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

The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

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

Little Einsteins Educare - Pukeko is an education and care service, located in a rural community close to Cambridge. It is one of three licences on the same site and caters for children from three and a half to five years. At the time of this review the centre had been operating for one year and the roll was 44 of whom two identified as Māori. This is the first Education Review for the centre.

The centre directors and manager provide high quality, effective leadership and management for the service. This leadership promotes a centre philosophy that is based on the child-centred approach and provides high quality education and care.

The centre provides unique opportunities for children through the provision of extensive, spacious and rich learning environments. The well-planned, purpose-built facility provides a wide range of essential learning areas and children have access to rural experiences such as horticulture, exposure to and care of farm animals, recycling and natural sciences. The facilities provide children with challenge and the opportunity to take risks in stimulating and safe environments.

The team priority in the first year of operation has been to develop and establish reciprocal and respectful relationships with each other, children and parents. Teachers are focused on encouraging children's self responsibility, management and independence. Children's work is respected and they work collaboratively with and alongside each other. Teachers model and foster a sense of inclusiveness where children learn about developing friendships and positive self-esteem.

Teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies that provide opportunities for children to broaden and share their ideas and knowledge about their world. Interactions are based on building independence, self reliance and developing trust in adults to assist their transition to the next stage of their learning.

Teachers and management have developed a useful approach to assessment, planning and evaluation that enables teachers to effectively notice, recognise and respond to children's learning pathways. The programme includes the integration of te reo me onā tikanga Māori, careful attention to procedures that ensure smooth transitions between rooms and school, and inclusion of meaningful literacy and numeracy experiences throughout the centre.

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 within three years.

Review Priorities

The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Little Einsteins Educare - Pukeko 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 Little Einsteins Educare - Pukeko.

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

Little Einsteins Educare - Pukeko is a new centre providing care and education for children aged three and a half to five. Its stated philosophy focuses on a child-centred approach, individualised learning and an environment that supports children to pursue interests, investigate and direct their learning. This is the first review for the service and evaluates the centre's progress towards realising its philosophy.

Areas of good performance

Governance and management: The centre directors and manager provide high quality, effective and inclusive leadership and management for the service. The successful establishment and strategic direction of the centre have been facilitated through:

- the development and implementation of clear policies and procedures;
- the focus on employing knowledgeable, qualified and experienced staff;
- the ongoing strategic development and maintenance of the complex; and
- the expertise and guidance of the centre manager.

Committed and visionary leadership promotes a philosophy that provides high quality education and care, based on sound understanding of current theory and best practice, for children and families.

Programme: Teachers effectively implement a programme of learning that is underpinned by key principles and derived from a sound philosophy. Key features of the programme are:

- the child-centred approach to teaching and learning;
- integration of te reo me onā tikanga Māori practices through implementation of a developing bicultural plan;
- careful attention to procedures that enable the smooth transition between rooms and to school; and
- inclusion of meaningful and appropriate literacy and numeracy learning experiences.

Children benefit from a programme that is consistent, well planned and balanced to extend their learning journey.

Learning environment: The centre provides unique opportunities in extensive, spacious grounds with

thoughtfully placed equipment which foster rich learning for children. Features of these environments include:

- a well-planned, purpose-built facility that provides a wide range of essential learning areas;
- access to rural experiences such as horticulture, exposure to and care of farm animals, recycling and natural sciences;
- provision of high quality equipment and resources that children are able to access throughout the day for sustained periods of play and exploration; and
- effective use of indoor and outdoor areas to allow children to work with equipment, make decisions about how and where they use resources and material.

The well-developed facilities provide children with challenge and the opportunity to take risks in stimulating and safe environments.

Relationships: Adults in the centre have developed responsive and meaningful relationships with children and their families. They are focused on encouraging children's self responsibility, management and independence. There is a climate where children's work is respected and they work collaboratively with and alongside each other. Teachers model and foster a sense of inclusiveness where children learn about developing friendships and positive self-esteem. Children are developing as confident individuals who understand and can contribute appropriately within their group.

Interactions: Teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies that provide opportunities for children to increase and share their ideas and knowledge about their world. They work hard to ensure that children's interests, strengths and abilities are recognised and built on through conversations, opportunities and teaching interactions. Children are becoming focused, motivated and empowered as learners.

Assessment, planning and evaluation: Since the centre opened, teachers and management have developed a useful approach to assessment, planning and evaluation. This has happened through:

- professional development that has assisted teachers to improve their knowledge, and refine and use effective assessment practice;
- using children's and parents' contributions to identify children's knowledge, ideas and interests to promote their learning and include this in their programme; and
- ICT, which is used effectively in the process of children's learning and the documentation of observations.

Assessment processes enable teachers to effectively notice, recognise and respond to children's learning pathways.

Self review: The centre has a well-developed and strategic approach to self review. It includes both planned and spontaneous review about aspects of centre operation and programme. The process is clear, well understood, effectively documented and provides a foundation for ongoing development. Centre directors and the manager have involved stakeholders in many opportunities to have input into self-review processes. The centre is using self-review information to monitor its progress in maintaining and developing its high quality education and care service.

Areas for development and review

Ongoing centre development: While the centre has made significant progress in the 12 months it has been opened, ERO and management agree that the centre team will continue to consolidate review and refine:

- assessment and planning practice to strengthen the links between individual and group stories and ensure more consistent use of this information to inform planning;
- evaluation processes to more consistently inform the next planning cycle; and
- how routines and structured times influence and impact on the quality of learning and interactions throughout the day.

Attention to these aspects of the centre programme is likely to enhance the quality of education and care.

National Evaluation Topics

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.

Literacy Teaching and Learning

When children understand, enjoy, engage with, and use language and symbols they are better able to express their individual identity and become active participants in a literate society. As part of this review ERO looked at literacy practices, particularly the opportunities provided for children to develop strong literacy learning foundations.

In this service children's literacy learning opportunities included:

- print-rich environments;
- a wide range of literacy opportunities and resources: books, puzzles, posters, and games;

- group times where teachers model language through reading, singing, movement, dance and games;
- teachers modelling language both written and verbal through ongoing conversations with children; and
- opportunities for children to write and read appropriate books.

Management Assurance On Legal Requirements

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

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

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 within three years.

Richard Thornton

National Manager Review Services

Northern Region

About The Centre

Type	All day service
Number licensed for	children
Roll number	44
Gender composition	Boys 24 Girls 20
Ethnic composition	Other 3
Review team on site	March 2010
Date of this report	18 May 2010
Previous ERO reports	This is the first ERO Review
Location	Cambridge
Ministry of Education profile number	30349

Community Page

To the Parents and Community of Little Einsteins Educare - Pukeko

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Little Einsteins Educare - Pukeko.

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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 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>.

Richard Thornton

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 contribute 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.