

# SAPPA

South Australian  
**Primary Principals** Association Inc



South Australian  
**State School Leaders**  
Association

**SAPPA / SASSLA**

**2026**

**School-Based Preschool Report**

---

*Stronger Together*

## Introduction

The school-based preschool model is a distinctive and important part of South Australia's public education system. It provides families with a seamless pathway from early learning into primary schooling and delivers clear benefits for children, communities, and the broader education system.

This joint work emerged from a shared commitment by the South Australian Primary Principals Association (SAPPA) and the South Australian State School Leaders Association (SASSLA) to better understand the current realities of school-based preschools and identify policy opportunities to support their continued development.

Through direct engagement with principals and early years leaders across metropolitan, regional, and rural contexts, we have gained a detailed understanding of both the model's strengths and the pressures it now faces.

What is increasingly evident is that, while the model remains highly effective, it operates within a system that has not kept pace with the scale of change in early-years policy, regulation, and expectations.

Over time, the regulatory environment, accountability settings, and operational demands placed on school-based preschools have expanded significantly. However, the underlying funding models, leadership structures, and policy frameworks have remained largely unchanged.

### Why this matters

Without deliberate policy attention, the gap between expectations and capabilities will continue to widen, placing increasing pressure on leaders and risking the long-term sustainability of the model.

**Tobias O'Connor**, *President SAPPA* & **Phil O'Loughlin**, *Chief Executive of SASSLA*

# 1. Focus & Methodology

*School-based preschools are one of the best things about our system — but they're running on goodwill, not good design.” — Principal*

This review has been designed to build a comprehensive picture of the current realities of leading and managing a government school-based preschool.

The objective of this work is to identify policy settings that will support the model's future success and sustainability.

A key premise underpinning this work is that **policy attention to school-based preschools has not kept pace with system change**. The original Child Parent Centre model, introduced over 40 years ago, has experienced fundamental changes in structure, curriculum and regulation and a fresh look at what is needed to ensure the future success of the school-based preschool model is a high priority.

This review is organised around four key headings:

- the benefits and system value of the model
- leadership, funding and regulatory alignment
- operational and workforce challenges
- future opportunities for development

## Why this matters

There are 113 school-based preschools in the state. Minimal attention has been given to the changed operating conditions and the risk profile of school-based preschools. The information and data collected in this study clearly show that policy settings for resourcing and staffing structures do not align with contemporary realities.

## Methodology

### Survey Data.

In 2025, SPPA designed a general survey to establish base data on the principal's views on the key areas of focus identified above. The survey was distributed to all 113 school-based preschools. Responses were received from 39 schools, representing 35% of the schools within scope. The schools that participated represent a good cross-section of size, location and socio/economic conditions, and we are confident that the survey results provide an accurate picture of the views held by principals across the cohort.

This data provides contextual information on enrolments, leadership structures, workforce pressures, and funding patterns.

See **attachment 1** for details on how to access the 2025 SPPA School-Based Preschool Survey Insights Report.

## Case Studies

In mid-2025, five government school-based preschool sites were selected to represent the diversity of contexts across South Australia — including metropolitan, regional, and rural settings; small and large enrolment profiles; and varying leadership structures. These sites collectively reflect the diversity of South Australia’s school-based preschool landscape — from small rural integrated settings to large metropolitan centres.

The five participant site characteristics.

	IoED	Principal Site Classification	Primary Enrolment	Preschool Enrolment
School A Rural	6	1 The site also operates a Rural Care service	34	9
School B Metro	6	3	365	44
School C Hills	6	3	166	27
School D Hills	6	3	399	65
School E Metro	2	4	300	60

Interviews were guided by a semi-structured framework exploring leadership, workload, compliance, funding, workforce, and system integration. Participants were also asked to reflect on the model's strengths and identify potential improvements. This approach enabled both consistency across sites and the flexibility to explore the local context and the lived experience of staff in depth. The interview framework is outlined in **Attachment 2**.

At each of the five sites, interviews were conducted with the principal and either the early years leader or, where that position did not exist, the recognised senior preschool teacher. All interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically to identify recurring issues, differences across contexts, and illustrative examples of both strength and strain within the model.

A summary of the data obtained from the five participant schools is included as **Attachment 3**.

## 2. Benefits of the School-Based Model

There was strong support for the value of the school-based preschool model across all surveyed sites. This question was explored in some depth in the five case studies. All participants in the case studies presented strong views that the model added significant value to public education and communities.

Key areas highlighted in the study are:

**Seamless Transitions and Continuity of Learning** – children enter reception already familiar with the people, routines and environment of the school. This reduces anxiety, builds confidence, and establishes

a strong foundation for learning. Teachers in the early years report smoother transitions and fewer behavioural or adjustment issues.

*“For families and children, the difference is huge. Transitions are smoother and less jarring when preschool is on the school site.” — Principal*

**Early Identification and Intervention** – shared professional teams enable earlier recognition of learning and developmental needs. Information about children moves seamlessly from preschool to school, allowing tailored support plans from day one. In many cases, allied-health referrals or literacy and numeracy interventions begin before children start Reception.

**Family Engagement and Community Trust** – families build relationships with the school well before formal enrolment, creating a strong sense of belonging and confidence in public education. Parents are more likely to stay involved in the life of the school, volunteer, and maintain long-term connections.

*“Having preschool on site means families feel part of the school from day one.” — Principal*

**Shared Facilities and Staff Expertise** – co-location provides children with access to facilities and programs rarely available in standalone preschools — libraries, halls, sports days, specialist teachers and learning technologies.

Preschool educators benefit from proximity to colleagues in Reception to Year 2, supporting stronger alignment of play-based and early-literacy practices.

*“Being part of a bigger school community gives us access to the library, hall, oval and playgrounds. We join in Book Week and Sports Day.” — B1 Leader*

**Strengthened Professional Collaboration** – the model promotes a culture of collegiality across staff teams. Preschool and junior-primary teachers share planning, data and pedagogical approaches. This helps build a whole-school understanding of early childhood development and reinforces the importance of play-based learning through the early years of schooling.

**Support for Equity and Inclusion** – school-based preschools can draw on the school’s broader wellbeing, inclusion and multicultural support systems — such as Aboriginal Education Workers, bilingual SSOs and counsellors — enabling more responsive support for diverse learners and families.

**Viability and Sustainability for Communities** – in many regional and rural areas, the on-site preschool sustains the viability of the local school. It offers a “one-stop” model for families, providing continuity of care and education in communities that might otherwise lose early-years provision.

*“Being a small school, our preschool helps sustain our numbers into primary.” — Principal*

**A Model That Works for Families and Schools Alike** – leaders acknowledge that the model is not without strain — but despite the workload, they emphasise its value. The connection between preschool and school fosters trust, continuity and aspiration.

*“It’s hard work, but it’s the right work. Our preschool is the heart of the school community.” — Principal*

**Retention to Public Education** – families who enter through preschool are more likely to stay through primary school. For most schools, the preschool acts as an anchor for community continuity, supporting enrolment stability and family confidence.

### **The Value of the School-Based Preschool Model**

The research confirms that school-based preschools have specific organisational characteristics that deliver strong benefits across three key domains:

#### **Community Connectivity**

The model provides a seamless educational experience from preschool to Year 6. For families, particularly working families, this offers significant practical value through a single site for drop-off and pick-up. It also strengthens relationships and continuity across the early years of schooling.

#### **Equity and Inclusion**

School-based preschools enable early access to specialist resources, intervention, and support. This improves transitions into schooling and reduces fragmentation for children with additional needs.

#### **System Productivity**

The model enables efficient use of existing school infrastructure, staffing, and expertise. In aggregate, school-based preschools operate at a lower cost than standalone services while delivering strong outcomes.

### **3. The Core Tension: A Model Under Pressure**

While the model remains strong, it is now operating under significantly increased expectations and associated pressures.

Over time, the regulatory environment governing early years education has expanded substantially. This includes the National Quality Framework, ESB oversight, and ACECQA requirements.

These reforms have been driven by an appropriate focus on safety and quality. However, they have resulted in a level of compliance expectation that is increasingly misaligned with:

- available leadership time
- funding structures
- workforce capacity
- system integration with schools

Leaders consistently report that compliance is no longer an embedded part of practice, but a dominant and escalating workload driver.

*“I am more scared of the preschool than the school — the compliance is relentless.”*

### **Why this matters**

The model has evolved, but the system architecture has not kept pace. This misalignment is now a central pressure point across all sites.

## **4. Challenges Identified in Our Research**

*Principals managing schools and preschools are essentially managing two sites. It's an unbelievable amount of work without additional leadership." — Principal, Regional SA*

The benefits of the model must be viewed against the current operational challenges and financial pressures of managing a successful school-based preschool.

The key Management and funding issues identified in our research are:

### **4.1 Leadership Depth and Capacity**

Principals are the nominated supervisors of school-based preschools and are legally accountable for compliance with national and state standards and DfE policy.

Our study clearly indicates that it is not feasible, without additional leadership support for Principals, to exercise the day-to-day oversight of the preschool and manage compliance requirements to the standard required.

Schools respond to this dilemma in two main ways:

- Establishing a Band B leadership role for management of the preschool. This is the case in the three schools in the case studies with total enrolment (school and preschool) in the 350-plus bracket (Schools B, D, and E). There was a strong view within these schools that a dedicated Band B role was essential to the effective management of the preschool. In each school, the Band B position established to manage the preschool was subsidised by funds allocated to primary students.
- Where a Band B position is not feasible (Schools A&C), additional responsibilities were placed on the principal and teachers who are responsible for delivering the preschool program. In these schools, teachers assumed additional responsibilities for managerial and compliance tasks that would nominally be considered as leadership duties. The role of the principal was extended to having a significant "hands-on role" in managing the preschool, including the need for extensive input on meeting compliance standards. This raises an important question of industrial fairness.

Both approaches create challenges.

- Where a Band B position is established to manage the preschool, primary school funding cross-subsidises the preschool.
- Where the additional load is shared by the principal and teacher(s), the potential for industrial and regulatory risks is elevated.

### **Why this matters**

The two approaches to managing school-based preschools highlight the essential policy problem of not

recognising and funding the capacity for effective leadership oversight in these settings. A specific and immediate problem is the high job demand placed on the principal and teacher(s) in small schools to meet minimum conditions.

*“Without extra leadership time, we couldn’t keep NQS functioning. If I did it all myself, the school would suffer. If I didn’t do it, the preschool would be non-compliant.” — Principal*

## 4.2 Regulatory and Compliance Burden

The regulatory environment is consistently described as:

- highly prescriptive
- administratively intensive
- inconsistent in interpretation
- insufficiently resourced

Leaders report:

- significant time spent on documentation and audit preparation
- duplication between systems
- compliance requirements that extend beyond proportional risk
- working nights and weekends to meet obligations

Examples from case studies highlight:

- minor compliance issues being treated as significant
- steep learning curves for new leaders
- compliance processes that operate separately from school systems

### Why this matters

When compliance becomes the dominant driver of leader attention, it fundamentally reshapes the work of leadership. Rather than being one component of a balanced role, regulatory demands require leaders to constantly monitor, interpret and respond to multiple, shifting accountabilities in real time.

This creates work intensification, not simply through increased hours, but through the layering of competing priorities that must all be held simultaneously. Leaders describe the need to constantly move between operational decision-making, regulatory interpretation, documentation, and day-to-day educational leadership.

The impact is not only time-based. It is cognitive. Over time, this sustained cognitive load creates risk. Research into leadership workload and psychosocial safety is clear that environments characterised by:

- high accountability
- low control over workload volume and pace
- constant vigilance requirements.

These characteristics are associated with increased burnout risk, reduced decision quality, and declining role sustainability. In effect, the current settings risk shifting leadership from educational leadership to compliance management, with implications for both quality and sustainability over time. Over time, this leads to challenges in attracting and retaining leaders willing to take on the role

As one principal described, *“it was like learning a new language”*.

### 4.3 Cross-Subsidisation from School Budgets

The core structure of the preschool funding model predates the introduction of the National Quality Framework and the significant expansion in compliance, accountability, and pedagogical expectations that now shape early years settings. As a result, there is a growing gap between allocated funding and the actual cost of delivery.

School-based preschools receive a defined allocation through the Resource Entitlement Statement (RES). This allocation is intended to support core service delivery and includes provision for:

- teaching and ECW staffing to meet minimum supervision ratios
- a limited allocation for relief teachers
- administrative supplementation, including SSO hours and additional leadership allocation
- A financial supplement for achieving NQS standards through the SBP Additional Administration Leadership line of the RES.

The additional supplementation for the NQS is inadequate for two reasons:

- The additional funding has not kept pace with the significant increase in compliance, especially regarding the strong focus on child-safe environments actively being promoted by the department and the ESB. The expectation is that compliance-related work will further intensify in the future.
- Compliance work requires similar input of time irrespective of enrolment level. The formula for distributing funds is based on enrolment, which further disadvantages low-enrolment sites.

In practice, schools absorb this gap through a combination of financial and in-kind support. This includes:

- funding leadership roles, often at Band B level, from primary school budgets
- providing administrative support beyond allocated entitlements
- utilising school infrastructure, systems, and principal oversight to meet regulatory requirements

Attachment 3 provides a detailed overview of the extent of this cross-subsidisation, highlighting both direct financial contributions and the notional value of significant in-kind support required to sustain operations.

The consequence is that primary school resources are routinely redirected to sustain preschool operations.

As a result:

- schools consistently subsidise preschool services beyond allocated funding
- leadership capacity is drawn from primary budgets rather than being system-funded
- administrative and compliance functions are absorbed within existing school structures

*“Our preschool funding covers \$590,000. It costs \$750,000 to run. The shortfall comes straight from the school.” — Principal*

#### **Why this matters**

This creates an unintended redistribution of resources away from primary students and places principals in a position of managing competing priorities without adequate resourcing. Over time, this model becomes increasingly difficult to sustain and risks undermining both preschool and primary provision.

## Other Issues Identified

The findings of this review highlight several systemic pressure points that have significant implications for the sustainability of the school-based preschool model. These issues are not isolated; they intersect and compound, creating operational and compliance challenges that extend beyond individual sites.

- **Zoning:** Misalignment between preschool and school zones undermines continuity and family trust. Siblings attending the same school are often refused preschool entry.
- **Labour Market:** Severe shortages of early-years relief teachers (TRTs) and Qualified SSO staff compromise safety, quality and compliance. Difficulty in attracting and retaining suitable SSOs was noted in all case study sites.
- **Industrial Regulation:** Rigid contact-time and NIT provisions limit flexibility and make it harder for school-based preschools to respond to local needs and the realities of delivering a preschool program for a small enrolment base.

Together, these factors interact to amplify pressure on leaders, creating operational and compliance risks that extend beyond individual sites.

### Risks to the Future

The evidence from this study indicates that under current policy settings:

- All school-based preschools, no matter their size, need high levels of leadership oversight to deliver a quality preschool program and manage the risks associated with not meeting the NQS. The impact is most significant on small schools.
- Workforce pressures, including difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers and qualified SSOs, along with meeting industrial requirements, present significant operational challenges.
- The requirement for cross-subsidisation of the preschool program puts school-based preschools at a disadvantage compared to standalone primary schools and preschools.

### Why this matters

The confluence of the factors described above indicates that the current model for school-based preschools is under stress, and policy reform is needed to:

- Stabilise the current model
- Assess options for workforce reform in school-based preschools
- Establish a strong base for the model's ongoing development to enable future expansion options, such as the geographical rollout of preschool for 3-year-olds, which started in country SBPS in 2026.

## 5. Shaping a Preferred Future

What stands out in this study is the high value and cost-effectiveness of the school-based preschool model. A counterpoint to these benefits is the operational risks and funding issues we have identified in the study. There is a strong case to be made for a deep policy review to address SBPS's current and future delivery needs.

We view our work as an initial step toward a wider dialogue with the Government and the department on school-based preschools. We welcome the chance to explore options and opportunities to tackle operational challenges and enhance the role of school-based preschools in providing quality early childhood education.

In relation to the findings made in this report, our areas of interest are summarised below:

1. **Evolve Leadership and Industrial Arrangements** – explore ways to provide a sustainable model of leadership to support the operation of SBPS now and into the future.
  - A. **Establish minimum leadership standards** based on enrolment, complexity, and environment, taking size and context into account. We propose that, as a default, each school-based preschool should have at least a B1 leader with allocated release time. While different settings may require varying levels of leadership, they all need some form of support. A clear minimum standard should be adopted promptly. In larger sites, this requirement could scale up to a B2 or B3 leader.
  - B. **Recognise the classification of SSOs working in school-based preschools.** Given the duties, mandatory training, levels of responsibility and certificate qualifications required for the role, duly recognise the classification of SSOs working in school-based preschools at the SSO2 level.
  - C. **Build Leadership Capability** – develop targeted induction, mentoring, and professional learning supports for principals and early-years leaders.
  - D. **Redesign Funding to Reflect Real Costs** – move towards a funding approach that stabilises current system needs, provides for future enhancements and reflects the true cost of service delivery, including administration, compliance, and facilities, so that preschool operations do not rely on cross-subsidy from primary budgets.

### Longer Term Structural Changes Horizon

The full benefits of the SBPS model can be realised through further development and structural reform. Two important opportunities on the horizon are:

1. **Prepare for the Introduction of Three-Year-Old Preschool** – The ongoing geographical rollout of three-year-old preschool represents both an opportunity and a pressing test of system readiness. Thorough planning and reform are required to ensure the expansion strengthens, rather than stretches, government school-based preschools.
2. **Simplify and Align Regulation** – work towards greater coherence between school and preschool compliance frameworks, reducing duplication and focusing on improvement rather than penalty. Streamlined reporting and proportionate expectations will allow leaders to spend more time leading learning and less time managing paperwork.

## 6. Final Word

This project has been both enlightening and unifying. It has provided SAPPA and SASSLA with a valuable opportunity to collaborate genuinely—listening to members, learning from their experiences, and developing a shared understanding of what it means to lead a school-based preschool in today’s context.

Through this process, we have been impressed by the professionalism, creativity, and care shown by leaders and educators who work tirelessly to maintain high-quality early learning environments despite limited funding and increasing complexity. Their stories have reminded us that school-based preschools are not just administrative units—they are the heart of many communities and an essential entry point into public education.

Our collaboration across associations has strengthened both our understanding and advocacy. We now have a clearer picture of the model’s value and the systemic issues that need addressing to ensure it remains viable and effective.

However, there is also an undeniable sense of urgency. The staggered rollout of three-year-old preschool presents both an opportunity and a test. This report isn’t a call to reduce standards. It is a call to ensure that expectations are matched with appropriate resourcing, leadership capacity and system alignment.

We urge the government and the Department for Education to act quickly—in partnership with SAPPA, SASSLA, and other associations—to ensure that the expansion of early learning builds on a solid foundation rather than adding to existing burdens.

By acting now, we can preserve what works, fix what doesn’t, and ensure every child—starting from three years old—receives the best possible start in their education within a strong, sustainable public system.



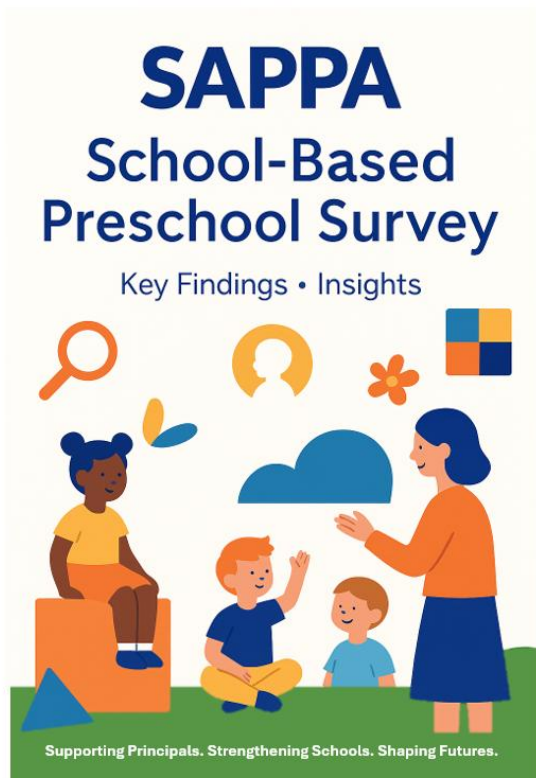
Tobias O’Connor  
President



Phil O’Loughlin  
Chief Executive



**Attachment 2:  
SAPPA School-Based Preschool Survey**



**Foreword**

School-based preschools play a critical role in providing South Australia's youngest learners with the foundations for lifelong success. Principals lead these services with passion and commitment, balancing the dual responsibilities of managing preschools alongside primary schools.

The findings from SAPPA's 2025 School-Based Preschool Survey highlight both the **strengths of this model** and the **significant systemic pressures** faced by leaders. Principals consistently raised concerns about leadership workload, inequitable funding, growing compliance demands, and the challenges posed by the rollout of 3-year-old preschool.

This report brings the voices of principals to the forefront. It provides **evidence-based insights** to inform SAPPA's advocacy, ensuring school-based preschools are **sustainably funded, adequately resourced, and appropriately supported**.

SAPPA remains committed to working closely with the Department for Education, Government, and stakeholders to ensure that every child — regardless of their location or circumstances — has access to a high-quality preschool experience.

*Tobias O'Connor*  
President  
South Australian Primary Principals Association

School-based preschools provide significant benefits for families and communities, but the SAPPA 2025 survey highlights growing systemic pressures:

- Leadership workloads are unsustainable. Principals are managing two organisations.
- Funding models are inequitable, forcing 84% of schools to subsidise preschool budgets.
- Compliance demands create duplication and administrative overload.
- Workforce shortages threaten quality and consistency.
- With 3-year-old preschool on the horizon, urgent planning, funding, and leadership support are essential.

- 84%** Schools subsidise preschool budgets - funding model is unsustainable
- 72%** Principals report excessive leadership workload managing two sites
- 65%** Want funding parity with standalone preschools to meet obligations
- 58%** Compliance frameworks cause significant administrative burdens
- 70%** Leaders highlight workforce shortages impacting quality

**SAPPA calls for urgent funding reform, dedicated leadership allocations, and streamlined compliance to ensure sustainable, high-quality early years provision.**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Context**

- 39 principals responded to SAPPA's 2025 survey on school-based preschools.
- The survey explored **enrolment management, leadership workload, funding pressures, and the rollout of 3-year-old preschool**.
- Findings highlight **systemic inequities** between school-based and standalone preschools and identify **priority areas for reform**.

**2. Top Five Insights**

**1. Funding Pressures Are Acute**

- **84%** of schools supplement preschool budgets from general school funds.
- Contributions range from **< \$20k to \$250k+ annually**.
- **65%** of principals believe the current model **disadvantages school-based preschools**.

**2. Leadership Time Is Insufficient**

- **76%** of principals report **poor balance** managing preschools alongside primary schools.
- Multiple respondents requested a **minimum 0.5 FTE Band B2 leadership allocation**.

**3. Enrolment Zones Create Complexity**

- **46%** of respondents are dissatisfied with their preschool zone.
- Mismatched school and preschool zones are creating **confusion for families and inefficiencies in transitions**.

**4. 3-Year-Old Preschool Rollout Raises Concerns**

- While supportive of early access, **41% of respondents are worried or highly concerned**.
- Key challenges:
  - Workforce shortages.
  - Limited facilities.
  - Uncertainty around integration within existing structures.

**5. Administrative Burden Is Growing**

- Funding acquittals, staffing compliance, and reporting requirements are creating **unsustainable workloads**.
- Multiple comments emphasise the strain of **dual preschool + primary leadership responsibilities**.

There are 113 Government School-Based Preschools in South Australia

All SBPS							
	LoED						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total	21	20	11	19	15	18	9
	41	30	42				
	52			61			

Country SBPS							
	LoED						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total	18	7	5	9	7	12	7
	25	14	26				
	30			35			

Metro SBPS							
	LoED						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total	3	13	6	10	8	6	2
	16	16	16				
	22			26			



**Scan to access full report**

[Link to report](#)

*"Principals managing schools and preschools are essentially managing two sites... I am struggling. I don't need more pay, I need more leadership support."*

## **Attachment 2:**

### **Interview Schedule – School-Based Preschool Case Studies**

#### **Purpose**

This interview schedule was designed to support a consistent but flexible approach to data collection across case study sites. It aimed to build a detailed understanding of the operation of school-based preschools, including leadership, funding, compliance, workforce, and system integration.

Interviews were semi-structured, allowing participants to provide context-specific insights while ensuring key areas of inquiry were explored across all sites.

#### **Section 1: Context and Role**

- Can you describe your preschool setting (size, structure, days of operation)?
- What is your role in relation to the preschool?
- How is the preschool staffed (teachers, SSOs, leadership roles)?
- How does the preschool fit within the broader school structure?

#### **Section 2: Day-to-Day Operations**

- What does a typical week look like in the preschool?
- How is time allocated across teaching, administration, and leadership tasks?
- Who is responsible for:
  - day-to-day operations?
  - planning and programming?
  - parent communication?
  - administration and organisation?
- How independent is the preschool operation within the school?

#### **Section 3: Leadership and Responsibility**

- Who holds overall responsibility for the preschool?
- How is leadership structured (principal, Band B leader, teacher-led)?
- What leadership work is required to operate the preschool effectively?
- How are decisions made and communicated?
- In smaller sites, how are leadership responsibilities managed?

#### **Section 4: Workload and Time Demands**

- How much time is spent:
  - on the floor (teaching)?
  - on administration and compliance?
- What work is completed outside of standard hours?
- What are the key pressure points across the year (e.g. assessment, reporting, enrolments)?
- What work is difficult to complete or gets deprioritised?

#### **Section 5: Regulatory and Compliance Requirements**

- What compliance requirements do you manage (e.g. NQS, ESB, ACECQA)?
- How confident are you that your preschool meets all requirements?
- What is your experience of assessment and rating processes?
- How much preparation is required for compliance and audits?
- How manageable are current regulatory expectations?

#### **Section 6: Funding and Resourcing**

- What funding is provided for the preschool through the RES?
- Is this funding sufficient to operate the preschool effectively?

- To what extent does the school provide additional financial or in-kind support?
- Where are the main cost pressures?
- How are leadership and administrative roles funded?

#### **Section 7: Workforce and Staffing**

- What is your experience in recruiting and retaining preschool staff?
- Are there challenges accessing:
  - qualified teachers?
  - SSOs?
  - relief staff (TRTs)?
- How do workforce issues impact operations and compliance?

#### **Section 8: Industrial and Operational Constraints**

- How do industrial arrangements (e.g. contact time, NIT) impact the preschool?
- How flexible is the current model in responding to local needs?
- Are there structural constraints that make the model difficult to manage?

#### **Section 9: System Integration and Communication**

- How well is the preschool integrated within the school?
- How effectively do school and preschool systems align?
- How is information shared across:
  - staff
  - leadership
  - system/department communications?
- Are there gaps or duplication in processes?

#### **Section 10: Comparison to Standalone Preschools (where relevant)**

- How does working in a school-based preschool differ from a standalone setting?
- What additional responsibilities or expectations exist?
- What aspects are more effective in a school-based model?

#### **Section 11: Strengths of the Model**

- What works well about the school-based preschool model?
- What benefits does it provide for:
  - children?
  - families?
  - the school community?
- What aspects of the model should be preserved?

#### **Section 12: Future Improvements and Opportunities**

- What are the key challenges that need to be addressed?
- If you could change one aspect of the model, what would it be?
- What would improve sustainability and effectiveness?
- Looking ahead (including three-year-old preschool), what needs to be in place for success?

#### **Closing Prompt**

- Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?

### Attachment 3a

A summary of the Data obtained from the five participant schools

School	Direct supplementation from the Primary School Budget <sup>1</sup>	Estimate Indirect Cost of allocation of time and resources to <sup>2</sup> Preschool Operations.
<p><b>School A</b> IoED: level 6  Principal Classification: SCM-1  Enrolment: School -35 Preschool -9 Rural Care -40 <sup>3</sup></p>	<p>TRT supplementation \$5K</p>	<p>Principal time \$35K<sup>4</sup>  Finance/Admin/ICT/Maintenance estimated at \$27K</p>
<p><b>Specific operational issues associated with the site</b></p>		
<p>The principal is the only leadership position in a school with a capacity of 85 students and children, including the school, the preschool, and rural care.</p> <p>The principal takes a “hands-on” role in managing NQS requirements in the preschool.</p> <p>Rural Care attracts a leadership allowance of 0.2 FTE, which is absorbed into general site operations.</p> <p>The principal spends 50% of school time face-to-face teaching over the year. This teaching load is at the industrial maximum of 11 hours and 15 minutes established in the EA. A contributing factor is the inconsistent TRT supply, which necessitates the principal taking relief lessons on short notice.</p> <p>The Preschool teacher does not have access to an ECW because the enrolment is below the 11-child threshold. Under current enrolment conditions, the teacher delivers the preschool program without additional support.</p> <p>Preschool collapses into Junior Primary when relief teachers are unavailable.</p> <p>Preschool and Rural Care teachers operate with a high degree of autonomy and take responsibility for curriculum planning, parent engagement, and the general operation of the preschool/rural care.</p> <p>The school's staffing is finely calibrated. The school has retained highly competent staff who can operate flexibly under the day-to-day pressures of a small school. Should this change, further operational work would flow to the principal.</p>		

<sup>1</sup> Funds are directly transferred from the school budget for the operation of the preschool. Assumes all funding attached to the SBPS Additional Administration Leadership line of the RES is allocated for additional and is not included in this estimate for direct supplementation from the school.

<sup>2</sup> Estimate of the cost of existing fixed resources to support preschool operations. For the purposes of this study these are regarded as notional costs that have a positive productivity impact.

<sup>3</sup> Maximum capacity for Rural Care placements.

<sup>4</sup> Represent hours working on operational work, including teaching in the preschool.

### Attachment 3b

A summary of the Data obtained from the five participant schools

School	Direct supplementation from the Primary School Budget <sup>5</sup>	Estimate Indirect Cost of allocation of time and resources to <sup>6</sup> Preschool Operations.
<p><b>School B</b> IoED: level 6</p> <p>Principal Classification: SCM-3</p> <p>Enrolment: School -365 Preschool -44</p>	<p>B-1 Leader additional supplementation \$30K</p> <p>TRT release \$5K</p>	<p>Principal time and other leadership support estimated at \$20K</p> <p>Finance/ Admin/ICT General Maintenance estimated at \$25K</p>
<p><b>Specific operational issues associated with the site</b></p>		
<p>School Leadership positions include Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal (Intervention), who work closely with the preschool, especially during transition time, and with student referrals to the SSS Wellbeing Leader (0.6 FTE).</p> <p>Preschool capacity was reduced from 66 to 44 in 2025.</p> <p>A B1 Leader was appointed to the preschool to oversee day-to-day operations, including planning and programming, and to meet NQS requirements. The B1 Leader line-manages the SSO staff, and the Principal line-manages teachers. The B1 Leader has 1.5 days of admin release and 3.5 days on the floor.</p> <p>The Principal and B1 Leader meet weekly to discuss preschool operations and make operational decisions as required.</p> <p>TRT supply is generally stable. Difficulty is had in finding suitable SSO staff. Occasionally, teachers are employed to meet ratios.</p> <p>The school is critical of a recent NQS assessment. A particular criticism was the inexperience of the person undertaking the assessment.</p>		

<sup>5</sup> Funds directly transferred from the school budget for the operation of the preschool. Assumes all funding attached to SBPS Additional Administration Leadership line of the RES is allocated for additional and is not included in this estimate for direct supplementation from the school.

<sup>6</sup> Estimate of the cost of existing fixed resources to support preschool operations. For the purposes of this study these are regarded as notional costs that have a positive productivity impact.

### Attachment 3c

A summary of the Data obtained from the five participant schools

School	Direct supplementation from the Primary School Budget <sup>7</sup>	Estimate Indirect Cost of allocation of time and resources to <sup>8</sup> Preschool Operations.
<p><b>School C</b>                      IoED: level 6                      Principal Classification: SCM-3                      Enrolment:                      School -166                      Preschool -27</p>	<p>TRT release \$4k                      SSO Supplementation 8 hours top up per week \$20K</p>	<p>Principal Time estimated at \$10K                      Finance/ Admin/ICT General Maintenance estimated at \$28K</p>
<p><b>Specific operational issues associated with the site</b></p>		
<p>School Leadership comprises the Principal and one Band B-2 Leader. The B-2 Leader has 0.6 release for school-related administration. There is no intermediate Band B position established for oversight of the preschool.</p> <p>The preschool runs a full-time program over 4 days.</p> <p>A preschool teacher assumes responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the preschool. The teacher takes operational responsibility for engaging with parents and meeting NQS requirements. The teacher exercises discretion over which matters are elevated to the Principal.</p> <p>In 2025, the school decided to continue with a full-time delivery model. This required the allocation of funds for additional SSO hours.</p>		

<sup>7</sup> Funds are directly transferred from the school budget for the operation of the preschool. Assumes all funding attached to the SBPS Additional Administration Leadership line of the RES is allocated for additional and is not included in this estimate for direct supplementation from the school.

<sup>8</sup> Estimate of the cost of existing fixed resources to support preschool operations. For the purposes of this study, these are regarded as notional costs that have a positive productivity impact.

### Attachment 3d

A summary of the Data obtained from the five participant schools

School	Direct supplementation from the Primary School Budget <sup>9</sup>	Estimate Indirect Cost of allocation of time and resources to <sup>10</sup> Preschool Operations.
<p><b>School D</b> IoED -6  Principal Classification SCM-3  Enrolment: School -399 Preschool -65</p>	<p>Band B-2 Leader \$50K  SSO playgroup 3 hours per week \$10K</p>	<p>Principal Time and other leadership time estimated at \$10K  Finance/ Admin/ICT General Maintenance estimated at \$30K</p>
<p><b>Specific operational issues associated with the site</b></p>		
<p>School Leadership Structure B3 Deputy Principal, B2 Wellbeing &amp; Inclusion Leader</p> <p>The B2 leader was created to manage the preschool. The job structure is designed for 2 days of leadership and 3 days of teaching. The leadership component of the role (0.4) is funded through funds allocated to the school.</p> <p>The school's focus is on an integrated approach to early years learning.</p> <p>A very high regulatory load is placed on the school principal for the preschool and OSHC (100+ children each night).</p> <p>Current industrial requirements create rigidities – strict limits on face-to-face teaching, NIT and other duties reduce flexibility in timetabling and staffing.</p> <p>The value of experienced SSO staff is acknowledged, but a lack of funding remains a barrier to reclassifying staff.</p>		

<sup>9</sup> Funds are directly transferred from the school budget for the operation of the preschool. Assumes all funding attached to the SBPS Additional Administration Leadership line of the RES is allocated for additional and is not included in this estimate for direct supplementation from the school.

<sup>10</sup> Estimate of the cost of existing fixed resources to support preschool operations. For the purposes of this study, these are regarded as notional costs that have a positive productivity impact.

### Attachment 3e

A summary of the Data obtained from the five participant schools

School	Direct supplementation from the Primary School Budget <sup>11</sup>	Estimate Indirect Cost of allocation of time and resources to <sup>12</sup> Preschool Operations.
<p><b>School E</b> IoED: level 2  Principal Classification: SCM-4  Enrolment: School -300 Preschool -60</p>	<p>Band B Leader additional supplementation \$80K  TRT release \$13K  An additional 12 hours of SSO time allocated to preschool \$30K</p>	<p>Principal and other leadership time estimated at \$20K  Finance/ Admin/ICT General Maintenance estimated at \$25K</p>
<p><b>Specific operational issues associated with the site</b></p>		
<p>School Leadership positions B-4 Deputy, B-2 Curriculum, B-2 Inclusion, B-1 Coordinator.</p> <p>Dedicated Band B-2 Leader (0.8) appointed to manage the preschool. Reports to the Principal. Has day-to-day responsibility for the preschool and for establishing and managing compliance. Ensures systems are established and managed to meet NQS requirements.</p> <p>Complex student cohort – high EALD, health, and social and emotional needs in children.</p> <p>The policy and regulatory environment associated with the student cohort results in very high work demand.</p> <p>Difficulty attracting and retaining teachers and SSOs. SSOs vary widely in skills. New staff require intensive training.</p> <p>Industrial requirements do not suit preschool operations. School staff are often needed to manage NIT requirements.</p>		

<sup>11</sup> Funds are directly transferred from the school budget for the operation of the preschool. Assumes all funding attached to the SBPS Additional Administration Leadership line of the RES is allocated for additional and is not included in this estimate for direct supplementation from the school.

<sup>12</sup> Estimate of the cost of existing fixed resources to support preschool operations. For the purposes of this study, these are regarded as notional costs that have a positive productivity impact.