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# EXCELLENCE<sup>7</sup> IN PUBLIC EDUCATION<sub>L</sub>

**Newton Moore**

**Education Support Centre**

An Independent Public School

Performance study report

Expert Review Group

February 2018



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# 1: Introduction

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Expert Review Group (ERG) has been established to strengthen the Department of Education's quality assurance processes. As an independent body, the ERG provides authoritative studies of schools whose performance demonstrates exemplary practice.

In August 2015, the Department of Education Services conducted an independent review of Newton Moore Education Support Centre to determine the extent to which it had met its commitments as outlined in its Delivery and Performance Agreement and associated Business Plan.

On 5 February 2018, the Director General of the Department of Education invited the Principal to participate in a study of exemplary practice at the school. This performance report by the Expert Review Group was prepared as a result.

## 1.2 CONTEXT

Newton Moore Education Support Centre is an Independent Public School (2013) that was opened in 1994 in the suburb of South Bunbury, 4.5 km south of the Bunbury central business district. The school occupies a shared site with Newton Moore Senior High School.

In Semester 1, 2018, Newton Moore Education Support Centre enrolled 75 students from Years 7 to 12. Students mainly transition from South Bunbury Education Support Centre and other local primary schools. The school caters specifically for students with an intellectual disability.

The average teaching experience is over 10 years with all qualified as special needs educators. The school also has highly skilled non-teaching staff, many of who have additional qualifications.

The current Principal was appointed in 2003 and the two deputy principals have been at the school for four and seven years respectively.

The school has a State decile rank of 7.

### 1.3 PERFORMANCE STUDY APPROACH

Discussions were undertaken between the school and the ERG on how best to conduct the study. Broad lines of interest emerged and provided pathways to understanding the success achieved by Newton Moore Education Support Centre.

A study team of three, including an ERG Director and two experienced school leaders, visited the school for three days and met with the school community.

Interviewees included: the Principal; two deputy principals; eight teachers; Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) external coach; six education assistants (EAs); manager corporate services; workplace learning and transition coordinator; three workplace learning coordinators; vocational education and training coordinator; student services support officer; Parkerville staff member; student representatives from Years 7-12; School Board Chair and representatives of the School Board; four parents and the Regional Executive Director.

## 2: Findings

- 1 A passionate, confident and capable staff display a relentless commitment to the school's purpose and vision. This is exemplified in the values that underpin the quality of the school environment as an exceptional place for students to achieve their potential, and as a positive adult workplace.
- 2 The leadership enables bold and innovative teaching and learning practices through clear communication and building of trust. The collective staff professional and personal respect for each other is a key factor in the school's success.
- 3 Student access to the Western Australian Curriculum, complemented by carefully crafted developmental achievement milestones, provides the opportunity for genuine student educational accomplishment. Differentiated teaching practices together with off-site work experiences optimise the diversity of student aspirations and achievement.
- 4 Students are intentionally and meaningfully engaged in a wide range of learning opportunities and environments. The genuine expressions of excitement from students and appreciation from parents are powerful motivators for staff to pursue avenues to augment their existing high levels of knowledge and skill.
- 5 The school's resources effectively target the building of staff expertise and provision of a wide range of innovative programs. Consequently, a range of initiatives facilitate highly effective transition to work programs, targeted staff research opportunities and the deployment of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning options.
- 6 The Positive Behaviour Support framework serves as a fundamental tenet underpinning the school's ethos, operations and staff interactions. The shared values of the parents and support agencies have created an inspiring culture of positive relationships, both within the school and between the school and the local community.
- 7 The school has developed a comprehensive student learning tracking system. As a result, staff are able to confidently design learning programs sequenced against student prior learning and provide parents with comprehensive accounts of student progress. Students are the ultimate beneficiaries in gaining an authentic sense of accomplishment from their learning and work experience activities.

### 3: Study of findings

- 1 A passionate, confident and capable staff display a relentless commitment to the school's purpose and vision. This is exemplified in the values that underpin the quality of the school environment as an exceptional place for students to achieve their potential, and as a positive adult workplace.**

It is a common expectation that schools will have inclusive policies and established structures for supporting students with a disability.

The staff at Newton Moore Education Support Centre however, are strong advocates for inclusive practice having a broader focus than just disability. Their education-for-all approach underpins a clear vision of “to see young people with disabilities living a life of their choice, embraced and supported by the community around them.”<sup>1</sup>

“Education is not simply about making schools available for those who are already able to access them. It is about being proactive in identifying the barriers and obstacles learners encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality education, as well as in removing those barriers and obstacles that lead to exclusion.”<sup>2</sup>

Newton Moore Education Support Centre exemplifies this position. Rather than limiting prospects, the school's priorities, vision and ethos demonstrate an understanding that inclusion is not a place, but a process founded on the awareness of what is important for each student and their family.

The School Board and parents interviewed provided feedback to the review team endorsing the clarity of intent and purpose regarding what it is that the school is setting out to achieve. They believe that the concept of inclusion is not solely extended to students, but to all involved with the school.

Citing a vision that is just right in capturing their aspirations, it also provides room for input by them as they participate in reflective feedback processes with school staff. It is testament to the way in which the School Board is authentically engaged with the school that they have already sought to identify ways to share the good practice highlighted in this study for the benefit of the system.

Staff are motivated, passionate and united in their approach. They work persistently to promote and enact a consistent approach to the delivery of teaching programs. This is achieved through a deep understanding that genuine engagement is the key to student success.

There is a profound culture of mutual support, respect and trust amongst all staff.

Staff convey that they feel valued and supported to be able to perform their role effectively.

Rather than looking purely for external recognition of their work, they seek excellence through the intrinsic motivation gained through their individual and collective responsibility as part of such a highly professional and innovative team. Consequently, as periods of high workflow or challenging issues emerge, their response is to look for solutions rather than let a culture of blame prevail in their workplace.

Recognising that explicit and clear expectations for staff are integral to achieving consistent whole-school practices, the leaders have developed and implemented a set of standards to ensure a sustainable and accountable school culture.

Informed by the efficiency of this strategy within credible highly effective business organisations, the leaders use the standards as exemplars for professional conduct, to guide the work of the School Board and expectations for consistent approaches to teaching and learning practices across the school.

In describing these standards, staff refer to them as being sufficiently aspirational to encourage continual improvement, while providing guidance and clarity regarding how each staff member is expected to perform their role.

Teams that exhibit high levels of trust are able to have unfiltered, passionate debate about things that matter, causing teams to value conflict and the strengthening of the team as a result.<sup>3</sup> The staff at Newton Moore Education Support Centre report that they value being able to openly express their opinions, knowing that often, robust discussion leads to productive outcomes.

This is a culture where staff are fearless in advocating for the best interests of every student to drive the actions of staff and community.

The Principal communicates expectations for student achievement clearly. Not satisfied with only student achievement being reported, she has invested school resources to ensure that staff are skilled practitioners who are focussing on measuring and reporting student progress.

Her mantra of 'is this good enough progress for this student?' captures her passion for ensuring every child achieves beyond satisfactory progress.

Building the professional expertise of all staff is a key priority at Newton Moore Education Support Centre.

Professional learning opportunities are accessible to staff with attention given to being highly selective. Of particular note is the astute investment of school resourcing towards ensuring staff achieve additional qualifications.

The study team observed many examples of individual staff acknowledged over time for their outstanding practice and/or potential and subsequent opportunity to further develop their skills through accreditation. Creative approaches supporting staff to maintain industry currency for Certificate IV Assessment and Training illustrates the leadership's priority of investing in staff.

**2 The leadership enables bold and innovative teaching and learning practices through clear communication and building of trust. The collective staff professional and personal respect for each other is a key factor in the school's success.**

“Excellent leaders have a commitment to fostering school-wide culture of high expectations and a shared sense of responsibility for student engagement, learning, development and success.”<sup>4</sup>

The Principal has created a school community that values collaboration, trust and empowerment.

Citing a period of leadership reflection five years ago and prompted by an increase in student enrolments, the Principal commenced a review of the school's culture and organisational processes. This was followed by engaging with staff and the community to communicate her intent to re-visit key school directions with them.

The belief that the school culture must be built around the students in any future strategic planning, underpinned and guided the subsequent discussions with staff and the community.

However, resolute in the belief that the hero leader approach would not set the conditions for staff, student and parent empowerment, the building of trust allowing others to lead and contribute personifies the leadership approach.

A well-constructed, transparent and inclusive process built the capacity of staff to be active participants in creating a new model for school improvement.

This process commenced with a survey of staff focussing on the key aspects of high performing schools or organisations. In partnership with a local business, the leaders created a set of school standards as clear statements of expectation. Staff input was critical in ensuring maximum levels of buy-in across the school.

These standards were frequently referred to by the leaders and staff throughout this study.

They were considered critical in setting the parameters underpinning staff engagement and development of ongoing processes and strategies. Furthermore, the standards provided a level of assurance to all that what was expected of them was understood clearly.

Staff also consider that they provide highly effective ways to focus their efforts around what matters most on a daily basis and a means by which explicit feedback at the individual, group and whole-school level can occur.

By creating opportunity for staff to be 'decision makers' the Principal created a culture of empowering others through the realisation that everyone can make a difference. Open and honest communication is valued by the staff and parents with avenues for them to access information in a timely manner.

Throughout the study, feedback to the reviewers highlighted how the Principal has gained the confidence and trust of staff. Recognising the potential and/or outstanding work of identified staff, she has invested additional funds in the human capital of the school.

Examples provided included EAs moving to a Ministerial role and Certificate IV Assessor training provided to others enabling them to lead and deliver workplace learning programs.

This has had a profound impact on the way in which staff feel valued, further motivated to continue to build their skills and to assist improving the performance of others.

Effective communication at Newton Moore Education Support Centre is not restricted to internal means of updating staff or newsletters to parents. The workplace learning and transition coordinator role is an example of how they utilise the multiple points of communication set up to ensure strong links exist between various people and programs.

This role is responsible for communicating with key groups to facilitate seamless transitions between identified Year groups, for example, Year 10 to Year 11. Regular communication with the various disability organisations is also considered an important aspect of this role.

Timely and directed reflection forms a key aspect of the current school culture and leadership approach.

As part of this study, the leadership team were invited to nominate an area in which they would value further feedback in order to further strengthen an identified area of focus. Incorporated into the reviewers' discussions with students, staff, School Board and parents, feedback was obtained and formed part of a discussion with leaders at the conclusion of the study.

With the aim to gain a wider perspective on how the leaders as a team can further improve their performance to impact on school improvement, the feedback provided some valued insight. It is testament to the highly reflective leadership mindset that this feedback was received positively and their commitment to careful consideration of the information expressed as a result.

During this study, the school environment was frequently described as 'supportive'. Staff appreciate the ongoing support provided from both the school's leaders and their colleagues.

There is a climate of mutual respect among everyone involved in the educative process.

Clear communication and building of trust have had a profoundly positive influence on teacher efficacy.

Participation by the leaders in the 360-degree feedback process as part of the school's engagement with a strategy to increase the effectiveness of teacher feedback was provided as an example of the open and reflective communication style of the Principal. This involved open sharing and acknowledgement of strengths and weaknesses and demonstrated commitment to act.

Staff frequently referred to examples of the Principal being very clear and directive around expectations for curriculum provision. They value the clarity this provides them while also providing sufficient room to make professional judgements themselves.

**3 Student access to the Western Australian Curriculum, complemented by carefully crafted developmental achievement milestones, provides the opportunity for genuine student educational accomplishment. Differentiated teaching practices together with off-site work experiences optimise the diversity of student aspirations and achievement.**

“We are unique because we do not accept the barriers and are precise and thoughtful about each student”.<sup>5</sup>

The leadership and staff are committed to delivering a high quality curriculum across all year levels. Staff are deeply invested in ensuring that all students are provided authentic and purposeful learning experiences, with the ultimate goal of meaningful engagement and contribution post school always in view.

A continuous improvement culture underpins all aspects of the work performed by staff and this is clearly exemplified in high quality programs. Staff feel empowered in their contributions towards the design and delivery of teaching and learning.

They are reflective, proactive and highly supportive of the purpose of the school as it aligns deeply with their personal philosophies of why they are teachers at the school.

Staff value the trust invested in them by the leaders. They report being confident to deliver what is best for the students and they feel supported to do so. Effective communication processes ensure that they are listened to when they provide feedback.

Shared accountability among the teachers through an embedded collaborative process supports them to seek clarification and reasoning from one another.

Teachers have found the opportunity to be creative in their planning invigorating.

Every student at Newton Moore Education Support Centre is provided with a learning program which meets their individual needs, however this does not overshadow explicit links to a rigorous curriculum.

Teachers plan, teach and assess using the Western Australian Curriculum (WAC) and where required, Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia (ABLEWA), Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and Special Education Needs Assessment Tool. Use of scope and sequencing documents provide timely and appropriate learning experiences.

This expectation is linked to an accountability audit to ensure consistency and rigour of practice. In addition, such carefully monitored alignment of practices and understandings supports teachers to differentiate and deliver highly engaging relevant and explicit learning programs.

Individual education planning at Newton Moore Education Support Centre underpins robust collaborative interactions of leaders, staff, students and parents.

Each student in Years 7 to 12 has an individual education plan that guides their learning specific to their needs. These documents are constantly used throughout the day to not only guide student learning but also feature regularly in focussed team discussions in order to plan for future learning needs and opportunities.

In addition, students in Years 11 and 12 have individual transition plans that serve as key documents to assist in the coordination and monitoring of various aspects of the learning program. Each student has the opportunity to engage in off-site learning through an innovative 'Community Work Centre' concept.

Four separate businesses located off-site provide students with relevant learning matched to their capabilities and aspirations. Key to the success of the program is the access to information prior to consideration of participation by students and parents. They are provided with an understanding of how each works and what it offers in readiness to make a selection in Year 10. The students then undertake their placement over two years and work towards certificate qualifications, ASDAN accreditation or individualised plans.

The goal of standardised accreditation ensures that their learning is recognised and valued in the wider community. The students are assured that their successful engagement in this learning stream provides them with every opportunity to fairly access the employment area of their choice.

The outstanding success of these innovative programs has led to students developing a realistic understanding of what it is to be a part of the workplace, the expectations, rules and of being valued in the process.

Students are provided opportunity to problem solve as part of their transition into a new phase of learning. Travel training, beginning and finishing the school day in the work place and interacting with the local and business community is integral in this model. It is deeply valued by families who see their child engaging in a way that they may not have thought possible.

This real time, real world delivery gives the students a place in the community that opens doors for them post school completion.

Identified school priority areas including high quality teaching and learning and PBS have dedicated committees that guide and support staff. These are led by staff and have a member of the leadership team present to provide additional input such as system information that may influence their decisions.

The committees regularly engage in opportunities for sharing information to the rest of the staff and consider that they have appropriate levels of influence in matters that affect student outcomes.

Creating empowered learners through visible learning with an emphasis on high quality learning is apparent in every classroom.

There are no barriers or mindsets to say a student cannot access curriculum. Rather, staff focus on how this can be achieved and create the opportunity for the student.

Students are active participants in the learning process. They know why they are learning something and how they will know if they are successful. During class visits, the study team consistently observed the verbal and visual statements that cued students into their learning.

**4 Students are intentionally and meaningfully engaged in a wide range of learning opportunities and environments. The genuine expressions of excitement from students and appreciation from parents are powerful motivators for staff to pursue avenues to augment their existing high levels of knowledge and skill.**

Educational leaders invested in Newton Moore Education Support Centre believe that their role is to ensure students become independent and active citizens of their wider community.

Inclusive practice at this school promotes a bold approach and the pursuit of possibilities.

Staff articulate a clear vision for how their students will be successful members of their community upon leaving school, and families are strongly supportive of them in achieving it.

They are skilled at creating learning opportunities that are tailored to the abilities and interests of the individual. Staff are experts who are well-resourced to provide what is required to achieve success for every student, regardless of their disability.

Parents are an integral part of the school and each family is provided with 'wrap around' support to help students succeed. The school is part of the community for each family.

The leaders and staff know their students well and collectively celebrate the achievements of each student.

Intent on demonstrating value adding for every student, the school has adopted the principles of 'Visible Learning', with several sets of data produced with evidence showing positive effect sizes calculated over time.

The study team observed the expectation that each student will make expected progress, to be a critical aspect underpinning curriculum delivery. Staff referred consistently to the practice of low expectations and/or learning goals captured in individual education plans being inappropriate and not acceptable at Newton Moore Education Support Centre. Instead they regularly hold each other to account for ensuring students make expected progress and in many cases exceed it.

Students are also an important part of this highly accountable learning culture. Discussions with them regarding their progress and achievement ensures they are active participants in their learning journey.

During the study, the team members observed genuine enthusiasm and excitement displayed by students regarding learning in classrooms and the work-based programs.

Students consider that they are challenged to do their best and expected to be highly accountable for what they are learning.

Two students represent the Centre on the Newton Moore Senior High School student leadership council. The criteria for selection of students was the same for all students applying and consequently expectations for their roles no different.

The School Board are strong advocates for what the Centre is setting out to achieve. Through regular discussions with staff they are able to provide genuine support for the work that the staff do. This endorsement has further empowered staff to pursue avenues for continual improvement and research practices to take their work to the next level.

Individual staff members participate in the South West Education Support Network to further build their knowledge and expertise. Ongoing development of an assessment tool and subsequent sharing with schools across the State further illustrates their contributions to ensuring excellence is fostered across education support schools.

The school assesses all aspects of its performance in an 18-month self-assessment cycle. Individual elements of the self-assessment are audited every five weeks. A set of audits or surveys have been created in collaboration with all staff to gauge the effectiveness of the school's implementation of policies and processes, school targets and the operational plan.

The audits also monitor individual and whole staff alignment of practice to the school's vision and values. There is consensus among staff that these audits are worthwhile and drive the positive school culture that exists. Teachers are confident that the audits are undertaken in a timely manner, which is neither onerous nor time consuming.

Well-planned and strategically executed Tier 2 PBS meetings are a driver of the school's collaborative approach to managing extreme behaviours, escalations and complex case management.

Whole-school understandings, enriched by comprehensive data on student performance and behaviour, are the foundation of rich support provided to students, their families and staff.

Staff review the effectiveness of all school meetings and processes. An agenda item for all Tier 2 PBS meetings is a review of the meeting itself. Questions asked include use of time, evaluation of the tracking of student behaviour and follow up on achievement of agreed assignments and overall impact on student behaviour.

High expectations are apparent in staff selection processes. Confidence in the school's leadership team, together with the competence and professional integrity of staff members underpin a culture that supports decisions. It promotes constant improvement to the existing high levels of knowledge and skills acknowledged by all as being a requirement for working at Newton Moore Education Support Centre.

**5 The school's resources effectively target the building of staff expertise and provision of a wide range of innovative programs. Consequently, a range of initiatives demonstrate highly effective transition to work programs, targeted staff research opportunities and deploying 21st century learning options.**

An unrelenting focus on the recruitment of high quality staff has ensured optimal learning experiences for students and ensured teachers and EAs maintain high standards of professional dialogue regarding all aspects of teaching and learning.

Maximising opportunities afforded by becoming an Independent Public School, the Centre has not allowed a deficit model of thinking to influence what can be achieved as a small Level 3 school. It has expanded on more traditional ways of service provision to students through creative employment of system structures.

Through investing in additional leadership positions to enable extra layers of support, they have been able to meet the needs of students, their families and the community.

This commitment to build the leadership capacity of staff supports ongoing learning for a number of positions based at the school.

The leaders, teachers and EAs participate in additional study to ensure the currency of their Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Certificates or challenging themselves to acquire further accreditation or degrees. Certificate IV currency is supported and resourced by the leaders and maintained in creative and authentic ways.

Coaching to build capacity is a part of the culture of this school.

It is seen as a positive support for all that enables the personal development of a high quality leadership team. During the study, the leaders expressed reflective and professionally sophisticated perspectives on the value of coaches to their leadership.

Professional learning in the school is targeted to meet in-school needs and system requirements. Extensive engagement in PBS and Visible Learning have resulted in a strong culture of respect for the individual and a passion for best practice in teaching and learning.

Graduate teachers and new staff are supported intensively through the leadership processes and the communication model of the school. Deputy principals regularly model high quality teaching in classroom.

Informal professional interactions with Newton Moore Senior High School staff are valued by several teachers, citing that this provides opportunities for mutually beneficial building of knowledge. Some staff express an interest in pursuing opportunities to further enhance existing programs through utilising the potential benefits of being located on a shared school site.

School resources have been used creatively to provide diverse supports to the student community that would otherwise be unavailable.

The Parkerville Project provides a highly skilled social worker to offer additional services complementing the school's PBS model (on the school site) to 'at risk' students and their families.

The school's focus on preparing their students for adult life maintains the foundation of an unwavering 'can do' attitude that is evident in the way staff address the challenges faced by a small school on a shared site.

Engagement with their local community ensures access to other professional work sites, including opportunities for older students to engage in work placements and achieve their TAFE Certificates.

In order to facilitate industry-based learning programs, the school rents business areas for an office, a shop and a manufacturing workshop. Dedicated and skilled staff members manage these facilities and provide leadership oversight to ensure high standards of program delivery. There is also a 'work crew' of students, led by highly trained staff, who perform gardening and handy man jobs to various not-for-profit organisations in the local community.

The school offers a mix of auspiced and school-based TAFE certification to meet the needs of their students, for example, certificate and moderation for the performing arts music program is sourced through a Melbourne-based company.

Suites of initiatives that enhance a range of programs cater effectively for a wide range of student capabilities.

A highly effective 'transition to work' program is conducted over the last term of Year 10 for students who will be in Year 11 the following year. The program provides comprehensive and targeted training for students and enables the school to start the work program in week 1

of the following year. Students are encouraged to be independent and autonomous while creating opportunities for staff to work in their interest and skill areas.

The music program provides differentiated access to all elements of the curriculum. It allows students to write and perform original music, play a variety of instruments, use technology, and experience success in a highly professional and contemporary environment.

A strong commitment to Information, Communication Technology and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics is evident in classes. Students engage regularly in the use of 21<sup>st</sup> century methodology and achieve outcomes that enhance learning objectives rather than use of devices as distractions from what is to be learned.

A committed culture of sharing knowledge and information is evident.

Communication and review processes are known and embraced. Administrators, teachers and EAs value opportunities to moderate, share and learn together. Data on student performance and the performance of the school against its own standards are reviewed regularly.

Staff meetings follow a well-designed agenda, a tight timeline and address current issues and school development in a way that keeps the school's key issues at the forefront. Meeting effectiveness is evaluated and meeting chairpersons are coached to increase their effectiveness.

**6 The Positive Behaviour Support framework serves as a fundamental tenet underpinning the school's ethos, operations and staff interactions. The shared values of the parents and support agencies have created an inspiring culture of positive relationships, both within the school and between the school and the local community.**

Implemented in 2010, the school has embedded a school-wide PBS approach as the foundation for all interactions, relationships and learning across the school.

This consistently articulated and deeply valued approach has created a living culture that is evident from the moment a person steps on the school grounds or into one of the wider community programs that are run by the school.

PBS has been predicated on a strong understanding of the students and their needs. The students' varying abilities and disabilities and how these factors impact on the students' behaviour and ability to learn, master and generalise behaviour has been more universally understood as a result of the work in this area.

The long-term commitment to this approach has been a critical factor to its success.

The school has a coherent and systematic plan for the delivery of PBS that ensures consistency across all years clarifying what needs to be taught and what students should be learning.

From recruitment to induction and all points through the school day, week and year the school dedicates its resources to ensuring that the students are well-supported.

Students are active participants in all parts of the learning process and develop skills for self-regulation that they understand value and can apply independently in their lives. They are taught new positive behaviours explicitly, provided the opportunity to practice them and then acknowledged when they display these behaviour expectations.

Expected behaviours are outlined in the PBS induction booklet and reinforced in all areas of the school and when in the community. This creates the opportunity for practice providing all students with the maximum prospect of demonstrating the behaviour.

Interactions between students and the study team while out on work placements reinforced the universally accepted standards of behaviour.

One student on work placement commented, “PBS is important because it’s not all daisies and rainbows...PBS is our moral for the school, it’s a good way of teaching kids to be respectful and responsible.”<sup>6</sup>

Critical to ensuring high levels of student engagement and the success of the PBS strategies is the belief of staff that the curriculum must cater effectively for individual student needs. A small range of well-researched strategies complement a highly consistent approach to curriculum delivery.

Upon appointment to the school, teachers are given an intensive induction and skills training on key programs and approaches to ensure that they feel confident and capable. This is supported and developed continually through in-school processes incorporating structured meeting procedures and clear referral and follow up.

There is no lag between a student’s behaviour demonstrating the need for additional support and the teacher and PBS team stepping in to decide on a plan and implement it.

Review and follow up is data driven and planned for explicitly. All processes are timely and built on the daily monitoring processes and leading to staff being able to respond in a clear and informed manner at all times.

No staff member in the school is solely responsible for one child or a ‘difficult’ class. The school as a whole accepts and understands their responsibility to every child and contributes to it.

This collective responsibility traverses all Year levels and programs with staff valuing the importance of being consistent in teaching and supporting PBS so that success is built across the student’s school journey.

Dedicated leadership and a specific team that is representative of the school meet regularly and with a common purpose of preparing students for life through developing their behavioural responsibilities. Critical to this is a student services team that has trained youth workers employed as student support officers. This is complemented by the school psychologist with external agency support from a social worker.

Feedback provided by external agency representatives working with the school describe the staff at Newton Moore Education Support Centre as being outstanding in creating the conditions for successful partnerships.

Very high levels of organisation, accountable record keeping and collaborative structures that maintain purposeful communication characterise the way the staff work together.

Staff at the school feel enabled and supported to have an impact in helping mould young people who understand their emotions and can respond in ways that are good for them.

No staff member displays judgement toward another for their management of a student, including when an escalated situation occurs and a student displays behaviours outside the PBS expectations. When this occurs there are again, clear processes that support staff to work with the student and the situation.

- 7 The school has developed a comprehensive student learning tracking system. As a result, staff are able to confidently design learning programs sequenced against student prior learning and provide parents with comprehensive accounts of student progress. Students are the ultimate beneficiaries in gaining an authentic sense of accomplishment from their learning and work experience activities.**

The school engages in strong collaboration between parents, students and the community that inform and support continuity and tracking of learning for all students at points of transition.

Positive engagement with primary schools ensures that students commence their education at Newton Moore Education Support Centre in a seamless manner. In addition, partnerships with other agencies are fostered with a deep understanding and acceptance of the specific expertise each brings, a key feature.

A whole-school planning, teaching and assessment strategy is in place designed to ensure that the learning of all students is monitored systematically.

The staff have recently implemented the South West Education Support Network Adjustment to Assessment Tool. Nominated staff curriculum leaders have identified this tool as providing documented information supporting the Special Education Needs Assessment Tool, ABLEWA and WAC levels. Pre and post assessments are utilised to identify scores of adjustment leading to informed and explicit planning of individual learning programs.

Although in the early stages of implementation, staff are confident that this will provide even greater rigour to current processes for student tracking.

Expectations guiding the evidence teachers are responsible for collecting to demonstrate student learning are clearly articulated by the leaders and English and mathematics curriculum leaders.

A journey file assigned to each student is the main repository that contains this documented evidence. The English and mathematics learning area leaders have created English and mathematics mapping books for each student to be completed by teachers over the year. Shared discussion with staff occurs to identify the most appropriate assessment tools, with a priority being that they ensure maximum opportunity for each student to demonstrate their levels of understanding against content being taught.

The staff at Newton Moore Education Support Centre ensure that expectations for planning, assessment and reporting are unambiguous. High levels of follow up and follow through also ensure teacher accountability is evident.

While the approaches to whole-school planning, assessment and reporting are followed, there is considerable flexibility for teachers regarding selection of programs underpinning their delivery of the curriculum.

Staff believe that they are able to achieve very high levels of relevance of curriculum delivery overall due to the processes in place to guide their judgements as to where students are within curriculum scope and sequencing. Teachers value highly the professional trust they are afforded in order to make the judgements regarding how they will teach specified content.

The school has identified what growth is expected for each student with staff engaged in discussions regarding whether there is 'good enough' progress demonstrated at identified points in time.

The Principal and deputy principals meet with all staff on a regular basis to engage in targeted professional conversations with them regarding how they have used data to inform their teaching and learning. One to one meetings between the leader and teacher incorporate discussion ascertaining whether students have made expected progress over the specified period.

The leaders also engage in coaching conversations with the staff member as an explicit way to ensure a balanced approach towards accountability and support.

Staff are well-supported to perform their roles across the school. They pay close attention to the health of their workplace through respectful communication and care for one another.

Recognising the effectiveness of their student tracking systems, individual staff are currently looking at how they can develop a staff health and wellbeing tracking system with a specific focus to gather data over a number of years. They believe that such data would enable a proactive and embedded approach to planning for a workplace to become more agile in pre-empting known challenging episodes expected throughout the normal school year.

As part of workplace learning programs, students are required to self-assess and track their own progress and achievement. Together with work safety and other related information relevant to the program, the PBS whole-school values of respect and responsibility are emphasised. A reward points system which provides feedback loop to students and other teachers provides an effective means of tracking important social and emotional behaviours.

The tracking of student learning is further enhanced by strong teamwork among teachers and with partner agencies. High levels of involvement and connected practice ensure parents and members of the community identify issues early and initiate a proactive response to address them.

## 4: Conclusion

As an outstanding Independent Public School specialising in the area of special needs education, Newton Moore Education Support Centre exemplifies the factors critical for all schools striving to improve student outcomes.

This is achieved through inclusive planning processes, a self-sustaining and self-improving culture committed to fostering intrinsic motivation, engaged staff and students, inspirational team work and high levels of accountability.

High levels of personal and collective responsibility accepted by all ensure that students are the beneficiaries of learning experiences enabling current and future engagement in the community to be positive.

As an affirmative and constructive influence striving to contribute to its students being well-placed in society, is to be highly commended.

The Expert Review Group's performance study of Newton Moore Education Support Centre, an Independent Public School demonstrating exemplary performance, is designed to acknowledge this example of outstanding school practice and share the findings for the benefit of all public schools in Western Australia.

## 5: References

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