

File Reference:
(if applicable)



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Report

Service Name

Naracoorte North Kindergarten

Service Approval Number

SE-00010701

Provider Name

Department for Education

Provider Approval Number

PR-00006069

Assessment & Rating Number

ASR-00030464

Report Status

Final

Date Report
Completed

7 September
2021

About this report

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to give the approved provider notice of the outcome of the rating assessment and the rating levels for their education and care service (under section 136 of the Education and Care Services National Law).

The goals of the report are to provide:

- an assessment of the education and care service against the National Quality Standard (NQS) and the National Regulations
- the reasons for rating the service at each level
- support for the ongoing quality improvement of the education and care service

The rating system

The National Regulations prescribe the rating levels within the assessment and rating process (regulation 57). The rating levels are:

- Exceeding National Quality Standard
- Meeting National Quality Standard
- Working Towards National Quality Standard
- Significant Improvement Required

Further information on how ratings are determined is available in the [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#) (Chapter 3: Part 3-Assessment and rating process) available on the ACECQA website at www.acecqa.gov.au.

Assessment and rating visit details

Type of service

Long Day Care

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

Family Day Care

Preschool/Kindergarten

Nominated Supervisor

Kara Lang

Educational Leader/s

Sandra Williamson

Primary Contact
(for assessment & rating)

Kara Lang

Quality Improvement Plan
Date Received

21 May 2021

Visit/s

Visit Date/s

24 June 2021

Authorised officers

Name 1

Natalie Byrnes

Name 2

Shannon Osborne

Further information (if applicable)

Naracoorte North Kindergarten is a Department for Education (the department) preschool located in Naracoorte, approximately 330 kms from Adelaide CBD. The service provides universal access to all children who attend and offers a playgroup program each day. The service is co-located and works very closely with Naracoorte Child Day Care Centre (NCDCC).

The service had previously been assessed and rated under the 2012 National Quality Standard (NQS). This assessment and rating visit (the visit) was conducted under the revised 2018 NQS.

The visit took place on 24 June 2021. The authorised officers (AOs) observed practice during the morning of the visit and held discussions in the afternoon. Present for discussions was the kindergarten director. The kindergarten director is one of three early childhood teachers (ECT) at the service. Another ECT is the educational leader (EL). Later in the day, the second ECT/EL joined discussions. Also in attendance for discussions was the kindergarten's early childhood leader (ECL).

Throughout the report the ECTs and early childhood workers (ECW) have been collectively referred to as 'educators' unless referring to their specific roles.

This report is intended to be read in conjunction with the service's Preschool Quality Improvement Plan (PQIP).

Summary comments

The AOs would like to acknowledge the kindergarten's commitment to continuous improvement and building positive relationships with families, children and the community. The kindergarten is dedicated to providing quality education and support to both children and families.

The AOs would also like to acknowledge the demonstration of Exceeding themes in some Standards. The kindergarten is encouraged to reflect further on the Exceeding themes and how they might be able to clearly demonstrate these themes in practice and/or through documentation in order to achieve an overall rating of Exceeding in the future. It may be useful to use the reflective questions and the questions used by AOs to establish Exceeding NQS practice from the Guide to the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice

Standard 1.1	The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.	
1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.	Met
1.1.2	Each child’s current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.	Met
1.1.3	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 1.1

Practice is embedded in service operations	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 1.1 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 1.1

All aspects of the educational program enhance children’s learning and development. Practices related to the educational program have been assessed as Exceeding NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- The service develops their program on a half-term basis with The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) used to guide curriculum-making decisions. The program is informed through observations and analysis of children’s learning, individual goals, and a ‘what else we noticed/so we will’ reflective template. It was discussed with the director that language used to document children’s learning is reflective of the wording used in the EYLF. The service uses the OneNote application as a collaborative platform to record and share children’s documentation, parent conversations and reflections on all aspects of the program.
- The director discussed how the service values the knowledge families have of their child and that this knowledge is equally important to that of the educator. Parent conferences were established after it was identified that face-to-face communication is the most significant way in which parents provide feedback. Educators tailor the focus of the program to be responsive to families input and ‘weave originality’ into the program. This approach has led to evaluating how the service best obtains meaningful information during face-to-face conversations to gain a better understanding of the child. Recent professional development with Jane Lemon has assisted educators in refining information gathering skills with new questions asked of parents such as, ‘What three words best describe your child?’

- Children demonstrated a strong sense of belonging. Upon arrival, children confidently transitioned into the environment and into free play or planned learning experiences with support from educators. The environment was warm and inviting, with children observed engaging in activities such as: exploring musical instruments, using dress-ups from the home corner, playdough, playing with loose parts set-up in the sandpit and/or participating in phonological awareness activities with educators at a writing table.
- Throughout the visit, each educator was consistently observed using phonological awareness strategies during experiences that were driven by the children's interests. This is a strong focus of the service's PQIP. Educators supported children's speech development through reciprocal conversations, focusing children on recognising the initial sounds in their name. Educators were often observed role modelling this strategy in front of parents. During discussions, the director explained that some families are not confident in facilitating speech activities in the home. Educators actively role model phonological awareness strategies in front of parents to support the development of their abilities.
- Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program. It was discussed that the service screens children's speech and phonological awareness capabilities at the beginning of the year. The information gathered is referred to as 'raw data'. The raw data is tracked across Term 1 and 2, with children's progress documented and analysed. The data collection has resulted in positive outcomes for children, with educators able to identify children who require additional speech support, intervention or individualised programs.
- The service's strong focus on phonological awareness and music-based literacy is a result of identifying complex challenges within the community. One such challenge is the significant increase in children with speech development delays. During discussions, the director noted how the focus on speech within the program has been in response to major gaps in community health referrals and a growing reliance on children accessing government speech services in their kindergarten year. The director discussed that children's speech delays in the region were also reflective of the data captured in the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). The service's Wrattobully partnership within the Mount Gambier portfolio had also identified similar issues. To improve outcomes for children, the service has actively sought to work in collaboration with department and private speech pathologists, such as Limestone Speech. This collaborative approach enables the service to access professional speech strategies to include in their program and educator's practices, as well as to provide current resources to support families.
- Shared non-contact time provides educators opportunities to critically reflect and share information on current research to support children's development, such as concepts around 'tiers of vocabulary'. This time is utilised to break down the raw data captured by educators to foster educator's shared understanding of the program. It was sighted in governing council meeting minutes on 16 March 2021, that educators who were not confident in supporting children in their phonological awareness were offered opportunities for professional development. An increase in educator knowledge and understanding of oral language has led to changes in practices to support children's speech development. For example, at the start of the year, the service implemented planned experiences in small groups to support children's speech development. Through the upskilling of educators, the service has progressed away from this strategy. Educators have now become confident at instinctively using strategies to support speech development in all aspects of the daily routine.
- All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in a way that maximises learning opportunities for each child. Phonological awareness training has led to educators making slight adjustments to regular routines to increase children's exposure and understanding of phonological concepts. This was evident on the day of the visit with high quality practices observed around morning group times with educators intentionally selecting certain texts to scaffold children's use of increasingly complex language. For example, an AO observed educators using word signs from a 'word wall' to support children's recognition of certain words in a story. When the word was read (words such as 'delicious', 'interrupted' and 'expert'), the child holding the word sign was supported to explain the meaning of the word.

Standard 1.2		Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
1.2.1	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.	Met
1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.	Met
1.2.3	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 1.2

Practice is embedded in service operations	No
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 1.2 is rated Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 1.2

All educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development. Educators' practices related to delivery of the educational program have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- Throughout the visit, educators were observed to be deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their practice. For example, educators supported a child to write their name, and then they used this document as a template to mould the letters out of playdough.
- Documentation demonstrated that group times are designed to capture the needs of children. During discussions, the director explained that educators remain flexible during group times with room for spontaneous elements. For example, educators facilitated a group time around hand hygiene after observing children not washing their hands after using the toilet.
- Children are supported to follow their own play ideas and access resources to support their inquiry and exploration. For example, children were observed using loose parts to create a fire truck. An educator was observed extending children's thinking around their creation through open questions such as: 'How do you know when there is a fire?' and 'What does the peddle do?'. In another example a child was creating a check-list book, with the educator enquiring what kind of things the child would be checking off their list.
- The set-up of the learning environment was directly linked to supporting children engage in the program. For example, children had opportunities to engage with a diverse range of resources such as pencils, crayons, textas, paints, paper and playdough and a wide range of musical instruments set-up in both indoor and outdoor environments to support ongoing phonological awareness and literacy development. As sighted in staff meeting minutes from 4 April 2021, educators had reflected on texts available in the learning environment. Educators considered how words are visually presented within the books to increase the complexity of language children are exposed to.

- On the day of the visit, children were observed to have agency and choice, with long blocks of uninterrupted play time. Children were given choice to independently move between the indoor and outdoor environment. During these experiences, educators were overheard posing questions, responding positively to requests for assistance and supporting children through challenges. For example, while a child was writing their name, the educator supported the child to continue with the task when it became challenging. The educator prompted the child to remember what strategies they had practised the day before. While during free play times children's agency was supported, there were some missed opportunities to further promote children's agency and extend learning during group times. For example, for morning tea and morning group time, all children were asked to come together. This meant that there was limited choice for children around participating in these routine times. In addition, during morning tea it was observed that educators missed some spontaneous opportunities to extend children's thinking about healthy eating or children's current interests.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 1.2

It is recommended that:

- educators further consider group times and mealtimes as opportunities to promote children's choice and agency as well as to further extend their learning and development.

Standard 1.3	Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.	
1.3.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.	Met
1.3.2	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.	Met
1.3.3	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 1.3	
Practice is embedded in service operations	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 1.3 is rated	Meeting NQS
------------------------------	--------------------

Evidence for Standard 1.3
<p>Educators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child. Practices related to the assessment and planning cycle have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service's program is developed on a half-term basis (as mentioned in Standard 1.1) and is completed on a template which links children's planned experiences to the EYLF learning outcomes, the department's <i>Indicators of Preschool Numeracy & Literacy (IPNL)</i> and the department's <i>The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum</i>. The program lists focus children who are linked to experiences that support them in achieving their goal. The program is flexible by enabling educators to add adjustments/progressions. Educators continue to reflect on children's learning through 'what else we noticed/so we will' templates. The program was initially developed from educator observations and information gathered from families during pre-entry visits. Children contribute to the program through the implementation of a 'child's view of their learning' template which is completed by children with support from educators. There is a clear ongoing cycle of planning for each child. The data driving individual children's planning cycles is collated from observations and educator perspectives in OneNote. This information is analysed under 'learning progress' and 'next step' headings for each child, and is used to develop children's goals. When collating information to move into the planning cycle, educators record all children's 'next steps' on post-it notes and consider them as a group before linking them to EYLF learning outcomes. As the service offers flexible sessions (as mentioned in Standards 6.1), educators carefully consider groups of children when planning. The director discussed that due to the flexible attendance schedule of children, educators use an observation checklist, with educators having focus children to ensure each child is regularly observed.

- It was evident in documentation sighted in staff meetings on 7 April 2021, that educators reflect on the program and the environment to establish where they can further scaffold phonological awareness or music-based literacy experiences. The process of recording observations has been considered recently. It was discussed that educators focus on documenting what is seen, with time for analysis to be completed later. This approach ensures educators focus on capturing learning that is authentic.
- Educators supported children's external learning in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (the pandemic) by creating 'Individual Planning' for each child. Educators observations and learning progress recorded in OneNote enabled a quick response to the pandemic with children and families receiving individualised resources and learning plans to complete at home.
- Families are regularly informed of their child's progress. This is achieved through daily conversations, a floor book, parent conferences, 'Come and Play' sessions and learning updates. Learning updates are compiled from children's learning progress notes on OneNote and completed each term. Learning updates provide another aspect for families to provide feedback into the service's program and are another prompt for families to reflect on their child's learning. The learning updates focus on sharing new information with families.
- The service uses OneNote to share 'family correspondence' amongst the team. This is a detailed document that enables educators to all stay informed of often complex family situations and children's ongoing development.
- During discussions, the director explained that along with increasing speech delays within the community, not all families were open to support. Educators have considered non-invasive ways of sharing information with families to encourage them to engage in phonological awareness strategies at home. This is facilitated through filming a 'reading intention' which is shared consistently each week on Facebook. The service's newsletter is also a platform to promote current research and information on literacy strategies for parents to access without 'bombarding' them with information. In addition, the service has developed a simple program template that is displayed in the learning environment, with clear planned experiences and links to the EYLF so families stay informed of their children's learning opportunities.
- The service has been considering ways in which they can make learning 'more visible' for families. This has led to conversations with families on how children's documentation in the environment is displayed alongside information about the learning journey so families can see the process and move the focus from just the finished outcome.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 1.3

Quality Area 1 summary

For Quality Area 1, is there a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children?

No

Regulation 62(2) prescribes that an Exceeding National Quality Standard rating may only be given for Quality Area 1 for an education and care service that educates and cares for children who are in the year that is 2 years before grade 1 of school if the service either provides a preschool program or has a documented arrangement with an approved provider of another education and care service to provide a preschool program and informs parents of this arrangement.

Does the service educate and care for children who are in the year that is 2 years before grade 1 of school?

Yes

Does the service have a preschool program? A preschool program means an early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher.

Yes

Quality Area 1 is rated

Meeting NQS

Quality Area 2 – Children’s health and safety

Standard 2.1	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted.	
2.1.1	Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation.	Met
2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.	Met
2.1.3	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 2.1

Practice is embedded in service operations	No
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 2.1 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 2.1

Children’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted. Practices related to children’s health have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- The service has a sleep and rest policy in place. Quiet spaces are made available to children in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Mats are available for children who need to rest and if children require a sleep, the service will borrow a bed from NCDCC. Conversations are held with parents regarding children’s needs for sleep and/or rest and the service strives to meet the needs of children in their care, while being conscious of families needs. Opportunities for relaxation experiences are provided regularly through the program. For example, a nook has been created on the verandah, baskets of books with mats are set-up outside during summer and educators lead group times for yoga and relaxation. Educators have also attended professional learning on interoception to enable them to better support children in their understanding of the connection between their body and feelings.
- During discussions, the kindergarten director stated that when children have toileting accidents it is treated respectfully, with children comforted by educators and supported to independently change. If children require help with toileting, educators always ask for permission from the child before providing assistance. In order to further support families and children with toileting needs, the service hosts a ‘Toilet Time’ evening each year. Families, staff and members of the local community are invited to attend. This evening is organised in collaboration with NCDCC.

- Children with medical conditions have medical management plans in place and the service has completed risk minimisation and communication plans for these children. Although, it was noted that the risk minimisation plans listed symptoms of children's conditions rather than their triggers. It was discussed with the director that the plans should consider what triggers each child's medical condition, in particular for asthma as there may be multiple reasons. The 'proactive' column of the risk minimisation plans listed measures the service would take to reduce triggers within the environment.
- Upon checking medication expiry dates for medication stored at the service, an AO noted that the service's emergency Ventolins had expired in December 2019 and January 2020. The director explained that these medications are checked by an external contractor when they conduct first aid audits for the service. Following the visit, the service reflected on this practice and have implemented a new system for checking service medication expiry dates. It was confirmed that no children had been provided with this medication and that educators must check expiry dates prior to administering any medication to children.
- Hygiene practices at the service were effective with children being asked to wash their hands before mealtimes and after blowing their nose. During discussions, the director explained that hygiene had been a major focus during the pandemic. Handwashing, in particular, was highlighted with educators demonstrating how children should be washing their hands properly and visuals displayed in the bathrooms. In addition, educators complete a weekly wash of sheets, towels and smocks and the couch cover is regularly cleaned along with cushion covers to ensure good hygiene.
- Throughout the morning of the visit, the service provided simultaneous indoor/outdoor play (as mentioned in Standard 1.2), meaning that children were able to choose when they needed or wanted to engage in physical play. Children were observed engaging in experiences outside such as climbing, building with heavy loose parts, pushing wheelbarrows, digging, swinging and playing chasey games.
- Healthy eating is promoted at the service, with educators role modelling healthy food choices when eating with children. Information about providing healthy lunchboxes for children is given to parents at enrolment and educators discuss healthy eating during group times. Educators show respect to families who may be unaware of what healthy foods are or how to prepare a healthy lunchbox and will send home advice and suggestions when needed.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 2.1

It is recommended that:

- educators review risk minimisation plans and ensure that triggers for each child's medical condition are captured as risks
- educators follow through with their new system for checking service medication expiry dates to ensure that they are removed from the service and replaced prior to expiry.

Standard 2.2	Each child is protected.	
2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.	Met
2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.	Met
2.2.3	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 2.2

Practice is embedded in service operations	No
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 2.2 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 2.2

The service ensures that each child is protected. Practices related to children's safety have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- Children were adequately supervised by educators at all times with children being either within sight or sound, both inside and outside. Educators were overheard discussing their movements based on how many children were inside or outside to ensure enough educators were present to meet the needs of children. During discussions, the director stated that educators have reflected on their supervision practices to ensure better placement across the service.
- A large fixed play structure is located in the service's outdoor play area. The service has bark chips beneath the structure which acts as soft fall. Although, it was noted that the depth of the bark chips did not meet the best practice guidelines for soft fall requirements. This was discussed with the director who explained that she was aware of the need to have 30cm of bark chips to be counted as soft fall. She went on to explain, that whilst it had been ordered, they needed to wait for better weather as the truck had got stuck in the wet ground last time it tried to deliver bark chips. Educators have been lifting the bark chips to help loosen it while they wait for the new bark chips to arrive. It was sighted in documentation that this matter had been identified in the April 2021 quarterly safety inspection of the kindergarten's outdoor environment. In the February 2021 inspection, it was also documented that it would need to be topped up in 2021. Although, it appeared that it may have been at an appropriate level at this time as the director had ticked the box to indicate it was.
- The service has a procedure in place for ensuring the safety of children who catch a bus to the service. This procedure involves one or two educators collecting children from the drop off point. This depends on how many children have caught the bus, as the service employs excursion ratios of 1:6. If children are not on the bus, educators will discuss this with the bus

driver. Once all children who are registered to be collected from the bus have arrived, educators still wait for all the buses to leave in case any other children have caught the bus without the family letting educators know. As the route back to the kindergarten crosses a car park, the service has communicated with the school who has put up bunting to make drivers more aware of where children will be crossing. Parents from school have been informed of the procedure so they know to let children through. In the afternoons, children catching the bus home leave via a separate door and educators make sure all children get on the bus before heading back to the kindergarten. Families are expected to let educators know each day how their child will be getting home, and educators will call if this is not done to double check how the family wants the child to return home.

- Educators conduct daily safety checks. More intensive safety checks are conducted both quarterly and annually for all learning spaces. To ensure that educators are aware of what to look out for, they are all involved in these checks.
- The service conducts emergency procedure rehearsals twice a term, one evacuation and one evacuation. These rehearsals are documented and reflected upon to ensure the procedure is effective in the event of an emergency. During discussions, the director stated that the bus service that collects and drops off children to the kindergarten also do regular emergency rehearsals which the children take part in. The service follows Naracoorte Primary School's bushfire response plan because they evacuate to their staff room in the event of a bushfire.
- All educators hold Responding to Abuse and Neglect (RAN) training certificates. Children's needs and any concerns educators may have related to children are discussed during staff meetings. During the induction process, volunteers and students on placement are supported to learn the service's approach to child protection matters and are made aware that they should talk to the educators about any concerns they may have about children.
- Educators have completed Strategies for Managing Abuse Related Trauma (SMART) professional learning in order to best support the growing number of children attending who have either experienced or are experiencing trauma. The director is a trained facilitator of Circle of Security (CoS) and has mentored the educators in using this approach with children.
- Educators communicate with the Naracoorte Police and employees of the Department for Child Protection (DCP) to try to ensure that children in their care are safe, both while at the service and at home. For example, a new family who enrolled their child at the service came across as transient. The director checked with DCP to flag that the family was attending the kindergarten and see if they had any information related to the family. Educators will call the police to request welfare checks on families if they have concerns.
- If families are interested in support, the service will provide what they can to ensure that children are not put at risk. For example, they have provided families with food vouchers and access to support services. If families communicate their need for assistance (related to risks to children's safety) educators will give them information directly. If educators notice an area of concern, but families have not directly approached them, educators will subtly provide general advice or links to services in newsletters or other communication rather than taking a targeted approach.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 2.2

It is recommended that:

- the service reflects on their process for replacing bark chips in the yard under the fixed play structure to ensure that the level is always sufficient
- educators refer to the Guide to the NQS in relation to the Exceeding themes and how they may be demonstrated for the Standard.

Quality Area 2 summary

For Quality Area 2, is there a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children?

No

Quality Area 2 is rated

Meeting NQS

Quality Area 3 – Physical environment

Standard 3.1	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.	
3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.	Met
3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 3.1

Practice is embedded in service operations	No
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 3.1 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 3.1

The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service. The design of the service has been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- The outdoor environment is large and nature based, with natural water courses enabling children to engage in open-ended exploratory and sensory play. Backing onto the North Parklands, the outdoor environment consists of a cubby house, swings, undercover sandpit area, a mud kitchen and a fixed outdoor playground structure.
- As sighted in the services 'indoor and outdoor environments reflection and enhancements' folder, the service recently renovated their outdoor environment, improving paving and drainage in the verandah area. This was funded through a government facilities grant.
- Provisions have been made so children in wheelchairs have accessibility to the indoor and outdoor environment via a ramp.
- A large enclosed verandah space with blinds ensures children can utilise the outdoor environment during all kinds of weather. In addition, large trees provide shade all year round.
- The service operates with two large indoor playrooms which are bright and inviting. Defined areas enable children to enjoy individual, small or large group play. The environment is designed to support quiet or rest activities, with the use of comfortable chairs, couches and cushions.
- As noted in the service's PQIP, the indoor bathroom has been recently renovated to promote independence, with the addition of child friendly taps, soap dispensers and sinks. The larger toilet cubicle supports wheelchair access with the inclusion of additional space and rails.
- The office space is for all educators to use, with a larger secondary space used for family meetings and planning. The service has a community sharing library, which is a designated space for speech pathologists to use. Due to the large windows, educators can maintain supervision if a child is in a speech session.

- Educators engage in daily cleaning tasks as required, with a professional cleaner employed who attends the service each night. If educators identify any maintenance issues, a department maintenance contractor is requested, with tasks usually completed within a month.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 3.1

Standard 3.2	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.	
3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.	Met
3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.	Met
3.2.3	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 3.2

Practice is embedded in service operations	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 3.2 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 3.2

The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning. Practices related to the use of the environment have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- On the day of the visit the learning environment was intentionally set-up to promote learning experiences that linked to the service's focus on phonological awareness and literacy development such as musical instruments, mark making resources and a wide variety of texts. The selection of texts (as mentioned in Standard 1.2) supports children's developing speech needs. The service philosophy also supports this intentionality. It states, 'We will intentionally plan for and design playful environments that invite and provoke engagement and learning.'
- It was discussed during the visit, that the environment has been reviewed so resources are readily available for children to access. Whereas previously, children were only able to select from certain items. Doors have been removed from cupboards to enable children to self-select resources and have been adjusted to be at children's level. The service has taken into consideration the playgroup program and incorporated resources into the environment for younger children to use. The weekly meetings held with all educators ensure a shared understanding and consistent approach to setting-up the service environment to support children's inclusion, learning and development.
- Large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags were displayed in the outdoor environment along with a 'yarning' area. First Nation's texts and loose parts promoted cultural awareness in the learning environment, with a focus on promoting the language of the Boandik people.
- The service has a large focus on natural and sustainable resources, with a diverse range of loose parts available in both the indoor and outdoor environments such as shells, bricks, old

cable reels, piping, tyres and wooden cut-offs. Many of the resources in the environment have been donated. Older resources are donated to a local men's shed where they are repurposed. For example, an old table was donated, with the top and legs updated and sold. Proceeds from the sale went back into the community.

- Recycled materials such as boxes and cartons were available in the environment and children were observed using these recycled materials in their play. The service has reflected on ensuring resources are open ended and accessible, so children can be creative in how they use them. This was observed on the day of the visit, with children using loose parts to create their own fire trucks (as mentioned in Standard 1.2). In another example, children were using old cable reels to jump over as they pretended to be horses.
- The service has involved children in taking care of the 'Kindy Veggie Patch' which has plants donated or heavily discounted by Hutchinson's, a local nursery. A worm farm has been established where families can purchase worms for fishing or to set-up their own worm farms. Children collect bread tags and yoghurt lids and have been shared with the Naracoorte Primary which were used to create a mural.
- Recycling bins are available in the service for the use of families, taking into consideration the lack of availability of recycling services in some areas. Children are encouraged to bring in cardboard boxes to recycle in the service. This acts as a platform for discussion with children around environmentally responsible and sustainable practices.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 3.2

Quality Area 3 summary

For Quality Area 3, is there a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children?

No

Quality Area 3 is rated

Meeting NQS

Quality Area 4 – Staffing arrangements

Standard 4.1	Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.	
4.1.1	The organisation of educators across the service supports children's learning and development.	Met
4.1.2	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 4.1

Practice is embedded in service operations	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 4.1 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 4.1

Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development. Practices related to staffing arrangements have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- Naracoorte North Kindergarten is a small service with a long-standing staff team. The same educators are rostered across the week, with consistency being a priority. Educators are rostered to work for the entire time children are present, ensuring that continuity of staff is maintained for children and families. An inclusion support educator is employed on a part-time basis, along with an ECW. The ECW also acts as the playgroup co-ordinator. Service leaders are committed to ensuring high-quality practice regarding staffing arrangements. This was demonstrated in a number of ways. For example, one of the 2021 philosophy intentions was, 'To prioritise 'being with' children to listen to their voice and build understandings.' This intention is well supported by their rostering of educators. In addition, professional development was sourced for the ECW to better facilitate playgroup for younger children (as mentioned in Standards 6.2 and 7.2).
- At all times during the visit, ratio requirements were maintained with the service often working above child to educator ratios.
- Educator lunch breaks and relief staff are covered by educators working at the adjacent NCDCC. This relationship offers an additional element of consistency as many children attending the Naracoorte North Kindergarten also attend NCDCC.
- A 'Team Routine' document guides the structure of the week for all staff. Educators are rostered to have non-contact time together for administration and planning tasks for an hour each afternoon, and for three hours on Fridays. This time ensures that when educators are working directly with children their focus remains on them. It also provides the team with an opportunity to collaborate and share information on each child (as mentioned in Standard 1.1).

- There are three ECTs employed at the service, with one ECT working on a part-time basis. As part of their succession planning, the service recently employed an additional ECT for when the EL eventually retires. When recruiting the new ECT, there was a focus on finding someone whose values aligned with the service's philosophy. The candidate was chosen from the service's current relief list.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 4.1

Standard 4.2	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.	
4.2.1	Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.	Met
4.2.2	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 4.2	
Practice is embedded in service operations	No
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 4.2 is rated	Meeting NQS
------------------------------	--------------------

Evidence for Standard 4.2

Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical. Practices related to professionalism have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- Interactions between the ECTs, ECW, the director and relief educators were observed to be supportive and respectful. It was discussed that moving onto the OneNote application has given educators the opportunity to recognise each other's strengths. For example, one educator has been supporting the development of another educator's knowledge of the OneNote application. In return, the educator is supporting that educator's understanding of the EYLF and IPNL.
- Non-contact time on Friday afternoon's supports educators to work collaboratively. During this time, educators are able to discuss and share any service-related information (as mentioned in Standard 1.1 and 4.1).
- Professional standards that guide practice, interactions and relationships include the service's philosophy (mentioned further below), South Australian public sector values, Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics. Other examples discussed were, the department's IPNL and The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the NQS, and the Reflect, Respect, Relate (RRR) resource. Ongoing training and engagement with CoS principles has supported the development of ongoing trusting and respectful relationships, assisting educators to respond and adjust expectations of children based on these principles.
- The service meets with the department's Wrattontully partnership within the Mount Gambier portfolio. Ongoing professional collaboration supports the sharing of knowledge and data to ensure the program accurately reflects the needs of the wider community (as mentioned in Standard 1.1). There is a shared philosophy with NCDCC (recently developed, as mentioned in Standard 7.1) so that both services have the same approach to their beliefs and values in relation to the curriculum and pedagogy, partnerships and the wellbeing of all children.

Quality Area 4 summary

For Quality Area 4, is there a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children?

No

Quality Area 4 is rated

Meeting NQS

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children

Standard 5.1	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.	
5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.	Met
5.1.2	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 5.1

Practice is embedded in service operations	No
Practice is informed by critical reflection	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 5.1 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 5.1

Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child. Practices related to relationships between educators and children have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- As children arrived at the kindergarten in the morning, educators greeted them warmly and supported them to label their food/lunch boxes with their names and then to sign in. As discussed in Standard 2.2, educators were spread out in order to offer children one-on-one support as they arrived. This approach appeared to be very supportive of children's needs, with children settling in quickly and calmly.
- Educators appeared to know children well and seemed genuinely interested in their lives. For example, when one child arrived an educator greeted them warmly and asked them what book they read last night. She gave the child time to recall what they had read and sounded excited to hear the response. In another example, a child was describing to an educator how they had been practising hopping. The child then showed the educator how they were now able to hop. The educator responded excitedly, 'Well done, that's what happens when you practise.' The child responded, 'Yep. I just keep getting better and better.'
- Educators were observed listening to children's ideas, responding positively to them and tried their best to support children to find what they needed for their play. For example, a child approached an educator wanting a specific piece of paper with black dots on it for her bookmaking. The educator looked in several different places with the child to try and find it. She then went to ask the director if she knew which piece of paper the child was talking about. After searching again, they still could not find the paper the child was looking for. Instead, the director searched the paper supply to find a different piece of paper that the child was happy to make books with.

- During discussions, the director explained the service’s approach to developing relationships with children. The director explained that this has been an area of critical reflection for educators. Documentation provided following the visit demonstrated that educators have critically reflected on how they engage with children to ensure they feel secure and supported, as well as what they might need to improve upon. Educators have regular conversations with families and share and listen to strategies in order to ensure children feel respected and cared for. Relationship building is a strong focus of pre-entry visits. Educators use their professional learning on the CoS (as mentioned in Standard 2.2 and 4.2) to ensure they are engaging meaningfully with children. This includes being at their level and giving enough time so children have time to think of their response. Critical reflection on interactions with children was not only supported through this professional learning, but also in professional development provided by Jane Lemon when revising the service philosophy. Another tool educators have used to critically reflect on interactions with children was the RRR relationships scale. Using this tool, educators reflected on their personal practice in relation to this Standard and it was discussed during their Performance Development Conversations (PDC). From here a ‘learning sprint’ was implemented that focused on improving interactions during the lunch time routine. Educators now use this time to scaffold reciprocal conversations and to engage in sustained, shared thinking with children.
- The director explained that positive relationships with children is focused on during the enrolment process. Educators have a specific process of handing over care from parents to the service to support children in recognising that educators are their safe person while at the service. She stated that, ‘Children need to see parents and staff having trusting and positive relationships in order to feel safe where they are.’
- The majority of interactions between educators and children were observed to support children maintain their dignity and rights. For example, educators were patient with children and provided them with time to respond (as mentioned above) and children were supported through the program and routines to have agency and choice. Although, two interactions were observed during a group time that did not support children’s dignity. At this time, a child was visibly excited to provide a response and so spoke over another child. The educator reading the book put her hand up and said, ‘Shh X, it’s Y’s turn to talk right now.’ Later another child did the same thing and the educator responded, ‘Hang on, hang on. Let X have a turn.’ The child appeared embarrassed as they hung their head. The educator was not observed to follow up on their responses by inviting them to comment later. At other times during the visit, this educator’s interactions with children were observed to be respectful and warm. It was discussed with the director that educators might benefit from a discussion around how important it is that all interactions, including interactions to support children’s behaviour and provide guidance, are positive and do not cause shame or embarrassment in children, as per the service’s behaviour, interactions and guidance code.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 5.1

It is recommended that:

- educators reflect further on their interactions and how they can positively and warmly support children to understand behaviour expectations.

Standard 5.2	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.	
5.2.1	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.	Met
5.2.2	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 5.2	
Practice is embedded in service operations	No
Practice is informed by critical reflection	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 5.2 is rated	Meeting NQS
------------------------------	--------------------

Evidence for Standard 5.2

Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships. Practices related to relationships between children have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- Children were observed engaging in collaborative and responsive play with one another. This was supported by educators. For example, two children were observed in the musical instrument area tapping a beat from a familiar Al Perkins’ book. The children worked together to tap the beat, with one child taking the lead and providing the other child with direction. An educator approached and said, ‘I can hear you making a beat. Are you practising Sandra’s song she has been practising with you?’ The educator then read the book to the children while they played the drums. After they had finished, the educator thanked them for letting her join them in their play. In another example, an educator was outside when some children approached her to ask for some resources. The educator supported them to gather their requested resources from the shed and then stated to one of the children, ‘X, make sure you ask Y what his plan is. He has a plan in mind.’ She returned soon after and checked on how they were going.
- During discussions the director stated that educators were conscious of how they set-up the environment to promote children’s interactions with one another. For example, they ensure that there is space for children to move and play in small groups and they set-up paint easels side by side and across from one another to promote children’s ability to converse while they work on their art. The director also discussed that through children’s cycles of planning, educators identify where children have similar interests and plan for next steps where children are supported to engage in collaborative projects with one another, sharing their skills and knowledge.
- Educators have critically reflected on the difficulties of children making meaningful connections with their peers based on their current attendance patterns. This was due to many children attending different sessions across the week. Their findings from this critical reflection were taken to governing council (discussed in Standard 1.3 and 6.1) with the

educators wanting to discuss the positive and negative aspects of offering either set or flexible session times for children. The decision was made to survey families and the wider community before making any changes to session offerings. This survey was shared with families (including playgroup families) and the community via email and on the kindergarten's Facebook page. Responses were received from current, previous and future families. Again, educators critically reflected with the governing council on the responses and discussed what would best promote children's ability to develop strong connections and relationships with their peers. It was decided that educators would seek families preferences and availability and they would then intentionally group children to 'promote continuity of relationships into school, while still supporting families to engage with limited care options in Naracoorte and supporting working mothers in particular to continue to engage in paid work.'

- Educators worked with the department's speech pathologist and special educators to create visual cue cards in order to support specific children in their 'receptive and expressive communication needs'.
- The director explained that the service has a behaviour, interactions and guidance code in place (as referred to in Standard 5.1) which is open to review by parents. This code outlines positive behaviour guidance strategies that will be implemented by staff, including that 'no person has a right to make any child feel rejected, insecure, embarrassed or ashamed'. The code is broken into three sections: 'As a staff team we believe:', 'As an educator team we promote positive behaviour and interactions by:' and 'We will respond to behaviours that pose challenges or safety risks by:'. At the bottom of the code, it states that the kindergarten is open to community input before it is endorsed by the governing council.
- Educators approach behaviour guidance as a learning opportunity for children. The director stated that educators will pose questions to further children's understanding of safe, fair and positive behaviours. This approach was observed in practice when an educator approached a small group of children who were having a disagreement. The educator asked, 'Is your game working for everybody?' After some discussion the educator then asked, 'How do you think you could sort this out?' Although, as mentioned in Standard 5.1, during group time an educator's approach to behaviour guidance, on some occasions, did not fully support the service guidance code.
- During discussions, the director explained that educators intentionally use relaxation times to assist children in developing their self-regulation skills. This is linked to educator's professional development on interoception (as discussed in Standard 2.1). Professional development on the Berry Street education model was attended by the director where strategies were discussed on how to respond to children in a way that supports them in regulating their own behaviour and recognising cues in their body. The director shared this learning with educators and emphasised the importance of pointing out what the educators are seeing in children's bodies when they are upset and assisting children to make sense of their feelings and bodily reactions. Being a CoS facilitator has meant that the director has been able to further support educators in their understanding of how to support children with their behaviour.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 5.2

It is recommended that educators:

- consistently implement the service behaviour, interactions and guidance code.

Quality Area 5 summary

For Quality Area 5, is there a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children?

No

Quality Area 5 is rated

Meeting NQS

Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Standard 6.1	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.	
6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.	Met
6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.	Met
6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 6.1

Practice is embedded in service operations	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 6.1 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 6.1

Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role. Practices related to supportive relationships with families have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- Educators have built close relationships with families and consistently provide opportunities for families and the community to contribute to service decision making. A governing council is in place, which includes parent representatives, educators and is also open to community members. The governing council meets regularly to discuss various aspects of the service, such as the PQIP, philosophy, policies, professional development and learning opportunities and service finances (see Standard 5.2 in relation to seeking input for session times offered to children). Families not involved in the governing council are also regularly asked to contribute to service decision making through surveys and feedback. The department sends all families a parent opinion survey. The director collects and uses data from these forms of input to inform decision making. In 2021, the service began the process of reviewing their philosophy (see Standard 7.1). Families were sent a survey regarding this review in order to seek their input for the 'Our Place' section of the philosophy. This input is seen by educators as vital since the philosophy guides all aspects of the kindergarten's operations and educator's practice.
- Families are offered regular opportunities to be involved in their child's learning and in events planned by the service. For example, the PQIP states that families are involved in 'Family Fun Nights, Information Evenings, Obstacle-a-thons, performances, Playgroup and simply coming

to join the play with their children at Kindy.' The service offers 'Come and Play' and parent and educator conferences each year (as mentioned in Standard 1.3). During these sessions, families come for two hours to play with their child at the service and then return later in the day/week to have a more formal discussion with educators about their child's learning and development.

- Documentation was sighted that demonstrated that educators regularly communicate with families to learn about their children's needs. They also share in decision making, suggest and listen to strategies to support children in their needs and/or behaviour and check on their wellbeing and welfare. This communication is all documented in OneNote which all educators have access to so they have a shared understanding of what has been communicated with families about children (as mentioned in Standard 1.3).
- As discussed in Standards 1.1 and 1.3, educators value family input into decision making around their children's learning, as much as they do their own. This is supported by the kindergarten philosophy which states they believe that, 'Families want the best for their children. Every family has their own values, beliefs, experiences and understandings which contribute to their child's world. Sharing insights and perspectives supports children to grow and learn.' It is further supported with their 2021 philosophy commitment to, 'Make explicit for families the value of collaboration between them and educators.' Educators make it clear to families on their 'family friendly' program format that their ideas/input has been included.
- During the pandemic, educators created at home learning packs for children (as mentioned in Standard 1.3). These packs also included an additional 'goody bag' for parents, for those families who were not able to attend the service during the pandemic because of border closures (these families lived in Victoria). The preschool also provided these families with a contact list of Victorian support services, such as counselling, health and food delivery services.
- The service engages meaningfully with a range of community services to ensure that relationships with families are respectful, collaborative and that families are supported in their parenting role and wellbeing. This engagement has developed over many years and is adapted based on the current needs of families. For example, the director of the service is involved in the community care network and the network services hub meetings. Psychologists, occupational therapists, local council members, migrant resource centre and other community support services attend meetings. During the meetings, the director and other support service workers highlight areas where they have noticed families or children need support. They also share challenges and areas of concern. Through this meaningful engagement with the local community, the director has been able to advise parents of services with long waitlists and provide them with other services in the local area (as discussed in Standard 1.1). Evidence was sighted of the director providing families in need with information regarding Autism SA (and that they offer respite care services), the payment structure and enrolment forms for NCDCC and Carers SA. Each year the kindergarten, in collaboration with NCDCC, host a 'Toilet Time' session for families and members of the local community to attend, in order to support not only families that attend the service but the community as whole, in that aspect of their parenting.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 6.1

Service leaders may consider:

- how all educators can engage in critical reflection, relevant to their roles and responsibilities, regarding supportive relationships with families in order to achieve an overall rating of Exceeding for this Standard. Educators may like to consider the reflective questions for Exceeding on page 267 of the Guide to the NQF, as well as the questions used by AOs to establish Exceeding NQS practice (page 97 of the Guide to the NQF).

Standard 6.2 Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.		
6.2.1	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.	Met
6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.	Met
6.2.3	The service builds relationships and engages with its community.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 6.2	
Practice is embedded in service operations	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 6.2 is rated	Exceeding NQS
------------------------------	----------------------

Evidence for Standard 6.2

Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing. Practices related to collaborative partnerships have been assessed as Exceeding NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- Educators are committed to establishing relationships with support agencies and the community in order to best support each child’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing. These meaningful relationships (as discussed in Standard 6.1), have been built over many years and are highly effective in supporting children’s inclusion and learning. For example, the kindergarten’s relationships with local speech pathologists have enabled them to provide effective support to develop children’s language skills (as discussed in Standard 1.1). In another example, the service has a very close relationship with NCDCC (as mentioned throughout the report). This relationship enables them to share information regarding children’s needs (with family permission). Documentation was sighted showing the kindergarten had shared plans with NCDCC’s director in order to effectively support a child’s transition to the kindergarten.
- For many years the service has provided a playgroup for local families. This playgroup has changed over the years to best support the needs of families. At the moment, the playgroup sessions run every day in the morning and afternoon. During these times, educators encourage children to spend time with their families, learning through play. The service funds an ECW to facilitate playgroup (as mentioned in Standard 4.1). Educators critically reflected on the needs of children attending playgroup. Based on this, educators have attended professional learning in order to build their capacity in working with children from birth to three years old, to best support children attending playgroup. The playgroup co-ordinator has implemented scrapbooks so children can document their time at the service and revisit it with

their families. As many children who attend playgroup go on to attend the kindergarten, this program helps with effective transitions.

- The service has worked very closely with all the schools the children go on to attend following kindergarten to develop a shared transition agreement. As part of developing this agreement, educators spoke with the schools about the fact that, while having transition visits on different days and times may meet the schools' needs, it was having a negative impact on children. Educators came to this conclusion after engaging in critical reflection regarding the transition process. The service worked within their partnership and utilised professional learning (from their work with Jane Lemon) to look at the benefits of children having a consistent approach to transitions. All schools now, including those in Victoria and private schools, will conduct their transition visits on the same days and for the same periods of time. This initiative was driven by the service director who is the portfolio representative for the early years executive. During this process, families were surveyed about what they wanted the transition visits to look like, what was best for their child and how the local kindergartens and schools could best support these needs. The kindergarten gathers information from families regarding transition visits every year now to ensure that best practice is followed and reflects the current needs of families. In addition to meaningfully engaging with schools to improve transition times, the kindergarten has been working with Naracoorte South Primary School on implementing the Walker Learning Approach into their transition visits. This approach emphasises child focused education and promotes play-based investigative learning. The director stated that she had 'seen environments shift in an ongoing meaningful way' that were more supportive of children's transitions.
- The service has inclusive education support funding in order to provide additional support for children who have been identified as having higher support needs. The director has developed a roster to ensure that there are sufficient staff available each day to meet the needs of the children attending. Along with working closely with local support services (such as speech therapists) the kindergarten also utilises department services for inclusion support.
- Through the service newsletter, the kindergarten promotes local community events such as Carpe Diem BBQ and Show, hosted by the local council. They also attend local community events such as Harmony Day and the Taste Festival in the town square. During community events, the kindergarten has run a children's tent with NCDCC and they also host an annual outdoor movie night for families and the community. Other examples were provided of the service developing reciprocal relationships with local community members such as with a local handy man who built a gumboot storage/drying rack for children's gumboots.
- The service respects and represents the local First Nations culture and language through their environment and experiences. Community elders have been invited to attend the kindergarten to share their history, culture and Dreaming Stories. On the day of the visit, the service had an outdoor weaving experience set-up on the undercover verandah. Children weaved the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags around a metal cubby frame and have been learning greetings in the local Boandik language (as mentioned in Standard 3.2).

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 6.2

Quality Area 6 summary

For Quality Area 6, is there a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children?

No

Quality Area 6 is rated

Meeting NQS

Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership

Standard 7.1 Governance supports the operation of a quality service.		
7.1.1	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations	Met
7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.	Met
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 7.1

Practice is embedded in service operations	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 7.1 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 7.1

Governance supports the operation of a quality service. Practices related to governance of the service have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- The kindergarten's philosophy consistently guides all aspects of service operations. The philosophy was created with NCDCC, in order to develop a shared philosophy and understanding across both sites. Educators have worked with Jane Lemon to ensure their philosophy is meaningful, outlines their commitments to children, guides their practice, communicates their beliefs and drives action. It was noted by the service that, 'Educators have been respectful and open-minded throughout the process, sharing openly with each other and being comfortable to challenge and clarify thinking as we worked through the process. Educators are building a holistic vision for our service and are clearly taking ownership over the new philosophy as changes to practice and focus for improvement are becoming evident in daily interactions and processes.' This was evident on the day of the visit as all educators demonstrated their commitment to the philosophy guiding their practice.
- The service has well established site specific systems in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service. There is a tracking system for staff certificates. The director goes through and checks dates each week to ensure currency and provide staff reminders if their certificates are due for renewal. The director also manages the entire building and all preventative maintenance. In addition, the director is a trained WHS representative. Other systems, such as the OneNote documents, and the 'Team Routines' document (mentioned in Standards 4.1 and 7.2) ensure that all educators have a shared

understanding of the service's expectations regarding providing a high-quality program and educator's roles and responsibilities. The OneNote document system includes an extensive record of family correspondence which all educators can access easily, to monitor, review and 'be acutely aware of'. The document tracks who the correspondence was with, dates and any referrals to other support agencies. This includes but is not limited to tracking of children's progress with toileting, enrolment and transition details and strategies, sourcing additional information for families to contact support agencies.

- The service has recently transitioned to the education management system (EMS). This system is used for children's bookings and attendance records.
- The finance officer tracks spending through FABs Net, which is the department's finance system. The finance officer, along with the director and governing council, ensure the budget supports long term plans to achieve bigger projects, such as outdoor environment upgrades.
- Policies and procedures have review dates which are tracked. The service is waiting until the philosophy has been finalised to update some policies and procedures in order to ensure they align with the service's philosophical stance.
- Comprehensive induction processes ensure that educators are aware of their roles and responsibilities before they begin employment with the department and at the kindergarten. The director has developed a comprehensive roles and responsibilities table which outlines each educator's role and responsibilities against the seven Quality Areas. This document is used by all educators to 'guide practices and support team cohesion'.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 7.1

Standard 7.2	Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.	
7.2.1	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.	Met
7.2.2	The educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.	Met
7.2.3	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.	Met

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 7.2

Practice is embedded in service operations	No
Practice is informed by critical reflection	No
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	No

Standard 7.2 is rated

Meeting NQS

Evidence for Standard 7.2

Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community. Practices related to leadership have been assessed as Meeting NQS. The following evidence supports this rating:

- There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place at the service. Educators provide input into the PQIP. A learning improvement plan has also been developed by educators through discussions between the EL and director. The quality changes in programming and planning have been due to the service's PQIP goals. Through self-assessment and professional learning, presented by Simon Breakspear, service leaders have led teaching sprints which have resulted in programming becoming more effective for all educators. Data collected by educators on children's learning is discussed as a team and leads to goals being developed each year. A 'Team Routines' document has been developed, with links to the PQIP, to keep educators on track and accountable. One of the main PQIP goals for 2021 has been vocabulary development in children (as discussed in Standard 1.1). This came from data collected on children struggling with speech and educators noticing that this is an increasing trend. This has led to more work for the kindergarten in terms of supporting children with their speech needs, hence its inclusion in their PQIP.
- The governing council is involved in reviewing and providing feedback for the PQIP. In order to further support the service's continuous improvement, the governing council has approved closure days throughout the year, where educators can meet to focus on the PQIP.
- The EL is well supported in her role by the director through professional development opportunities, open discussions and regular non-contact time scheduled on the roster. Professional development opportunities such as that on phonological awareness and music-based literacy learning are linked to PQIP goals and support the EL in mentoring other educators at the service in their practice.

- During discussions the EL noted that she is able to support educators in the development and implementation of the program and assessment and planning cycle as they document children's learning in OneNote. Here, educators are able to access the same information on children's learning and see what other educators (including the EL) are noting about children. The learning updates and analysis of learning are written as a team. The EL is available to support educators in their understanding of the service's approach to programming, curriculum and practice. The service funds all educators to attend meetings on Friday afternoons for three hours to engage in joint reflections on learning (as mentioned in Standards 1.1 and 4.1).
- Every member of staff, including all educators and the finance staff, have an performance development plan (PDP) in place. The director has developed a document that has each member of staff's goals for 2021, with notes documented each term to show progress against each individual goal.
- Service leaders use the department PDP templates to formally document the PDP process. Formal meetings are held every six months, with the director stating that she 'checks-in' with staff several times a term. During Term 3 and 4 during the PDP process, educators reflect on where they 'fit in the APST continuum'. The director is well supported by the education director and ECL who conduct her PDP and also provide her with ongoing professional feedback.
- Educators regularly engage in professional learning opportunities which are sought and booked for them based on their strengths, interests and/or areas of need. PDP goals, and the resulting professional learning, are closely aligned with the service's PQIP. For example, two educators attended birth to three year old professional learning in order to better support them in implementing the playgroup program offered by the service (as discussed in Standards 4.1 and 6.2).

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 7.2

Quality Area 7 summary

For Quality Area 7, is there a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children?

No

Quality Area 7 is rated

Meeting NQS

Assessment and rating summary

Quality Area 1 is rated	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 2 is rated	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 3 is rated	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 4 is rated	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 5 is rated	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 6 is rated	Meeting NQS
Quality Area 7 is rated	Meeting NQS
Overall rating	Meeting NQS

Quality improvement plan notes summary

Quality Area 1

Standard 1.1

Standard 1.2

It is recommended that:

- educators further consider group times and mealtimes as opportunities to promote children's choice and agency as well as to further extend their learning and development.

Standard 1.3

Quality Area 2

Standard 2.1

It is recommended that:

- educators review risk minimisation plans and ensure that triggers for each child's medical condition are captured as risks
- educators follow through with their new system for checking service medication expiry dates to ensure that they are removed from the service and replaced prior to expiry.

Standard 2.2

It is recommended that:

- the service reflects on their process for replacing bark chips in the yard under the fixed play structure to ensure that the level is always sufficient
- educators refer to the Guide to the NQS in relation to the Exceeding themes and how they may be demonstrated for the Standard.

Quality Area 3

Standard 3.1

Standard 3.2

Quality Area 4

Standard 4.1

Standard 4.2

Quality Area 5

Standard 5.1

It is recommended that:

- educators reflect further on their interactions and how they can positively and warmly support

	children to understand behaviour expectations.
Standard 5.2	It is recommended that educators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently implement the service behaviour, interactions and guidance code.
Quality Area 6	
Standard 6.1	Service leaders may consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how all educators can engage in critical reflection, relevant to their roles and responsibilities, regarding supportive relationships with families in order to achieve an overall rating of Exceeding for this Standard. Educators may like to consider the reflective questions for Exceeding on page 267 of the Guide to the NQF, as well as the questions used by AOs to establish Exceeding NQS practice (page 97 of the Guide to the NQF).
Standard 6.2	
Quality Area 7	
Standard 7.1	
Standard 7.2	