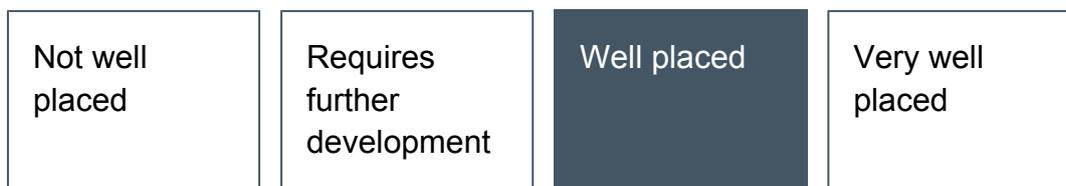


Okara Educare Education Review

- 2 Information about the Early Childhood Service
- 3 General Information about Early Childhood Reviews

Evaluation of Okara Educare

How well placed is Okara Educare to promote positive learning outcomes for children?



ERO's findings that support this overall judgement are summarised below.

Background

Okara Educare is situated in Morningside, Whangarei. It provides sessional and full day education and care for children up to the age of five. Seventy percent of children are Māori. Children play in a large, purpose-built indoor space which opens out onto a well designed outdoor area.

The centre is part of the Educare Early Learning Centres group of early childhood services. It operates under the management systems that support all Educare centres. The centre manager at Okara Educare oversees the day-to-day management of the centre. Most of the staff are registered teachers and many have continued to work at the centre since the 2013 ERO review.

ERO's 2013 report noted good practices in the way the centre was developing relationships between children, parents, whānau and teachers. The development of the curriculum was a centre priority at that time. Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, was evident in documentation, and teachers used effective approaches to planning and assessment. These good practices continue to be evident.

The centre has responded positively to ERO's 2013 recommendations. Managers and teachers have made good progress strengthening the quality of the programme. They have taken steps to develop a curriculum that better supports children's developing social competence and understanding of appropriate behaviour. These changes have helped to support positive learning outcomes for all children.

This review was one of three reviews of Educare Early Learning Centres. Educare owners and senior managers took an active role in each review.

The Review Findings

Children are confident, capable and articulate. They benefit from an inclusive environment, play well together and display a strong sense of belonging and security. Children show competence in their social skills with each other and in the way they relate to adults. Teachers are nurturing and respond quickly to children's needs.

Children enjoy the indoor and outdoor flow. They experiment in their play and trial new ideas. They benefit from readily accessible resources that offer varying degrees of interest and challenge. The environment is well organised and attractively presented.

Positive and reciprocal relationships are evident. Teachers engage effectively with children to support their learning. They respect children's choices and view them as capable and competent learners.

Infants and toddlers enjoy the attentive care they receive in their separate area of the centre. Teachers are committed to actively involving and fostering children's sensory awareness throughout the day. Individualised care promotes children's sense of wellbeing and capability.

Teachers plan programmes using Te Whāriki and their observations of children's interests and responses to learning activities, as their guide. Parents and whānau contribute to this planning process. Teachers help children to make connections with their learning. Individual children's learning portfolios reflect the progress of each individual in their development and learning.

Teachers are developing their use of te reo Māori. Positive relationships and strong partnerships have been established with whānau. Parents are invited to share aspects of their cultural heritage in the daily programmes.

The centre manager has been purposeful in building good relationships with the local primary school. Teachers, parents and whānau work together to help support the transition to school process for children and their families.

The Educare leadership team provide effective governance and management systems and processes to centre leaders and teams. Distributed leadership and sharing of expertise across centres is promoted. The owners provide very well for the professional development of staff. The general manager capably supports each Educare centre to improve outcomes for children.

Key Next Steps

The general manager, centre manager and senior teachers agree that the next steps for centre improvement are to:

- continue to develop teachers' reflective practice, both individually and in teams, to build shared understandings of best practice
- use strategic goals as part of appraisal processes
- consider ways to extend the centre's strategy for bicultural practice
- continue to seek ways to increase the documentation of whānau contributions to assessment
- focus on the evaluation stage of planning to consider the effectiveness and impact of teacher practices and developments.

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Okara Educare completed an ERO Centre Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal obligations related to:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management and administration.

During the review, ERO looked at the service's systems for managing the following areas that have a

potentially high impact on children's wellbeing:

- emotional safety (including positive guidance and child protection)
- physical safety (including supervision; sleep procedures; accidents; medication; hygiene; excursion policies and procedures)
- suitable staffing (including qualification levels; police vetting; teacher registration; ratios)
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.

Next ERO Review

When is ERO likely to review the service again?

The next ERO review of Okara Educare will be in three years.

Dale Bailey

Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

13 April 2015

The Purpose of ERO Reports

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the government department that, as part of its work, reviews early childhood services throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. ERO's reports provide information for parents and communities about each service's strengths and next steps for development. ERO's bicultural evaluation framework Ngā Pou Here is described in SECTION 3 of this report. Early childhood services are partners in the review process and are expected to make use of the review findings to enhance children's wellbeing and learning.

2 Information about the Early Childhood Service

Location	Whangarei, Northland		
Ministry of Education profile number	45829		
Licence type	Education & Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008		
Number licensed for	70 children, including up to 20 aged under 2		
Service roll	68		
Gender composition	Girls 35 Boys 33		
Ethnic composition	Māori	30	
	NZ European/Pākehā	38	
Percentage of qualified teachers	80% +		
	0-49% 50-79% 80%+		
Based on funding rates			
Reported ratios of staff to children	Under 2	1:4	Better than minimum requirements
	Over 2	1:8	Better than minimum requirements
Review team on site	February 2015		
Date of this report	13 April 2015		
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	September 2013	

3 General Information about Early Childhood Reviews

ERO's Evaluation Framework

ERO's overarching question for an early childhood education review is 'How well placed is this service to promote positive learning outcomes for children?' ERO focuses on the following factors as described in the bicultural framework Ngā Pou Here:

Pou Whakahaere – how the service determines its vision, philosophy and direction to ensure positive outcomes for children

Pou Ārahi – how leadership is enacted to enhance positive outcomes for children

Mātauranga – whose knowledge is valued and how the curriculum is designed to achieve positive outcomes for children

Tikanga whakaako – how approaches to teaching and learning respond to diversity and support positive outcomes for children.

Within these areas ERO considers the effectiveness of arotake – self review and of whanaungatanga – partnerships with parents and whānau.

ERO evaluates how well placed a service is to sustain good practice and make ongoing improvements for the benefit of all children at the service.

A focus for the government is that all children, especially priority learners, have an opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood education. ERO will report on how well each service promotes positive outcomes for all children, with a focus on children who are Māori, Pacific, have diverse needs, and are up to the age of two.

For more information about the framework and Ngā Pou Here refer to ERO's Approach to Review in Early Childhood Services.

ERO's Overall Judgement and Next Review

The overall judgement that ERO makes and the timing of the next review will depend on how well placed a service is to promote positive learning outcomes for children. The categories are:

- Very well placed – The next ERO review in four years
- Well placed – The next ERO review in three years
- Requires further development – The next ERO review within two years

- Not well placed - The next ERO review in consultation with the Ministry of Education ERO has developed criteria for each category. These are available on [ERO's website](#).

Review Coverage

ERO reviews are tailored to each service's context and performance, within the overarching review framework. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to the service.