



Specialist Service Standards Review Mahinawa Specialist School

Final Report

31 July – 2 August 2018

Mahinawa Specialist School is a special school in Wellington.

Students receiving ORS specialist services

Students with Very High Needs funding	37
Students with High Needs funding	43
Total number of students with ORS funding	80

Specialists Employed

Physiotherapist	0.4 FTE
Occupational Therapist	1.6 FTE
Speech Language Therapist	1.2 FTE
Registered Psychologist	0.3 FTE
Registered Music Therapist	1.2 FTE

The reviewers were Glenis Allen, Cathy Herries and Lyn Doherty.

CONTEXT

The Specialist Service Standards were developed to ensure the provision of quality specialist services for all children and young people with special education needs. All providers are required to meet these Standards when delivering specialist services.

The Standards have always included the expectation that there will be both internal and external monitoring and review systems.

The revised review process for Cycle 3 builds on this expectation and will support providers to:

- demonstrate beneficial effects that specialist services have on education outcomes for children and young people
 - use internal monitoring and review processes to identify ways in which services and outcomes can continually be improved
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SCOPE

This review evaluated specialist services provided to students through the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme. The review focused on Mahinawa Specialist School's knowledge of the quality and effectiveness of their specialist services in promoting and supporting positive outcomes for students.

Pre review information

The provider's annual assurance statement and discussion with management at the pre-review meeting provided initial information for this review.

Review Information

The reviewers met with management to discuss:

- their ongoing monitoring and review processes including an inquiry being undertaken into the effectiveness of their specialist service provision
- selected Management and Organisational Standards important for supporting specialist practice.

The reviewers also met with:

- seven specialists to discuss services delivered to four selected students for the Implementation Step of the Service Pathway
- five parents and caregivers of the students to talk about the specialist services their children receive
- four teachers to talk about the specialist services the students receive
- seven specialists who wished to contribute to the review in an open forum.

Action Plan

Mahinawa Specialist School had six requirements from the July 2013 external review and submitted an Action Plan to address these.

As part of the current review the Lead Reviewer met with Mahinawa Specialist School's management, reviewed the partly completed Action Plan and considered that four of the requirements had been fulfilled. Management and the reviewers agreed that to fulfil the two remaining requirements Mahinawa Specialist School needs to:

- provide a website with relevant up-to-date information on specialist services
- provide a written statement for parents informing them of the process for accessing their child's information.

FINDINGS

Provider internal monitoring and review of specialist services

Mahinawa Specialist School has a range of processes to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their specialist services.

These processes occur at a number of levels and include:

- the recent introduction of the Specialist Professional Learning and Development process
- annual file reviews using the Specialist Service Standards
- fortnightly Specialist Team meetings
- whole therapy team meetings with the principal
- a recent document review.

The new Specialist Professional Learning and Development process has the potential to reinforce a focus on quality specialist work and the links to specialist reflection, supervision and professional development.

Concerns about the Occupational Therapist's (OT) workload and the over-reliance of classroom staff on the OT to implement familiar programmes, resulted in a focused inquiry. The capacity for additional OT hours and alternative service delivery models were investigated. The actions resulting from this inquiry included:

- the employment of an additional Occupational Therapist
- targeted professional development for support staff

- the implementation of a referral system for senior students to prioritise OT and Speech Language Therapist input.

Management and reviewers agreed that future inquiries could be strengthened by collaborating with all key people across the stages of the inquiry. The development and implementation of robust processes for monitoring, analysis and review of all actions for improvement will allow the impact on service delivery and outcomes for students to be evaluated.

Provider Assurance on Specialist Service Standards

The Management of Mahinawa Specialist School attested that they have:

- written procedures related to all of the Management and Organisational Standards across the Service Pathway
- ongoing internal review of specialist service provision to improve the quality and effectiveness of specialist services and enhance outcomes for children and young people.

Probes on Management and Organisational Standards

During the review the review team carried out probes on selected Management and Organisational Standards considered to have particular importance for supporting specialist practice.

Professional Supervision

Specialist competence is maintained and enhanced through professional supervision. Management regularly questions specialists about the effectiveness of supervision and its impact on practice.

Professional Development

Specialist undertake professional development and there is evidence of some reflection on this. The upgraded Specialist Professional Learning and Development process will support more consistent reflection.

Culturally respectful and responsive service

Parents are invited to share cultural information through the Wellbeing passport and at IEP meetings. The new Specialist Professional Learning and Development process requires specialists to provide evidence of increased and improved cultural competence.

Next Step: Management will provide the necessary support and supervision to develop these cultural competencies.

Induction

There is a systematic induction process in place for all new specialists which is evaluated informally. The Specialist Service Standards are not currently central to this process.

Next Steps:

- *Specialist induction will be formally evaluated to inform the ongoing development of the process.*
- *The Specialist Service Standards need to be integrated throughout the specialist induction process.*

Ongoing Informed Consent

Specialists gain ongoing informed consent from parents for programme changes. This is monitored by the team leader in random file reviews.

Next Step: Management has a policy or procedure to ensure ongoing informed consent.

Transitions and Closures

There are appropriate processes for transition into and out of Mahinawa Specialist School and also closure processes. In an effort to ensure successful transition at the end of schooling parents are encouraged to begin discussions at a Year 9 level.

Next Step: Gain feedback from families and whānau and post school providers on the quality of transition and closure processes and analyse the feedback to inform future practice.

Follow up and Reflection

Parents/caregivers are asked informally by specialists and also by the Principal at IEP meetings for feedback on the quality of specialist services. Planning is in place for the development of a telephone survey for family and whānau.

Next Step: The planned telephone survey is developed and implemented as part of systematic process for gathering information to evaluate the effectiveness of specialist service delivery.

CYCLE 3 AREA OF FOCUS: The Implementation Step of the Service Pathway

Service Expectation - all children and young people have regularly monitored individual programmes that are implemented in the context of daily activities, are age appropriate, motivating and meaningful.

Mahinawa specialist school management and specialists are effective in all aspects of the implementation step of the service pathway.

For example

- Specialists work very collaboratively and engage with parents and whānau through open, regular and thorough communication.
- Specialists and teachers acknowledge each other's expertise. Teachers appreciated specialists' willingness to research specific areas new to the team.
"Our relationship is fluid, they acknowledge my expertise" (teacher).
- Specialists are responsive to family and whānau priorities when developing programmes (individual and group), and are sensitive to student and family circumstances.
"we are lucky to have Mahinawa.....because everything works very well. I feel informed about what my child is doing and have the opportunity to say what I think" (parent).
- Specialists work with the team around the student to develop programmes that incorporate motivating and meaningful activities based on the strengths, needs and interests of the student.
"all activities are (my child's) interests and so he/she is motivated to engage" (parent).
- Specialists work flexibly and make time to ensure they are available to teachers and family members for consultation, goal adjustment, and problem solving about student programmes.
"they are available" (parent). "I feel strongly supported by the specialists" (teacher).

COMMITMENT TO ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

Management and specialists' commitment to the ongoing improvement and effectiveness of specialist practice is well supported by the principal and grounded in the school's strategic plan. Mahinawa specialist team and principal have identified areas for improvement resulting in a comprehensive range of planned initiatives.

Once Mahinawa Specialist School collaboratively implements and embeds these developments, the school will be well placed to continue to improve the quality of its specialist services and the outcomes for students.

FUTURE ACTIONS

Within this report are actions in a number of areas that management and reviewers agreed needed to be undertaken, in order to improve specialist services and student outcomes. These are:

- provide a website with relevant up-to-date information on specialist services
- provide a written statement for parents informing them of the process for accessing their child's information
- strengthen inquiries by collaborating with all key people across the stages of the inquiry, and by developing and implementing robust processes for the monitoring, analysis and review of all actions for improvement
- provide support for the ongoing development of specialist cultural competencies
- formally evaluate specialist induction
- integrate the Specialist Service Standards throughout the specialist induction process
- write a policy or procedure for ongoing informed consent.
- gain feedback from families and whānau and post school providers on the quality of transition and closure.
- develop and implement the planned telephone survey.

Progress on each of these areas should be reported as part of the next Provider Annual Assurance Statement.

Your next review of specialist service provision will be in approximately three years' time as part of the regular review process.

Carolyn Grace



Manager Assurance and Eligibility
Date: 15 October 2018