



Marangaroo Primary School
Specialised Learning Program for students with
Autism Spectrum Disorder



AN INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOL

We are the future





Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the fastest growing diagnosed disability (Marder & Fraser, 2015).

A diagnosis of ASD is defined by deficits in three major areas, including social skills, communication skills, and restricted patterns of interests or behaviours (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). There are two domains rather than three. The new domains are social communication and restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests and activities.

Specialised learning programs for students with ASD have been established to better meet the needs of students with ASD in mainstream primary schools. Our program consists of three dedicated homerooms, staffed with specialist teachers and highly trained education assistants, and are designed to meet the specific and unique needs of students with a diagnosis of ASD from Kindergarten – Year 6. A key feature of the program is the homerooms which will be accessible, comfortable, supportive and safe at all times of the school day.

The program will be supported by the School of Special Educational Needs: Disability - Autism Education Service (SSEND – AES) and the School Psychology Service.

Our Values

Collaboration
Aiming for Success
Respect
Being Responsive
Reflection
Being Inspiring
Research



Our School Context

An Independent Public School since 2012, Marangaroo Primary School has a welcoming environment that embraces diversity and individualised learning. We are proud to be a multi-cultural school and value the diversity of cultures which our children bring. We are committed to ensuring that every child achieves success.

Situated on spacious grounds, we have well-resourced and generously sized classrooms, innovative technology, ample play spaces, a full length oval and purpose built Early Childhood facilities. Along with our mainstream classrooms, we have an onsite Specialist Learning Program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), with three fully integrated homerooms across the school. The students within the Specialist Learning Program integrate with mainstream classrooms regularly.

We value a whole child approach to learning and recognise the importance of providing a high quality educational program for each and every student, guided by the universal design principles. This includes evidence based, best practice for children with additional needs.

Our School Board takes an active role in creating, reviewing and shaping the strategic direction of the school, both now and for the future. We have a strong and dynamic Parents and Citizens Association committed to supporting the school with community activities and resources to further enhance learning opportunities for all students.

We aim to engage with our community to create a vibrant and welcoming school that is respectful of families and the wider community. We offer a 0-4 year old program as well as before and after school care.



Program Aim

Specialised learning programs for students with ASD aim to meet the individual needs of students with ASD from Kindergarten to Year 6 for whom there is an expectation to attend mainstream schools, but who are at risk of disengagement, underachievement and/or other significant behaviour management issues. The program targets age-appropriate academic engagement and achievement, organisational skills, social thinking, peer relationships and self-regulation.

Parents that enrol in Primary Specialised Learning Programs will have the option of continuing the program through to secondary schooling in their partnering SLP secondary school.

By 2020 there will be eight primary and eight secondary SLP's in Western Australian public schools.

Strategic Direction

The specialised learning programs for students with ASD at Marangaroo Primary School will:

- provide expertise that is unique and distinctive to support students with ASD within existing mainstream primary school settings

- promote a high performance – high care culture in all programs

- explicitly implement protective behaviours instruction for students with ASD

- support teachers of students with ASD by modelling inclusive practice and supporting the implementation of evidence-based approaches to deliver high quality instruction

engage with key stakeholders and improve collaboration between colleagues, families, networks of schools and external support agencies.

Outcomes

At Marangaroo Primary School we strive for achievement of positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for students with ASD. Specialist teachers and trained education assistants provide evidence-based programs in the homerooms and additional support to staff and students in mainstream classrooms. Each student's individual program is based on their unique profile and needs across all educational settings.

The overall outcomes for the specialised learning programs for students with ASD are to:

- lead in demonstrating an alternative, innovative and effective model of service provision to further support students with ASD within mainstream primary schools.

- Empower schools and communities to have a greater investment in, and ownership of, the outcomes for students with ASD.

- Strengthen school knowledge around positive behaviour intervention and effective evidence-based practice for students with ASD.

- lift behaviour standards and increase curriculum access and engagement for students with ASD

- Increase attendance and retention rates for students with ASD.



Structure of the program

At Marangaroo Primary School we focus on the achievement of positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for each student to maximize learning and increase opportunities for further education.

Our program is a withdrawal program for students with ASD who do not have the competencies at the point of enrolment to participate successfully full-time in mainstream classrooms.

The Kindergarten and Pre-Primary elements of our program provide very intensive intervention and structure.

Students from Pre-Primary to Year 6 spend part of each week integrated into mainstream classrooms, gradually increasing interaction with typically developing peers. The emphasis in the home rooms is on explicit teaching and providing support for students to address the issues that stem directly from their Autism such as communication, self-regulation, peer interaction and organisational skills.

Objectives

The Marangaroo Primary School Specialised Learning Program provides a supportive environment to enable a confident and successful transition into mainstream education. The program is supported by specialist teachers and education assistants who work collaboratively throughout the school and community to promote learning for each student which is delivered across three settings:

- learning within the general primary school setting
- learning within the program homerooms
- learning within the community.

Specialist program teachers and education assistants provide programs in the homerooms and support in classrooms to assist the students to achieve positive academic, behavioural, social and emotional outcomes and to enhance the skills set required for primary education. Each student's individual program is based on their unique profile, strengths, needs and goals, and encourages the development of social and communication skills for personal development.

The program provides students with ASD a specialised placement option and supports families to develop strategies and support networks for the future.

Eligibility and needs assessment

Students deemed to be eligible to enrol in the specialised learning program for students with ASD will have:

- a multi-disciplinary diagnosis of autism
- eligibility for enrolment in Western Australian public schools in Kindergarten to Year 6;
- a multi-disciplinary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder or Autism Spectrum Disorder with Global Developmental Delay (GDD1 for students in Kindergarten or Pre-Primary);
- a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder without accompanying intellectual impairment;
- an anticipated ability to work at, or near, year level academic standard with support;
- difficulties with social, emotional and/or behavioural issues and challenges directly attributed to the impact of ASD2 ;
- independent self-management of personal care requirements;
- transport to be facilitated by families (bus services are not provided to the program); and
- exemption from local intake zones.



Pedagogy

The school leadership team, program staff and school staff promote evidence-based practice and pedagogy in order to be able to meet the diverse range of needs of students with ASD, and to be consistent in the application of effective strategies in educational settings. An evidence-based practice is defined as an instructional strategy, intervention, or teaching program that has resulted in consistent positive results when experimentally tested (Mesibov & Shea, 2011; Simpson, 2005).

Intervention strategies and programs are consistent with the methodologies of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). Intervention strategies include, but are not limited to, evidence-based strategies: Functional behaviour Analysis (FBA); Discrete Trial Training (DTT); Pivotal Response Training (PVT); Direct Instruction (DI); Positive Behaviour Support (PBS); Reinforcement (R+); Prompting (PP); Visual Supports (VS); and Social Skills Training (SST).

Program staff aim to establish and maintain strong relationships with educators, parents, service providers and the community, which is an essential component to maximising academic, social and behavioural successes of students with ASD.

Overall and operational responsibility

The principal of the host school has overall responsibility for the program, with support provided from the School Psychology Service and SSEND (Autism Education Service). Program responsibilities:

- Provide Personalised Learning Plans for each student which will allow for parents and other key stakeholders to have input

- Provide flexible timetabling for each student to allow for seamless transition from the homeroom to mainstream classes, depending on individual student needs, to allow students to be included in classroom assessments

Enrolment criteria and procedures

An expression of interest form can be downloaded from the Marangaroo Primary School website, alternatively this can be emailed or posted.

The selection process includes interviews and rating against eligibility criteria to offer placements to students who are eligible for, and will most benefit from, the specialised program. Enrolment into the program carries a minimum one year commitment, and may be extended to suit the individual support requirements of each student.

- Offer places in the program only to students who meet the eligibility criteria
- Preference should be given to students who are most likely to benefit from the program
- Eligible students can be enrolled from other schools and from outside the local area
- Students with a diagnosis of ASD are targeted in Kindergarten to Year 6 who are presenting with social, emotional and self-regulation difficulties
- Suitability for the program to be reviewed annually.
- Inflexible behaviour causes significant interference with functioning in one or more contexts;
- Restricted/repetitive behaviours appear frequently enough to be obvious to the casual observer and interfere with functioning in a variety of contexts;



- Distress or difficulty coping with change; difficulty switching between activities; and
- Problems of organisation and planning hampering independence.

Transition

Transition refers to:

- a student moving from their local school to attend the program
- a student moving between the program and mainstream classrooms
- a student exiting from the program back to their local school

Parents that enrol in Primary Specialised Learning Programs will have the option of continuing the program through to secondary schooling in their partnering SLP secondary school. Primary and Secondary schools liaise regarding anticipated enrolments as students transition from primary to secondary settings.

Exit criteria

Students who exit the program will remain at the host school or transition back to their local primary or high school.

Students would be considered suitable to exit the program when the following factors are evident:

- The student is successfully accessing the curriculum in a mainstream classroom for a minimum of one term
- The student has successful strategies in place to self-regulate his/her behaviour and uses them appropriately 80 per cent of the time
- The student has a Personalised Learning Plan in place that demonstrates goals have been attained and this plan has been adapted for the new environment
- There is evidence of thorough transition planning in place, including:
 - Training of new classroom teacher, administration, support staff, specialist teachers
 - Strategies for parent support of the process and their role
 - Student input into the transition process
 - The student has had visits to new the school/classroom environment
 - Ongoing support has been negotiated with the receiving school.

Staffing and resource requirements

Our program comprises of three dedicated home rooms with three teachers and eight education assistants for 22-25 students, and a dedicated working area for one Program Coordinator.

Quality Standards

Program staff:

- are suitably qualified and experienced 'high quality' educators
- have expertise in working with students with ASD
- have access to timely and relevant professional learning
- are familiar with the latest research and implement evidence-based practices
- follow all Department of Education (Western Australia) Guidelines and Policies
- initiate and engage in regular professional dialogue with host schools, networks and other program staff
- collect and review data, and engage in quality standards assessments.



Our Vision

The Marangaroo Primary School community works collaboratively to create motivated, engaged and empowered lifelong learners.

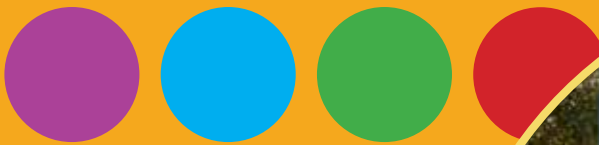
Our commitment to positively reflect and respond to the holistic needs of every child, reflects our accountability to best practice.

Information and research is used to develop expert teachers who support student success.





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