

Highbury Community Creche Education Review

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1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Confirmed Education Review Report: Highbury Community Crèche

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

Highbury Community Crèche continues to provide the high quality sessional early childhood service identified in past ERO reports. The crèche was originally established to provide casual care for children whose parents attend courses at the adjoining community centre, and also provides for families of the wider local community. Most children attending the crèche are under three years of age, moving on from the service once they start kindergarten.

Significant changes were made to the structure of the service in 2010. The teaching team was expanded from three to four qualified teachers. Consequently, parent help is still welcome but no longer essential to meet adult-child ratio requirements. A waiting list was established to help manage the increasing roll. While this means that new families have a long delay before their children can attend, it is resulting in the smaller group of enrolled children settling with greater ease. Teachers recognise that their role is changing from helping with children's transition into the crèche, to an increased focus on supporting their engagement and learning.

Strong relationships are at the core of the crèche philosophy. Parents appreciate the support they receive from teachers to assist them as parents, and the nurturing care and educational opportunities provided for their children. The staff are held in very high regard by their community.

The indoor environment has been refurbished and is a comfortable, attractive space for children and adults. Some work has been undertaken outdoors, with further upgrades planned as finances allow. The crèche is well resourced with good quality equipment and learning materials. In 2011 teachers will be considering how best to increase their bicultural provision in the environment and in their practices.

Children are provided with a wide range of activities to support their development and foster their involvement. Teachers work alongside them to ensure they are engaged and happy. They continue to provide very good support for children with specific learning needs. Teachers are interested in strengthening their focus on children's interests in order to provide ongoing meaningful challenges for children.

The redistribution of management tasks in 2010 has helped the committee to navigate funding changes in the early childhood sector, and to manage the cost of increased staff numbers. These structural changes should enable the service to continue to be responsive to children

and their families in times of policy change. Highbury Community Crèche's effective leadership and strong culture of self review stand the service in very good stead for making ongoing improvements.

Future Action

ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.

2 Review Priorities

The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Highbury Community Crèche 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 Highbury Community Crèche.

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 2009-2010 environment upgrade, administrative changes, increase in staffing and establishment of a waiting list have been significant matters for the committee, teaching staff and families to manage. With changes largely implemented, the teaching team is looking forward to adapting their programme and attending to their other earlier identified goals such as increasing bicultural provision.

Areas of strength

Relationships. Parents and children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging. Teachers recognise parents as their child's first teacher and provide support for them to develop confidence in their parenting role. They maintain effective relationships with each other and families that help them work in partnership with parents to support children's learning and growth.

Curriculum. Teachers provide a broad range of activities and learning experiences for children based on their knowledge of the group attending each session. Equipment and learning

materials are attractively displayed for children to independently access. Teachers are skilled at recognising when children are ready to engage, and supporting them to participate in new learning experiences.

Outcomes. Children happily explore the environment, equipment and activities. They are free to play at their own pace, and show good levels of persistence and focus in experiences that interest them. Group learning is also a feature with shared music and literacy experiences. Children interact in gentle ways with each other, well supported in their developing social and emotional competence by teachers.

Assessment. Children who attend two or more sessions per week have portfolios maintained as records of their learning and development. Teachers are skilful at assessing children's progress. They could now share these excellent assessment records more frequently with parents and children, and seek their perspectives in terms of progress, interests and planning.

Proactive and responsive leadership. The centre manager provides effective leadership for the service, and works collaboratively with the licensee, management committee and staff. Staff work cooperatively to prepare for and manage the sessions. They take shared responsibility for the programme and for making ongoing improvements. The well-run management committee is focused on ensuring that the service is sustainable.

Self review. The service has well-established systems for ensuring accountability and for responding to shifts in government policy. For example: the performance management process has been aligned with new teaching criteria; and policies and procedures have been reviewed in preparation for the relicensing, a process all ECE services will undergo by 2014. The quality of their systems means that staff are well placed to focus their self review on relevant aspects of teaching and learning.

Areas for development and review

Centre management agrees that it would be useful to evaluate the extent to which structural changes are affecting, or could affect, the service achieving its philosophy and vision. This will help management and staff to consider which practices may need to be adapted or revisited.

Teachers agree to review their detailed, comprehensive systems for programme planning to ensure that their process is helping them to best respond to children's interests.

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.

Partnerships with whānau of Māori children in early childhood services

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

- this service understands and values the identity, language and culture of Māori children and their whānau, particularly when the child and whānau transition to the service;
- managers and educators have built relationships with whānau of Māori children;
- this service works in partnership with whānau of Māori children.

Background

Increasing bicultural provision, particularly the teachers' use of te reo Māori, was a service goal for 2010. However, staff had to adjust their priorities and refocus on successfully managing the structural changes in the crèche. They have retained their goal to develop bicultural provision for 2011 and beyond.

9 children out of 147 on the crèche roll identify as having Māori heritage.

Areas of strength

The service's focus on creating and maintaining positive relationships with parents and children aligns well with the Māori value of whanaungatanga. Parents appear comfortable in the crèche and appreciate the opportunity to work alongside teachers through parent help. Staff extend a warm welcome to all parents/caregivers, many of whom have a long association with the crèche.

Areas for development and review

While staff use basic te reo Māori, sing waiata and have provided some Māori symbols and resources in the environment, they are aware that much more needs to be done to reflect their commitment to biculturalism.

Teachers will be seeking to discover parents' aspirations for their children so that the service can strengthen their educational partnerships with Māori whānau. To start this journey they plan to survey parents of Māori children early in 2011.

4 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of Highbury Community Crèche 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; and
- 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; and
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

5 Recommendations

ERO, centre management and teachers agreed that teaching practices and programme provision would be formally reviewed in response to recent structural changes within the service.

6 Future Action

ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.

Richard Thornton
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

About the Centre

Location	Birkenhead, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	20069
Type	Sessional Education and Care Service
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1998
Number licensed for	25 children, including up to 10 aged under 2
Roll number	165
Gender composition	Girls 76 Boys 89
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 147 Māori 9 Australian 2 Chinese 2 Middle Eastern 2 Indian 1 Samoan 1 other Asian 1
Review team on site	December 2010
Date of this report	14 March 2011
Previous three ERO reports	Education Review, February 2008 Education Review, April 2005 Accountability Review, March 2002

Community Page

14 March 2011

To the Parents and Community of Highbury Community Crèche

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Highbury Community Crèche.

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The redistribution of management tasks in 2010 has helped the committee to navigate funding changes in the early childhood sector, and to manage the cost of increased staff numbers. These structural changes should enable the service to continue to be responsive to children and their families in times of policy change. Highbury Community Crèche's effective leadership and strong culture of self review stand the service in very good stead for making ongoing improvements.

Future Action

ERO is likely to review the service again within 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>.

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 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.