly successful Early Intensive Intervention Program for Kindy and Pre Primary students.
- The development and successful implementation of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and SPECTRA programs.
- Innovative teaching strategies adapted to suit individual learning styles.
- Explicit teaching which contributes to the progress of students in the areas of literacy and numeracy.
- Priority given to enable each child to access learning towards reaching his/her potential.
- The provision of an Individualised Education Plan for each child, developed in close consultation with parents.
- Small classes with a high staff/student ratio providing individual and small group instruction when required.
- A school priority of Health and Wellbeing has led to an increase in community based activities to enhance student wellbeing, mental health and ultimately, resilience.
- Creation of positive Home / School links.
- Excellent community access and independent living programs.
- Collaboration with Merriwa Primary School in providing integrated learning programs across all learning areas.
- A strong commitment to the use of technology aided instruction.
- Learning with Information Communication Technology which includes Interactive Whiteboards, Computers and iPads across all curriculum areas.
- Successful use of Mini Schedules and Mat Sessions.
- Continued use of sensory programs.
- Successful participation in the North Metro Region ESC Sports Carnival.
- Active participation in the school garden.
- Reverse integration opportunities for Merriwa Primary School students.
- Innovative collaboration with WCIT, ECU and UWA in providing practice placements for pre-service Education Assistants and Teachers.

### STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Participation at Merriwa ESC is reasonable for a centre with a large number of students with major medical issues. In 2014 the attendance rate percentage was affected by student absence due to their medical needs and hospital stays. Students considered at risk of poor attendance are monitored to encourage better outcomes and more regular participation where possible. Generally, the attendance rates indicate that the school provides an appropriate and stimulating curriculum which is valued by our parents and caregivers.

### Merriwa ESC Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Teaching</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical/Admin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers meet the requirements necessary to teach in government schools and are registered with the Teacher’s Registration Board.

All staff participated in a wide range of relevant professional learning throughout 2014.
INCREASED ENROLMENTS

The steady enrolment of students into the early childhood year groups has had a direct impact on curriculum delivery and early intervention programs.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

A focus on establishing consistency with whole school assessment allows staff to track student progress over time. Each student is assessed for literacy and numeracy skills in Term 1 and again in Term 4. In 2014 the average scores calculated from all ESC students tested shows an improvement from Semester 1 to Semester 2 in both the literacy and numeracy assessments. Assessment data is stored in a student tracking file to illustrate student achievement and progress but also to identify areas of concern. The ‘Special Education Needs Assessment Tool’ (SENAT) documents are also utilised to assist staff to plot student levels and provide information for staff in subsequent years.

‘LEARNING FOR LIFE’
HOW OUR STUDENTS PERFORMED

ROOM 26  Year 1 to Year 3
Student confidence and social skills have really blossomed this year. All students have worked hard and have shared some memorable experiences. We began the year by learning about Australian animals with a fantastic excursion to Caversham Wildlife Park. Students were able to pat the animals and give the kangaroos food to eat. Throughout Semester 1 students were supported to access the local IGA to locate items from a shopping list and learnt about road safety on the weekly walk. On Fun Friday we would use the ingredients we bought at IGA to make food during cooking lessons.

Throughout the year students learned about sounds using Jolly Phonics and performed to the whole school for assembly, which was an awesome experience. Students are using their phonics knowledge to start to sound out and read words. Numeracy tasks incorporated hands on activities to improve number knowledge and other mathematical skills.

A highlight of the year was the hydrotherapy swimming program at Butler College in term 4. The students loved being in the water and had so much fun!

ROOM 29  Kindy to Year 2
It has been an eventful and busy year in Room 29. The students focused on ‘settling in’ and forming relationships. Classroom rules and structures were quickly established and programs were introduced incorporating social reciprocity skills and understanding their emotions. Learning experiences incorporated gardening and messy sensory activities. On our weekly walk to the local shops we practised ‘road safety rules’ and purchased ingredients for cooking. The weekly ‘Hydrotherapy swimming sessions’ at Butler College was a huge success in term 4 with all students enjoying swimming and travelling on the bus. During the year students had lots of fun developing gross motor skills. They persevered at learning how to ride a bike (with stabilisers). Students have particularly enjoyed music which is included to engage students and enhance progress in all learning areas. Each day we practised table manners whilst sitting as a group to eat our recess and lunch. A cohesive and consistent staff ensured the successful implementation of strategies and structures throughout the year. We are proud of how our students have adapted and responded to routines and strategies including self-help techniques and of the progress each of them have made. What a wonderful year we have had together!

ROOM 6a  Early Intensive Intervention Program
This year all the children have worked hard on all of their discrete trials and independent work with very pleasing results. Throughout the year the students have blossomed when it comes to their confidence. It is excellent to see all of their personalities develop!

The students worked well to learn sounds and have started to listen to the beginning sounds in known words, how to count objects in a group, and look at numbers that come before and after. Both classes have come so far and have had fun learning.
ROOM 30  Year 1 to Year 4
Room 30 has had a wonderful year, working hard in class and sharing some fabulous experiences! The students have made progress across all areas of the curriculum, including numeracy and literacy.
Our fortnightly excursions were always very much looked forward to, and enjoyed. We travelled to Lakeside, Joondalup in semester one; and Ocean Keys, Clarkson in semester two. The students gained experience in accessing public transport, purchasing morning tea from the food hall, and groceries from a supermarket. The students thoroughly enjoyed our weekly cooking lessons, which the staff in the room take turns to lead. The students used the groceries they bought to make healthy snacks. There was usually enough left over to take home for family members!
Another favourite with the class was our daily morning fitness program, playing a variety of games including T-ball, dodge, cricket and soccer. A highlight of the year was definitely our swimming lessons at Arena Joondalup in term four. All students enjoyed the experience and worked hard to improve their swimming skills.

ROOM 27  Year 1 to Year 3
Room 27 have had a fulfilling and busy year. In Semester 1, students learnt about Australian Animals and visited Caversham Wildlife Park. They also put on their scientist hats and learnt about Space. We all had an awesome time experimenting and playing at Scitech’s Discovery Land.
In Semester 2, students went on to learn about Dinosaurs and Mini Beasts, they enjoyed lots of sensory and cooking activities, including dinosaur dig and bug jelly. Our ESC Assembly, the ESC Interschool Carnival at Beldon and Hydrotherapy are some of the highlights for this year. The Junior classes have worked collaboratively throughout this year and it has been beautiful to watch the children interact and form new friendships.
Staff are extremely proud of all the students and what they have accomplished and I am confident that they will continue to achieve their learning goals.

ROOM 23  Year 4 to Year 7
Room 23 prioritised the teaching of literacy and numeracy this year in the belief that these important skills lay the foundation for all students to succeed at school and in life. Identifying and building upon the individual strengths of each student, starting at their particular level and building confidence through success and fun, all these aspects have contributed to a very enjoyable and successful year.
Academic programs were interspersed with a Year Six/Seven Camp at Em Haliday in Term 1, a fantastic Transperth Excursion to the city in Term 2, lots of fun and laughter at Circus Quirkus in Term 3 and a magnificent integrated sports day at Edith Cowan University in Term Four. How did we fit it all in!
Of particular pride was our highly acclaimed Madagascar assembly item, it was so much fun preparing and practising. The Year Six and Seven Students are all excited about moving to Butler College next year and in preparation have experienced lots of transition days. We wish them every success in the future.
HOW OUR STUDENTS PERFORMED

ROOM 15 Year 6 and Year 7
We had a wonderful year filled with fun activities and hard work. Students participated in our Independent life skills program which proved to be a huge success in building confidence and independence skills. We were able to reinforce this program through integrated learning and real life participation in the community. Students independently tagged on and off the bus as we travelled to and from our local shopping centre to purchase ingredients for our weekly cooking program. At Clarkson library students were given certain tasks to complete. They were asked to find a particular type of book and answer questions regarding the book they investigated. Our focus on Literacy and Numeracy this year was implemented with the integration of mainstream students joining with us in Room 15. This gave all students an opportunity to share and grow together. Students learnt about being tolerant through participating in group activities such as; role-play, pair and share and work-stations. We investigated shape, measurement, working with money and time. In English they learnt how to plan and draft a narrative text, they learnt about various text types and made their own Pop-Up birthday invitations. We had fortnightly cooking classes and weekly art classes in which the children created some amazing art works and tasty meals while learning some very useful and practical skills. Senior students attended Em Haliday Camp and participated in cycling, caving, crate climbing and enjoyed the big swing and beach games. On the final day the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the Great Escape in Hillarys. The ESC attended the combined Education Support Carnival in Beldon where our children participated with outstanding sportsmanship. At the end of term the class visited Scitech for an awesome day of mind boggling science experiments. High School transition visits and dance lessons helped to prepare students for their big GRADUATION day. I am so proud of all of our students; they have worked so hard this year and have made some outstanding progress both socially and academically.

PREPARATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL
Parents and students of Year 6 and 7 are invited to tour the local high schools in readiness for their transition to secondary schooling. This allows families to make informed decisions about the most appropriate placement for their child. Twelve graduating students enrolled at Butler College for Year 7 or 8 in 2015. One other student enrolled at Beilidge SHS ESC. All students were excited and well prepared to transition into this next phase of schooling and staff wish them well for the future. Transition programs assist both parent and child to feel at ease and become familiar with their new surroundings. In 2015 students in Year 6 will participate in various transition activities in order to prepare them for secondary school.

PROGRAMS FOR MAINSTREAM STUDENTS
Students in our partner school who required extra assistance in numeracy and literacy attended classes in the ESC. Students enjoy the small group setting and make steady progress as a result. These reciprocal programs are highly effective and are mutually beneficial for the ESC students and their mainstream peers. The joint classes provide opportunities for all students to develop and practise their social and interpersonal skills. In 2014 senior students had a greater opportunity to integrate with their Year 6 and 7 peers as they prepared for an inclusive graduation from Primary School.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION FOR SPELLING
All students from Year 3 to Year 7 across the Merriwa Campus have been engaged in Spelling Mastery sessions with very pleasing results over the past 2 years. This initiative has been made possible due to the involvement of staff from the ESC who are utilised to facilitate small groups for the ESC and Primary School. Students are assessed to determine appropriate groups and participate each morning for intensive sessions. Students who do not meet the skill requirements of this program are provided small group instruction in the Language for Learning or Phonemic Awareness programs.
SCHOOL PLANNING 2015
The planning cycle begins in term 4 with all staff reviewing the school operational plan. Teachers’ reflections on learning programs and analysis of student progress data against IEP specified outcomes drive the review. The new plan is then drafted and finalised in term one the following year. The budget is framed and funds allocated to support each learning program and identified priority areas. Our comprehensive self-reflection and planning processes lead to a positive and self-critical school culture striving for on-going improvement. Learning programs evolve as continuous teacher reflection on student performance drives pedagogy more responsive to student needs.
It is our aim to continue to provide all our students with a positive learning environment through an energised staff who seek new challenges within the curriculum, providing explicit teaching and instructional strategies in the classroom.

INTEGRATED STUDIES
The ESC supports an integrated curriculum which provides opportunities for students to explore Aboriginal and Cultural Education, Science, Health, Society and Environment and Technology and Enterprise through practical hands-on activities. The integrated approach allows teachers to program in ‘Themes’ and to incorporate the topic across all learning areas throughout the week/term.

THE ARTS
Students are able to access specialist programs in the visual arts and music, and to participate in whole school assemblies, incursions and performances with their mainstream peers. In 2014 the ESC were invited to attend performances by WASO at the Concert Hall and Circus Quirkus at the Perth Convention Centre. With much practice and loads of enthusiasm the students performed at, and conducted, their assembly item at the end of term 3. Staff and Parents were very proud to see the students getting so involved and contributing with such energy.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
Each classroom in the ESC has an Interactive Whiteboard installed to facilitate access to ICT across all learning areas. Regular use of computers, online learning programs, Interactive boards, iPads and apps, cameras and software motivates and engages students to participate in their learning programs in all areas of the curriculum. Staff are able to participate in professional learning modules to develop their skills in utilising technology for the benefit of students.

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH
AUSLAN (Australian Sign Language) and KeySigns are used across the Centre as a strategy to facilitate communication. Signing supports Teaching and Learning strategies, particularly with non verbal and ESL students where a visual prompt is able to support student outcomes. Students are taught to use gestures and facial expressions to assist them in communicating their needs. Staff will attend workshops to assist with the teaching of sign language in 2015.

STUDENT WELL-BEING, HEALTH AND PHYS-ED
Students benefited from both ESC and mainstream programs throughout 2014. A strong emphasis was placed on teaching social competencies and developing skills required to attend the recreation and community access programs. All students participated in our Healthy Eating program and class groups were involved in shopping and food preparation as part of the curriculum. This gave all students an opportunity to understand and make healthy food choices.
Fitness and sporting activities provided a well-rounded Health and Physical Education experience for all students who participated in the minimum requirement of 2 hours of physical activity each week. Students participated enthusiastically in a weekly Dance Program during Term 2 and graduating students learned social dance routines during Term 4. The Combined ESC Athletics Carnival is a highlight every year and was again well attended during Term 3. Interm Swimming lessons with mainstream peers or Hydrotherapy sessions for higher needs students were offered during Term 4.
All staff are informed, as required, of various health concerns of our students so that they are familiar with the health and behavioural needs of all students in the ESC. Capable students participate in weekly lessons on Protective Behaviours to assist in preparing them to be independent in their community.

COMMUNITY ACCESS
Community Access is the basis of our Life Skills program for many students who are actively involved in various visits within the local community and are taught to use public transport utilising SmartRider cards and to access public facilities in a safe and semi-independent manner. They enjoyed several activities such as trips to shopping centres and to the local library. It is encouraging to witness improvements in confidence, consideration of others and their awareness of personal safety develop. Special thanks go to our local IGA, Ocean Keys and Lakeside Shopping Centres for their support of our centre. Small groups of supervised students are able to access these centres regularly each week.

'LEARNING FOR LIFE'
SPORT, CULTURE AND RECREATION

Students are able to access the community through the varied programs offered at Merriwa ESC. Here is a list of our program highlights for 2014:

- School Assemblies and Special Presentations: Royal Agricultural Show, Fire Fighters, Cuddle Farm
- Community Access: Various suburban shopping centres including Ocean Keys, Lakeside, Merriwa IGA
- Community Libraries: Clarkson Grand Cinemas
- Excursions to: WASO, Circus Quirkus, Scitech, Caversham Wildlife Park
- Healthy Eating Program – Sit down lunch and Cooking Programs
- Hydrotherapy Program – Utilising Butler College Hydro-pool
- Cultural Awareness Days / Harmony Day / NAIDOC Day / ANZAC Day
- Sport: Sports Ability and Fundamental Movement Skills programs
  - In-term swimming sessions
  - Athletics Carnival
  - Combined ESC facilities Sports Day
  - Dance Program
- ECU Sports Day
- WADSA – Ten Pin Bowling
- Day Camp at Ern Haliday for Year 6 and 7 students

SENSORY PLAYGROUND

Through various funds including grants by the Department of Education, Disabled Children’s Foundation and P&C fundraising efforts, the Merriwa Schools were able to provide the students with a shaded Sensory Playground which is well utilised by students in the junior year levels. Careful consideration was made at the design stage to ensure an inclusive play area which accommodates students with disabilities and special needs.

AGENCY SUPPORT

Merriwa ESC works closely with various agencies to ensure successful outcomes for students. Staff incorporates strategies recommended for individual students by their therapists. We welcome the support from Disability Services Commission and Therapy Focus- Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist; TCCP: The Centre for Cerebral Palsy and SENSES who support our students with disabilities.

The Education Department provides student support to schools through SSEN: Schools of Special Education Needs- Disability, Sensory, Medical and Mental Health. These services are utilised and greatly appreciated by staff at Merriwa ESC. Another agency with which we have built a mutual partnership include the Independent Living Centre, their library of resources has been well used by our students. We continue to work closely with WCIT and ECU and benefit from the enthusiasm and developing expertise of pre service teachers and education assistants.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Parents provide great support to the various ESC programs and are invited to participate in the development and endorsement of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for their child and to participate in teacher/parent meetings to discuss semester reports. School Council is made up of ESC and Mainstream staff and parents who endorse our plans, policies, fees and charges and the school budget. Information gained from parents through informal feedback help staff to modify and improve our teaching and learning programs. If you are interested in joining our School Council please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Merriwa Schools pride themselves on school/home partnerships and encourage all parents to make arrangements to discuss concerns with their child’s teacher. We also encourage the use of our Communication Book / Student diary strategy to facilitate regular contact between school and home. The combined schools P&C support our school through fundraising initiatives.

Students from various universities and WCIT were given the opportunity to complete their practicum assessments with the expert guidance and mentoring from our staff. Our regular team of relief staff ensured the continuity of programs and have developed positive relationships with staff and students in the ESC. We thank them for their loyalty.

We extend our sincere thanks to our wonderfully supportive community.

‘LEARNING FOR LIFE’
FINANCES 2014

Merriwa ESC
Financial Summary as at
31 December 2014

Revenue - Budget vs Actual

Current Year Actual Revenue Sources

Expenditure - Budget vs Actual

Cash Position

‘LEARNING FOR LIFE’