



THE HOLMEWOOD
SCHOOL

Autism Accreditation Summary

General Comments

- There is no complacency at Homewood with staff being highly reflective and keen to take on new ideas and approaches.

Social communication interaction and relationships

- In all observations staff were clear and Direct in their communication, spoke at an appropriate pace and avoided overloading students with too much extraneous information.
- Whole class discussions were a feature of most observed sessions. Staff use appropriate strategies to ensure that each student contributes to discussions at their own pace. Students are encouraged to focus on and comment on what other students are saying we're doing. Staff are very skilled at asking probing and challenging questions and presenting complex topics in accessible formats.
- Autistic students were empowered to ask and answer questions and express their views. They demonstrated assertiveness and confidence in doing so.
- It is suggested that peer collaborative work could be developed further.
- At lunchtime an atmosphere has been created in which students are encouraged and enabled to interact with each other and enjoy each other's company with discreet adult supervision. Students who may find unstructured time challenging have access to social clubs.
- Students' confidence in speaking in public situations and expressing their opinion has been developed through the Homewood public speaking and Performance program both in giving TEDx style talks as well as less formal open mic sessions.

Functional skills and self-reliance

- The school should work on ensuring that every pen picture is an authentic and specific expression of how the young person wants to be supported.
- The career program can be considered a particular strength at the school.
- Where best practice was observed, students had a copy of this information on their own tablet or computer allowing them to refer back to this information or process it at their own pace. In one lesson good practice was observed in students being prompted to tick off completed activities in a checklist on their own computer screen. The assessment team considers that in some other sessions there may have been missed opportunities to develop

independence and executive functioning skills by providing students with a tick list or as their skills develop students being prompted to devise their own task list.

- A number of lessons were observed in which teachers presented a body of knowledge to the students followed by a whole class discussion and then students working by themselves to complete a prescribed task. Whilst this format ensured that lessons were well structured and predictable, consideration should be given to introducing more student-led problem solving activities especially those that involve collaboration and negotiation with peers or address higher order thinking skills. This would help students prepare for the demands that will be placed on them in mainstream educational and vocational settings. This may be an area of staff development ensuring that staff have the skills and confidence to facilitate student-led activities and teamwork within an autism-friendly structured teaching context.

Sensory experiences

- There may be opportunities to make activities more multi-sensory in order to both support different learning styles but also to build up tolerance to a range of sensory experiences.

Emotional well-being

- Support for mental health and wellbeing is exemplary the therapists work collaboratively with each other and with teaching staff sharing their knowledge about student and their professional expertise and insight to create highly personalised flexible and trans disciplinary programs of support
- Young people present as confident, relaxed and happy with no indication of anxiety or stress. They have been empowered to be themselves, speak their own mind and respect others.
- Recommend that BSPs reviewed to ensure that proactive and reactive strategies are consistently identified for any specific behaviour identified as requiring support consideration could also be given to how behaviour support plans could be reframed to can be consistent with the school's holistic therapeutic approach and commitment to the new diversity paradigm. for example the plans could be resigned as well-being support plans.
- Interviews with staff confirm that support for mental health and wellbeing is exemplary the therapists work collaboratively which other and the teaching staff sharing their knowledge about the student and their professional expertise and insight to create highly personalised flexible and trans disciplinary programs of support
- There is an excellent established comprehensive well-being program which can be considered another strength for the school.
- Since coming to home with the students have become less stressed and it is making progress both academically and socially as a result of targeted support
- The high expectations set for students in terms of achieving academic qualifications is impressive
- Staff treat the students with dignity and respect and have clearly built trusting relationships with them. young people present as confident, relaxed and happy with no indication of anxiety or stress. they have been empowered to themselves speak their own mind and respect others.

- The school offers an inclusive environment in which each autistic person is empowered to recognize that autism as an integral part of who they are but also to explore and express diverse identities around gender sexuality, race, religion and other aspects of their personality including coexisting with divergent conditions.
- Students are supported to develop skills, confidence and insights to be self-advocates.
- Student behaviour was excellent on those occasions where student needed to be reminded of expected or appropriate behaviour this was done quite gently in a non-confrontational way for stop
- The teaching of emotional intelligence self-respect in respect for others of skill for their oval into the curriculum
- All students are provided with meaningful positive feedback to boost confidence and self-esteem.
- Academic expectations present as being set at a very high level with students being engaged in activities comparable to those taught at mainstream and working towards natural curriculum goals and GCSE and A Level qualifications. Programs of study in the upper school are highly bespoke with students and being provided with opportunity to obtain qualifications based on a personal skill or interest. In some cases tutors have been brought in to deliver highly specific examination courses where this is related to a particular skill or interest of the student.
- Any identified areas of development in this report should be considered as building upon and fine-tuning what is already excellent practice. Positive outcomes for students as they transition through school and into early adulthood are outstanding and impressive both academically and in terms of preparation for the world of work also in terms of social emotional well-being.
- Feedback from parents and students confirm that the school has a transformative impact on the quality of life of the students and their families admission to the school often seen as a life-changing Turning Point after previous very negative experiences of school.

Student and parent feedback

- Feedback from autistic students is overwhelmingly positive.
- A very small number of negative comments were made by students with the school which the school will wish to consider in terms of issues raised and possible actions.
- Feedback from parents and carers is overwhelmingly positive. One negative comment was made about a member of staff by one parent.