Morphett Vale East Kindergarten
Annual Report
2013
Morphett Vale East Kindergarten is located in Morphett Vale in the Onkaparinga Council area between South and Panatalinga Roads, approximately 25 kilometres from the GPO. While the families that access our centre are mostly Anglo in family background, we have a diversity of family and socio-economic structures.

In 2013 our staffing levels remained stable but we have had a variety of staff over the year. As the teacher took long service leave during the first two terms and then reduced her hours to 0.8. We have used a variety of staffing configurations over the year. During term 4 we were staffed at 1.0 Director, 0.8 Teacher and 1.0 ECW. Our preschool support hours have varied over the year from 11 up to 21 hours and we have continued to use the same worker to cover lunches.

In term 4 2013 the preschool population consisted of 5.8% of children from a Non English speaking background, 0% identifying as being from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Heritage and 32% of the population were receiving Preschool Support. As in previous years speech and language needs continue to remain high at our centre.

This year being the first year of single intake meant that we had a decreasing number of children each term. In term 4 we had 33 eligible kindergarten children and 1 early entry child and a much higher percentage of boys.

Quality Improvement Plan

Quality Area 1
This year our inquiry question was “How do we enable children to engage in a project over a period of time?” Throughout the year we trialled several strategies to support children’s continuation of their work following interruptions due to daily schedules. These strategies included:

- writing notes to the other children to not pack away creations – or break them.
- reminding the children verbally but the children (and also the staff) found this difficult to do as they would often forget.
- Writing notes and putting them in parent pigeon holes overnight, so that parents were also able to remind children to go back to their project the next time they were at kindy.
- Providing opportunities for children to follow plant and animal growth over extended periods of time.

We have an example of a wonderful learning story of one of the girls at kindy when she hadn’t finished building with the small wooden blocks on the carpet. It was the end of the day and pack up time. So we decided to write a note to the cleaner to be careful of her work while he was vacuuming the floor. Unfortunately she was late the following morning and her castle had been destroyed by the time she arrived. But we used a photo taken the previous day as instructions to copy and build it again.

Next steps: With all the children starting at the start of the year next year there is the possibility to build this behaviour into the culture of the site. If this is talked about repeatedly at group time with reminders given during the session to look after each other’s work then perhaps this could be more successful. Also setting up a space where built work could be placed or stored so children could come back to it.

We introduced a routine chart for all children to use. It is displayed by the front door at the kindy at the children’s height. It has all the parts of our routine written in words and then a Compix image so the children are able to ‘read’ what comes next etc. The routine also has a moveable arrow which the children can move down the page as things are finished. This chart was particularly useful for children who struggled with the full-day or separation issues from their family. These children were able to see the kindy day progressing but as they became used to our environment and the routines the chart was used less and less during the year.

We have also increased the flexibility within the routines providing increased opportunity for children to have extended uninterrupted play when they are highly engaged.

We have also been critically reflecting upon group times. As a staff team we noted group times are useful because:

- All children have opportunities to observe/listen/participate in shared experiences- this supports the children’s acquisition of language and the conventions of conversations.
- Taking part in large group means children have to work together, share and take turns.
- Enables children to ‘have a turn out the front’, public speaking to share information with others.
- The children themselves ask for group time and like to nominate which song we might sing.
- Sometimes a group time settles the children if they are not actively involved.

Next step: continue critically reflecting on the daily routines and group times and their usefulness and limitations.

The second standard within element one was looking at children’s literacy and numeracy growth. We used the 3 wave model to capture data relating to children’s learning within the Early Years Learning Framework. The three wave model is used as it focuses on children in the middle
of the range. At this site the particular cohort of children with special rights places particularly high demands on all staff time. However we have endeavoured to plan more effectively for our mid-range children.

We captured this data with learning stories, photos of children’s engagement (each child has an individual photo folder on the computer which really quickly tells us who we are missing during the day) and also with examples of children’s work. We also ensured that the children were provided with and actively engaged in literacy and numeracy during each kindy day.

Next step: continue to focus on literacy and numeracy within the curriculum. With the introduction of Preschool indicators it seems that perhaps this work will continue in a more formal data collection manner.

Quality Area 2

At the start of the year the staff induction folder was updated to include information about where children’s individual medical information is kept. We also ensured that this information is verbally given at induction. Using the new Early Years System ensures that medical plans are correctly entered and then recorded within the roll book for easy access. We have also included photos of children with medical issues within the roll book.

Next step: The policy regarding medical emergency procedures has been left for next year to be updated. Procedures were discussed, as a staff team, both within our first aid training and at staff meetings.

Quality Area 3

Under standard 3 we have increased the environmental education for the children, including sustainability. We have worked very hard at getting the vegetable garden up and running. We had the watering system upgraded so that the vegetable garden was watered automatically. We also had new soil put in and removed some of the nearby trees to increase the light to the vegetable patch. This has meant that the children have been able to grow turnips, silver beet, carrots, broccoli, strawberries and tomatoes (with varying success) and use them in cooking.

We have been using an indoor “bachi” compost with the children to supplement our outdoor compost. We have been using the liquid to feed the vegetable garden. In fourth term the children also grew their own individual sunflower and had to look after it to ensure it grew. This meant watering it but at the same time being aware of water usage. We also have planted a lemon, mandarin and peach tree. The children had to water the mulberry tree to feed the silkworms too.

We also had a variety of works done with the maintenance grant. We were able to repaint the outdoor of the kindergarten and also increase the height of the walls in the bathroom so that children no longer climbed on the toilets and toilet paper holders to talk to other children. We had a tree deemed to be dangerous removed. We have been very lucky to have some parent volunteers over the year come in and work in our garden with pruning and also some weeding.

We have also contracted a company to replace the fence along the back of the yard to be in-line with National Quality Standards. This work should be completed by the end of the year. Once the fence is installed we will focus on upgrading the back corner.

Next step: to continue with sustainable education and hopefully grow many more foods in the garden. It would be good to introduce more recycling into our program.

Quality Area 4

We have had regular staff meetings and debrief at the end of each day. This year again has been inconsistent with our staff team. During the year we have had 3 teachers and many more relief staff and ECWs. This impacts on the ability to do in-depth thinking regarding all areas of the kindy, the curriculum and how to share this with parents.

As well as the regular more formal meetings staff also share information with each other during the working day, on the run or during debriefs at the end of the day. As we look at the observation folders as a staff team we ensure that all children are discussed in depth at least once a term. This means that all staff can come to a common understanding of each child as we all perceive things differently. It can be during these conversations that our differing opinions arise and we have been working hard to value each other’s opinions. This also means that it is not just the children with higher needs are discussed too.

We also celebrated as a staff team twice a year and went to two training and development sessions offered by the region as a staff team. These two sessions enable staff the time they need to take part in professional conversations which build collegiality.

Next step: Hopefully next year will be more stable in relation to staffing. This will assist in building relationships and ensuring all staff members feel comfortable in sharing their opinions.

Quality Area 5

As part of our four year cycle we looked at the Well-being scale of the Reflect Respect Relate document. This links in nicely with quality area five – relationships with children. In term one we videoed children in their first full-time term of kindy (ie date of birth before the 28th Jan). We paid a relief staff member to come into the kindy to work with the children while one of our staff members went behind the camera. We had to video six five minute samples over the whole day. In term four we repeated this process with the same group of children (a couple were absent and one had gone onto a different kindy on the day of term 4 filming.)

The results did not really surprise us. In the first term our mean score was 2.2, though this was a little lower than we would have liked. In term 4 this had risen to 4.65. It would seem only natural that the relationships built between staff and children increase over the kindy year. The children’s dispositions for learning had clearly increased by looking at the third section in the scale which was about openness/receptiveness and also persistence/robustness (both of which clearly link in with the “you can do it program” we implemented).

“It is educators’ practices and their relationships with children that make the difference in how children approach and experience learning, how they feel about themselves and how they ‘are’ with others” (RRR page 34).
The ‘You can do it’ program was introduced to the children and their families during term 1. The children liked learning about the characters and singing their special songs. We worked with each character from about a two week period, revisiting when necessary. It was not long before the children we were using the language of being confident, resilient, persistent, organised and a get-a-long. We soon had parents commenting on the program and children were telling them that ‘they could do it’. We received an email received from a mum who was very pleased with the program as her daughter who was always telling her she couldn’t do things was now giving new things a go.

This comment was written in the parent comments on their child’s summative report:

“I believe the Connie confidence program helped his understanding of others and to gain empathy and consequences of his actions to others”.

Next step: We will definitely continue with the program next year. Single intake offers the opportunity to only have to work with each character in depth in term 1 and then revisiting it later on as there will be no new children each term.

Quality Area 6
In our QIP for Quality Area six we looked at 6.3.2 to increase attendance within the kindergarten. While the data in the tables in the following section do not show any results for term 3 and 4 at a site level we are able to show an increase in attendance and even an increase in the amount of parents letting us know when their child will be absent or has been absent. This increase demonstrates parental awareness of the importance regular attendance and the sharing of this information with us.

The data we collected was a record of absences collated at the end of each week. This included; when the child was away by date and day of the week and also whether or not we were told about it. Staff made time on a Friday for follow up phone calls to parents whose child was absent for more than a couple of days with no explanation (this was also recorded). Collecting data in this manner enabled staff to see if there was any patterns of absence; ie was John missing every Wednesday of kindy? This enabled staff to have a conversation with parents about whether or not Wednesday was a convenient time to attend, do we need to swap sessions to increase his attendance or do we take him out of this session so no absence is recorded?

We implemented several things to increase attendance including:

- Sharing the importance of regular attendance with parents upon enrolment and at pre-entry meetings.
- We put in several articles over the year within the newsletter about the importance of regular attendance.
- We displayed a poster made by the Western Region on our window.
- We also added a sentence within our ‘next terms sessions’ note about regular attendance.

As discussed below in term 3 we received an Attendance Initiative Grant. This grant was allocated to increase staffing and therefore relationships with both children and their families within the centre. It is when children and their parents feel comfortable that children are going to want to attend naturally increasing attendance.

Quality Area 7
All staff took part in the Professional Development Cycle. In term 1 staff were able to individually set their own goals in relation to the Quality Improvement Plan. This plan was then discussed at a meeting set for term 1. In term four these were reviewed with written feedback given after each meeting. The process was the same for the Director to her line manager. While the staff might find the process onerous at the time it is one that has value as it is during these conversations that we can ascertain individual goals and required support in the achievement of these.

Next step: to continue with this process and perhaps review the proforma we are using at a site level to ensure it meets the needs of all staff.

Intervention and Support Programs

There is a high level of speech and language needs within our centre. Many of our children are referred to us from Southern Primary Health – some of these are recommended for Early Entry. Our preschool support hours varied over the year from 11 to 21 hours. Most of these children access the speech pathologist and our preschool support worker. They are both highly skilled workers and many of these children move off to school with high phonological awareness skills, due to the extra support.

We have also accessed the social worker for 3 of our families over the past 12 months and a psychologist has completed 9 assessments upon our request. Hearing Intervention was in place for one child accessing our centre.

We have had bilingual support (2 terms) for one child whose first language is Mandarin and also speaks Cantonese. The worker was also able to begin building relationships with an early entry child and his family during her time at the centre.

Report from Governing Council

Our Governing council continues to consist of long term members who are very dedicated and committed members of our community. We averaged approximately 6 members at each meeting. We are always offering this opportunity to parents through the induction process, whiteboard, newsletters and informal chats.

Our governing council continues to be central to decisions regarding our staffing this year including the universal access grant. It was unanimously agreed that we would continue to employ our ECW using this grant instead of employing another teacher 0.4.
This committee also worked with the staff to formulate the Quality Improvement Plan, influenced the termly and fortnightly programming as each was discussed at each meeting. The governing council helped the kindy raise nearly $3000 towards kindy resources. They also supported all of our special events at kindy such as of end of year concert, Dad’s night, special visitors day and our Obstacle-a-thon. They were also informed at every meeting of the financial status of the kindergarten, including the budget, staffing and unpaid fees. This year reports need to made to governing council regarding bullying and harassment each meeting which was completed. One member is also a member of Morphett Vale East School R-7 and she feeds back information from their meetings and vice versa.

### Student Data

**Enrolments**

**Figure 1: Enrolments by Term**

[Enrolments chart]

**Table 1: Enrolments by Term**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on person counts in the two week reference period each term. Excludes pre-entry. Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems

This year, being the first year of single intake, meant that all our children for the year started in term 1. Our governing council approved those children whose birth date fell between 29th Jan and the 1st of May (19 children) to start in term 1 but to access only 3 sessions (due to capacity issues). Our term 2 eligible starters accessed 5 sessions in term 2 and built up to 6 sessions in term 3 and 4. This gradual build to 3 full days worked well for the children and the staff.

Single intake meant that we also sent children to school at the end of each term but had no children to replace them. This meant by term 4 we only had 33 full-time children – though our staffing remained the same due to having permanent staff members.

Our enrolments in term 1 were higher than in previous years, this is not shown on the table above as they were not counted in the data collection until term 2. As we were able to accept children in term 1 many families who may not have come to this kindy did so. However, in term 2 when spaces would have been made available at other sites all families except one decided to stay. This data speaks volumes of the work we do with children and the community satisfaction with our service.

### Attendance

**Figure 2: Attendance by Term**

[Attendance chart]

**Attendance Percentages 2011 - 2013**
Table 2: Attendance Percentages 2011 - 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Percentage</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011 Centre</td>
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<td>93.3</td>
<td>89.6</td>
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<td>2012 Centre</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>79.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Centre</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>90.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>2011 State</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 State</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 State</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>88.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Based on attendances recorded in the two week reference period each term, and calculated to an average unadjusted daily attendance (deemed attendance). Attendance percentages are based on the calculated deemed attendance (integer), divided by the number of enrolments. Excludes pre-entry

Note 1: Figures have been revised for previous years, using integer deemed attendance not decimal.

Note 2: Data for Term 3 and Term 4 2013 will not be reported. It is not comparable with previous years due to the transition to the Same First Day enrolment policy for preschools in 2013 creating a break in series.

Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems

This year many of our children have been receiving 3 full days of kindergarten in term 3 and 4. This has had both a positive and negative effect upon our attendance. When children are ill and miss a day of kindergarten they then miss 2 sessions of kindergarten. But having all full days has also encouraged more families to attend when healthy (half days remains unpopular within the community).

In term 3 we were given an attendance grant of $9101.00. The governing council and staff discussed a variety of options for the funding and it was decided to employ our ECW full-time and increase our pre-school support workers hours to increase staff:child ratio and therefore relationships with all children and their families. The staff were also able to allocate time to record absences including reasons for this. Time and funds were also allocated to make follow up phone calls with parents whose children was absent more than a couple of days unexplained. As the year went on families understood that if they didn’t let us know that then we would be chasing them up.

We also included information within the newsletters regarding the importance of regular attendance. We also had conversations with parents who admitted to us that they were having difficulty getting their children here and what the implications would be for the future of allowing the children to have the ‘choice’ of attending.

Our attendance in term 1 and 2 as shown by the table above has been higher than in the previous 3 years, both figures being above 90%. We would be very interested to see what our attendance figures for term 3 and 4 look like. As noted in previous annual reports having data collection at the start of each term is difficult as many families take family holidays during the school holidays and have some extra time off. Also term 3 data falls in the middle of winter when many children and their families are ill and unable to attend kindy.

Feeder Schools

Feeder School Percentage Data

Table 3: Feeder School Percentage Data 2011 - 2013

Feeder Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site number - Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0362 - Port Noarlunga Primary School</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0379 - Reynella Primary School</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the percent of children currently enrolled who will attend school in the following year, where the expected school is known. Due to rounding totals may not add up to 100%.

Source: Term 3 Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems

Our main feeder schools remains Morphett Vale East Primary R-7 (previously known as Morphett Vale East Junior Primary School), though this has been steadily dropping over the past 3 years. As we accepted children in term 1 we had some families that otherwise would had attended elsewhere which also increased the variety of schools which the children will transition to.

After the data collection in term 3 several families changed their school choice which meant that the above table should actually reflect: One child will attend Braeview Primary, One child will attend Antonio’s Catholic, One more child will attend Prescott Southern, One child will be going to Flaxmill Primary School. This additional data actually changes the percentages quite a bit as 34% of children transitioned to alternative schools while only 66% went to Morphett Vale East R-7. This may have to do with the wider community we were drawing our enrolments from or an increase in awareness that families who chose our centre do not have to attend the school located next door.

**Client Opinion**

After last year’s success we decided to distribute our parent opinion surveys at the end of each term again to a random selection of parents whose children had attended our kindergarten for four terms. This meant that all the parents should know our Centre extremely well which should increase the validity of the responses and therefore our data. However as only 8 were returned from 16 were returned (50%) the validity of the data is questionable.

All the responses to every question asked were either in the “agree” or “strongly agree” columns except for eight responses.

The statements in the “neutral” columns were:

Q1 My child is motivated to learn at this preschool
Q10 Children have enough materials and resources for their learning
Q5 There is a broad variety of communications that informs me about the preschool
Q9 This preschool provides opportunity to discuss my child’s progress
Q13 Teachers let me know how my child is doing
Q4 The preschool seeks parents’ opinions about educational programs
Q6 The preschool is always looking for ways to improve what it does
Q7 Parents are invited to participate in decisions about their child’s education
We are very happy with our parent opinion surveys. As in previous years we have found that many families do not return the opinion survey. We also generally find that some of the families use the opportunity to ‘air their concerns’ anonymously rather than approaching staff. This means that the issue is often not addressed. From the above responses in the neutral column it could be surmised that the family was not happy with the level of communication regarding their child’s progress – however no-one approached me with this concern. If it was I would have been more than happy to discuss their child’s progress. As it is anonymous and I don’t know who wrote this I am unable to share more knowledge of their child with them and vice versa to come to a shared understanding. Throughout the year I offer time to parents to discuss progress with them. Of all the children this year only 2 parents have taken this up in their first term and none in their final term. The surveys were also given out prior to summative reports and perhaps this may have changed their opinion.

The families have written many wonderful comments to us on the parent opinion surveys, some of these include:

“The staff have been very thorough with teaching the children about being treated with respect. All of the issues my child has had have been dealt with very promptly and well.”

“My daughter has absolutely loved going to this preschool has blossomed beautifully with the help of all the teachers. She would go every day if she could. I feel confident and secure in taking my child there to learn and play. Would recommend it to any parent.”

“enjoyed our experience at kindy. Staff show genuine care and concern for my child, his sibling and the family as a whole. Great community to grow in and be nurtured as an introduction to formal education before starting primary school.”

We also collect parent feedback throughout the year on children’s summative reports and feedback from special visitors days and Dad’s night. It is through these comments that I think we gain a better picture of the parent/community opinion of our site and staff.

Some of these comments include:

“thanks for all your hard work this year….her father and I are really happy with everything”

“We have been extremely happy with the attention to detail and assistance they have given in nurturing the personal growth and development of our daughter whilst in their care……We could not have expected or asked for more”

“both my children have been to this kindy. Love love love the staff – Always happy. A great environment”

“The staff at Morphett Vale East Kindy are fabulous”

“Wonderful atmosphere and friendly staff. Keep up the good work guys”

“I cannot thank Kerri enough for all that she has done and for the wonderful care and attention my (child’s name) has received from all the other ladies”

“I would like to say a big thank you for all your help and support…. We will miss you Kerri”

Next step: Due to single intake next year all of our children will be going to school at the same time. This means we will go back to distributing the parent opinion surveys once a year – at the start of term 3. This will mean that all the families will have been attending
the kindy for the same length of time and should have reasonable understandings. We will continue to collect data at other events during the year as we feel this data is much more reflective of the opinion of the site.

Financial Statement