



# THORNDON PARK

## KINDERGARTEN

## Thorndon Park Kindergarten

### 2022 annual report to the community

Thorndon Park Kindergarten Number: 4670

Partnership: Campbell

Signature

Preschool director:

Miss Samantha Chirgwin

Governing council chair:

Kate Stead

Date of endorsement:

3 February 2023



Government  
of South Australia  
Department for Education

# Context and highlights

Thorndon Park Kindergarten is located near the lower foothills in Athelstone. It services many families within the local communities of Athelstone, Newton and Rostrevor, as well as other nearby suburbs. We offer small group sizes and a dedicated and experienced early childhood trained team. The kindergarten operates on a full-time basis, with the inclusion of universal accesses, we offer children 15 hours of preschool a week, with children attending from 8:15am - 3:45pm on either a Monday/Tuesday (red group) or Wednesday/Thursday (blue group). We have a close connection with Thorndon Park Primary School, where approximately 50% of our children continue their educational learning after kindergarten. We often receive positive feedback from families around the importance of the regular school visits and how they have ensured a smooth transition to school for many of our kindergarten children.

At Thorndon Park Kindergarten we implement a play-based curriculum to foster children's enthusiasm for learning, in a dynamic and holistic environment. Our curriculum is purposeful and well planned, to support children's interests, strengths and learning opportunities, in partnership with families. The early years learning framework is the foundation of our curriculum, along with Preschool Literacy Indicators and Preschool Numeracy indicators. We welcome and celebrate children, families and educators from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, currently we have high enrolments of children with Italian, Greek, Korean and Indian backgrounds. Each family is supported to access our learning curriculum, ensuring a strong sense of community, identity and well-being for all at Thorndon Park Kindergarten. We highly value our bilingual educators who are able to further strengthen our family connections.

The kindergarten's accessibility to nature within the local community allows opportunities for children's learning, inquiry and exploration to expand beyond the kindergarten setting. We regularly visit Padulesi Park and the Athelstone Community Garden, where we have a designated garden plot to help support our learning around sustainability, children enjoy exploring the beehive and butterfly gardens and access the oval and playground areas too. Over the past five years we have established many community connections, this includes regular visits to Thorndon Park Primary School to visit our buddy class and join in with assembly events, and we have visited Gorge Wildlife Park for an excursion each year, we have been involved in bush kindergarten and nature play and held excursions at kindergarten. We have also had community members assist in redevelopments at kindergarten, such as our front garden and storytelling mosaic area.

# Governing council report

It's my pleasure to present the Chairperson's report for the kindy's Governing Council for 2022. The Governing Council is a group of parents, who meet a couple of times a term to support the kindy staff and co-ordinate activities and social events to support the growth of the kindy community.

From week one at Thorndon Park Kindergarten our family was welcomed with open arms into a wonderful community, which was both nurturing and inclusive. Sam, Esther, Sue and all the educators at Thorndon Park Kindergarten have a lovely way to make the children feel secure in their surroundings, and nurture a strong foundation for their lives as learners.

Educators came up with fabulous ideas and ways to keep everyone learning and thriving throughout the year, with favourites including the tinker table, mud kitchen, bonfires within the sand pit and harvesting and cooking fresh produce from the vegetable garden.

Multiple animals were brought in for the curious children to explore, from 'Becky' the Blue tongue lizard, baby chicks which were incubated in the kindy, to a rather large crocodile skull.

Excursions were thoroughly enjoyed by all the children, including many Paudulesi park visits, Bush kindy and the Gorge wildlife park.

Numerous school visits were also organised for the children, to visit Thorndon Park Primary School, to familiarise themselves with the school environment. The children were buddied with a class, who also took the time to visit the Kindy. The children were also very excited to join in with their buddy class with the Book week parade at the school!

Generous family members of the children volunteered their time, to broaden their understanding of the big wide world including a visit from the locally owned Seafood Works, cooking up some delicious seafood, Pasta making with Nonna Nella and a very informative session with a St Johns First Aid trainer.

A strong favourite in our household was the play session with Glenn from the mobile junk and nature playground. Where the children left completely saturated and muddy, but with a big smile on their faces.

All the kindergarten fun culminated in an incredible end of year disco, where the children performed dance routines learned through Dancify, which received a roaring round of applause by the audience.

I've really enjoyed working on the Governing Council this year – it's an interesting chance to see how the kindy works behind the scenes. I've really enjoyed getting to know the other parents on the council and collaborating with them throughout the year. Thorndon Park Kindergarten is such a lovely community, and it was a real privilege to be part of the governing council.

Kate Stead

# Preschool quality improvement planning

When analysing our success against our improvement planning for 2022, it must be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic meant that some priorities were not started until later in the year and certain areas were not implemented during the year, this was due to the site following Department for Education guidelines and prioritising the health and safety of children, staff and families. At times, we had multiple changes within the staff team, however, we ensured the improvement plans were always discussed amongst the staff team and with our Governing Council and families.

Thorndon Park Kindergarten's main priority for 2022 was 'to increase children's use of complex and sophisticated language in their play and inquiries'. Some of the most effective actions and strategies to support educator and family growth in this area was to hold an educator session with speech Pathologist: Petrea Allen, along with a parent information session around choosing and using books in the early years. Feedback from the parent session included comments such as "Great session and motivated me to read more to the kids" and "Very informative! I really enjoyed it and took a lot from the session. Thanks!".

Educators have consistently ensured that our Storytables were read to children multiple times a day and through using multiple mediums (ie: acting out stories), staff are more confident with highlighting the big and bold words to children and we aimed to also use these words within the context of children's play. Educators have worked with an Occupational Therapist from the Department for Education Self-Regulation service around strengthening common language and visuals to guide regulation and we look forward to further learning and embedding new strategies in 2023.

Overall, staff observed an increase in children's reciprocal conversations in context and more complex vocabulary use at times, however, overall children are continuing to use mainly tier 1 and occasional tier 2 vocabulary within their play with peers, with a slight increase from term one. Next year we will more closely monitor a cohort of children, to ensure our data collection is effective and allows for all staff to monitor the data on a regular basis.

In 2023, we will continue to focus on supporting children's vocabulary, with a strong educator focus on modelling of tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary during child lead play. Educators, along with other preschools within their Campbell Partnership will be re-engaging in book making, with a focus on conferencing and we will continue to help support our families in building on and expanding strategies to support vocabulary development.

## Enrolment

Year	Enrolment by Term			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2019	43	45	42	40
2020	37	N/A	39	39
2021	43	42	34	35
2022	32	33	34	33

NOTE: The data is based on person counts in the two week reference period each term. Excludes pre-entry.

Data Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Reporting and Analytics directorate.

Term 2 2020 data may not be available for all preschools.

## Attendance

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2019 centre	90.5%	85.2%	89.8%	86.0%
2020 centre	99.3%		96.8%	92.2%
2021 centre	94.1%	93.5%	94.9%	93.6%
2022 centre	87.6%	64.9%	86.0%	92.1%
2019 state	90.8%	88.2%	86.8%	87.6%
2020 state	89.8%	83.6%	86.2%	87.2%
2021 state	88.6%	86.5%	88.6%	85.6%
2022 state	84.9%	79.8%	80.3%	77.5%

Based on attendances recorded in the two week reference period each term. Data for eligible enrolments as described in the department's Enrolment policy.

Attendance rates may differ to previous reporting with the transfer from calculations based on deemed attendance to actual attendance using booked hours divided by attended hours.

\*Note: Term 2 2020 data may not be available for all preschools.

## Attendance comment

We had variations in attendance across each kindergarten year, based on children's health, with families consistently keeping children home who were unwell. Several families kept children home for durations of time, through impacts of COVID-19. Several families also had time away from kindergarten for planned family holidays.

Through our enrolment processes, families are advised of the requirement to report absences each day and a combination of phone calls and Storypark messages were used to advise staff of absences.

Overall, families at Thorndon Park Kindergarten understand the value of preschool education and this is reflected in our above state attendance data throughout the year.

## Destination schools

Feeder Schools (Site number - Name)	2019	2020	2021	2022
419 - Athelstone School	0.0%	7.9%	6.5%	3.7%
973 - Paradise Primary School	5.3%	2.6%	0.0%	3.7%
9013 - St Francis of Assisi School	5.3%	2.6%	0.0%	7.4%
9088 - St Pius X School	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%
1154 - Thorndon Park Primary School	57.9%	57.9%	83.9%	81.5%

NOTE: The data is collected in Term 3. It does not reflect actual schools enrolled in by exiting preschool children. Only schools that are a destination for 3% or more of students are shown.

Data Source: Site Performance Reporting System (SPER), Term 3 2022 collection.

## Destination schools comment

Due to the statistics of intended destination schools being configured in term 3, there are inconsistencies across this Data as several families changed their schooling decision after this data was attained.

With a strong connection with Thorndon Park Primary School, approximately 50% of our cohort of children will attend the Thorndon Park Primary school in 2023. Several children will also attend Athelstone Primary School and Stradbroke School, along with Private and Catholic Education Schools in the local area.

# Family opinion survey summary

We highly value the feedback of our families and community and in the past few years we have observed a decline in parent opinion survey responses, however, there was an increase in 2022 with a total of 9 families completing the survey.

Our most highly achieved areas, include:

- My child's teachers know what my child can do and what he/she needs to learn
- This preschool has the expectation that children will learn
- Teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching.
- Teachers at this preschool really want to help my child learn.
- My child is motivated to learn at this preschool.
- Children know how they are expected to behave at preschool.

Our least achieved areas (where we received 1 disagree and 3 neutral results), include:

- The preschool seeks parents' opinions about educational programs.
- I am given the opportunity to be involved in the preschool's educational activities.

Some of the comments from our 2022 families, include:

"The staff are very helpful, and supportive".

"I love everything about this Pre-School. A lovely, friendly and inclusive learning environment with exceptional educators that really do a wonderful job in the teaching space".

"My child has developed excellent phonological awareness skills which is the result of the excellent teaching that is happening at kindy".

Through our preschool self assessment and analysing the parent opinion survey data, staff have critically reflected on the information and made changes for 2023. We have updated our child background information and created a list of all families who may like to come into kindergarten to engage in learning and share their skills. We have reflected on family involvement with incursions and excursions. We are also starting the year without COVID-19 restrictions, therefore families will be welcomed inside from the beginning of the year, which will further increase family and preschool connection from early on. We will create a new summary of our programming and planning for and share with families during term one, to help increase family involvement and engagement in the kindergarten program and learning.

## Relevant history screening

Our strong induction process ensure that all educators, external staff, volunteers and other visitors (ie: Uni students) hold relevant WWCC and a copy is stored at the site.

The Director checks through all relevant certificates each term, ensuring they are valid and makes contacts any person who's certificate is due to expire within the next three months.

When employing a new staff member or contractor, the Director cross checks the SRN numbers on WWCC with the DCSI website to ensure they are up to date and no amendments have been made.

## Financial statement

Funding Source	Amount
Grants: State	\$426,305
Grants: Commonwealth	\$426,305
Parent Contributions	\$22,072
Other	\$0

## 2022 Preschool annual report: Improved outcomes funding

Improved outcomes category (where applicable to the site)	Briefly describe how the 2022 funding was used to improve the relevant department's standard of educational achievement outcomes (where applicable):*	Outcomes achieved or progress towards these outcomes:
Improved outcomes for numeracy and literacy	We have updated our books and literacy and numeracy resources and time was allocated to our ECW to create literacy packs for families to borrow. We held a staff professional development on oral language and parent information session with a local speech pathologist about choosing and using books in the early years. We also used some of the funding to provide early intervention (1:1 support and small group learning) for children who needed extra support for their literacy and numeracy.	Staff professional development has increased consistency amongst the staff team to embed oral language practices. Families are receiving the same information and can support oral language development at home.  All children receiving 1:1 and small group learning, showed an increase in their literacy and numeracy skills.
Inclusive Education Support Program	<p>IESP support funding allocation and intervention funding was used to provide an educator to cluster speech and language groups to implement specific programs for speech and language for 4 children, as well as provide individualised support, with focused learning goals.</p> <p>IESP funding and IESP extensive funding was used to support 4 children (1:1 support) for durations varying from 1 hour and up to 10 hours per a week for extensive funding. This has ensured children requiring adjustments to their learning have received the support required to help them engage in the preschool curriculum and manage the preschool routine.</p>	Children's learning increased across many areas, including wellbeing, social, emotional, independence, numeracy, communication and speech and language.
Improved outcomes for non-English speaking children who received bilingual support	We received funding for 6 bilingual children. We employed two bilingual educators across the year. Our bilingual educators are highly regarded and they support a strong connection between families and the preschool educator team and environment.	All children receiving bilingual support in 2022 have established connections with peers, increased their confidence to access the preschool curriculum and increased their literacy and numeracy skills.

\* The department's standard of educational achievement is defined as children and young people progressing and achieving at or above their appropriate year level.