Ballara Park Kindergarten Annual Report 2015
1. CONTEXT

Preschool Name: Ballara Park Kindergarten  Preschool Number: 3608
Preschool Director: Marilyn Clark  Partnership: Holdfast

Ballara Park Kindergarten is a stand-alone service offering preschool and playgroup sessions. Children attending preschool sessions attend for two full days per week from 8.30am until 4.00pm. One group attends on Mondays and Wednesdays and the other attends on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our playgroup operates on Friday mornings and has been enthusiastically and capably co-ordinated by some parents this year. The children attending our centre come from families who are diverse in cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Many of our children concurrently attend child care centres or access other forms of care on the days they are not at kindergarten. The preschool is located within a park setting adjacent to a community playground and tennis courts. The facility was purpose built more than 50 years ago and is leased from the City of Marion.

We have five staff members, all of whom have been at the centre for 5 or more years. Ballara Park Kindergarten is a member of the Holdfast Partnership of public schools and preschools. This is a collaborative partnership of 8 preschools, 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school.

2. REPORT FROM GOVERNING COUNCIL

After seeking input from current and prospective parents and consulting with staff, it was decided to continue with the longer day model of preschool provision for 2015. The effectiveness of this option in meeting community needs is supported by the number of families who want to come to Ballara Park and the high proportion of children who take up all of their 15 hours of entitlement each week.

However, Governing Council notes that, for the second year in succession, staff were unable to confirm to families about the availability of 15 hours of preschool until very late in the year because of funding uncertainty. This was again particularly frustrating to families and unfair for staff. The situation was compounded this year by additional uncertainty about funding to meet the new ratios, meaning that it was unclear how many enrolments could be accepted for 2016 until late in the year. The Governing Council urges DECD to ensure that this untimeliness of funding confirmation that results in significant frustration and inconvenience for families and high levels of anxiety for staff does not continue.

Our most significant project at the kindergarten this year was the installation of a mounded grass area and a watercourse, platform and mud kitchen adjacent to the sandpit. This has enhanced the play opportunities in the outdoor learning area.

We were pleased to participate in the first joint Governing Council meeting for all sites within the Holdfast Partnership. For the second year families from our preschool participated in the Moon Lantern Walk.

3. HIGHLIGHTS 2015

Please see termly summaries at the end of this report for information about the highlights of our educational program.

4. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The main priorities in our Quality Improvement Plan for 2015 were to improve numeracy learning outcomes for all children in the areas of number, measurement, space and geometry and to review and update our assessment and reporting processes.

In the area of numeracy, all staff participated in professional development that examined the preschool indicators. We also participated in partnership wide professional development related to the Results Plus initiative. Through our ongoing informal assessments of children’s skills and knowledge we were able to demonstrate that there were clear improvements in
numeracy learning outcomes for all children over their preschool year. These outcomes are now reflected more clearly in our new statements of learning. Further improvements to our assessment and reporting processes and the statement of learning will be a priority for 2016 and we will continue to embed the preschool indicators in those processes. Continued participation in Results Plus initiatives will also be a priority for 2016.

5. INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

While we had a number of children with additional needs this year, none of those were eligible for preschool support funding. We did not access the bilingual support program or the Aboriginal 3 Year Old Family Literacy Program. The preschool funded some additional teacher and Early Childhood Worker time to provide extra support in the form of individual and small group experiences for children with additional needs and for children who have English as a second language. This support resulted in improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for these children.

6. STUDENT DATA

6.1 Enrolments

Demand for places at Ballara Park Kindergarten remains high and we needed to apply our priority of access policy for the 2015 intake because we had more names on our preliminary enrolment list than we had vacancies. This occurred again when offering places for our 2016 intake. We again collaborated with our local preschools to ensure that all children who lived in our local area were offered places.

6.2 Attendance

Attendance data indicates that we continue to have a high attendance rate at Ballara Park Kindergarten. We have again averaged over 94% attendance, reflecting the similar pattern of the last 6 years. This attendance percentage is above both the regional and state-wide figures. Considering that this centre has provided only full-day sessions since Term 2 2008, the high attendance supports the need for and popularity of this model of service delivery in this community. It is also interesting to note that the longer day sessions that we have offered for the past four years have been equally as well attended as previous years. Nearly all children attend kindergarten for their full fifteen entitled hours.
6.3 Destination – Feeder Schools

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site number - Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<th>2015</th>
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<tr>
<td>0637 - Brighton Primary School</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.1</td>
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</table>

2015’s destination data is similar to previous years and reflects an increasing trend of children going to public schools. This year 72% of children from Ballara Park went to public schools within the Holdfast Partnership, 4% went to other public schools and 24% went to non-government schools.
7. CLIENT OPINION

Since 2012 we have used a parent survey that aims to facilitate feedback about the preschool's performance in each of the seven quality areas of the national quality framework. We developed this survey as we believe this more succinctly identifies areas for improvement to be addressed in our Quality Improvement Plan. The survey asks for comments and has five statements to rate in each of the seven areas – educational program, health and safety, physical environment, staff, relationships with children, relationships with families and community and leadership and management. Parents are asked to state on a 5 point Likert scale the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statement. Surveys were distributed to families as their child finished their fourth term of kindergarten. A total of 58 of the 70 distributed surveys were returned in 2015. All responses agreed or strongly agreed to all 35 statements in all seven areas of the survey, except for four responses to a statement were neutral. Two of these responses were to statements related to Governing Council and two were to statements related to responding to children with additional needs. In all four cases, the respondents indicated that they “Don’t Know” about these specific areas. Strongest areas of agreement were educational programs and practice, physical environment, staff, relationships with children, partnerships with families and leadership and management.

There was one recommendation made through the opinion survey this year. A parent commented that they would like there to be a lending library at the kindergarten. We have undertaken to look at the viability of re-establishing a book lending facility. A parent also commented about the mouldy smell that is prevalent in our building in winter. This has resulted from many years of ongoing flooding. We have replaced all floor coverings and furnishings but will continue to try and address this problem.

Commendations in the parent opinion surveys included:

QA1: Educational Programs and Practice
“the educational program at this kindergarten is absolutely outstanding”
“the preschool is innovative with programs and we love seeing what our son has learnt”

QA2: Children’s Health and Safety
“the children and their safety and well-being are clearly important to staff who do a great job at managing all”

QA3: Physical Environment
“the outdoor area is an inspiring place to be – and often changes. We love how nature is everywhere from wooden stepping blocks to the frog pond and the fairy garden. Lots of different areas to explore”

QA4: Staffing
“the staff are excellent. The children respect them and enjoy attending.”
“the staff are first class and work beautifully as a team. A fantastic, fun, friendly and professional team who are a credit to the education system”

QA5: Relationships with Children
“there are excellent expectations around behaviour – all done in a positive way”
“such a warm and caring team”

QA6: Collaborative Partnerships
“we have always felt welcome at Ballara.”
“I could not ask for better education and joy of life”

QA7: Leadership and Management
“Marilyn is an extraordinary person who does a brilliant job, supported by a fantastic team”
“I can’t recommend Ballara Park Kindergarten highly enough”

8 ACCOUNTABILITY

All teachers working at this preschool in an ongoing or temporary role have current teacher registration. Our permanent ECWs updated their clearances this year and all temporary or relief ECWs have a current clearance and DECD authority.

All Governing Council members and volunteers spending time in the kindergarten had received a relevant criminal history clearance prior to commencing their role. All also completed Reporting Abuse and Neglect Induction Training before or at the joint Partnership Governing Council meeting in May.

9. FINANCIAL STATEMENT- ATTACHED