



Evaluation of MindMatters at

Hermitage High School

(Fictional Name)

Report on a study from 2002 to 2005

This school was one of fifteen schools that agreed to participate in a case study as part of the evaluation of MindMatters across Australia.

The evaluation was conducted for the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health

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Summary

Hermitage High is a large independent school located in a capital city. The school extends across four campuses, located in different suburbs of the city. Three campuses accommodate years K to 9 and consist of a junior school and a middle school. The fourth campus is a senior campus accommodating years 10 to 12. While traditionally Hermitage has been a boys school, in recent years a parallel girls school has evolved and by the time the evaluation was completed, girls were enrolled up to year 8.

The evaluation was conducted at two of the middle school campuses and at the senior campus. While the school is associated with a particular Christian denomination, enrolment is not restricted to membership of this church. Campuses differ in their socio-demographics with one campus in particular have quite a large enrolment of students whose background might be non-English speaking.

Immediately prior to the adoption of MindMatters, Hermitage High was undergoing a major restructuring and reorientation with the overriding philosophy one of providing a high level of pastoral care and of viewing education as an holistic exercise. MindMatters was seen by the executive of the school as providing a meaningful framework of ideas and principles around which the school could base the restructuring of pastoral care.

MindMatters professional development was used as part of the process of orienting staff towards the new directions. MindMatters curriculum resources were used in the middle and senior schools to provide a link within the curriculum to the school's pastoral care ethos. Curriculum ideas are included in a period formerly known as 'Character Education' and, latterly as 'Health and Values' in the middle school campuses. In the senior school, MindMatters curriculum is utilised in a 'Personal Development' period.

MindMatters principles and emphasis on wellbeing continues to underpin the focus on internal staff development at Hermitage High School.

I suppose in a sense, it gave us a structure as to what we wanted to do. In a sense we had in our mind what we would want and we had ... some ideas about how to go to from the starting point to the end point and what was the staffing profile ... MindMatters has created a scaffold for us to work with, a structure which we could work to and apply. It gave us something in writing and a process of professional development that we could follow ... I think we could have got to this point without MindMatters but I don't think it would have been as quick or as easy.

The school today is fundamentally a different place ... there's more tolerance and more respect here and I think MindMatters has contributed to that, along with staffing, getting the right sort of staff in the school ... So I think that we've seen a cultural shift here in the school very quickly and I don't think that MindMatters has contributed completely to the change but it has contributed in part to that change.

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1 This school's characteristics at the beginning of the study

Overview

This is a large independent school located in a capital city. It caters for students from pre-school to year 12, across four campuses.

We have three campuses which are sometimes called junior campuses which go up to year 9, then all students come together for their senior schooling; only the last three years of school are here on this campus. Staff 2002.

The school was previously a boys' school but in recent years has created a parallel girls' school and has begun to enrol girls in the primary years. These female cohorts will move up through the school, with girls' enrolments eventually reaching year 12. The evaluation study focuses only on secondary students, all of whom are currently boys. Until recent years, the staff profile was predominantly male, but now the school features approximately even proportions of male and female staff.

The school has few Indigenous students but has a large proportion of students from other culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly Asian students. The school runs a special program for international students seeking education in Australia. Certain campuses have greater cultural and socio-economic diversity than others, because of the characteristics of surrounding suburbs.

Well one of the great things about the school, I love about it in fact, that the culture's so varied here ... We've got boys in the school that come from a range of backgrounds, the predominant ones are the boys from the Asian community, particularly Chinese, Hong Kong, Vietnamese. We've got boys from a strong Sri Lankan community here, fewer boys from India and Pakistan ... we've got boys from Greek and Italian background ... Staff 2003.

The way I describe the (suburb) community to other people is it's very homogenous. You've got a lot of children here whose parents are quite wealthy and they live in the area. They're frequently a white population, as a compilation, and certainly there's a very distinct feeling of the parents and community being strongly involved ... being very closely involved with the teaching staff ... It certainly has a feel of a very sort of enclosed private school, whereas (other campus) itself, the community is far more heterogeneous. It's certainly got a great deal of racial mix ... and the socio-economic basis for parents would be broader ... I think the needs for students (there) are far different and sometimes far more intense. Staff member from a different campus 2004.

Administration

There is a school principal, supported by a head of campus on each of the junior campuses. The junior campuses also feature a head of middle school position, responsible for students in years 5 to 8. There is also a dean of studies, who manages the curriculum and a dean of students, who is responsible for student welfare across all campuses. The position of dean of students is equivalent in status to that of the dean of studies, indicating the school's commitment to pastoral care and student wellbeing.

The school adopted a particular focus on pastoral care some two years before the evaluation study commenced, as a result of a change in school leadership. It had been a long-established boys' school with an emphasis on traditional values and academic excellence, but

little explicit focus on students' wellbeing. From the year 2000, the newly-appointed dean of students established new systems and policies for pastoral care, creating a framework which drew significantly upon the principles of the MindMatters resource.

That was really the first year when the framework was put into place. I guess MindMatters happened a year or two later, in terms of the implementation, although I know (the dean) was certainly very much aware of MindMatters and would have used it to influence the framework that she put together ... so it is difficult to isolate the true influence of something. Staff 2003.

Staff and executive team members report that recruitment practices changed to accommodate the school's overall shift in direction, with most staff now actively recruited by agencies or executive staff, rather than through general advertisement. Individuals involved in recruitment report considering candidates' commitment and personal resilience, as well as their capacity to create positive relationships with students. Recruitment favours those who can demonstrate the contemporary teaching and behaviour management practices that the school also adopted as part of its conscious shift in direction. In general, there has been a shift toward a younger staff profile and a more even mix of male and female staff.

The staffing at senior school's ... different to what it was four years ago. I've actively looked for staff. Firstly the majority of staff have been appointed through head-hunters not through the (newspaper), so we're looking for a particular type of person, we're looking for staff who are very contemporary in their style of teaching and have what's called a certain discipline in the way in which they manage students. In other words there's an expectation on students to manage themselves and be aware that their behaviour has consequences for others ... So there's been a shift from a very traditional way of management to a very contemporary way of management ... Staff that haven't felt comfortable have gone or we've moved them to other parts of the school, or we've transferred them out. That's part of it and I think perhaps more recently too, the style of teaching. We try and teach them in a fairly contemporary engaging way and for many years the mode of teaching here at (Hermitage) has been pretty much teacher centred ... dictation, handouts, a lot of work from text ... - Staff, 2003.

When I'm interviewing ... I think the best way of judging it is that idea of do I think this person is going to be able to make a good, strong, bond with students and if the answer to that is yes ... and that I feel they're a resilient person as well themselves, because that's the key as well ... It's quite a unique environment, we have a lot of expectations on staff and, comparatively, I believe, a higher stress level than probably any other school ... the peer review process sort of thing, the expectations of senior management and the level of innovation, all lead to a staff who are driven very hard. So staff need to be resilient as well ... Staff 2003.

Curriculum

The school offers a varied curriculum and a range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sport. The arts and drama are also well supported. The school also has a commitment to small class sizes across all learning areas, allowing teachers to provide more individualised support for students. Both students and staff spoke positively about the range of curriculum choices and activities and about the support offered by small class sizes.

I think it's good because it offers a lot of opportunities, like sport-wise, you've got a lot of sports to choose from, then extra-curricular things like debating and stuff, there's a lot of those kind of things. And academic wise they've got a lot of options as well ... it's pretty good. Student 2003.

So they're finding subjects that are very meaningful for them but also allowing them, I think, we're finding here because we have very small class sizes. The average class size here at year 10, we have a ceiling of 20 but the average for a say an English or a Science may be say, 18, but beyond those two studies, the average class size would be about 13. So it allows them to connect with the teacher. It's all beneficial. - staff, 2003.

In regard to extra-curricular activities, one group of students reported a sense of pressure to represent the school in all their endeavours, rather than pursue interests outside of the school. They also spoke of an emphasis on attending events on weekends and evenings, such as sporting events where the school is represented. Two or three students within this group complained that they had little life outside the school, because of this expectation.

Year 9 students participate in a pre-senior program that includes a component called 'Options', which emphasises experiential learning and activity. Their classes are offered on a separate part of the junior campuses, creating a sense of separation from the middle years and younger students. They also attend a number of camps throughout the year and have contact with year 9 and senior students from the other campuses of the school.

First of all at the top of each junior campus is a separate year 9 sort of centre and program. We call it the pre-senior program - it's really a transition time, it's designed to help kids make the transition from middle school to a pretty academic sort of senior school. It's a one year program, delivered in separate buildings so the kids are away from all the younger kids and so on, there's a lot of experiential based learning goes on so they expect to be out of the school, perhaps out of (the city), for 2 or 3 weeks each term. They're brought together across the campuses quite a bit, and go off and do things and also work on their presentation skills and so forth, so just to get them to a point where they can get to senior school. Staff 2003.

Senior students looked back positively on the Options program, while those in year 7 or 8 reported that they looked forward to the pre-senior program. The following quote is an aggregate of comments from one group of middle school students:

(Year 9 will be) fun. Because we go on three camps and we've got Options so you can choose to go sailing on a trip for a week, or the snow. It's more of a relaxing time. Basically it's character building. The opportunities are really good. They change it to make more opportunities so you go on more camps and get out there more and experience stuff. (Name) is in year 10 but last year he said there were so many choices and they were all just great. He went to the Great Barrier Reef with Marine Biology. It's called pre-senior so I think it's a set up for senior school. It's completely different from middle school. Students 2003.

Students in year 10, 11 and 12 attend the senior school campus and most stay to complete Year 12. From Year 10 onward, students are able to select subjects that will count toward the senior school certificate in their state. There is also a diversity of subjects in the senior school program and there is a highly academic focus, with an emphasis on preparing students for

university study.

We offer for boys of year 10 - now if you look at an average secondary school, you'd find that the core number of year 10 studies that they do, like core English, core mathematics and core science and so on, and there'd be a smaller group of elective studies ... We've got for them available at year 10, 72 subjects to pick from and the core group of studies ... so what it allows the boys to do, is that I think they and their families feel that they've got a grave sense of ownership of the program in year 10. Staff 2003.

There has been a major move to make senior school students more responsible for their own wellbeing and their own action whereas possibly you might say in the past they've been directed more and spoon-fed more ... what we're putting in the place, the transition process that will lead them into university. Again with better resiliency skills. Staff 2002.

The curriculum includes religious education, taught in a manner that is tolerant of religious diversity. The school population includes students with diverse religious beliefs, reflecting the cultural diversity of at least some campuses.

We actually did a survey at the beginning of the year and in the two year 7 classes that I teach history, we had 23 nationalities. And that would have covered six religions. Staff 2003.

Yeah and most of us enjoy learning about the different religions. In my class we have like maybe five different religions. Student 2003.

The curriculum for most students also includes regular sessions that have a pastoral care focus and explore a range of issues, including social and emotional wellbeing. Students in the middle school (years 5 to 8) engage in one period a week of Character Education, which is normally taken by the home room teacher. Students in the senior school (years 10 to 12) have a unit called 'Personal Development', which is taken by the head of house and a tutor. This occurs in one period a week for year 10 students and once per fortnight in years 11 and 12. Topics vary but include issues such as drugs and alcohol, personal safety, relationships and bullying. There does not appear to be a specific Character Education or Personal Development curriculum for year 9, but there is a small number of sessions per term in which pastoral care can be explicitly addressed, while the experiential nature of the Options program also allows some exploration of Personal Development issues.

Educational context

The school has always had a focus on high levels of academic achievement and has retained this while more actively embracing student wellbeing in recent years. At several campuses the school now has extensive waiting lists for enrolment. Academic and sporting scholarships are available to support students' enrolment and offset fees. Students with special needs are not excluded from enrolment.

We have an open door policy currently and have done in the whole time I've been here. When the students are interviewed, if the parents have let us know that the child has learning difficulties or social or emotional difficulties, either myself or one of the special ed people or the other counsellors, depending on what campus, would probably become involved - not in terms of can this child come here or not, but what can we do to support your child while they're here?

... It then helps the parents to make a decision ... Can I provide, you know, one-on-one counselling for eternity, no, but I'd certainly be (there) as a support. Can a special ed person provide one-on-one, no that's not part of our policy, but we do have small class sizes ... (this campus) in particular does attract a large number of kids with special needs in a variety of areas. Staff 2003.

The school has also made deliberate choices to embrace a more contemporary and interactive learning style than was used here in the past. It sees itself as progressive and innovative in regard to educational approaches and recruits and trains staff with this in mind.

No, we embrace it (an interactive classroom style), that's the other thing, that we're not staid in our ways here at all and as with the in-servicing and so forth it's a very progressive campus, our team is amazingly progressive and we embrace all of those sorts of things so again, we are one of those institutions that are pretty flexible, in what programs we offer. Staff 2003.

The old style of teaching borne out here at (Hermitage High) was you wouldn't know about your male teacher's background or what he was thinking, there was always a front there, you teach the class and you don't ask any questions, so I think already that the teaching generation that is now coming through is far more relaxed with their own self and to maybe convey some of their ideas and thoughts to students and again, I don't think staff are threatened by doing that sort of thing and a lot of these classes, it's an open forum to talk about issues and staff happily share their ideas with students, which has come a long, long way from what we used to be like as a school. Staff 2003.

The school is expanding to take on female enrolments, creating a parallel girls' school. In addition, one of the junior campuses will also expand in future to enrol senior students in years 10, 11 and 12.

We're travelling in leaps and bounds at the moment. It's a great time to be here because the community is well and truly supporting us and we've got a situation next year which we've never had before where just about every class is full. The waiting lists now are huge and it's great and we're going to end up going to year 12 by 2008 and there's a lot of work going on. Staff 2004.

Annual turnover

Staff reported that the school has a low level of student turnover. They also reported a relatively low level of staff turnover, although acknowledged previous periods of higher staff turnover.

If you look at the school an average turnover - well some schools differ. If you speculated that the turnover of staff in the school if you averaged about might be somewhere in the range of eight per-cent, maybe at worst ten per-cent, we're probably turning over about four here ... (people) picking up promotions elsewhere, we're not losing staff because they're not happy with the school. Staff 2003.

However comments from one group of students show that staff turnover can be disruptive when it occurs; it may be higher in particular learning areas or at certain campuses. The following quote is an aggregate of students' comments from a group discussion:

Because when our (Japanese) teacher left last year we lost a lot of it because we didn't have a Jap teacher for a while so we lost all that we learnt. Because all the Japanese teachers they've stayed for a while, then they've gone, and then a new one's come and then he's gone. They've all got different methods of teaching so it's hard to pick up and keep stuff. You just keep on going back every single time. When a new teacher starts you go back. We've had about six different Japanese teachers. It's because it's really hard because the problem is that the Japanese teacher is actually responsible for year 9 down to prep. Students 2003.

Pastoral care arrangements

Since the year 2000, the school has developed comprehensive structures and processes for providing broad pastoral support for all students. One of the aims of the current pastoral care system is to provide opportunities for every student to feel connected to a staff member that they can talk to, if they have personal difficulties. A large number of staff are involved in pastoral care in some way.

I suppose to me it's that one of the things attracted me to the school was that it is that whole school approach that actually maximises the number of points of contact so you don't minimise it to just the psychologist or just the counsellor or just the tutor, it recognises that you need to broaden it, so there should be someone, that anyone can find, whether it's the chaplain, or whether it's the tutor or whether it's the head of house, you know, if you make it broad enough, there's got to be one of them that you'll get along with well enough to be able to talk to. Staff 2004.

In the senior school, there is a house system, with a staff member nominated as head of house. The head of house attends to welfare and discipline issues for those in his or her care. The head of house is assisted by a number of staff members nominated as tutors within each house, who meet with students in smaller groups. Houses in the senior school are vertical in structure, incorporating students from years 10, 11 and 12. There is also a horizontal support structure in the form of a Year Level Coordinator (YLC) for each of these groups, who can also become involved in welfare or discipline issues.

The senior school operates with the structure based around the houses, it's really a matrix, I suppose. The heads of houses, and there are eight houses, each with about 70 students in them. The head of house is the person who's responsible for the pastoral care of the kids in their house. The head of house has assisting him or her, four or five tutors who meet once or twice a week regularly with a group of about 15 kids. The tutor groups are vertical in the sense that they're years 10,11 and 12, with three or four from each year level in each tutor group and kids in that group would expect to say with their tutor over the whole of their time in senior school. The tutor gets to know them pretty well and the head of house gets to know them pretty well. Now in addition, there's a horizontal structure, a year level structure at senior school, where a year level coordinator will also involve himself or herself in things like obviously course selection ... (and) also involved in any issues, either welfare or discipline type issues that go across more than one house. Staff 2003.

For year 9 students, individual pastoral care issues are managed by the director of the pre-

senior program on each campus. In the middle school, they are managed by the classroom teacher, who normally takes a group of students for several subjects and so is able to make a connection with students in his or her group.

Now, underneath the pre-senior program we have the middle school. Middle school goes from years 5 to 8. At middle school the key person for student welfare is the classroom teacher and even in years 7 and 8 the classroom teacher will respectively be taking those kids for quite a number of the subjects they're doing but it's not like a fairly typical secondary school situation where you might have seven or eight teachers, so we try and limit it to about three, maybe four teachers, for years 7 and 8. Staff 2003.

Students on each campus have access to a school counsellor who is a psychologist, being either the dean of students for the school or an assistant dean of students on the junior campuses. Students can access the counsellor by self-referral, or may be referred by a staff member or parent. The school counsellors are responsible for individual counselling and are also involved in whole-school issues relating to student wellbeing, such as review of relevant policies, participation on other committees and the provision of staff professional development. In regard to individual counselling, school counsellors report that many situations involve the provision of support to students where there have been behavioural problems or learning difficulties. Certain campuses of this school attract a number of students with special needs, who are also supported by the counsellors and/or by special needs advisors.

They look at (particular campus), a lot of parents with kids who have special needs will probably look at the fact that it is small and the small class sizes and it looks like a nice place to be at and that you know, we do have policies in place and certainly we have staff - we have chaplains and counsellors, we have special ed advisors, so I think they would certainly be looking at those sorts of things. Some parents have even said well that's why we chose this school because we do have that. Staff 2003.

In addition to school counsellors, students on each campus have access to a chaplain who is available to provide individual support for students. On each campus the counsellors and chaplain and sometimes the special needs advisors participate in a committee, variously referred to either as a pastoral care committee or a student welfare committee, which meets regularly to discuss any concerns. The frequency of formal committee meetings varies from campus to campus.

So (in the middle school) the structure is really based on the classroom teacher with the active support of the local assistant dean of students who's also the counsellor and a student welfare committee, pastoral committee so that students are sort of referred up fairly quickly to the student welfare committee if there appear to be issues. The student welfare committee sort of work with the classroom teacher to try and support the kids as well. And the student welfare committee is usually made up of the classroom teacher, the head of that middle section, the counsellor and usually the head of campus as well. So a team of about five, sometimes we'll pull in more people, a special needs teacher, and so forth as well. Staff 2003.

The student welfare committee and staff who are involved in pastoral care also actively discuss how to manage the impact of troubling world events, such as terrorism and warfare.

We have a very open way of managing a school and when we have issues arise we

tend to talk to the boys about it rather than not talk. For example, if you look at the issue of the war in Iraq, which is perhaps a more recent example of that, we did a range of things. We spoke in assembly about that in a neutral way, where the message there was basically that we're seeking a concept of peace and a quick and final outcome to it for it not to drag on. We provided for boys places where they could go and talk to staff about it if they wanted to and that was advertised and they could talk, for example, perhaps to a counsellor here or a chaplain or the head of house that's happening at that level. It was raised during the Personal Development sessions. Staff 2003.

Parents and students who were interviewed seemed well aware of the general pastoral care options in place.

If any of the boys had a problem, they'd go to head of house but then if it was out of their area, they'd sort of then refer them on to say (dean of students) or somebody else. Parent 2002.

Also we've got a reverend and he's pretty cool so a lot of people just talk to him about their problems and stuff like that and he's friendly and he keeps it to himself as well unless it's something really big. Student 2003.

Behaviour management arrangements

The school has seen a shift away from traditional to more contemporary forms of behaviour management, in which students are required to take greater responsibility for their own behaviour. Behaviour problems are reported to be relatively few, compared with other schools. Small class sizes and close staff-student relationships allow behaviour issues to be detected and managed early.

Those who are responsible for pastoral care, such as classroom teachers, heads of houses, and school counsellors, also take a lead role in behaviour management issues. Behaviour management is seen as closely related to pastoral care, with staff looking for any underlying issues of concern when difficult behaviour occurs. There is a discipline committee on at least some campuses, involving the head of campus, that meets with students and parents to resolve more serious incidents of undesirable behaviour.

If there is a case of bullying it's referred to what we call a discipline committee hearing meeting and that student with their parents and the head of school and myself will meet in here and we'll say that this is just not appropriate. If it happens again, that student's place inside the school may be at jeopardy. So we're very, very firm but ... just as important ... we say, well why are these behaviours being manifested? Staff 2002.

The school also uses positive reinforcement to promote desirable behaviour, such as awarding service points for contribution to extra-curricular activities or competitions in which the school is involved, or awarding 'colours' for excellence in a particular field, such as sports or academic success. These colours are coded and are worn on the uniform to signify that student's achievement.

Staff also reported that the administrative and physical separation of students into junior, middle, pre-senior and senior groups allows the school to provide developmentally appropriate behaviour management strategies.

We've got older boys, effectively young men, in an environment where we try

and manage them as young men and we don't have disciplinary structures and management processes that are appropriate to years 7 or 8, we can offer separately from the other schools. And I think to respect them, there needs to be open dialogue for them. Staff 2003.

Other welfare support issues

In addition to the comprehensive pastoral care structures provided by staff, there is a peer leadership program through which year 8 students, who are the senior group within the middle school, provide support to younger students. Peer leaders are selected by votes from their peers as well as teacher input and are trained in elements of leadership and support by the school counsellor. Peer leaders participate in activities with younger students, provide general support in the school setting, and encourage students to seek help from staff for more serious issues. The following is an aggregate of comments from several peer leaders:

What we do is pretty much help people, we're a psychologist kind of, we just help people with their problems. Like if they've got a problem at home we talk to them. And we help all the little kids as well and stuff in the junior school. If they've got a problem we suggest ideas. We'll also be playing games with the little kids sometimes and stuff. Students 2003.

Staff and students reported that the general culture and communication style in the school is supportive, particularly in regard to staff relationships with students, which are strengthened by small class sizes. Positive communication styles are favoured and modelled and there is a no-shouting policy on at least some campuses by which staff are not permitted to shout at students.

(Students have) a really close relationship with staff which is no longer didactic. It no longer holds the staff member up on a pedestal but one which is much more casual, much more based around mutual trust and mutual respect and I think that's something that we have to a great extent here. Small class sizes, a small environment at (this campus) makes a big difference. The young staff makes a big difference. Staff 2004.

However, in spite of the school's efforts to provide a comprehensive pastoral care system, difficulties may sometimes occur with students being reluctant to seek help, or with parents being reluctant to disclose family problems to the school.

As any system works in regards to making sure that we don't have students slip through the system, sometimes it's unavoidable if the parents aren't communicating with the school. For instance if there's been a split in the marriage and they're not quite prepared to release that to the general public and they're still working out themselves how things are going. The lead up to that separation could have been horrid and students could be suffering and, without parents coming to us, without students - because also students won't necessarily come to a staff member no matter how appealing we may be to them and how genuinely interested we are - that's the hardest thing any school or any pastoral care team have to overcome. Staff 2003.

Links to the community

Although students are encouraged to talk to staff about their issues, there is an awareness that students may prefer to seek assistance or information outside the school. Staff report trying to ensure that students are aware of helpful agencies in the community and do invite representatives from community organisations into the school to speak with students.

Like today in the year 11's there's a person coming from the Gambler's Help Line speaking to the year 11's. We have people from the drug and alcohol and the peer educators from the prison system, they come into the drug ed program. Each year now we run a boys' own day, so at that point we have people from the community health centres and various other agencies to come and run workshops and things around masculinity, so yeah, that's how we pretty much gear things with that and the other really good link here is a body called the school focus network. So they are a body that act as sort of communicators and liaison people between community agencies and schools. Staff 2002.

Parent involvement

The school attempts to actively involve parents and inform them of the school's direction and school activities.

We want to talk to parents if they're happy and we also want to talk to parents if they're not happy. If you like, the success of our school is going to be based on relentless self-criticism so if we're not doing it well enough, let's do it better. Staff 2002.

Because parents actively choose and pay to have their children attend this school, often from some distance away, they are happy to work with staff at the school to resolve any difficulties that arise with their child's behaviour or performance. Enrolments are reported to be increasing and parents' views are valued by the school.

If there's been a difficulty, and it could be a school-based difficulty, (there is) a real willingness and a hope on the parents' behalf that something will be able to be resolved, because the last thing they want is for the child to be removed from the school. So working really hard together with the staff and students to try and fix you know, whatever the problem is. Staff 2002.

We survey and questionnaire our parents. We also do that to our students in years 7 and 8 as well and the results we're getting back is that there is a very strong sense of community in the school. Staff 2003.

Student views of the school

Staff and parents reported that the majority of the students have a positive view of the school and a strong sense of community and belonging. They cited results from student surveys and forums to support this. It was suggested that satisfaction with the school is also reflected in a low level of difficult behaviour.

Down at (campus) they do regularly implement, I think it's the end of each term, they do a student survey that asks them questions and how they're enjoying school and some questions about teasing and safety, that sort of thing. And the last round was fairly favourable. Staff 2002.

Certainly one thing that I've been impressed with (school) doing is that the students here really do have a strong feeling towards the school and a belonging to it. That's really made a mark on me. Staff 2002.

Students who were interviewed were also generally positive about being at this school, enjoying the small class sizes and sense of community. Student views did not appear to change significantly between visits.

Everyone knows everyone like on a personal level. Student 2002.

Yeah I like there are really low (numbers in) years, I mean we only have 15 kids in our class and that's been really good because you're not lost. My friend goes to (another school) and there are 500 year 8s and you get lost in the crowd. Student 2004.

When asked about their introduction to the school, several students reported that they felt quite welcome, or that special efforts were made to orient them to the school and to help members of a new class get to know each other.

On the first week or so they focus on socialising but not really socialising - like we did English classes and learned English - at the end of the period ... they might play a game of like calling peoples' names and knowing their names and knowing things about them - like saying what school you came from and where you live and places like that. And then you know a bit about that person and that sort of welcomed you a bit more and you felt, okay I know this guy a little bit. Student 2003.

Students were aware of the support options in the school and felt that most people would be able to find a teacher, advisor, counsellor or chaplain to talk to, if they wanted to discuss personal issues. However they acknowledged that some people would not seek help for a personal problem, as they may not feel comfortable talking about it.

There's Miss G ... (school counsellor) and we can talk to reverend - but the home room teacher, like last year a couple of kids in my class, including myself, had family problems and stuff, and our old home room teacher really did (help). They try and help but it's totally up to you if you want their help and stuff. Student 2004.

I used to just go to the school reverend. He always tells you to go to him - and most of the teachers, or the majority of them, have kids who are our age so if you've got any troubles you can talk to them, they understand. Student 2002.

Several students indicated that the school facilities were good and that they enjoyed the diversity of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

They get involved in all the arts like drama, there are productions, and we have like art competitions ... they give you a lot of opportunities to express yourself in your subjects. Student 2003.

The facilities are pretty good compared to my old school and you've got a lot of options. Student 2003.

They offer you so much more clubs and stuff that you can do in school and coming from a state school in year 7, like here they'll give you the teacher's after hours home number whereas at a state school they don't offer anything like that. And like the computer setup how you can access everything from home, like what subjects and stuff you're doing. Student 2003.

Students in the senior school (year 10 to 12) felt that the school was supportive of their needs. They indicated that the pre-senior program was helpful in preparing them for senior school and felt that support was offered to prepare them for life beyond school, including career information.

They prepared us well for year 10 in year 9, with the things that are different and at the end of the year they brought us here and we had two weeks here so they built us up to senior school. Student 2003.

They help you, like guide you along the way anyway through your schooling, and they prepare you for what's going to come up in your adult life. Student 2002.

Students were also asked if there were any negative aspects of attending this school. They noted that some students, particularly those on scholarships, can experience considerable pressure to succeed, academically and in other areas. Some feel pressured by the choices and expectations of their parents.

There's a lot of commitment with the school, you've got to be committed to your studies and with your sport and if you did music you have to be committed to that. If you're doing all these things you've got to like put in and it can be a bit overwhelming. Student 2002.

Other disadvantages included the school's strong focus on attending extra-curricular events outside of school hours (eg sporting events on weekends at which the school is represented) and the distance that some students have to travel to attend school and events.

We get here at 8.05 and I get up at 6 o'clock to catch my bus at five past seven which is about 20 minutes away from my house and that's the first stop and so it takes us an hour to get to school except we're getting to school 45 minutes I think before school starts. Student 2003.

A small number of students expressed discontent at the strictness of the uniform policy and the general strictness of the school, but others did not feel this was a problem.

Probably everyone outside the school sees it as strict and stuff but once you're in the school it's not that much. Student 2002.

There were mixed feelings about the school's decision to enrol girls in the parallel school – although those students interviewed will not have girls in their own cohort, some will interact more with girls a year or two younger, as they reach the senior years.

For the past how many years, it's been basically a guys school, it's a tradition and the principal's point of view would be that girls might be a distraction to the boys but now as we enter this new age type of thing, they're getting different points of view, different perspective and interest in girls. Student 2003.

Staff views of the school

Staff reported that the morale and collegiality of the current team was reasonably high, but that the school culture in the past had been difficult for some teachers. The school's transition from a traditional boys' school to a more contemporary institution had also placed pressure on teachers and resulted in some staff turnover. However the current staff are supportive of each other and have a high level of commitment to their roles.

Staff morale is pretty high at the moment, now it certainly hasn't always been like that and the school's gone through a lot of change during the last three or four years. A lot of staff moved on then, but with the new staff that have come in ... morale now is pretty good and a recent survey of the staff about a month ago showed that they felt very comfortable at the school, they felt in tune with the goals of the school. Staff 2002.

(The school) did a recent (staff) survey - mind you, it was the first week after the holidays ... I think the strong thing that came out of it on all campuses was the strong collegiality between staff. We've been a school that's gone under a huge change in three years and it's been rapid and intensive and hugely demanding on staff, so it's meant that there's been quite a bit of conflict early on between old school and new school. And I think it's moving now that people do accept the direction that the school has gone in. Staff 2002.

Well this is my first year here and I was quite surprised at how everyone is pretty committed about what they're doing and very supportive of each other too. I found being new I got a lot of support from colleagues here and it was very positive for me. Staff 2002.

There is a staff welfare committee and the school provides some support mechanisms for staff.

But he's supposedly somebody who staff can talk to about staff welfare and there is a staff welfare committee that is appointed and elect people. We did have a sexual discrimination officer and various other people like that, which by legislation we had to have, but they weren't very overt and there's much more overt support mechanisms ... than there used to be. Staff 2002.

Community views of the school

In the past the school had a reputation for being a traditional, authoritarian boys' institution. Community views are gradually changing in recognition of the school's shift in direction, including its greater focus on student wellbeing. However staff reported that these changes in community perception take time.

I think it's changing. It had a reputation as being a pretty hard school for boys and that it doesn't have a particularly strong welfare focus. I think that's changing quite rapidly. So out there I think the idea that (Hermitage High) is actually a caring school is spreading, but also a school that is offering a lot of opportunity. Staff 2002.

The school has always enjoyed a good reputation academically and student achievement is still high, despite the changes in discipline and teaching style. The school is seen as being less exclusive than in the past, socially and academically.

Yeah I think it's a very comfortable school. You don't feel as though you've got to have a certain car or you've got to have a certain ... job and I think (Head of Campus) to his credit, went out of his way to make everyone feel comfortable and because of that, boys when they do leave after year 12, are able to speak with anybody and communicate well. Parent 2002.

I think the school has broadened its academic program to allow for those boys who are less able and they're achieving success so people are feeling good about having their kids here. They know that the school's achieving and I think it's certainly making itself felt in the community. Staff 2002.

2 How the evaluation was undertaken at this school

Four school visits were made in March 2002, June 2003, June 2004 and August 2005. At these visits, the school arranged for various members of the school community to be interviewed, and these conversations were audio taped for later analysis. Interviews were spread over the senior campus and two of the middle school campuses. The following interviews took place:

Interviewees	Number interviewed			
	1 st visit	2 nd visit	3 rd visit	4 th visit
Principal				
School Executive	2	3	3	5
Senior teacher			8	7
Teacher or assistant teacher	8	9	4	5
Student	30	24		30
Counsellor, social worker etc	3	1	3	2
Parent	3	-	-	-
Community member				-

A brief visit was also made to the school early in 2003 and a brief conversation that took place on this occasion was also taped.

Student questionnaires were administered in July 2002, August 2003, August 2004 and September 2005.

At baseline, the following participation rates were achieved:

Year 7	27%
Year 8	38%
Year 9	33%
Year 10	35%

Results from first round of data collection are used as points against which results, after two-years of implementation of the program, can be compared.

How the evaluation was undertaken at this school

3 Why did this school decide to adopt MindMatters?

3.1 Community context

Concern about students' community context was not raised as a specific reason for the school adopting MindMatters, as many of this school's students come from relatively privileged socio-economic backgrounds. However, a small number of staff and parents did nominate social change and family breakdown as factors which increase the need for schools to be supportive of the wellbeing of young people.

I suppose the changing role of the community and the changing role of the family is that divorces are on the increase in Australia, the church is becoming older, the church is, if you like, becoming less important in families' lives in society ... school will really be seen as the last real community in Australia society in time to come. So if we can provide all of that education, not just to our kids but also to our mums and dads, I think we'll go a long way to sort of ensuring we've got a pretty successful future to come. Staff 2002.

3.2 Student wellbeing Issues

Mental health problems

None of the informants reported particular concern about a high incidence of mental health problems among members of the school community; this does not appear to have been a motivating factor in the uptake of MindMatters. However there was broad awareness of the mental health needs of young people, with a particular emphasis on the risk of adolescent depression.

Depression is more of an issue I think. Kids who find it really difficult to deal with either troublesome domestic situations or pressures from home or from school and so on, pressures to fit in amongst peer groups and so on, that is a really tough one. Staff 2002.

You might teach for three years and only end up having one child that's genuinely depressed but if you don't pick up that child and support them then you've failed that child. Staff 2002.

In the light of discussions that have been in the media recently with (sports celebrities) who were saying that they've got depression and that sort of thing, there's more openness towards something like that ... we've had a couple of boys through in the last five years who've had depression and they'd been looked after in a sort of way and they'd been living a normal life, and I don't think there's as much stigma as we certainly used to have. Staff 2004.

Counsellors reported that they provide individual support for students in regard to a number of difficult situations in adolescence, with a focus on learning difficulties, relationships and family problems. Most cases did not relate to specific mental disorders or suicide risk.

Grief and loss, friendship problems, bullying problems, kids having trouble with school work. (We) get boys with parents not getting on with their mums and dads, parents separate that seems to be a big one, the limbo stuff - that time where the parents are separating but they still have to wait that full year before legally there's any kind of finality around things, that's a really tricky

year I find and I get quite a bit of involvement with families in that time. Staff 2003.

Students discussed the issue of mental health as one aspect of health and illness. Many also saw it as being about broader issues such as learning about how people think, helping people to learn more effectively, developing self-esteem and addressing bullying. One or two students felt that the topic was not directly relevant to everyone. Students suggested that specific problems such as depression were rare, or that they were handled discreetly by the support staff and not broadly known.

Yeah often it's taught in PD (Personal Development) so for things like self-esteem and teaching kids about respect and not to bully and that kind of thing. Student 2002.

I personally don't really think there's a real need for it, like there's a real need for it for everyone. Some people tend to need a bit more guidance than others. Student 2002.

Bullying and harassment

Bullying was not a primary motivator for the school to take up MindMatters, but incidents do occur and several staff were hopeful that the promotion of resilience through MindMatters may help students to address bullying and harassment.

Your bullying is only probably 3% of your school population. Your 97% should be able to rise up and deal with that so that's where the resiliency part of the MindMatters is, I'm pretty keen to have a look at. Staff 2002.

One staff member reported that bullying had been a feature of the all-boys' school in the past. There had been a culture of ignoring or condoning student victimisation and criticising staff who spoke out about student 'initiations'.

When I first arrived here 15 years ago, the ... (boys) ... used to tell stories about tying other kids by the feet from the bus rails by their ties and that was part of an initiation process and it was almost condoned by the school. And you know, the buses had luggage racks in them and the kids would have to run races, crawl up and down, you know, and that was happening and even within the house system, there were initiation procedures that I don't even want to describe. You know, it was very sexist, very derogatory and that was going on in a lot of areas with the heads of house condoning it ... and I know that in the last 15 years there's been dramatic changes and we don't tolerate bullying - we have a bullying process. Staff 2002.

The culture appears to have changed significantly, with the school now described as having strong policies against bullying and responding promptly and discreetly to complaints.

Certainly there is that bullying and harassment policy that is followed through and I think the students here know that it's not tolerated and that certain patterns of mediation with kids on being able to talk through their differences and a bit more acceptance from each other. Staff 2002.

The students reported that bullying does still occur and felt it would be difficult to ever eliminate it completely. They identified trouble spots such as the ovals and the school buses.

I think most people would feel safe. It depends though. There's always bullying and stuff. There'll always be someone who's picked on. Student 2002.

It's more on the buses where there's no teacher supervision. And bus drivers don't really care. Student 2002.

There are only, I think, two teachers on duty in the middle school in the quadrangle outside near the tuckshop and kids aren't going to do it in those places, they're going to do it out in the fields where there are no teachers and stuff. The kids are just going to go somewhere else. Student 2003.

It's an issue. But the thing is it's not obvious bullying, it's quite subtle, like very intelligent bullying. By intelligent I mean the bullies are actually quite smart about it. If you think about it, it's like they won't do it in front of a teacher and they won't make it obvious that they don't like you, it's just that they do it in subtle ways. Student 2004.

One group of students complained that teachers are sometimes too strict on what the boys see as harmless banter between friends, but may miss serious incidents of bullying that occur elsewhere in the school.

The thing is with like the teachers they're so focused on the bullying, that they focus on that and they see kids that are sort of mucking around with their friends. Like I was in an incident once where a kid came and sat down who was actually a good friend of mine, just as a joke, you know, how you say, go away and get lost ... and you have a laugh afterwards ... a teacher saw that and thought that was bullying. Then there's been kids who have been bullied ... they're picking up kids that are joking around and they're not picking up the kids who are serious about it. Student 2003.

The type of bullying that occurs seems to be predominantly verbal abuse and social isolation, with relatively few incidents of physical abuse.

Oh a little bit. Verbally. Not physically. No bashing up. Just simple name calling and just like irritation and stuff til they get really annoyed or whatever. Student 2003.

I still have difficulty at this school with that problem. It's sort of a group thing, they gang up on people and you feel left out. I had an instance that started this year where I was talking about something that I felt interested in, I was talking with the teacher, the other guys just started singing this very annoying ... 'na na na' sort of song. It's just really frustrating, because you're trying to give your voice and you can't. Student 2003.

Say if you've got a dodgy surname or something or an unusual name, they'll use that against you a lot. Say you're new to the school and ... if like you've got a weird surname or something they'll use that against him. Or something that rhymes with something else. It might be sexual or something. Students 2003.

Students reported that racism and religious difference are not common forms of bullying at campuses the which are culturally diverse, but may occur on other campuses. They did feel

that some bullies might tend to use this form of harassment as a reflection of attitudes in their family background. Staff did acknowledge some bullying involving racism, on certain campuses.

Oh racism is not so much a problem at this campus. I know at other campuses racism is a bit of a problem. It (this campus) has got a lot of ethnic groups. Most of the problems they go straight to the teachers and they'll deal with it. Student 2002.

Drugs and alcohol

Staff, parents and students reported that while some individual students use cigarettes or alcohol (often outside the school), substance use was not considered a significant problem for most. Drug and alcohol use was not seen as a motivating factor for the uptake of MindMatters, nor was it strongly associated with the anticipated outcomes of the program.

I won't say it's a problem for the school, it's certainly a problem for the kids involved and there's an underlying level, particularly, of alcohol use but also some drug use that you know, must be of concern to anybody involved with the kids themselves. I don't think it's endemic, and certainly drugs in the school or during school hours is virtually non-existent, but out of hours it's certainly there. Staff 2002.

As to drugs and stuff like that, look I'm aware that they're having a go at smoking and things like that but I'm aware of other schools that do have like an issue with, for example, marijuana or something like that. Now neither of my guys are bumping into it here at school and I've got a year 11 and a year 8. I'm sure it's around, I'm not stupid, but nor do I think it's an ongoing problem within the school. Parent 2002.

Gender and sexuality

None of the informants reported this as a particular reason for the uptake of MindMatters. However, in considering mental health issues, there was some interesting discussion about gender and sexuality. Respondents felt that Australian boys were traditionally less adept than girls at exploring and expressing emotions and that MindMatters may be helpful.

We're talking about emotional intelligence ... we're still predominantly, at the moment, a boys' school and boys, and particularly Australian males, find it very hard to communicate and to talk about issues of grievance and talk about issues of an emotive matter and so I'm sort of hoping that elements of MindMatters will pick up, if you like, that it's okay for pre-adolescent boys to talk about issues that they may be concerned about ... that if they're feeling at risk or if they're feeling that they're overwhelmed that they actually have a pathway to solve that matter rather than taking what is an increasing pathway in Australian culture, and that's suicide. Staff 2002.

The male mentality is sometimes to just deal with it and deal with it on your own, the minute you put your hand up and say 'I can't handle this situation', you're perceived as being weak, but I would also then throw that back a little bit to dad, the man at home as well. I think we can only go so far and if dad at

home every time comes home and does exactly the same thing and bottles it all up and that's the way dad does it, mum's crying over there and she's always dealing with her emotions and getting them out and telling the whole family, whereas dad comes home from work, tells everyone to be quiet I'm watching the TV and bottles things up. Staff 2003.

The school is in the process of changing from an all-boys' school to an institution with parallel education for both sexes, and combined classes in some areas. Several staff felt that this required some consideration about how best to meet the needs of both boys and girls. One staff member felt in 2002 that this was an issue not adequately addressed in the existing MindMatters material.

I think the big thing next year is on gender, because we've got girls coming up the system, so that's going to be a big thing. See MindMatters, I think there's a book missing, it's on identity and gender, isn't it. Well that's what I feel. Staff 2002.

Boys were reported to use gender-specific and homophobic terms as a put-down or a form of bullying.

It's one of my observations that the boys use a lot of these homophobic or gender specific terms as a putdown without thinking what they're actually saying, just a word. Staff 2003.

Staff reported that sexuality has come up in discussion with some English classes and in health and pastoral care subjects.

Last year at the end of the year, we did run sex ed in years 6 and 7, which hadn't been really focused on previously. And in year 8 two of the novels chosen deal with sexuality and in year 9 all of the novels chosen deal with sexuality and I'm finding - I think because I'm an older female anyway and they perceive me as somebody's mother rather than as an actual female - they're very happy to discuss very openly, especially the year 9's but the year 8's were as well ... because there aren't any girls around, they're actually quite open in a funny kind of conversation. Because in most schools the girls are actually a lot more advanced by year 8. Staff 2003.

Yes, I take a year 10 (for Personal Development), once a week on a Tuesday, year 11 twice per four week cycle and year 12. And I have an assistant, a tutor ... and we share the group and it's a lady teacher and I find that gender mix is excellent. Because we do a lot of work on sexuality. And we talk about contraception and we had a big program with the football sex scandals just recently at year 11 because relationships were a sort of an overall topic and we were able to perhaps tap into what's going on in the newspapers at the moment with that. Staff 2004.

However, other staff favoured more open and systematic discussion with the school community about sexuality, including same sex attraction. This was seen as an important issue in itself and also a way of promoting more inclusive language and challenging bullying that incorporates homophobic language.

And the other one, of course, is kids and their sexuality, particularly boys and their sexuality. I think a clearer upfront discussion about the issues there and

permission for kids to be much more open about it will help enormously. Staff 2002.

Students reported knowing very few people who self-identified as gay and felt that they would be ostracised for doing so. They would suggest that anyone questioning their sexuality talk with an adult, such as the counsellor or chaplain, rather than disclosing to their peers. Some also noted that they would feel threatened by being approached by someone talking about their homosexuality, although they would be accepting if a friend was gay.

A lot of people are homophobic. Like I'm actually homophobic myself. I mean if it was one of my friends, I'd accept it. If it was some guy came up to me and said, 'I'm gay', I'd be kind of scared of him. Student 2003.

If you've been friends for someone like for say a year or a few years and they say, 'oh yeah I think I'm a little bit gay', you'd sort of learn to accept it because you know, he's been your friend for that long. Student 2003.

Parents and staff suggested that students are exposed to issues about same sex attraction outside of school, for example through the media, and that senior students in particular are aware of issues of equality.

3.3 Consistency of MindMatters with school direction and ethos

The primary reason for adopting MindMatters was that it was consistent with the school's chosen direction and ethos. As previously described, a process of school change began some two years prior to the evaluation period, driven by new school leadership. Much of this change revolved around an increased focus on pastoral care and the adoption of contemporary teaching and disciplinary styles.

(Dean of students) definitely had an idea of a framework that she was trying to implement into the school and MindMatters certainly was very much in keeping with her ideas about where the school should be heading and very much the curriculum in particular was a big part of that attraction. Staff 2003.

The system that we've got in this school, that we're trying to implement in the school and the topics that we were kind of looking at just married so well with what was in the kit. So it seemed, so why reinvent the wheel? Here was a kit that had good teacher material, particularly that was what was so attractive about it, that matched to so many of the sort of issues and themes that we were driving. Staff 2002.

The existence of an external program like MindMatters legitimised the direction the school was already taking. It also provided opportunities for external staff training and a resource that could be used internally to support staff professional development.

I think when they created our positions, they weren't just school counsellor positions, the sort of idea was ... really using your counselling and welfare in a sort of holistic, systemic way. I found there was, with something like MindMatters, it's almost concrete, so what we're trying to drive, if there's something external that's also driving the same thing, it kind of legitimises where you're going. And with the training that we did and we were able to send people off to MindMatters training and within that training ... it really does say about ... community, it's not just like a classroom type thing. People come back

from those training (sessions) with a good insight into what we're saying so it's just been a really useful tool. Staff 2002.

MindMatters was also consistent with other programs in which the school had already become involved, such as a project focussing on resilience and a middle years project that included consideration of school connectedness.

3.4 Perceived need to emphasise student wellbeing

An emphasis on student wellbeing was one key aspect of the school's shift in direction which began with a change in leadership two or three years prior to the evaluation. MindMatters was seen as consistent with the need to emphasise student wellbeing. As part of its change in direction, the school created a position for a dean of students and this person made use of the MindMatters principles and materials from around the year 2000.

Well we've had quite a change in the way that we do things over the last three or four years, one of the things that we have really focused on is trying to build up our student welfare services. Three years ago we didn't, for example, have a counsellor or anything like that and the structures were fairly old-fashioned so with the introduction of counsellors and school psychologists in particular, we felt that we were really in a position to take a more sort of integrated view of students' mental health essentially and this particular program took the fancy of our counsellor. Staff 2002.

Respondents felt that the school is an important setting for mental health promotion but that both community members and teachers have traditionally had little formal education about mental health issues. For these reasons, MindMatters was seen as a valuable tool for educating school communities about mental health and student wellbeing.

I think school's an important place to have something like that because it's the one consistent thing in the kids' life apart from families, who may or may not be doing well, and it's an important way to pick up changes in a child as well if they are consistently at a school. School staff hopefully are consistent enough to pick up changes with a child. If there's a sign of depression coming on someone who's not in fact out there as often as they used to be is retiring more or is acting out more. Parent 2002.

I think too that in teacher training and teacher education there's not a great deal of information passed on about mental health in teenagers and I think also the research is always coming out so ... Staff 2002.

3.5 Impact of student wellbeing on academic outcomes

This was not nominated as a primary reason for taking up MindMatters but was acknowledged by at least two staff members as an important potential benefit of the program.

I think it's most important to make the kids happy at school because if they're happy they're going to enjoy being here and they're going to basically optimise their learning. That's how I feel. Staff 2002.

3.6 Characteristics of MindMatters itself

Several characteristics of MindMatters itself were highlighted as positive aspects of the program and may have contributed to the school's decision to adopt. However it should be noted that the primary reason for adoption was that MindMatters was viewed as being consistent with the school's change in direction and its increased focus on student wellbeing. Respondents noted the following as positive aspects of MindMatters: it is a universal program, it brings together important concepts into a cohesive package, it provides high quality curriculum materials and it embraces a whole school approach.

The beauty of MindMatters is that it is just so together ... there aren't actually many other programs that I'm aware of, especially for that age group, that have done what MindMatters has done. (Respondent listed several programs for different age groups that focus on different aspects of wellbeing). But as an entire sort of package, I'm not aware of anything that's quite so cohesive. Staff 2002.

It's not just the boys with difficulties, it's everybody and that's also useful because it means you're not targeting the boys with difficulties or with problems. Everybody gets them, everybody needs those skills, some will use them much more happily than others but there's no sense of isolating individuals who are looking for help in particular areas ... I think MindMatters is to do with a whole range just of life skills. Staff 2002.

3.7 Early expectations of impact of MindMatters

Respondents suggested that MindMatters might be expected to create a greater awareness and understanding of mental health issues among both students and staff, with a possible shift in language. It was also considered possible that counsellors might notice an increase in referrals or a shift in the nature of referrals, owing to increased help-seeking among students or earlier detection of student support needs by staff. There was also discussion of the possibility of increased resilience among students, with a reduction of issues such as withdrawal from others, risky or difficult behaviour, or academic problems.

I'd hope, just by the approach is that we'll see an increase in ... different sorts of people that might go for help seeking, I mean it's hard to know whether that's actually to do with MindMatters, but it's part of it. And I also think, especially at Senior school, what I'd like to see is perhaps a development and attitudes towards mental health and you know, I think it's getting there actually but it would be hard to sort of do it concretely. And I think if you've seen the shift in the language that students use, so that's what I'd hope to see. Staff, 2002.

I would think that ... we'd get more reports of students talking to counsellors about these sorts of issues and more reports of discussion about them sort of in the school generally amongst the students and that's hard to pick up but between students and staff, I would see those as probably being the most obvious feature. Staff 2002.

There was some evidence that such changes had begun prior to the evaluation period. At the first visit, staff reported that there had already been a shift in awareness, help-seeking and referral as a result of the school's greater emphasis on student wellbeing, which included the adoption of MindMatters principles and curriculum.

We've seen it already - I mean even in what we've done in the last few years, we've got kids now coming to us and saying, 'I'm a bit worried about this boy', you know, 'can you help him or can someone give him some help?' And we're seeing it by talking about it and bringing it out into the open. Staff 2002.

3.8 Early expectations of problems

Respondents suggested that while mental health related issues have a place in the timetable, through the pastoral sessions, it may be difficult for staff to allocate time to detailed curriculum planning. Concern was also raised about students' possible reluctance to discuss emotional issues and about teachers' experience in delivering such programs.

Teacher time constraints is always one. The other barrier really, initially sometimes I think kids are reluctant to sort of enter this area, or certain parts of it and it's hard to get them using the language and even seeing that this is something that is worthwhile talking about, exploring, so that's always a significant one and particularly significant, I think in those sort of junior secondary years - most of my experience is with boys and I know that they initially at least tend to hold these things at a bit of a distance. At the same time, it's not all that difficult to win around. The key has to be really having people who are experienced in this sort of area, delivering the program and this is always the worry - can we make sure, because we're such a big place that the experienced people are the ones delivering the program? Staff 2002.

4 What did this school do to introduce MindMatters into the school?

4.1 How MindMatters was identified

The school created the position of dean of students around the year 2000, as part of its commitment to a greater emphasis on student wellbeing. The person who took on that role was already familiar with MindMatters from her work elsewhere and created a comprehensive framework based on the MindMatters principles, including a focus on policy, pastoral care structures, curriculum change and staff professional development.

4.2 Process of deciding to use MindMatters

The first dean of students who was appointed to the school recommended the program to the school executive, which endorsed it. The dean of students has considerable autonomy and authority in the school, within the domain of student wellbeing, which is indicative of the school's commitment to this issue. The position is equal in standing to that of the dean of studies, in which the incumbent is responsible for management of the curriculum.

It's really been driven by (Dean of Students) and she discussed it with me at the beginning. It really looked like a very useful tool for her and she'd been involved in MindMatters before so when she asked if she could use it ... we said yes, of course. Executive Staff 2002.

4.3 Attendance at professional development

Initially the dean of students and two counsellors from other campuses attended the MindMatters professional development. They also attended a key messages / train the trainer supplement at a later date but found this less helpful. At the time of the first visit, the school was still sending other staff to the MindMatters training. In a telephone consultation between the first and second visits, some 12 to 14 staff had been trained over all campuses. This included several heads of house. By the second visit, many of those who were using the material in the pastoral curriculum had not been to the external training, but had received internal professional development about student welfare issues that draws in part upon the MindMatters principles and materials.

We're still sending people to the training So we've got about, we've booked in five for the next one in July. Staff 2002.

At (campus) the current (Character Ed) teachers have very limited exposure to MindMatters, quite apart from what we in-service at the school which is not necessarily MindMatters per se but are student welfare related matters. Teachers at (other campus), well (name) has definitely done two days, teachers at year 9 have had some exposure to MindMatters ... and at (third campus) there's one that I'm definitely aware of that's been trained. Staff 2003.

4.4 How school was informed or involved

Hermitage High School has a compulsory internal professional development program. The dean of students and other school counsellors have a designated role in providing professional development related to student wellbeing. They have drawn on MindMatters extensively but not exclusively in delivering these sessions. This means that virtually all staff

have been exposed to the principles of MindMatters although they may not necessarily associate the content of these sessions with the MindMatters program *per se*. The dean of students and the other school counsellors also provide the worksheets for staff teaching in the pastoral curriculum, these units being Character Education in the middle years and Personal Development in the senior years. There is also a copy of the MindMatters kit in the library on each campus.

Staff here have compulsory professional development each week and they've got to attend a weekly PD and so we're responsible for delivery in the student welfare PD. So each campus has that too. Staff 2002.

More the themes of MindMatters more (than) the resource. Now last year we tracked what was about four or five themes. So we did Grief and Loss, Identifying Students at Risk, we did another one on learning difficulties and a couple of campuses that went in with Identifying Students at Risk, Bullying and Teasing, Classroom Behaviour Management and then this year we put a focus on Resiliency and there's some really good material on Resiliency and we've had Andrew Fuller out to kind of kick start staff thinking about Resiliency. Staff 2002.

4.5 Formation of a core group or other planning group

The school did not develop a formal MindMatters core group, but the program was driven by a group that already had responsibility for student welfare. This consisted of the dean of students and the assistant deans of students, who are school counsellors on the other campuses. They planned the implementation, incorporated MindMatters principles and material into staff professional development and integrated the curriculum resources into the pastoral curriculum. They are also involved in reviewing any school policies that have a bearing on student wellbeing.

4.6 Process of planning

There does not appear to have been a formal process of planning. Rather, implementation appears to have been guided by the vision of the school's first dean of students and achieved through this person and the school counsellors on other campuses. The audits provided in the MindMatters package have not been used formally although the whole-school audit in particular may have guided some of the early adoption and implementation phases.

4.7 Early plans for change

Early plans for change revolved around the appointment of a dean of students some two years before the evaluation period began. This person was influenced by previous contact with the MindMatters resource (during its pilot phase) and implemented considerable school change, in terms of policy, pastoral care, the pastoral curriculum and staff professional development. Most of this change had been implemented prior to the first visit.

The school had later planned to develop project teams to consider particular aspects of the whole school approach, including the school's handling of critical incidents and the more active involvement of parents and the community. However these project teams were not discussed at subsequent visits and appear not to have emerged formally, perhaps as a result of staff changes.

We're just about to establish some sort of project team to look at aspects of

just the whole school program that staff want to change and then a part of that will be reviewing what's already happening and I just think the feedback that I get from those groups will give me a really good indication of how much they're already using MindMatters and where they see it also moving in to different areas. Like transition might be one, and gender identities is probably going to be another area that we're going to look at. Staff 2002.

One thing we tried to get off the ground for two years now, and hopefully maybe next year we'll get to it, is to do something, to get us a group of staff together on critical incidents as a peer support team so that if we do have a critical incident we've got an in-house lot trained. Staff, 2002.

4.8 Views of the MindMatters professional development

Most aspects of the professional development attracted positive feedback, being described as exciting and interactive. Respondents suggested that it increased their knowledge and awareness and created a burst of enthusiasm for the potential of the program in their school.

Yeah, it was good. It was really hands on ... lots of fun actually, the games and things. Staff 2002.

My sense from the training session was that there was a sort of burst of excitement that here was a program that was actually sensible and written so that anybody without any training at all could pick up one of these things and do a lesson. Staff 2003.

I'm also the special education consultant and I found that my knowledge and awareness of mental illness, both in students and carers, and I guess the staff members too, was heightened. So that was from the training and that certainly was a good thing and it also meant that there was more common ground when talking to the counsellor or when talking to the counsellor with the parent, so I thought that that was something that was really personally useful that I've taken out of it. Staff 2003.

Certain elements were not valued by the respondents, however, particularly a supplementary 'key messages' session that respondents found did not add to their understanding or to practical considerations about implementation.

I was enrolled to take the two days. So in the morning it was great, the role play was looking at the kit but then in the afternoon it was (a waste of time) ... my time like everybody else's is precious and I ended up sitting there for two hours looking at the different booklets ... it was a waste of time. Especially when the kit's in production and it's out there. Staff 2002.

I think what they were trying to do was to train some people in the key messages so that those people could then train other people. I don't know, I think the people who were there were probably converted anyway so it wasn't anything new so it could have had a bit more something else, a bit more depth. Staff 2002.

4.9 Review processes

Because there was no formal planning group, the school did not have specific review processes in place to monitor the overall implementation of MindMatters. Review rested largely with the initial dean of students. However later staff changes in the roles of both dean of students and assistant deans of students may have caused a lack of continuity of vision and difficulties in monitoring implementation.

Having said this, the school did have some other review processes that related to student wellbeing and to MindMatters. One of these was a regular discussion among the heads of houses in senior school. These staff, assisted by tutors, are responsible for delivery of the Personal Development sessions and were able to discuss how the MindMatters and other material was working in these units. Respondents also reported that the school has other general review processes such as surveys of students and parents, to assess satisfaction with the school.

At the third visit, there were mixed reports about the current effectiveness of pastoral care practices across the campuses – the then dean of students was planning to undertake a review of these processes.

5 What changes were made during the first two years of the evaluation?

5.1 Changes in pastoral care

An increased emphasis on pastoral care originated some two years prior to the evaluation period. Due to a change in leadership, the school introduced the position of dean of students, assisted by counsellors on other campuses, and these staff members adopted elements of the MindMatters program. While these changes in pastoral care and school direction are not primarily attributable to the adoption of MindMatters, key informants from the school claim that the adoption of the program has assisted the school's change processes, particularly through professional development and reinforcing the new school culture. There is evidence that the focus on pastoral care has continued to evolve and become stronger during the evaluation period.

There's certainly been more of an emphasis placed on the pastoral care, student welfare in general, especially while I've been here, this is my third year and it seems to have increased every year. We, regularly, as a staff, sit down and have welfare meetings and every staff member has an opportunity to talk about the kids that they think warrant bringing to everybody's attention. Staff 2004.

At the time of the first visit, the system of houses, home rooms and school counsellors was already established, with regular meetings of a pastoral care committee or similar group on each campus. In essence, this system remained current throughout the evaluation period. By the third visit, there was some evidence that the system might be in need of review in certain areas, particularly regarding the demand on counselling staff and the pastoral care for year 9 students.

So there are two meetings a week but I know that the psych that we've got working for us, she's working on two campuses and she has a huge list of kids to deal with on various matters and she'll be lucky to be through them by Christmas and quite a lot of them are urgent now. Staff 2004.

Pastoral care in year 9 is problematic because the year 9 program here is a fantastic outdoor education based program so they go on Options and ... they've got a broad selection ... they do city option, they do palaeontology, they do white-water rafting or whatever, so a lot of it is based off-school. And the problem with them being out of school so often is that we don't have that follow-up with the school-based pastoral care staff, such as the psychologist. Staff 2004.

However these proposed changes appeared to represent a commitment to continuous improvement of an already positive system, rather than a change in direction regarding pastoral care practices.

The weaknesses (in the pastoral care system) are probably more about value adding and just getting a bit better ... there's usually this strong connection with staff, which is fantastic. The staff are very receptive to making those connections ... so I think its strength is that kids are connected and staff are connected to kids, so there is a real sense of belonging. The value adding stuff would be about fine-tuning some of that system and in some ways looking at how the staff do manage the number of kids. So I suppose for me it's around that more assistance based approach, that whole school stuff again. Staff 2004.

What changes were made during the first two years of the evaluation?

In the middle years, home room periods on at least some campuses were reported to be shifting toward a more administrative period, rather than one in which pastoral care was also deemed important. While the intention was to have home room teachers also take their student group for several other subjects, including the pastoral unit called Character Education, this was becoming difficult to maintain. Thus, while the timetable retained designated Character Education time, the above changes may have begun to impact upon teachers' ability to create strong connections with their students.

Now some teachers only have them for home room and little or nothing else - originally too the home room teachers always took Character Education, but I think this has eroded too, at least on (this campus), although it possibly still happens at other sites - there's more often an emphasis on administration {than on pastoral care in the home group}. Staff 2004.

In response to these issues, the dean of students at the third visit planned to review pastoral and home room practices on each campus.

I'm actually asking for a statement from each of these campuses as to the operations of their pastoral care teacher and how the home room system works, what information is given to staff, what training is given, and what documentation is given and I haven't got it back yet. It's obviously more difficult than it seems, I suspect is about not having a clear process. Staff 2004.

5.2 Changes in policies

The school introduced more specific policies in student welfare and wellbeing when it began its change in direction some two years before adopting MindMatters. The dean of students and the school counsellors are involved in the review of school policies relating to student welfare, as well as being closely engaged in the implementation of MindMatters content and principles in the school. This indicates that the school's policies would be consistent with the principles of MindMatters but there is no evidence of policy change as a direct result of adopting the program.

Well we've done a lot because there's been huge policy writing in the last two years more staff / student welfare policy documents than I've ever seen in my life ... 200 to 300 pages. Staff 2002.

I've got a fairly regular policy meeting that I attend that is about reviewing and evaluating student welfare policy ... and there's a girl's expert committee because we've got girls coming on board, I'm part of that committee as well and we get together and talk about all sorts of things that are related to the girls' school but my particular input is looking at what types of welfare matters might be important to them. Staff 2003.

5.3 Changes in school environment and culture

Given the previously-described changes in school leadership, policy and recruitment practices, it is not surprising that school culture has changed significantly. Again, this change began some two years prior to the evaluation period and was not driven by MindMatters, but it is likely that the program has contributed to sustaining a culture that values student wellbeing, through its impact on staff professional development and its inclusion in the pastoral care curriculum.

What changes were made during the first two years of the evaluation?

The school's become really in many ways a very different place from what it was prior to MindMatters being introduced. In the old days, up to about probably 2000, the school would have been identified as a very traditional Boys Grammar School. There (was) a hardness here in the school, the ways in which the boys relate to the boys and the ways in which the boys relate to the staff and the staff to the boys. We felt that we needed to modify the pastoral provision in the school so we adopted MindMatters. The school today is fundamentally a different place. The way in which each of those groups relate to each other is more gentle, there's more tolerance and more respect here and I think MindMatters has contributed to that, along with staffing - getting the right sort of staff in the school over the last year has come a long way towards achieving that. So I think that we've seen a cultural shift here in the school very quickly and I don't think that MindMatters has contributed completely to the change but it has contributed in part to that change. Staff 2004.

5.4 Changes in curriculum

Changes in pastoral curriculum

At the time of the first visit the school had already introduced a comprehensive pastoral curriculum that incorporated elements of MindMatters. While this initiative was driven by previous processes of school change rather than by the introduction of the MindMatters program itself, the MindMatters materials have made a significant contribution to the curriculum. Specifically, the following components of MindMatters have been described as having been used in the pastoral curriculum: resilience, bullying, loss and grief, understanding mental illnesses.

The dean of students and the school counsellors prepare the core content for delivery in the pastoral care periods and make extensive but not exclusive use of the MindMatters material. The staff draw on other resources, guest lecturers and topical issues for discussion. Staff who deliver the lesson plans may or may not recognise elements as coming from the MindMatters program.

(MindMatters is) in the (pastoral) curriculum that's been provided for us. Our psychologist has written up a lot of the curriculum. She's done a superb job and certainly recognises the MindMatters program, the quality of it but also the graphics of it, it's uniformity and the presentation, which is a good thing. Staff 2003.

The pastoral curriculum in the middle school (up to year 8) is called Character Education. This was intended to be delivered by home room teachers but as previously discussed this has proven difficult to maintain on at least one campus. Year 9 students do not appear to have a designated pastoral subject but have some pastoral care periods built into their pre-senior program. It is unclear whether there are ongoing mechanisms for reviewing the delivery of such material in the middle and pre-senior years; delivery may be somewhat ad hoc.

It (MindMatters) is something that I suppose scaffolds in Character Ed and perhaps sits in the background of it, so yes it's a resource and a lot of the structures - my perspective is a lot of structures in Character Ed arose from using that resource. Staff 2004.

What changes were made during the first two years of the evaluation?

At year 9 they don't have the subject Character Ed but we've put together a number of lessons the staff could use, with the year 9 boys they have a floating kind of pastoral period which is used for all sorts of things but they've got about five lessons per term which they could use. Staff 2003.

The pastoral care sessions in the senior school (years 10 to 12) are known as Personal Development. These sessions are delivered by the heads of house and tutors allocated to each house. Heads of house meet periodically to discuss what has worked well in the pastoral curriculum.

In the senior school ... we have eight houses. The heads of house and one of the tutors in the house will deliver what we call the Personal Development program which is done at the year 10 level in a 45 minute lesson once a week. And at years 11 and 12 we do two weeks in a cycle of four, so two weeks we'll have year 11's and for the next two weeks we'll have year 12's. I suppose we had already seen the need for some of the sort of stuff that MindMatters deals with in constructing the program and so MindMatters has slotted in. Staff 2003.

Respondents reported that students have mixed reactions to the pastoral sessions and curriculum. Younger students may find the less-structured nature of pastoral sessions too great a contrast from their other subjects to value the discussion – although the sessions may still have a positive impact on their awareness of relevant issues. Some students find the topics repetitive, even though staff might be seeking to reinforce messages from year to year by covering them again from a different angle to take advantage of students' development. Older students sometimes resent a session that is perceived as a diversion from more academic studies or from spare periods, which could be used for study or leisure.

We talk. Like I don't think we've had a proper written task yet and we've been here a term and a half. It's not like English or maths or anything, we're not set work and you have to do it. As long as we've had a good conversation with this slightly related to the topic or starting to relate to the topic. The stuff we've done we don't go into, we've already covered the past two years over and over. Like alcohol abuse and smoking cigarettes and drugs and that kind of thing. We've been doing that for ages and it's just getting really boring at that stage now. Students 2004.

Year 10s are fine with it, because it's weekly. Year 11s are OK with it because they remember oh yes this wasn't so bad in year 10 but towards the end of year 11, somehow the penny drops with them, mmm ... 'what would we be doing now if we weren't doing PD?' And we don't give our year 11s any spares when they're not actually supervised ... we send them to PD or we send them to supervised study. Now in year 12 the approach is quite resentful from the kids' point of view and the reason for that is because we do give year 12s quite a few spares in the week and up until now if those spares have been in the morning they've been supervised, if those spares have been in the afternoon then they're free to go and play footy or sit around the common room and chat or whatever, and by year 12 they start looking at the PD program and they say, look if we didn't have this now what would we be doing? Staff 2004.

At the second visit, staff reported a lack of clarity over what was covered, or should be addressed, in related units such as Character Education, health and civics. One teacher also reported that some students may not cover the relevant material, because of timetable difficulties associated with the selection of language subjects.

What changes were made during the first two years of the evaluation?

It's possible that we might actually miss segments, that worries me in a way ... For instance, Character Ed has now got our careers as part of our Character Education and I believe that health is going to be incorporated into it next year and also. So we have times when we don't have clear boundaries between ... and we also have civics as another course and some of the civics materials overlaps with the Character Ed, so some of the boundaries get a bit blurred. Staff 2003.

At the third visit there was a move toward a review of the pastoral curriculum and greater standardisation of what is done in the sessions. There was a perception that the quality and coverage of issues has been variable and that outcomes may have depended on the expertise and comfort level of the teacher taking the session. Staff variously suggested the need to select tutors on the basis of their knowledge or confidence in certain areas, to provide more training for those delivering the material, or to augment the sessions with external speakers.

The other thing is that we did actually have, a few years ago, people who would have been asked if they would like to teach Character Ed and so they actually specialised in it and they chose to do it, whereas the system's changed now, where it becomes either home room teachers' responsibility and, in fact, we've got some pretty unhappy mathematics teachers teaching Character Ed ... who feel it's beyond their language and emotional scope and the way that they usually deal with children, and they find it very challenging. Staff 2004.

It's been one of the criticisms of the (Personal Development) program that we've tended to follow our own lead and, depending on the individual nature of the head of house - you've got two mathematicians running houses who are absolutely rigorous about what they've done and where they've done it ... and I am, of course, at the opposite end of the extreme with at least one other head of house as sort of English/drama people so we do it ... less systematically. Staff 2004.

That whole area around Loss and Grief and suicide, brings in all sorts of personal issues. I think in terms of people running that program, it needs to be by people who actually feel good about it. Certainly our review of the PD program that was done here brought up all of those issues but I mean for PD the outcome is based on who takes it, so ... whoever's presenting is pretty critical to the outcome, probably more than the materials that are presented ... on different topics, there are different people ... it's a matter for us of trying to use tutors and trying to use groups. Staff, 2004.

By the third visit, the subject areas of health and Character Education had been combined for delivery to the middle years students. This may have reduced the time allocated to discussing issues relevant to students' social and emotional wellbeing. Students reported that the merger had resulted in duplication of issues they felt had been covered previously. There was still a lack of clarity about the coverage of issues across related subjects, with one staff member reporting the initiation of a philosophy subject into which social and emotional issues might also be incorporated.

It went from being a standardised subject in year 8 to health and Character Ed, so previously there was one period a week Character Ed and one period a week health. Year 8 changed this year because of pressures on ... the curriculum and

What changes were made during the first two years of the evaluation?

a bit more time given to the arts ... so the health and Character Ed were combined, which has probably diminished to some extent the amount of the pastoral care aspect that can be achieved because it's reduced the amount of time available. Staff 2004.

Last year we had a period of health and a period of Character Ed, now we just have them both combined so last year we covered basically the whole health book with (name of teacher), who's now gone, and then with our home room teacher we did Character Ed, which was just interaction and we learnt it all and now we're doing it all again and so everyone's sort of sick of it. Student 2004.

5.5 Changes in partnerships

Certain teachers reported promoting students' awareness of community agencies, or drawing on such agencies to provide speakers or participate in special events. There was little or no evidence of significant change in the school's partnerships during the evaluation period.

Because each campus has got a psychologist we're pretty self-sufficient and we've also got a team of chaplains, so in terms of that sort of support we're very self-supporting ... we use the community and we do try to use the community on say, special occasions. Like today in the year 11's there's a person coming from the Gambler's Help Line speaking to the year 11's. We have people from the drug and alcohol and the peer educators from the prison system, they come into the drug ed program. Each year now we run a boys' own day, so at that point we have people from the community health centres and various other agencies to come and run workshops and things around masculinity ... and the other really good link here is a body called the school focus network. So they are a body that act as sort of communicators and liaison people between community agencies and schools. Staff 2002.

5.6 Efforts to include parents

The school has made some efforts to involve parents more directly in school activities, but with little success. At the third visit, the school expressed interest in the Families Matter material, but their first attempt to engage parents in this initiative was unsuccessful.

How best to get parents involved. We actually met last week with the parents, at their regular meeting as a way to getting them to know a bit more about what we're trying to achieve and what we kind of do on a day to day. Staff 2002.

I've got all the Families Matter material here so we were going to hook into Families Matter and train up the parents here to come back and do training re resilience. Couldn't engender the amount of support we needed immediately so we missed the training day, which I was disappointed about. But so that was going to be one of our strategies. Staff 2004.

6 Sustainability of changes at the fourth visit in 2005

Overall, the changes reported and observed over three previous visits to Hermitage High remain in place and have even been reinforced by additional curriculum and staffing changes. MindMatters continues to be seen as a framework and a rationale for school structures that support student wellbeing and provides the basis for ongoing commitment to professional development of staff. As indicated, however, in the previous section, the unique contribution of MindMatters is difficult to pinpoint.

You could look at it, MindMatters may make us look at some areas that we may have not included or not emphasised and even if that's the case then it's been of some benefit. It's hard to measure something like that. School executive, 2005

6.1 Changes made in the first two years

Ongoing influence on the school

MindMatters was adopted in 2001 as part of a radical restructuring of the school from a traditional boys school to one that emphasises holistic education based on close, personal caring relationships and supportive structures. The MindMatters program came to embody many of the underlying philosophies of the school leaders who were recruited into the school to enact these changes. Four years later, the school is a very different place and MindMatters is recognised, particularly by members of the school executive who have been involved in the process of change as having made a valuable contribution. It appears the program's influence now is more on reinforcing the changes previously made.

As a school we still take, if you like, that program (MindMatters), the application and the understanding of the philosophies of that program very seriously. I mean but also again the way that we look at our curriculum; again we're probably doing that mindful of what elements of the MindMatters program will say to us, so with our teaching our subject Health and Values so again we're looking at elements to do with the greater being of someone's health so not just a physical capacity but also a mental capacity as well. So we're still into the program. School executive 2005

One thing I will say is you mentioned quite specifically that (the inaugural dean of students) really emphasised the issue of resilience training and conflict resolution, which was really the focus of what we're trying to achieve and even that, that hasn't changed. We still speak of resilience here. Counsellor 2005

One executive member from one of the middle school campuses pointed out, however, that as change becomes embedded, the recognition of 'MindMatters' as one of the contributing programs may be less explicitly recognised.

Certainly I was at senior school when (the inaugural dean of students) introduced it (MindMatters). And the word was on everybody's lips. It's not quite as out there as it was. It's probably that we're doing elements of it anyway. Or because of what (the dean) set up, the term isn't used as widely as it used to be. School executive 2005

It's pretty much a multi-layered thing in the sense that we don't say okay kids we're going to have a MindMatters session, you know, it's got various forms, it's got the student welfare side and the pastoral care side from the staff's

point of view, and also in the classroom on the other side of it. It comes through our Character Ed or it used to be Character Ed, now it's Health and Values. So there's no one hat that you place on it and, say this is MindMatters, its just that we take the aspects of that program and how can we fit it into our existing curriculum. Staff 2005

MindMatters is recognised as synonymous with the positive school culture that has been deliberately established at Hermitage High.

What we're trying to do is instil the right values in our students, so that's where MindMatters, we feel, is in integral part here because we're developing a culture. It should be something that's integrated throughout all our subjects, so there's that value, that sense of belonging, empowering the students, this is their school, you know, pride in school, pride in their environment, just generally looking after each other so as (name) said, we don't specifically teach the MindMatters but it's entrenched in our school culture and it's trying to change the culture and looking at the different aspects, mental health, Health and Values, Civics and Citizenship, all these types of things. They're all linked yeah. Staff 2005

I think we've got an excellent pastoral care program and whilst we don't specifically use the MindMatters terminology, we use many of the principles of the MindMatters program in our pastoral care program; it's an active program. I think part of the reason, because we're such a small school it's also easier for us to manage our pastoral care issues but I think our pastoral care is excellent. To actually increase the profile of MindMatters we need a lot more resources. We would need every teacher to have a kit and that's not the case, so to actually actively use the terminology we need a lot more resources which we don't currently have, but many staff have been in-serviced on it and I think that the rationale behind the program is flowing to our pastoral care system. Executive staff 2005

Changes made in how MindMatters is used in the pastoral care period

Up until the third evaluation visit, certain elements of the MindMatters curriculum resources had been programmed in the middle school into the subject known as 'Character Education', which was taught by pastoral group teachers. At the third visit, it was reported that the curriculum for this subject was being reviewed and this had been completed by the end of 2004. A new subject called 'Health and Values' has been developed which combines elements with the former 'health' course with elements of the old 'Character Education'

For year 9:

Year 9 we call our pre-senior year and for that Health and Values we've decided if we start at pre-senior we're running for semester 1 a VCE unit, Health and Human Development unit 1, which is a pretty big move because most people do that in year 11 and we're running with the same academic rigour that they would be doing in year 9 and we're running a second VCE unit in semester 2 called Religion in Society, unit 2, so you put your Health and Human Development unit 1 and your Religion in Society unit 2 and you've got a Health and Values course. Staff 2005

For years 5,6 and 7

For year 5 to 8 we had a number of teachers that were in-serviced for the MindMatters and we adopted, as a result of that, years 5 and 6 and years 7 and 8 the Friends Program, which I'm sure you're aware of, so we've got the Workbook for Children in years 5 and 6, and that booklet we've got the Friends for Youth for years 7 and 8, and they have two 50 minute periods a week at year 5, 6 and 7, and for year 8 they've got one 50-minute period per week.

So the Friends Program has taken ... we ran that over a semester and probably another four weeks so we're looking at probably 24 weeks to run those programs. And then still within our Health and Values, we go on to other areas and for the year 8 we're running a program - we've only got the one program a week - called Fit to Lead - which was actually designed for mental health and physical health of girls - the Fit to Lead program but we've adapted it to run for boys. Staff 2005

Overall the focus on mental health issues comprises about 25% of the new Health and Values course.

We had a list of all of the dot points that we wanted to cover for all of the complete mental health and we believe that Friends program has covered those dot points extremely well. Mental health has taken, I reckon we would devote 25% of our school year for years 5,6,7,and 8 to the mental health. And for year 9 mental health is 25% of the VCE Health and Human Development Unit 1. So all of those five year levels have mental health covered. Year 9 has been quite exciting because we featured mental health in one of the three school-assessed mandatory assignments that they have to do, but we also featured it as a separate question on the exam paper where we use case studies and go the students to cover sportsman and depression actually; youth depression. Youth depression has been a big one actually within the mental health. So I think we're very happy at the moment at what we have covered. Using the Friends has helped us to be able to sequentially develop that mental health component really well because it does it for them. So that's where we are at. Staff 2005

Nevertheless, the subject outline, does list MindMatters as one of the resources that teachers can use to supplement the topics raised in the Friends program.

Each precinct has the MindMatters resource kit and in order to achieve the outcomes which are listed these supplement the requirements and they've all got access to this and where we were doing an audit of the MindMatters, we actually found that they paralleled the Friends program, so I reckon I could take 80% of the current Friends Program and that we'd cover exactly the same outcomes as what the MindMatters does there so close. So we have actually mentioned, in our documentation MindMatters, and we have listed the resources that are in there and are expecting the teachers to use those resources to compliment the outcomes listed in the Friends program. Staff 2005

The actual extent to which teachers are accessing and using the MindMatters curriculum resources is unknown.

Nevertheless, the core issues contained in the MindMatters resources are being addressed in 2005 as evidenced by this description of the course by girls at one of the junior campuses, of one of their Health and Values classes.

Yeah. We had a really D&M - Deep and Meaningful - one class we were talking about boys and in year 6 I went through a stage where I was bullied quite a bit and I got to talk about that and it was really good because I felt comfortable around everyone.

And they wouldn't judge you.

Yeah. So I reckon that was really good. And we had one class where we just talked about bullying and I can't exactly remember it completely but I remember we were all sitting around in a circle and it was just really good because everyone was listening to each other really well. If you had something to say everyone would just listen while you were talking. Staff 2005

These girls actually complained that they did not address these issues enough in Health and Values. They describe how they value the opportunity to explore issues of self-identity in a social studies class:

Yeah and in social studies we were answering questions like what are we and who are we and stuff. And we had to sort of go beneath what we looked like and stuff, the way we feel and I feel we should do that more in Health and Values because sometimes Health and Values is pretty boring. Pointless. Like one lesson we read like a song about self-confidence and I don't think we needed to do that; we didn't learn anything. Staff 2005

It was interesting to see what other people thought of themselves, like how they looked because some people might be the brightest chirpy thing, then you get inside them and they may see themselves as a dark, mysterious kind of figure and that's how they could have drawn it. Like you could see this person that was wearing rainbows and everything and they had a big smile on their face and then they show you this picture and it's dark and black and gloomy. Staff 2005

A further change is that rather than being taught by the pastoral group teacher, the new Health and Values course is being taught by a range of teachers as determined by workloads and timetable commitments.

For some of those, those teachers are from a broad curriculum base and as we know, teachers teach to their strengths. It doesn't have to be exactly the same, and delivering it to some extent a teacher's uniqueness can add value to it. You still need quality control across three precincts. We've prescribed what resources we want. We've prescribed the outcomes that we want. Staff 2005

In the senior school, MindMatters was still being used explicitly in the Personal Development program and there was no intention to change this. There was, however, an imminent change in the way in which the Personal Development program would be delivered. Whereas in the middle school the Health and Values subject was taken away from pastoral group teachers, in the senior school, the Personal Development subject was to be made the responsibility of the home room teachers rather than the house tutors. The main reason for this was to reinforce the pastoral role of the home room teachers who, in many cases, were using the whole of the pastoral care period for administration purposes.

I think the driving feeling is that those 45 minutes a week are often purely

administrative and there isn't a real way of the tutor getting to know all the boys in a group. And this is one way of making sure that that happens and you can certainly spin it by saying that what we're doing in a Personal Development program is actually offering life skills that every teacher should be involved in delivering anyway, but we're just making it a little bit more formal and there maybe a sense that some staff will be more accountable now for what they're doing as tutors and so it has benefits for everybody because if somebody's not prepared to be involved in some of these issues, I have to question why they're involved in teaching.

It's going to show that they're not involved with the whole person if they're not involved in the sort of development and growth of the whole person then it makes their teaching dubious. Staff 2005

Use in the leadership program

Counsellors who are responsible for developing leadership schools describe that they are using MindMatters within their leadership program.

I have used it myself this year with the year 8 students so it was more as part of the leadership program, I've used it - just some of the games there. It was one of the leadership days we ran. I can say I have used it, in a very direct way. Counsellor 2005

Families Matter initiative

At the third evaluation visit, the counsellor at one campus described early moves to adopt the Families Matter program by arranging for a number of parents to attend training. One year later they reported that the initiative had not really progressed. It appears that only parents who were very involved with the school agreed to attend the initial training, and then had the expectation that it was the school's role to take the next steps.

I wish I could say some really good things about what we've been doing in relation to that but I got to term three and realised that oh my goodness I've not rung the parents that were involved in it, and I spoke to one of them right at the end of term 1, and said oh we must get together and see where we're all at and lo and behold it's term three. Staff 2005

The challenge then after this, we missed the first training, the second training came up and I finally got a team of parents there but what I found was really interesting was after that, they kept saying 'well okay when are you going to call a meeting?' I would say 'No, no, no. I'm a liaison. I don't drive it.' You drive it. The parents who did finally put their hands up are also the ones who are very busy in the parents things. Staff 2005

6.2 New changes made in third year of implementation

Creation of the girl's school

In previous visits to the school, girls were being introduced into the school in a gradual way by

taking on a new cohort each year. In 2005 girls were introduced into the middle school for the first time. Whereas in the past the evaluation was sited in a boys only school setting, this was not the case in 2005. Boys and girls are affiliated with separate schools on the same campus in a parallel rather than co-educational approach. Boys and girls share the same playgrounds and sporting facilities during recess and lunch time.

At the moment our girls college is from year 5 through to year 8, that's in its parallel sense. There's 120 girls that have started with us this year. Now given that they've all come - except for our year 5 cohort - all of them have come from eclectic backgrounds, from a different range of schools. We had to make sure that that transition to the school was successful. Staff 2005

Did you have to recruit new staff?

Yeah we did. And the same way we go about our staff in here is we look for reputation. We look for staff that we know, that have been recommended to us or we know of in practice that are exceptional teachers. So again, we're in a pretty good position where we had a brand new school, brand new facilities which are outstanding, brand new girls essentially. We then have the capacity to go out and attract and to appoint our very own staff for the first time and the balance we've got are second to none. They're wonderful people. School executive 2005

Restorative Justice

The staff at one of the middle school campuses, indicated that the school had identified the Restorative Justice program as having value and was in the early stages of adoption.

Well we're not far behind. I spent one day at the training, I didn't think I could afford two days but I'm going to go back later in the year to complete the two-day training and we've actually only had that our focus at the start of next year, the whole staff. Executive staff 2004

6.3 Access to general practitioners and other community agencies

The issue of the school's relationship with general practitioners was raised for the first time at the fourth visit. It appears that the school has little contact with general practitioners and that the school's use of MindMatters has not had any impact on this practice. In answering this point, the school revealed for the first time other changes in a whole range of community partnerships with external agencies.

Prior to the (first dean of students) there was no psychologist here. So I think 'yes' would be the answer to that and probably dramatically. Staff 2005

Was this related to MindMatters though?

Well yes and no. (the dean) actually ran the whole platform on MindMatters and the two are linked. In terms of the school process, Health Promoting Schools was the vehicle that went across inserting a whole program across the whole school. But the introduction of MindMatters coincided with the introduction of psychologists here. And certainly, that whole method of referral is very high.

I would be stunned if there wasn't a dramatic increase in referrals externally from what used to happen in the old school. Because there wasn't that pastoral care. Staff 2005

So do you use the family's general practitioner?

A whole range of people. They would include ... we do a lot of work with ... we try and get the community groups in here. So we actually try and get the local people, the school-focussed youth people, the substance abuse services, the community policing squad. We get as many as we can in to speak to the boys so that we are encouraging self-referral as well as basically building connections with staff. Staff 2005

This informant further reveals that MindMatters 'philosophies' have been the reason that these external partnerships have been initiated.

For me, a lot of the MindMatters work that we have done since I have been here has been with staff, and really around inclusive teaching, interactive teaching and the value of that program (MindMatters) for us has been in that interactive teaching and referral ... its fitted in very well with the health promoting model. Its also very well with the National Drug Education and the National Mental Health Strategy as well. So when you are working with staff to increase referrals, we are actually bringing people in, where actually saying to staff 'right here's inclusive teaching, here's what to do'. Staff 2005

7 What issues did this school face during the implementation?

7.1 Issues that helped

Positive professional development

As previously noted, the comments received from those who attended the MindMatters professional development were predominantly positive. The training appeared to create a burst of energy and enthusiasm among most participants, as well as providing an important forum for learning.

I just think for me, I'm a trained psychologist anyway, but I learnt things at the MindMatters training that I didn't know, and I certainly learned ways of expressing them to other people that I didn't know I love the way it was presented ... it was one of the most exciting things I've ever done because we were up out of our seats all the time, we were playing games, we were interacting, we were busy, we were focused, we were always changing and doing different things and it was teaching us to be active learners. Staff 2004.

Yeah a couple of years ago I think some (staff) went for two days and they came back so built up by that and they really engaged the rest of us, sort of saying this is good material, it's pitched right, there's really a need for this in society and schools get to accept that and run with it. Staff 2004.

Positive staff attitudes

As a result of earlier processes of school change, including policy and recruitment, the current staff are generally very supportive of the school's focus on student wellbeing. The staff as a whole are also reported to be hard working and committed in all aspects of their roles.

I've also found at (Hermitage), perhaps in contrast with some of the schools I've been in, but the number of staff who have a real sort of sense of student welfare is really quite high. So there's quite a focus already just amongst staff on student welfare so there's no need to always convince them that this is something well worthwhile doing, they just expect that it's something that they should be doing. Staff 2002.

Helpful leadership

Hermitage High underwent a leadership change some years prior to the evaluation period in which the whole ethos and direction of the school was fundamentally changed, to include a stronger focus on pastoral care and wellbeing. The leadership team has remained committed to this focus in the intervening years, which has contributed positively to the uptake and implementation of MindMatters. Evidence of the school's commitment includes the status and authority accorded to the dean of students' position and the creation of school counsellor roles on all campuses, as well as the ongoing inclusion of a wellbeing component in compulsory professional development. Furthermore, student wellbeing is a significant element in school policies and promotional documents available from the school and on its web site.

*I don't think anything works unless you've got the support of top administration
- I mean the reasons that they've got a position like mine (counsellor/dean of*

students) up there with curriculum, is really saying curriculum and welfare, we see them both as very important or equal. We've never been stopped (from) anything we've really wanted to do, so I think they've got faith in us - but also they want this sort of change in their system so they're very open to whatever we've got to offer. Staff 2002.

School's commitment to staff professional development

Access to professional development – including both external MindMatters training and the compulsory internal professional development system – appears to have been an important factor in disseminating information about the concepts underpinning MindMatters. It is also significant that the dean of students has considerable autonomy and authority within the school and is able to direct the internal professional development components relating to student wellbeing, working collaboratively with the assistant deans who are also school counsellors. While not all staff will identify the content of this internal professional development with the MindMatters program *per se*, the principles of the program have certainly been broadly disseminated. This appears to have helped the school maintain its strong focus on student wellbeing.

Staff here have compulsory professional development each week and they've got to attend a weekly PD and so we're responsible for delivery in the student welfare PD. So each campus has that. Staff 2002.

Usefulness or suitability of MindMatters

As previously described, staff felt that MindMatters was useful in providing a comprehensive and integrated treatment of student wellbeing in the curriculum and that it was highly consistent with the school's ethos and direction. It was suggested that the curriculum resources are easy to use even for those without a prior background in mental health issues.

Here was a program that was actually sensible and written so that anybody without any training at all could pick up one of these things and do a lesson. And I suspect that that's had quite a major impact lower down in the school ... that's been hugely liberating for a lot of staff who've suddenly found that here is a lesson that I can do and I don't have to be a psychologist. Staff 2003.

Positive school ethos

MindMatters was consistent with the school's adopted ethos, which shifted some years before the evaluation study began. Due to a change in leadership, the school made several changes designed to create a culture that was more supportive of student wellbeing. This shift in ethos laid the groundwork for the appointment of a dean of students and the adoption of MindMatters, which was recommended to the school executive by that staff member.

Well we've had quite a change in the way that we do things over the last three or four years, one of the things that we have really focused on is trying to build up our student welfare services. Three years ago we didn't, for example, have a counsellor or anything like that and the structures were fairly old-fashioned so with the introduction of counsellors and school psychologists in particular, we felt that we were really in a position to take a more sort of integrated view of students' mental health. Staff 2002.

7.2 Issues that hindered

About MindMatters itself

A package such as MindMatters could be replaced as other resource kits or issues emerge, particularly in a school that sees itself as innovative and progressive. While this doesn't appear to have occurred at Hermitage High School to date, it was discussed as a point of vulnerability.

The problem with MindMatters is that ... because it comes in a box and it's seen as an add on then it is vulnerable to being ditched for the next new thing and I think that's where we were talking about how do you actually get this - you look at the social competencies that's coming in now, the next kit will be about social competency or the next kit will be about the value of education and there's not a sense that these materials are the same, that they're connected. Staff 2004.

One staff member felt that there should be a more structured and chronological description in the MindMatters booklets of how to use the material, in contrast to the flexibility the package now offers in regard to module choices.

It would be really good if MindMatters actually put together - the information in that is great, there's almost too much of it - it would be good if they had a booklet that really covered all the subject chronologically and were age-related loosely so that the school could actually use it from beginning to end ... and it would give a lot of credence. You could use that as the mental health topics throughout the school ... rather than just having all this information where you can just pull out this and pull out this. Staff 2004.

Resistance to change

Resistance to change and to the school's focus on student welfare was not raised as an overly problematic factor, but was mentioned by some respondents as an issue that is always present to some degree. Much of the significant change in this school occurred before the evaluation began and wasn't driven by MindMatters per se but by a change in school leadership. There may also be some resistance on the part of students to change their culture in regard to talking about personal and emotional issues.

They've still got a way to go though. There's still some individual staff members that need a bit of work ... and there are a lot of kids that we've still got to get through and there's a big cultural barrier that we face, particularly in some houses, where the culture says you don't ask for help and if you do you are weak. Staff 2002.

Parent uncertainty about the use of the term 'mental health' was also reflected in a certain amount of resistance from parents in consenting to students' participation in MindMatters evaluation surveys or the qualitative interviews.

For some reason, one of the parents rang me with regard to these interviews, and she said, 'I'm really happy for him to do it but the term mental health was a bit off-putting' - but when I explained to her what it was, she said 'oh well that's what I thought it was.' Staff 2003.

There was also resistance among some staff – or had been in the past – to the chosen delivery approaches of the pastoral curriculum subjects, being Personal Development and

Character Education.

Just from a staff point of view, there has been a bit of resistance, over perhaps the course of five years in recent times of the PD program - but it certainly has seemed to have softened because in the way the house is set up now in delivering a PD program, I think all the heads of house are on side. Staff 2002.

Multi campus school

The size of the school and its division into several semi-independent campuses has made it difficult to implement MindMatters in a systematic and standardised way across the whole school. This also makes reviewing the implementation of MindMatters and the pastoral curriculum content more difficult for the dean of students.

We are so isolated from the three other campuses we often don't know what they're doing down there. What (staff member) suggests is a great idea but we actually don't know enough about what our own place is doing. Staff 2004.

Lack of resources

Resource constraints were reported as a partial hindrance to the implementation of MindMatters, both in terms of staff time and also access to the MindMatters kits available in the school. While the school has a strong commitment to internal professional development, there is reportedly only a small budget for external training, making it difficult to send multiple staff members to the MindMatters professional development sessions, where they would obtain a more rounded understanding of the potential of the material and the whole school approach.

Time to plan ... the subjects ... we have staff professional development time set aside for welfare but it's more the time to prepare to put in (the curriculum) is the difficulty. Staff 2002.

Getting out the videos for everybody - because we've got a couple of kits at senior school and junior schools have got kits, so it's just a matter of getting themselves organised because we all of course wanted them at the same time, with eight different groups. Staff 2004.

In terms of (Hermitage High's) implementation of MindMatters, a mistake that we've perhaps made is that we're a little bit under-resourced with the kits and it was always our intention to have eight or nine kits for eight houses. That's one used for the dean of students and one for each head of house ... but unfortunately that's never happened. We've had to try and share resources in terms of videos. And there was the mental health topic that we did recently with year 10, we only had three videos between eight of us and ... we had this rotation system that worked but what it meant was we were all out of sync with each other ... and really our PD program works best when we're all in sync because we feed off each other. Staff 2004.

Changes of staff

Staff changes in the positions of dean of students and school counsellors may have impacted on pastoral care and contributed to some lack of continuity in the delivery of MindMatters within the pastoral curriculum. Other staff change has involved shifting roles rather than the departure and recruitment of staff. By the third visit, several staff delivering the pastoral curriculum had not attended MindMatters training.

There have been a lot of staff changes, that's the main thing. I think we've got nearly a 75% turnover throughout the school. For instance, I used to teach Character Ed last year and the year before and the year before, and used MindMatters and did the training. At the moment the dean of studies is also new, he's working on rewriting all of the Character Ed so until next year we won't really know how much is incorporated but he'll have to negotiate that with our new dean of students. So we have a new dean of students and a new dean of studies. Staff 2004.

Change fatigue

Change fatigue was not specifically mentioned as being problematic in the implementation of MindMatters, but certainly the school has experienced considerable change in the past several years, both before and during the evaluation period. It is possible that this has contributed to some negativity around further change or new initiatives in the school.

Stigma of mental illness

Because of the stigma attached to terms such as 'mental health' and 'mental illness' some parents were reluctant to consent to student participation in the MindMatters evaluation. At least one student shared the view that the discussions in class relating to MindMatters and/or mental health were only relevant to 'some people' rather than dealing with the wellbeing of everyone. Staff reported mixed student responses and were aware of the impact of stigma.

I personally don't really think there's a real need for it (MindMatters/mental health in the curriculum), like there's a real need for it for everyone. Some people tend to need a bit more guidance than others. Student 2002.

If the survey's about pastoral care in your school or student wellbeing, I think we would have a much more greater response of parents signing permission to be involved in the project. Just the few people I've talked to or talked to me, it's starting to sound that as soon as the word 'mental' comes into it, there's another perception of what mental (means) - I mean if we said that our PD program was a mental health program, I'm sure we'd get a lot more parents saying, "what are you doing with our boys?" Staff 2002.

I think there's still a lot of stigma attached to it, it's hard to talk around the kids on that one. It seems to be deeply entrenched, even with year 10 kids. It's surprisingly biased sort of ideas that they have on virtually all those aspects of mental illness. Staff 2004.

7.3 Incidental issues arising during the evaluation

Other wellbeing projects

What issues did this school face during the implementation?

The school was also participating in a number of other projects broadly related to student wellbeing, or receiving professional development about other school-based programs. There is little evidence for a direct impact on the implementation of MindMatters but these other activities do demonstrate the school's broader commitment to student wellbeing. Items mentioned included a resilience project, a middle years study including a focus on school change and professional development about the Bounce Back program.

They participated in the (name of study) last year, they completed ... a rating scale from 0 to 5 and it's about how you feel at school, how you feel about the teachers, how you feel about your peers, do you feel safe, do you feel stimulated and the majority of ratings were a mean 4 which is well above the state results. Staff 2002.

(Other) programs have come into play and people have been in-serviced in Bounce Back with Helen McGrath and things like that. Staff 2004.

8 Issues identified at the fourth visit

Positive school ethos

There is no doubt at all that the school ethos of Hermitage High, at all campuses, is a very positive one in which both students and staff seem happy and supported, and with which parents are very satisfied. It is reported that this is a result of deliberate changes implemented in 2001, along with MindMatters. As years progress, however, the positive those of the school provides a supportive environment for programs such as MindMatters.

Yeah very much so. There are many ways you can measure that, we questionnaire or we survey our students all the time and the survey results that we're getting back are suggesting that our girls are connected; they feel safe; the way that we teach they appreciate; they actually believe that they're learning more or learning at a faster rate than what they had done at previous schools. We also survey our parents so we ring them often; we actually go through a rotation so that we can guarantee that we're communicating with our families at least on a monthly basis and the words that we're hearing back are nothing but glowing. School executive 2005

Positive modelling

A culture of mentoring is explicit at the school. First of all teachers who have been at the school for some time and who enjoy their pastoral care responsibilities act as mentors for new staff, thus ensuring that there is consistency in the staff support for programs such as MindMatters. Of course, some new staff may not want to invest in close supportive relationships with students and such teachers may not want to stay.

And because those structures are in place, I think standard breads standard too sometimes. A new staff member sees it. All the other staff members are modelling all these sorts of things. And then there's a sort of 'oh that's what happens here'. And that really works and just sort of becomes part of it and it either works for you or it doesn't. Staff 2005

Modelling emotional maturity is also a deliberate strategy of teachers to help students understand about emotions, thus reinforcing the more formal curriculum of the Health and Values program (in middle school) and Personal Development (in the senior school). These ideas are reflected in the following description of how the school has changed over the years in its attitudes to masculinity and emotions.

I think in years gone by, I think, males were a victim of their own circumstance in a sense that, to be truly masculine you had to hide your feelings. You certainly didn't admit any sign of weakness and heaven help you if you even attempted to cry. I think what's happening now is society is actually seeing that it's okay to have those feminine qualities in terms of emotional intelligence, and that's basically what's happening through our values education and when we talk about those sort of things. We don't want people who are going to walk around hiding their feelings and pretending to be really macho and strong, you want people to know that there are places to go if you're in trouble and everyone has those times of weakness. I think here in particular, there's a lot of old boys here who went through the school and if you speak to them, some of them actually don't like the changes that have happened here because the lines have been softened, whereas a lot of others do. I know that there'd be boys here

that would not have survived 10-15 years ago in the old Hermitage; they wouldn't have survived. Who knows what would have happened to them. But times have changed and luckily Hermitage have moved with the in times and as I said they've got a good mix of both males and females and, for boys, it doesn't have to be a male role model, females can be a role model as well, modelling those different qualities of expression and different emotions and that type of thing. That way you get a good balance. Staff 2005

Factors affecting the uptake of the 'Friends' program

The focus on the prominent use of the Friends program as the basis for the new Health and Values subject seems to be due to two factors: the fact that the person who developed the new course was familiar with the Friends course; and the fact that the dean of students who is a promoter of MindMatters seems not to have been involved in the review and development of the new subject.

I must say that probably she (the dean of students) would have liked the MindMatters to lead through on the curriculum we've got here. It is capable of doing that; there's no doubt about that. We've just found - and not taking anything away from the MindMatters, because to be totally honest, we had found the Friends Program to be user friendly with both the workbook and the manual, prior to the MindMatters being adopted to us. So when the MindMatters came to us and we went through it, it became very obvious that the outcomes were parallel and can be used for a resource. If the MindMatters had have come through to us first, it may have been different so this wasn't a grading process or anything like that and in actual fact our dean of students believes that MindMatters is the lead for the whole lot but we just found that the teachers having the Friends Program working with it, etc. with the worksheets, we're going to take that off pretty quickly. Staff 2005

A factor that would have reinforced the utility of the Friends program might be the fact that each teacher was given their own set of resources, and that there was a booklet as well for students. When MindMatters was used as part of the former Character Education subject, teachers not introduced to the whole kit of MindMatters resources. Rather they were only given those lessons and activities that were relevant to the topics in Character Education. Consequently few teachers are as aware of the range of MindMatters resources as they are of the Friends resource.

One of the informants claimed that there are actually two kits per campus that teachers would be able to . In contrast all of the teachers for Health and Values have a copy of the book and so do the students. However, this is not the case at one campus.

Yesterday, for example, we had a meeting with the middle school girls' pastoral care, and we were talking about one of the issues about the development of cliques and how we were going to manage that and sort of a discussion of bullying behaviours, assertiveness behaviours and how best to tackle it and what kind of packages and resources we could use to underpin any interventions. Because I'm involved in the preventative stage and the post-vention kind of you know, therapeutic support stage, we're sort of trying to get some of the good stuff going and we're talking about different resources and I thought, hang on what about MindMatters, it's a very large component of the whole booklet, which is specifically related to dealing with bullying issues and mental health

aspects of that, and it includes group activities, questions, role playing - a huge variety of resources, and the one of the people who recognised the program from other schools, said oh yeah that's right, and (name) our head of school said hang on we don't have a MindMatters kit over here. Staff 2005.

Training of teachers of 'Health and Values'

Teachers for Health and Values, under the changes introduced in 2005, were to be selected on the basis of the availability during the time the period is scheduled in the timetable and not on the basis of their training. The author of the new subject felt that general skills would be sufficient to enable teachers to teach the subject.

We've gone through a philosophical discussion of whether they should all be possibly physical education health teachers. To some extent they would be comfortable in talking a lot about it, but at the same time, they wouldn't cover the full spectrum of strengths you need to teach it. You've got other people, they might be parents that have got children, who would be very able to teach that and have strengths that no-one else could give. Where the problem would always exist where you've got a very large learning organization is that for some, a subject that only has two periods per week will be a load filler. There will be a load there and they will take it. And if they're not comfortable taking something which has a sensitive use of a course like this, it can be of some concern. But that's just a generic problem and I'm actually very happy with the quality of the people that are teaching it but it is something to always push for and that will always be the problem. Staff 2005.

As the subject is taught across three middle school campuses, there are also difficulties for the subject leader to provide curriculum leadership across the whole school.

Getting 45 teachers across three precincts together is always a concern; we have got them together twice to discuss how the first six months of this course has gone and still not enough really because some are still only one lesson ahead of themselves and next year will be the big year of reflection because they would have been able to take a breath and just have a look at how they've delivered this. Staff 2005

One staff member who had been to the two-day MindMatters training felt that sending the group of teachers who take the Health and Values subject to MindMatters training would be a way of ensuring that there was some consistency in the way it is delivered.

I have heard some of the staff here say at times, like the Character Ed program and the Health and Values program, even though I'm sure they do a really good job, there's never really been a sense of cohesion around it. And part of that might be that some of them are feeling maybe they need some more training or something and maybe MindMatters might be a really good framework and resource to do that. Staff 2005

Support for teachers' professional development

Hermitage High expects its staff to provide a very high level of pastoral care and to support its extensive pastoral care structure. The school supports the teachers in their pastoral care role by providing access to appropriate professional development. Teachers are required to achieve a certain number of points for professional development, which can be taken outside

of normal teaching hours.

We can actively go out and seek PD, that we feel is appropriate for our needs. Say, for example, I attended PD on middle school; I've attended PD for maths. Staff 2005

In addition to self-selected professional development the school also requires teachers to attend certain training sessions.

We also have PD sessions at the beginning of each term, the school's responsible for it so we've looked at mental health this year. We've had two fabulous speakers, two males who were fabulous - (the counsellor) would know. But two fabulous speakers about boys' development and mental issues; so the school still has a commitment to Character Ed in a global sense. Staff 2005

Two of the four annual compulsory professional development days are dedicated to issues of student welfare.

One example of how professional development supports school direction is given by the following quote from an executive staff member in one of the middle school campuses, who describes the importance of the teacher's relationship with students and capacity to help students with problems while still emphasising the building of resiliency traits.

I think this is a particularly responsive campus in terms of pastoral care. I mean I tell prospective parents, if a child's got a problem we're all very responsive but that doesn't mean we want to solve the problem for the child necessarily. It means we're here, we're listening and we're with them on it and the communication (with parents) about it is very immediate. And I think we've still got to work with teachers on finding different ways of solving problems for the kids. We had a big professional development last year and we probably should run it next year, where we had scenarios and we looked at various ways under the resilience umbrella. And I use resilience rather than MindMatters. But under the resilience umbrella, how could we assist the child to solve the problem without solving it for them, and that's again something you've got to keep leaving in because teachers, by their very vocation, are caring, and connecting people and it's easy in that relationship too, the student/teacher relationship, to just step in and then solve it for them, in all good faith. Executive staff 2005

Communication with parents

Given the views expressed above, the school occasionally finds that they may be at odds with parents who may wish to intervene to resolve students' problems quickly, and to restrict risk-taking.

And you can talk about it on the one hand, but their talk and their actions don't quite mix and certainly we try to do work with parents last year to build up their understanding of what we were trying to do in the area of resilience so that they could be a little bit more attuned to perhaps not being so protective of the children so I thought that was really important, not a short-term thing at all. Staff 2005.

In order to achieve this, the school organised meetings with parents to attempt to inform them about the direction of the school's pastoral care approaches.

Well we had two speakers come out - night forums - and the word resilience tends to run through any information nights we have. This is our focus. Our pastoral care. It's about building up the strengths in children to be able to withstand the rough times, etc. And we had parents say 'I know you don't like us carrying our child's school bag but'. So there's a sense of them trying to grapple with it but in a world that they're still quite frightened for their children if you know what I mean. So it's a hard one. Executive staff 2005

You know the research tells us that more closely aligned the values at home are the values at school, you know, the better the learning outcomes the happier they're going to be and all that sort of thing. And I believe a lot of parents have lost their way a little bit and they want to over control their children for various reasons. They have a very narrow view of what it means to be a good parent and the notion of being a good parent at the moment is about managing and controlling their children's lives. I've got to be involved and that level of involvement is confused I think now, merging into management and control. So I'm actually trying to chip away at giving them a different model of good parenting, if you like. But it's compounded because the families are smaller, you know, the one child families; that investment into the child's life, that micromanaging of their lives; it's only chipping away but if you maybe just pose a few possibilities for them, and especially the way the school is trying to work with children and develop their independence, which means their resilience. Executive staff 2005

Attitudes of teachers

While the school supports teachers with access to professional development, it also seeks to recruit teachers who display positive attitudes towards students and pastoral care.

I think, predominantly we're teachers and I think there might be specialists in our field but what links all teachers together is a love of kids and if you've got a connected kid and part of the emotional development links with their academic performances as well. I think we've got to draw on, maybe the personalities of the staff as well. I think that life is about relationships and I think through adolescence, it's a difficult time and I think teachers don't need to necessarily be trained (to do pastoral care). Staff 2005.

Change in role of the counsellor

Whereas in previous years the counsellors on each of the junior campuses have played a role in coordinating the Character Education subject, they no longer have a role in teaching at all and focus more on their counselling and supporting roles.

I don't have anything to do with the curriculum at all, although teachers might come to me now and say, 'oh and this lesson's on such and such and I've been provided with this but I'd prefer to do something along the lines of bla bla bla, and what do you think? Will that will fit.' So I have that kind of conversation. So I have nothing to do with the curriculum development anymore. Counsellor

2005

9 What impact did the changes arising from MindMatters have?

9.1 Improved student wellbeing

Supports for students

By the third visit, it was clear that the school provides considerably more support for students than it had some four or five years earlier, in terms of school counsellors, special needs information, the adoption of pastoral care programs and the delivery of relevant material in the curriculum. This process began with a change in school leadership rather than being attributable to the adoption of MindMatters, but it is likely that the program has contributed positively to an ongoing culture of valuing student wellbeing.

My understanding of these pastoral care structures at this school is it completely changed at about the time MindMatters was released, so I think it actually was a gift in some ways in that it allowed that coincidence or that opportunity ... allowed a school that was looking for something at the same time that this was here, and a practitioner who recognised the strength in the program, so it gave you a base to actually start from. Here is a program, it goes from school policy that allows you to do all the things that was happening at a school that was changing, its approach with the new principal had gone from being a traditional school to a caring school, the whole school planning documents would have been there. Staff 2004.

Mental health problems and behaviour

The qualitative interviews did not provide evidence of significant change in regard to mental health problems, substance use, bullying or difficult behaviour. This may be in part because the school had already become very supportive of students and the level of these issues was not considered particularly problematic at baseline (see section 3).

9.2 Positive impacts on staff

Increased knowledge and awareness

MindMatters has contributed to, but is not solely responsible for, increased staff knowledge and awareness, particularly through inclusion in compulsory professional development. Anecdotes suggested that staff were becoming more comfortable with discussing pastoral issues in the classroom and that there may have been earlier identification of students in need of support.

MindMatters is really appealing because the resources are available ... anybody can kind of use them but we still have a personal connection. We can't always get it absolutely right. But I think that's less of a worry to those of us (delivering Personal Development) now than it was some time back and I think MindMatters has provided that kind of framework for a number of those things. So it's been really useful. Staff 2004.

I mean you see the changes are sort of like significant but small things. Like, I know for example, at the beginning of this year, within the first two weeks staff were coming up and saying, 'oh I'm just a bit worried about so and so, I

think he's got learning difficulties, if there's something I should know about him'. Now that wasn't happening, it took a long time to happen but now it's happening a lot, so it's happening a lot earlier. Staff 2002.

Positive changes in relationships

There appears to have been a shift in student-teacher relationships and in the relationships between staff. The previous change in school leadership and recruitment practices are primarily responsible, but it is possible that the MindMatters program and staff professional development about wellbeing issues has contributed to this change.

The staff relationships are very good now, although it was a pretty hard school in the old days, and there was elements of bullying within staff ... some of the senior members of staff here have been here a long time, when I say a long time I mean 35 or 40 years, were pretty intolerant towards new members of staff, particularly young males and females. What they were doing really was bullying them, that's all gone. The nice thing about the staff is that they relate well to each other, there are no divisions in the staffroom. I'm not aware of any member of the staff who has a poor relationship with another member of the staff to the point that they don't talk or relate to each other professionally. They mix well, very eclectic, they're very different in a sense that we've got teachers here that might be viewed as being teachers who would be very comfortable in a traditional boys' environment right through to some really quiet, contemporary, left of centre teachers in the way in which they present and teach. Although they're very eclectic, they all share common elements and I think there are two common elements within the way in which they approach their professional practice. One is that ... (most) ... do have an element of reflection of their professional practice, so they'll go in and they'll teach and they'll quietly and as objectively as they can reflect on what they've done and how it's gone. The second thing is they place a high value on the quality of the relationship between the student and the teacher, to them it's important. Staff 2004.

There's a closeness between (staff) and the boys, not that close that they're best friends, first name basis, but there's a warmth. The professional relationship is really quite warm. They're a younger staff, the gender mix is far greater than you'd find in a traditional boys school. Now that's not because I deliberately set out to appoint women. What I was looking for was were those two elements reflecting teacher practice and warmth of relationships that they have with the students. To me they're fundamentally important. Staff 2004.

9.3 Impacts on whole of school

Change in school culture

There has been a significant change in school culture beginning a couple of years prior to the evaluation period, when the school went through a number of changes that included the adoption of MindMatters. While MindMatters is not seen as having caused that change in school culture, it is seen by the school community as having made a significant contribution, in having provided a framework and professional development which assisted school leaders

to introduce the changes that they had in mind in reorienting the school towards a greater focus on student wellbeing

The school's become really in many ways a very different place from what it was prior to MindMatters being introduced. In the old days, up to about probably 2000, the school would have been identified as a very traditional Boys Grammar School. We felt that we needed to modify the pastoral provision in the school. The school today is fundamentally a different place. There's more tolerance and more respect here and I think MindMatters has contributed to that, along with staffing, getting the right sort of staff in the school. So I think that we've seen a cultural shift here in the school very quickly and I don't think that MindMatters has contributed completely to the change but it has contributed in part to that change. Staff 2004.

Increased priority to student wellbeing

Student wellbeing does have a higher priority in the school compared to four or five years ago, but the differences are in large part due to a change in school leadership and direction. This included the adoption of MindMatters but there were many other changes in progress. The program is likely to have contributed to the shift or helped to maintain the focus on student wellbeing, rather than being a primary agent of change in itself.

There's certainly been more on an emphasis placed on the pastoral care student welfare in general, especially while I've been here, this is my third year and it seems to have increased every year. Staff 2004.

I suppose in a sense, it gave us a structure as to what we wanted to do. In a sense we had in our mind what we would want and we had ... some ideas about how to go to from the starting point to the end point and what was the staffing profile. MindMatters has created a scaffold for us to work with, a structure which we could work to and apply. It gave us something in writing and a process of professional development that we could follow. I think we could have got to this point without MindMatters but I don't think it would have been as quick or as easy. If MindMatters was not there we would have structured something ourselves but I don't think it would have been as rich and as varied. Staff 2004.

10 Further views on impacts at the fourth visit

10.1 Impacts on students

Help-seeking

Teachers interviewed at one of the middle school campuses, report that they feel students are more likely to be open about any problems or issues that they are worried about. They report that students are equally open to the idea of talking with their teachers, with counsellor, and also with executive staff members.

But the students certainly have enough opportunity to either just with the heads of school, visit with (head of middle school) whose doors are always open and we're actually finding this year that they're visiting more often; they don't have to be forced to go there. If they're in need they just go along, have a quick chat and that's something that's really tangible this year as opposed to previous years. The students will actually knock on the door and come in for a chat quite often.

And basically in essence, the fact that the kids actually do that off their own bat is the kids being assertive enough at standing on their own two feet to actually go and use some of the support.

Teaching in the middle school is all about fostering relationships, you've got to be able to talk to them and understand them and give them the opportunity to come in and they will. Quite often they'll come in for a chat if they're having issues either at home or at school. And the good thing about it is it's usually those kids that are really troubled that will pop in for a chat. Initially it takes you making first move and booking them in, but once they see that it's not that bad, it's not that threatening, they tend to come in quite a bit and that what we tend to do, get on the front foot and try to build those relationships. Staff 2005

The counsellor reflected similar views about students' willingness to see their teachers as a source of help.

Well it is because they're very willing to seek help on anything. I've had kids where I've left a note on the door saying 'I'm really sorry I'm not here today but if you need to see me urgently or it's an urgent matter speak to your home room teacher'. They'll go to their home room teachers and spill the beans because I'm not here. I mean that's how comfortable they feel with them. Okay well the person I normally talk to is not here I'll go and talk to my home room teacher. Counsellor 2005

Positive relationships with teachers

This willingness to use teachers a source of help is perhaps reflective of a broader development of close relationships between students and teachers. Again, this teacher perceives that this condition has improved in 2005 compared to earlier years.

There's been a big difference in the school over that last year, to here it's much more open and I guess different relationships with staff and students are

pretty positive here and it certainly didn't occur at the school over that last year to some extent. Staff 2005

Bullying and harassment

Students and staff who were interviewed in 2005 report similar levels of bullying as in previous years. Generally bullying is at a low level. It occurs but is rarely physical in nature, and intervention to support students is rapid and seen as effective. Staff believe the school is now more effective in its responses to bullying than in previous years.

It depends, I guess, on what you call bullying but even today I was talking to someone who ... there was some bullying earlier at the beginning of the year and he came to talk about a number of things. He said 'look, it's still there and kids are still doing it. It's not going to disappear.' So I think for a school to say that it doesn't exist, they'd have to be lying, because it's human nature. But how we respond to it. I think we're responding to it a whole lot better than we used to and I think the kids now know that if they do sort of know who's doing it, at least the staff will take it seriously and do something and the person will stop doing it, at least for a while. So there'll be some reprieve and there are consequences too. Staff 2005

Acceptance of mental health problems

Staff at one of the middle school campuses report that they observe students to be very supportive of each others' differences and that this extends to acceptance of mental health problems, even when these are exhibited by extreme behaviours.

I've got cases that I've dealt with over the last year and a half, since I've been at Hermitage, with students who have really significant mental health problems, you know, sort of way out of the normal range, and some of the behaviour - one particular case that I'm thinking of - the behaviour had got extraordinarily extreme. But one of the things that we congratulate our students for is that until it got to that very extreme point, they managed the difference really well. What I thought was really interesting, maybe part of the difference between a public school and a private school is that in a public school a kid might be seen as just flat crazy and maybe the kids harass them for that, but here with the particular student I'm thinking of, was really treated as just eccentric for a lot of the time, and because he was highly creative.

The students are extraordinarily generous and extraordinarily accommodating and it wasn't until things really got to a very, very serious level, that the students actually started to verbalise their own sense of growing discomfort and fear. This boy was very sick and it was just terrible to watch what he was going through but to their credit, the boys could have turned on him at a very early point but they didn't. And for many months his behaviour reached a particular degree and it didn't deviate much for quite a few months and during that period we were just amazed at the boys simply say, 'oh that's just him' and 'oh he's had another one today'. And they'd even cover for him. They'd even give him their own kind of support and we both found it just remarkable. Staff 2005

Social skills

Girls in year 8 at one middle school campus indicated the positive benefit they had received from being at Hermitage generally and, in particular, the opportunity it provided through its parallel education approach of developing appropriate social skills in relating to male students, while still providing the benefits of single-sex educational environments.

I went to a co-ed school until year 4 and then I moved to (another girls school) in year 5 and it's just so much better here because you still don't get distracted in class but you still get social skills at lunchtime. When I went to (the other girls school) I kind of shied away from guys a bit because it was an all girls school and I didn't know how to act around them and then I came here and it was just so much better because you really need those skills. Female students 2005

School attendance

Informants from the school indicated that it was not easy to comment on changes in patterns of school attendance over the period of the evaluation due to the complexity of the school (over four campuses) and due to the considerable amount of change that had occurred in the previous three years.

It is hypothesised that attendance rates may have fallen since the overall approach to education had changed.

I don't know but I am guessing that there might be an increase which is the opposite trend to what we might be looking for. And that's just based on what I know of the old Hermitage. You either attended or left I think. But I am guessing. The trend may go the opposite way, which may not be a bad thing. Staff 2005

10.2 Impacts on the whole school

Reorienting the school's ethos

In many respects, the positive ethos of the junior and senior campuses of Hermitage High are in themselves evidence of the impact of a whole range of changes made in 2001 that include the adoption of MindMatters. In many respects, individual changes such as staff selections, curriculum development, and professional development have been influenced by MindMatters.

Without a doubt MindMatters actually brought Hermitage into a newer level of thinking or new echelon. Hermitage in the past was a fairly dour school and it was a school where students had, if you like, the task of fitting in to what we were as a capacity, rather than us actually having any dynamicity to actually be able to fit the needs of our students. And I think that the work that was done initially by some of those counsellors and the introduction of programs like MindMatters was instrumental in actually delivering a far more effective pastoral care system all the way through our school. So without a doubt, MindMatters probably should take a fair amount of credit for the ethos that fits in this school today. School executive 2005

It's that what we're moving away from is the misunderstanding that curriculum driven or content knowledge is important; in fact it's less important. We're looking at what our girls and what our boys will be as 25 year old men and women. And essentially an understanding of content knowledge is less important than it is to have an understanding of developing and maintaining relationships, effective communication, researching of referencing skills, time management and... emotional literacy. Without a doubt so this is where we're lucky that we've worked hard to be in a position now where we're enjoying that and our students are enjoying that, but again I go back to your first question - the MindMatters program probably needs to take a fair amount of credit for helping us to deliver that approach to a whole school. School executive 2005

11 Indicators of change from student questionnaires

Two questionnaires (Healthy Kids Survey and Help-Seeking Questionnaire) have been used to assess key outcomes from the school's use of the MindMatters resources. From these questionnaires, a number of variables have been selected to indicate changes in: protective and resilience factors, help-seeking intentions; and drug and alcohol use.

To examine whether any of these indicators have changed since MindMatters was implemented at Hermitage High, the scores each year in 2005 are compared to the scores of students of the same year in 2002.

Note

Differences between year groupings in 2005 and 2002 were examined for statistical significance. For Tables 1 and 3, the *t*-test for independent samples was used while for Table 2, Chi-square was used.

Positive or negative changes in variables are described as 'little' if they are between one quarter and one half of the standard deviation of the national mean, and as 'moderate' if they are between half and three quarters of the standard deviation. Changes greater than three quarters of the standard deviation are described as simply 'higher' or 'lower'.

Please note that it is not possible to attribute with certainty any positive or negative changes in these indicators simply to the school's use of MindMatters. It is likely that other important factors might also impact on these variables.

Data were collected from males students only in 2002 and consequently only responses from male students in 2005 are included. A small number of responses from female students were received in 2005 as this was the first year that girls were enrolled in years 7 and 8.

Changes in protective and resilience factors

The Healthy Kids Survey has two main scales each of which has six sub-scales. Not all of these are considered to be target variables for the MindMatters program. Four key sub-scales were selected for the purpose of this report, as likely indicators of changes that might be attributed to MindMatters. These are:

The 'School attachment' sub-scale;

The 'Autonomy experience' sub-scale;

The 'Self-esteem' sub-scale; and

The 'Effective help-seeking' sub-scale.

In the questionnaire, students are asked to rate statements from '1' to '4', where '1' is equivalent to 'never true', '2' is equivalent to 'true some of the time', '3' is equivalent to 'true most of the time' and '4' is equivalent to 'true all of the time'. The 'School attachment' scale is comprised of four such statements. The student's score for 'School attachment' is calculated by adding the scores for the individual statements and dividing by four. Other sub-scales are calculated in a similar way although the number of statements that comprise the scales varied from two to four.

To facilitate comparisons between the different outcome variables in the survey, a standardised metric was adopted, based on the grand standard deviation at baseline (SDB) for each of the variables. Changes between baseline and three-year follow-up were categorised as 'small' if they were greater than or equal to one quarter of the SDB, but less than one half of the SDB. 'Moderate' changes were those which were greater than half but less than or equal to three quarters of the SDB. Changes greater than three quarters of the SDB were regarded as large.

Table 1 indicates that, on the whole, there was only one comparison between 2005 and 2002 that was statistically significant. Year 9 boys in 2005 had a moderately higher mean score for 'school connection' compared to students in the same year in 2002 ($p < .05$).

The only other comparison of note was that males in year 9 in 2005 had a slightly higher mean score for 'effective help-seeking' compared to students in 2002.

Table 1: Resilience and Protective factors in 2005 compared to the control group.

	School connection	Autonomy experience	Self esteem	Effective help-seeking
Year 7 (2005)	No difference	No difference	No difference	No difference
Year 8 (2005)	No difference	No difference	No difference	No difference
Year 9 (2005)	Moderately higher	No difference	No difference	A little higher
Year 10 (2005)	No difference	No difference	No difference	No difference

Changes in help-seeking intentions

In the Help-Seeking Questionnaire, students are given a scenario depicted in a cartoon format and are asked to indicate what type of help-seeking responses they might use if they were in the situation. For the purpose of this report, two variables have been examined for change. These are:

'Willingness to Talk to Someone at School'

Students were given a list of individuals (friend, mother teacher etc) or organisation (eg Kids Help Line) and asked to indicate whether or not, if they were confronted with the problem depicted, they would talk to anyone on the list. They could select as many as they wanted. This variable identifies the students who had indicated that they would talk to a teacher or some other adult at the school.

'Positive Attitude to School Counsellor'

Students were asked to indicate whether they considered that a school counsellor, student welfare teacher or pastoral care teacher (abbreviated to student welfare) could help with the problem depicted in the questionnaire. Those who indicated that a counsellor would 'help quite a lot' or 'would definitely be helpful' were classified as having a 'positive attitude to the school counsellor'.

Table 2 shows the differences between students in each year in 2005 and those in the same year in 2002. None of the differences were statistically significant. Indeed the scores at baseline and three-year follow-up were essentially the same, with two exceptions:

- a slightly higher proportion of students in year 8 in 2005 indicated that they would talk about problems to a teacher or some other adult at school; and
- a slightly higher proportion of students in year 7 in 2005 indicated that they thought a school counsellor or other student welfare person would be helpful.

Table 2: Help-seeking indicators in students in 2005 compared to the control group.

	% who indicate they would talk to someone at school	% who indicate that student welfare would be helpful
Year 7 (2005)	No difference	A little higher
Year 8 (2005)	A little higher	No difference
Year 9 (2005)	No difference	No difference
Year 10 (2005)	No difference	No difference

Changes in drug and alcohol use

In the Healthy Kids Survey, students were also asked to indicate the number of days of drinking, smoking and use of marijuana they had experienced in the previous three months. Three variables are reported as potential outcomes of the MindMatters program:

‘mean number of days of drinking in last three months’

‘mean number of days of smoking in the last three months’

‘mean number of days of using marijuana in the last three months’

Table 3 shows the mean number of days of use of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana for students in 2005 compared to students of the same year in 2002. Overall, these data show no statistically significant differences between the year cohorts in 2004 compared to 2002.

Non-significant comparisons to be noted are:

- Year 8 students had slightly higher means for days of drinking and days of using marijuana; and
- Year 10 students had a slightly lower mean for days of smoking tobacco.

Table 3: Drug and alcohol indicators, 2005 compared to 2002

	Mean days of alcohol use	Mean days of tobacco use	Mean days of marijuana use
Year 7 (2005)	No difference	No difference	No difference
Year 8 (2005)	A little higher	No difference	A little higher
Year 9 (2005)	No difference	No difference	No difference
Year 10 (2005)	No difference	A little lower	No difference

Comment

With small numbers of students, and relatively positive scores on all variables at baseline, only one variable showed any statistically significant changes, and this was in year 9. It is interesting to note that there have been significant changes in the way pastoral care has been provided for year 9 since 2002, and this may reflect their more positive views of the school.

12 Teachers experience of teaching MindMatters

When the evaluation was extended from two years to three, the evaluator was asked to attempt to engage teachers in a discussion about their classroom experiences of teaching any of the MindMatters lessons. This was done opportunistically by asking all interviewees whether they had taught any of the MindMatters lessons in recent weeks. If they had they were asked to briefly describe what they had taught and their opinion of the process and outcome of the lesson in question.

Although none of the teachers interviewed had taught any lessons using MindMatters in recent weeks, two teachers did provide descriptions from earlier months. These are included to provide a sense of the classroom experience of teachers interacting with MindMatters.

Example 1 – a middle school teacher

This is a description of a teacher's experience of teaching the Character Education subject.

I'd have to say - I have year 8s last period on a Friday - and if there's any periods that - particularly the last period Friday, they tend to think this is a bit of a bludge lesson and so you would suspect that you'd have more difficulty doing it. I found I had to prepare lessons really well and had to try and make it more engaging; not just theory, more discussion, more activity based and what I did do, this as last year that I didn't do the year before, is that I actually started the lesson with a little bit of yoga, a little bit of quiet time, so they'd come in last period so we actually did some mind relaxing things, and once we got them up, I got them up sitting in groups, because then they were much more open to discuss. If I started the discussion with what I had planned, it was like going to the dentist and pulling teeth. So I found for me, personally, on a period five on a Friday, if I did some yoga and some meditation and also it was part of the program because I said to them that we all need - one of the biggest killers of adults is stress - and that we need to have mechanisms built in that we can have time to chill out and get those breaks between working. So I think it's very important and something that you'll have for the rest of your life. Some of them giggled and laughed, but everyone of them did it. And I had 26 in a class for Character Ed in that year. I have 26 year 8 boys and they all did it. Some of them laughed and giggled but by the end of it they were like oh we're going to have our relaxation times. So it was actually really good. What I discovered then was they were much more open to discuss and more willing to have ... I didn't make it predominantly a writing session, they didn't have to do homework, there were a couple of things that when I needed them to brainstorm that they would like but this was a group activity and they knew that what I wanted from them was their thoughts that we could just discuss. So we sort of set the ground rule but I didn't want it to be an academic subject, that they had to be accountable for proving it, they had documented evidence of what we'd been doing so it was really an opportunity for them to talk to me, and what we discovered from those sessions was that there were a couple of kids who had difficulties and it was a very good opportunity.

They were able to say that?

I had one little boy - we were talking about families - and sometimes that can be very difficult. I approached it pretty much that there isn't actually a what we call normal family. There are so many different types of families and we

were brainstorming and one little boy put his hand up straight away and said, 'well I come from a difficult family'. In front of everybody. And I thought that was so great. And year 8 boys can be sometimes difficult with each other. And they listened. That was really, really, really good.

Example 2 – a senior school teacher

This example concerns a report of the process of teaching the 'Understanding Mental Illness' lessons by one of the heads of house and was disclosed during a meeting with other heads of house who also commented on their experience.

The kids are really engaged. They have a knowledge base.

And they have the most incredible personal experiences too that they want to share with the whole class sometimes. I mean I had one kid talk ... 'yeah my Auntie was classified as having very bad Schizophrenia 'and I went 'oh, you don't have to talk about it now unless' ... And he said 'oh no, we're going to talk about it now because it's interesting' (and he talked about), what happened in the process and how much better she is now. And that made me realise that it can happen to anyone.

But also his peers are going to learn a lot from that. And hearing him talking about it as if it's part of the family life.

He ran that session and it was fascinating; it was really fascinating.

Yeah it's one of the topics that can go on for a fairly significant amount of time. I don't think we do as much as we should be doing on the drug issue. I think that's been pushed sideways. Staff 2005

13 Key learnings from this school

Consistency with the existing school ethos and direction facilitates the uptake and implementation of MindMatters.

Positive aspects of the MindMatters package itself may contribute to the decision to adopt and use the materials within the school - such factors would include presentation and layout, high quality curriculum resources and the comprehensive and integrated nature of the package.

Support from school leaders is important in setting up wellbeing as a priority and/or in the adoption and implementation of MindMatters. In this school there was an opportunity for formal leadership through the role of dean of students, who was given the time and authority to drive pastoral change.

MindMatters can be a very useful resource for the internal professional development of staff, provided there is a staff member available to provide leadership and there are opportunities for PD sessions within the school. This school's strong commitment to internal PD helped to maintain its focus on wellbeing.

In schools that already allocate a high priority to student wellbeing, it is difficult to distinguish the impact of MindMatters from the impact of other programs, structures and policies; however adoption of MindMatters under these circumstances is likely to reinforce the school's focus on student wellbeing.

In schools where there is a relatively low baseline incidence of student difficulties - such as mental health problems, bullying, truancy, substance use or difficult behaviour - it is difficult to identify any tangible short-term impacts for students from the adoption of MindMatters.

MindMatters can be a useful addition to the pastoral curriculum and provides comprehensive, easy to use materials that are valued by staff.

Staff have differing levels of expertise and comfort with the issues discussed in MindMatters and some may need additional support if they are required to teach this material in a pastoral session; lack of support may result in staff discontent and a lack of standardisation in delivery.

Staff changes in key roles can cause a lack of continuity of implementation of MindMatters and can make it more difficult to review progress, particularly in large or multi-campus schools.

Resource constraints can impact negatively upon the implementation of MindMatters, including staff time and workload, the school's budget for professional development and the availability of copies of the resource materials.