

Scholars Preschool Waiuku Education Review

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27 February 2012

To the Parents and Community of Scholars Preschool Waiuku

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Scholars Preschool Waiuku.

Scholars Preschool Waiuku, located in a rural township south of Auckland, opened in 2009. This is ERO's first review of the centre, which provides an all day education and care service for children.

Children are warmly welcomed into the centre and settle quickly into the daily activities. They are capable learners who participate in all areas of the programme. Their wellbeing is supported by the respectful relationships they have with staff. These relationships encourage children to be independent and confident in the play environment.

Staff know their children and families well and have established warm reciprocal relationships with them. These positive relationships support children's participation in the programme and provide regular opportunities for staff to talk to parents about their children.

Effective teaching strategies that promote children's learning are modelled by some staff. Managers and staff are committed to developing the programme further. They should now consider how well the planning cycle enables staff to evaluate their planning and their responses to children's interests. Professional development could help staff to develop more responsive teaching.

Managers are committed to ongoing improvement. They acknowledge that self-review is at

the beginning stages of development. They could now implement review that focuses more on learning outcomes for children and teachers. Managers would find it helpful to align long-term planning with the 2008 early childhood relicensing criteria.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interest of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again in three years.

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 contact person 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>.

Makere Smith
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

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.
- National Evaluation Topics – This strand contributes to the development of education policies and their effective implementation. The information from this strand is aggregated by ERO for its national evaluation reports. Topics for investigation are changed regularly to provide up-to-date information.
- 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.

Disclaimer

Individual ERO school and early childhood centre reports are public information and may be copied or sent electronically. However, the Education Review Office can guarantee only the authenticity of original documents which have been obtained in hard copy directly from either the local ERO office or ERO National Office in Wellington. Please consult your telephone book, or see the ERO web page, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>, for ERO office addresses.

1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Confirmed Education Review Report.Scholars Preschool Waiuku

Scholars Preschool Waiuku, located in a rural township south of Auckland, opened in 2009. This is ERO's first review of the centre, which provides an all day education and care service for children.

Children are warmly welcomed into the centre and settle quickly into the daily activities. They are capable learners who participate in all areas of the programme. Their wellbeing is supported by the respectful relationships they have with staff. This creates a climate that encourages children to be independent and confident in the play environment.

Staff know their children and families well. They have established warm reciprocal relationships that support children's participation in the programme. There are regular opportunities for staff to talk to parents about their children.

Effective teaching strategies that promote children's learning are modelled by some staff. Managers and staff are committed to developing the programme further. They should now consider how well the planning cycle enables staff to evaluate their planning and their responses to children's interests. Professional development could help staff to develop more responsive teaching.

Managers are committed to ongoing improvement. They acknowledge that self-review is at the beginning stages of development. Together with teachers, they could now implement review that focuses more on learning outcomes for children. Managers would find it helpful to align long-term planning with the 2008 early childhood relicensing criteria.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interest of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again in three years.

2 Review Priorities

The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Scholars Preschool Waiuku 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 Scholars Preschool Waiuku.

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
- the interactions between children and adults.

ERO also evaluated the quality of centre management as this is the first ERO review of the recently opened centre.

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

The Quality of Education

Background

Scholars Preschool Waiuku opened in 2009. It is the third Scholars Preschool centre in the Franklin area operated by the same licensee. Three separate indoor spaces for infants, toddlers and young children help to give the children in each area a sense of belonging in the centre.

Areas of strength

Teaching and learning. Staff support children's sense of wellbeing and belonging. They guide their learning through the programme, and engage in positive interactions that respect children's preferences. Staff have warm affectionate relationships with children.

Confident learners. Children play alongside each other and develop friendships. They are familiar with centre routines and practise self-help skills at meal times. They confidently make choices about resources and their participation in the programme.

Parent partnerships. Parents report that they feel welcomed and valued in the centre. They enjoy the frequent social events that enable parents and staff to build relationships with each other. Parents appreciate the ways in which staff keep them informed about their children's learning through their individual portfolios and daily informal conversations about their children's progress and engagement in activities.

Areas for development and review

Teaching practices. Managers and staff could consider ways to further develop teaching practice in the centre. Useful strategies include:

- using more open-ended questions to challenge children's thinking and promote their learning
- improving teachers' responses to children's emerging interests
- integrating children's feedback and their contributions into the programme.

Planning, assessment and evaluation. The quality of planning, assessment and evaluation to support children's learning is variable. The management team agrees that these are priority areas to develop to improve the programme.

While attractive portfolio records are kept, greater focus should be placed on recognising children's individual learning. Strategies to enable this could include:

- improving the analysis of children's individual learning
- increasing parents' involvement in the assessment of their children's learning
- identifying next steps for children's learning and recognising their progress over time
- evaluating the programme in terms of children's learning outcomes.

Professional development would support teachers' understanding and use of planning, assessment and evaluation that focuses on children's learning outcomes.

Outdoor environment. The range of equipment that is on offer to children in the outdoor environment should be extended to provide them with a good variety of physical and creative challenges. A better selection of equipment would support children's exploration in the outdoor environment and provide greater opportunities for more complex play.

The Quality of Management

Background

This is the first ERO review of the Scholars Preschool Waiuku. The licensee has two other

centres and is experienced in areas of centre operations.

Areas of strength

Managers are committed to ongoing improvement in all areas and are open to feedback and guidance. They continue to develop and refine policies and procedures in preparation for relicensing under the 2008 early childhood licensing criteria. They are aware that, now that the centre is well established, it is timely to involve staff and families in a review of the centre philosophy.

Areas for development and review

Managers agree that to further improve management practices they could.

- align staff appraisal processes with the registered teacher criteria
- implement a guidance process as part of the provisionally registered teacher programme
- develop self-review processes that include consultation with all parties involved
- expand long-term goals to include educational outcomes for children.

3 National Evaluation Topic

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.

Inclusion of children with moderate to severe special needs

As part of this review ERO evaluated the extent to which:

- transitions ensure the continuing wellbeing, learning, and development of children with moderate to severe special needs
- children with moderate to severe special needs are supported to be confident and capable learners
- the service is inclusive of children with moderate to severe special needs.

Findings

Although no children with moderate to severe special needs are currently enrolled in this service, the centre is well placed to be inclusive of a child with moderate to severe special needs. Ramps provide independent access to most areas of the centre. Managers have a special needs policy in place and staff work closely with parents and any outside agencies that may be involved with the child. A primary caregiver is appointed for each child, and a daily diary is established to help ensure that communication with parents is open and regular. Children are well supported to be fully engaged in the programme.

4 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of Scholars Preschool Waiuku 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:

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

During the review, ERO looked at the service's documentation, including policies, procedures and records of recent use of procedures. ERO also checked elements of the following areas that 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
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

In order to improve current practice, centre managers should:

- develop a process for reporting suspected abuse that includes the addition of the protected disclosure clause
- display earthquake evacuation procedures
- develop a process for analysing accidents to prevent their recurrence
- ensure that procedures for sleep checks align with centre policy.

During the course of the review ERO identified areas of non-compliance. In order to address these, centre managers must:

4.1. ensure that hazards that could pose a risk to the safety of children and adults are promptly identified and minimised or removed,

Source: [Education (ECC) Regulations 1998, r23(2), 24(1)(a), (4)]

4.2. ensure that the licence for the centre, teacher qualifications and practicing certificates,

early childhood education regulations, the latest ERO report, and complaints procedures are prominently displayed in the centre,

Source: [Education (ECC) Regulations 1998 r9(a), (b), (c)(i), (c)(ii)].

5 Recommendations

ERO and the centre managers agree that programme managers should.

5.1 access targeted professional development to support teachers to develop useful planning, assessment and evaluation practices

5.2 strengthen self review and long-term planning to guide all aspects of centre operations.

6 Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interest of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again in three years.

Makere Smith
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

About the Centre

Location	Waiuku, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	25390
Type	All Day Education and Care Centre
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1998
Number licensed for	34 children, including up to 12 aged under 2
Roll number	44
Gender composition	Boys 24 Girls 22
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 34 Māori 7 Tongan 1 other European 2
Review team on site	November 2011
Date of this report	27 February 2012
Previous three ERO reports	No previous reports