Quality Improvement Plan: The Kindergarten developed a plan in line with the National Quality Standards. The Plan is available for parents to view and identifies a number of areas that require improvement. The areas where significant progress was made in 2013 were the areas of writing individual learning plans for children which reflected their interests and needs for development. We made significant progress on communication to parents about their children's progress.

Recommendation for 2014: to continue to develop the Quality Improvement Plan.

Physical Wellbeing

In Term 3 we had Heidi 'Dancify' come to the kindergarten to teach the children some dances for the disco at the end of the term. All the children were highly engaged in learning the dances and remembered them to show the parents at the disco.

Recommendation for 2014: to employ Heidi for Term 3 to teach the children some dances to show the parents at the annual fundraising disco.

The kindergarten joined with Tea Tree Gully Primary School for their annual sports Day in 2013. This was a wonderful way to encourage the children to practice the skills needed to be involved in Sports Day. The Kindergarten is very fortunate to have the owl nest to it which makes practicing for running, hunting events much easier.

Recommendation for 2014: to co-ordinate with the school to ensure that we can be involved with Sports Day.

Sustainability

The kindergarten has a worm farm for recycling food waste and is growing herbs and vegetables as part of the children's learning about sustainability. The children have learnt about the importance of recycling and at kindergarten we recycle and re-use material wherever possible.

Recommendation for 2014: the kindergarten program will continue to promote sustainability through the learning activities developed with the children.

Information Communication Technology

The kindergarten uses the EYS system for administration (enrolments and attendances)

The kindergarten purchased a new laptop in 2013 to run the Smartboard and has purchased wi-fi to use the internet with the Smart Board.

Recommendation for 2014: hold a meeting with current Playground members to ascertain if a change in day/time is needed and then advertise Playground through local community networks.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to be involved in the running of the kindergarten through the Governing Council, attendance and help on excursions, helping out during the sessions and help with fundraising and maintenance of the kindergarten. Parents assist in the library and yard and help with the maintenance of profiles folders. Support for Governing Council was very strong in 2013 with all meetings very well attended. One parent paid for the hire of a truck so that the kindergarten could be involved in the annual Westfield Christmas Pageant. In 2013 the parents helped to run fundraising activities for the year which were: Mother's Day Stall, Kytos fundraiser, Bulb fundraiser and the Annual Disco. Parents also assisted with the laundry and gardening. All parents are invited and encouraged to be involved at kindergarten. Comments from parents on Summative reports indicated a very high level of appreciation for the care, thoughtfulness and consideration given by staff to families.

Governing Council Members 2013

Chairperson - Sarah Mead
Vice Chairperson/Secretary - Karen Rands
Playgroup Co-ordinator - Sharon Muscic
Treasurer, Catherine Hardy
Committee members - Helen Jones, Ross Weatherall, Kati Stucky, Alanna Lambert, Rebecca and Matt Wright, Shane Walker, Marianne Blunt and Lesley Hug. Staff reps - Anne Willis and Margaret Yares

The annual disco was a wonderful way of getting the preschool community working together towards a common goal. It was a very successful fundraiser as well as being a showcase for the children's learning. The children show the parents the dances they learnt with Heidi from 'Dancify'.

Out and about in the Community—authentic learning experiences

Active Learning environments are vital to children's learning and require the educator to be responsive to the children's ideas and initiatives. At Kathleen Moller Kindergarten we responded to children's initiatives and interests with visits to the Recycling Centre in response to some children's interest in recycling. We also attended two theatrical productions where children had the opportunity to engage with live theatre. We also celebrated Seniors Week with a Grandparents Day which was extremely well attended.

Many of our children have Grandparents that are very involved in their care. Highlighting the contribution they make to their families was a very important part of this day. On excursions, children are able to see there are many opportunities for learning in the real world/community. There are opportunities for children to learn from experts in the field. Children's voice is valued at kindergarten and children who have ideas thoughtfully followed up actively engage in their learning as a deeper and more meaningful level.

All excursions are reflected upon by the children and staff and are able to assess their understanding through recall of events, questioning and active dialogue. Staff ensure that safety excursions is paramount and all excursions are assessed for potential risk prior to the excursion.

Kathleen Moller kindergarten is situated in the historic township of Tea Tree Gully, within the Tea Tree Gully Council area. It is located adjacent to the Memorial Oval, and enjoys a park-like setting, with natural gum trees and a shady feature of the outdoor area. Tea Tree Gully Primary School is within walking distance across the Oval.

The staffing consists of 0.5 Director, 0.5 Teacher and 0.5 ECW, plus a preschool support worker.

2013 Highlights

Information Night for families combined with the AGM
Learning stories written for all children- Profile Book portfolios
Universal Access for the whole year
Inclusions: Monty Pryor and Sam Derchie
Excursion - Recycling Centre and Planetarium
Patch Theatre productions: “Alon in the Night” and “Me and My Shadow”
Dancing workshops with ‘Dancify’ - Annual Disco
Grandparents Day
Cindy in the Park— to celebrate children’s week
Windmill Theatre production – “Gruff”

Parental Involvement

The information night was a great success with over 20 families represented. The families came along for a shared meal to meet and greet the staff and other families. The children were entertained by a clown while the parents attended the AGM where the 2012 Annual Report was presented. Families have also supported the fundraising efforts this year, especially the disco which was a fantastic success. Sports Day was also a wonderful success with all the parents attending to support their children. This was a combined sports day with Tea Tree Gully Primary and the kindergarten was included in the planning of the day to ensure our involvement. We had four excursions this year that were very well supported by parents and caregivers.

Out and about in the Community—authentic learning experiences

Active Learning environments are vital to children's learning and require the educator to be responsive to the children's ideas and initiatives.
Area 1: Educational Program and Practice

In 2013 the teaching staff from the kindergarten met with the Early Years team from the Tea Tree Gully Primary School to develop a learning program to support the teaching of social skills. Parents are given information sheets to help re-inforce the messages at home.

Area 3: Physical Environment

In 2013 we continued to develop the use of learning stories to document children’s learning. Learning Stories are designed to inform parents about their child’s learning and show both the child and the educator’s engagement in authentic literacy learning and assessment. Learning stories are used by staff to inform their own practice and to plan the future curriculum for the children involved.

Recommendation for 2014 to use the Reflect, Respect, Redact document in conjunction with the Bellingen. Being a Learning Design framework to ensure that the curriculum is a seamless process from kindergarten to school. The result was that partnerships were developed and relationships built that went beyond professional collaboration. The conversations about children that the sites shared were meaningful and rich and surpassed our expectations.

In 2014 we hope to continue with this collaborative work.

Towards National Quality Standards

In 2013 the kindergarten developed a Quality Improvement Plan which highlighted areas where there was a need for improvement. Areas identified as needing improvement were:

Area 5: Relationships with children

The Children are supported in developing attachments to staff to enable separation from carers to be as happy as possible. Social skills were explicitly taught in 2013 through the “You Can Do It” social skills program. Characters introduced in 2013 were Oscar Organisation, Gabby Get along and Ricky Resilience. This program is the pre-cursor to “Program Achieve” which is being used in the local Primary School. Behaviour management strategies are in line with Departmental guidelines are effective and appropriate to the situation and the individual child involved.

Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with families and Communities

Parents sharing in the decision making in kindergarten was an area identified as needing improvement in the 2012 Parent Opinion Surveys. In 2013 we implemented various strategies and documentation to ensure the opportunity to be involved at kindergarten. Profile folders were shared regularly with families to share the learning journey.

Area 7: Leadership and Management

Self assessment practices are being investigated through the use of the RRR document and the aim is to embed these into practice so that self review is an ongoing cyclical process.

Literacy Focus

The kindergarten maintained a focus on literacy in 2013, specifically oral language. Children are encouraged to converse with adults and children and are supported to use second and third tier language to support their communication skills.

Recommendations for 2014: to continue to focus on literacy and specifically oral language.

Data collection on literacy levels.

The kindergarten collects data on all children’s literacy levels using the “Phonological Awareness checklist” which data is collected on many different learning areas. The quilt is included in children’s summative report which they receive when they leave kindergarten. Data on children’s learning is also collected through observations, anecdotal and in learning stories. Examples of children’s work is included in their portfolios which parents are able to access at any time. Portfolios are sent home at the end of each term for families to share the learning experiences of kindergarten for the term. When children leave kindergarten the portfolio of work is presented to them at a school’s teacher’s Celebration.

Data on Bullying

The kindergarten has a zero tolerance to bullying or anti-social behaviour. Incidents are dealt with immediately and reported to parents where appropriate. Children are taught appropriate responses to anti-social behaviour and the kindergarten used the “You Can Do It!” program to support the teaching of social skills. Parents are given information sheets to help re-inforce the messages at home.

Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

More opportunity for aerobic activity was identified and was a focus for 2013.

Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

Staff meet regularly to facilitate communication. Staff collaborate, affirm and challenge practice through supportive relationships with colleagues.

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Recommendation for 2014 to continue to support the team with professional development and support staff. Staff are given time to develop and improve their skills in a variety of areas.

Towards National Quality Standards

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Recommendation for 2014 to use the Reflect, Respect, Redact document in conjunction with the Bellingen. Being a Learning Design framework to ensure that the curriculum is a seamless process from kindergarten to school. The result was that partnerships were developed and relationships built that went beyond professional collaboration. The conversations about children that the sites shared were meaningful and rich and surpassed our expectations.

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