

2023 annual report to the Community

# Pennington Children's Centre

Pennington Children's Centre number: 5640

Partnership: Inner West



Preschool director:

Jessica Dubois & Michelle Highfold  
Presented by: Suzanne Dawson - 2024

Date of endorsement:

07/02/2024



Government  
of South Australia  
Department for Education

# Context Statement

Pennington Children's Centre for Early Childhood and Parenting is one of 48 Children's Centres in South Australia. This service model aims to bring together care, education, health, community development activities and family services for families and their young children. Our service opened to families in March 2018, after a lengthy design and consultation period with our community which resulted in a move from our previous stand-alone service called Pennington Kindergarten on Northgate Street to our new building on Butler Avenue, Pennington. We are now co-located with Pennington School R-6 which has enabled our relationship to strengthen as we work together to support our wider community. While we are co-located with a primary school, we remain 'stand-alone' and led by our Children's Centre Director and our Governing Council committee.

We are a Department for Education site and are part of the Inner West Partnership. We work closely in professional learning communities with colleagues from this Partnership, regularly meeting for professional learning and action research together throughout the year.

We have 60 preschool children enrolled, in two groups. Each group attends for an equivalent of 30 hours each fortnight. We have two set groups of children who attend on consecutive days. This is an intentional decision to support children's sense of belonging to a group of learners and their continuity of learning.

We also offer an integrated occasional care program which runs on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursday offering six sessions to children aged 2 – 4 years old. We value the integrated nature of this program with our kindergarten program and work together as a whole team in our enactment of our philosophy, priorities for improvement, professional learning, and research as well as our ongoing planning and assessment cycle.

Our community program is varied with a range of community programs offered to families throughout the year with support from many local non-government organisations. We are supported by a Community Development Coordinator and a Family Practitioner employed through the Department for Human Services. Programs include regular playgroups and parenting programs. Pennington Children's Centre is a place of learning for all so our community programs begin from a strength-based approach and aim to connect families together and with service providers who can support this life-long and life-wide learning journey.

Our vision is that Pennington Children's Centre is a place of learning for all.

This vision is underpinned by the following big ideas:

- We hold high expectations - we are committed to quality teaching and learning.
- We welcome everyone - we see culture as an asset.
- Relationships underpin everything we do - all learning is relational.
- We value learning in groups - children and adults who learn in groups encounter new perspectives which enrich their own.
- Connection and participation are key to the wellbeing of all members of our community.

Further Information about Pennington Children's Centre is available on the centres website, as well as the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website.

# Report from Governing Council

Two words sum up the Pennington Children's Centre for the year 2023: inclusivity and connection.

Being part of the Governing Council has been a wonderful experience. It's been lovely to work alongside dedicated parents and staff to create an environment where our children can learn and grow in a supportive environment. As a governing council member, I have witnessed how passionately our educators have embraced their own development and how that has flowed into the children's learning experience.

Highlights for the year have included community excursions in Terms 2 and 4 and the trip to the beach, which brought a sense of connection for our children to care for the land on which they live. They have also been included in the wider Pennington School community, taking responsibility for caring for the school chickens, utilising the nature play areas and being involved in the school's Stay and Play events. Other fantastic opportunities include visits by our emergency services to explain how they are vital in protecting and caring for people within our community.

This year saw the introduction of a mid-year intake, which required a delicate balance between the needs of the community and the capacity for children at the Pennington Children's Centre. The educators had to adapt their teaching styles to provide the best possible learning outcomes for a new range of ages and experiences. It is a testament to the Directors and the staff that despite the complex juggling of new administrative challenges, this transition appeared to happen flawlessly, with a wave of new faces joining the Pennington Children's Centre and an adjustment to the availability of the Community Playgroup.

I would like to express a heartfelt thank you to all of the amazing people who have created such a wonderful, inclusive space for our children to thrive.

No doubt 2024 will bring about some big changes. I wish all the best for those who will begin their learning journey at Pennington Children's Centre.

To all the students moving onto the big world of school next year, may the love of learning and community you have experienced this year continue in the future.

**Bryony Copeland - Chairperson**

## Director Report

### **Preschool Quality Improvement Plan (PQIP):**

During our closure day and staff meetings we have been working through evaluating our progress towards achieving our goals for improvement. This process has enabled us to identify how we can update our preschool quality improvement plan to enhance its impact on children's learning. Work on our 2024 QIP has commenced and will be discussed as part of the hand-over to our in-coming Director ready for 2024. Our QP goal will most likely be a continuation of the work we have been doing in 2023.

### **2023 Reflection**

In 2023 our Director role was shared with Jessica working Monday – Wednesday and Michelle working Thursday – Friday. This was a very positive move as Michelle moved into the director role with a strong understanding of the centre and also maintained 1 teaching day each week. Jessica and Michelle communicated regularly and maintained shared workloads across the year.

Mid-year intake occurred for preschools in South Australia at the commencement of Term 3 2023. This meant that we had many additional enrolments on top of our 60 children enrolled from Term 1 and Group B grew from 30 places to 45. Mid-year intake also meant that a pause was placed on Occasional Care sessions as there was no longer site capacity to offer the additional places. Due to the additional enrolments 2 additional ECW educators were employed, both were new to Pennington CC. Upon reflection educators felt that operating a group size of 45 children was very complex particularly as the out-door learning area is small. Staff felt that for this number of children access to gross motor and sensory experiences were compromised due to the lack of space, which in turn lead to an increase in the number of children needing support to co-regulate.

There were many wonderful opportunities afforded children within the learning program in 2023 and educators documented and shared children's learning with families throughout the year. Pedagogical documentation of small group enquiry projects and point in time learning has been prioritised. Documentation was then used to write children's statements of learning that support their transition to school.

Children with special rights were supported through our IESP funding each preschool gets. In addition we had several children requiring a higher level of support for whom extensive adjustments were approved.

### **2024 Proposed timetable**

The timetable for 2024 will be set to match what has been offered in 2023 with Group A attending Monday & Tuesday and Group B attending Thursday & Friday with both groups being offered 3 additional Wednesday sessions each term. A calendar noting the Wednesday sessions will be sent home to families at the beginning of each term.

### **Parent Opinion Survey**

The results of our survey are shown later in this report. The data from the POS was used to support our thinking about next steps as part of our site review in 2023. Overall, the POS is extremely positive, we do however interrogate the survey results to look for patterns and specific points of improvement. For example, staff have reflected upon responses to the question 'The centre provides opportunities to discuss my child's progress' and note that with the complexities associated with mid-year intake it was very challenging to find times to offer parent chats for those families. This will be prioritised for 2024.

### **Staffing**

Jessica Dubois (Director Mon-Wed) has accepted the position of Early Childhood Leader for the Inner-west & Torrens Partnerships, starting 2024. The Early childhood leader provides leadership, curriculum and pedagogical expertise to Directors, leaders, and their teams at Early Year's sites. Working closely with the Education Director of the two partnerships. This means, Jessica will still be connected with Pennington as we are in the inner-west partnership. Jessica began working at Pennington June 2014 – we are so thankful for the transformative change and impact she has created with the team and community.

Linda Hughes (permanent early childhood worker, currently working Monday & Tuesday) has decided to retire after 2023. Linda began her Pennington journey in 2015 and has worked for the Department for Education for many years prior. Linda has contributed to the high-quality education at Pennington and will be missed, we hope she returns to volunteer.

Michelle Highfold has accepted the Director position at Jean Horan Kindergarten in Flinders Park as of 2024. This is a full time, 5-year tenure. Michelle began her journey at Pennington in 2015, becoming the permanent teacher for the site, before 2023 moving into the director role part time.

Following a merit selection process for a 12-month Director position Suzanne Dawson has been appointed to the Director role for 2024. Suzanne previously worked at Pennington CC in 2022 and is looking forward to returning to the role.

### **2024 Teachers:**

- Tamara Holmes is continuing at 0.9, every second Friday off.
- Mel Common is returning after having maternity leave. Mel will be lead teacher with group B. She previously worked with us for 3 years and is an excellent teacher, we are excited for her return.
- Francine Schiller has accepted a 0.8 contract with us for 2024. Francine is an experienced teacher and has previously worked at Modbury Preschool. We are excited to have her join our team.
- Courtney Robb has accepted a teaching contract at Baden Pattinson Kindergarten for 2024.
- Leesa Taleporos has accepted a teaching contract at Parks Children's Centre for 2024.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to sincerely thank Briony Copeland and the members of our Governing Council for their support and guidance in 2023. It is such a valuable thing to have willing members join and contribute to our community.

Written by Jessica Dubois, Michelle Highfold & Suzanne Dawson

## Preschool Attendance

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2023 centre	73.9%	76.7%	78.9%	77.6%
2022 centre	83.7%	70.7%	75.7%	80.4%
2021 centre	81.4%	83.1%	87.4%	82.7%
2023 state	85.4%	82.9%	83.4%	81.4%
2022 state	83.6%	77.6%	77.9%	77.8%
2021 state	87.3%	85.3%	87.1%	84.5%

Based on attendances recorded in the two-week reference period each term. Data for eligible enrolments as described in the department's Enrolment policy. Attendance rates may differ to previous reporting with the transfer from calculations based on deemed attendance to actual attendance using booked hours divided by attended hours. Data Source: Department for Education Attendance Data, Semester 1 Report 2023. A blank cell indicates there were no students enrolled.

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

## Attendance Comment

In South Australia, preschool attendance is not compulsory, but it is strongly encouraged. Preschool gives children the best opportunity to develop skills, which prepare them for school. These benefits include establishing positive routines and habits, friendships, and connections as well as developing communication, problem-solving and creative skills. All children are entitled to access a preschool program over 4 terms the year before they start school.

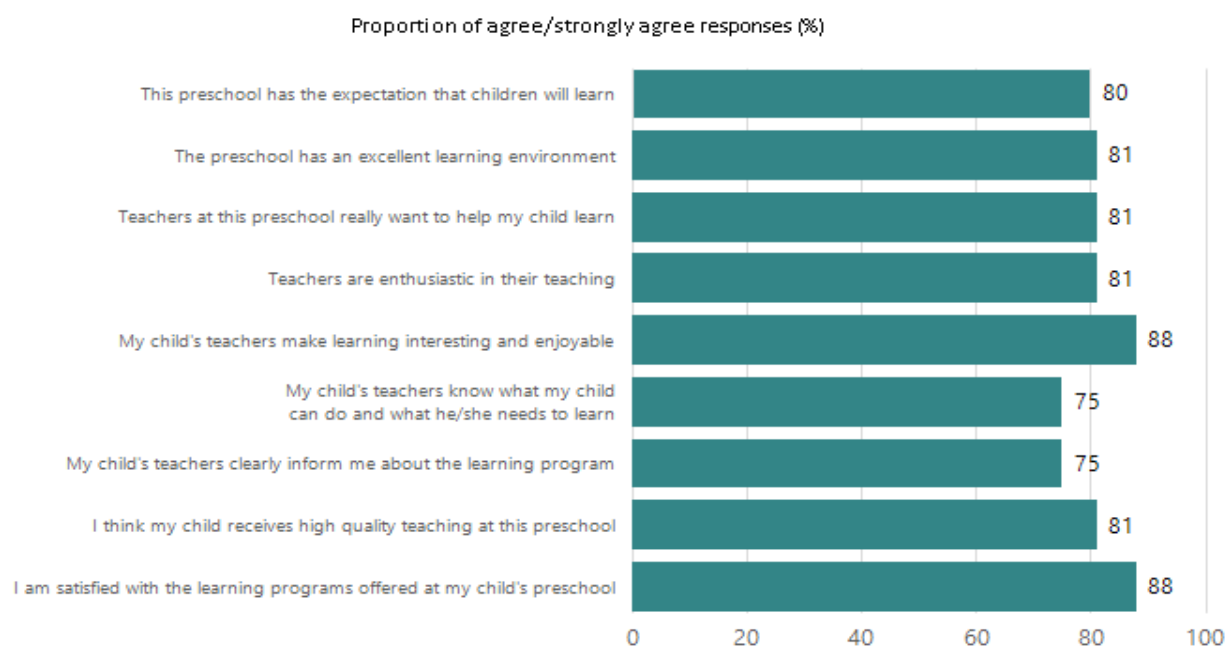
## Preschool Family Opinion Survey

The annual family opinion survey was conducted in Term 3, with the survey sent out to families attending preschool and occasional care. Hard copies were also made available. 13 surveys were completed. Most responses fell in the Agree/Strongly Agree fields. As discussed above staff have reflected on the small but important responses in the neutral and disagree fields.

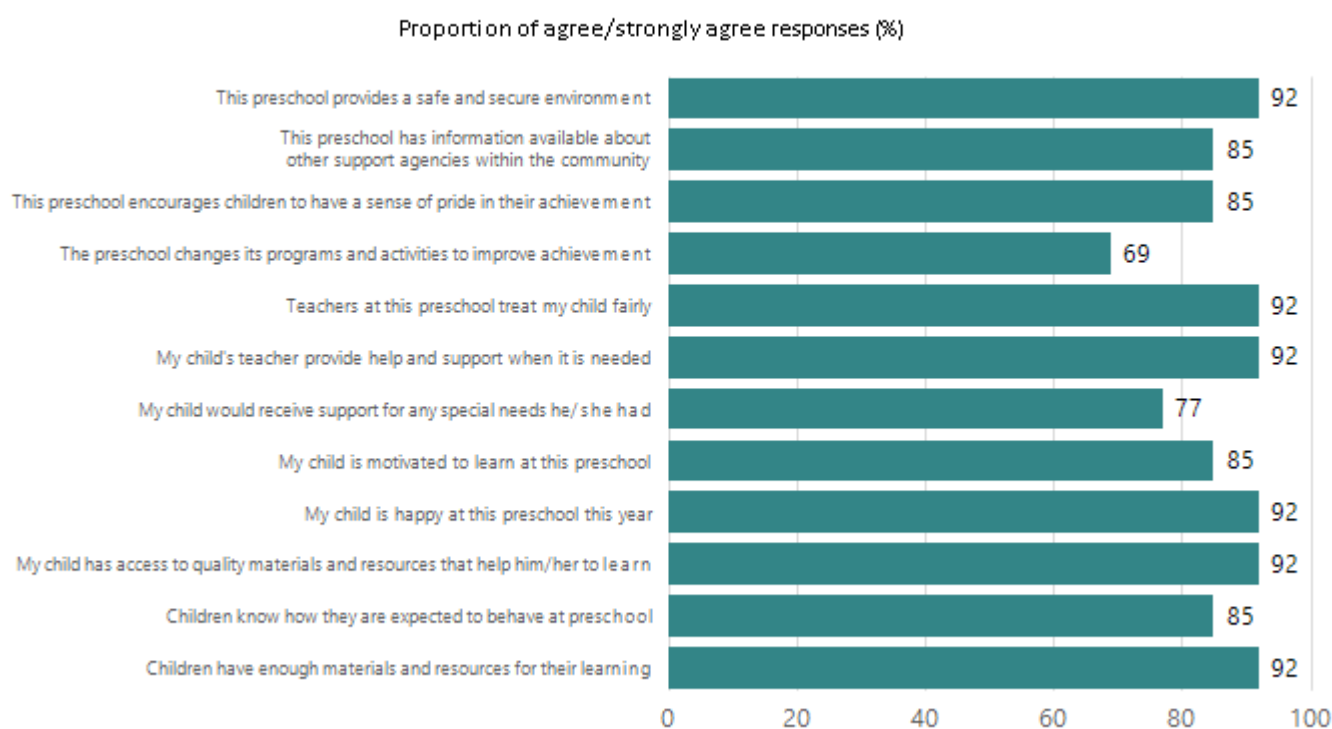
A selection of parent comments include:

- *"We believe the quality of teaching is exceptional at PCC. Our child is seen, listened to and feels a close belonging. The whole teaching team go above and beyond to create a warm inclusive environment where our culture is embraced. A highlight for us was the reconciliation event."*
- *"Our child is flourishing at kindergarten and shares his learning every day! It's evident that care and learning for the child and whole family is core to PCC. My child's language development has skyrocketed! I love how the educators continue to wonder, be curious and teach thinking. We think the team does a wonderful job even with a smaller outdoor learning environment."*
- *"We are fairly new, but I feel all of the teachers are enthusiastic and really care about each child. It's beautiful and refreshing."*
- *"Each day we feel that we can chat to the educators about our child. We receive communication through a variety of ways, which helps us both to know what is happening."*
- *"Great preschool because teachers and support educators show they really care about my child. You can see this through my child responses to her educators and communications with everyone involved."*

## Quality of Teaching and Learning

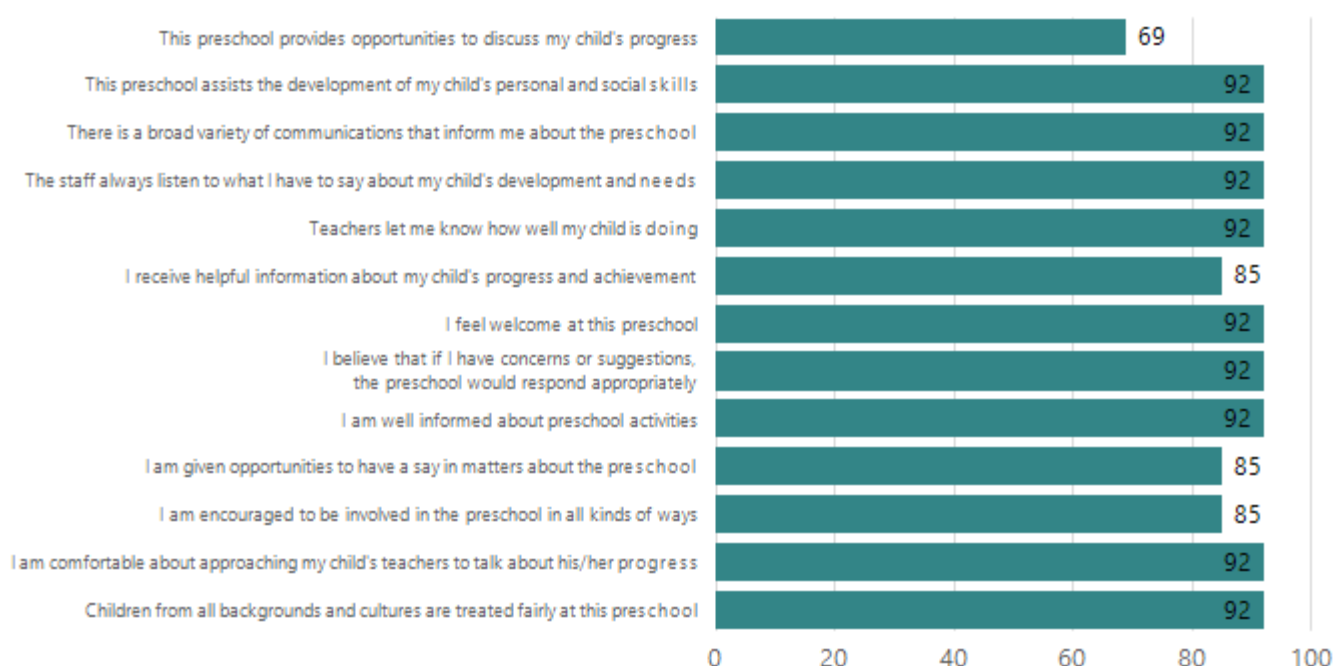


## Support of Learning



## Relationships and Communication

Proportion of agree/strongly agree responses (%)



## Leadership and Decision Making

Proportion of agree/strongly agree responses (%)



## Destination Schools

Feeder Schools (Site number - Name)	2021	2022	2023
0337 - Pennington School R-6	-	44.4%	48%
0497 - Woodville Primary School	3.6%	-	1.8%
8386 – Portside Christian College	5.5%	-	1.8%
9069 - Mount Carmel College - Primary Campus	12.7%	3.7%	25%
9089 - Whitefriars School	3.6%	3.7%	1.8%
9999 - Unknown	69.1%	42.6%	-
Other	-	-	22%

Data Source: Department for Education Destination Data Report, 2023.

Note: 2023 data has been adjusted to demonstrate actual enrolments.



# Highest Qualifications held by the teaching workforce and workforce composition

All teachers at this school are qualified and registered with the SA Teachers Registration Board.

Qualification Level	Number of Qualifications
Bachelor's degrees or Diplomas	4
Postgraduate Qualifications	1

Data Source: Data extracted from Mandatory Workforce Information Collections as on the last pay date of June 2023. As self-reported by staff in the system.

Please note: Data includes staff who are Actively employed and on extended paid leave. Please note only the highest qualification of the Teaching staff is reported. Excludes any number of other certifications earned.

## Workforce composition including indigenous staff

	Teaching Staff		Non-Teaching Staff	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Full-Time Equivalents	0.0	3.9	0.0	5.0
Persons	0.0	5.0	0.0	8.0

Data Source: Data extracted from Mandatory Workforce Information Collection as on the last pay date of June 2023.

Please note: Data includes staff who are actively employed and on extended paid leave. "Indigenous category" is self-reported by staff in the system.

# Financial Statement

Funding Source	Amount
Grants: State	\$ 928 758
Grants: Commonwealth	-
Parent Contributions	\$ 32 204
Fund Raising	-
Other	\$ 15 620

Data Source: Preschool supplied data.