

File Reference:
(if applicable)



National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating Report

Service Name Menzies Creek Pre-School

Service Approval Number SE-00012084

Provider Name Menzies Creek Primary School Council

Provider Approval Number PR-00002897

Assessment & Rating Number ASR-00035733

Report Status

Date Report
Completed 4 July 2022

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/s Monica Moulday

Educational Leader/s Monica Moulday

Primary Contact
(for assessment & rating) Monica Moulday

Quality Improvement Plan
Date Received 10 May 2022

Visit/s

First Visit Start: 7 June 2022 End: 7 June 2022

Authorised officers

Name 1 Pamela Hollins

Name 2

Further information (if applicable)

Menzies Creek Preschool is located in the Menzies Creek township in the Dandenong Ranges and operates from the town hall across the road from the primary school that it is a part of. Menzies Creek sits on the border of the Yarra Ranges and Cardinia Shires and Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation.

Menzies Creek Preschool offers a combined three-year-old and four-year-old Kindergarten group for six hours on a Monday and Wednesday with the four-year-old children attending on Friday for another six hours.

The nominated supervisor is the early childhood teacher and educational leader and is supported by two educators. On the day of the visit there were 12 Children in attendance.

Summary comments

Menzies Creek Preschool has been rated as **Exceeding** National Quality Standard.

Educators at Menzies Creek Preschool were dedicated early childhood professionals who worked together to provide each child with a kindergarten experience that nurtured their wellbeing, effectiveness as communicators and confidence as learners. Educational programs were rich with literacy and numeracy experiences and woven skilfully into play and inquiry-based learning experiences, routines and transitions where children's agency was championed, and the joy of childhood celebrated.

A professional culture amongst educators at Menzies Creek Preschool was sustained through the strength of their reflective practice across the National Quality Standard and supported the individual needs and aspirations of each child and their family. Children's safety and wellbeing was a service wide priority and embedded in daily operations and maintained through consistent review and consultation with relevant stakeholders.

A strong collaborative and respectful association between educators with the school principal, business and teaching staff, including the school council established an effective governance and leadership model in which members used their professional skills and vision to provide high quality education and care to children within a local community setting, whilst providing an educational pathway from three-year-old kindergarten to grade six at Menzies Creek Primary School. The management and leadership team were committed and motivated, empowering educators to maintain focus on continuous improvement through the provision of ongoing professional learning and resources that sustained each educators' passion as early childhood educators.

Respectful relationships promoted partnerships between educators and families at Menzies Creek Preschool and were pivotal in enriching daily learning experiences for children and achieving learning outcomes. Meaningful connections with the local community and regular outings were well established and were visible in programs with children's thoughts, feelings and current understandings of the world around them honoured and used purposefully to drive curriculum decisions and extend each child's learning.

Educators at Menzies Creek Preschool are encouraged to consistently sustain the high-level quality of educational programs by harnessing their passion and motivation to deepen reflective processes, upholding best practice, continuous self-assessment and the significance professional partnerships have contributed from a range of community perspectives to children's learning and development outcomes. The service team are also encouraged to use the strength of professional relationships with the school principal and staff, early childhood sector and with health specialists to support them empower families identified as vulnerable with individualised opportunities to contribute to decision-making in relation their children's program and learning, providing a strong foundation for all in their educational journey during their preschool years and onto primary school in Menzies Creek.

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

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

Educational programs including routines were rich in literacy, numeracy, art, Indigenous culture, science and nature and were extended through children’s participation in regular outings as citizens of the Menzies Creek community. Each child’s daily learning experiences and engagement promoted their confidence and involvement as learners in accordance with the approved learning frameworks, the Victorian Early years Development Framework (VEYDLF) and the Early Learning Framework Australia (EYLF).

Practice is informed by critical reflection

Educators used the ECT’s recent engagement in “Early Childhood Play Matters” School Readiness Funding (SRF) leading to a journey of critical reflection regarding current practices and culminating in embracing an approach to “slow pedagogy” across all aspects of the curriculum including routines and transitions. These changes to the ebb and flow of the session were both fun for the children and purposeful for educators to scaffold children’s learning and nurture their sense of wellbeing. This was demonstrated in action during the visit with children completing an obstacle course on their journey to the bathroom to wash their hands, with the morning tea routine providing them with time to eat and socialise in a way that was unrushed and where the children who required extra encouragement to eat fruit and vegetables could be provided with support while other children demonstrated their agency with less instructions to transition outdoors to play and promoted their participation in setting up the outdoor environment.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Educators recognised the worth of their geographical location and valued connections with both their Indigenous and school community with these perspectives embedded in educational programs, including regular outings in the community. Educators demonstrated how children’s learning could occur outside the service premises with regular outings to the school that recently involved preparing for a “Smoking ceremony” by making clapping sticks from the limbs of a fallen tree and then participating in the ceremony by invitation of Uncle Ian Hunter with the primary school children. Regular outings included walks to play in nature cubbies, waving to passengers on Puffing Billy and to collect “gifts from nature” that had fallen to the ground and used in ethical ways to extend learning and to develop understandings of Aboriginal ways of being and knowing.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 1.1

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

Standard 1.2 is rated	Exceeding NQS
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Evidence for Standard 1.2

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations
 Educators promoted the five learning outcomes of the approved learning frameworks through consistent scaffolding and reflective discussions with individual children during play and inquiry-based learning. The strength of these practices developed common understandings between children and was used as a vehicle by the three educators to respond to the individual learning needs of each child. The supportive learning environment provided capacity for children to explore and test ideas, extend roles during play and communicate learning to others during play, group times and mealtimes.

Practice is informed by critical reflection
 In a quest to promote the voice of children within the program SRF was sought by the early childhood teacher (ECT) to undertake professional learning in "Early Childhood Play Matters." As a result, loose parts were slowly and purposefully added to play spaces to complement and extend children's play, promoting higher thinking as children explored their curiosity and tested their ideas whilst developing understandings of concepts texture, shape, size, measurement, cause and effect. This was demonstrated through recent inquiry-based learning and projects that included "Not a Box construction", the "Bug hotel" and by extending the dry riverbed with the children to include a sandy shore to facilitate the use sand in play, when inclement weather did not support play in the main sandpit.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community
 Educational programs for children were driven by educators' application of the practice principles of the approved learning frameworks and were enriched by their partnerships with families and another early childhood service in the local community. These partnerships combined contributed to each

child's program, progress and wonder at the world around them. An example of this was demonstrated through the introduction of spiny leaf insects donated by another kindergarten for the children to care for in a new setting. Adjacent to the spiny leaf enclosure was an investigation table that included a collection of dead bugs, insects and natural artifacts collected by children with their families to create exhibits for children to observe and study the shape, size, similarities and differences of a wide array of mini beasts, eliciting age-appropriate conversations about the cycle of life and extending to children's interest in observing living creatures within their natural habitats in the playground. Part of this inquiry involved children thinking about and communicating how to interact with these living creatures safely and respectfully and the importance of returning them to where they were found to preserve the ecosystem.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 1.2

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	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 1.3 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 1.3

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

The learning, development and participation of each child was thoughtfully reflected upon by educators and combined with recent professional learning from Walker Learning resulted in more direct input and feedback from children through sustained conversations that was documented in a variety of ways and extended children's learning in genuine ways. Children's ideas, interests and skills were observed and analysed, extended and revisited to support their ongoing learning and development. Children's learning was communicated to families and provided opportunities for family input and feedback through attractive visual displays, project (floor) books and via the "Kindyhub" electronic platform.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

The ECT had actively pursued professional learning opportunities and networked with her professional counterparts within the early childhood sector to improve the planning and assessment cycle. Initially the ECT followed the approach of her predecessor but found it restricting in capturing the children's voice regarding their own understanding of their learning. The ECT discussed she needed to find further ways to document children's learning and strengthen both the analysis and assessment steps of the cycle. As a result, a floor style book was introduced to document children's thoughts and ideas as they emerged whilst providing opportunities for them to reflect on their own play and learning including creating treasure maps to communicate their recent play experience searching for treasure.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Professional partnerships with the early childhood sector including the ECT's participation in a "Beginning teacher's community of practice" supported the prioritised approach to the

implementation and review of how-to best plan and assess individual children's learning and development. This journey established connections and mentoring opportunities for the ECT and included consultation with allied health workers and more experienced early childhood teachers in neighbouring communities. Although improvements to the planning and assessment cycle were relatively new, the changes demonstrated how professional learning and mentoring added an extra layer of critical reflection by capturing the children's voice during each stage of the programming cycle.

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

Exceeding 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	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 2.1 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 2.1

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

Each child’s health and physical wellbeing was promoted through educators sustained professional learning and family and community partnerships. Healthy eating and physical activity were actively promoted and thoughtfully planned across all aspects of children’s learning programs and experiences within the service and beyond as citizens of the Menzies Creek community. Recently educational programs drew on the cultural backgrounds of educators, expertise of families and shared initiatives with the school and community partners. Combined these connections promoted positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles with the increased consumption of fruit and vegetables by children with learning experiences and regular outings fostering the development of their fine, gross motor skills and core strength.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

A strong culture of reflective practice promoted healthy lifestyles to children in fun and meaningful ways through educators’ research to discover the possibilities. During this process, the service provided opportunities for children to learn how to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh, seasonal food. In turn educators were able to extend children’s awareness of healthy eating by intentionally giving children learning opportunities to making connections between good nutrition, caring for the environment and becoming sustainably aware. These higher-level thinking concepts were evident across educational programs and were woven together to teach children about how crunching and chewing healthy food contributes to their physical growth and development.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Educators were proactive in their approach to improve their own understandings of healthy lifestyles to promote each child’s health and sense of physical wellbeing. Recently this had involved consulting with a parent, employed as a nutritionist who provided ideas to support children and families to improve their nutritional health, including recipes. Recently children were involved in a Little Scientists incursion where they investigated the sound of the crunch in fresh fruit and vegetables using a decibel metre whilst learning how chewing and crunching food contributes to their physical wellbeing, including their speech.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 2.1

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

Standard 2.2 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 2.2

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

A consistent and dedicated approach by educators resulted in the safety and protection of each child attending the service and was responsive to the needs of individual families and the social and cultural context of the Menzies Creek community. Effective communication and a high level of awareness demonstrated by educators with regards to their movements and the participation of each child always ensured active and responsive supervision. Incident and emergency management and the application of the Child Safe Standards aligned with the policies and procedures of the school and the Department of Education and Training with shared understandings and protocols protecting children from three-year-old kindergarten through to Grade six at Menzies Creek Primary School.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

Educators' commitment to child safety and the protection of children involved them considering all aspects of the curriculum and service operations, evaluating how they were best informed and skilled in delivering learning experiences that presented risk to children. As part of this process the ECT engaged in road safety training in 2021 to support regular outings with children in the local community, supporting educators further to intentionally teach children road safety as they crossed local roads and the Puffing Billy railway crossing situated within cross proximity to the service.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Opportunities for children to learn about their own safety and to protect themselves from harm was intentionally fostered by educators in ethical ways throughout educational programs and aligned with the practice principles of the VEYLD and the Child Safe Standards. Furthermore, Child safety was informed by educators ongoing commitment to maintain professional relationships with community services and their connections with their families. These partnerships had led to safety upgrades in

the service car park and at the time of the visit the children were preparing for a visit from a volunteer CFA fire fighter.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 2.2

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

Exceeding 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	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 3.1 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 3.1

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

The play and learning environments were consistently responsive to the interests, ideas, culture, and abilities of children. All outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment, and resources provided a safe, stimulating learning and care environment promoting each child's sense of wellbeing and citizenship with educators nurturing their respect and responsibility for natural and man-made environments as they interacted with them.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

The service premises had been a shared building with the local community, serving as the local hall for many years and this arrangement required ongoing consultation by educators with the school council and hall committee to maintain an appropriate kindergarten learning environment for children. As a result, educators were tasked with exploring different ways to set up indoor spaces to suit the current needs and priorities of all stakeholders. A recent example of educator's ingenuity had been the use of wheelie boards to display children's learning that could be permanent for children and families accessing the preschool and children's sense of belonging was promoted through their artwork visible on other moveable furnishings such as plant pots.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Educators reflected on current research, training and consultations with their community to support the access of every child. The service's affiliation with the Yarra Ranges Bushland team and their Landcare grant had been pivotal in improving the outdoor learning environment for children and reflected the natural beauty of the Dandenong Ranges as well as repurposing fallen tree stumps and branches from the storms that ravaged the area in 2021. Wooden platforms were built for play from tree trunks and a tee pee frame was constructed from fallen limbs, providing focus features that increased the natural aesthetics of the playground.

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	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 3.2 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 3.2

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

Educators were thoughtful in weaving natural elements of the physical landscape of the kindergarten setting and local community within the design of play-based and during inquiry-based learning for children. Opportunities for children to develop understandings of the world around was purposeful and included consistent participation in sustainable practices including observation, and conservation of living things (insects and plants) and the maintenance of the worm farm and edible gardens.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

Using a process of critical reflection educators were purposeful in organising both indoor and outdoor spaces for children using furniture, equipment and materials in innovative ways that supported the growth of children's bodies and their developing capabilities and competencies, according to their individual learning styles. To achieve this learning environments were set up using a combination of man-made, natural and homemade items such as different size and height tables, easels and floor levels, both inside and out, where children could make a decision that suited their level of comfort and/or concentration, to kneel, sit, crouch, lie down or stand during play and discovery.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

A Landcare grant coupled with established partnerships with local businesses and collaboration with the Bushland team strengthened the scope of learning environments for children to contribute to establishing and maintaining across indoor and outdoor environments. An example of this was the introduction of establishing a range of indoor plants from donations that involved children planting seeds in pots, previously decorated and nurturing their growth. Children demonstrated their level of understanding of photosynthesis during this process watering the plants, including the movement of

pots for optimum sunlight when required. Furthermore, connections to previous learning experiences promoted by educators were introduced with the discovery of daffodil bulbs sustained in the worm farm that were ready for the children to plant. During the visit children were engaged in a picture story called "That's not a daffodil", inspiring conversation and an avenue for another inquiry-based project.

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

Exceeding 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	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 4.1 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 4.1

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

The organisation of educators coupled with their interpersonal and professional skills provided a welcoming environment for children and families to participate within an early childhood setting where the voice of the child was heard, and family and community priorities were the foundation of each child's program. Educators were skilful in placing themselves during sessions, including routines and transitions to promote spontaneous, open conversations with children that contributed positively to their learning and development.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

The way in which staff were arranged and the development of the current timetable had been organised to support each child's learning and development with a particular focus on their social and emotional development, as they returned to onsite learning after a period of lockdowns due to the global Covid 19 pandemic. This process involved the service and school council developing the best possible timetable, providing each child with an opportunity to transition and participate in an early childhood setting where for the returning three-year-old children promoted continuity of education and care as they had already established trusting relationships with all three educators. In achieving this a combined three- and four-year-old kindergarten timetable was implemented with the additional educator who also worked part time at the school as a teacher's assistant being factored into the service budget for 2022.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

The timetable for three and four old kindergarten was developed in consultation between educators and the school council through consultative processes with families and provided the service and approved provider with the confidence that the new timetable met the needs of their community of

families that would journey through the service to the primary school. Furthermore, by combining these groups provided continuity for children enrolled in the four-year-old group as they would be educated and cared for by one consistent ECT and two co-educators over a two-year period.

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

Standard 4.2 is rated	Exceeding NQS
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Evidence for Standard 4.2

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations
 Interactions between educators were observed as positive and respectful. Educators consistently demonstrated a high level of professionalism and collaboration, seamlessly assisting each other throughout the day achieve the objectives of educational programs for each child. The practice of educators provided a positive and calm environment for children who were able to feel safe and supported as they played and navigated routines, and transitions.

Practice is informed by critical reflection
 When the ECT began her new role at the service including the nominated supervisor and educational leader roles, she was proactive in establishing professional connections with the Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) and local early childhood teacher networks. The ECT discussed that her participation in a beginner teachers' community of practice had been pivotal in improving the way she programmed and assessed children's learning, with new learnings leading to documenting children's progress alongside them. This new process included involved both educators and children communicating their learning alongside the planned program with children documenting their thoughts and ideas in their own made-up books, on clipboards and in the shared floor book. As the children became more involved in this process educators had noticed many of the children showed a keen interest to start forming words and short sentences.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community
 High standards of professionalism and a commitment by educators to collaborate with each other and other early childhood professionals drove the delivery of a high-quality program for children and service provision to families. Educators discussed and reflected on the needs of children and families consistently and sought advice and resources from external organisations. An example of this was the implementation of the "See More Safety Program" from the Kids Foundation that aligned with both the practice principles of the VEYLD and the Child Safe Standards. Part of this program involved parents, encouraging adult partnerships and supporting children to think about safety,

including safe play behaviours as they interacted with the resources, including a puppet at home and the service, before sharing their experiences with their peers.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 4.2

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

Exceeding 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	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 5.1 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 5.1

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

Educators' interactions with children consistently reflected a deep respect and the inclusion of each child. Children were consistently observed communicating their choices and took opportunities to develop autonomy within the program. This was achieved through educators' looping conversations and interactions with each child. During the visit as children played and explored their environment educators were present with them, nurturing the development of their language and fostering each child's sense of self and being.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

To uphold respectful and equitable relationships with children educators engaged in ongoing critical reflection to respond to the needs of each child. This involved thinking about the ages and stages of development of the cohort of children, ranging from three to five years of age. As a result, teaching strategies were carefully considered and involved a balance of one-to-one learning with individual children to achieve educational and wellbeing goals with small and large group activities intentionally arranged to extend learning for children with similar interests and/or in response to their current learning needs. For example, during the visit placemats were arranged at the morning tea tables inviting children to a space where educators could support their confidence as learners, by nurturing emerging skills and consolidating friendships. This also provided opportunities to individual children with peer role models and demonstrated how children and educators could both contribute to the growth of individual children's social competencies and sense of belonging.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Relationships with children were fostered through a collaborative approach between educators, families and the wider community. Educators prioritised areas of practice to improve and sought

input and resources to support children's sense of identity and wellbeing. An example of this was borrowing the gender equity tub from the Yarra Ranges Council to share with children and explore the identities of the group, increasing family's sense of belonging to their kindergarten. As educators have become more aware of the literature they can share with children and families these books have continued to be borrowed from the school and local libraries and support educators to build trusting relationships with children.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 5.1

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

Standard 5.2 is rated	Exceeding NQS
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Evidence for Standard 5.2

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations
 Consistent codes of behaviour were achieved by educators with children shaping expectations for behaviour. Each child’s thoughts and ideas were sought to maintain fair play and a safe learning environment and was intentionally extended with educators scaffolding children’s understanding and responsiveness to each other during play and inquiry-based learning. Teaching approaches included the use of visuals that supported every child. During a group time children were observed using visual cues to reflect on the day so far and to anticipate their participation for the rest of the day.

Practice is informed by critical reflection
 As the delivery of kindergarten programs to children began a new journey in 2022 with a combined cohort of three- and four-year-old children this prompted educators to think about how they could promote developmentally appropriate, equitable and responsive relationships between children. To encourage children to consider others in play Charlie the chicken puppet was introduced to the children to help Walter the parrot puppet with his behaviour. Educators brainstormed with children how to help Walter play “nicely”, teaching concepts of co-operation and awareness of others as they helped Walter find more equitable ways to play with Charlie.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community
 Collaborative partnerships between educators with the school and feedback sought from families provided educators with opportunities to reflect on the delivery of educational programs from an age and stage of development perspective, improving learning outcomes for every child. This was fostered by providing meaningful support to build responsive relationships between individual children, to help and collaborate with each other and was strengthened through consultation with Link Health and Community, a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) partner.

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

Exceeding 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.
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.
6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

Demonstration of Exceeding themes for Standard 6.1

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 6.1 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 6.1

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

The planning and delivery of educational programs to children by educators demonstrated the high level of respect educators had for their community of families and their ability to consistently communicate effectively with each family that recognised their individual family circumstances and the education and care needs of their child.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

During the orientation process this year educators took the opportunity to use their current understandings of an individual child's needs and the current context of their family, securing the child's participation at the service. On this occasion due to this child's father's serious illness and the impact that this had on the child's life, educators engaged with the family to find ways of how they could support this child's ongoing and meaningful participation at the service. This resulted with the child benefitting from arriving and leaving earlier than his peers with scope to shorten his day depending on his wellbeing. This mutual agreement had been advantageous in strengthening the relationship with the family and provided the child with the care and attention to settle each day at kindergarten.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Decision making in relation to developing trusting relationships with families and promote positive partnerships with families in the community was fostered by educators, the principal and school

council who worked together to provide their community of families and children with streamlined exchange of information across both the preschool and primary school through initiatives such as shared newsletters, parenting sessions, fund raising and social events.

Quality Improvement Plan notes for Standard 6.1

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
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Evidence for Standard 6.2

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations
 Meaningful connections with agencies in the community and beyond the primary school contributed to each child's inclusion, wellbeing and sense of citizenship within the Menzies Creek community. Information sharing and collaborative practice established by the ECT with her professional peers including early childhood networks and with early childhood health professionals provided educational pathways for children, providing improved learning and developmental outcomes.

Practice is informed by critical reflection
 Through a process of critical reflection between educators with the school principal, teaching staff and school council, communication, business and management systems were streamlined to support the inclusion of families within the preschool and primary school community, improving children's learning, wellbeing and continuity of learning. Examples of this included combining traditional newsletters and fundraising initiatives to support continuous improvement across both education sites. The ECT discussed that this had strengthened the service's presence in the wider community with the preschool visiting the school weekly as part of their program whilst providing an entry point for families to seek membership in the school council when their child/children began their educational journey during early childhood.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community
 During the Covid 19 global pandemic the ECT thought of an innovative way to support children's and the wider community's sense of fun and play by creating a "Bluey" dog hunt during the term 3 holidays of 2021, encouraging families to venture out into the community and be part of a whole community game. This involved educators and children setting up the "Bluey" hunt by hiding

"Bluey's" all over the community for participants to hunt for and collect. This was a very well received and enjoyable event for all and demonstrated the value educators placed on creating a sense of community after extended periods of isolation due to lockdowns in Victoria. Furthermore, the newly designed playground was open to the community to utilise during school holidays that the nominated supervisor discussed was helpful in settling the new cohort of children at preschool in 2022.

Quality Improvement 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

Exceeding 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	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 7.1 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 7.1

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

Educators were clear of their roles and responsibilities and were informed of these during recruitment and induction procedures and embedded through collaborative critical reflection and professional development opportunities that improved management systems at the service. Educators consistently worked with a range of support services in the local and broader community to assist them build their capacity in undertaking their roles and responsibilities and resulted in effective operations and decision making at the service.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

A direct complaint investigated by the Department of Education and Training in August 2021 was the catalyst for the newly appointed nominated supervisor to seek professional development opportunities to ensure compliance with the *National Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and National Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. In doing so the nominated supervisor undertook Kindergarten management training through the Early Learning Association Australia (ELLA) to improve systems to manage risk and strengthen managements at the service. Although this process was required to meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework the complaint prompted the ECT to improve her capacity in her combined role as nominated supervisor and educational leader and was the vehicle that drove overall improvements at the service through the prioritisation of SRF and her participation in local early childhood teacher networks and a beginning teachers' community of practice.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

A holistic approach to governance and leadership shaped the statement of philosophy, service purpose and upheld the effectiveness of day-to-day operations at the service. This was achieved through collaboration with the school principal, the school council that included parents of children enrolled at the service and the committee of management (COM) that presided over the town hall. Through seeking deeper connections with the COM, the service team and school were able to negotiate better outcomes for service delivery to local children and families by improving a more equitable approach to the sharing of resources, including the building. This was particular evident with improvements to the car park and the outdoor playground being made available to families during the school holidays. Furthermore, management systems in place for the preschool enabled the service team and children to attend the primary school and make use of the facilities due to a recent power outage at the service premises.

Quality Improvement 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	Yes
Practice is informed by critical reflection	Yes
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community	Yes

Standard 7.2 is rated

Exceeding NQS

Evidence for Standard 7.2

In addition:

Practice is embedded in service operations

A steadfast commitment to continuous service improvement and professional learning was demonstrated through the reflective practice of educators and promoted the evolution of educational programs, achieving a high-quality teaching and learning community. The ECT as nominated supervisor and educational leader embraced all aspects of her role with a high level of professionalism and demonstrated a commitment to ongoing professional learning. Professional relationships were enriched through respect and a shared vision with her colleagues and resulted in a learning culture that was driven by current research, collaborative partnerships and best practice.

Practice is informed by critical reflection

The service teams' approach to critical reflection shaped their pedagogy and their professional capacity grew as they identified areas of practice that could be improved. In achieving this the team reached out to their professional peers, allied health professionals and used SRF to deepen their pedagogical knowledge, refining their teaching skills. This in turn, improved the learning and development outcomes of children in authentic ways with integrated teaching and learning approaches woven into daily programs that extended play and inquiry-based learning experiences for each child in a way that was responsive to their current knowledge, interests and ideas.

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

The team were transparent and constructive regarding the aspects of the service that may benefit from improvement and clear key improvement processes detailed goals, strategies and progress measures, demonstrating to date how they had made a positive contribution to the lives of their children and families. An example of this included collaboration with the early childhood education

and care service next door to prioritise managing the safety of the delivery and collection of children from both services using the same car park by both services agreeing to adjust start and finish times to allow for safer movement through the community for children and families between both early childhood services and the primary school.

Quality Improvement 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

Exceeding NQS

Assessment and rating summary

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

Quality improvement plan notes summary

Quality Area 1

Standard 1.1

Standard 1.2

Standard 1.3

Quality Area 2

Standard 2.1

Standard 2.2

Quality Area 3

Standard 3.1

Standard 3.2

Quality Area 4

Standard 4.1

Standard 4.2

Quality Area 5

Standard 5.1

Standard 5.2

Quality Area 6

Standard 6.1

Standard 6.2

Quality Area 7

Standard 7.1

Standard 7.2