SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT  

Updated: 6/10

School number: 1801

School name: Port Lincoln Special School

School Profile: Fostering Independence

Port Lincoln Special School is a Reception to Yr 12 site, located in the coastal city of Port Lincoln. It is the only special school in the Lower Eyre Peninsula and one of two in the Eyre and Western Region.

Situated at the Lincoln Gardens Education site, which also hosts a primary school, dental clinic and Early Intervention Resource Centre; the school offers specialised programming, through negotiated education and learning plans. It also provides dual enrolment opportunities with rural mainstream sites should that be appropriate. Class sizes are small and teachers are supported in the classroom environment by SSOs.

The school achieves its mission to foster independence in each student, by focussing on communication, practical literacy and numeracy, personal development and behaviour goals.

The school has strong community links, and is valued by the community for providing a safe, caring and supportive environment, conducive to students’ reaching their maximum potential.

The core values of the school are based on excellence, equity and social justice, tolerance, understanding and respect. Inclusion, where each person feels included and includes others is a feature of the school.

1. General information

- School Principal name: Pam Roach
- Deputy Principal’s name: n/a
- Year of opening: 1986
- Postal Address: P O Box 1795, Port Lincoln SA 5606
- Location Address: Barley Road, Port Lincoln SA 5606
- DECS Region: Eyre and Western
• Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (km): 3km
• Telephone number: 86825319
• Fax Number: 86825016
• School website address: www.plss.sa.edu.au
• School e-mail address: admin@plss.sa.edu.au
• Child Parent Centre (CPC) attached: n/a
• Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service: n/a
• February FTE student enrolment:

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<th>Specific Population Enrolment 2009</th>
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• Student enrolment trends: Predicted to be steady. Generally students enrol in transition years – reception, year 3, year 7 and occasionally year 10.

• Staffing numbers (as at February census):
  Principal 1.0
  Coordinator 1.0 (school converts this salary)
  Teachers 3.2
  Total entitlement: 5.20
  Permanent Ancillary hours 118 hpw
• Public transport access: Most students are transported to and from school in DECS funded taxis. The school owns 2 buses – one with wheelchair access, with which it accesses community activities and programs.

• Special site arrangements: The school is situated on the same campus as Lincoln Gardens Primary School and shares IT infrastructure. It is part of the Eyre and Western Small Schools hub and links with other rural special schools as part of the Spencer Special hub.

Most students are enrolled on a full time basis, but the school allows students from outlying rural centres to access its specialised programs through part-time enrolment. This is only undertaken in partnership with the neighbourhood school and with guidance officer support.

2. Students (and their welfare)

• General characteristics

All students attending the Port Lincoln Special School have an intellectual disability. Some also have a sensory or physical impairment. A number of students have autism and some display challenging behaviour. All have a Negotiated Education Plan, those under the guardianship of the Minister also have an Individual Education Plan. Students range in age from 5 to 19 years, with Reception to Year 10 students working within the South Australian Curriculum Statements and Accountability Framework (SACSA) and post compulsory students working within the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) framework. As well as having special needs, most students meet other criteria for disadvantage – poverty, single parent families. All students are entitled to register with DisabilitySA.

• Student well-being programs

Positive behaviour support, Keys to Success and care programs implemented by all staff, exert an influence across the school.

• Student support offered

Due to the size of the school and town, all staff form close relationships with the students and their families. Counselling is offered when needed and strategies presented in curriculum. The school works closely with other agencies – DisabilitiesSA, FamiliesSA, Community Health, Aboriginal Health Services, Yarradi, AutismSA, Down Syndrome Society, Novita and through Child Development meetings. DECS services – Kilparrin, SERU and regionally provided speech pathology, disability coordinator support, hearing impairment service, guidance and behaviour management are available.

• Student management

The school aims to provide a supportive, caring and collaborative environment, through a non-aversive behaviour policy, in which each student has the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential. Student issues are addressed through individualised learning plans focussing on communication, independence, personal development and behaviour.
Staff, students, families and in some cases support agencies work in partnership to encourage and support positive behaviour.

The school is securely fenced to ensure an environment in which safety is paramount.

- **Student government**
  
  There is no formal student government, but staff encourage students to make choices and develop decision-making skills. The senior class have class meetings and vote on issues such as class activities. They are also responsible for coordinating whole schools assemblies. Student leaders are elected each year and they take on areas of responsibility – making thank you speeches to visitors etc.

- **Special programmes**
  
  The Clarke Road Money Program is implemented across the school. The skills gained are reinforced in real life learning, through weekly shopping. PECS and visual strategies are also implemented throughout the school for students to develop communication skills and foster independence. Swimming and water safety sessions are undertaken on a weekly basis. Some students also access the Riding for the Disabled program.

  Senior students are involved in Active8 – an initiative which links students to community organisations. The school links with Australian Conservation Volunteers and Greening Australia, and this forms a component of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which the school coordinates at Bronze level. A ‘work exposure’ program which prepares students for work experience and post school options was recognised as a ‘lighthouse project’. Opportunities are accessed within the community – gymnastics, community library visits.

3. **Key School Policies**

- **Vision:**
  
  Port Lincoln Special School is committed to fostering independence in each student, enabling them to have the capacity to engage in a positive and productive life. It will provide a supportive, caring and collaborative environment in which each student has the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential. Port Lincoln Special School works in partnership with care providers, specialist agencies and department service providers to ensure programs and courses are in line with national priorities, DECS strategic plan priorities and region priorities; while always meeting the individual’s unique needs.

  - **Contextual Influences:**
    
    Port Lincoln Special School is a feeder site for students attending the Inclusive Pre-School program or who have accessed special class facilities at the local junior primary or primary schools. Occasionally students will be jointly enrolled at their neighbourhood school and the special school, where prohibitive distances do not enable attending the special school on a fulltime basis to occur.
All students have a negotiated education and where necessary health care plan. Individual student profiles are written which indicate disability, service providers, medication management, preferred learning styles and positive behaviour interventions.

- **Operational Principles:**

To students: To provide a high quality education for all students which will foster independence and enable the to have the capacity to engage in a positive and productive life.

To parents: To provide a collaborative approach which will ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all students.

To the community: To provide a facility which caters for the specialized needs of students with special needs, provides opportunities for meaningful engagement with the community and prepares students for engagement in further education, training, employment or community programs.

- **Shared values:**

  Excellence – seeking to perform at one’s best; individually and collectively

  Equity and Social Justice – where each is entitled to fair treatment and access to opportunities leading to equitable outcomes

  Tolerance and Understanding – accepting other peoples’ differences

  Respect – treating others with consideration

  Inclusion – where each person feels included and includes others

The Site Improvement Plan addresses site priorities using DIAF principles and the Teaching for Effective Learning/Learning for Effective Teaching frameworks. Goals are set and assessed using the SMARTA framework.

- **Priorites for 2010, which will be achieved through**

  - High performing and accountable leadership
  - Quality teaching
  - Development of infrastructure and organisational practices that support learning and wellbeing
  - Effective community engagement and governance

1. **Quality Teaching – student engagement through IT**

  DIAF principle: Continuously Improve

  TfEL domain: teach student how to learn
SMARTA goals: Staff access quality, relevant professional development which enhances learning opportunities for students with disabilities. Participants then present 3 sessions per term to other staff members to ensure learning is shared. Teachers ensure that a session using IT is programmed each week to enhance engagement and learning opportunities.

2. **Student Engagement – Science**

**DIAF principle:** Continuously Improve  
**TfEL domain:** develop expert learners  
**SMARTA goals:** Staff meet with primary connections facilitator and undertake professional learning to ensure that students in years 3-7 receive 60 minutes/week of quality science.

3. **Literacy – Communication**

**DIAF principle:** Set Directions  
**TfEL domain:** create safe conditions for rigorous learning  
**SMARTA goals:** Teachers meet with parents/caregivers and decide on one individual learning goal from areas of communication, personal development, independence and behaviour. These goals will then be discussed at team meetings and curriculum developed to ensure student has every opportunity to meet goals. These goals will be directly reported on in end of year report.

4. **Staff Wellbeing**

**DIAF principle:** Attend to Culture  
**TfEL domain:** Plan and organise for teaching and learning  
**SMARTA goals:** Acknowledging complexity of special education setting, by the end of term 2, staff will have identified what changes they would like to have in place and suggest at least 3 strategies which can be further investigated to alleviate feelings of ‘overload’.

- **Recent key outcomes:**

  Work Exposure program which provides a link between school and work continues to be very successful.

  Professional development undertaken by staff has added value to the curriculum and learning experiences of our students.
4. Curriculum

- **Subject offerings:**
  All students have a negotiated education plan.
  All required learning areas except LOTE are offered within the SACSA framework for students in Reception to Year 10. Post compulsory students work within the new SACE framework. Transitional work experience opportunities prepare students for the world of work.

- **Open Access/Distance Education provision:** n/a

- **Special needs:**
  All students attending the school have special needs and these are addressed and catered for within the specialised environment and through specialised programs and support agencies.

- **Special curriculum features:**
  Sensory awareness, relaxation and positive behaviour support enable access to the curriculum, which is driven by the goals negotiated and outlined in the NEP.
  Through the Office for Youth – Active8 program – senior students are linked with the community and undertake propagation, weed eradication, data collection and natural resource management opportunities as part of the school curriculum.

- **Teaching methodology:**
  High quality teaching is integral to improving student learning outcomes and professional development is a priority of the school. Staff have undertaken PECS, positive behaviour support and information technology training.
  Based on the communication needs of the student, staff use augmentative visual communication techniques – Boardmaker and AUSLAN. The TEACHH program is also currently being explored as a teaching methodology.
  Explicit teaching occurs on a 1:1 basis or in small groups. Staff work in teams (teachers and SSOs) to maximise the achievement levels of students.

- **Student assessment procedures and reporting**
  Assessment is based on the goals outlined in negotiated education plans. Teachers use a variety of assessment procedures and reporting mechanisms – observation, photographs, developmental checklists, work sheets, work samples and incident reports to develop an understanding of the student’s current knowledge and skill level and plan further learnings.
  Formal reporting to parents is via NEP reviews in term 1, written reports in terms 2 and 4 and progress folders in term 3. Informal discussion, diary
entries, parent information evenings, CDU and other reports also occurs. Daily communication between home and school is via a diary or in some cases, telephone.

• Joint programmes:
Links with the Lincoln Gardens Primary School are valued and a more formal partnership is being investigated to enable integration and inclusion. Transition programs exist between Bedford/Compass (post school option for most students) and the school. The Spencer Special Hub enables teachers working in special school settings to meet and share expertise. The school hosts the Lower Eyre Special Educators hub and shares expertise with others working in the field of special education in the local area.

5. **Sporting Activities**

• Physical activity is an important part of the curriculum and all students are encouraged to take part. Weekly swimming sessions are held at the Port Lincoln Leisure Centre. Some students access the Riding for the Disabled (RDA) program. Community resources – basketball stadium, tennis courts, table tennis and gymnastic halls are used when appropriate. Surf sessions and aquatics are popular. Bike riding is undertaken by most classes. Sporting achievements have been incorporated into the Duke of Edinburgh awards. Although learning team games is enjoyed by some students, others engage in solitary play and make use of playground equipment.

6. **Other Co-Curricular Activities**

Once a year students from Port Lincoln Special School challenge Whyalla Special School students to a game of basketball. This is held midway between the two schools at Cleve Area School. Premier's Reading and Be Active Challenges are undertaken. Sports Day and Graduation evening are highlights of the school calendar. Culturally significant weeks are celebrated – NAIDOC.

7. **Staff (and their welfare)**

• Staff profile
There is a high staff: student ratio, with the school supplementing DECS funding to provide additional support in classrooms.

• Leadership structure
The Principal is the sole leadership position in the school with the PAC deciding to convert coordinator salary to more teacher and SSO time. This decision is reviewed each year. The principal also takes responsibility for classes to release teachers for NIT.
• **Staff support systems**
  Service agreements exist with service agencies. Team meetings; teacher, ancillary and whole school staff meetings, as well as PAC meetings are held. Staff are also encouraged and supported to pursue professional development and to share expertise with other staff members in in-house professional development sessions. On some occasions volunteers will also assist in classrooms.

• **Performance Management**
  Time is allocated for staff to meet for professional dialogue with the Principal. In these meetings professional aspects of their work, student progress, career pathways and professional development opportunities are discussed. Written feedback is provided.

• **Staff utilisation policies**
  Coordinator salary is converted to ancillary hours and school supplements DECS allocation to enable additional support in classrooms. Staff are deployed according to student needs. Applications for additional support to manage challenging behaviours have been successful. Staffs' strengths and areas of interest and expertise are considered as part of the class allocation process.

• **Access to special staff**
  Specialist support services are available from DECS – Guidance, speech, behaviour as well as vision and hearing impairment services. Other support services include Novita, AutismSA, FamiliesSA, CAMHS, Down Syndrome Society, Community Health – Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy.

• **Other**
  Staff at the Port Lincoln Special School must have a commitment to and empathy with the students and their families. Physical, emotional and intellectual demands on staff are high. Staff must be organised, innovative and flexible to constantly modify educational resources and programs to suit students’ needs.

**8. Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff**

• Complexity placement points
  1.5

• Isolation placement points + base
  5.5

• Shorter terms
  n/a

• Travelling time
  n/a
• Housing assistance
  Subsidised housing assistance available. Contact David Wray - 86883077
• Cash in lieu of removal allowance
  Contact Gavin Carey - 86621065
• Additional increment allowance
  n/a
• Designated schools benefits
  Special class allowance; protective clothing allowance
• Aboriginal/Anangu schools
  n/a
• Medical and dental treatment expenses
  n/a
• Locality allowances
  Locality allowance + country incentive zone 2 allowance applies
• Relocation assistance
  DECS will pay removal costs for people appointed 1 term or more. Contact
  Gavin Carey - 86621065
• Principal’s telephone costs
  Mobilephone for school business

9. School Facilities
• Buildings and grounds
  The school was extensively redeveloped in 1998, with further
  redevelopments in 2002. As part of the National School Pride program a
  levelled softfall mini basketball court was laid in 2009. A new learning area is
  currently under construction as part of the Building Education Revolution.
  The yard can be divided into 2 play areas with the back secured with high
  fencing. There is extensive playground equipment.
  A large shed, attached to an enclosed garden area, is used to store 2 buses.
  An undercover drop off and collection zone for parents and taxis allows all
  weather access.

• Heating and cooling
  Split cyle throughout the school
• Specialist facilities and equipment
Access ramps and disabled toilet facilities. Secure decking to one learning area. Rear projection smartboards in learning areas.

• Student facilities
Access to cool storage for food and drinks. No canteen on site, but an arrangement exists with local delicatessen.

• Staff facilities
Staff room with shower and toilet, multi-purpose area preparation area. Staff have access to internet.

• Access for students and staff with disabilities
Ramps and toilet facilities are fully accessible to wheelchair users.

• Access to bus transport
School owns a 19 seater coaster and 8 seater commuter with wheelchair provision.

• Other
Co-located with Lincoln Gardens Primary School on the outskirts of the town. It is in the ‘High Risk’ zone for Bushfires, and policies and procedures relating to this are well documented, reviewed and practised.

10. School Operations

• Decision making structures
Weekly teacher meetings and fortnightly SSO meetings; Personnel Advisory Committee, Governing Council, Finance Advisory Committee, OHS committee. Principals of primary and special schools meet formally twice a term to discuss whole of site issues. Teaching teams also meet to discuss student and class issues.

• Regular publications
Weekly planner, daily notice book, term planner, fortnightly newsletter.

• Other communication
Transition pamphlets (beginning school & beginning secondary schooling), Year book, Staff handbook. A pinup board at Woolworths displays student work and showcases activities and programs – it is an effective means of informing the community of what occurs in a special education environment and has reduced the ‘stigma’ that can surround ‘special schooling’.

• School financial position
The school is in a sound financial position, with funds set aside in a building fund. A replacement wheelchair access bus will be a major purchase in the near future.
• Special funding
School is active in accessing grants to provide more and varied opportunities for students.

11. Local Community

• General characteristics
Port Lincoln is a city of approximately 15,000 people. It’s central industries are farming, fishing, aquaculture, grain handling and tourism. It is anticipated that mining will also soon have an impact.

• Parent and community involvement
The school encourages family support, while acknowledging the difficulties and time constraints faced by families who have a child with special needs. The school is held in high esteem by parents who value the provision of this special education option. Governing council is an active body who promote the school in the local community. School functions and events are well attended.

• Feeder or destination schools
All schools and preschools in Port Lincoln and surrounding areas have the potential to be feeder schools/preschools. An inclusive preschool program and junior primary and primary special classes enable a pathway for students with special needs to continue their education in a special school setting, should that be determined as the most suitable option. Likewise, should a student develop skills which indicate another setting would be more appropriate, students can transfer to that facility.

• Other local care and educational facilities
There are a range of educational facilities available in Port Lincoln from preschool to tertiary. There are 4 preschools, a junior primary school, three primary and one high school. There are also 2 independent schools. A TAFE campus and Marine Research Centre linked to UniSA are also located in the city. There are a number of childcare services available.

• Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities
The city boasts a number of aquaculture industries and vineyards. A wide range of shopping facilities are available.

• Other local facilities
Cinema, indoor swimming pool, range of sporting facilities, national parks and beaches, churches, gyms, fitness clubs
Hospital, dental and medical facilities
• Availability of staff housing
  Government housing available

• Accessibility
  Port Lincoln is situated 660km from Adelaide. There are regular flights and a bus service between Adelaide and Port Lincoln. Road conditions are good.

• Local Government body
  City of Port Lincoln, Civic Centre, Tasman Terrace, Port Lincoln

12. Further Comments
  Port Lincoln hosts a number of special events throughout the year – Tunarama festival (over the Australia Day/long weekend in January); race week (horses), Adelaide to Port Lincoln Yacht Race and other sailing regattas and ‘The Long Lunch’.