

Otaki Montessori Preschool Education Review

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1 Evaluation of the Service

How well placed is the service to promote positive outcomes for children?

The service is developing its capacity to promote positive outcomes for children.

Context

Otaki Montessori Preschool is a sessional centre providing education and care for children from two to six years of age. The centre is set in attractive surroundings. A present focus on the natural environment is evident. Since the December 2009 ERO report a new head teacher/licensee and a centre manager have been appointed.

The curriculum and philosophy are underpinned by the principles of Montessori and Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum. The mission statement of “help me do it by myself” is evident in teachers' practice.

The Review Findings

Teachers have positive and responsive relationships with children. They actively promote caring interactions that support learning. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere where children socialise well. Sustained, shared teaching provides opportunities to extend children's thinking and promote their contribution to their learning experiences. Children are encouraged to be independent and respect their environment. Outdoor spaces are well organised and provide children with opportunities for physical challenge and problem solving. Teachers share a commitment to inclusive practices and a sense of belonging is promoted.

Children's intellectual and developmental learning is successfully promoted through the well-organised environment. Teachers prepare a range of activities to provide children with opportunities to make sense of their world and broaden their horizons. Children follow their interests and develop skills and knowledge, selecting from resources and equipment that complement the Montessori philosophy.

Numeracy and science are features of the programme that stimulate children's

inquisitiveness. Structures and routines provide a sense of security and successfully scaffold learning. Teaching strategies effectively support children's involvement in child and adult initiated activities. An extension class for four year olds focuses on group learning and literacy to support transition to school.

Information about children's participation and learning is efficiently gathered and recorded. Their interests are identified and responded to through individual or collective programme planning based on the mastery of Montessori equipment.

Teachers seek ways to connect learning to children's language and culture through greetings, songs and waiata. Experiences from home are valued and shared through group times. Teachers are committed to developing their cultural competence and confidence. Leaders are growing the centre's relationship with the community, establishing productive links to other centres, agencies and local iwi.

Teachers know children well. Children's portfolios are a record of their learning experiences and illustrate teachers' responses to significant learning moments during their time in the centre. Parental contributions are encouraged and their feedback is included in curriculum decisions. Children benefit from teachers building partnerships with parents and whānau. Useful information about children's interests is gathered through regular verbal communication and twice yearly formal meetings with parents. Leaders have identified that deepening the relationships between families, the centre and local schools should support children to successfully transition to their next stage of learning.

The leadership team is developing into an effective group. The head teacher models good teaching practice. Members of the governing committee are developing an understanding of their roles, and have a focus on improvement. Parents effectively contribute to strategic direction through surveys and discussions with staff.

Leaders and teachers have gained increased knowledge from professional development aimed at building their self review capability. Ongoing developments in self review, at all levels, guide improvements to practice and operations. ERO and centre leaders agree that the next steps for development are to fully implement and embed newly developed self-review processes. This should prove useful for improving teachers' practice and enhancing learning outcomes for children.

Areas for review and development are to:

- improve assessment processes to enable teachers to notice, recognise and respond to the strengths, interests and abilities of children. This should include documentation of children's learning and progress

- measure the impact of funding, resources and professional development on outcomes for children
- ensure that curriculum and planning decisions respond effectively to the learning and cultural needs of all children
- explore transition strategies to further support children's successful move to school.

The Purpose of an ERO Report

Education reviews in early childhood services focus on the factors that contribute to positive outcomes for children. We work with early childhood services to identify their strengths and the areas they need to review and develop. Early childhood services take part in the review process and are expected to make use of the findings to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.

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2 Legal Requirements

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the management of Otaki Montessori Preschool 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 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.

3 Next Review

When is ERO likely to review the early childhood service again?

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Joyce Gebbie
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Central Region (Acting)

12 March 2013

Information about the Early Childhood Service

Location	Otaki		
Ministry of Education profile number	60235		
Licence type	Education and Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1998		
Number licensed for	40 children, aged between 3 and 5 years		
Service roll	42		
Gender composition	Female 24 Male 18		
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	24	
	Māori	13	
	Other ethnic groups	5	
Percentage of qualified teachers	80% +		
Reported ratios of staff Under 2 to children	n/a		
	Over 2	1:10	Meets minimum requirements
Review team on site	December 2012		
Date of this report	12 March 2013		
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review	December 2009	
	Education Review	September 2006	
	Education Review	April 2004	

General Information about Early Childhood Reviews

About ERO Reviews

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the New Zealand government department that reviews schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

Review focus

ERO's education reviews in early childhood services focus on the factors that contribute to positive learning outcomes for children. ERO evaluates how well placed the service is to make and sustain improvements for the benefit of all children at the service. To reach these findings ERO considers:

- 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 self review and partnerships with parents and whānau.

Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of service 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 the service.