

# Spirit of Play Community School

## Request for Rent Freeze

Shire of Denmark	
A3140	
19 JUL 2011	
ICR1177969	
DATE	LPH
FILE REF	
COUNCILLORS	
CEO	
DIR of FINANCE	✓
DIR of PLANNING	
DIR of INFRASTRUCTURE	
DIR of COMMUNITY	✓
OTHER	

### Executive Summary

The Spirit of Play Community School (*Our School*) Management Committee is writing to request a rent freeze for six months and an assessment of the rent after this time.

Our School is an important asset to the community of Denmark. Part of Our School's appeal is its small size. Though this means that from time to time, as the numbers of enrolments fluctuate, financial pressures increase and Our School comes under threat of closure.

In 2010 the Management recognized that it is important to do some strategic planning to ensure the long term viability of Our School. Since then there have been a number of planning sessions and activities.

A rent freeze will ease some of the immediate financial pressure, providing Our School time to implement the strategies the Management Committee has developed as part of preliminary strategic planning sessions.

Please see below for more information including:

- Benefits of Our School to the Denmark Community
- Financial Information
- Planning into the Future
- About Our School

We have also included the following attachments

- Evidence for Investing in Early Years Education
- Annual Report 2010
- Auditor's Report for 2010
- Budget for 2011

Should you wish to get any further information about Our School you can visit our website at [www.spiritofplay.wa.edu.au](http://www.spiritofplay.wa.edu.au) or call us on 9848 2285.

## **Benefits of Our School to the Denmark Community**

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- Having a selection of schools contributes to our town's rich diversity, something Denmark is renowned for. It empowers families allowing them a choice of educational facilities to best meet the individual needs of their children.
- The importance of investing in good quality early childhood education and care is widely recognised. (*See attachment - Evidence for Investing in Early Years Education*) It does more than provide significant returns to children – our future citizens. It also benefits taxpayers and enhances economic vitality.
- Research shows that positive educational experiences in the early childhood years can have life-long impacts on health, learning and behaviour.
- Our School provides quality early childhood education for children in Kindergarten, Pre-Primary and Year 1, with an emphasis on learning through play. Some benefits of Our School include:
  - small groups for personalised attention
  - a flexible, responsive and active approach to learning
  - qualified and experienced teachers
  - program guided by the national Early Years Learning Framework, Western Australian Curriculum Framework and Australian Curriculum
  - excursions in the local community and environment
  - an ethic of social and environmental responsibility
  - opportunities for parent and family involvement
  - Noongar language, storylines and cultural awareness integrated into our classroom and everyday experiences with our children.

## **Financial Information**

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The financial viability of Our School is dependent on several key factors:

- Our income derived through State and Federal Government funding which is based on our enrolment numbers.
- Income derived from other sources such as grants and fundraising
- Expenses including rent and staff costs
  
- **What would a rent freeze mean for Our School if current enrolments remain unchanged?**  
If our enrolment numbers remain unchanged (n=10) for Term 3 and 4, a rent freeze would enable our school to remain open until the end of the current school year. However the school would then face closure.
  
- **What would happen to Our School without a rent freeze if current enrolments remain unchanged?**  
Without a rent freeze and if our enrolment numbers remain unchanged, Our School would have to close at the end of Term 3 2011 (30 September 2011).
  
- **What is the minimum number of enrolments required to ensure the continuation of Our School?**  
If our enrolment numbers were to increase by a total of 3 students (or more) for Term 3 and 4, this in conjunction with a rent freeze, would enable our school to avoid closure and continue to function into 2012.
  
- **Current situation**
  - **Rent**  
Our school currently pays \$2050.00 (ex GST) in rent per quarter.
  - **Enrolments**  
As of 1 July 2011, we had a total of 10 children enrolled at our school.  
The school is taking steps to increase enrolment numbers.
  - **Grants and Fundraising**  
In 2011, our school has sought and successfully gained grants worth over \$21,000 to support specific projects and programs within the school, including Numeracy and Literacy programs.  
Our school Management Committee has also been energetically involved in fundraising activities. So far this year we have raised \$930, however we have other fundraisers currently underway and anticipate raising at least \$2000 by the end of 2011.

## **Planning into the Future**

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*Our School aims to improve its long term sustainability by implementing the following strategies:*

- Review barriers and increase opportunities for new families enrolling in Our School.
- Development and implementation of a Marketing & Promotion Plan to raise Our Schools profile with a view to increase enrolment numbers.
- Strategic and Business Plan Development.
- Review of Management Structure, including roles and responsibilities.

## **About Our School**

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### Vision Statement

Spirit of Play Community School supports the integrity of early childhood by offering a holistic education which respects the uniqueness, individual learning style, and developmental journey of each child. Thus, we are committed to providing an integrated and play-based curriculum in a safe, imaginative and aesthetic learning environment, and by promoting a positive and supportive school community.

Our philosophy is shaped by the following fundamental principles:

1. the education of the whole child
2. an integrated, play-based curriculum of learning,
3. mixed-age (family) grouping, and
4. community participation.

We are also guided by the principles, values, and outcome statements of the Australian National Curriculum, National Early Years Learning Framework and WA Curriculum Framework.

### Management Committee

The Spirit of Play Community School is a non-profit organisation. The school is run by the Management Committee, elected at the AGM. This group oversees the running of the school and meets regularly to discuss relevant issues including: fundraising activities, busy-bees and maintenance, parent feedback, future projections for the school, employment of staff, performance of the school within the community, viability, and agrees to the setting up of sub-committees. The Management Committee currently meets twice each term.

<b>Spirit of Play</b>			
2011 Budget			
		<b>Without Rent Freeze</b>	<b>With Rent Freeze</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Per capita funding:	Commonwealth Government DEEWR	29935	29935
	Remote loading	1500	1500
	State Government DES WA	24108	24108
	AISWA Universal Access (Kindy)	2,580	2,580
	Indigenous pre-school assistance (Kindy)	2,000	2,000
School fees:	Student Fees	14360	14360
Grant income:	PALS Grant income	750	750
	AISWA Literacy Program income	7,950	7,950
	AISWA Numeracy Program income	7,550	7,550
	AISWA Languages Program income	4,000	4,000
	AISWA Language Assistant funding	2,000	2,000
	AISWA Australian Curriculum grant	600	600
	Languages promotional DVD grant income	2,200	2,200
Other income:	Fundraising	2,000	2,000
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>99,533</b>	<b>99,533</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
General expenses:	Accounting & audit fees	600	600
	Advertising & promotion	1,500	1,500
	Bank charges	140	140
	Electricity	1,300	1,300
	Insurance	2,500	2,500
	Maintenance	500	500
	Payroll: Salaries & wages	73,000	73,000
	Superannuation	6,570	6,570
	Postage & stationery	900	900
	Rent & utilities	8,600	4,500
	Subscriptions & licences	1,200	1,200
	Teaching resources & supplies	600	600
	Telephone & internet	1,500	1,500
	Ocean Awareness Programme	200	200
Expenses related to grants:	Languages promotional DVD grant expenses	2,200	2,200
	PALS Grant expenses	750	750
	Literacy and Numeracy resources	3,750	3,750
	Professional development (teachers)	3000	3000
	AISWA Language Assistant expenses	4000	4000
	AISWA Languages Program expenses	3,000	3,000
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>115,810</b>	<b>111,710</b>
	<b>Deficit</b>	<b>(16,277)</b>	<b>(12,177)</b>
	Bank account balance at 31 Dec 2010	18,604	
	Other assests at 31 Dec 2010	1,300	
	Liabilities at 31 Dec 2010	8438	
	<b>Balance at 31 Dec 2010</b>	<b>11,466</b>	

## Evidence for Investing in Early Years Education

### International Evidence

**“Investments in quality child care and early childhood education do more than pay significant returns to children—our future citizens. They also benefit taxpayers and enhance economic vitality.**

The evidence is in: **quality early education benefits children of all social and economic groups.** There are both short- and long-term economic benefits to taxpayers and the community if early education that meets high standards is available to all children, starting with those who are most disadvantaged. Indeed, universally available quality early education would benefit everyone and be the most cost-effective economic investment.

- High-quality early childhood education helps prepare young children to succeed in school and become better citizens; they earn more, pay more taxes, and commit fewer crimes.
- Every dollar invested in quality early care and education saves taxpayers up to \$13.00 (US) in future costs.
- The early care and education industry is economically important—often much larger in terms of employees and revenues than other industries that receive considerable government attention and investment.
- Failing to invest sufficiently in quality early care and education shortchanges taxpayers because the return on investment is greater than many other economic development options.
- Access to available and affordable choices of early childhood learning programs helps working parents fulfill their responsibilities.
- Quality early education is as essential for a productive 21st century workforce as roads or the internet; investing in it grows the economy.”

Source: Calman LJ & Tarr-Whelan L (2005) *Early Childhood Education for All: A Wise Investment Recommendations arising from “The Economic Impacts of Child Care and Early Education: Financing Solutions for the Future”* a conference sponsored by Legal Momentum’s Family Initiative and the MIT Workplace Center.

<http://web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/docs/Full%20Report.pdf> (viewed on 23 June 2011)

## **National Evidence/Policy**

### **Council of Australian Governments**

"Through this Agreement, the Commonwealth and the States and Territories will work together to ensure universal access to quality early childhood education in the year before school (Commonwealth election commitment)."

"Early childhood is a critical time in human development. There is now comprehensive research that shows that experiences children have in the early years of life set neurological and biological pathways that can have life-long impacts on health, learning and behaviour. There is also compelling international evidence about the returns on investment in early childhood services for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including the work of Nobel Laureate James Heckman.

...

High quality early childhood services offer the productivity benefits of giving children the best possible start in life, and for parents, the opportunity to be active participants in the workforce or community life."

Council of Australian Governments (2008) *National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education*.

[http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov\\_agreements/federal\\_financial\\_relations/docs/national\\_partnership/national\\_partnership\\_on\\_early\\_childhood\\_education.pdf](http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/docs/national_partnership/national_partnership_on_early_childhood_education.pdf) (viewed on 23 June 2011)

### **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

"The importance of investing in good quality early childhood education and care is widely recognised. Research shows that positive educational experiences in the early childhood years can have life-long impacts on health, learning and behaviour. In particular, high quality early education and care can significantly improve outcomes for disadvantaged children.

Responsibility for early childhood learning and care is shared between the Australian Government and the state and territory governments. Recently, federal, state and territory agencies have focused on integrating the regulation of services covering preschool and child care.

In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed a new National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. Under the Agreement, the Commonwealth and state and

territory governments have committed to ensuring that all young children will have access to a quality early childhood education program by 2013."

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *4102.0 - Australian Social Trends*, Dec 2009, *Preschool Attendance*.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features40Dec+2009#1> (viewed on 23 June 2011)

### **Australian Council for Educational Research**

"Evidence on the impact and effectiveness of early childhood education and care shows there is a compelling knowledge base which demonstrates that enriched learning environments are fostered by better qualified practitioners, and that better quality environments and pedagogies facilitate better learning outcomes. Research shows that children's experiences and outcomes, and especially for those at risk or from disadvantaged backgrounds, are optimised when they participate in high-quality early childhood programs or in programs targeting specific areas of development such as early literacy. High-quality centre-based developmental programs tend to produce enhanced cognitive, language and social development. For disadvantaged children, the effect of high-quality programs is maximised when implemented in conjunction with parent support and home visits (Ellis, 2005). Crucially, evidence shows that skills and understandings acquired in early childhood predict later school achievement. Evidence also indicates that many reading and other academic problems reported in the first years of school can be minimised, and even prevented, if early childhood professionals provide rich pedagogic environments targeted to the individual learning needs of each child, and if help is sought when problems requiring specialist input are diagnosed.

Quality outcomes for children are most likely when competent, qualified staff interact with small groups of children in enriched environments."

Source: Elliott, Alison. (2006) *Early Childhood Education: Pathways to quality and equity for all children*.

[http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/AER\\_50-QualityAndChoice.pdf](http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/AER_50-QualityAndChoice.pdf)



## INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

To the Committee Members,  
Spirit of Play Community School Inc.  
Old Post Office Building  
Inlet Drive  
Denmark WA 6333

### *Scope*

I have audited the attached Special Purpose Financial Report comprising Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Statement of the Spirit of Play Community School Inc. for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010. The Management Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial report. The Management Committee has determined that the information contained therein and the accounting policies used are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Constitution of the Spirit of Play Community School Inc. and are appropriate to meet the needs of members and various funding bodies. I have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Spirit of Play Community School Inc.

The Special Purpose Financial Report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Management Committee's financial reporting requirements under the Constitution of the Spirit of Play Community School Inc.

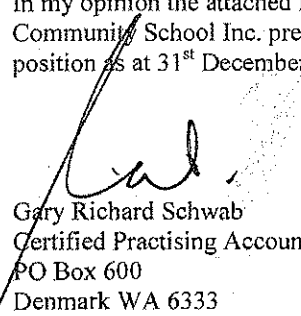
I disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members or for any purpose other than for which the report was prepared.

My audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. The procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the Special Purpose Financial Report is presented fairly in accordance with the requirements of the accounting policies adopted and deemed appropriate by the Management Committee so as to present a view of the Spirit of Play Community School Inc. which is consistent with my understanding of its financial position and the results of its operations and cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

### *Audit Opinion*

In my opinion the attached Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Statement of the Spirit of Play Community School Inc. presents fairly in accordance with the adopted reporting requirements the financial position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended.

  
Gary Richard Schwab  
Certified Practising Accountant  
PO Box 600  
Denmark WA 6333

30<sup>th</sup> June 2011

**SPIRIT OF PLAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL INC**

**SPECIAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL REPORT**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED**

**31ST DECEMBER 2010**

G R Schwab CPA

# SPIRIT OF PLAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL INC

## Balance Sheet

For the year ended 31 December 2010.

	<u>2010</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
BankWest	18604.00
Petty Cash Float	<u>41.03</u>
Total Current/Savings	18645.03
Other Current Assets	
School Fees Receivable	2585.00
Sundry Receivables	<u>1592.00</u>
Total Other Current Assets	<u>4177.00</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b><u>22822.03</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	<u>2050.00</u>
Total Accounts Payable	2050.00
Payroll Liabilities	
PAYG Withholding Payable	2993.94
Superannuation Payable	<u>1749.81</u>
Total Payroll Liabilities	4743.75
GST Payable	1544.44
Fees Received in Advance	<u>100.00</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>6388.19</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b><u>8438.19</u></b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>8438.19</u></b>
<b>EQUITY</b>	
Retained Earnings	
Opening Bal Equity	7258.78
Net Surplus/Deficiency for year	6292.06
Reserves	<u>833.00</u>
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b><u>14383.84</u></b>



# SPIRIT OF PLAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL INC

## Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the year ended 31 December 2010

### Income

#### Government Funding

Commonwealth Government DEEWR	39912.00
Commonwealth Gov Remote loading	2000.00
Commonwealth Indigenous Pre-School Assistance	4547.63
State Gov Funding - DES WA	33319.25
State Gov Funding - Teacher Supp	649.31
AISWA Universal Access	3714.55
<b>Total Government Funding</b>	<b>84142.74</b>
Student Fees	22342.50
School excursion & camp fees	1898.50
<b>Total Fee Income</b>	<b>24241.00</b>
Donations	50.00
Fundraising Income	
Wine fundraiser	1790.00
Easter Weekend BNW fundraiser	64.00
Raffle	1964.55
Fundraising Income - Other	794.60
<b>Total Fundraising Income</b>	<b>4613.15</b>
Interest Received	35.65
Grants Received	
PALS Grant Income	750.00
PALS Grant Costs	-750.00
Literacy Program Income	6775.00
Literacy Program Expenses	-3116.41
AISWA other	1773.00
<b>Total Grants Received</b>	<b>4750.32</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>118514.13</b>

### Expenditure

Accounting & Audit Fees	940.00
Advertising & Promotion	673.12
Electricity	-196.99
Excursion Expenses	1536.64
Fines & Penalties	956.13
Insurance	2571.35
General Office Expenses	22.47
Wages & Salaries	83614.59
Superannuation	6816.29
Payroll Expenses - Other	898.87
Postage & Stationery	1027.61
Superannuation	6816.29
Staff & student amenities	181.21

# SPIRIT OF PLAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL INC

## Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the year ended 31 December 2010

Staff medical expenses	123.05
Subscriptions & licenses	1105.00
Teaching resources & supplies	641.54
Telephone & internet	1643.15
Total Expense	<u>110682.07</u>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>7832.06</b>
Other Expense	
Other Expense	
Programmes	
Music Alive	800.00
Ocean Awareness	740.00
Total Other Expense	<u>1540.00</u>
Net Income	<b>6292.06</b>

SPIRIT OF PLAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL INC.


SPECIAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL REPORT

MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010

In the opinion of the Management Committee;

1. The Special Purpose Financial Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 presents fairly the financial position of the Spirit of Play Community School Inc at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 and the income and expenditure for the period then ended.
2. The Spirit of Play Community School Inc. will be able to meet its financial commitments as and when they fall due.

Signed..........

CHAIRPERSON

Dated.....8-7-11.....



TREASURER

8/7/11

# SPIRIT OF PLAY

COMMUNITY SCHOOL



## Annual Report 2010

### CONTACT DETAILS

Spirit of Play Community School Inc

Inlet Drive Denmark

Postal: "Old Post Office Building" Inlet Drive, Denmark WA 6333

Ph: 9848 2285

Email [spiritofplay@westnet.com.au](mailto:spiritofplay@westnet.com.au)

Web: [www.spiritofplay.wa.edu.au](http://www.spiritofplay.wa.edu.au)

# School Overview

## **Vision Statement**

Spirit of Play Community School supports the integrity of early childhood by offering a holistic education which respects the uniqueness, individual learning style, and developmental journey of each child. We are committed to providing an integrated and play-based curriculum in a safe, imaginative and aesthetic learning environment, and by promoting a positive and supportive school community.

## **Guiding Principles**

- 1) A vision of childhood.
- 2) Ecological (holistic) model of education.
- 3) Community participation.
- 4) Play-based curriculum.
- 5) Integrated learning.
- 6) Mixed-age grouping.
- 7) Safe and aesthetic environment.
- 8) Engagement with the natural world.

## **Elaboration of Guiding Principles**

### **1. Vision of childhood.**

We respect the mystery and essential genius of childhood, and value the innate intelligence underlying our children's understanding of the world. We recognise that each child is a unique being, unfolding at his/her own rate, with distinctive ways of learning, strengths and weaknesses. Every child has a right to live and enjoy their childhood fully, free of inappropriate social or academic pressures.



## **2. Ecological (holistic) model of education.**

While every component within our School may be viewed as a whole in itself, the relationships and interdependence between them create an effect, or 'synergy', greater than the various parts in isolation. This understanding influences our view of the child, the learning environment, curriculum planning, and community networking and bonding. We also recognise that each child, and our school as a whole, is in a process of unfolding and becoming.

## **3. Community participation.**

The quality of our children's education and life experience is richly enhanced by the experience of the significant people in their life playing, working, and socialising together in an ethos of care and respect. We therefore encourage active participation and networking by our parents, siblings, extended families, and friends in the broader community. The management structure of our school is intentionally non-hierarchical, inclusive, and strives for consensus in decision-making.

## **4. Play-based curriculum.**

Play is the fundamental way children learn about themselves, each other, and the world. To them, meaningful activity is playful activity. Children in our School are given extensive opportunities for self-initiated and spontaneous play; planned activities are always play-oriented and developmentally appropriate. We are committed to bringing all aspects of the curriculum to life in the spirit of play.

## **5. Integrated learning.**

Children learn in real-life contexts that evoke interest and inquiry, and in a range of curriculum areas in any given situation. The arts are an integral part of our educational programmes, the children being given opportunities to engage with a wide range of mediums. Literacy and numeracy are given due importance within our curriculum, but kept in balance with other important areas of learning.

## **6. Mixed-aged grouping.**

Children receive significant educational benefits from participating in a mixed-age grouping, including:

- exposure to a greater 'breadth of normality', allowing for differing rates and variety of development.
- more complex social interactions among young children.
- older children engage younger children in more complex play.
- improved self-regulation, enhanced leadership and responsibility among older children.

### **7. Safe and aesthetic environment.**

Every child has the right to feel safe and valued at all times. The nature of the learning environment shapes the quality of children's learning, hence we strive to create an environment that is respectful, caring, comfortable, imaginative, attractive, and uncluttered. We endeavour to provide the children with an environment which is engaging and interactive.

### **8. Engagement with the natural world.**

Each child is a natural being, and as such deserves to be grounded in the variety, beauty, cycles and rhythms of nature. We bring this variety and beauty into our School and explore the natural environment around us. We celebrate the changes in the seasons, modelling care and respect for the Earth and its creatures. We endeavour to help each child develop their relationship with the Land.

# Teacher Standards and Qualifications

All teachers employed at the school in 2010, held current registration with the Western Australian College of Teaching. The requirements for registration with WACOT can be found at [www.wacot.wa.edu.au](http://www.wacot.wa.edu.au).

All teaching staff participated in a variety of professional learning courses throughout the year. These included:

- Mandatory Reporting Training – face-to-face and online training certificate
- Leadership Training - AISWA
- Curriculum Development – Early Years Learning Framework and National Curriculum Consultation
- Literacy – First Steps Reading, Whole School Planning,
- Languages – AISWA TP Languages
- Numeracy – AISWA Numeracy Learning experiences
- Child Protection in-house training
- Networking – AISWA Local networking conference

In 2010 teacher retention for the year was 100%, with both teachers remaining all year long.

## School Workforce Composition

In 2010, the school was staffed by two qualified Early Childhood Teachers in one full time equivalent position, a part time Teacher's Aide and a part time Administrative Officer.

Shenoa Elvin-Johnson continued in her role as Early Childhood teacher at Spirit of Play. From the beginning of the year we also had a new teacher Michelle Ryan, and teacher's aide Jasmin Day. In June we had a changeover of the school office administration staff with Tegan Brown leaving and committee member and parent Kathy Rainbird taking on the role.

# Student Attendance

## Student Enrolment

Table 1: Student enrolment numbers by year level since 2007

Year	Kindergarten	Pre-primary	Year One
2008	6	5	3
2009	12	4	2
2010	8	7	1

## Student Age Entry and Attendance

- Kindergarten children must turn 4 on or before June 30 in the year they enrol. They are able to attend 5 sessions (half days) per week.
- Pre-Primary children must turn 5 on or before June 30 in the year they enrol. They are able to attend 5 full days per week.
- Year 1 children must turn 6 on or before June 30 in the year they enrol. It is compulsory for these children to attend 5 full days per week.

## Student Attendance

Table 2: Percentage of attendance for Year 1 in 2010

Year	%
2010	88%

**Note:** This figure is a marked improvement (<4% increase) on 2009 attendance records. Care must be exercised when interpreting this data as it refers to small student numbers and therefore the attendance rate may be volatile.

## Management of Non-Attendance

Spirit of Play has a clear Attendance Policy and it is compulsory for students in Year 1 to attend 5 full days per week. In the case of irregular attendance the following actions will be taken for a student in the **compulsory** years of schooling (i.e. Year 1).

- On the day of non-attendance – The parent will be contacted, if the school office has not received information concerning the child's non-attendance for the day, by 9.20am. If the parent and emergency contacts are unreachable, the Local Police will be contacted to confirm the child's location and safety.
- If a child is regularly non-attending, the parent will be called to a Parent/Teacher meeting to ascertain appropriate further action. If a resolution is unreachable the appropriate authorities will be contacted and further action may occur. The parent will be offered methods of support intended to enhance the child's educational gains.
- A child will be removed from the register only after receiving confirmation from the new attending school. Other situations requiring a child's removal the register are: if the school has reasonable grounds to consider the child is enrolled in another school; resides in another state; has registered for home education; or there are reasonable grounds for the school to refuse continued enrolment to the child or any investigation to find the child's whereabouts has been unsuccessful.

# Student Progress and Achievement

## **Student Learning**

Due to the school providing education for Kindergarten, Pre-Primary and Year One only, the school does not participate in NAPLAN or TEE, which are forms of external standardised testing. To ensure accountability and advance the students' learning across the curriculum, teachers apply developmentally and individually appropriate methods of assessment and recording. Teachers implement both individualised and standardised tests within the school environment to establish student's progress and achievement across the academic year. These tests are implemented in the least invasive manner possible to maintain developmentally age-appropriate expectations across all year levels.

The school provides information to parents about their individual child's progress and achievement via parent-teacher interviews and a written report mid-year and at the end of the school year.

## **Value Added Education**

During the 2010 academic year, the students of all year levels (K, PP and Yr 1) participated in a balanced curriculum that focused on the eight Curriculum Framework Areas of the Western Australian Curriculum Framework. The target foci for 2010 were Society & Environment and Science, with a maintained focus on Numeracy and Literacy across the curriculum. The student learning outcomes within these curriculum areas reflected the integrated and holistic approach of the school.

## **SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT OUTCOMES**

Across the year, students and teachers explored how the surrounding community and environment impacted their own experiences. These discoveries built upon students' prior knowledge and aimed at diversifying and developing complexity of understanding.

One objective of these explorations was the impacts people have upon their environment as well as how the environment impacts upon people.

Students gained a range of skills in identifying their own sustainable actions and the actions of others. These understandings allowed the students to consider the roles of protection and development that people take within their employment as well as personal lives. Students gained the social responsibility to develop their own observation and records of their surrounding natural environment and the socially responsible behaviours and how these are advocated by all within the school community.

The students were very interested to understand their own role within the development and maintenance of the water ecosystems that surrounded the school. Many discoveries regarding the supply and use of water within the play environment occurred. A range of theories and hypothesis were created and tested about continued supply to children's own households and other community sources. The children considered their responsibility to conserve and maintain the water for all users and even explored the use of water within their own bodies. These learning episodes allowed students to gain well developed understandings of their social and environmental responsibilities and to be accountable for their own use of resources.

Socially and environmentally accountable concepts were explored across the academic year with a culmination of the projects inspiring parents to apply for a Solar Schools Grant in term four. This grant, if successful, will be expended over 2011 and will allow students to further explore the use and conservation of resources in a range of real world episodes.

## **SCIENCE OUTCOMES**

Spirit of Play Community School continually maintains a prime focus on the hands-on, real-world explorations of the natural and scientific world around the children. An ethos of discovery and investigation is imparted throughout the execution of focused and spontaneous activities. The resulting learning allows students to maintain a wonder and awe of the natural and technological world around themselves.

Students explored the growth and rejuvenation of both the plant and mineral world across the year. Students planted, grew and collected a range of vegetables, flowers, and natural bush tucker. These discoveries enhanced the students' concepts of the needs of living organisms within their daily lives. The children observed and noted the significance of the seasons upon both the created and natural living environments of their classroom and surrounds. The students became aware of the translation between indigenous and European seasons and calendar systems. These

explorations allow students to view the subjectivity of knowledge and facts.

The students emerging discoveries of the living world inspired them to consider other growing phenomena. A term long experiment to investigate the growth of minerals allowed students the opportunity to consider the impact of variables upon how and why experiment results can be different. The students grew salt crystals from a few different recipes and discovered the differing results. The students then hypothesised about the results and continued the experiment to see if time was an added variable. After a whole term and holiday period of growth they discovered that some of the recipes were more effective over the extended duration than other recipes.

The students gain confidence and competence in investigating, hypothesising and communicating their findings to others. As a result of their explorations all of the students were able to define their own discoveries in varying degrees of scientific language. Confident young scientists, with a lasting interest in exploring and investigating the world around them, was the result of these explorations across the year.

## **NUMERACY AND LITERACY OUTCOMES**

Numeracy and literacy hold an integral role within the School curriculum, and teachers continue to develop age-appropriate methods of integrating these areas into all elements of the curriculum. The majority of the projects and programs offered by the school provide the foundation skills that all students need to progress in their academic journeys. As a result, new and innovative undertakings are carried out each year with the assistance of the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia, targeted grants programs.

In 2010, parent education and support was one of the aims of these funds with two separate information sessions being offered to families across the year. A range of parent information handbooks were also purchased and a new parent library system was established following an informal process of previous years. All of these implementations consolidated the literacy and numeracy outcomes for students which were maintained at a high level following enhanced staff professional development of the prior and current year.



# Parent Satisfaction with the school

A Parent Feedback Survey conducted at the end of 2010 revealed that parents were generally very satisfied with their child's educational experience at Spirit of Play. On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 = "Very Happy," parents rated their level of satisfaction with their child's overall experience at the school an average of 1.3. In terms of the balance of the educational program, most parents reported that they felt the balance was about right. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = "More teacher-directed", 3 = "Balance about right" and 5 = "More child initiated," parents rated the balance an average of 3.1.

When asked what they appreciated about Spirit of Play, parents listed a variety of positive aspects about the school, in particular:

- Small class size, allowing individualised learning and attention
- Good quality of teaching
- The school's warmth and homelike atmosphere
- The school's physical beauty & the nature that surrounds it
- Community focus
- Focus on learning through play
- Child initiated education – matched to children's individual needs

***"I love the small, nurturing environment offered by Spirit of Play – it is exactly what I would choose to give my children for their preschool years." ~ parent, Pre-primary student 2010***

And to the teachers...

***"Thank you for all your hard work." ~ parent, Kindergarten student 2010***

# Post-school destinations

At present, Year 1 is the last year level of schooling provided by Spirit of Play. As such, post-school destinations relate to the next stage of school and corresponding choices made by our parent body.

An examination of post-school destinations at the end of 2010 revealed:

- Of the 8 children enrolled in Kindergarten, 1 family moved away from town, 2 students moved on to the local State Government Pre-Primary, and 5 (63%) stayed on at Spirit of Play for 2011.
- Of the 7 children enrolled in Pre-Primary, 1 family moved away from town, 1 student moved to another independent school in the region, 4 children moved on to the local State Government Primary School, and 1 (14%) remained at Spirit of Play for 2011.
- The 1 child in Year 1 in 2010 enrolled for Year 2 at another independent school in the region.

# Management Committee's 2010 Report

**(Prepared by Jo Smith, Chairperson of the 2010 Management Committee and presented at the Annual General Meeting on 3 March 2011)**

In 2010 we had a lot of upheavals and changes at this little school but at the same time the school was benefiting from a more stable management committee and one that had learned from previous years. It was however a difficult year with some instability in the staffing of the school and again low student numbers.

Shenoa Elvin-Johnson was the only constant staff member from previous years. We had a new teacher Michelle Ryan, and teacher's aide Jasmin Day starting from the beginning of the year. And at the end of first term we had a changeover of admin staff with Tegan Brown leaving and committee member and parent Kathy Rainbird walking into the job and creating a new and amazingly efficient environment.

Thoughts about management and questions of how the school could be more successfully run were posed throughout the year and conversations between parents, teachers and management committee were begun. At the end of 2010 we had an informal visioning meeting led by Liz Jack to attempt to look at what people thought were the important fundamentals of the school. These were to be used as a baseline to check when major decisions about organizational changes were being had. One of the main outcomes of the conversations was it is difficult for the school to be successfully managed voluntarily by the parents. With most parents working and parenting the time they had available to the school is not always consistent. A recommendation was posed that the school aim for getting to a financial position of being able to employ one of the teachers as a Principal.

The other recommendation was that the new 2011 management committee obtain support for their roles through a training programme. To this end a Lottery West grant is in process to cover these costs and at the same time cover costs of having a strategic plan for the school written up.

Another fantastic coup for the school was a successful grant – put together by Shenoa – which supported us to employ an indigenous

educator for 2011. Indigenous education has always been an incredibly important part of the school's curriculum and the funding has allowed us to embed this into our fortnightly activities.

But despite the sometime rather heady workload 2010 was a fabulous year filled with activities and incredibly bright happy students at the end – which is what we're about after all.

It has been a privilege to have been the Chairperson at Spirit of Play over the last two years, and having the opportunity to work with such amazing and skilled parents.

## **2010 EVENTS**

### **TERM 1**

#### ***Surfing:***

Another great summer activity to teach children about water skills and environmental explorations.

#### ***Broke Inlet camp:***

An annual camp that brings the community of Spirit of Play together. A great opportunity for families to come together and get to know each other.

### **TERM 2**

#### ***Winter Solstice lantern walk:***

A gorgeous evening of lanterns meandering through the night to the hum and strum of music – supported by music teacher Bruce Anthony. A spiral walk was also created.

### **TERM 3**

#### ***Re-registration:***

The school came up for re-registration with the Department of Education Services. A huge effort was put in by teachers, administration and management committee to make sure all of the paper work and finances were in order to show how the school was being run. This had positive feedback but again we were only given one year. They will return again in 2011 for another look.

#### ***Whale Watching:***

This has also become a part of our annual programme of events. The whole school drove to Albany with parents and friends where we boarded a catamaran and went in search of whales for the afternoon.

#### ***Djilbra***

Every year it is tradition to have a camp in the Djilbra season – September

– up in the Stirling Ranges. We all gathered at a beautiful camp ground at the base of Mt Trio along with other members of the community. This year Niah Kartijin Coolingars helped the students run the weekend. Joey showed the kids and parents his artistic skills as he set upon the water tank with a landscape painting, spear making and throwing and clap stick making and playing. There were ochre body adornments, trips to a ritual ochre pit – a very special and spiritual space. Joey's aunty Avril came and made damper and told traditional stories. And of course the very popular bush-tucker walk guided by Avril and Joey. This was a great place for all to get together and experience the strength and knowledge that still exists in the indigenous culture and for us to gather as a community group

#### **TERM 4**

##### ***Visioning***

The whole school was invited to talk and discuss what they saw as important for the school and recommend changes that could occur around these ideas to improve the school's functioning and reach into the community.

##### ***Children's Week Spring Fair***

This is an annual event held at the Recreation Centre where all organisations and individuals who work with children come and show the community what they have on offer. This was a great opportunity for the school to show and express the play based curriculum we run and opportunities to discuss these philosophies with interested parents. We also used it as an opportunity for a bit of fundraising.

##### ***Morning with Woodbury Boston***

This was a great opportunity to get out and about with one of the other schools in our region and for the children to meet, catch up with and share some time together. Everyone gathered at Elephant Rocks and had a fabulous morning of swimming and running.

##### ***Sleep Over***

Getting children to have a strong and relaxed relationship with their school and experience it as a place that you can have fun at is important to our children's' education. This was a fabulous evening with the teachers giving up their time to be there and cook breakfast for the kids in the morning.

##### ***Christmas Parade***

This year the school joined with Niah Kartijin Coolingars – Indigenous Corporation in Denmark – on the parade. The kids all got painted up, clambered onto Joey Williams' trailer with little camp fire, mia mia and didgeridoo, and followed the parade around. Heaps of fun!

## **ONGOING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN THE SCHOOL**

### ***Indigenous Programme***

In 2010 Joey Williams, Regula Peppin and others started up an indigenous corporation called Niah Kartijin Coolingars. For the year we worked closely with this corporation to bring ongoing indigenous programmes to the students.

### ***Music Programme***

Every Friday Bruce Anthony to enliven the kids' knowledge with sounds and rhythms. They learned a great swag of songs – including indigenous ones – and danced their Friday afternoons away.

### ***Literacy Information Sessions for parents***

Over the year Shenoa and Michelle ran several information sessions for parents to get a better handle on their children's literacy acquisition and offer skills that parents can use to help their children learn.

# School Income by Funding Source

Spirit of Play funding comes from five main sources. The majority of funding comes from the Commonwealth and State Governments and is based on student enrolment numbers as reported in the school bi-annual census. Other funding comes from fees and parent contributions, fundraising and donations and other grants. The income from other grants varies from year to year and as these grants are competitive they cannot be relied upon. In addition any monies received from grants are usually allocated to specific projects and such are not part of the general pool of funding for the school. Table 3 presents the breakdown of school income by funding source for 2010.

**Table 3: Proportion of school income by funding source in 2010**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
Commonwealth funding	41%
State funding	28%
Fees and parent contributions	19%
Fundraising and donations	4%
Grants	8%

# Future Directions

## Curriculum

Throughout Australia, curriculum guidelines and documents are undergoing reforms and changes during 2010 through to 2015. Two significant documents will come into effect over this time: Early Years Learning Framework and The Australian Curriculum. These changes directly impact the provision of education within Spirit of Play Community School's environment. The reforms strongly support the educational approaches stated by the school's ethos and philosophy. This helps to substantiate the school's quality programs that have been established over many years of high quality individualised education.

The teachers and management committee hold a continued resolution to maintain and affirm the unique approach that Spirit of Play Community School offers the Denmark community. This approach is now justified and substantiated by the world class, Early Years Learning Framework, which is a national document that all high quality early childhood educational institution's must adhere to across the country.

Spirit of Play Community School feels it is in a place of advantage to address the outcomes and objectives of this reform. As the School has many years of proven, established and effective approaches, strategies and quality learning programs that adhere to the core values of the Early Years Learning Framework. As a result the school has been able to transition to this new framework with ease. The School began implementation during 2010 and will continue to development further procedures, processes and strategies over 2011.

Following numerous professional development sessions and final decisions being made by the Commonwealth Government, some sections of the long awaited Australian Curriculum have been published. Spirit of Play Community School has planned a transitional phasing in of some sections over 2011. This new curriculum will continue to be implemented along side the Western Australian Curriculum Framework until the final phases of the Australian Curriculum are completed in 2015.



## **Whole School Planning**

Whole school planning is a reoccurring process that ensures the consistency and integrity of the curriculum and individual needs of the students across the academic years. Spirit of Play Community School reviews and adapts it's planning processes in response to students needs and with aims to enhancing quality on a regular basis.

The Australian Curriculum areas Science, Mathematics, English and History have been published. Spirit of Play Community School has established a whole school plan to implement these sections with the remaining curriculum areas continuing under the Western Australian Curriculum Framework for 2011. Further review and planning will take place over 2011 for the implementation of the remaining areas of the Australian Curriculum which are yet to be published.

## **School Viability**

The viability of Spirit of Play is dependent on our student enrolment numbers. In 2011 the school will continue to improve publicity and promotion, with the aim to increase our student enrolment numbers. A number of fundraising events are also planned for 2011. These events help increase the school's income as well as raise the school's profile within the community.

The school will also offer a Pre-Kindergarten orientation program in terms 2, 3 and 4. This program is unique to our region and will no doubt attract new parents and students.

