



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Tabled at the Spirit of Play Community School *Annual General Meeting*, held 8th May 2023

OUR SCHOOL

OUR MISSION is to:

- Nurture children to grow in confidence, courage and knowledge
- Encourage children at our school to be respectful, self-aware and empathetic
- Deliver the WA curriculum with an approach that is creative, playful, grounded in nature and connected to the community

OUR VISION

Kwoorabup Nature School students are confident and self-aware learners, who are respectful and caring of others and our shared environment, and face the world with knowledge, courage, compassion and creativity.

OUR VALUES

LEARNING FOR LIFE: We value education that enables each child to fulfil their academic, emotional, ethical, and creative potential as confident and life-long learners, and active and informed citizens.

LEARNING WITH NATURE: We value nature as a teacher and cultivate a school community that understands and cares for the life around us.

LEARNING TOGETHER: We value the inclusive, collaborative and respectful relationships that connect our students, school, and wider community.

These relate to the core values that we teach our students across the school:

Care for Self

Care for Others

Care for Environment

OUR MOTTO

Nature, Nurture, Knowledge





The Spirit of Play Community School Council is the governing body responsible for the ongoing successful operation of Kwoorabup Nature School. As Chair of the Council in 2022 it is my privilege to share some of the highlights of our year with you here.

2022 was a year which held challenges in the form of the February bushfires that impacted many of our families, the restrictions required to safely allow the COVID-19 virus entry into our state and community in Term 2, and also an unexpected but very welcome growth in our school numbers during the course of the year.

I think it is fair to say that our school managed to navigate these challenges very well and that a consistent focus on

the wellbeing of our community from both the School Council and the School Management team has led to a strengthening of our organisation at all levels.

The School Council made a number of decisions to ensure the strength and stability of our school's governance and staffing, including improving the succession planning and training for school council members, and supporting the Principal to delegate responsibilities to a wider executive team. As the school grows it is imperative that we also provide the institutional and personal support to sustain our strategic and day to day management of the organisation.

As it became apparent that we would soon need more space in order to grow our school to an ideal size with small single stream classes, we commenced the process of considering what such expansion might look like, including future consultation with the school community, Shire of Denmark and our reserve neighbours. Our aim is to build a collaborative vision for our school site that incorporates multi-generational sharing of resources and the honouring of the environmental and social history of this site, enabling students to have the best educational experience.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT - JOANNA GRIFFITH

2022 was a year of growth for our school as our town saw a significant influx of young families looking to make a sea-change to our beautiful location. The growing recognition of the value of Nature-embedded and Inquiry-based learning as well as the importance of a nurturing, family-like school environment resulted in a significant increase in our enrolments by the end of the school year. This led to the decision to put two additional classes on for the 2023 school year to accommodate the demand for places.

1. COVID 19 RESPONSE

Term 1 and 2 of 2022 were marked by the response to the Covid-19 virus as it came into Western Australia. We started the year with a high level of government restrictions which impacted on our ability to operate in our normal fashion - parents were not permitted in classrooms and children in Years 3-6 were mandated to wear masks. As people became sick, those who had been in close contact with them were required to isolate and there was a great deal of student and staff absences.

While we remained thankful that we were not obligated to lockdown and close the school, it was a challenge to navigate the rapidly changing requirements and provide clarity for our families and staff. There was a great deal of anxiety in the wider community at the time and we felt it was our role to hold a sense of normality for children as much as possible, and to be a safe space where people could come to us with their concerns and questions and receive clear communication about the evolving situation.

In order to both alleviate the spread of the virus and to allow children to be mask-free at school, we moved our Year 3-6 classes outdoors for the duration of the restricted period. We felt fortunate to be a Nature School with years of experience with managing outdoor learning during this time, which came with its own challenges. Overall the children responded very well to the changing situation and we were fortunate to have our large undercover space available. We acknowledge the flexibility and professionalism our staff showed during this challenging time, and the resilience of our children adapting to a new classroom environment. We are very proud to say that the school community came together in what could have been a divisive time, and the expressions of support from families were overwhelming at times.

2. STUDENT AND STAFF WELLBEING

2022 was also a year where we put considerable effort into improving the wellbeing of students and staff through a number of innovative strategies. These included participating in a student wellbeing survey carried out by Curtin University - which showed that children at our school were happier and less anxious than average, and the appointment of Mahsa

Anderson, a local psychologist with extensive experience in working with young people to run a weekly wellbeing and leadership session with our Upper Primary cohort.



We also created a new Inclusive Education teaching role focussing on supporting children with diverse needs in semester 2, with the aim of supporting the classroom teachers in providing the best possible outcomes for every student.

We also looked into improving our teacher conditions by consulting with a range of similar small schools in Western Australia before implementing a fair increase in teacher wages to be closer with pay conditions in State Schools. Staff were further supported by the set up of a

salary sacrificing program and the provision of an Employee Assistance Program through Relationships Australia.

The school increased EA hours to have EA positions in all classes across the school.

3. STUDENT LEARNING

This year the school implemented Kath Murdoch's inquiry framework across the whole school. There was some wonderful growth in teacher understanding and skills around inquiry based teaching, with some incredibly deep inquiries occurring this year in 3-6 around sustainability, ethical consumption and marine conservation, and in the K-2 classes focusing on Denmark and trees.

Teacher collaboration has become an embedded and important part of our staff culture. We have continued to consolidate skills in delivering a strong literacy curriculum. We continue to build capacity in using agreed resources for Critical & Creative Thinking including Harvard University's Thinking Routines and SHARP reading comprehension program that extends students ability to analyse and critically consider texts.

The school organised students from PP-6 to attend swimming lessons at ALAC in term 3.

There was overwhelming support from families to provide this, and the skills learnt beautifully support students to confidently participate in our Walkabout program.

Sarah Pozzi ran a Kindy Transition program in week 1 term 4 for 2023 Kindy students. There was great attendance and lots of positive feedback. The aims of the program were to support a smooth transition into Kindy which includes children's relationships with each other, their understanding of the rhythms of the school and our understanding of their needs as individuals and as a cohort.

4. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Some staff requested a follow-up visit from our literacy consultants from 2021 to review some of the learning they had been involved with last year. Chris Witt and Jill Buckrell attended in week 2, term 3, and each teacher was provided an opportunity to meet 1:1 to reflect/ask questions/delve deeper into their learning. Differentiation continues to be an area where teachers are asking for support and it is great to be able to provide for this.

Three teachers progressed their registration from graduate to proficient standard in 2022. The school's culture of collaboration, professional learning and our constant reflection around improving student learning outcomes made this process smooth and enjoyable.

We hosted 2 student teachers in the Pre Primary and the Year 1/2 class which was a fantastic learning experience for all involved. Prac students always comment to us that it is so great to see a school actually practicing what they are learning at university, as it is rarely the case.

5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Changing our school's name was celebrated in our first week and was a wonderful success, particularly in the support that our school received from local Elders. Uncle Lester Coyne and Auntie Carol Pettersen (OAM) attended and showered the school with their support and praise. The value of this is incredible, and is testament to the success of our Noongar Language and Culture program, and our RAP.

A group of parents started a small garden club which shows the initiative, passion and dedication of our families. The school split the school maintenance role into two separate roles, one for maintenance and the second for gardening. This has been very positive for the school as Jazz our 'garden fairy' brings an incredible amount of local knowledge, and having young children of her own she has demonstrated an incredible depth of thought to what plants the students will use in different ways.

We reviewed our Reconciliation Action Plan in September and brought together some

excellent suggestions from our staff to continue to improve our work in engaging with our Noongar community and promoting Indigenous culture. I also met with representatives of Reconciliation Australia and Reconciliation WA when they visited Denmark and took the opportunity to showcase our school to Leone Cottam-Williams, the Education Officer at Reconciliation WA, who was enchanted by what we offer.



SCHOOL ACTIVITIES IN 2022

The school year was full of many and diverse activities, and we were fortunate to be able to offer a rich program of incursions, excursions, festivals and community engagement in line with the relevant regulations. Some key events in the 2022 school year included:

- **February**
Name Change ceremony
Bunuru by the Bilya festival
Student Wellbeing Survey
- **March:**
Solar Car Challenge
Bunuru Festival



- **April**
Djeran Festival
- **May:**
AGM
NAPLAN
Sorry Day whole school circle
Reconciliation week
'Knowing Nullaki'
Artist/Scientist in Residence
- **June:**
Festival of Voice opening ceremony performance
Refugee Ration Challenge
Survival Camp years 5/6
Makuru Festival
- **July**
Tree planting with Denmark Shire
- **August:**
Science Week
Book week parade and celebration
- **September:**
Upper Primary Leadership Camp
Musica Viva incursion: Adventures in Antarctica
Better Beginnings Kindy Library incursion
Djilba Festival
- **October:**
Nyingarns on Denmark FM
- **November:**
Kambarang Sports Carnvial
School Fete
Surfing Lessons
Transition Day
- **December:**
Birak Beach Festivals
Camp week
Y3-6 Leadership Day
Graduation



STUDENT ENROLMENTS

Our student numbers grew significantly over the course of 2022, from 77 at the beginning of the year to 96 in December. A large proportion of these families joined us towards the end of Term 2 when COVID restrictions eased and there was a large group of young families moving to Denmark.

A great number of the new families already knew someone at the school and were attracted to us via word of mouth, which highlighted the wonderful community and educational practice that we have developed at our beautiful school.



TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF

In 2022 the School employed 22 staff, comprising 14 teachers, six education assistants, and four executive and administrative staff (Principal, Bursar, Director of Administration and Administrative Manager). We are fortunate to have such skilled and passionate teachers, dedicated and enthusiastic teaching support staff, and proficient and accomplished executive and administrative staff.



At the end of term one Simone Barrow left us to travel Europe, and at the end of the year Jenna Nygaard and Julie Lhuillier both moved back to Perth for family reasons.

Teachers in 2022:

Upper Primary: Elaine West

Middle Primary: Rosie Lane and Josh Griffith

Lower Primary: Tash Rubie

Pre-Primary: Jenna Nygaard and Simone Barrow

Kindy: Julie Lhuillier

Walkabout: Olly Watkins

Music: Lou McKenna

Noongar language and Culture: Angela Dickinson

PE: Josh Griffith and Bree DeKoning

Digital Technologies: Allister Dickson

Visual Arts: Tessa Moncrieff

Inclusive Education: Bree DeKoning

Education Assistants:

Kanae Jones

Jess Dyer

Angela Dickinson

Liv Carter

Heidi Compton

Hollie Gilmour

Executive and administrative staff:

Principal: Joanna Griffith

Bursar: Rene Procter

Director of Administration: Zoe Car

Administrative Manager: Sandra Brandao

THANKS



The Spirit of Play School Council would like to heartily thank all the many individuals who devote their passion, energy, time and effort to make this amazing school possible.

These include all the

wonderful kids,
passionate families,
inspired teachers and EAs,
dedicated staff and management,
diverse community groups,
the Shire of Denmark, and
committed volunteers...

... who all make our school so great!

It truly takes a village to raise a child, and we are fortunate and grateful to have the beautiful community in Denmark to help raise our next generation within Kwoorabup Nature School.