



The Briars Special Early Learning Centre 2016 Annual Report to the Community



Government
of South Australia
Department for Education
and Child Development

The Briars Special Early Learning Centre Preschool Number: 1417

Partnership: Campbell

Name of Preschool Director:

Judith Candy

Name of Governing Council Chair:

Tori Brookes

Date of Endorsement:

29th March 2017

Context and Highlights

Being a site for children with significant additional needs and complex communication needs we work hard for our children to be able to participate in the community as members of the community, not as passive observers. Our programs are designed to facilitate independence and to offer our children rich varied learning experiences with choice making and the opportunity to navigate the environment core to our planning. Communication underpins our learning programs and is essential for our children to access the EYLF.

An important project we have been working on is The Briars' Charter a response to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is an opportunity for staff to examine the Children's Convention of Rights and to respond with what that means for us at The Briars, looking at what we do and what we could do to be included in our Site Improvement Plan. It is a longterm project that is giving us the opportunity to have deeper conversations about the children, their needs and rights.

An exciting new initiative is The Expression through Movement and Music Program. This is a dance program offered to give our children the opportunity to participate in extra curricular activities that they would not otherwise have been able to attend. It has been highly successful with some wonderful outcomes for the children.

With the Early Intervention Foundation Group being such a success we have trialled a program for younger children. The Early Intervention Parent and Toddler Group is designed for parents/carers to work with staff and their child to develop early play and communication skills. The feedback has been remarkable with many families being referred by paediatricians, therapists and NDIS planners.

Our outdoor space has also been a focus. We have employed a gardener and installed a sprinkler system which has been highly successful, transforming the paddock into a wonderful space for the children. We have also shifted the Liberty Swing with a grant provided by Variety The Children's Charity. This has enlarged the paddock making room for a proposed bike and wheelchair track.

With a focus on improving the children's learning we have been reviewing our programming, data collection and reporting. We have introduced ABLES, a program to support the assessment of the children's progress. By converting a large disused hygiene area into a programming room staff now have a space to prepare and display the development of the program.

Report from the Governing Council

This year we have welcomed 2 new members, who are also current parents. We are always happy to have new members join us – the time commitment is not onerous, and it's an opportunity to learn more about what happens at the Briars, while contributing to this amazing community. As a parent of a former student at the Briars, I am proud to continue to support the work of the dedicated staff here.

Highlights of the discussions, decisions, and accomplishments of the governing council from 2016 include:

- Four governing council members attended DECD governing council training
- The expansion / rejuvenation of the consultancy and disability awareness programs
- Consideration of how to improve the internet presence of the Briars
- Revision of the emergency procedures (following an incident requiring an ambulance)
- Supporting a former EI group to continue to meet monthly on the Briars site as a playgroup
- A pilot toddler group, which continues to be popular with families, as well as the Early Intervention groups
- Supporting Briars families as their children transition to school
- Feedback from staff from professional development (especially DECD SMART training) and pupil-free days
- Reports from staff regarding the Outdoor Education, Early Education, and AAC Programs
- Financial reports indicating that the Briars continues to have a solid financial position

I would like to thank all council members for their contributions in 2016, but in particular Sue Knight, who was the chairperson from 2014 until 2016, along with staff members Dan McCauey and Tash Borg, who continue to serve the council as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Thanks also to Judith, and Helen who acted in Judith's position in Term 3 while Judith was on leave, along with all the staff of the Briars for their support.

I look forward to another great year supporting the Briars in 2017.

Tori Brookes



Quality Improvement Planning

The Briars Special Early Learning Centre is not in scope of National Quality Standards as we are an Early Intervention Service with a "Preschool Program". Therefore, we come under ACARA and have a Site Improvement Plan not a Quality Improvement Plan. Our SIP is aligned with DECD Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and is a separate printed booklet. Below is an excerpt.

Our priorities

1. Higher standards of learning achievement

The Briars will be a centre of expertise where children, staff and families are supported and encouraged to achieve, grow, challenge and engage in an equitable and safe environment.

The Briars will enable children to be successful and confident learners through the development of communication skills within an adjusted play based curriculum.

The Briars staff will ensure that we build upon our current knowledge and practice to provide the latest, proven resources and strategies to develop children's communication skills, and technologies to access the curriculum.

2. Improve health and wellbeing

The Briars will provide targeted education and family initiatives to support the 'whole child'.

The Briars staff will empower the children to actively navigate their environment promoting a sense of self and self-esteem by developing a curriculum that addresses the needs of all children taking into account preferred learning environments.

The Briars will support families to transition into the DECD system through developing their confidence and knowledge.

3. Engage children, families and community

Families will be partners in their child's learning.

The Briars will facilitate better communication and information sharing to support parent and community involvement in our planning and decision making.



Enrolment

Year	Enrolment by Term			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2014	30	31	34	36
2015	28	33	33	33
2016	37	36	38	

Based on person counts in the two week reference period each term. Excludes pre-entry. Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems.

Enrolment Comment

Enrolment numbers at The Briars vary according to the complexity of the attending cohort. In some instances we have set the capacity per day at a lower figure to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the children and staff.

Early Entry is a core part of our service and is essential to enable us to carry out our obligation to provide 600 hours of eligible preschool. Commencing in Term 3, 2016, we acquired 31 Early Entry children over the semester, on top of 35 Eligible Preschool children enrolled in term 4. Two children left, one child to mainstream, another overseas and one turned six.

Attendance

Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
2014 Centre	56.7%	54.8%	64.7%	58.3%
2015 Centre	67.9%	69.7%	63.6%	72.7%
2016 Centre	67.6%	75.0%	71.1%	
2014 State	90.0%	88.9%	86.1%	87.1%
2015 State	90.5%	88.7%	86.3%	86.3%
2016 State	89.6%	88.7%	87.7%	

Based on attendances recorded in the two week reference period each term, and calculated to an average unadjusted daily attendance (deemed attendance). Attendance percentages are based on the calculated deemed attendance (integer), divided by the number of enrolments. Excludes pre-entry. Note: Figures have been revised for previous years, using integer deemed attendance not decimal. Source: Preschool Data Collection, Data Management and Information Systems.

Attendance Comment

It is very pleasing to see that our attendance data indicates a consistent rise in relative terms in attendances. We attribute this to the success of the Early Intervention Foundation Group which is funded by the Increasing Attendance grant. By building up parent trust in the site before the children start their eligible preschool year, and new parents meeting current and past parents, they have confidence to leave their children in our care.

Destination Schools

Feeder Schools (Site number - Name)	2014	2015
0474 - Trinity Gardens Primary School	0.0%	12.5%
0548 - Black Forest Primary School	0.0%	12.5%
0844 - The Grove Education Centre	16.7%	0.0%
1043 - East Marden Primary School	0.0%	12.5%
1405 - Modbury Special School	33.3%	25.0%
8235 - St Brigid's Catholic Primary School	0.0%	12.5%
9021 - St Patrick's Special School	16.7%	0.0%
9036 - St Brigid's School	0.0%	12.5%
9081 - Our Lady of the Visitation School	0.0%	12.5%
9082 - St Joseph's School - Tranmere	33.3%	0.0%
Total	100%	100%

Destination Schools Comment

This data is obscure and makes no sense to us. According to the data only 8 children exited The Briars in 2015 and 6 children in 2014. In fact 36 children exited to special classes, units, schools and primary schools in 2015 and 26 exited 2014. These numbers are impacted by Same Day Start.

All of our children participate in The Special Options process and are recommended sites unless a parent has chosen to exclude their child as they would prefer to attend a private school. The children attend sites across the metropolitan area and a detailed list of schools is available from administration as the information does not fit in this box.

Client Opinion Summary

In 2016 families were offered to participate in the DECD Opinion Surveys. We do not modify the survey so in some instances parents are not sure how to answer. This is obvious by the neutral responses for some questions, for example, "children know how they are expected to behave at preschool".

It is very evident from the results of the survey that most parents are very happy with all of the areas indicated in the survey with only one parent writing negative comments.

However an area that consistently comes up over the years and that we have tried to address every year and through our Site Improvement Plan is that some families do not feel that they have a say in their child's learning or do not feel informed about the program. This is in conflict to other families who are very satisfied and who read the diary every day of attendance, (which was purpose designed in consultation with the families), who read the fortnightly program sent home each fortnight and who read the termly overview sent home at the beginning of each term. All of the children have NEPs which are reviewed after approximately 20 attendances when the parents have another NEP meeting to discuss goals and individual learning plans. These plans are constantly reviewed and the children's progress assessed.

All families are invited to join the Governing Council but unfortunately we have very little uptake.

Parent comment has been consistently positive.

The Client Opinion Survey is available from the reception desk.

DECD Relevant History Screening

We are compliant with DECD Screening requirements. All staff have current DECD Relevant History Screening checks and we are using the DCSI Recording Spreadsheet that was provided to us, to record sighting the approved screening of all visitors and volunteers who require screening.

Financial Statement

	Funding Source	Amount
1	Grants: State	25,947.72
2	Grants: Commonwealth	245,941.59
3	Parent Contributions	28,917.77
4	Other	

2016 Preschool Annual Report: Improved Outcomes Funding

Improved Outcomes Category (where applicable to the site)	Briefly describe how the 2016 funding was used to improve the relevant DECD Standard of Educational Achievement * outcomes (where applicable):	Outcomes achieved or progress towards these outcomes:
Improved outcomes for numeracy and literacy	\$4819.50 received was spent on the purchase of communication resources for the children. This included numerous voice output devices and iPads,	The DECD Standard of Educational Achievement outcomes are not relevant to the children at The Briars. Data shows our children have made progress in communication skills.
Improved ECD and Parenting Outcomes (Children's Centres only)		
Improved outcomes for children with disabilities		
Improved outcomes for children with additional language or dialect		

* The DECD Standard of Educational Achievement is defined as children and young people progressing and achieving at or above their appropriate year level.