Woodford International School
Strategic Plan
2015-2017

February 2015

Mission Statement:
To provide a dynamic learning environment through an internationally recognised curriculum that encourages and fosters the intellectual, social and physical development of our students.

Values:
Woodford is committed to:
- Integrity
- Respect
- Innovation
- Quality
- Teamwork

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Where has Woodford come from?

Ten years ago Woodford International School:
- Was recovering from near-closure during the tensions
- Had around 200 students (rebuilding from 50 students a few years earlier)
- Taught preschool to year 6, with a non-standard mix of Queensland and Pacific curricula
- Had little involvement in peer activities (eg Principal did not attend peer meetings, teachers had little involvement with peers in other schools)
- Had artificially low fees which did not reflect the cost of operation, as teachers had taken pay cuts to enable school to continue operating and maintenance was ceased
- Had run-down buildings and facilities
- Went through ongoing changes in staff, management and board membership

In the past five years, Woodford has:
- Undertaken major curriculum reform, introducing the International Baccalaureate and Cambridge IGCSE and undergoing the first review of its International Baccalaureate program
- Introduced a senior school from years 6-10
- Upgraded all junior school classrooms, added new classrooms for senior school students, and improved the grounds and student facilities
- Developed school-wide computing facilities (ongoing)
- Increased fees to rebuild from the survival levels of ten years ago
- Achieved stable management and solid finances

Where is Woodford at?
The School has over the past few years successfully recovered from near-closure during the tensions. It now has quality staff, offers a global curriculum (with accompanying international scrutiny), has adequate buildings and teaching resources, and has solid finances and stable management. For the first time in over 15 years, the School has the opportunity to consolidate what it does – rather than simply survive and rebuild, or fix the basics.

The School is now in a phase of consolidating after massive change in relatively short period:
- There are approx 475 students (65 in early childhood education and pre-school (almost half from Solomon Islands)), 268 in primary school (just over half from Solomon Islands), and 130 in secondary school (around two thirds from Solomon Islands)
- The Primary School has in recent years operated at near capacity, while the Secondary School continues to grow
- There are approx 45 teaching staff, of whom around two thirds are Solomon Islanders
- The School is continuing to build curriculum strength
- The School has successfully trialled improving student and teaching support services (eg for English as an additional language and other particular student needs; also for teachers)
- There remains still 2-3 years of a building program to complete
- There is a broad core of non-curriculum activities
- There remains a need for peer and community outreach
- The School has in recent years raised fees considerably, but retains lower fees by comparison with peer schools internationally

The Curriculum at Woodford:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Kindy to year 5:</th>
<th>Years 6-8:</th>
<th>Years 9-10:</th>
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<tr>
<td>- International Baccalaureate, Primary Years Program (PYP)</td>
<td>- Middle school program</td>
<td>- Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)</td>
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<td>- Program has global recognition – offered approx 1200 schools, 145 countries</td>
<td>- Developed at Woodford to reflect local learning needs in Solomon Islands, and to bridge PYP and IGCSE</td>
<td>- Curriculum has global recognition - offered approx 2600 schools, 120 countries</td>
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SWOT analysis of Woodford:

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<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
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<td>- Internationally recognised and evaluated curricula</td>
<td>- Recent period of low parent and community engagement</td>
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<td>- Small class sizes</td>
<td>- Limited communication of challenges, plans and achievements</td>
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<td>- Diverse school community</td>
<td>- Constrained space for growth, need to further upgrade facilities</td>
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<td>- Qualified and committed staff</td>
<td>- Limited ability to offer attractive packages for teaching staff</td>
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<td>- Strong commitment to student security and welfare</td>
<td>- No network of peer schools (as exists in many other countries)</td>
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<td>- Good location and campus facilities</td>
<td>- Low fees in comparison to comparable schools internationally</td>
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<td>- Low fees in comparison to comparable schools internationally</td>
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<table>
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<th>Threats:</th>
<th>Opportunities:</th>
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<td>- Political environment and security risks</td>
<td>- Community engagement and communication</td>
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<td>- Difficulty attracting and retaining quality staff</td>
<td>- Further embed IB and Cambridge curricula in teaching and learning</td>
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<td>- Narrow base of families able to afford fees</td>
<td>- Offer full preschool to year 12 education</td>
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What will Woodford’s priorities be 2015-17?
During late 2014 the Board met parents, teachers and others to discuss priorities for the School over the next three years, 2014-17. It offered two open-invitation meetings, and met with several parent groups and teachers. Several other groups were also approached with invitations to meet. Overall, at least ¼ of families with children at the School were represented at a meeting. Materials relevant to this process are available on the School’s website.

The message from these meetings was clear – the priority for the next three years should be teacher professional development and mentoring, a position that the Board readily endorsed. This will be primarily achieved by:
- Teacher professional development and training;
- Recruitment of skilled staff who are able to mentor others, as well as specialist English as an additional language and special needs staff;
- More individualised student diagnostics and needs assessments.
- Enhanced interaction with the School community.

These areas will be the focus for this strategic plan, though other areas will continue to be developed to ensure a balanced School. The priorities will be delivered over the life of the strategic plan, and not take place all at once.

Compared to the way in which the School currently operates, over time there will be a greater prominence of:
- Increased communication between parents and the School about a child’s academic, social and emotional learning and wellbeing;
- A small number of specialised teachers involved in cross cutting issues such as special needs assistance or English as an additional language tuition;
- More teaching teams, led by a senior or mentor teacher;
- More teachers studying for English language or other qualifications.

How will Woodford achieve these priorities?

Strategy 1 - We will strengthen learning and teaching

How?
1) Employ
   a) Full time equivalent specialist teacher in English as an additional language (from 2015)
   b) Full time equivalent specialist teacher in special needs identification, response and teacher training (from 2015)
2) Increase professional development for teachers (commencing 2015)
   a) Lift current average from 5 to 8 days per teacher per year
   b) Additional classroom support to enable teachers to attend professional development
   c) Topic areas to focus upon include:
      i) English language assessment and, if necessary, training
      ii) Special needs recognition and response strategies
      iii) International Baccalaureate and Cambridge IGCSE
      iv) English as an additional language needs recognition and response strategies
      v) ICT
3) Introduce specialised diagnostics and testing, to improve tailored responses to individual student needs (from 2016, as finances permit)
4) Explore means to benchmark quality of teaching and learning
   a) Including by encouraging review by International Baccalaureate and Cambridge International Examinations
5) Continue to:
   a) Offer balanced international curriculum, tailored to the needs of individual students
   b) Offer smaller class sizes
   c) Promote School environment that supports learning and development needs of all students
   d) Invest in IT for teaching and learning
   e) Invest in professional development for teachers

**Strategy 2 - We will strengthen services and extra-curricular opportunities for students**

**How?**
1) Consider how best to utilise the newly-available music/theatre facility in Chinatown
2) Continue to:
   a) Offer a range of sport, art and music extra-curricula activities
   b) Ensure excellent safety procedures in the event of an emergency, including through regular safety drills and training
   c) Provide a safe and healthy campus

**Strategy 3 - We will enhance engagement with the school community**

**How?**
1) Improved reporting on individual student achievements, learning and needs (continue process commenced in 2014)
2) Improve School website and populate with information about the School, student activities and involvement in the wider community, and train staff to ensure its regular upkeep (by mid 2015)
3) Encourage revitalisation of PTFE association (2015 onwards)
4) Initiate more frequent contact between teachers and parents (from 2016, as budget becomes available to provide teachers with time)
5) Continue: program of School-initiated contact between teachers, parents and students
   a) Primary School: Learning Journey, Three Way Conferences, Year 5 Exhibition
   c) Full School: Weekly ‘Wavelength’ newsletter

**Strategy 4 - We will responsibly manage finances, assets and human resources**

**How:**
1) Build teaching teams, with lead teacher responsible for development of other teachers at each year level (for Primary School)
2) Maintain a competitive salary scale and benefits package for all employees to attract and rewards outstanding teachers and staff
3) Implement the campus master plan for long term development
4) Revised admission procedures to identify students with learning support needs (from 2016)
5) Improve financial management software and support
6) Continue to:
   a) Recruit and retain highly skilled and committed staff
   b) Manage staff so as to maximise moral and performance, and address development needs or concerns
c) Manage finances effectively and efficiently, including ensuring costs are kept to a minimum
d) Improve ICT systems
e) Maintain current assets to maximise campus amenity and to minimise long term maintenance costs.

**What this strategic plan does not address**

The Board in late 2014 decided to increase fees over the period 2015-17. These fee increases will enable the School to deliver on the additional priorities identified by parents and community members during consultations on this strategic plan.

However the fee rises will not be sufficient to address all issues, including:

- the largest single barrier to recruiting staff has been the inability of the School to offer teacher housing – the fee rises will not themselves enable the School to address this concern;
- employment offers have been rejected because of the perceived low salary package. The fee rises will not solve this problem;
- all the extra-curriculum or specialist programs that some parents indicated they would wish to see;
- while the School will remain non-selective, and will increasingly attempt to meet individualised student needs, it will also retain the right to decline students with intensive needs;
- all the campus improvements that might be desirable.

These issues will need to be addressed by future School Boards.

**Reviewing this strategic plan**

This strategic plan is intended to be in place throughout 2015-17. It should be reviewed in late 2016 with a view to revising and updating it, and setting fees to apply for 2017 and beyond.