

# Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Nursery Education Review

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13 September 2011

To the Parents and Community of Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Nursery

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Nursery.

The Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Nursery is one of two early childhood services administered by the Dunedin Methodist Mission. The licensee/manager oversees both programmes and she is supported by a section manager, practice leader and two team leaders appointed by the mission. The services benefit from a close working relationship with a social worker (Advocacy and Support Worker) who supports the service and the families in the community. The nursery caters for 15 children, most being under the age of two.

The focus of this review is the quality of education. This covers the quality of the programme, learning environment, interactions and the way these contribute to children's learning and development. As with all early childhood services currently being reviewed, ERO is investigating aspects of health and safety as well as how the service provides for Māori children.

Children and their families benefit from positive, supportive relationships with the teachers and staff. Children are the central focus and the teachers know them well. Teachers are welcoming and friendly and have built a strong sense of community within the service. Children are well cared for and teachers are respectful of and responsive to each child's needs and preferences. Other teaching practices that contribute positively to children's learning and well-being include:

- the way teachers promote children's language learning continually through the good quality interactions they have with them
- the presentation of the environment that makes it easy for children to confidently play alongside one another or cooperatively in small groups independently of teachers
- teachers working as a team during the programme, sharing information regularly around children's needs and interests.

Children are consistently encouraged to take responsibility and be independent. The teachers provide opportunities for children to become familiar with New Zealand's bicultural heritage by using te reo Māori through the daily programme. ERO did not see the outdoor environment being used but there is evidence to show that children experience a wide range of activities inside and outdoors likely to extend and promote learning.

Teachers are aware that they need to further develop centre programmes and practices. Developing a shared philosophy and defining how this looks in practice, and in outcomes for children, may further strengthen the programme. Teachers also need to clearly show how they gather, analyse and use information to effectively support and extend children's learning. ERO, the managers and teachers agree that the centre needs to further build bicultural practices, integrate Māori perspectives and develop more comprehensive policy and practice review.

The recommendations in this report have been raised in two previous ERO reports. Therefore an action plan has been requested so managers and teachers can show how the areas for review and development will be implemented over time.

## 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.

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>.

Graham Randell  
National Manager Review Services

## Southern 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 Corporate 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: Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Nursery

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

The Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Nursery is one of two early childhood services administered by the Dunedin Methodist Mission. The licensee/manager oversees both programmes and she is supported by a section manager, practice leader and two team leaders appointed by the mission. The services benefit from a close working relationship with a social worker (Advocacy and Support Worker) who supports the service and the families in the community. The nursery caters for 15 children, most being under the age of two.

The focus of this review is the quality of education. This covers the quality of the programme, learning environment, interactions and the way these contribute to children's learning and development. As with all early childhood services currently being reviewed, ERO is investigating aspects of health and safety as well as how the service provides for Māori children.

Children and their families benefit from positive, supportive relationships with the teachers and staff. Children are the central focus and the teachers know them well. Teachers are welcoming and friendly and have built a strong sense of community within the service. Children are well cared for and teachers are respectful of and responsive to each child's needs and preferences. Other teaching practices that contribute positively to children's learning and well-being include:

- the way teachers promote children's language learning continually through the good quality interactions they have with them
- the presentation of the environment that makes it easy for children to confidently play alongside one another or cooperatively in small groups independently of teachers
- teachers working as a team during the programme, sharing information regularly around children's needs and interests.

Children are consistently encouraged to take responsibility and be independent. The teachers provide opportunities for children to become familiar with New Zealand's bicultural heritage by using te reo Māori through the daily programme. ERO did not see the outdoor environment being used but there is evidence to show that children experience a wide range of activities inside and outdoors likely to extend and promote learning.

Teachers are aware that they need to further develop centre programmes and practices. Developing a shared philosophy and defining how this looks in practice, and in outcomes for children, may further strengthen the programme. Teachers also need to clearly show how they gather, analyse and use information to effectively support and extend children's learning. ERO, the managers and teachers agree that the centre needs to further build bicultural practices, integrate Māori perspectives and develop more comprehensive policy and practice review.

The recommendations in this report have been raised in two previous ERO reports. Therefore an action plan has been requested so managers and teachers can show how the areas for review and development will be implemented over time.

### 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.

## 2 Review Priorities

### The Focus of the Review

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.

### The Quality of Education

#### Background

Since ERO's last review, a new team leader has been appointed to manage the daily programme and teaching practices within the nursery. The teaching team has developed a shared philosophy to guide practice. Teachers have clear roles and responsibilities. The managers have been working on a new assessment and programme planning system which was being trialled at the time of ERO's visit and has yet to be implemented fully.

#### Areas of strength

Teachers are building positive relationships with families. The clear focus for staff and parents is children's well-being. The teachers have established good communication systems with parents and constantly work to improve these. Children settle quickly and demonstrate a strong sense of belonging. The teachers work in a calm, gentle, and affirming manner and are respectful of children. They are enthusiastic and reflective and appear to enjoy their work. Children's choices and preferences are listened to and teachers are responsive to children's verbal and non-verbal cues. The teachers are generally skilled and competent. ERO observed seamless transitions through routines. Teachers promote children's language learning continually through the interactions they have with them.

Other positive features that support and promote the children's learning and development include:

- teachers being able to use a range of good quality teaching practices
- the bicultural values being demonstrated, such as whanaungatanga
- routines being used as opportunities for children to learn self-help/care skills
- children being able to choose from a wide range of well-presented resources
- group experiences such as music and movement. that are enjoyable and engage

children.

### Areas for development and review

The teachers need to clearly show how they gather, analyse and use information and documentation to effectively support and extend children's learning. This includes:

- **Philosophy.** Managers and teachers are aware they need to review the shared philosophy in terms of how this looks in practice and the outcomes for children.
- **Learning programme.** The centre managers have been developing a new system for planning and recording children's learning. The process needs to include assessment of each child's current learning, a process to share this information and what teachers have collectively planned to support and extend this learning. The parents' learning priorities for children also need to be included. It was too early for ERO to evaluate the effectiveness of the new system. Learning records (profile books), however, show that some teachers are able to clearly identify learning and respond appropriately to build on it.
- **Bicultural development.** The centre managers and teachers are also aware that they need to plan ways to support the ongoing development of their own and the children's bicultural understandings and find ways to further integrate Maori perspectives.
- **Review processes and practices.** The managers and teachers are in the process of reviewing the centre's policies. The review schedule needs further development and the review processes could also be improved. The review of learning and teaching is in the early stages but teachers are achieving some good outcomes for children. Support for self review may need to be externally sought.

### 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.

#### Findings

Teachers have positive relationships with families at the centre. Part of the Methodist Mission approach is to provide a wide range of support for all families in the community. They are interested in developing their bicultural understandings and already integrate te reo Māori throughout the daily programme. The teachers are in the process of improving how they gather information from families about the aspirations they have for their children's learning.

## 4 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Nursery completed an ERO Centre Assurance and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they have 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 the managers should:

- ensure copies of current policies and procedures are on site and accessible by parents and staff
- record fire and earthquake drills and review their effectiveness
- make it clear that any person who believes that any child has been or is likely to be harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived may at anytime report directly to CYFs, a social worker or the police. [s15-16 Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1998]

## 5 Recommendations

ERO and the centre managers agree that the centre managers and teachers:

5.1 improve the review of policies and learning and teaching practices, including the centre's philosophy, and ensure they align with current best practice

5.2 further develop the assessment system, programme planning, implementation and evaluation

5.3 increase bicultural practices and the integration of Māori perspectives in programmes

5.4 develop an action plan to address the recommendations above.

## 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 within three years.

Graham Randell  
National Manager Review Services  
Southern Region

13 September 2011

## About the Centre

Location	Dunedin
Ministry of Education profile number	83003
Type	Education and Care Service
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1998
Number licensed for	15 children aged under 2
Roll number	17
Gender composition	Boys 9 Girls 8
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 11 Māori 4 Samoan 1 Other Pacific 1
Review team on site	July 2011
Date of this report	13 September 2011
Previous three ERO reports	Education Review September 2008 Education Review August 2005 Discretionary Review March 2002