Oaklands Estate Kindergarten
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Quality Improvement Plan
2015
We are a standalone Department of Education and Children Development (DECD) kindergarten located in the Southern Adelaide suburb of Marion. The kindergarten is located in a residential area known as Oaklands Estate. It is surrounded by houses, with many of our families living within easy walking distance of the kindergarten and in Pethick Terrace. Marion train station is located within walking distance to the kindergarten, as is the Oaklands Wetland.

The Kaurna people are the traditional owners of the land on which the kindergarten resides. In 1943 a large parcel of land was purchased from the Crown and became known as “Oaklands”. Over time and a number of different uses, the land was divided up and sold to a number of parties. There is a long history of community involvement at Oaklands Estate Kindergarten beginning with the Oaklands Estate Residents Association who, with much lobbying was fortunate in acquiring the land for the kindergarten and began raising funds for the building. In 1964 the kindergarten was incorporated. The history of strong community involvement continues today with the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure assisting the kindergarten with outdoor redevelopments in 2013 and 2014 and strong family involvement continues with all families participating in kindergarten and fundraising events throughout the year.

The centre has a maximum capacity of 30 children per session. Currently children attend two full days Monday to Thursday (8:45am – 3:30pm) and a number of additional Friday sessions, for the equivalent of 15 hours per week. A parent run playgroup operates on Friday mornings 9:00am to 11:00am during the school term, with the exception of the last week of each term.

Oaklands Estate Kindergarten is a multiculturally diverse community representing a number of different cultures each year in its enrolments, including Indigenous, African, The Americas, Asian, European and Middle Eastern.

Oaklands Estate Kindergarten is part of the Holdfast Partnership group of 8 kindergartens, 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school. While we are part of the Holdfast Partnership our children transition to a number of other schools within our local area and at times outside of our local area. In 2014 children were enrolled to attend 18 different schools at the beginning of the 2015 school year.
A number of other staff also work at the kindergarten supporting the educational program and the operation of the kindergarten, these may include bilingual workers, preschool support workers, administration officer and finance officer. In 2015 they include Steven Gosden, Kristy Baldock (Early Childhood Workers), Anna Wong (Bilingual Worker), Francie Bourke (administration officer) and Leonie Smith (finance officer). Regular relieves also support the educational program and in 2015 include Helen Tessari, Sarah Clews and Jasmin Horseling (teachers).
Our Philosophy

We acknowledge the many stakeholders in education; children, families, staff and the community and acknowledge the importance of effective relationships in underpinning all else. We each have a responsibility to establish and maintain positive relationships and work in partnership in order to maximise outcomes for children.

We strongly support a play-based learning environment. We believe when children are actively engaged in their own learning they will develop a positive sense of self and wellbeing. Through the provision of a dynamic, challenging and open ended curriculum, built upon the children’s interests and prior experiences, we will provide children with opportunities for exploration, discovery and consolidation of meaningful and deep learning.

As educators at Oaklands Estate Kindergarten we will uphold the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics that focuses on the protection and wellbeing of children. We will promote contemporary perspectives of Early Childhood Education and advocate and practice play as a primary learning tool. As Early Childhood Educators we have high expectations of ourselves as reflective practitioners and recognise our responsibilities in continuous improvement.

All children have the right to access a high quality, play based curriculum. We recognise that all children come to our kindergarten with a variety of knowledge, experiences and diverse backgrounds and celebrate this diversity. We acknowledge that all children require different levels of scaffolding at different points along their educational journey. Staff will provide learning programs that are open ended and allow children to experience success while being challenged. Our teachings will reflect the rich cultural diversity of our community, taking into consideration and celebrating our indigenous people, their customs and teachings.

We value the learning environment as a vital teacher. Our kindergarten will be welcoming and reflective of the diversity within our community. We acknowledge and value the natural elements of our kindergarten and aim to foster a sense of respect and connectedness.

We believe sustainability is an essential part of our curriculum and that each member of our community has a responsibility to actively practice and promote sustainability. Through embedded every day practice and routines we support children’s knowledge and understandings of their individual and shared impact and responsibility towards global sustainability.

Revised with the staff team and in consultation with Governing Council September 2014
Our Strengths

Our strengths have been identified through a continuous cycle of self-reflection and should be read in conjunction with our Annual Report which highlights our work through the year. In 2015 the staff team will reflect on each Quality Area throughout the year, focusing on Quality Areas 2 Children’s Healthy and Safety and 3 Physical Environment in Term 1, Quality Areas 4 Staffing Arrangements and 7 Leadership and Service Management in Term 2, Quality Areas 5 Relationships with Children and 6 Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Community in Term 3 and Quality Area 1 Educational Programs and Practice in Term 4.

At Oaklands Estate Kindergarten we are committed to the delivery of a high quality kindergarten program where children can grow, learn and be free to simply, be.

We offer a play based educational program that is broad, varied and built upon children’s strengths, interest, ideas and experiences. It is supported by the Early Years Learning Framework: Belonging, Being, Becoming where the practices and principles are reflected in our everyday practice.

We have established processes to record each child’s development and learning is reviewed and learning programs are reviewed as part of our assessment for learning process.

A range of assessment and reporting processes are utilised to inform our curriculum planning and children and families of each children’s learning and development.

In 2014 a number of the kindergarten’s health and safety procedures were reviewed and updated. A number of new processes were introduced to ensure a consistent and effective approach to health and safety is achieved.

A focus on health and nutrition in 2014 has led to imbedded practices and educational programs to support children’s knowledge of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.

At Oaklands Estate Kindergarten we are committed to providing all children with a safe learning environment. In 2014 the teaching staff updated their Keep Safe Child Protection Curriculum knowledge and all staff completed SMART (Strategies for the Management of Abuse Related Trauma) Training. The understandings, teachings and strategies are implemented into our daily programs.

Staff and community have worked hard over the last three years to develop the kindergarten’s learning environment, a number of projects have been completed including the introduction of more natural materials, a new sandpit, paving and play areas including mudpie kitchen and enchanted garden.

Staff have undertaken professional development focusing on nature play, play space design and sustainability.

Careful consideration is always given to the environment when planning learning experiences to ensure the engagement of all children in the learning program.
Current research and thoughts are embedded in our everyday practice, which is underpinned by effective processes and a culture of trust, support, open dialogue and a genuine commitment to continuous improvement.

Staff have worked hard to establish an environment where appropriate and effective relationships flourish. Staff have the strong belief that the establishment of effective relationships is crucial and underpins all else.

A number of strategies are used to develop and maintain relationships throughout a child’s kindergarten experience. These include strategies for information sharing before children start kindergarten and the utilisation of monitoring processes to ensure positive relationships are maintained over each child’s time at kindergarten.

We believe in the notion that it takes a village to raise a child. Family and community participation is an important part of our kindergarten program. We are committed to fostering family participation and providing opportunities for family participation. A number of special activities family activities are offered each term in addition to the other general ways families can participate in the educational program.

In 2014 a commitment was made to strengthening the relationship with the Child and Youth Health Nurse. Through this commitment we were able to see an increase in the uptake of Preschool Health Checks which in turn has led to a more coordinated approach to children’s health and educational needs.

In 2014 the induction processes of the kindergarten were reviewed which resulted in the development of all inclusive induction procedures being developed for staff, volunteers, work experience students and pre service teachers. This occurred alongside the introduction of comprehensive Performance Development processes and expectations, with the underpinning philosophy of continuous self-improvement to ultimately improve outcomes for children. All staff regularly participate in personal critical reflection as individuals and as part of a team.

In 2014 staff reviewed and reflected upon their own and the kindergarten’s philosophy. Six philosophy statements were developed as guiding principles for our work. At the same time staff undertook a self-assessment of Quality Area 5 Relationships with Children and established a schedule for the self-assessment of each Quality Area.
## Improvement Plan

### 1.0 How will we develop children’s sense of agency?

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</table>
| 1.1 Staff to investigate and develop an understanding of agency and what it means for all children accessing our kindergarten | DECD  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
**Holdfast Partnership**  
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice?; How will the partnership develop pedagogy to challenge and stretch student learning?*  
**NQS**  
*Standard 1.1; 7.2  
Elements 1.1.1, 1.1.6; 7.2.2* | • Access professional development and readings  
• Review the Australian Early Development Census Data to identify areas of strengths for our community and any areas for improvement | • Staff able to clearly articulate what agency is, why it is important and how the development of children’s agency is supported at our kindergarten | October 2015 |
| 1.2 Share our learnings on supporting the development of children’s sense of agency with families | DECD  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
**Holdfast Partnership**  
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice?; How do we engage our communities?*  
**NQS**  
*Standard 1.1  
Elements 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.1.6* | • Use a variety of methods including newsletters, learning stories, displays, facebook, parent information booklet, conversations  
• Engage families in exploring their believes about children’s sense of agency  
• Include information about the development of children’s sense of agency in enrolment induction | • Information about children’s sense of agency is evident in a range of documentation sources  
• Documentation demonstrates family participation in the learning program  
• Parent Opinion Survey results express satisfaction with the educational program | October 2016  
December 2015  
December 2015 |
| 1.3 Staff team to Research and explore Growth Mindset theory | **DECD**  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
**Holdfast Partnership**  
*How will we work together to deprivatise practice?; How will the partnership develop pedagogy to challenge and stretch student learning?*  
**NQS**  
*Standard 1.1; 7.2  
Elements 1.1.1; 7.2.2* | • Staff will access professional development and readings  
• Time allocated during staff meetings for critical reflection on staff’s learning | • Staff performance development plans identify Growth Mindset theory as a work priority in 2015  
• Staff’s critical reflection demonstrates an increased awareness of Growth Mindset theory and areas they have developed | July 2015  
December 2015 |
| 1.4 Develop a philosophy statement that reflects our understanding and practices in fostering the development of children’s sense of agency | **DECD**  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
**Holdfast Partnership**  
*How will we work together to deprivatise practice?; How will the partnership develop pedagogy to challenge and stretch student learning?*  
**NQS**  
*Standard 1.1; 7.2  
Elements 1.1.6; 7.2.1* | • Use our research findings to develop a shared understanding of developing children’s sense of agency | • Our work is guided by our philosophy statement and the development of children’s sense of agency is embedded into our daily practice | April 2016 |
| 1.5 Staff to explore sustained shared thinking and how this supports the development of children’s sense of agency | DECD  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
*Holdfast Partnership*  
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice?; How will the partnership develop pedagogy to challenge and stretch student learning?*  
*NQS*  
*Standard 1.1; 5.1; 7.2  
Elements 1.1.1, 1.1.5; 5.1.2; 7.2.2* | - Access professional development and readings  
- Time allocated during staff meetings for critical reflection on staff’s learning | - Reflect Respect Relate Relationships scale data demonstrates an overall average score increase from the term 3 2014 data | October 2015 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.6 Build staff’s skills in the documentation of children’s learning as part of the assessment for learning process that fosters children’s sense of agency | DECD  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
*Holdfast Partnership*  
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice?; How will the partnership develop pedagogy to challenge and stretch student learning?; How will we measure successful learning?*  
*NQS*  
*Standard 1.2  
Elements 1.2.1, 1.2.3* | - Access professional development and readings  
- Share practices with other kindergartens  
- Develop social media guidelines  
- Time allocated during curriculum meetings to discuss assessment for learning processes | - Staff express satisfaction with current documentation processes  
- Parent opinion survey data demonstrates an increased level of satisfaction with the information they receive about their child’s learning and development  
- Each child’s learning is clearly reflected in their portfolio and through a range of documentation sources  
- The assessment for learning cycle is clearly evident for all children, groups of children and the kindergarten through a wide range of documentation sources | December 2015 |
### 2.0 How will we promote the development of children’s sense of agency in the outdoor learning environment

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| 2.1 Staff will engage in an inquiry around current and contemporary pedagogy in outdoor learning | DECD  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
*Holdfast Partnership*  
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice?*; *How will the partnership develop pedagogy to challenge and stretch student learning?*  
*NQS*  
*Standard 3.1; 7.2  
Elements 3.1.1, 3.1.3; 7.2.2* | • Staff will investigate current thinkings around outdoor play, including nature play and Reggio Emilia principles to inform our planning for the redevelopment of the outdoor learning environment  
• Staff to access professional development opportunities and professional readings  
• Staff visit sites with outstanding outdoor play areas  
• Engage the support of Natural Resource Management Board to share examples of best practice | • Staff implement strategies and learnings into the provision of outdoor play  
• Curriculum documentation reflects children’s learning and development in the outdoor learning environment | April 2016  
June 2016 |
| 2.2 Staff will engage children and families voice in creating plans for the development of the outdoor learning area | DECD  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
*Holdfast Partnership*  
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice?*; *How do we engage our communities?*  
*NQS*  
*Standard 1.1; 6.1, 6.2  
Elements 1.1.5; 6.1.2 6.1.3, 6.2.1* | • Staff conduct a play audit to gather data about where and how children play in the outdoor learning area  
• Staff to explore the 100 languages of children to seek their voices, ideas and feedback  
• Staff explore ways of gathering families ideas and feedback | • An outdoor development plan that reflects children, family and staff voice is created | December 2016 |
### 3.0 How do we provide for the development of children’s literacy and numeracy in authentic ways?

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| 3.1 Staff to investigate current theories and practice in Literacy and numeracy in Early Childhood | DECD  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
**Holdfast Partnership**  
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice? How will the partnership develop pedagogy to challenge and stretch student learning?*  
**NQS**  
*Standard 1.1; 7.2  
Elements 1.1.1; 7.2.2* | • Staff will access professional development and readings  
• Teacher will attend network meetings to share practice with other partnership teachers  
• Utilise the Early Years Leader and Numeracy and Literacy Results Plus Leader to support staff’s professional development | • Staff performance development plans identify Literacy and Numeracy as a work priority in 2015 | December 2015 |
| 3.2 Staff to explore the Indicators of Preschool Numeracy and Literacy and what they look like at our kindergarten | DECD  
*Higher standards of learning achievement*  
**Holdfast Partnership**  
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice? How will the partnership develop pedagogy to challenge and stretch student learning?*  
**NQS**  
*Standard 1.2  
Elements 1.2.1, 1.2.3* | • Staff to attend professional development to begin familiarisation with the Indicators  
• Closure Day to explore the Indicators  
• Seek the support of our Early Childhood Leader  
• Staff will update family borrowing packs | • A range of documentation sources reflect staff’s understanding of the preschool literacy and numeracy indicators  
• Information is available to families on what literacy and numeracy looks like at Oaklands Estate Kindergarten  
• The borrowing of family packs increases throughout the year and family feedback indicates high levels of engagement with them | December 2015 |
### 3.3 Staff to explore ways of documenting and sharing children’s progress that is pedagogically sound and relevant to our community

**DECD**
*Higher standards of learning achievement*

**Holdfast Partnership**
*How will we work together to de-privatise practice? How will we measure successful learning? How do we engage our communities?*

**NQS**
*Standard 1.1; 1.2 Elements 1.1.4; 1.2.1*

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<td><em>Standard 1.1; 1.2 Elements 1.1.4; 1.2.1</em></td>
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- Staff will access professional development and readings
- Investigate and share practices with other kindergartens
- Time allocated during curriculum meetings to discuss assessment for learning processes
- All children’s literacy and numeracy learning development is recorded in a variety of ways and reflected upon as part of our ongoing assessment for learning process
- Children’s literacy and numeracy learning and development is specifically referred to in each child’s Statement of Learning

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December 2015

December 2015
## 4.0 Management of the Kindergarten’s Records

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| 4.1 Clear processes are embedded into daily practice for the management of the kindergarten’s records | **DECD**  
*Build a better system*  
**NQS**  
*Standard 7.3  
Elements 7.3.1, 7.3.2* | • Provide funding the budget to employ administrative and finance officers to organise the kindergarten’s records for archiving off site | • The kindergarten’s records are organised and storage according to the State Records of South Australia  
• A budget line is included in each year’s budget for the maintenance and storage of the kindergarten’s records | October 2015  
January 2016 |
| 4.2 All policies are regularly reviewed and embedded in practice | **DECD**  
*Build a better system; Improve and integrate child safety*  
**NQS**  
*Standard 7.3  
Elements 7.3.1, 7.3.5* | • List all kindergarten and relevant DECD policies  
• Priorities policies that require urgent review  
• Employ the kindergarten’s administrative officer to maintain the relevant history screening records  
• Use the Business Manager System to develop a timetable of policy review | • The kindergarten’s policies are reviewed according to the Business Manager Schedule  
• Current practice reflects the kindergarten’s policies  
• All staff, governing council members, contracts and volunteers have a relevant history screening | December 2015  
April 2015 |
Term One 2015
Staff actively sought the input of Petra Passon, Early Childhood Leader during the creation of our 2015 Quality Improvement Plan. In the first weeks of the term Petra supported the staff in development of our priority areas, building upon the work the staff team had begun in 2014 and the findings from our Annual Report. We found Petra’s guidance and support invaluable in the creation of our plan.

In term one staff reflected upon Quality Area 2 Children’s Health and Safety and Quality Area 3 Physical Environment using the guiding questions to self-assess and critically reflect upon current practices and pedagogy, identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. From the self-assessment an action plan for the quality areas reviewed was developed, with most actions identified as easy to remedy, low priority or already acknowledge through the Quality Improvement Plan.

At the beginning of the year the kindergarten purchased “Boardmaker” software for use with children with limited or no verbal language. The Boardmaker software has allowed for the creation of a communication strategy that has been integrated into the kindergarten program. Initially staff used the visual tools with children with special rights, but as the term has progressed all children have used them. It has been a highly valuable tool in supporting all children’s learning and participation in the kindergarten program.

In term one all staff begun to read “Mindset How to Fulfil your Potential” by Carol Dweck. At each staff meeting staff have reflected upon their reading, learning and developing knowledge of mindsets. Staff have engaged in critical reflective discussions and have begun to identify mindsets in themselves and in the children. As staff’s personal knowledge has grown they are beginning to share this knowledge with families. With their growing understandings of mindsets staff are modifying the way children are supported and encouraged and the conversations that are had with children are also changing to foster a growth mindset.

An exciting achievement for the kindergarten towards the end of term one was the redevelopment of a small underutilised space at the back corner of the garden. Paving, moss rocks, small moveable logs, red dirt and native plants were installed to create a multipurpose mud and digging patch. The redevelopment has created an inviting and engaging space where children can connect and play with nature.

Curriculum focuses in term one included developing a sense of belonging in the kindergarten environment, exploring the kindergarten creek, camping, chinese new year, horse riding, exploring life cycles through the vegetable garden, monarch caterpillars and living eggs, castle building and the Eat a Rainbow Program. We hosted three family events, a welcome family night, an excursion to the Oaklands Wetlands and a train excursion to Belair National Park. Strong attendance was seen at each event along with positive feedback from children, families and staff.

Review & Progress Update April 2015
Term Two 2015

As part of our self-assessment, staff reflected upon Quality Area 4 Staffing Arrangements and Quality Area 7 Leadership and Service Management during term two. Staff reflected upon our strengths as a team and identified areas for improvement in both quality areas, as with most actions for term one’s review the majority of actions were identified as low priority or easy to remedy. As a result of the self-assessment an audit of the kindergarten’s website was undertaken and an action plan for improvement was developed. A number of actions were immediately undertaken and it is anticipated that website will be fully updated by the end of the year.

During term two our Mudpie Kitchen underwent some renovations with one of our kindergarten families donating a sink and frame and later Victoria and her family repurposed some pallets to create a redesigned Mudpie Kitchen. The renovation of the kitchen did not end there with another kindergarten family plumbing in a tap and pipe work to allow water to be connected. The renovations in the Mudpie kitchen along with the redeveloped digging patch have seen greater participation by all children in exploration of mud, dirt and the natural resources available in the kindergarten environment.

During term two Toni and Riki attended “An Introduction to the Indicators of Preschool Numeracy and Literacy” and “Unpacking the Indicators of Preschool Numeracy and Literacy”. While this professional development has lead staff to reflect upon the numeracy and literacy learning we see at kindergarten each day, it also identified the need for all staff at our kindergarten to revisit their knowledge and understandings of the numeracy and literacy learning processes and key elements. Governing Council approved a closure day for later in the year for the staff team to continue to unpack and get to know the indicators at a deeper level. Riki has taken on the role of Numeracy and Literacy Results Plus Leader for the preschools in the Holdfast Partnership and will work closely with the schooling sector leader, Greg Graham. As part of this role Riki attended the Results Plus Module One Professional Development, which focused on tracking and monitoring.

Staff reviewed and revised the kindergarten’s Behaviour Management Policy, renaming the policy to Behaviour Guidance Code. The review of the policy engaged staff in a process of critical reflection as they researched current believes and practices and considered their own personal views and philosophy. Staff drew upon their own professional learning undertaken, particularly the Strategies for the Management of Abuse Related Trauma training, consulted with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics, DECD documentation and reflected upon the Reggio Emilia philosophies and personal learnings on children’s sense of agency in the development of our Behaviour Guidance Code.

Term two saw the development and approval by Governing Council of the kindergarten’s first Social Media Policy. The policy was developed in consultation with DECD policy and guidelines and with kindergarten staff. The policy addresses staff representing the kindergarten on social media and the personal use of social media. The approval of the Social Media Policy has allowed staff to establish a Facebook page which will allow another avenue of communication with families and the community.
The management of the kindergarten’s records progressed significantly during term two with a large number of records being sorted for archiving according to State Records Regulations and sent off site for storage. The organisation of the kindergarten records and continued development of processes and schedules has contributed to smarter and more time efficient systems in the confidential storage and retrieval of information. The kindergarten underwent the Safe Schools Audit during this term and received commendation on our excellent volunteer induction processes.

Curriculum highlights during term two have included following a child’s interest in creating a lemonade stand to raise funds for the purchase of new resources for the kindergarten. Selling the lemonade to kindergarten families and friends raised the children $234, just short of their $250 target to purchase their chosen toy a felt fairy tale story castle. After the lemonade stand, there was an ice cream shop, which then turned into a teddy bear shop after, making a teddy bear at kindergarten. The children followed the progress of the monarch caterpillars in the garden that emerged from their chrysalis on a warm sunny day after the holidays. We celebrated all things mud with International Mud Day and the children replanted the vegetable garden, also making a scarecrow named Claudia to watch over the growing vegetables. At kindergarten the children have recorded their at home vegetable growing and harvesting, with families sending in photos of the children growing and tending to their vegetable patches along with their harvested produce.

We visited the zoo at the beginning of the term with a large number of children also bringing along a parent or grandparent, naturally a large part of the kindergarten program centred around our excursion, predicting what we might learn beforehand and what we discovered after. We had a wonderful night at our VIP twilight kindergarten evening with many families and friends coming along to learn about and join in with all of the learning experiences offered at our kindergarten. Another successful family excursion was enjoyed at Pinky Flat. We again utilised the public transport network located close to the kindergarten catching the train into the city, crossing the footbridge and making our way down to Pinky Flat. On the way we collected fallen leaves, seedpods, flowers and sticks and made some nature art.

During the term we hosted UniversitySA Student Claudia Tripodi who was in her 3rd year completing her first kindergarten placement. Hosting students is an important element of our work, with all staff believing this a valuable experience for both student and the kindergarten. Staff are able to share their knowledge, skills and experiences while at the same time critically reflecting on their pedagogy. Students share with staff current practice and research and challenge them to think in new and different ways. Claudia was able to participate in discussions around our priorities including mindsets, children’s sense of agency, outdoor learning and policy development. During this term Riki was selected by the Holdfast Partnership along with three other teachers to participate in the DECD Reggio Emilia Study to be half funded by the partnership.

During term two Toni and Riki actively sought the feedback of Petra Passon on our Quality Improvement Plan priorities. We met with Petra and were able to strengthen our priorities and actions as a result of our critical reflection with Petra.