

Even cyclone can't disrupt NT schooling

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They might have been airlifted out of harm's way but a day after Cyclone Lam struck, Goulburn Island's school children were already back in class.

All 426 residents of the island's community of Warruwi were flown 300km west to Darwin on Thursday after it was decided there were no buildings sturdy enough to withstand a category four storm.

And by Friday morning at Ludmilla Primary School, the island's 74 school-aged students were attending classes.

Their teachers were flown with them to Darwin so they have had a near-perfect transition, Northern Territory Education Minister Peter Chandler said.

He said the situation was a good example of the direct instruction education model championed by Cape York indigenous leader Noel Pearson, which would roll out across NT schools this year.

The model focuses on students with learning difficulties.

They are grouped according to achievement rather than age or year level, and teachers, who follow a tight script for each lesson, ensure the group does not proceed until every student has grasped what they are learning.

The model has its critics but Mr Chandler is a strong advocate.

Warruwi school has already been practising direct instruction.

"For those children that left Warruwi yesterday and finished lesson three, today they pick up lesson four, so everything just rolls on," he told reporters on Friday.

"That's the beauty of this system, (rather) than more traditional ways of teaching, where they walk into a different school, a completely different learning environment, and may struggle for a little while until they're learning again."

The education model built resilience in students, provided classroom stability and kept them engaged at their own learning level, Mr Chandler said.

If the next school a child attends is practising direct instruction, continuity would be maintained.

Mr Chandler met police and emergency services on Friday, and said as soon as assessment teams were able to fly into Waruwi to examine the damage, they would.

He hopes that could be as early as Monday.

Source: <http://www.9news.com.au/national/2015/02/20/16/37/even-cyclone-can-t-disrupt-nt-schooling>