

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR WILLMOTT PARK A 5-YEAR VISION IN PROGRESS

Below is the 5-year improvement vision for Willmott Park that was developed towards the end of the 2007-year. Implementation began in 2008. Key elements included are:

- Supportive & shared leadership
- Clear high expectations
- Willingness to take risks
- Problems identified and strengths acknowledged
- Achievable goals set
- Professional learning environment
- Improvement through representative working parties
- Explicit teaching employed
- Multiple forms of feedback
- Need to raise student achievement
- Develop deeper levels of thinking
- Use of data to set achievement measures
- Regular feedback to students
- Aligned planning, implementation & assessment
- Good working environment – staff morale, motivation & commitment
- Accountability
- Peer observation & coaching
- Use of external providers
- Professional dialogue often
- Opportunities for improvement
- Change for improvement culture
- Regular reflection
- Respect, trust & integrity
- Collective responsibility

A 5-year improvement vision

A) Preconditions (For Improvement)

- **Supportive Leadership**

Expertise and experience are recognised and the management/leadership team is supportive and approachable. There is good communication, a clear vision and there are common goals. Teachers are reflective, are open to learning and there is shared best practice between teachers. There is whole staff, parental, community and leadership commitment and support. Mentoring/coaching is valued and staff sees the need for continual improvement. Improvement focuses set are achievable. The learning environment should be bright and suitable, there should be adequate resourcing and there is administrative and financial support. Time is considered as an important resource and there is a core stability of staff. Following P&DC accreditation, a school Performance & Development culture is central to a dynamic and inclusive professional learning environment. There is a strong link between Strategic & Annual Implementation plans and Unit & Individual Development plans.

- **Shared vision and commitment**

There is team commitment, shared vision and values, goals, targets and clear high expectations. Staff and leadership are motivated and the Principal is supportive. Roles are clear, working relationships are sound and there is structure and consistency. Communication is open and effective and it is important to have “everyone on board”. The critical mass should be ready for change and have optimism that change is possible. There is recognition, and articulation, of what needs improving and also of the need for professional learning. Staff has a willingness to implement change and are accepting of new ideas. Openness to critically view the current situation and to embark on the journey is evident. Staff are prepared to “face the truth” about school performance. There should be a clear plan or agreed process, but the approach is flexible. A “no blame” culture exists. Morale and workload are priorities, effort is acknowledged and there are adequate resources. There is a level of trust and belief in what is being done and staff are willing to take risks.

- **Data**

School data is utilised, problems are identified, strengths are recognised and quality evaluative tools are used. New assessment tools researched or developed. Targets and goals should be measurable and there is good documentation. There is recognition of which areas to target and what the problems are. Baseline data needs to be analysed and there is continuous evaluation of progress.

B) Organising (For Improvement)

- **Strategic Plan**

Based on evidence, an action or strategic plan, and annual implementation of the strategic plan, for improvement is developed, and a vehicle or framework for undertaking it is established. Input is collected from a variety of sources; goals are set for the school and individuals and progressive targets are set along the way. Actions and milestones are identified. Effective measurement tools are used – i.e. behaviour management success evidenced in terms of incident sheets and observable changes. Student management profiles/plans are used and student outcomes are a focus for core business. Baseline data is analysed and then achievable goals are set that are realistic – both short and long term. Specific areas are audited and targeted, as are practices and processes and a team may be organised to select an area for improvement. All areas of the school community are consulted and educated. Necessary training using modelling – not just research is provided. Best practices adopted, critical friends/advisors and coaches are used and coherent, consistent educational leadership is developed.

- **Involvement**

A professional learning community is established, based on an action/inquiry model of learning and improvement through P&DC. There is effective, committed and strong leadership; a good structure and clarity of roles, but all people have the ability to be involved in the improvement process and it should involve all sectors of the community. Professional Learning has both content and research focus and extra human resources are put in place. Existing data is understood and regular reviews are conducted. Multiple sources of feedback outlined in Strategic Plans, AIP and received through a wide variety of mechanisms including Parent, Staff and Student Surveys are used.

Consideration is given to Working Parties (internal TPL) and resources. A positive, supportive environment is fostered. Facilities are available to parents and the wider community

- **Data Analysis**

Data is collected on the current state and the time and resources necessary for implementing change and creating improvement are allocated. Clear timelines are established and key areas for improvement are identified. There are clear, focused areas of attention. Resourcing (both physical and personnel) is evaluated and an implementation plan for provision of such is formed. Students are pre-tested, followed up with post-testing, data is evaluated and analysis undertaken.

- **Organisation**

There is strategic school planning that incorporates future direction, is flexible and there is supportive timetabling. There is both collegiate (unit) and cross-school planning, there are staff focus groups and shared teaching practices. Resilience is

encouraged and there is a reflective cycle of the status quo. Staff input and contributions are valued and there is effective team and management planning. Changes are made from the grassroots level. Good communication is essential – through meetings, feedback, emails, brainstorming, and open discussion, PL, bulletins, workshops and staff consultation. The environment is conducive to student learning. It is important to belong to Somerton Network groups and have a motivator to keep things going. Tasks need to be delegated and rules and boundaries established for everyone to stick to. There needs to be strong focus on developing teachers and succession planning should be taken into consideration. Professional Learning should be encouraged and should be provided via internal and external expertise.

C) Key strategies employed (To Raise Achievement)

- **Support**

Opportunities are provided for staff to challenge and be challenged. There is on-going teacher education so staff can understand and manage change. Teacher's strengths are recognised and known and opportunities for input are available. Strategic & Annual Implementation Plans are developed. Parent/community support and involvement is encouraged; program budgets should reflect adequate resource allocation and support staff are provided. Team driven initiatives are fostered, Strategic & Annual Implementation Plans developed and there is a focused curriculum. PL is attended and PL plans (as a part of P&D process supported by collegiate groups) developed. Behavioural management consultants are utilised and peer observation and mentoring encouraged. There is dynamic leadership in Domains and Teaching & Learning.

- **Professional Learning**

Explicit teaching strategies are adopted consistently across the school and multiple forms of feedback including peer observation are utilised. "Like" students are streamed, class sizes are small and staff are willing to accept new ideas. Experts are engaged and staff are prepared to take new directions. Professional Learning is relevant and practical, with close correlation between PL offered and class practice and staff strengths are developed/used (also through unit PL time). Goals set should be the same for all involved. There is agreement over the need to raise achievement and improve better practices. Expectations of both students and staff are high and there is a commitment to "raise the bar". Quality teachers who value high self esteem and adopt targeted intervention are developed. Social as well as academic development is taken into account and students' prior knowledge is built on. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application.

- **Data Monitoring (Assessment)**

Data is used for, of and as learning. There is a clear understanding of the existing levels of achievement and measures, targets and milestones to track improvement are developed. Classroom and school programs and policies are evaluated. Successes are celebrated and there is shared reflection on progress. Sound assessment procedures are established and learning is scaffolded. Assessment is conducted cyclically and collaboratively – using moderation. Regular feedback is given to students and their understanding of the evaluation process is promoted. The starting point for students (e.g. . . National Numeracy & Literacy testing) is known, a variety of pathways and programs are provided and absences are tracked. Small group focus programs are used and planning is based on student needs *. Periodic surveys are conducted, data analysed and focus maintained.

* Staff focusing on students' needs using a variety of strategies should be an OFI (Opportunity For Improvement) – such as supporting 'uphill climbers' and extending & challenging students with special abilities.

- **Structured Professional Interaction**

Ideas are shared, class sizes are small and there is a common curriculum structure. Opportunities to participate directly in decisions about curriculum and policies are provided. Planning, implementation and assessment are aligned. Teachers meet together to set goals for improvement. Planning Weeks are structured so staff can share, work as a team and document ideas as this increases clarity and accountability. Good staff morale, motivation and a commitment to process are fostered. Opportunities are put in place for coaching/mentoring and evaluation/feedback to happen. Support is given to staff at all levels, focused teaching is encouraged and a range/variety of learning experiences is offered to students. There is ongoing assessment and support programs – reading, intervention, maths extension etc are offered. There is a clear and consistent discipline policy. Staff are accountable and take responsibility. Language is used consistently and Individual Learning Plans are developed. Teachers are supported and maximise learning conditions for students. Plans are implemented through reflection, evaluation and adaptation. There is a belief in oneself and in others and staff doesn't get stuck on traditional values or institutionalised practices.

D) Professional learning

- **Professional Learning Teams**

An inquiry based and action oriented approach based on goals/vision, with prior knowledge explored and defined and new knowledge explored is adopted, trialled and eventually embedded. Open minds are kept, feedback given and professional reading encouraged. Ideas and resources are shared, and there is an awareness of new philosophies and ideas that will aid the social, academic and emotional development of students; which is then reflected in their achievement levels. A commitment to lifelong learning that is in line with goals is acknowledged. Professional learning is applied to classroom practice and the outcomes or improvement measured and successes shared. Collegiate activities are initiated and internal and external Professional Learning, Networking and Cluster Groups support staff in their academic endeavours. An emphasis is

placed on personal responsibility and a supportive and stimulating environment that encourages risk taking and openness to new ideas is fostered. Professional discussion/conversation and the sharing of information/reading are encouraged.

- **Peer Observation and Coaching**

There is whole staff commitment, shared expertise and a genuine Professional Learning Team approach. Various staff teams are formed, so learning is collaborative and there is emphasis on the relevant and real with practical solutions and applications at a variety of levels. Mentoring and coaching, shared practices and feedback on classroom observations are conducted using a reflective approach. New ideas or methods are trialled, then reflected upon and evaluated. School based PL, utilising consultants and successful teacher role modelling is ongoing and everyone is accountable for outcomes.

- **School Organisation**

There are opportunities for ongoing learning and PL is targeted and contextual; with plans developed and time given to trial/implement and evaluate. External providers are utilised. Good communication is in place through school conferences, formal and informal meetings and arranged school visits. There are additions to the knowledge base through mentors, staff P&D, planning weeks and curriculum days, team planning and collegiate support, networking and viewing specific programs in a variety of workplaces. A reflective process and professional dialogue relate content back to strategic plan and there is support from coordinators.

E) Culture & change

Changes are imbedded into school planning documents, policies and practices and new initiatives are implemented. A clear process and expectations are understood and practiced by all. Creative school structures are developed and there is a sustained effort that identifies achievable steps. There is consultation, shared commitment, consistent agreement and a long term vision with perseverance from leadership. There is an emphasis upon a team approach to behaviour management, and there are commonly set goals. Teachers are willing to explore, confront, plan and change the approval/premise they work from all are regarded as agents for change. Quality processes are in place that address or diminish the influence of blockers to change and provide opportunities for improvement. There is a spread of experience and expertise across the school. An understanding of the need to change the culture (where necessary) is held by all elements of the community. Time is allowed for change to happen.

- **Shared Commitment for Change**

What has to change, what will be given up and what will be taken on that is new and different has been identified. New ideas are trialled (and encouraged); there is regular reflection and programs and initiatives are updated. Role modelling, instructional leadership, coaching/mentoring and a commitment to accountability are ongoing. Staff opts for continuous learning, strive for excellence and are adaptable. There is knowledge of current best practice, effective implementation of new ideas, programs and standards demonstrated within a 'no blame' environment. Information is shared in collegiate groups and there is input from all staff members as to what they want to achieve. Administrative support and resourcing will be provided to support the change process.

- **Positive Support for Change**

Values and vision are explored, embedded, revisited and reinforced within the whole school. Persistence and preparedness to 'ride the wave' is encouraged. Values, beliefs and practices are reflected in the behaviour of all stakeholders' e.g. reciprocal respect, trust and integrity, recognition of rights and responsibilities and students' rights to the best education. There is understanding and encouragement, and successes/improvements are celebrated. P&DC (Performance & Development Culture) is understood and there is a focus on building relationships.

- **Change**

The school structure is flexible and there is a process of continuous improvement. Data is reflected upon and there is evidence for direction. A "no blame" culture operates and there is no trying to justify data. There is recognition that cultural change takes time and that learning occurs by analysing past attempts that may have not worked. Change is a collective responsibility of this school as an organisation. Feedback is obtained, further improvements or modifications made and assessed against future data.

The document draws upon both the Strategic & Annual Implementation plans, the school's Performance & Development Culture report as key inputs into future directions. The Vision & Outline for School Improvement is a result of the collective input from staff, School, Council, and PFA and referenced through the above mentioned documents.