

Ratings Review Decision Notice

Panel Members

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Panel Date

[REDACTED] 2020

Applicant

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Regulatory Authority

NSW Department of Education

Decision

The Ratings Review Panel (the panel), by consensus, decided to confirm the ratings as follows:

- Quality Area 3, Standard 3.1 – Meeting NQS
- Quality Area 4, Standard 4.1 – Meeting NQS
- Quality Area 4, Standard 4.2 – Meeting NQS
- Quality Area 5, Standard 5.1 – Meeting NQS
- Quality Area 5, Standard 5.2 – Meeting NQS
- Quality Area 7, Standard 7.2 – Meeting NQS

The services overall rating remains at Meeting NQS.

Issues

1. The Approved Provider (the provider) sought a review of the ratings for the above Standards on the grounds that the Regulatory Authority:
 - (a) did not appropriately apply the prescribed process for determining a rating level
 - (b) failed to take into account or give sufficient weight to special circumstances existing or facts existing at the time of the rating assessment.
2. After the initial assessment and rating, the overall rating for the service was Meeting NQS. Ratings specific to each standard were as follows:

Quality Area 1: Exceeding NQS

Standard 1.1: Exceeding NQS

Standard 1.2: Exceeding NQS

Standard 1.3: Exceeding NQS

Quality Area 2: Meeting NQS

Standard 2.1: Exceeding NQS

Standard 2.2: Meeting NQS

(Demonstrating Exceeding themes 1 and 2 at final report)

Quality Area 3: Meeting NQS

Standard 3.1: Meeting NQS

(Not demonstrating Exceeding themes 1, 2 and 3 at final report)

Standard 3.2: Exceeding NQS

Quality Area 4: Meeting NQS

Standard 4.1: Meeting NQS

(Demonstrating Exceeding themes 1 and 2 at final report)

Standard 4.2: Meeting NQS

(Demonstrating Exceeding themes 1 and 2 at final report)

Quality Area 5: Meeting NQS

Standard 5.1: Meeting NQS

(Demonstrating Exceeding theme 1 at final report)

Standard 5.2: Meeting NQS

(Demonstrating Exceeding theme 1 at final report)

Quality Area 6: Exceeding NQS

Standard 6.1: Exceeding NQS

Standard 6.2: Exceeding NQS

Quality Area 7: Meeting NQS

Standard 7.1: Exceeding NQS

Standard 7.2: Meeting NQS

(Demonstrating Exceeding theme 1 at final report)

3. The provider applied for first tier review in relation to the following quality areas:
- Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
 - Quality Area 3: Physical environment

- Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
 - Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
 - Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
4. At first tier review, the ratings review panel determined the following Exceeding themes to be demonstrated at the required level to support a higher rating:
 - Standard 2.2: Exceeding theme 3
 - Standard 5.1: Exceeding theme 2
 5. All remaining standards under review at first tier review were confirmed. A summary of the service's ratings, as documented in the first tier decision notice, is as follows:
 - Quality Area 1 was not under review and remains at Exceeding NQS
 - Quality Area 2 is amended to Exceeding NQS
 - Quality Area 3 remains at Meeting NQS
 - Quality Area 4 remains at Meeting NQS
 - Quality Area 5 remains at Meeting NQS
 - Quality Area 6 was not under review and remains at Exceeding NQS
 - Quality Area 7 remains at Meeting NQS.
 6. The service's overall rating following first tier review remained at Meeting NQS.
 7. In their application for second tier review, the provider sought a review of the following standards:
 - Quality Area 3, Standard 3.1 (Exceeding Themes 1, 2 and 3)
 - Quality Area 4, Standard 4.1 (Exceeding Theme 3)
 - Quality Area 4, Standard 4.2 (Exceeding Theme 3)
 - Quality Area 5, Standard 5.1 (Exceeding Theme 3)
 - Quality Area 5, Standard 5.2 (Exceeding Themes 2 and 3)
 - Quality Area 7, Standard 7.2 (Exceeding Themes 2 and 3).

Evidence before the panel

8. The panel considered all the evidence submitted by the provider and the regulatory authority. This included:
 - the application for second tier review and its attachments
 - the assessment and rating instruments and the final assessment and rating report
 - the service's feedback to the draft report
 - the application for first tier review and its attachments

- the regulatory authority's findings at first tier review
- the regulatory authority's submission to second tier review
- the provider's response to the regulatory authority's submissions.

The law

9. Section 151(1) of the National Law states that, 'Following a review, the Ratings Review Panel may:
 - (a) confirm the rating levels determined by the Regulatory Authority; or
 - (b) amend the rating levels'.

The facts

10. [REDACTED] is a long day care service with [REDACTED] approved places. The service is based in [REDACTED] New South Wales.
11. The service's last assessment and rating was [REDACTED] 2016. The service's overall rating was Working Towards NQS.
12. The assessment and rating visit took place on [REDACTED] 2020 by one authorised officer.
13. The provider was sent the draft report on [REDACTED] 2020 and supplied feedback to the regulatory authority on [REDACTED] 2020.
14. The final report was sent to the provider on [REDACTED] 2020.
15. The provider applied for first tier review by the regulatory authority on [REDACTED] 2020.
16. The regulatory authority made a decision on the provider's first tier review application on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 2020.
17. The regulatory authority sent the first tier decision notice to the provider on [REDACTED] 2020.
18. The provider applied for second tier review on [REDACTED] 2020.

General submissions at second tier review

19. The provider submitted a statement with their application for second tier review:

We are seeking a review of the ratings for the above Standards on the grounds that the regulatory authority, in making its determination, did not take into account all of the relevant evidence at the time of the assessment and additional background information is available in the attached document.

Theme 1- Practice is embedded in service operations

Officers who have assessed our service, have acknowledged that we have demonstrated Exceeding Theme 1 in 14 of the 15 standards. We believe that we have demonstrated this

theme for all 15 standards including 3.1, evidence for which is highlighted in the attached table.

Our high-quality practice is demonstrated consistently and frequently across our service operation and all improvements are being applied across our Service daily.

Consistency across all educators, staff and age groups is clearly evident in all our services. We believe our practices and service go 'above and beyond' what could be expected at the 'meeting' level.

Theme 2- Practice is informed by critical reflection

Officers who have assessed our service have acknowledged that we have demonstrated Exceeding Theme 2 in 12 of the 15 standards. We believe that we have demonstrated this theme for all 15 standards including 3.1, 5.2 and 7.2, evidence for which is highlighted in the attached table.

Our critical reflections are frequent and cover a wide variety of topics, they are genuine in that they occur out of circumstances and situations that are unique to our Service.

Our reflection process has various levels where reflections are made on an individual basis and as a whole service. We have documented the way our decisions have been informed by critical thinking and included reflections on our past practice and incidents that have occurred at the Service.

Our quality improvement journey demonstrates that we reflect regularly, both on our practice and ways we can extend the children's learning, development, safety and wellbeing.

We also reflect collaboratively with all educators and families to ensure reflection is critical and best practice is applied in our services. Educators, family members and community members are provided with different opportunities to provide feedback, which then forms the foundation of our critical reflective process.

Our reflections have led to change and action, and this process has been evident during assessment and rating and continues in our practices today. We believe our practices and services go 'above and beyond' what could be expected at the 'meeting' level.

Theme 3 Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Officers who have assessed our service have acknowledged that we have demonstrated Exceeding Theme 3 in 9 of the 15 standards. We believe that we have demonstrated this theme for all 15 standards including 3.1, 4.1, 4.2 5.1, 5.2 and 7.2, evidence for which is highlighted in the attached table.

In order to better our service and practices, we have collaborated with a variety of health professionals, industry leaders and other sources, obtaining the most current information to ensure a safe and enhancing service for families and children.

We have sought and obtained input from families and the community on a wide variety of topics that are specifically relevant to our Service and Practice. We have provided evidence that demonstrates how our practices have been influenced and informed through the correlation between feedback gathered from stakeholders and educator's reflections.

Overall, we believe the ways which we consistently and meaningfully engage the children's families and the wider community in our decision making is clearly evident and our practices and services go 'above and beyond' what could be expected at the 'meeting' level.

Standard 3.1

20. Standard 3.1 is:

The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.

21. The regulatory authority found the service to be not demonstrating Exceeding themes 1, 2 and 3 for this standard.

22. Exceeding theme 1 is that:

Practice is embedded in service operations.

23. Exceeding theme 2 is that:

Practice is informed by critical reflection.

24. Exceeding theme 3 is that:

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

Standard 3.1: Assessment and Rating

25. Evidence collected by the regulatory authority in relation to Standard 3.1 is documented in the assessment evidence summary.

26. With reference to the service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), the following evidence was observed, sighted and/or discussed specific to Standard 3.1 and recorded in the assessment evidence summary:

- *The Preschool playground has open spaces that encourage participation in active and passive play, sensory play, sand and water play and gardening and provides for flexibility in experiences between indoors and outdoors. These spaces are designed to ensure inclusiveness of all children, and to support their diverse abilities and developmental stages.*
- *The outdoor play area is safe and secure, and intentionally designed to facilitate their access to the larger playground to extend on their development and learning and allow opportunities for the babies to interact with the older children, to reap the reciprocal benefits inherent in this approach.*
- *We have regular and consistently applied systems to monitor the condition of resources and furniture and to ensure that it remains safe, clean and well maintained.*

- A maintenance checklist is available to all educators and kept in the office. There is a completion date recorded on each maintenance item and they are all up to date.
 - All centre premises and equipment are vigilantly maintained, and we can call on a handyman employed to maintain [REDACTED] centres, who responds quickly and efficiently to maintenance and repair requests. We see this as a strength of the provider, as every educator is aware of the system to log any equipment and maintenance repairs or requests for replacement and knows that this will happen without delay sometimes experienced in other contexts.
 - The handyman re-purposes and recycles equipment and furniture where appropriate, in line with our strong focus on sustainability.
 - The approved provider explains that they have a handy man who does maintenance work for [REDACTED] services. He collects the unused and broken furniture and equipment from the service and donates to the Vinnies or recycling services.
 - Our centre has intentionally designed spaces to support every child's participation and inclusion at the service. Our classrooms are spacious, and our spaces are organised to ensure that every day experiences such as toileting, nappy changing, eating and sleeping, promote positive interactions and opportunities for learning.
 - We intentionally design spaces in the babies area to support babies to explore their environment using all of their senses, consciously minimising the time that they spend in high chairs, cots, etc.; and maximising opportunities for babies to be cuddled and held by educators, to build strong relationships and attachments.
 - Due to the low number of children enrolled in the babies room, this key practice was not able to observe. The nominated supervisor explains, as they currently have only one child enrolled in the babies room, the child has transitioned to the [REDACTED] room in agreement with the child's parents.
 - The Centre was refurbished with a fresh coat of paint, the flooring upgraded to a natural wood colour, and new timber furniture and sustainable resources were purchased to replace the previous.
 - The nominated supervisor and approved provider confirm, "We felt that the colour was too bright so we decided to change the colour to neutral tone."
27. Evidence of practice observed, sighted and/or discussed at the assessment and rating visit specific to Standard 3.1, as recorded in the assessment evidence summary, included:
- Day to day cleaning is maintained by educators.
 - A majority of the children's play area is under the built shade.
 - [REDACTED] room is currently utilised by the explorer's room as sleep/rest area.
 - The kitchen has open windows allowing easy access to the [REDACTED] room and the service foyer. Meals are delivered through the bench top between the [REDACTED] room and kitchen.

28. The authorised officer recorded the following analysis notes in the draft rating outcome summary specific to Standard 3.1:

- *The premises are appropriate for the service operation and supports the participation of children in the program. Procedures are in place to ensure the equipment and furniture are safe and well maintained. The design of the facilities is thoughtful and considerate for the effective operation of the service.*

Standard 3.1: Provider's feedback on draft report

29. In response to the draft report, the provider submitted an assessment and rating feedback form. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard.

30. With reference to "Acceptance of preloved toys", the provider said:

- *We believe we are exceeding in this area as we are embedding more sustainable practices by encouraging parent contribution for natural resource example when parent bring in preloved toys.*

31. With reference to "Change the physical environment according to children's interest", the provider said:

- *We believe that we are exceeding in this area as we put children's interest in the forefront and change our indoor and outdoor environment according to children's interest.*

Standard 3.1: Final Report

32. In response to the provider's feedback for this standard, the regulatory authority noted that, "Evidence was already considered when developing draft summaries. No Change of Rating."

33. The analysis notes recorded in the final rating outcome summary specific to Standard 3.1 are as documented in the draft report.

Standard 3.1: First Tier Review

34. In seeking a first tier review, the provider specified the following grounds for review, as detailed in their first tier review application form.

We are seeking a review of the ratings for the above Standards on the grounds that the regulatory authority, in making its determination, did not take into account all of the relevant evidence at the time of the assessment and additional background information is available in the attached document.

Theme 1- Practice is embedded in service operations

Officers who have assessed our service, have acknowledged that we have demonstrated Exceeding Theme 1 in 14 of the 15 standards. We believe that we have demonstrated this theme for all 15 standards including 3.1, evidence for which is highlighted in the attached table.

Our high-quality practice is demonstrated consistently and frequently across our service operation and all improvements are being applied across our Service daily.

Consistency across all educators, staff and age groups is clearly evident in all our services. We believe our practices and service go 'above and beyond' what could be expected at the 'meeting' level.

Theme 2- Practice is informed by critical reflection

Officers who have assessed our service have acknowledged that we have demonstrated Exceeding Theme 2 in 11 of the 15 standards. We believe that we have demonstrated this theme for all 15 standards including 3.1, 5.1, 5.2 and 7.2, evidence for which is highlighted in the attached table.

Our critical reflections are frequent and cover a wide variety of topics, they are genuine in that they occur out of circumstances and situations that are unique to our Service.

Our reflection process has various levels where reflections are made on an individual basis and as a whole service. We have documented the way our decisions have been informed by critical thinking and included reflections on our past practice and incidents that have occurred at the Service.

Our quality improvement journey demonstrates that we reflect regularly, both on our practice and ways we can extend the children's learning, development, safety and wellbeing.

We also reflect collaboratively with all educators and families to ensure reflection is critical and best practice is applied in our services. Educators, family members and community members are provided with different opportunities to provide feedback, which then forms the foundation of our critical reflective process.

Our reflections have led to change and action, and this process has been evident during assessment and rating and continues in our practices today. We believe our practices and services go 'above and beyond' what could be expected at the 'meeting' level.

Theme 3 Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Officers who have assessed our service have acknowledged that we have demonstrated Exceeding Theme 3 in 8 of the 15 standards. We believe that we have demonstrated this theme for all 15 standards including 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2 5.1, 5.2 and 7.2, evidence for which is highlighted in the attached table.

In order to better our service and practices, we have collaborated with a variety of health professionals, industry leaders and other sources, obtaining the most current information to ensure a safe and enhancing service for families and children.

We have sought and obtained input from families and the community on a wide variety of topics that are specifically relevant to our Service and Practice. We have provided evidence that demonstrates how our practices have been influenced and informed through the correlation between feedback gathered from stakeholders and educator's reflections.

Overall, we believe the ways which we consistently and meaningfully engage the children's families and the wider community in our decision making is clearly evident and

our practices and services go 'above and beyond' what could be expected at the 'meeting' level.

35. The provider applied for first tier review seeking recognition of Exceeding themes 1, 2 and 3 in relation to Standard 3.1.
36. In their first tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 3.1 and Exceeding themes 1, 2 and 3, the provider stated:
- *The facilities are purpose built and suitable for the delivery of an Early Childhood Education and Care Birth to 5 years program.*
 - *The design of the facility provides separate areas for administrative functions and children's activities.*
 - *A separate kitchen area, entrance foyer and storage areas are all provided for, and easily accessible, in the layout of the building.*
 - *All areas, both inside and outside, are clean and well maintained.*
 - *A ramp leads to the entrance of the property. And all other areas of the service cater for disability access, as the service and its facilities are single level and accessibly sound.*
 - *The learning spaces consistently support the children's emerging interests and aligned with the service statement of philosophy.*
 - *The service has engaged in a process of critically reflecting upon how the facility was being used and how it could be modified to better meet the needs of the children and families. As a result of this reflection the service underwent a renovation over the Christmas closure. Walls and flooring were all refurbished. And new resources were purchased.*
 - *After critically reflecting on the service environment in line with sustainable practices, we installed more Solar panels. We have also recycled all our unused electronics through the [REDACTED] initiative. We have moved from a paper-based service to having policies and family resources available and accessible electronically. In addition to recycling practices, the compost bin and worm farm, we also recycle our used cartridges through [REDACTED] so that our cartridges are remanufactured responsibly - we encourage our family community to recycle their toners/cartridges in our box too.*
 - *Children are involved in the activity setup of the environment between routines and in preparation of the following day. Children are encouraged to think about how the spaces and resources will be used by different groups of children and how they could present the environment in an inviting way for other children attending at different times. This was observed on the day of assessment and rating by officers and complemented.*
 - *Upkeep: we have a maintenance log/register at the centre which is updated by the educators and Nominated Supervisor. Our handyman visits the centre on an as-needed basis. He ensures that he completes the work outside of operational hours to ensure that there is no disturbance or risk to the children.*

- *At our service the importance of the physical environment is embedded in service operations and practices, our service setup is continuously changing according to the interests of the children and the environment and the setup is informed by critical reflection and helped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.*
 - *Families were being surveyed about how they would rate the room set up.*
 - *The design and arrangement of the indoor and outdoor spaces consistently supported engagement and sustained participation of children.*
 - *Staff members conduct checks of the premises and use the spaces to support each child's access.*
 - *Our service operates in a way that enables children to move freely between learning spaces, make decisions and supported the full participation of each child in a safe and stimulating learning environment.*
 - *Educators consistently reflected and positively promoted children's interaction with the space, materials, and each other. Educators' engaged with families about the children's individual experiences and considered this when arranging the environment.*
37. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at first tier review.
38. The first tier review panel considered evidence collected by the authorised officer as part of the assessment and rating visit. The panel also considered evidence submitted by the provider at assessment and rating and first tier review. Their deliberations are documented in the first tier review decision notice.
39. In relation to Standard 3.1 and Exceeding theme 1 the panel stated:
- *The panel considered the authorised officer's notes and acknowledged that play spaces at the service promote an inclusive environment for children, and that the service has systems in place to ensure the premise is safe and in good repair. However, the panel felt that this evidence reflects a meeting standard and was limited in demonstrating embedded practice relating to the design and maintenance of the service's physical environment.*
 - *The panel reviewed the evidence supplied by the approved provider and noted that some design features facilitate access for children. The panel also acknowledged the approved provider's claims that the learning spaces support children's emerging interests which aligns with the service's statement of philosophy. However, the panel agreed that the evidence provided was insufficient in demonstrating exceeding embedded practice for Standard 3.1.*
40. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 1 for Standard 3.1 as No.
41. In relation to Standard 3.1 and Exceeding theme 2 the panel stated:
- *The panel reviewed the evidence collected by the authorised officer and found no recorded evidence for critical reflection processes or practices at the service in relation to this standard.*

- *The panel discussed the approved provider's submissions and noted the physical environment survey completed by educators before and after recent service renovations. However, this evidence was limited in demonstrating critical reflection processes and how it informs practice, as no comments were recorded by educators. Similarly, the approved provider's evidence of updated room plan noting areas added as children showed interest were insufficient in demonstrating robust discussion or critical reflection processes across the service premises.*
42. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 2 for Standard 3.1 as No.
43. In relation to Standard 3.1 and Exceeding theme 3 the panel stated:
- *The panel considered the authorised officer's notes and found no recorded evidence of engagement with families or the community in relation to Standard 3.1.*
 - *The panel discussed the evidence supplied by the approved provider and acknowledged the physical environment survey completed by families before and after recent service renovations. However, the evidence provided was limited in demonstrating how suggestions and comments made by families were considered or implemented by educators. Similarly, the panel recognised the survey completed by families and a support worker on room set up, but found it limited in showing how this guided practice.*
44. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 3 for Standard 3.1 as No.

Standard 3.1: Second Tier Review

45. At second tier review, the provider sought recognition of Exceeding themes 1, 2 and 3 for Standard 3.1.
46. In their second tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 3.1 and Exceeding themes 1, 2 and 3, the provider stated:
- *The facilities are purpose built and suitable for the delivery of an Early Childhood Education and Care Birth to 5 years program.*
 - *The design of the facility provides separate areas for administrative functions and children's activities.*
 - *A separate kitchen area, entrance foyer and storage areas are all provided for, and easily accessible, in the layout of the building.*
 - *All areas, both inside and outside, are clean and well maintained. The service has systems in place to ensure the premise is safe and in good repair.*
 - *A ramp leads to the entrance of the property. And all other areas of the service cater for disability access, as the service and its facilities are single level and accessibly sound.*
 - *The learning spaces consistently support the children's emerging interests and aligned with the service statement of philosophy.*

- *The service has engaged in a process of critically reflecting upon how the facility was being used and how it could be modified to better meet the needs of the children and families. As a result of this reflection the service underwent a renovation over the Christmas closure. Walls and flooring were all refurbished. And new resources were purchased.*
- *All spaces including outdoor and indoor the building fixtures and fittings support the access and full participation of every child attending [REDACTED] and visitors. The environment and the design of the service positively supports and promotes children's interactions with the space, materials, and their peers. The environment is design in a flexible way to stimulate and enhance each child's learning and development.*
- *All educators and families are familiar with the physical environment, the appropriateness of furniture, equipment and resources, the design of the facility and environment supports inclusive access of each child. And promotes each child's engagement in the program.*
- *After critically reflecting on the service environment in line with sustainable practices, we installed more Solar panels. We have also recycled all our unused electronics through the [REDACTED] initiative. We have moved from a paper-based service to having policies and family resources available and accessible electronically. In addition to recycling practices, the compost bin and worm farm, we also recycle our used cartridges through [REDACTED] so that our cartridges are remanufactured responsibly- we encourage our family community to recycle their toners/cartridges in our box too.*
- *Children are involved in the activity setup of the environment between routines and in preparation of the following day. Children are encouraged to think about how the spaces and resources will be used by different groups of children and how they could present the environment in an inviting way for other children attending at different times. This was observed on the day of assessment and rating by officers and complemented.*
- *Upkeep: we have a maintenance log/register at the centre which is updated by the educators and Nominated Supervisor. Our handyman visits the centre on an as-needed basis. He ensures that he completes the work outside of operational hours to ensure that there is no disturbance or risk to the children.*
- *At our service the importance of the physical environment is embedded in service operations and practices, our service setup is continuously changing according to the interests of the children and the environment and the setup is informed by critical reflection and helped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.*
- *Families were being surveyed about how they would rate the room set up.*
- *The design and arrangement of the indoor and outdoor spaces consistently supported engagement and sustained participation of children.*
- *Staff members conduct checks of the premises and use the spaces to support each child's access.*

- *Our service operates in a way that enables children to move freely between learning spaces, make decisions and supported the full participation of each child in a safe and stimulating learning environment.*
 - *Educators consistently reflected and positively promoted children's interaction with the space, materials, and each other. Educators' engaged with families about the children's individual experiences and considered this when arranging the environment.*
 - *The design of the physical environment reflects the culture and community of our service.*
 - *Opportunities for communication and feedback from families and community members is embedded in our organisation.*
 - *Based on the feedback received, the approved provider has engaged a company to quote up the outdoor play yards for a renovation. [REDACTED] specialises in the supply and install of wet pour rubber soft fall and soft fall synthetic grass surfaces to child care centres. They also supply quality playground equipment and experienced installers to meet the specific design and safety needs of the children, service and regulatory authority.*
47. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at second tier review.
48. The provider gave a further submission, included as a final evidence matrix and supporting evidence, after reviewing documents submitted by the regulatory authority.
49. Specific to Standard 3.1 and Exceeding theme 1, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:
- *Closing checklist template saved as evidence to show that as a service we have continuity of practice when it comes to ensuring our physical environment is safe and has the ability to consistently support the children's interests.*
 - *Opening checklist saved as evidence to show that we are consistent in the open and set up of our service. Our practice is to ensure we are providing a safe, hygienic, stimulating environment for the children each day.*
 - *Bathroom cleaning checklist saved as evidence to show that we have embedded practices throughout daily routines to ensure the upkeep of the service is maintained at a high standard.*
 - *WHS / Safety Audits to show we are consistently ensuring the facility and resources are safe and well maintained.*
 - *Daily room cleaning checklist to show that the daily practices for the educators include ensuring each room including its furniture and resources are maintained on a continuous basis.*
 - *Hazard Identification form to show effective communication between staff, management, and maintenance workers.*
50. Specific to Standard 3.1 and Exceeding theme 2, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:

- *Room set up plans with critical reflections to show educators are taking on feedback from families, children and wider services (■■■■ Inclusion Support) and themselves are observing day to day areas for improvement to ensure our facility consistently meets the needs of the children.*

51. Specific to Standard 3.1 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:

- *Evidence of room set up ideas conversed about with staff during staff meetings. This included input from ■■■■ inclusion support to show that after engagement with wider community services we have reflected and implemented new practices.*
- *Evidence of implemented input and ideas throughout the room as a result of the staff meeting.*

Panel considerations

52. In considering whether the service demonstrated Exceeding themes 1, 2 and 3 for Standard 3.1, the panel remarked that examples submitted as evidence were not sufficient to demonstrate practice at the exceeding level.
53. The panel noted the service's efforts to create systems and practices specific to the design of the facilities. They remarked that the evidence submitted as examples of embedded practice, for example the maintenance register, cleaning checklists and safety audits, etc., would be evidence expected of a service Meeting NQS rather than Exceeding NQS.
54. The panel highlighted one example of embedded practice specific to sustainability as documented in the service's QIP. The QIP notes that the service had skylights fitted to allow natural light to filter in the rooms, with children given responsibility to ensure lights are turned off when not in use to support their understanding of their environmental responsibilities. The panel added that this example alone was not sufficient to demonstrate exceeding practice.
55. The panel also noted that the only improvement sought in the service's QIP specific to this standard was to keep the outdoor shed clean and orderly. They added that this specific outcome did not address the exceeding themes for this standard. Further, they were unable to find evidence of the service's self-assessment process and development of the QIP specific to this standard.
56. The panel commented on staff meeting minutes, which documented what staff weren't doing to maintain the upkeep of the facilities. In their view, this was evidence that practice specific to this standard wasn't embedded, rather than evidence that it was.
57. The panel noted that the evidence submitted specific to Exceeding theme 2 was more of a description, evaluation and/or reflection of practice rather than evidence of critical reflection, which requires a deeper level of analysis, examination and critical thinking, and consideration of multiple views and perspectives. The panel cited as one example the reflection about pre-loved toys and subsequent communication to families expressing a preference for donations of wooden toys in their efforts to move towards more sustainable practices.

58. The panel also commented on the surveys completed by families and educators before and after the service's renovations. They noted that seeking feedback in this way, while positive, offered information as part of an evaluative process. The panel were unable to find clear and substantiative evidence of how this information was used to inform robust discussion or as a tool for critical reflection. Nor was there evidence demonstrating how this information had informed practice.
59. Drawing on a comment from one family in the survey about a lack of shelter at the entrance to the service on wet days, the panel noted this as an opportunity to undertake further investigation and a deeper level of discussion and analysis involving educators and families to explore new possibilities and, potentially, inform changes in practice.
60. The panel noted that evidence submitted specific to Exceeding theme 3 was more demonstrative of the service seeking information from or imparting information to families, for example seeking feedback from surveys, requests for pre-loved toys and informing families of solar panels on the roof. They encouraged the service to rethink their understanding of what meaningful engagement with families and/or the community looks like at the exceeding level, including how this engagement is used to shape practice.
61. The panel concluded that the evidence provided was insufficient in demonstrating exceeding practice specific to this standard.

Panel decision

62. The panel decided, by consensus, to confirm the rating for Standard 3.1 as Meeting NQS.

Standard 4.1

63. Standard 4.1 is:
Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.
64. The regulatory authority found the service to be demonstrating Exceeding themes 1 and 2 but not Exceeding theme 3 for this standard.
65. Exceeding theme 3 is that:
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

Standard 4.1: Assessment and Rating

66. Evidence collected by the regulatory authority in relation to Standard 4.1 is documented in the assessment evidence summary.
67. With reference to the service's QIP, the following evidence was observed, sighted and/or discussed specific to Standard 4.1 and recorded in the assessment evidence summary:
 - *Each room gets [REDACTED] hours to reflect and program each week which is used by the educators regardless of their position in the room. This is not stated in the roster but flexible as the nominated supervisor covers these hours. The nominated supervisor explains, "Educators also get spare non-contact time if we have a low number of children."*

- *Every educator is responsible for the room they work in. Educators communicate through room communication diaries keeping up to date with staffing and routines of the day in response to uncertainty.*
 - *We have the same educators in each room to support strong attachments with children and families and enhance consistency in their care and education.*
 - *Our main asset is our staff who have been with us for many years, some are due for long service leave and many others have been with [REDACTED] for over [REDACTED] years.*
 - *Our pool of casual staff and part-time educators are called upon to cover the roster of an educator who may call in sick or be on leave, also to ensure continuity of care and education for the children and families through familiar educators who provide stability and consistency in children's learning and development.*
 - *The service retains staff by offering extra shifts to part-time educators during school holidays or when educators have capacity to work more days.*
 - *The weekly roster is given to educators in advance, to allow educators to plan and be prepared to work for the week to ensure continuity and consistency for all children.*
 - *We consider the family commitments of our educators, keeping in mind the importance of a happy family unit, and accommodate their requests when possible as the service recognises diversity in staff needs and promotes cultural inclusiveness. The service is flexible with the roster accommodating educators' request to change shifts or for leave. The nominated supervisor tells, "Our educators take initiative to offer a shift swap for other educators if needed."*
 - *All educators share the house-keeping tasks and responsibilities equally (e.g. cleaning up after mealtimes, mopping floors, cleaning toilets and outdoor play areas) for maintaining clean and hygienic facilities at all times by planning a fair roster.*
 - *Our in-house cook holds a Food Preparation and Menu Planning certificate from Munch & Move.*
 - *The Approved Provider treats each team member as an extension of her own family. We socialise together, celebrate milestones together and even endure trying times together. This key practice is confirmed and moved from standard 7.2.*
 - *Staff dinner and Christmas party are regularly organised and paid by the approved provider. The nominated supervisor adds that during A&R preparation days, the approved provider provided lunch for all staff members and staff members were able to make menu suggestions and chose what they want to eat.*
68. Evidence of practice observed, sighted and/or discussed at the assessment and rating visit specific to Standard 4.1, as recorded in the assessment evidence summary, included:
- *A weekly roster displayed on each room door contains shifts of all room educators and number of children on each day.*

- The service promotes diversity within staffing. Staff members are from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds such [REDACTED]
- The nominated supervisor worked at [REDACTED] service since [REDACTED]. She left the service in [REDACTED] due to a move to another state and returned this year.
- There are 8 children with 2 educators at 8:22am [ACECQA note: Evidence relates to the [REDACTED] group].
- First aid and child protection trainings are annually offered to all educators and paid by the service.
- The previous director internally transferred to [REDACTED] service in [REDACTED] due to a distance from home.
- An orientation session is organised for new staff members prior to the commencement. New staff members are encouraged to read and familiarise with the service policies and procedures during orientation.
- There are 7 children with 3 educators at 8:45am [ACECQA note: Evidence relates to the [REDACTED] group].
- There are 8 children in the [REDACTED] room with 2 educators. One child is outside with one educator at 8:50am.
- Staff handbook is emailed to new educators.
- The service purchased the early childhood learning hub package supporting educators' professional development. All educators have access to the hub and can freely choose the learning modules.
- There are 5 children with 1 educator at 8:45am [ACECQA note: Evidence relates to the [REDACTED] group].
- The approved provider engages in the whole recruitment process herself. This includes the selection of candidates and interview process.
- A working directly with children record is kept in all rooms recording each room educator's in and out of the room.
- Opportunities are provided for the educators to choose the room they wish to work for the next year. Based on the conversation with the nominated supervisor, the educator is allocated to the room.
- There are 15 children with 4 educators at 9:35am [ACECQA note: Evidence relates to the [REDACTED] group].
- A [REDACTED] workshop was provided on March 2019 to [REDACTED] educators at the [REDACTED] service.
- All staff receive a bonus from the approved provider at the end of the year in the staff Christmas party.
- Dinner is provided for staff meetings.

- *The service introduces a new educator to families via [REDACTED] post, newsletter, email and introductory poster. Families are informed of the new educator's background, experience and qualification.*
 - *The newest employee is an educator who has been working at the service for a year. The educator says, "I saw the advertisement on [REDACTED] and applied for the job."*
 - *The nominated supervisor states, "Trainees get [REDACTED] hours of study time every week. We offer help and support their learning."*
 - *The approved provider explains, "During orientation, we arrange time for the new educator to spend time with the educator who will leave as part of a handover process."*
 - *The service encourages educators' continuous growth and ongoing development in the profession. Three educators are currently studying to update their qualification.*
 - *All educators hold an early childhood education and care qualification.*
69. The authorised officer recorded the following analysis notes in the draft rating outcome summary specific to Standard 4.1:
- *Staffing organisation across the service supports children's learning and development, at the same time ensuring ratios are meeting the requirements. The service has considered the arrangement of educators to maintain consistent practice and promote continuity for children and families with access to familiar educators. The service supports educators in various ways enabling to retain them.*

Standard 4.1: Provider's feedback on draft report

70. In response to the draft report, the provider submitted an assessment and rating feedback form. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard.
71. With reference to "Staffing arrangements enhance children's development and learning", the provider said:
- *There is evidence to show and exceeding practice by rostering staff enabling children to make choices to access both indoor and outdoor environment during their time at school.*
72. With reference to "Continuity of staff", the provider said,
- *We believe we exceed in this area as we roster extra staff during a child's orientation or transition period, to make it smooth for the child and their families.*

Standard 4.1: Final Report

73. In response to the provider's feedback for this standard, the regulatory authority provided an AO comment, highlighted in red text, noting that Exceeding theme 2 had been amended. They also noted that, "Evidence was already considered when developing draft summaries. No Change of Rating."
74. The analysis notes recorded in the final rating outcome summary specific to Standard 4.1 state:

- *Staffing organisation across the service supports children's learning and development, at the same time ensuring ratios are meeting the requirements. The service has considered and reflected on the arrangement of educators to maintain consistent practice and promote continuity for children and families with access to familiar educators. The service supports educators in various ways enabling high staff retention.*

Standard 4.1: First Tier Review

75. The provider applied for first tier review, seeking recognition of Exceeding theme 3 in relation to Standard 4.1.
76. In their first tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 4.1 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider stated:
- *The staffing arrangements are always consistent with a regular casual pool that is familiar with the service policy and procedures, children and families, so that when staff are on leave the service delivery is consistent and familiar to all.*
 - *Communication amongst the staff ensures consistency and continuity in service delivery.*
 - *We have lunchtime cover, crib breaks and programming cover from casual relief staff. This also facilitates opportunities for all staff to engage with children and families across the groups in ways that support positive connections, continuity, and predictability.*
 - *There is reflection and consideration given to the organisation when rostering to ensure educators strengths are appropriately utilised. For instance, educators are rostered with children whom they have well established relationships with and whose routines are known.*
 - *All educators have been with the organisation for [REDACTED] years some have been with the organisation for [REDACTED] years providing opportunity for relationships that were maintained [REDACTED] years and educators had worked with most children in the family. This was favoured by the officer during assessment and rating, as she commended the Approved Provider on this.*
 - *This supports children's learning and development and engagement with families that have also been long standing to the service.*
 - *Educators are responsive to learning relationships, this is evident in practice and educators support positive experiences for the children. The organisation of educators is reflected upon and support children and families to engage in interactions with educators' that they were familiar with. Engagement with families is consistently sought to share each child's learning journey.*
 - *The approved provider supports the flexibility of staffing arrangements to ensure that the needs of the children and families are met on an ongoing basis.*
 - *Families provide feedback and contribute to reflective practices by completing surveys.*
 - *There is a sense of family in our service. We celebrate the joys of our educators and share in their happy news as do the families.*

77. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at first tier review.
78. The panel's deliberations specific to Standard 4.1 and Exceeding theme 3 are documented in the first tier review decision notice. It states:
- *The panel discussed the evidence prepared by the authorised officer and acknowledged that the service notifies families when new educators start at the service. However, no other evidence was recorded relating to staffing arrangements which would support the attainment of theme 3.*
 - *The approved provider's evidence was considered by the panel, who found that, although it showed that the organisation of educators supports positive relationships with children and families, it did not demonstrate how practice for this standard is shaped by input and engagement with families or the community.*
79. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 3 as No for Standard 4.1.

Standard 4.1: Second Tier Review

80. At second tier review, the provider sought recognition of Exceeding theme 3 for Standard 4.1.
81. In their second tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 4.1 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider stated:
- *The staffing arrangements are always consistent with a regular casual pool that is familiar with the service policy and procedures, children and families, so that when staff are on leave the service delivery is consistent and familiar to all.*
 - *Communication amongst the staff ensures consistency and continuity in service delivery.*
 - *We have lunchtime cover, crib breaks and programming cover from casual relief staff. This also facilitates opportunities for all staff to engage with children and families across the groups in ways that support positive connections, continuity, and predictability.*
 - *There is reflection and consideration given to the organisation when rostering to ensure educators strengths are appropriately utilised. For instance, educators are rostered with children whom they have well established relationships with and whose routines are known.*
 - *All educators have been with the organisation for [REDACTED] years some have been with the organisation for [REDACTED] years providing opportunity for relationships that were maintained [REDACTED] years and educators had worked with most children in the family. This was favoured by the officer during assessment and rating, as she commended the Approved Provider on this. This supports children's learning and development and engagement with families that have also been long standing to the service.*
 - *Educators are responsive to learning relationships, this is evident in practice and educators support positive experiences for the children. The organisation of educators is reflected upon and support children and families to engage in interactions with*

educators' that they were familiar with. Engagement with families is consistently sought to share each child's learning journey.

- Families have the opportunity to engage in [REDACTED] surveys' where they have the opportunity to nominate and share experiences they have had with educators over the months and highlight their efforts. This practice of involving families in [REDACTED] nomination was initiated by a family Member who provided feedback and was followed up with an email.*
- The approved provider supports the flexibility of staffing arrangements to ensure that the needs of the children and families are met on an ongoing basis.*
- Families provide feedback and contribute to reflective practices by completing surveys.*
- There is a sense of family in our service. We celebrate the joys of our educators and share in their happy news as do the families.*
- Within our service the culture and diversity of staff is reflected by engaging with families and children about cultures and educators ensuring every child/families at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is welcomed and treated equally. As well as this we welcome families to help us celebrate cultural celebrations for example [REDACTED]*
- We have a staff wall that informs parents of each staff member in each room as well as their qualification and personal philosophy. In addition to this as a continuous practice we announce and new staff or staffing change on [REDACTED] to ensure clear communication to all staff and families*
- All educators are aware that diversity is a strength and work together to promote a culture on inclusiveness and a sense of belonging for all children, families, and community. Decision making and problem solving in regard to ethical issues that occur within the service are informed by the voices of families and communities.*
- The service has a termination of care survey where families are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the educators, service management and overall service provided. We are pleased to see positive feedback on our service and educators.*

82. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at second tier review.

83. The provider gave a further submission, included as a final evidence matrix and supporting evidence, after reviewing documents submitted by the regulatory authority. This did not include any further submissions specific to Standard 4.1 and Exceeding theme 3.

Panel considerations

84. In considering whether the service demonstrated Exceeding theme 3 for Standard 4.1, the panel noted that not all of the evidence submitted related to meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

85. The panel commented on one piece of evidence specific to this standard about the provision of lunch cover to address a need for more staff to cover lunch breaks. This was viewed as a description of what occurred, without a deep level of analysis and critical

thinking. Nor was there any clear connection of how this change in practice was shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

86. The panel remarked that much of the evidence submitted for this standard related to the service seeking information from or imparting to families, rather than demonstrating meaningful engagement and how that engagement shaped practice. For example, the service noted that they received positive feedback from families in their termination of care survey. However, there was no detail about how this information was used to inform critical reflection and/or shape practice.
87. Using another example regarding the transition of children between rooms, it was noted in the evidence submitted that parents are informed about children's transition experience via [REDACTED] posts. The panel noted that no detail was provided specific to the level of family engagement, input and/or involvement in decision-making that occurred in relation to children's transitions between rooms.
88. Similarly, the panel commented on the [REDACTED] survey, seeking feedback from families about whether or not staffing arrangements support the learning and development of each child. The panel questioned the extent to which this demonstrated meaningful engagement. They were also unable to establish a clear link between the feedback received and how this had shaped practice.
89. The panel encouraged the service to broaden their understanding of who their community is in relation to Exceeding theme 3, noting the difference between the [REDACTED] community and the local community specific to [REDACTED]. The panel noted the service's intention of creating a sense of family within the service. However, in their view, Exceeding theme 3 requires a broader understanding of community.
90. The panel concluded that the evidence provided was insufficient in demonstrating Exceeding theme 3 specific to this standard.

Panel decision

91. The panel decided, by consensus, to confirm the rating for Standard 4.1 as Meeting NQS.

Standard 4.2

92. Standard 4.2 is:
Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
93. The regulatory authority found the service to be demonstrating Exceeding themes 1 and 2 but not Exceeding theme 3 for this standard.
94. Exceeding theme 3 is that:
Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

Standard 4.2: Assessment and Rating

95. Evidence collected by the regulatory authority in relation to Standard 4.2 is documented in the assessment evidence summary.

96. With reference to the service's QIP, the following evidence was observed, sighted and/or discussed specific to Standard 4.2 and recorded in the assessment evidence summary:
- *We draw on the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child and reflect on these guiding documents in team meetings and professional discussions to guide our thinking about practice.*
 - *'Code of Ethics' and 'United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child' are included in the staff package and [REDACTED] book of individual educators.*
 - *We are guided by the National Quality Framework, and the principles and practices of the approved learning framework, to inform responsive and ethical interactions between management, educators, children, families and communities.*
 - *Our more experienced staff mentor and support new educators and see this as both a professional responsibility and a privilege.*
 - *An educator who is currently studying Cert III in Early Childhood Education and Care is supported and assisted by senior room educators, including the room leader on programming and observation. The senior educators oversee the educator's work and provide feedback.*
 - *The nominated supervisor sources books, research articles and provocations for educators to read for professional development, and webinars and workshops are arranged for educators to attend in areas they are interested.*
 - *'Early Childhood Curriculum' and 'Effective planning and documentation methods in education and care service' are sighted. The nominated supervisor also brings useful information to share with the educators allowing them to borrow the resources.*
 - *The weekly reflections of the program are evaluated and discussed by the team members in the room, and changes are made accordingly after having open discussions, e.g. in the [REDACTED] room the dramatic play area and the construction area were changed to allow children to interact in a more respectful and responsible manner, giving them more space and a sense of ownership. This change reflected our educator's self-awareness of the professional standards supporting their own practice.*
 - *Professional support and guidance is given, as well as voicing appreciation for the good work done, commending the educators for their dedication and commitment to their profession. This ensures continuity of staff, knowing that they are valued and supported in their work and promotes dedication and commitment to high quality practice.*
 - *Most of the educators are mature and have great experience. They take the new and less experienced team members under their wing to mentor them, guiding them in our centre practices and procedures.*
 - *Our multicultural team of educators actively contribute to our multicultural program. They give presentations on their ethnic culture by showing pictures, coming dressed in their cultural dress, bringing in flags, musical instruments and artefacts from their country of origin and singing and dancing to music specific from their country of origin.*



Our [redacted] educators set up a [redacted] the [redacted] educators [redacted]
[redacted]; educators from [redacted]
[redacted]; and educators of [redacted]
[redacted] background offer great knowledge of [redacted] culture.

- We exchange resources and ideas with our [redacted] and network with them regularly, comparing and reflecting on each other's practices to support each other.
[redacted]
- There are management meetings twice a year where all director of [redacted] gather and network. A combined Christmas party of [redacted] at the end of the year allows the staff and educators to network with other [redacted] services and develop a sense of community.
- Combined professional development workshops are organised for educators to meet and interact with educators from other centres and form positive relationships based on mutual respect and equity.
- Regular formal and informal staff/team meetings are held when we draw ideas, suggestions and skills from each other and evaluate and reflect on each other's work and educational approaches as well build on supporting each other as a team.
- The nominated supervisor confirms, "Formal staff meetings are conducted once a month. Informal meetings are organised if there is an issue that requires an immediate response."
- Meetings are also used to brainstorm ideas, overcome challenges, share resources, and have open discussions aimed at further improving/changing the planning and programming structure.
- Minutes of the meeting are distributed for all educators to refer back to and are filed for future reference.
- Meeting minutes are given to all staff members beforehand however copies of minutes are available in the office. Latest staff meeting minutes are placed in the staff room.
- Ethical principles and professional standards are used to guide decision making and practice in the service.
- The nominated supervisor explains, "In case of transition, we contact parents first asking if they think their child is ready and then we talk to educators getting their opinions on the child's transition. Regarding staffing, we are respectful of their choices. If they are comfortable with a particular room or educator, we support it."
- The centre philosophy and code of ethics reflects educators' responsibilities towards parents, families, children, colleagues and community.
- Educators have a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of NQS, EYLF, our philosophy, policies and procedures and implement EYLF in all rooms, under the mentorship and guidance of the Educational Leader.

- *The NQS and EYLF are discussed during staff meetings to continually engage with and deepen understandings of the concepts and components of the document.*
- *The NQS and EYLF are the two main topics for regular staff meetings. Key concepts and standards of the NQS were constantly unpacked during staff meetings through discussions and reflections. Reflections on programming are evident in the meeting minutes for example, linking to the learning outcomes, capturing children's voices, drawing on children's ideas and intentional teaching are constantly encouraged and reminded.*

97. Evidence of practice observed, sighted and/or discussed at the assessment and rating visit specific to Standard 4.2, as recorded in the assessment evidence summary, included:

- *A simplified version of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is on display in all rooms.*
- *Educators visit [REDACTED] services once a year to learn their exceptional programs and teaching strategies. The nominated supervisor explains, "Each service showcases their excellence in line with the seven NQS. Our service will showcase after the A&R."*
- *The nominated supervisor says, "Educators are proactive in contributing ideas. An educator contributed an idea of children drawing educators' portraits after reading an interesting post on the Facebook EYLF forum."*
- *All educators have an individual [REDACTED] book. The book contains the code of ethics and job description, the educator's individual philosophy and service's philosophy.*
- *Principles and practices and five learning outcomes of the EYLF are displayed in the curriculum planning area of the room.*
- *Educators exchange and share ideas via WhatsApp. The nominated supervisor adds, "I share exciting art and craft activities that educators can do with children."*
- *Educators who have attended the professional development workshop or seminar share with other educators at a staff meeting.*
- *"(Educator' name), can you please come outside?", educators communicate each other on ratios and negotiate supervision points.*
- *The nominated supervisor created the 'Rhymes and songs ideas' and collated recipes for cooking experiences ideas. These resources are kept in the office for educators to borrow.*
- *The service has implemented a staff of the month system to celebrate a staff member's achievement and hard work. The nominated supervisor and approved provider reflected on this and will change it to praise all educators on their strengths in the staff meetings and inspire other educators.*
- *"I am going to prepare morning tea now", an educator communicates with another room educator negotiating responsibilities.*

- *The service shares their goals and philosophy with new staff members through the staff handbook. It also includes but not limited to, 'conditions of employment', 'WH&S', 'general rules' and 'important policies'.*

98. The authorised officer recorded the following analysis notes in the draft rating outcome summary specific to Standard 4.2:

- *Educators communicate effectively and respectfully at all times. The approved provider and nominated supervisor provide a supportive workplace where educators are valued and respected. Professional standards are highlighted across the service operation guiding educators' practice.*

Standard 4.2: Provider's feedback on draft report

99. In response to the draft report, the provider submitted an assessment and rating feedback form. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard.

100. With reference to "Introduction of staff to families", the provider said:

- *If a new staff member; permanent or casual begins at the centre and introduction of the said member is displayed at the foyer and a [REDACTED] post is sent to all families.*

101. With reference to "Extra staff rostered to for the smooth functioning of events", the provider said:

- *We are exceeding in this area as we always roster extra staff during parent's teacher interviews as well as during events such as parent's day, grandparent's day, end of year get together etc.*

Standard 4.2: Final Report

102. In response to the provider's feedback for this standard, the regulatory authority noted that, "Evidence was already considered when developing draft summaries. No Change of Rating."

103. The analysis notes recorded in the final rating outcome summary specific to Standard 4.2 are as documented in the draft report.

Standard 4.2: First Tier Review

104. The provider applied for first tier review, seeking recognition of Exceeding theme 3 in relation to Standard 4.2.

105. In their first tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 4.2 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider stated:

- *Staff demonstrated respect for each other and collaboration in their day-to-day work. The skills and talents of individual members is recognised and utilised as part of an effective team, understanding the strengths and skills of one another.*
- *Educators shared tasks and all contributed to the different aspects of the service implementation, including documentation, working directly with children, cleaning tasks and administrative duties.*

- *Staff meetings, professional development, staff appraisals and networking opportunities all support the sharing of information and engagement in professional learning opportunities where staff can openly share practices and ideas across our service chains.*
- *Staff draw on each other's skills and knowledge to enhance their own work and the work of the team in delivering a high-quality program.*
- *Networking and collaboration opportunities are utilised to both share and gain knowledge and information with others in the community. This included local kindergarten and primary school teacher networks. Educators shared tasks and all contributed to the different aspects of the service implementation, including documentation, direct work with children, cleaning tasks and administrative duties.*
- *Staff meetings, professional development, staff appraisals and networking opportunities all supported the sharing of information and engagement in professional learning opportunities.*
- *Staff draw on each other's skills and knowledge to enhance their own work and the work of the team in delivering a high-quality program.*
- *Networking opportunities are utilised to both share and gain knowledge and information with others in the community. This included local kindergarten and primary school teacher networks. Educators demonstrated an ongoing commitment to a process of critical reflection and supporting each other in continually refining and improving practice.*
- *Mutual respect is demonstrated through interactions and a positive calm environment is always evident. Educators are always observed to communicate effectively, share tasks and routines, consistently share information and interesting aspects of the session and share responsibilities within each room.*
- *Educators demonstrate a commitment to quality practices, collaboration that affirmed, challenged and supported each other and critical reflection of professional standards. These guided practice, interactions and relationships across the service.*
- *Team building: We recognise that successful teams have a positive attitude towards change and are open to new ways of working. We believe that engaging in team building is beneficial for a positive service culture and engaging educators to be part of continuous improvement of the service.*
- *Managers of [REDACTED] meet for PD training, share ideas and networking.*

106. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at first tier review.

107. The panel's deliberations specific to Standard 4.2 and Exceeding theme 3 are documented in the first tier review decision notice. It states:

- *The panel considered the evidence prepared by the authorised officer and acknowledged that the service networks with [REDACTED] services, and exchange ideas. However, the panel agreed that this reflected a meeting practice and was insufficient in demonstrating meaningful and ongoing engagement with the community.*

- *The panel reviewed the evidence supplied by the approved provider, and determined that, although it also confirms some collaboration with other services, the evidence was insufficient in demonstrating that decisions regarding practice for this standard are informed by meaningful engagement with families and the community.*

108. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 3 as No for Standard 4.2.

Standard 4.2: Second Tier Review

109. At second tier review, the provider sought recognition of Exceeding theme 3 for Standard 4.2.

110. In their second tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 4.2 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider stated:

- *Staff demonstrated respect for each other and collaboration in their day-to-day work. The skills and talents of individual members is recognised and utilised as part of an effective team, understanding the strengths and skills of one another.*
- *Educators shared tasks and all contributed to the different aspects of the service implementation, including documentation, working directly with children, cleaning tasks and administrative duties.*
- *Staff meetings, professional development, staff appraisals and networking opportunities all support the sharing of information and engagement in professional learning opportunities where staff can openly share practices and ideas across our service chains.*
- *Staff draw on each other's skills and knowledge to enhance their own work and the work of the team in delivering a high-quality program.*
- *Networking and collaboration opportunities are utilised to both share and gain knowledge and information with others in the community. This included local kindergarten and primary school teacher networks. Educators shared tasks and all contributed to the different aspects of the service implementation, including documentation, direct work with children, cleaning tasks and administrative duties.*
- *Staff are extremely focused on creating and sustaining a very high level of positivity and morale within the service this includes hosting events with families and communities to include them in creating a family like atmosphere that is collaborative, respectful and ethical.*
- *Staff meetings, professional development, staff appraisals and networking opportunities all supported the sharing of information and engagement in professional learning opportunities.*
- *Staff draw on each other's skills and knowledge to enhance their own work and the work of the team in delivering a high-quality program.*
- *Networking opportunities are utilised to both share and gain knowledge and information with others in the community. This included local kindergarten and primary school*

teacher networks Educators demonstrated an ongoing commitment to a process of critical reflection and supporting each other in continually refining and improving practice.

- *Mutual respect is demonstrated through interactions and a positive calm environment is always evident. Educators are always observed to communicate effectively, share tasks and routines, consistently share information and interesting aspects of the session and share responsibilities within each room.*
- *Educators demonstrate a commitment to quality practices, collaboration that affirmed, challenged and supported each other and critical reflection of professional standards. These guided practice, interactions and relationships across the service.*
- *Team building: We recognise that successful teams have a positive attitude towards change and are open to new ways of working. We believe that engaging in team building is beneficial for a positive service culture and engaging educators to be part of continuous improvement of the service.*
- *Managers of our [REDACTED] meet for PD training, share ideas and networking.*

111. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at second tier review.

112. The provider gave a further submission, included as a final evidence matrix and supporting evidence, after reviewing documents submitted by the regulatory authority.

113. Specific to Standard 4.2 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:

- *Evidence that we value and act on parent feedback. This is done through different communication avenues including our regular staff meetings. Minutes attached to show we include this into meetings and regularly converse and act on feedback.*
- *Philosophy reviews from staff, families, and wider community members ([REDACTED] inclusion support staff) to show the consistent valued feedback from all aspects of the service.*

Panel considerations

114. In considering whether the service demonstrated Exceeding theme 3 for Standard 4.2, the panel remarked that while statements were made about what the service was doing, there was a lack of evidence demonstrating how practice was shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community to warrant a higher rating for this standard.

115. For example, ensuring new families are made to feel welcome, as documented in the service's QIP specific to this standard and exceeding theme, was noted as sound practice at the Meeting NQS level. Further, seeking feedback via the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was not seen as the deeper level of engagement required for this theme. Nor was it clear from the evidence submitted how this feedback had been used to shape practice.

116. Drawing on another example, the provider submitted three examples of position descriptions and key responsibilities. For the position of sustainability officer, one of [REDACTED] duties listed was to "engage families and communities in sustainability practice". The panel

was unable to find evidence about how this role was carried out and how this engagement has informed the service's sustainable practices.

117. The panel also noted a potential misunderstanding of what was required for Exceeding theme 3. They commented, for example, on evidence provided specific to the service's collaborations with [REDACTED] services and with some other services. They remarked that while an example of sound practice, this did not clearly demonstrate how practice specific to staffing arrangements and this standard was informed by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

118. The panel commented on staff meeting minutes submitted as evidence of the service acting on feedback from families, citing as an example families arriving late and not being approached or supported by staff. The panel saw this as a missed opportunity to engage in deeper reflection and discussion with families and with each other, to inform ongoing practice specific to welcoming families to the service. Further, the panel commented on the directive tone of some sections of staff meeting minutes submitted as evidence, which was not consistent with what this standard requires of the service team. They also noted a lack of discussion and opportunities for input by all educators recorded in the meeting minutes.

119. The panel concluded that the evidence provided was insufficient in demonstrating Exceeding theme 3 specific to this standard.

Panel decision

120. The panel decided, by consensus, to confirm the rating for Standard 4.2 as Meeting NQS.

Standard 5.1

121. Standard 5.1 is:

Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.

122. The regulatory authority found the service to be demonstrating Exceeding themes 1 and 2 but not Exceeding theme 3 for this standard.

123. Exceeding theme 3 is that:

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

Standard 5.1: Assessment and Rating

124. Evidence collected by the regulatory authority in relation to Standard 5.1 is documented in the assessment evidence summary.

125. With reference to the service's QIP, the following evidence was observed, sighted and/or discussed specific to Standard 5.1 and recorded in the assessment evidence summary:

- *We consider the rights of babies and toddlers in practice by consulting with them when engaging in nappy changes, toileting, hand washing, rest, and other routine experiences, and for all children we consider their dignity when taking photos and displaying or sharing their work and ask their views and opinions before doing so.*

- Educators follow the centre philosophy to maintain respectful and warm relationships with the children to develop their sense of belonging in the centre.
- Children are exposed to different genres of music and dance and appreciate [REDACTED] [REDACTED] music. We also sing songs in [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- We discuss with children the differences in others and show empathy and understanding of the diverse individual abilities and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This promotes spontaneous learning opportunities to discuss how children in other countries live, the kinds of schools they may go to, the houses they live in and foods they eat.
- Educators provide positive and responsive interaction with all children as they sit with children in small groups or individually doing activities, playing games, singing or having conversations with them, to support each child to feel secure and confident.
- We promote one-to-one relationships with children which we believe is important for their wellbeing and future development.
- Children are encouraged to help at routine times (mealtimes, setting beds and making them, cleaning after craft activities to name a few) giving them a sense of contribution, responsibility and ownership.
- Our approach to relationships between educators and children reflects discussion and input by all educators and is informed by critical reflection and past incidents.
- On enrolment families are asked to provide information about their child. The educators make a note of the comments and children's special needs. We reflect on them and plan the activities accordingly.
- As a team we reflected on Article 12 of UNCROC (Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account) and this resulted in our decision to transition a child to [REDACTED] Room. Nominated Supervisor, Parents and Room Leaders observed child's ability to settle in the new environment and the process was delayed giving the child enough time to move to [REDACTED] Room. The child was provided extensive transition over a period of time until he was fully ready to move up.
- We have news roster so that each child gets an opportunity to talk about their interest or share their experiences with their peers.
- We contribute to a culture of inclusiveness and a sense of belonging to our 'extended family'. For example, a child with English as a second language is given support by asking parents to give us key words in their home language to help the child feel relaxed and understood. A parent was asked to send some simple songs in their language to play and sing in the room.
- Common phrases and words in [REDACTED] displayed in the [REDACTED] room are sighted.

- *For younger children we ask parents to share any particular cues the child may give for us to understand their needs, for example when they are sleepy, hungry or need a cuddle. For example, children from [REDACTED] background were supported in the environment by educators learning key words from their language and by pairing them with a buddy who speaks the same language.*
- *The nominated supervisor explains that an educator who speaks same language is rostered in the child's room to support the child and family.*

126. Evidence of practice observed, sighted and/or discussed at the assessment and rating visit specific to Standard 5.1 as recorded in the assessment evidence summary included:

- *An educator assists a child with wiping their nose.*
- *A child's birthday is celebrated during afternoon tea time sharing a birthday cake with other children and educators. Educators say, "Happy Birthday" to the child and give cuddles on the child's departure.*
- *A child is upset when their mother is leaving the room after drop off. An educator approaches the child initiating conversation.*
- *Children's daily information contains meals, sleep/rest and sunscreen entries. Families have access to this information at the parent sign in kiosk.*
- *"(Child's name), Do you want to play with me?", a child invites another child at the playdough table to his play by giving small balls of playdough. The child smiles at him talking about what she will make with the balls.*
- *An educator greets the child upon arrival saying, "Good morning, (Child's name)." The educator then guides the child to the arrival routines, washing hands and applying sunscreen.*
- *When the children are unsettled making noise, the educators play music encouraging children's participation in a dancing activity.*
- *"What are you making, (Child's name)?", an educator approaches a child in the sand pit and asks. "Pancakes", the child replies. "I like your pancake. I want some. Can I have some?", the educator pretends she is eating the pancake and says, "I have lots of pancake today. Thank you (child's name)."*
- *During morning separation, a child cries looking for his mother. An educator approaches to the child giving cuddles to comfort him.*
- *A child helps an educator sweeping the floor while another child is assisting the educator making roads on the floor with masking tape.*
- *"Are you ready for nappy change?", an educator asks a child who is playing in the outdoor learning environment.*

127. The authorised officer recorded the following analysis notes in the draft rating outcome summary specific to Standard 5.1:

- *Educators' interactions with children are respectful and responsive and promote children's sense of belonging. Educators promote dignity and rights of the children and encourage the children to be respectful of their peers.*

Standard 5.1: Provider's feedback on draft report

128. In response to the draft report, the provider submitted an assessment and rating feedback form. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard.

129. With reference to *"Positive educator to child interaction"*, the provider said:

- *We exceed in this area by being flexible with our orientation process as well as providing support for bilingual children and families by rostering educators who are fluent in that particular language.*
- *Every child's first day is documented and is sent out to the parents as a [REDACTED] posts*

130. With reference to *"Dignity and rights of the child"*, the provider said:

- *This practice is embedded by regular reflection on how to address and engage with children with respect especially during transition times and nappy change times.*

Standard 5.1: Final Report

131. In response to the provider's feedback for this standard, the regulatory authority noted that, *"Evidence was already considered when developing draft summaries. No Change of Rating."*

132. The analysis notes recorded in the final rating outcome summary specific to Standard 5.1 are as documented in the draft report.

Standard 5.1: First Tier Review

133. The provider applied for first tier review, seeking recognition of Exceeding themes 2 and 3 in relation to Standard 5.1.

134. The panel concluded that there was sufficient evidence to support attainment of Exceeding theme 2 and decided to amend the assessment of this theme to Yes.

135. In their first tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 5.1 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider stated:

- *Respectful, reciprocal relationships are consistently observed across the service. Educators engaged with children in a positive, kind and respectful manner and engaged in shared learning opportunities.*
- *Children demonstrate a sense of security and are able to make decisions that impact their day. This is evident through the practice of yarning circle where children and educators use oral communication and work together. A yarning circle is a harmonious, creative and collaborative way of communicating to: encourage responsible, respectful and honest interactions between participants, building trusting relationships foster accountability and provide a safe place to be heard and to respond promote Child-Child interactions and*

Child–Service–Educator–Community connectedness enriching learning experiences for children.

- *Educators always show enthusiasm when interacting with children and acknowledge all children's efforts. The interactions between the educators and children are respectful. Children are confident to explore their environment and to express their ideas.*
- *Educators consistently draw upon the voices of the children, families and values to critical reflect and to create shared strategies to support children.*
- *Family input is sought at routine moments such as children's arrival at the service. Educators consistently work to support each child's sense of dignity and rights.*
- *Family input is sought at routine moments such as children's arrival at the service. Educators consistently work to support each child's sense of dignity and rights.*
- *A happy, relaxed and comfortable learning environment is always evident, enriched with shared humour with the children, meaningful in-depth conversations and genuine interest and enjoyment throughout each day.*
- *Some of the children are siblings of children who have previously attended [REDACTED] and the educators have developed a long-standing connection with the children and families.*
- *Educators follow up on conversations and questions that they posed to the children.*
- *Educators worked with families to develop consistent practices, goals and be responsive to the needs of individual children.*
- *During enrolment time a getting to know your child information sheet is filled by parents.*
- *To further gain input from families surveys are sent out.*

136. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at first tier review.

137. The panel's deliberations specific to Standard 5.1 and Exceeding theme 3 are documented in the first tier review decision notice. It states:

- *The panel reviewed the authorised officer's notes and recognised the confirmation of QIP notes that families are asked to provide information about their child upon enrolment, which is used to plan experiences. The panel also recognised that the service requests that families provide key words in their home language and cues for children with English as a second language. However, the panel found that this evidence reflected a meeting rating.*
- *The panel discussed the approved provider's evidence and acknowledged notes from families to educators on activities children are doing at home. The panel noted however, that the evidence provided was limited in demonstrating how engagement with families informs practice at the service. The panel also considered the approved provider's claims but found that much of them were not supplemented by supporting evidence.*

138. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 3 as No for Standard 5.1.

Standard 5.1: Second Tier Review

139. At second tier review, the provider sought recognition of Exceeding theme 3 for Standard 5.1.

140. In their second tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 5.1 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider stated:

- *Respectful, reciprocal relationships are consistently observed across the service. Educators engaged with children in a positive, kind and respectful manner and engaged in shared learning opportunities.*
- *Children demonstrate a sense of security and confidence and are able to make decisions that impact their day. This is evident through the practice of yarning circle where children and educators use verbal communication and work together. A yarning circle is a harmonious, creative and collaborative way of communicating and encourage responsible, respectful and honest interactions between participants. Trusting relationships between childcare & educators are built upon and a sense of safety is fostered.*
- *We strive to ensure our stakeholders feel that they belong and are included in the service, can participate in all learning experiences and that their contributions are appreciated and recognised. A survey is designed to encourage active involvement to all service decisions. The data collected is critically reflected upon and our practices are modified where necessary.*
- *Educators always show enthusiasm when interacting with children and acknowledge all children's efforts. The interactions between the educators and children are respectful. Children are confident to explore their environment and to express their ideas. Children expressed their interest of playing indoors and outdoors in tandem, which resulted in our educators reflecting of their practice.*
- *Educators consistently draw upon the voices of the children, families, and values to critically reflect and add to the curriculum. This data allows the educators to create strategies to support children and other stakeholders.*
- *Our [REDACTED] policy ensure that the relationships between educators and children and respectful and equitable. Families also have the continuous opportunity to provide feedback of which we take into serious consideration.*
- *Family and community engagement is evident through the policy review process. Policies are reviewed annually, and families and community members are invited to contribute input and feedback. The collection of input and feedback from management, educators, staff, community members, families and any interested parties is done through the service online policy review survey.*
- *Family input is sought at routine moments such as children's arrival at the service. Educators consistently work to support each child's sense of dignity and rights.*

- *A happy, relaxed and comfortable learning environment is always evident, enriched with shared humour with the children, meaningful in-depth conversations and genuine interest and enjoyment throughout each day.*
- *Educators work with families to develop consistent practices, goals and be responsive to the needs of individual children.*
- *During enrolment time a [REDACTED]’ information sheet is filled by parents.*
- *To further gain input from families surveys are sent out. See family/ community input and feedback survey.*

141. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at second tier review.

142. The provider gave a further submission, included as a final evidence matrix and supporting evidence, after reviewing documents submitted by the regulatory authority.

143. Specific to Standard 5.1 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:

- [REDACTED] *post of a family welcomed into the service to help make a birthday cake with the class for their child’s birthday. This family was then invited back later to celebrate the birthday.*

Panel considerations

144. In considering whether the service demonstrated Exceeding theme 3 for Standard 5.1, the panel remarked that the provider’s submissions and supporting evidence, including [REDACTED] documentation, family surveys and staff meeting minutes, were not sufficient to demonstrate practice at the exceeding level.

145. The panel agreed with the findings of the first tier review panel that some evidence provided specific to this standard and exceeding theme was more consistent with Meeting NQS practice, for example, asking parents to provide key words in their home language.

146. The panel commented on the yarning circle methodology as an attempt to build knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. They questioned, however, the extent to which the specific example submitted, i.e. an educator reading a story book to children, was reflective of the provider’s submission specific to this standard. Nor was it evident from the evidence provided, the extent to which this example was informed by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community. The panel encouraged the service to build connections and relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, or their representatives, to strengthen their practice embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives in the service.

147. The panel noted some contradictions between the provider’s submissions and the supporting evidence supplied. For example, the provider noted that the service draws on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to guide their thinking and inform their practice. The panel questioned how evidence shared with families via [REDACTED]

titled [REDACTED] is consistent with the Convention and how it demonstrates educator's responding respectfully to children's comments.

148. The panel concluded by noting there was a lack of clear evidence to support a higher rating for this standard and exceeding theme.

Panel decision

149. The panel decided, by consensus, to confirm the rating for Standard 5.1 as Meeting NQS.

Standard 5.2

150. Standard 5.2 is:

Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and supportive relationships.

151. The regulatory authority found the service to be demonstrating Exceeding theme 1 but not Exceeding themes 2 and 3 for this standard.

152. Exceeding theme 2 is that:

Practice is informed by critical reflection.

153. Exceeding theme 3 is that:

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

Standard 5.2: Assessment and Rating

154. Evidence collected by the regulatory authority in relation to Standard 5.2 is documented in the assessment evidence summary.

155. With reference to the service's QIP, the following evidence was observed, sighted and/or discussed specific to Standard 5.2 and recorded in the assessment evidence summary:

- *Children who need behaviour guidance are given strategies for self-regulation and self-reflection like deep breathing and calming techniques. We have sensory basket with various sensory items for children to help them calm down. Older children are supported to express their feelings in words and consider both the reasons for their actions and the consequences.*
- *We intentionally provide in our program opportunities that encourage children to work together, communicate with each other, and scaffold each other's thinking to achieve success.*
- *Educators model collaborative behaviour through their interactions with children and colleagues, to help children to initiate interactions and join in play and social experiences with their peers.*
- *Large periods of uninterrupted time in the program allow for children to deeply engage in peer collaboration, with children directing their own play experiences.*
- *Educators intentionally support children to understand that they have a right to make decisions about whom they play with, whilst also being respectful and mindful of other's feelings, and encourage children to communicate and express this sensitively.*

- *As every child is different, educators help children to develop skills to negotiate and resolve conflicts, altercations or disagreements with others according to their needs (e.g.) "Would you like to talk about this together?"*
- *Parents are consulted to find out if they have noticed a change in behaviour or if there is something that has changed within the home environment that may be contributing to the behaviour.*
- *We try to tailor our approach to supporting children to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships in collaboration with their family.*
- *Educators draw on the knowledge of each individual family's needs, concerns and home environment to support children to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.*
- *Educators draw on developmentally appropriate practice and strategies in supporting children's self-regulation and behaviour.*

156. Evidence of practice observed, sighted and/or discussed at the assessment and rating visit specific to Standard 5.2, as recorded in the assessment evidence summary, included:

- *A behaviour guidance plan has been developed to support a child's violent behaviours in collaboration with the [redacted] inclusion support officer. The child's educators recorded the signs of the child's behaviour and the incidents caused by the child's behaviour in the behaviour management records.*
- *When a child comes out from the sand pit, an educator reminds the child to put socks and shoes on. The educator encourages the child's self-help skills putting them on independently. However, when the child struggles with the socks, she offers help, "(Child's name), would you like some help with shoes?"*
- *A group of preschool children are engaging in the playdough experience. The children talk about how many cousins they have and how old they are. "Do you know how many cousins I have?", a child speaks to another child. "I have two cousins. One day, I will see them in [redacted]."*
- *"It's my guitar", a child is upset yelling at another child who is playing with the guitar. An educator encourages the child to share with her peer saying, "Sharing is caring" and directs the child to the playdough activity. The child is soon settled and joined the playdough activity.*
- *"Stop it", a child says to another child. The educator nearby says, "(Child's name), he is trying to help you. See, he is putting sand on top." The educator then encourages the children to build a sand castle together.*
- *"Sand stays in the sand pit", an educator prompts children as she puts sand back into the sand pit.*

157. The authorised officer recorded the following analysis notes in the draft rating outcome summary specific to Standard 5.2:

- *Children engage in collaborative learning in the program and daily routines sharing their ideas and feelings with their peers. Children are supported to negotiate and resolve conflicts with peers and encouraged positive behaviour. Educators collaborate with the inclusion support officer to develop strategies to guide children's behaviour and support children to participate in the program and build responsible relationships.*

Standard 5.2: Provider's feedback on draft report

158. In response to the draft report, the provider submitted an assessment and rating feedback form. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard.

159. With reference to *"Each child is supported to build sensitive and respectful relationships with their peers and educators"*, the provider said:

- *We believe we exceed in this area as each child is guided to regulate their behaviour, if need arises these are documented and in collaboration with families strategies are developed to help and guide child respectfully.*

160. With reference to *"Children collaboratively learn from each other"*, the provider said:

- *Our centre put routine in place for children to enhance their skills and help each other and learn from each other. These are documented and communicated daily to families and their responses and welcome.*

Standard 5.2: Final Report

161. In response to the provider's feedback for this standard, the regulatory authority noted that, *"Evidence was already considered when developing draft summaries. No Change of Rating."*

162. The analysis notes recorded in the final rating outcome summary specific to Standard 5.2 are as documented in the draft report.

Standard 5.2: First Tier Review

163. The provider applied for first tier review, seeking recognition of Exceeding themes 2 and 3 in relation to Standard 5.2.

164. In their first tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 5.2 and Exceeding themes 2 and 3, the provider stated:

- *Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with educators and peers.*
- *Children are supported to develop skills and an understanding of empathy to interact positively with each other.*
- *Cooperation and interdependence is developed through the range of learning opportunities that provide for small and large team work. Educators develop environments that enable children to collaborate, learn from and help each other. Communication is encouraged and role modelled when conflict between children arises.*

Communication and information sharing is used to develop strategies that support children's engagement with peers and to minimise potential conflict.

- *Children share ideas, turn take with resources and collaborate on tasks. These practices are discussed as part of the transition processes with children and children are reminded of appropriate behaviours, are actively supported and assist to minimise potential conflict situations.*
- *Intentional teaching is used to assist all children develop pro-social behaviours, recognise emotions, regulate behaviour and work co-operatively with others.*
- *Specific techniques are used to support children with additional social-emotional needs as per the inclusion support service plan. Input from the relevant families, as well as ■■■ specialist agencies, was being used. Educators reflect on the effectiveness of strategies and modifying approaches as required. Educators take part in behaviour management training.*

165. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at first tier review.

166. The panel's deliberations specific to Standard 5.2 and Exceeding theme 2 are documented in the first tier review decision notice. It states:

- *The panel reviewed the documentation prepared by the authorised officer and acknowledged that the service draws on developmentally appropriate practice and strategies in supporting children's self-regulation and behaviour. However, the panel did not find any further evidence recorded to support the attainment of this Theme for this Standard.*
- *The panel discussed the evidence supplied by the approved provider and found that it was not sufficient in demonstrating regular and ongoing critical reflection processes at the service. While the panel considered the approved provider's claims that educators reflect on the effectiveness of strategies and modifying approaches as required, no evidence was provided to support this.*

167. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 2 as No for Standard 5.2.

168. The panel's deliberations specific to Standard 5.2 and Exceeding theme 3 are documented in the first tier review decision notice. It states:

- *The panel discussed the notes prepared by the authorised officer and recognised that the service collaborates with an external organisation for inclusion support. The panel also acknowledged that the service assisted a family with a child who was not speaking but felt that this evidence was limited in demonstrating regular and meaningful engagement with families and/or the community in relation to this standard.*
- *The approved provider's submissions were considered by the panel, who felt the evidence reflected a meeting standard. The panel also found that the evidence was limited in demonstrating how interactions with families or the community shapes practices.*

169. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 3 as No for Standard 5.2.

Standard 5.2: Second Tier Review

170. At second tier review, the provider sought recognition of Exceeding themes 2 and 3 for Standard 5.2.

171. In their second tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 5.2 and Exceeding themes 2 and 3, the provider stated:

- *Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with educators' and peers.*
- *Children are supported to develop skills and an understanding of empathy to interact positively with each other.*
- *Our service is responsive to the needs of our families and especially children. We have critically reflected on issues with communicating with non-English speaking stakeholders and...*
- *Cooperation and interdependence is developed through the range of learning opportunities that provide for small and large team work. Educators develop environments that enable children to collaborate, learn from and help each other. Communication is encouraged and role modelled when conflict between children arises. Communication and information sharing is used to develop strategies that support children's engagement with peers and to minimise potential conflict.*
- *Positive behaviours are discussed with children during transitions (refer to the transition timetable).*
- *Behaviour guidelines have been formed with the children during group time discussions.*
- *Children share ideas, take turns with resources and collaborate on tasks. These practices are discussed as part of the transition processes with children. Educators always support and assist children to minimise potential conflict situations.*
- *All educators at [REDACTED] regularly reflect on the safety and wellbeing of the children and their responsibilities regarding child protection matters. Embedded in the day-to-day practices are processes that support interactions, behaviours, protective behaviours, and safe play. To maintain a high level of supervision, transitions between areas and routines are structured and meaningful. After reflecting on practices during self-assessment it was decided that children needed to be involved in daily group discussion about various topics that relate to them for example hygiene, child protection, sun protection, washing hands and safe transitions, etc.*
- *Educators are encouraged to use the transition timetable as a guide for transitioning. Educators use their discretion and will choose what topics to discuss at what times, from the topic helpers provided in the transition timetable.*

- *Planning for and supporting transitions between activities and areas has been beneficial to children. Educators Transitions meet the individual needs of children and support the diversity of families. The day progresses smoothly, children are more involved and challenging behaviours have improved and are avoided through effective and meaningful transitions. Transitions are planned as a meaningful part of the routine; promoting children’s learning, setting a positive tone, and assisting everyone move effortlessly through the day.*
- *This Transition Timetable ensures that aspects of the program routinely support the children to discuss and learn about ways they could reduce risk for themselves.*
- *This practice was shaped by meaningful engagement with families and the community at the development stages of the transition timetable, where input was sort. Families and community members were asked to complete a [REDACTED] form where families and community members were able to suggest topics for transition discussions with children.*
- *Intentional teaching is used to assist all children develop pro-social behaviours, recognise emotions, regulate behaviour and work co-operatively with others.*
- *Specific techniques are used to support children with additional social-emotional needs as per the inclusion support service plan. Input from the relevant families, as well as [REDACTED] specialist agencies, was being used.*
- *Educators reflect on the effectiveness of strategies and modifying approaches as required. Educators take part in behaviour management training.*

172. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at second tier review.

173. The provider gave a further submission, included as a final evidence matrix and supporting evidence, after reviewing documents submitted by the regulatory authority.

174. Specific to Standard 5.2 and Exceeding theme 2, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:

- *Critical reflections on how we were communicating with families, what was and was not working and how we will improve this to ensure that clear, precise information about the child is being relayed.*

175. Specific to Standard 5.2 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:

- *Behaviour management plans implemented by educators in conjunction with Inclusion support services and families.*
- *[REDACTED] checklist ensures that the communication between families, staff and management are effective and collaborative. This checklist also ensures the respectful transition of a child.*

Panel considerations

176. In considering whether the service demonstrated Exceeding themes 2 and 3 for Standard 5.2, the panel remarked that there was insufficient evidence to support this. This included a lack of evidence of all educators critically reflecting or engaging in robust discussion or debate or how these discussions had shaped changes in thinking and/or practice. The panel noted that while this evidence may exist, it was not included in the provider's submission.
177. The panel again remarked on the provider's reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in their submission. The panel commented that there was no evidence of their reflections and/or discussions specific to the Convention and how this informed or shaped practice specific to relationships with children.
178. The panel commented on email correspondence between the service and their inclusion agency about an impending visit to the service specific to supporting the inclusion of one of the children. The panel remarked that they were unable to ascertain from this evidence the conversations that ensued between educators and the inclusion professional/s, or how this informed their thinking and/or shaped practice specific to this standard. Further, the panel noted that the email correspondence between the service and the child's family, while evidence of communication between the service and family, did not demonstrate meaningful engagement with the family or how this engagement had shaped practice supporting this child's inclusion.
179. The panel concluded that the evidence provided was insufficient in demonstrating Exceeding themes 2 and 3 specific to this standard.

Panel decision

180. The panel decided, by consensus, to confirm the rating for Standard 5.2 as Meeting NQS.

Standard 7.2

181. Standard 7.2 is:

Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

182. The regulatory authority found the service to be demonstrating Exceeding theme 1 but not Exceeding themes 2 and 3 for this standard.

183. Exceeding theme 2 is that:

Practice is informed by critical reflection.

184. Exceeding theme 3 is that:

Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community.

Standard 7.2: Assessment and Rating

185. Evidence collected by the regulatory authority in relation to Standard 7.2 is documented in the assessment evidence summary.

186. With reference to the service's QIP, the following evidence was observed, sighted and/or discussed specific to Standard 7.2 and recorded in the assessment evidence summary:

- *Staff appraisals and professional reviews and development, based on the educator's critical reflection, is carried out twice a year by the nominated supervisor. The educators are given a self-reflection form in advance to give time to consider their input. The Director holds individual meetings with the educators to discuss and share their goals and concerns. This key practice is confirmed and moved from standard 4.2.*
- *Educators are informed that they are required to choose PD sessions for themselves. They are provided with upcoming PD session dates and are also encouraged to find the PD sessions from other sources like Professional Development websites, ECA learning Hub and My Mob - indigenous cultural awareness and webinars. This key practice is confirmed and moved from standard 4.2.*
- *Information is shared with families about continuous improvement and our quality improvement plan to ensure they can contribute their perspectives and opinions to guide service direction.*
- *Performance reviews are conducted annually for all staff, and are directly aligned with our service philosophy, the NQS and our QIP. Educators meet with the Nominated Supervisor a number of times each year to discuss their progress and reflect on the relevance of current goals.*
- *Based on the agreed plan for the year, educators identify professional development needs and interests and Professional Development Plans are created with the directors.*
- *Educators are inspired to learn from each other, and goals documented in individualised development plans are actioned through mentoring at the service, and by accessing professional support through networks, local government and support agencies.*
- *Self-assessment in relation to frameworks has been in progress since the introduction of the EYLF in 2009 and is considered by the Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider as core to the operation of the service. The nominated supervisor explains, "EYLF is core of the service program and embedded in the documentation."*
- *Our QIP is discussed at each staff meeting to ensure educators are striving to continually improve and reflect best practice.*
- *Newsletters are used as a platform to connect with families and provide updated information. Families are supported meaningfully to participate in the quality improvement process and review of QIP.*
- *The content of the quality improvement plan is informed by feedback from families, children and educators and aligns with educator reflections as a way of recording different perspectives on practice to consider. When the QIP evolves, a form is sent out to families and educators for their feedback and input.*
- *Educational leadership at the service is tailored to the individual development and support needs of team members.*

187. Evidence of practice observed, sighted and/or discussed at the assessment and rating visit specific to Standard 7.2, as recorded in the assessment evidence summary, included:

- *The educational leader oversees educators' observations and provides feedback.*
- *A questionnaire is given to staff and educators for self-evaluation prior to the staff appraisals. It consists of four focus areas such as [REDACTED]. Educators rate their skills and performance from one to four in each question. Comments sections are available in each area.*
- *The approved provider and nominated supervisor both attend the staff appraisal and talk about goals, strengths and achievements of an individual staff member. A questionnaire is given to staff members prior to the appraisal. The nominated supervisor says, "We are trying to do the appraisal every six months but at least once a year."*
- *The educational leader has her own checklist to monitor each educator's progress to achieve their set goals.*
- *The educational leader is planning to introduce a 'Circle of Security' in the next staff meeting. She did some research on the approach and the jotting note for the next staff meeting agenda is sighted.*
- *Families were informed of the upcoming A&R through the display of notes across the service.*
- *Educators complete a self-evaluation/reflection form discussing the challenges they have faced with the educational leader during their one to one weekly meeting.*
- *The educational leader and educator set goals together and write these goals in the [REDACTED] of the individual educator's [REDACTED] book. These goals are developed based on the educator's challenges identified in their self-evaluation/reflection form. The staff professional development plan includes [REDACTED].*
- *The educational leader tells, "I encourage educators to identify challenges and set their own goals. I am supporting them to achieve these goals by facilitating resources and working with them."*
- *The educational leader has a room checklist on the program of each room. The checklist contains eight focus areas which are based on the QA 1 of the NQS.*

188. The authorised officer recorded the following analysis notes in the draft rating outcome summary specific to Standard 7.2:

- *The service management supports educators to develop as professionals and contribute to quality improvement processes. The educational leader supports educators' professional development and growth to achieve set goals and implementing an educational program to promote children's learning. Staff appraisals are conducted regularly and encourage educators' continuous learning that contributes to high quality learning for children and to create a learning community.*

Standard 7.2: Provider's feedback on draft report

189. In response to the draft report, the provider submitted an assessment and rating feedback form. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard.

190. With reference to "Promoting information sharing workshops for both parent and educators", the provider said:

- *We exceed in this area because we promote information sharing for our educators and families. Through various workshops for example [REDACTED].*

191. With reference to "Information sharing between [REDACTED] centres", the provider said:

- *Workshops are arranged regularly at different locations for educators to do professional development as well as build and share information with colleagues from other centres.*

192. With reference to "Development and support of the educational program and staff member performance evaluation", the provider said:

- *We exceed in these areas as we have taken steps to reflect and implement strategies to further develop in these areas by maintain profession conversation books and also educational leader spending time in each room guiding the program.*

Standard 7.2: Final Report

193. In response to the provider's feedback for this standard, the regulatory authority noted that, "Evidence was already considered when developing draft summaries. No Change of Rating."

194. The analysis notes recorded in the final rating outcome summary specific to Standard 7.2 are as documented in the draft report.

Standard 7.2: First Tier Review

195. The provider applied for first tier review, seeking recognition of Exceeding themes 2 and 3 in relation to Standard 7.2.

196. In their first tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 7.2 and Exceeding themes 2 and 3, the provider stated:

- *A positive work culture is supported by educators' continuously reflecting on how to improve quality, how to improve their own methods, developing their knowledge and engagement with each child.*
- *The quality improvement plan was (and continues to be) reflected on at each educator meeting and available in the foyer for families to review. The quality improvement plan is developed through critical reflection and feedback which is obtained through an online survey. Feedback and suggestions are also obtained verbally on occasions or in the family communication diary in each room.*
- *Successes and goals were added to and reflected on at each staff meeting and was an ongoing part of the reflections.*

- *Educators are encouraged to build their professional knowledge and share their learning.*
- *Educators are inducted annually and when onboarded and when they return from extended leave.*
- *The educators are committed to ongoing learning and an effective performance review which is connected to the EYLF and to the performance planning for educators. Performance reviews are conducted annually for all staff members.*
- *During this review process, staff members' performance is evaluated and individual plans are in place to support goals, learning and development.*
- *Leadership at the service consistently promoted a positive culture and professional learning community.*
- *The team has reflected regularly, during staff meetings monthly and room leader work in progress meetings, on the service quality improvement process and changes have been made to enhance the children, family and educators' experiences.*
- *The educational leader mentors' educators and engages in shared reflections to actively link into practice and support the educational program. The educational leader actively facilitates processes for all staff to engage in critical reflection, develop knowledge and improve practice.*
- *Staff consistently shared ideas and professional learning in ways that supported a positive organisational culture and a professional learning community.*
- *All staff contribute to a process of critical reflection on the effectiveness of approaches with the aim of refining their practice and improving professional knowledge.*
- *Parents and community members are informed of changes and have opportunities to reflect on practice.*
- *Strong leadership supported ongoing practices, such as the development of the quality improvement plan that assisted the [REDACTED] community focus efforts on improvement in targeted areas, such as increasing community involvement, developing the statement of philosophy, program development and documentation of critical reflection.*

197. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at first tier review.

198. The panel's deliberations specific to Standard 7.2 and Exceeding theme 2 are documented in the first tier review decision notice. It states:

- *The panel considered the authorised officer's notes and found there was some evidence for reflection at this service. The panel acknowledged the officer's confirmation of QIP notes that staff appraisals and professional reviews are based on educator's critical reflection, and that the QIP aligns with educator reflections and feedback.*
- *The panel reviewed the evidence submitted by the approved provider and found that the service is moving towards engaging in reflection processes, particularly noting the [REDACTED] books introduced at the service. The panel felt, however, that*

the evidence provided was not sufficient in demonstrating robust discussions which informs practice. The panel also assessed the approved provider's claims relating to staff reflection during team meetings, and that the educational leader facilitates processes of critical reflection to improve practice. However, no evidence was supplied to support these claims.

199. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 2 as No for Standard 7.2.

200. The panel's deliberations specific to Standard 7.2 and Exceeding theme 3 as documented in the first tier review decision notice. It states:

- *The panel discussed the evidence prepared by the authorised officer and found that there was some evidence of engagement with families relating to improvements at the service.*
- *The panel considered the claims of the approved provider that the QIP is developed through feedback obtained through an online survey, verbally or in the family communication diary in each room. The panel noted, however, that all completed surveys were dated [REDACTED] 2020 and appear to have been completed after the fact. The panel also acknowledged that the service does collaborate with [REDACTED] services, but the evidence provided was not sufficient in demonstrating how this collaboration shapes service practices.*

201. The panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support attainment of the theme and decided to confirm the assessment of Exceeding theme 3 as No for Standard 7.2.

Standard 7.2: Second Tier Review

202. At second tier review, the provider sought recognition of Exceeding themes 2 and 3 for Standard 7.2.

203. In their second tier review evidence matrix and specific to Standard 7.2 and Exceeding themes 2 and 3, the provider stated:

- *A positive work culture is supported by educators' continuously reflecting on how to improve quality, how to improve their own methods, developing their knowledge and engagement with each child.*
- *The quality improvement plan was (and continues to be) reflected on at each educator meetings and available in the foyer for families to review. The quality improvement plan is developed through critical reflection and feedback which is obtained through an online survey. Feedback and suggestions are also obtained verbally on occasions or in the family communication diary in each room. Data gathered through these methods helps the service evaluate practice and improve quality.*
- *Successes and goals were added to and reflected on at each staff meeting and was an ongoing part of the reflections. Educator goals play an important part in the services' values. Without clear goals, the approved provider believes that educators are more likely to stand still and not progress. The approved provider encourages the execution of goals and has delegated a large budget towards professional development to fulfil these goals.*

- Educators are inducted annually and when onboarded and again when they return from extended leave.
- The educators are committed to ongoing learning and an effective performance review which is connected to the EYLF and to the performance planning for educators. Performance reviews are conducted annually for all staff members. To ensure staff are getting the most constructive feedback they can we have also given the parents the option to engage in an educator of the month survey where they can highlight an educator they feel has excelled.
- During this review process, staff members' performance is evaluated, and individual plans are in place to support goals, learning and development.
- Leadership at the service consistently promoted a positive culture and professional learning community.
- The team has reflected regularly, during staff meetings monthly and room leader work in progress meetings, on the service quality improvement process and changes have been made to enhance the children, family and educators' experiences.
- The educational leader mentors educators and engages in shared reflections to actively link into practice and support the educational program. The educational leader actively facilitates processes for all staff to engage in critical reflection, develop knowledge and improve practice.
- Staff consistently shared ideas and professional learning in ways that supported a positive organisational culture and a professional learning community.
- All staff contribute to a process of critical reflection on the effectiveness of approaches with the aim of refining their practice and improving professional knowledge.
- Parents and community members are informed of changes and have opportunities to reflect on practice and policies.
- Strong leadership supported ongoing practices, such as the development of the quality improvement plan that assisted the [REDACTED] community focus efforts on improvement in targeted areas, such as increasing community involvement, developing the statement of philosophy, program development and documentation of critical reflection.
- The service's approach to leadership reflects strong discussion, and opportunities for input by all educators, and is informed by critical reflection and past incidents is informed by current recognised guidance on leadership that supports the operation of a quality service. The main purpose of an employee engagement survey is to get deep insights into what drives engagement at [REDACTED]. The staff feedback is vital to assist improve employee engagement and the overall business performance. After receiving the survey results from the employee engagement survey the common feedback we received was that the support level was great but still could improve, the organisation structure was reviewed and the role of area manager was created, advertised for and filled. The purpose of the role is to increase the quality of support available to managers and the staff, as well as ensure compliance guidance and mentoring.

204. Supporting evidence was also provided specific to this standard at second tier review.

205. The provider gave a further submission, included as final evidence matrix and supporting evidence, after reviewing documents submitted by the regulatory authority.

206. Specific to Standard 7.2 and Exceeding theme 2, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:

- *Staff meeting minutes with reflection of practice included to show that as a service we consistently reflect and strive to improve daily practices.*
- *Educational leader notes that include the implementation of critical reflection within the team as well as reflection examples for staff to read via [REDACTED]*
- *Staff exits surveys that are completed by exiting staff members to ensure they have the opportunity to provide feedback or points for improvement are communicated before they leave.*
- *For each interviewee they will take part in a paid trial to ensure they are the right fit for the service and the service is the right fit for the applicant. The attached evidence is the practical interview questionnaire. The interviewee is also given an opportunity to provide feedback on the service to contribute to quality improvement.*

207. Specific to Standard 7.2 and Exceeding theme 3, the provider offered the following submission, with supporting evidence:

- *[REDACTED] post of Collaboration between [REDACTED] as well as ensuring that enough notice was given so all team members have the opportunity to attend.*
- *Saved documentation of how the collaboration reinforced practices and inspired the educators to create experiences for children to engage in.*
- *Correspondence with another service in the community inviting them into the service to exchange ideas and show support to peers with in the industry.*

Panel considerations

208. In considering whether the service demonstrated Exceeding themes 2 and 3 for Standard 7.2, the panel commented on the volume of evidence submitted by the provider. They added that despite the quantity of documents submitted, they were unable to find examples of critical reflection or meaningful engagement with families and/or the community to warrant a higher rating for this standard. Further, they noted that much of the evidence provided was more specific to operational processes than effective leadership.

209. The panel noted that evidence submitted for this standard was more a description of an event and/or an evaluation or reflection on what had occurred rather than evidence of critical reflection, which requires a deeper level of analysis, examination and critical thinking. They also noted that statements made by the provider were not substantiated by the evidence provided. For example, the panel noted that a critical reflection book had been provided in each room, which was to be completed during room meetings. There was no

further evidence describing how the book had been used across the service and how this had supported ongoing and continuous improvements in practice.

210. The panel commented on staff meeting minutes submitted as evidence, which documented a conversation about parent involvement. The minutes described the views of three educators regarding how to facilitate and capture parent involvement, which resulted in creating a [REDACTED] for the service. The panel noted this evidence alone was not sufficient to demonstrate either of the exceeding themes under review. For example, the discussion captured did not provide evidence of educators questioning and analysing the suggestions made, how meaningful engagement with families and/or the community had informed the discussion, or subsequent changes in thinking and in practice that resulted.

211. The panel commented on evidence submitted specific to this standard describing examples of the service collaborating with [REDACTED] services. They noted that while an example of sound practice, it does not sufficiently reflect what Exceeding theme 3 requires in terms of sustained and meaningful engagement with community specific to the unique context of the service and their local community. The panel encouraged the service to think more broadly about this exceeding theme and what is expected at this level to warrant a higher quality rating.

212. The panel resolved that the evidence provided was insufficient in demonstrating Exceeding themes 2 and 3 specific to this standard.

Panel decision

213. The panel decided, by consensus, to confirm the rating for Standard 7.2 as Meeting NQS.

General comments

214. The panel noted some emerging themes from their deliberations, which they encouraged the service to consider as part of their reflection of the review process and ongoing quest for quality improvement.

215. The panel noted the service is clearly making progress, but on the weight of the evidence provided, are not yet demonstrating exceeding practice in the themes and standards under review.

216. As a starting point, the panel encouraged the service to broaden their understanding of the three exceeding themes, and in particular Exceeding themes 2 and 3, which were pertinent to this ratings review. Additionally, the panel encouraged the service to consider the interconnected nature of the three exceeding themes, the relationship between the themes and how they work together to support ongoing quality practice.

217. The panel noted that no theme should be considered or can be achieved in isolation of the others. For example, to embed practice educators must critically reflect on what it is they want to embed and the underpinning rationale and intention. Further, when engaging with families and/or the community, educators must reflect on why they are engaging for it to be meaningful. In both instances, this requires consideration and valuing of diverse views and perspectives and an openness to consider and take on board new ideas and possibilities.

218. Specific to Exceeding theme 2, the panel encouraged the service to examine their current thinking about what critical reflection is and looks like. They noted that evidence submitted for this ratings review was predominantly descriptive or evaluative rather than evidence of critical reflection, which requires a deep level of questioning, analysis and examination from different perspectives, individually and together.

219. Additionally, Exceeding theme 2 requires that practice is *informed* by critical reflection. This requires all educators to understand and be able to articulate shifts in thinking and/or changes in practice that have occurred over time through critical reflection.

220. The panel encouraged the service to review the Exceeding guidance in the Guide to the NQF, as well as some of the available resources specific to critical reflection, to extend and build on current practice specific to Exceeding theme 2. This includes:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/videos/educational-leadership-videos#criticalreflection>

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/WHAT%20IS%20CRITICAL%20REFLECTION%20-%20NO%20EDITS.pdf>

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-09/Reflective-session-on-critical-reflection-presentation.pdf>

221. Specific to Exceeding theme 3, the panel encouraged the service to reflect on their current thinking about what meaningful engagement with families and/or community is and looks like, noting the difference between engagement and involvement. Additionally, Exceeding theme 3 requires that practice is *shaped* by meaningful engagement, that is, meaningful engagement leads to shifts in thinking and/or changes in practice.

222. The panel also encouraged the service to consider what makes engagement meaningful and how to ensure this engagement is meaningful for families and community partners. Further, and as noted previously, the panel encouraged the service to broaden their understanding of community, noting that in the context of Exceeding theme 3 it refers to the service's location and unique geographical, cultural and community context.

223. The panel encouraged the service to review the Exceeding guidance in the Guide to the NQF, as well as some of the available resources specific to meaningful engagement with families and/or community, to strengthen current practice specific to Exceeding theme 3. This includes:

<https://wehearyou.acecqa.gov.au/2018/07/02/it-takes-a-village-to-raise-a-child-the-role-of-community-part-1/>

<https://wehearyou.acecqa.gov.au/2018/07/31/it-takes-a-village-to-raise-a-child-the-role-of-community-part-5/>