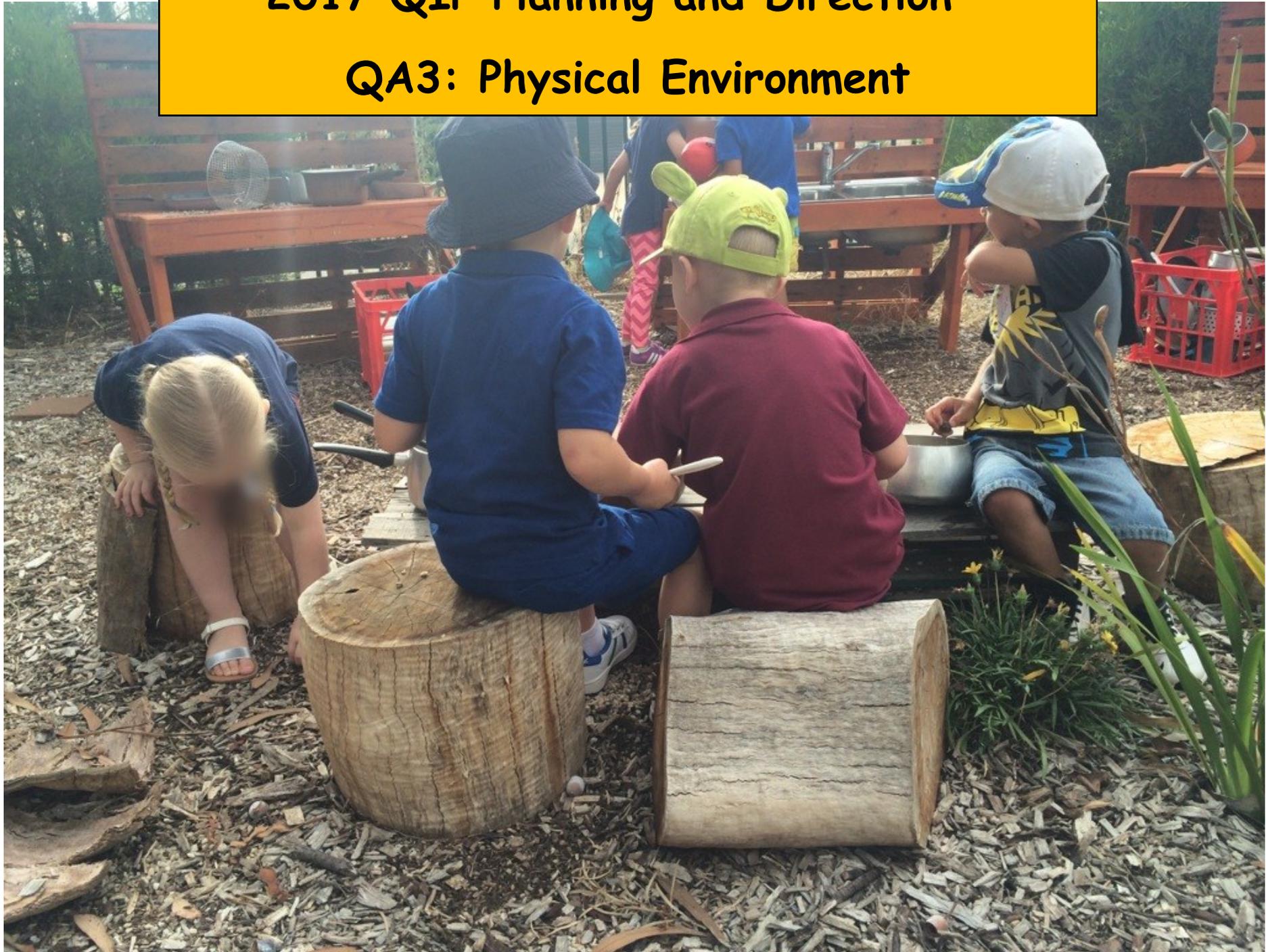


2017 QIP Planning and Direction— QA3: Physical Environment



Strengths

Families say....

- My daughter is very aware of her responsibility to pack up when the time comes.
- My child doesn't like to get dirty and has come so far. Being encouraged to have fun on Mud Day and at the Wetlands has supported her to take risks.
- Nature play at preschool is wonderful as at home my children now want to spend more time walking/hiking in parks and reserves and not find playgrounds.
- The children have so many planned and open play spaces to explore.
- My child is loving the outside and being supported to take risks e.g. riding down the hill
- The space is so clean and always see children helping too.
- Children are always doing new activities and involved in special days. It looks like so much fun.

Children think....

- We have a new cubby
- We can stack the crates
- I plant carrots
- We have a sandpit with water
- I like the sandpit
- I would like a water creek
- I love riding bikes

Strengths

Educators think....

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preschool environment is set up to be fun and welcoming. • We have a great outdoor space including a large and small lawn area, a playground, hard surface play areas, large sandpit, digging patch, cubby house, tree house, sensory garden and undercover area. • The outdoor area was extended to allow for a large grassed area, cubby house and a nature play area with loose parts added. • Children have lots of freedom to explore and play in the outside environment. • Inside there are many play space opportunities including a large mat area and soother space (relaxation spot). • The learning environment is changed weekly to provide engaging activities and to support children's interests and individual learning needs. • The environment and learning experiences encourage children to use persistence and to take appropriate risks. • Our preschool is safe and children are adequately supervised at all times. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We provide experiences that promote opportunities for children to develop both fine and gross motor skills. • Children are given adequate time to play both indoors and outdoors. • Children understand and feel comfortable and safe to follow the preschool routines. • Snack time allows children to confidently engage in relaxed positive conversations. • Children are taught about caring for the environment. • Children are taught about recycling and composting. • Children are taught about caring for plants, growing their own food and basic cooking skills through preschool experiences and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. • We have set up parent/caregiver spaces with opportunities for feedback/input and to make a meeting. Also all important information including weekly program is displayed. • Our preschool is clean and well maintained. • Staff use a sound field system to propel and protect staff voices |
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2017 QIP Planning and Direction—QA3: Physical Environment

Strength Summary

Standard 3.1 The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service.

The preschool environment is set up to be aesthetically pleasing and welcoming. We have a great outdoor space incorporating different types of play spaces including a large and small lawn area, a playground, hard surface play areas, large sandpit, fairy garden, digging patch, cubby house, tree house, sensory garden and undercover area. (3.1.1) There are shaded areas for sun protection and during really wet days we have a large veranda area and sandpit that is undercover and inside large blinds. We communicate with families about dressing their children in appropriate clothes for every season. We believe it is important to allow children access to the outside area all year around. Children are encouraged to wear gumboots, thick jackets, beanies and rain jackets in the colder months. During the term educators meet to discuss how the environment can change to suit the needs of the children i.e. building a digging patch and providing learning activities to support children to develop new skills in this area (3.1.1).

The centre has been extended to allow for a large grassed area, mud patch and cubby house. Children have opportunities to be exposed to team games on the lawn and more freedom to explore and play. Our new direction in 2016 which we began drafting the plan for in 2015 is to further extend our yard to incorporate a nature play area. The new nature play area will incorporate loose parts, trees and shrubs to climb and explore, teepees, wooden tree stumps, mud kitchen, water course and pump into mud patch and a ramp for bikes/science based inquiry exploration (3.1.1). The water pump will use reticulated water from an underwater storage tank to support sustainability. One educator has focused on improving our nature play area. Extensive online research and attending T&D has supported the planning and organising of the nature play area. Risk assessments are conducted on new purchases/additions in regards to safety and appropriate usage/storage.

Inside the space has been designed and a layout created to maximise play spaces. There are tables for painting, crafting, sensory play, literacy/numeracy etc. There is a home corner and a block corner which are both used in various play opportunities weekly and are always changing. A large mat area for activities such as puzzles, reading, group times, smartboard use etc. There is a quiet space in one corner (we call in the 'soother space') set up with sensory toys, books, cushions, couches, music etc. Children are encouraged to use this space for quiet time, needing some personal space or when they are having trouble managing their own emotions/behaviour decisions. In this instant an educator will support the child to successfully re-enter play when they feel ready. We have a separate room we call the 'Rainbow Room' this room is used for small groups, meetings, by support agencies and occasionally transformed into a special room to extend children's play and learning. Recently in early term 3 2016 it turned into the ramp room. Several pipes, gutters, various balls, construction materials were added to support our science based inquiry learning (3.1.1).

We have several areas set up designated for our families. The front entrance has our policies displayed, parent feedback board, current important information and a take home library system. Families are encouraged and supported to borrow books with their children. Above pigeon holes is our family QIP wall which shares our current QIP goals and progress. In the front walkway we have children's artwork displayed and a belonging tree with family photos. This is deigned to support a sense of belonging and pride to the preschool. By the learning journey folder all relevant curriculum information, timetables, our philosophy etc is displayed. There is also a family communication and feedback table set up encouraging family involvement (as described in more detail in QA6) (3.1.1).

Educators ensure that they are adequately positioned within areas during inside and outside play times to be able to adequately supervise children at all times and the areas are suitably fenced with childproof fencing and gates to ensure safety (3.1.1). Our inside area is open and educators can adequately supervise all areas. Between our inside and outside areas are floor to ceiling glass panels; this too supports adequate supervision. At all times there are at least two staff members in both the outside and inside areas. Outside staff position themselves in separate areas to maintain supervision (3.1.1).

2017 QIP Planning and Direction—QA3: Physical Environment

Strength Summary

A preventative Maintenance Schedule and Breakdown Procedure is in place through DECD for all facilities and educators report issues that may become a WHS problem to the site WHS officer. Old and broken equipment/resources are removed immediately and then repaired or replaced to ensure safety. (3.1.2) During morning set up educators thoroughly inspect the outside area to ensure it is safe and clean for the children to use during the day. This is then signed off on a daily log book. (3.1.2)

Educators ensure procedures are followed and cleaning is scheduled into the daily timetable to ensure furniture, areas and equipment are kept clean and well maintained. Cleaning of bathrooms is scheduled to be cleaned once per session as well as on an as needed basis and is signed off on a daily cleaning log book. Larger cleaning jobs e.g. oven, fridge, fish tank are scheduled onto a jobs list and additional jobs are added to the job delegation book, these jobs are completed on an as need basis but at least once a term and are signed off when completed. (3.1.2)

Weekly washing is completed of e.g. doll's clothes, blankets, cushion covers, smocks etc and are left to dry on the washing machine. Often children are encouraged to join in with this activity and enjoy helping to keep the preschool clean (3.1.2).

We have a professional cleaner that cleans the preschool everyday. Some of these cleaning duties include; bins, vacuuming, mopping, staff and student toilets, bench tops and windows. We have a hazardous chemical register to ensure appropriate cleaning materials are used and have a locked cupboard for appropriate storage of any chemicals. Our WHS officer often runs t&d on ways to keep ourselves and our site safe and hazard free. Our groundskeeper does regular checks on pests and where needed will do beetle bombs, spider eradication and mice traps.

Our kitchen is separate from the inside area and has a double locked door that educators keep locked at all times (3.1.2).

Adequate storage of equipment and resources is something we are always monitoring to best avoid clutter and mess. We work hard and ensure each day all equipment is packed up and stored appropriately. We keep bench tops clear and clean of clutter. Any loose/found objects are placed into a tub and then put back correctly by the end of the week. Puzzles, books, storage cupboards are cleaned and organised regularly. We have two large sheds to store equipment. We store equipment so the space is neat and safe. We aim to place one more shed into the yard in 2017 which will store all loose parts and equipment used by children regularly e.g. wheelbarrows, sack trucks, shovels etc so they can independently access them during play. We have a sandpit cover that is used daily and the sandpit is raked at least twice a week by the school's groundskeeper (3.1.2).

All sections of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments are well thought out during planning and programming to ensure they are used to their full potential. The learning environment is changed weekly to provide engaging activities and to support children's interests and individual learning needs. Children are encouraged to use persistence and to take appropriate risks (3.1.3).

The centre is fitted with both a sound field system and acoustic treatment. Staff ensure that the unit is well maintained and IT are called if any issues are identified. Staff are reminded to use the system by signs in the group room. We have also shown the children how to speak into and wear the sound field system to aid them in sharing their learning. This supports children with hearing impairments and educators to propel their voice. The inside play area has two areas that can be closed off to allow space for small and large group times and activities as well as support children who may need one to one support (3.1.3).

Strength Summary

Standard 3.2 The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.

Educators provide experiences that promote opportunities for children to develop both fine and gross motor skills using both built and natural features and structures. During outdoor play a wide variety of experiences are set up that encourage physical activity and energy release as well as exploration, problem solving and creative expression. Children are given time to play both indoors and outdoors and to engage in a variety of planned experiences, where they are encouraged to challenge themselves and take risks to develop new life skills. Experiences that are set up abide to the WHS guidelines.

Children have an understanding of the preschool routines and comfortably follow them. During snack time children confidently engage in relaxed, positive conversations with adults and other children (3.2.1).

A variety of both man-made and natural environments are used in the centre to establish exploration, engagement and inquiry. Staff members have attended training and development in nature play and reported back their learning at staff meetings. This information was used to guide changes to the site, including the removal of a section of fence to extend the outdoor nature play area, the addition of loose parts (e.g. crates, tyres, wood planks, PVC pipes) and collaboration with the Men's Shed to make wooden tepees, mud kitchen and log stump seating (3.2.1).

Both the indoor and outdoor learning environment and experiences are set up in a way to support children's engagement, a range of ages, interests and capabilities. Educators allow children to access all experiences and will observe children before intervening to support children to extend their play. Activities are changed weekly and are based upon the children's current needs and interest. Although activities are planned weekly, often spontaneous experiences, or interests provoke or scaffold new learning. We are continually buying new resources and equipment to support children's interests and to provide various play based opportunities. New resources are discussed at staff meeting and we regularly ask fellow preschools/kindys what is working well in their centres. We constantly ask for feedback from families and they provide input on what could be bought to improve our inside outside environment. Recently in term 2 2016 a parent of an autistic child suggested we buy bike ramps as it is an interest to him at home. We recently purchased these and have found many children finding a common interest also (3.2.2).

Standard 3.3 The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future.

We have established a recycling bin and chicken bin within the preschool and have taught children about the purpose of both. During snack times the children use these bins and educators support children to place items within the correct bin and discuss why. Children then take the chicken bin over to the school chickens with support of an educator. We have a large recycling bin that children take turns filling up and we enjoy socialising with the school children who collect the bin. We also had a construction day using recycled snack containers for a visual representation of reusing materials. Each year a term theme is designated to the environment and we provide strategies how we can look after our environment (3.3.1). Through children's interests we are also looking at science based inquiry topics including sun, light, wind, water etc which will provide in-depth opportunities for sustainability practice and learning to care for the environment.

Elizabeth Park Preschool has access to the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program that is run by a trained garden and kitchen specialist in the school. Children access this program one term per year through either a 45 minute garden lesson or a 1 and 1/2 hour kitchen lesson. The philosophy of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program is to enable children to learn how to grow, harvest, prepare and share seasonal fresh food in the belief that this approach will positively influence children's food choices. This program engages children in learning about healthy food and teaching them life skills in food preparation as well as providing them with learning about how to be environmentally sustainable by growing your own food and recycling green waste. During these lessons the children learn about and are involved in growing and harvesting food, caring for the environment and using what they have grown in cooking experiences in the kitchen. (3.3.2)

2017 QIP Planning and Direction—QA3: Physical Environment

Strength Summary

In our outside play area we have a raised garden bed, where the children help to plant and care for herbs to be used in regular planned cooking experiences within the preschool (3.3.2). We have pots that the children manage by regularly planting new seeds e.g. flowers. We observe them grow and often take predictions and recordings of what is growing.

Children are encouraged and supported to care for the preschool environment through taking responsibility. Discussions are regularly had with children about caring for preschool equipment and the children help pack up both the inside and outside areas on a daily basis.

During session times children regularly help educators to water the garden, weed and prune and sweep play areas. Regular yard clean ups are programmed into the weekly program when the children use tongs and buckets to collect rubbish that is our outside play area. (3.3.2)

Children support educators to clean and maintain the preschool fish tank and to feed the fish through the use of a roster.

As a preschool we are continually striving to improve our sustainability. We discuss with the children to reuse the water play trough - often putting it on our plants, recycling construction materials in art and for construction days, we use water for the sandpit from our water tank, encourage children to dry their hands under the hand dryer after washing their hands, turn lights off when not using that space and having water saving taps (3.3.2)

We have begun visiting our local Olive Grove Wetlands several times a term. This has provided the children and families with some important tips on how to care for our environment. We use these visits to explicitly learn about the importance of our environment. Caring for the wildlife, importance of the wetlands, leaving the area how we found it, not taking anything from the environment, keeping our environment clean from litter etc. We have noticed an appreciation of the environment from the children and have had families make comments about how their children on the weekends are heading outside to play rather than staying inside and like to explore the local parks rather than just the playground (3.3.2).

There is always room to improve and in 2017 we have already identified as a future goal wanting to go more in-depth with recycling. This may possibly look like involving KESAB with educating staff and children, purchasing the 4 coloured bin system and exploring 'nude food'.

2017 QIP Planning and Direction—QA3: Physical Environment

Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
No area available to store loose parts that can be easily accessed children.	A new shed will be installed outside for loose parts to be stored and opened each day that children have access to. (3.2.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and get quotes regarding installation of sheds. Meet with school finance person to check allocated budget. Clear area ready for shed installation. Schedule time to install shed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shed fully installed and being used by children. 	End of the year.
Progress Notes:				
Date: 9/2/2017 Bec discussion with Ian, grounds person regarding adding a shed	Date: 6/4/2017 Madi email to Ian and Corey regarding update on shed selection and possibilities. Mid-term break Ian to clear bushes from area.	Date:	Date:	

Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
An area is needed outside for children to withdraw and have quiet time.	Explore the introduction of a moveable quiet space outdoors weekly as a part of programming and planning. (3.1.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order outdoor cushions. Add to programming a space for outdoor cushions. Add outdoor cushions along with books in a quiet space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiet space scheduled for in programming notes. 	Term 2
Progress Notes:				
Date: 27/3/2017 Cubby house set up with books and outdoor cushions for children to use quietly.	Date: 6/4/2017 Material draped over mirror maze area and mats added for a quiet space for children to relax.	Date: 8/5/2017 Large outdoor cushions placed outside with outdoor books to create a quiet outdoor area.	Date:	

2017 QIP Planning and Direction—QA3: Physical Environment

Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
Dirt in the mud patch area is not suitable for making mud and the water is not easily accessible.	Source and organise for new suitable dirt to be added to the mud patch area. Source and organise an irrigation system to pump water from behind the cubby down to the mud patch. (3.1.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Will Cheeseman the school garden specialist to see the best way to irrigate the mud patch and where to source dirt and find out the costs involved. Meet with school finance person to check allocated budget. Source quotes for water course. Schedule time to install irrigation system and addition of dirt. And water course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrigation will be installed and used by staff and children to create mud. Mud will be of a suitable nature. 	End of the year

Progress Notes:

Date: 9/5/2017 Contacted contractor in regards to landscaping quotes to upgrade digging patch and create a water course.	Date:	Date:	Date:
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Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
There are limited permanent areas for children to sit outside if there are a large amount of children at once.	Source and organise pallet lounges/desks to create a natural outdoor sitting area for eating and playing. (3.1.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and get quotes from outdoor furniture suppliers. Meet with school finance person to check allocated budget. Schedule time to deliver outdoor furniture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furniture installed and used by children 	End of the year

Progress Notes:

Date: 20/3/2017 Leftover chairs from the school have been placed into various locations around the preschool including nature play area, cubby hole space and around the bike track.	Date:	Date:	Date:
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2017 QIP Planning and Direction—QA3: Physical Environment

Identified Issue	Goal	Outcome; Steps to achieve goal	Success Measure	By When
Plants planted in the raised garden bed within the preschool outside play area is dying during the summer school holiday breaks as they are not being watered.	The raised garden bed in the preschool will have irrigation going to it for it to be watered on weekends and during school holidays. (3.2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check if there is a water supply to area. • Meet with Will Cheeseman the school garden specialist to see the best way to irrigate the garden bed and find out the costs involved. • Meet with school finance person to check allocated budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised garden bed will be irrigated with timer to ensure plants are regularly watered. 	End of year
Progress Notes:				
Date: Term 1 2016 In staff meeting we discussed how best to use these raised beds e.g. what to plant and children involvement/management.	Date: Term 2 2016 Had a meeting with our finance manager Val regarding budget. She said the school will fund the irrigation system.	Date: Week 9 Term 2 2016 Asked Will our garden specialist to help irrigate the raised garden beds. He said he will purchase the equipment needed and have it done by end of term 3 2016.	Date:	