

Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Preschool Education Review

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13 September 2011

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

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

The Methodist Mission Preschool is one of two early childhood services run by the Dunedin Methodist Mission. This centre provides education and care for children from two to five years, with some provision for a small number of under-two children. The centre managers also have responsibility for the nursery next door for children who are under two.

Children play and learn in a centre where the managers and teachers place a high value on building a clear sense of belonging in a supportive, welcoming community. The Methodist Mission employs an Advocacy and Support worker who effectively supports all families and children in both centres.

Relationships between teachers, between teachers and children, and between children are positive and supportive. Teachers empower children to build their independence and self-managing skills.

Teachers plan and run programmes that build on children's interests. Teachers and children regularly go on excursions to build on learning or extend the range of children's experiences. Children regularly hear and use te reo Māori. Teachers respect children's choices and follow their leads.

Children know and follow centre routines well. There are smooth transitions between food, rest, and times when children are involved in other activities. Teachers make use of the range of different teaching spaces available inside and outside. Children enjoy opportunities to be active and challenged in the newly-developed outside play area.

Other positive features of the centre include:

- the way mat times support children's language, music and social development
- the way children can choose from individual, small-group or large-group activities
- the ways in which teachers include bicultural practices in the programme
- the expectations the managers, team leader and teachers have for continuous improvement.

The managers and teachers reflect on what is happening for children and are committed to improving the ways they support and provide programmes for children.

Managers and teachers acknowledge that self-review practices need to be extended. This is to ensure that, over time, thorough review is carried out of:

- policies and procedures
- the centre's philosophy
- learning programmes, interactions, and environment.

The managers and teachers have developed and implemented health and safety procedures and practices. Although some improvements to consistency of practice are required, children play and learn in a generally safe environment. Some recommendations in this report have been raised in previous ERO reports. Therefore an Action Plan has been requested so managers and teachers can show how the areas for development and review 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 Preschool

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

The Methodist Mission Preschool is one of two early childhood services run by the Dunedin Methodist Mission. This centre provides education and care for children from two to five years, with some provision for a small number of under-two children. The centre managers also have responsibility for the nursery next door for children who are under two.

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Teachers plan and run programmes that build on children's interests. Teachers and children regularly go on excursions to build on learning or extend the range of children's experiences. Children regularly hear and use te reo Māori. Teachers respect children's choices and follow their leads.

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Other positive features of the centre include:

- the way mat times support children's language, music and social development
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Future Action

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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.

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

The Quality of Education

Background

Since 2010, a new team leader has been working with a new team of teachers. They are making good progress towards developing greater cohesion with responsibilities and routines. Teachers are enthusiastic, reflective about their practices, and seek ways to improve outcomes for children. They share information regularly about children's needs and interests. They communicate well with each other.

Areas of strength

Sense of community/belonging. Teachers are friendly and welcoming. They are building positive relationships with families. They ensure there is good daily communication with parents about children and their families. Teachers know the key information they need to support the care needs of children.

Supporting children. Teachers know the children well. They aim to provide for the interests of children by finding suitable resources or going on excursions. Mostly teachers interact with children in ways that support their needs. They are responsive, caring and genuine. Teachers promote children's language learning through the interactions they have with them. Children confidently play alongside one another or cooperatively in small groups independent of teachers.

Bicultural practices. Children benefit from the inclusion of bicultural values and experiences. Teachers frequently integrate te reo Māori into daily activities. Children participate in and lead karakia and waiata. Teachers need to continue to build their capacity and confidence in providing a bicultural dimension, as well as include this in planning.

Independent children. Children are consistently encouraged to take their share of

responsibility and be confidently independent. Teachers use routines as opportunities for children to learn self-help skills. Children have and take a range of opportunities to be challenged and stimulated in the outdoor environment.

Environment and resources. Children choose from a good range of learning resources. They enjoy the use of books, puzzles and records of their past learning activities. Children enjoy the opportunities for challenge and busy activity in the recently developed outside area.

Mat times. Teachers make good use of mat times to explore te reo Māori, music, literacy, numeracy and to develop children's oral language skills. Children learn to take turns, listen to each other, and participate in a group.

Areas for development and review

Philosophy. The managers, team leader and teachers need to review the centre's philosophy in terms of how this looks in practice and how it links to outcomes for children. This is likely to further strengthen the programme.

Programme planning and implementation. Teachers need to clearly show how they gather and analyse information about children. They would then provide a better basis for supporting and extending each individual child and the learning for children as a group. The team leader plans to work with teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the newly developed approach to planning after a trial period.

Review. The managers and team leader need to complete a rigorous review of policies and programmes. The managers need to develop a review schedule, including those aspects that could happen every three years and those that need to be done each year. A clear review process should include the collection of useful data and the use of multiple perspectives.

Areas needing review include:

- the centre's philosophy, including meeting the needs of new children
- policies and procedures
- planning and assessment practices
- the quality of interactions
- the inside environment.

Support for self-review development might need to be found externally.

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. Teachers are working together to further develop their bicultural understandings and practices. They integrate te reo Māori and aspects of tikanga throughout the daily programme. They are in the process of improving the way they gather information from whānau about the aspirations they have for their children.

4 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of Methodist Mission Early Learning Centre Preschool completed an ERO 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 the managers should:

- ensure copies of current policies and procedures are on site and accessible by parents and staff
- 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:

5.1 the managers and team leaders work with external support to develop an action plan to address the issues identified above for development and review

5.2 managers and team leaders implement action plans to address the issues identified in this report.

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	83002
Type	Education and Care Service
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 1998
Number licensed for	36 children, including up to 6 aged under 2
Roll number	54
Gender composition	Boys 28 Girls 26
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 36 Māori 10 Pacific 5 Other 3
Review team on site	July 2011
Date of this report	13 September 2011
Previous three ERO reports	Education Review September 2008 Education Review July 2005 Discretionary Review March 2002