Welcome from our President...

On behalf of this year’s volunteer parent Committee of Management, welcome to Ascot Kindergarten in 2014. Some families are new to the kinder community this year, others have stayed on from the previous year and others still have come back again after a break. It’s wonderful to have you with us for this year!

Our educators pride themselves on striving to provide a high quality and inclusive educational program for our children and our volunteer parent committee is committed to helping them achieve this. Should you have any questions or queries at any stage regarding the program, please do not hesitate to ask the staff or any committee members.

We’ve had a very busy start to the year and have hit the ground running! During the Christmas Holiday break we were notified that our kinder was going to be assessed by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). This is the first time our kindergarten has been assessed as part of the National Quality Framework (NQF) set up in 2012 to improve and achieve consistently high quality care and education in the early years sector. This encompasses kindergartens, pre-schools, family and long day care. Our assessment date was set for Wednesday 2nd April, in the final week of Term 1. Although a lot of preparation has been done by previous committees, this year it has been very busy and special thanks must go to: Tara Usher (Administration Officer), Steph Yeend (Co-coordinator/Educational Leader), Janine Forbes-Rolfe (Policy Officer) and Bridgid Ryan (Vice-President).

The annual Welcome Barbeque was held on Friday 14th March. We were blessed with perfect weather and all the families that attended had a fabulous time. It was wonderful to see kinder families socialising together and with the educators, in a fun and relaxed environment, and the children in particular, having such a good time. The kinder is very grateful to receive the $1000 cheque from Jellis Craig Real Estate in Kensington, presented by the Director, John Morello, on the night. I’d like to congratulate the Fundraising Co-ordinator, Natalie Storey, and her Fundraising Subcommittee for organising such a successful event. Many thanks too, must go to all the businesses that supported the evening (refer to the full listing on page 2).

Ascot Kindergarten strives to foster a strong sense of community spirit. We hope you take every opportunity to enjoy participating in community activities run by the kinder throughout the year, whether they be fundraising activities, working bees or information evenings like the “Readiness for Kinder” evening to be held later this year. I’d also like to encourage any parents, guardians or grandparents in the kinder community to contribute to the kinder program. This may include sharing customs, talking to the children about their occupation (for instance Purple group enjoyed a presentation by a dad who it a fireman!) or even helping children make ornaments/art.

I look forward to meeting many of you at various kinder functions, or even at the park opposite the kinder (!) throughout the course of the year.

With warmest regards,
Sophia Karanatsios (President)
**Ascot Kindergarten Parent Committee for 2014:**

President: Sophia Karanatsios  
Vice President: Bridgid Ryan  
Secretary: Lucy Shaw  
Treasurer: Daria Butters  
Working Bee Co-ordinator: Sarah Collins  
Fundraising Co-ordinator: Natalie Storey  
Policy Officer: Janine Forbes-Rolfe  
Fees Officer: Wendy Stephenson  
Administrations Officer: Meron Slattery  
Occupational Health & Safety Officer: Sarah Jessup  
Sustainability & Grants Officer: Anne Pearsell  
Communications Officer: Elsa Yim  
General Committee Members: Zorica Rakovic, Larissa Cole, Katie Roberts  
Fundraising Subcommittee: Fiona Macri, Shane Roberts, Bridget Knol

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**Fundraising update...**

**Annual Ascot Kindergarten Welcome BBQ**

Our annual Welcome BBQ was the perfect event to kick off our fundraising year and raised in excess of $2000! A balmy evening provided ideal conditions for painting faces, eating sausages and drinking refreshments (especially Carol’s delicious punch!). Thank you to all of you who volunteered their time to assist on the evening and to the fundraising sub-committee for bringing the evening together. We acknowledge the generous contributions from the following local businesses and individuals that donated towards the raffle:


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Some of the funds raised at the BBQ will be used to purchase some outdoor play equipment for the children

Sophia our president accepting a cheque from John Morello from Jellis Craig Real Estate
**Fundraising Diary Dates - What’s in store this year?**

- Sunday, May 4 – Cake Stall at Flemington Farmer’s Market
- Saturday, July 19 – Bunnings Sausage Sizzle
- Thursday, August 14 – Parents Dinner!
- Saturday, August 16 – Bunnings Sausage Sizzle

**Fundraising Notice Board**

There are a number of things that run throughout the year and it’s worth checking the fundraising notice board every so often to keep updated. We will also continue to send emails as new events arise. Thank-you for your support!

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**Program News...**

**Orange Group**

Term 1 has been very busy for the Orange Group and we have observed lots of interesting play from the children. Our group have demonstrated a strong interest in literacy based experiences such as creating storybooks, writing and painting names on artwork, attempting to practice writing letters of the alphabet and each other’s names.

![Image of children's drawings]

We have also had a fascination with water play especially creating “floods”, “waterfalls” and “muddy puddles!” The children have enjoyed walking bare foot in our tiered puddles around the sandpit as well as using transport through the puddles, and then transferring water from one place to another, to use in cooking or to water our garden.

We have observed a keen interest in singing and dancing which we have supported during group experiences and some of our favourite dances have been ‘portside pirates’, ‘Wally wombat and his mates’, ‘the dinosaur walk’ and ribbon dancing. The children have enjoyed singing songs in front of the group individually, as well as all together, and have also enjoyed recording these songs on our camera to watch back.

There has been a lot of learning happening this term and one area we have focused on has been feelings and emotions. We have used a feelings and volume meter to represent our levels of energy, feelings, and voice. This is colour coded with red and orange in the high levels and blue and green in the lower levels. As well as the meter, Educators have been modelling language and actions for the children to use, as well as supporting the leaning through storybooks. We also aim to introduce a lot more social stories and puppet play next term to support this groups social interactions.

Kind Regards,

Blair, Jenny and Megan
Incursions - Melbourne Museum Dinosaurs and Fossils and The Sage Garden

Both the Orange and Purple groups participated in an incursion through the Melbourne Museum early in the year which involved investigating Dinosaur bones and fossils. The children enjoyed exploring the mould of a Tarbosaurus skull as well as touching the different fossils and measuring their height against the length of a real dinosaur bone! More recently we have had an environmental awareness incursion across all four groups – Orange, Purple, Blue and Red which explored planting herbs, vegetables, and flowers in our garden as well as the growth process and planting seeds in pots to take home.

Red Group

The Red Group have settled into the environment and are working on skill building and getting comfortable and confident with routines in the programme. This term we have observed lots of fantastic play and some strong interests are ‘The gingerbread man’ in which we have read the story and used puppets to tell the story, hand painting, singing songs with puppets, washing dolls, farm animals, hairdressing, sand play, and tea parties. We are focusing on receptive and oral language skills, turn taking, sharing, and working well together as a group.

Happy Holidays to everyone and a big thank you to all parents who have volunteered and helped to support children and educators this term! 😊

Kind Regards,

Blair

A note from the teachers and educators:

Thank you to all the children and families for a great start to the year! Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and energy for our Welcome BBQ, but especially to Natalie and the fundraising subcommittee.

Thanks to Tara and our Parent Committee for all your hard work and commitment leading up to our Assessment visit this term and for all the support we as educators have received in recent weeks.

Ascot Kinder thrives on the contributions of its community members and we really do rely on and appreciate everyone’s help and the time that you spend here with us. We know it can be challenging and everyone is very busy. So thanks once again and enjoy the holidays!
Purple Group

Term 1 has gone so quickly and so much has happened in purple group already! At the beginning of the year, there was a strong theme underlying our program... DINOSAURS! Dinosaurs are a common interest amongst children in the early years but in particular with purple group this year we saw a lot of dinosaur play, many questions about dinosaurs and children became really engaged with a variety of experiences we set up in relation to dinosaur exploration. Our Melbourne Museum incursion could not have come at a better time!

During the term we have all worked hard on building relationships and establishing a sense of belonging in our group. We have had a few children start in the second half of the term and we have all had to adjust to changes in the dynamics of the group as well as changes with educators. Like Orange group, we too have been talking a lot about feelings and how we express and manage our feelings and emotions. We have used a feelings meter as well as practised some relaxation and meditation during our group times. We plan to extend on this next term by introducing some yoga too! We have talked about the importance of slowing our bodies and minds down a little and taking the time to talk about things and asking for help when it is needed.

Children’s play has become more and more sustained and settled throughout the term and we are starting to see some great friendships forming and some favourite activities amongst small groups. Outdoor play is often favoured at Ascot and there is no exception in purple group. Cooking in the mud and sand pits is a daily occurrence and we know that the addition of some new outdoor kitchen equipment will be well received by the children in purple group!

Transport vehicles and emergency services have also been a hot topic this term and we were lucky enough to have a visit from a fire fighter who came to talk to the children and show them some different uniforms and equipment (thanks Shaun!)

The easels and the art table are always busy and children have been embracing the idea of contributing to their own scrapbooks with some children almost filling the pages already! (We can’t wait to see what you have added over the holidays!)

We will miss Megan and Carol but we are now looking forward to a great Term 2 when we will have a chance to get to know some new educators and continue to explore, play and learn together.

Best wishes for a relaxing and fun holiday break

Steph Megan and Jenny ☺️
Blue Group

I am pleased to say that I have almost met everyone in Blue group now and our group is nearly complete (and full!) We have 3 new children starting in Term 2 and I look forward to their first days with us!

We have had a lovely start to the year and our 3 hour sessions are going really well. Children have much more time this year to settle in and really get the most out of their play time whilst still having time and space to eat and then pack up and enjoy group story time without feeling too rushed.

We have celebrated many birthdays this term at group time and shared lots of giggles, books and songs. One of our favourite songs is “open shut them” backwards. Children are getting to know others in the group, learning names and other children’s interests and discovering similarities and differences between each other. We were sad to see Carol go and many children miss her but we have had a great reliever who has had many positive experiences with the children over the last few weeks and helped to make the transition period a little smoother. We look forward to getting to know our new educator next term.

We have had some great collaborative play outside building castles and having tea with dragons and there has been lots of water play and water painting. We have many gardeners in blue group who have loved feeding our worms and watering our new veggie garden recently. We have talked a lot about composting and what goes into the worm and children love holding the wiggly worms. I hope your broad beans are doing well and enjoying the rain!

We have some exciting plans for Term 2, including 2 more incursions – CERES water cyclists incursion as well as some yoga sessions! See you all after the break!

Enjoy!

Steph 😊

**Policy reminder:** Ascot Kindergarten has recently reviewed and updated several policies. Our policies are available in hardcopy for parents to read – folders are available in the children’s locker room and near our reflection book in the children’s room. Policies are also available in electronic copy to be emailed to families upon request.

**Readiness Information Night:** Look out for more details regarding our kinder and school readiness information night to be held early in Term 2!

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Jellis Craig are proudly associated with Ascot Kinder and will donate 10% from your property sale fee to our kinder. If you are thinking of selling your home or would like a current property appraisal, please contact:

John Morello on 8378 0500
291 Racecourse Road, Kensington.