

Kerikeri Kindergarten Education Review

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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

About The Centre

Location	Kerikeri, Northland
Ministry of Education profile number	5550
Type	Free Kindergarten
Number licensed for	40 children
Roll number	80
Gender composition	Boys 50, Girls 30
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 60, Māori 15, British/Irish 4, Indian 1
Review team on site	November 2008
Date of this report	13 January 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, February 2006 Education Review, February 2003 Assurance Audit, June 1997 Review, June 1992 Review, October 1990

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Kerikeri Kindergarten is a well established centre that serves children and families from Kerikeri and surrounding districts. The kindergarten operates under the auspices of the Northland Kindergarten Association, which provides a framework of policy and procedural documentation and a range of advisory and management support systems and services that guide the operation of the centre.

Since ERO's 2006 review, the teaching team has changed. A new head teacher has been appointed and relieving staff have gained permanent positions. An additional teacher has been employed to meet the staffing requirements for full day care, as the kindergarten now provides longer sessions for children.

In 2006 ERO noted that children were capable and confident learners who initiated their own learning and were articulate, positive and friendly. The teaching team was providing an interesting programme. They were described as reflective practitioners who made good use of teaching opportunities to extend children's learning.

The strongly reflective nature of the new teaching team, and their aim to provide high quality programmes for children, has led to their exploration of aspects of the Reggio Emilia philosophy to create a learning environment that truly supports children's socio-cultural learning. Parents express their satisfaction and pleasure that their children are enrolled in such a supportive and lively programme.

Teachers have successfully adapted the Reggio Emilia philosophy so that it more closely matches New Zealand conditions and the requirements of Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum. Children respond well to teachers' trust that they will treat their environment with love and care and that they will develop their ideas with their play companions.

Teachers actively include and celebrate the Māori families who attend the centre. They have used their Northland locale to increase children's knowledge of New Zealand and Māori history. They include Māori crafts in children's activities and seek the views of individual Māori parents. Children have a confident understanding of te reo Māori as it is used in the context of their play and in mat time activities.

This report evaluates the quality of education provided for children, including the programme in action, programme planning, interactions between adults and children and the impact of the environment on children's learning. The quality of education for Māori children is also reviewed. The strategic plan and policies for the centre could include more specific goals for responding to Māori families. ERO recommends that teachers reconsider group times and, in portfolios, increase the focus on assessing the progress of individual children.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

Review Priorities

The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Kerikeri Kindergarten was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the centre to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the management and staff. This discussion focused on existing information held by the centre (including self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to positive outcomes for children at Kerikeri Kindergarten.

All ERO education reviews in early childhood focus on the quality of education. For ERO this includes the quality of:

- the programme provided for children;
- the learning environment; and
- the interactions between children and adults.

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

The Quality of Education

Background

The 2006 ERO report identified good quality practices in teaching and providing programmes for children.

Areas of good performance

Confident children. Relationships with children are affectionate and trusting and, as a result, children are confident and competent in their approaches to play. They make choices about where they want to play for most of the session and are settled and sociable. They concentrate for extended periods, and are able to negotiate agreed outcomes in their games. Teachers are consistently supportive of children, are involved in their games and provide the prompts that enable play to develop.

Fun is part of play. Children are inventive and imaginative in their play. Records show that children often return to play themes. In response, teachers provide prompts and resources

that enable children to elaborate and continue their games. As well as valuing children's play, teachers introduce a sense of fun and enjoyment into their interventions with children.

Interactions. Children are highly articulate, imaginative and eager to share their ideas and thoughts. Conversations between children are frequent and are generally cheerful and friendly. Teachers see themselves as a resource for children, without dominating their ideas and games. They listen carefully to children, giving weight to their suggestions and asking questions that encourage further thinking. Teachers use questions to prompt problem solving, and urge children to resolve relationship difficulties verbally.

Interactions with parents. Teachers have developed friendly relationships with parents and engage with them in frequent conversations about children's progress and development. Parents are comfortable in the centre, staying to settle and play with their children. Some parents volunteer their time to help on a very regular basis.

The learning environment. The kindergarten environment is inviting, aesthetically pleasing, and arranged so as to provide open access and free movement of children. A wide range of equipment and resources is arranged to invite exploration and investigation. A repaint of the inside of the building in neutral colours makes displays of children's work and photographs of their play more attractive and immediate. Displays indicate the value that teachers place on recording and celebrating children's positive learning experiences. Information for parents explains the philosophies that guide the programme. Children understand the flexibility of the setting and move resources to where they need them. They demonstrate respect and care for resources.

The outdoor setting. The kindergarten includes an extensive playground shaded in parts by large trees. Teachers have put considerable thought into the arrangement and design of the play areas that they have developed and the flow of play is successful and rewarding for children. Teachers provide children with a range of play options outdoors, including areas of play that are more usually provided indoors. This placement of resources has been the result of a conscious and successful decision to enable children to develop their own play scenarios and games. Teachers have a continued focus on changing the environment to extend learning for children.

Teamwork. There is a growing sense that the teachers are working as a team to maximise opportunities for children. They are all eager to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Reggio Emilia philosophy that they have decided to follow and are working collaboratively towards accessing joint study options based on this philosophy.

Areas for improvement

Group times. Individual teachers take responsibility for planning group time with a small

number of designated children. While teachers present interesting and absorbing activities during this time, not all children are engaged. Planning is also sometimes focused on group activities, rather than on the individual interests of children. Teachers should consider the value of these group times in their present form, when children's play at other times is so educationally valuable to them. It is useful for children to work in groups, and teachers should respond spontaneously in helping children to initiate group activities or to gather small groups around interesting experiences. In this way, they will allow children to make choices and will foster their social development.

Portfolios. Teachers have developed portfolios for each of the children to record their development over the time. They are in the process of trialling new ways of recording. At present teachers record many stories about individual children's learning. The portfolios also include many stories that are about group experiences, or are accounts of what teachers have provided. As they review their recording styles and the content of portfolios, teachers should keep in mind the three-way partnership between themselves, the child and the parents. This focus would help them to align the records more closely to each child's interests and strengths. It would also provide material that helps parents and staff to discuss and plan ways of maximising each child's learning.

Areas Of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole through its national reports. This information will be used as the basis for long term and systemic educational improvement.

Māori Children

As part of this review ERO evaluated the extent to which this service carries out a process to identify and respond to the aspirations and expectations of the parents and whānau of Māori children and focuses on the potential of Māori children to develop as competent and capable learners.

Areas of good performance

Inclusive environment. Teachers provide an inclusive and welcoming environment. The displays in the kindergarten reflect teachers' intention that children will learn about the dual cultural heritage of New Zealand and that Māori families in particular will be able to recognise that they have a place in the kindergarten. Māori parents spoken to during this review stated that they felt comfortable and welcome in the kindergarten. Teachers use te reo Māori frequently in the programme and include legends and waiata. Children demonstrate their understanding of simple phrases and words and are able to sing the words to songs in te reo Māori.

Adding to everyone's knowledge. Teachers have included in the programme activities and experiences that have added knowledge about the Māori world. Teachers took children and many of their parents to visit Waitangi to learn more about the history of Northland. In the playground, children helped to build a traditional whare nikau, which is due to be completed shortly. Teachers organised a programme and celebration to mark Matariki with children. They invited parents to share their skills in Māori crafts and have been on visits to learn more about Māori crafts in their area. Parent and community involvement in the kindergarten is strong.

Resources. Games in te reo Māori are in constant use. Collage resources and other treasured pieces are stored in flax baskets and containers. There is a strong focus on papatuanuku and the valuing of the natural world in items of interest, books, and beautiful displays about stone carving and natural art. Teachers also focus on environmental and sustainability issues with children, who have planted a vegetable garden and plan to share a meal using the results of their efforts.

Parent survey. Teachers have specific conversations with Māori parents to determine their aspirations and desires about the programme for their children. The information gathered as a result of these conversations has been recorded to act as a prompt for teachers when considering programme planning. Parents were very positive about their children's involvement in the kindergarten.

Area for improvement

Strategic planning and policy development. In their strategic planning, teachers could specifically include planning for teaching the Māori dimension of their programme and planning for the care and education of Māori children attending the centre. Policies should now reflect an understanding of Māori traditions and protocols. Teachers are committed to continuing to improve their skills in te reo Māori and their understanding of the needs of Māori families. Improving long-term plans by including information about the ways teachers intend to improve their te reo Māori skills and a timeframe for reviewing and changing policies should help them to define the ongoing work needed to achieve their goals for the centre.

Management Assurance On Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the licensee and staff of Kerikeri Kindergarten completed an ERO Centre Management Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they have attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- administration;
- health, safety and welfare;
- personnel management;
- financial and property management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on outcomes for children:

- emotional safety (including behaviour management, prevention of bullying and abuse);
- physical safety (including behaviour management, sleeping and supervision practices; accidents and medication; hygiene and routines; travel and excursion policies and procedures);
- staff qualifications and organisation; and
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

ERO's investigations did not identify any areas of concern.

Recommendations

ERO and the kindergarten teachers agreed that teachers should continue to:

- 6.1 reflect on the value of group times as a way of providing experiences that acknowledge children's individual interests; and
- 6.2 develop ways of using portfolios to show clearly the learning and development of individual children.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

Signed

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

13 January 2009

13 January 2009

To the Parents and Community of Kerikeri Kindergarten

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Kerikeri Kindergarten.

Community Page

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When ERO has reviewed an early childhood centre we encourage management to inform their community of any follow up action they plan to take. You should talk to the management or licensee if you have any questions about this evaluation, the full ERO report or their future intentions.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the centre or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve quality of education for children in early childhood centres; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on outcomes for children and build on each centre's self review.

Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on four review strands.

- Quality of Education - including the quality of the programme provided for children, the quality of the learning environment and the quality of the interactions between staff and children and how these impact on outcomes for children.
- Additional Review Priorities - other aspects of the operation of a centre, may be included in the review. ERO will not include this strand in all reviews.
- Areas of National Interest - information about how Government policies are working in early childhood centres.
- Compliance with Legal Requirements - assurance that this centre has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of centre performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to this centre.

Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a centre is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this centre.