

11 April 2011

To the Parents and Community of ACG Strathallan Preschool

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on ACG Strathallan Preschool.

ACG Strathallan Preschool continues to build a strong foundation for children's development, with an emphasis on building their intellectual, physical, emotional and social skills. Children engage in a well balanced programme guided by *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum. The programme effectively combines structured teaching times and free play and is led by children's interests and needs. Parents state that they are very satisfied with the quality of care and education provided for their children.

The learning environment is well resourced and provides children with a wide variety of challenging and stimulating activities and learning. Children, teachers and parents interact respectfully with each other. Children play and learn collaboratively with their peers and enjoyed sustained periods of uninterrupted play, facilitated by teachers. The generous adult to child ratio enables children to experience individual attention and to engage in conversation with teachers.

Since ERO's 2008 review, significant progress has been made in assessment and planning practices. Teachers are well able to identify children's learning. They display their planning in the centre to inform and include parents and families. They are continuing to consider ways to further refine their planning and documentation. Teachers work collaboratively and accept a collective responsibility for children's learning and development. The manager agrees that the centre philosophy and programme could acknowledge the place of Māori as tangata whenua to support children's growing understanding of the bi-cultural nature of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The centre is well managed. Teachers' leadership capacity is supported and developed through a cycle of rotated areas of responsibility for aspects of curriculum and management. The centre manager agrees that refinement of self-review processes and self-review documentation would support enhanced learning outcomes for children.

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>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line ending in a small vertical tick.

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.



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CONFIRMED
**EDUCATION REVIEW
REPORT**
ACG STRATHALLAN PRESCHOOL
April 2011

Location: Karaka, Papakura
Ministry of Education profile number: 10316

 **EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE**
TE TARI AROTAKE MATAURANGA

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**CONFIRMED EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
ACG STRATHALLAN PRESCHOOL**

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

1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

ACG Strathallan Preschool continues to build a strong foundation for children's development, with an emphasis on building their intellectual, physical, emotional and social skills. Children engage in a well balanced programme guided by *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum. The programme effectively combines structured teaching times and free play and is led by children's interests and needs. Parents state that they are very satisfied with the quality of care and education provided for their children.

The learning environment is well resourced and provides children with a wide variety of challenging and stimulating activities and learning. Children, teachers and parents interact respectfully with each other. Children play and learn collaboratively with their peers and enjoyed sustained periods of uninterrupted play, facilitated by teachers. The generous adult to child ratio enables children to experience individual attention and to engage in conversation with teachers.

Since ERO's 2008 review, significant progress has been made in assessment and planning practices. Teachers are well able to identify children's learning. They display their planning in the centre to inform and include parents and families. They are continuing to consider ways to further refine their planning and documentation. Teachers work collaboratively and accept a collective responsibility for children's learning and development. The manager agrees that the centre philosophy and programme could acknowledge the place of Māori as tangata whenua to support children's growing understanding of the bi-cultural nature of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The centre is well managed. Teachers' leadership capacity is supported and developed through a cycle of rotated areas of responsibility for aspects of curriculum and management. The centre manager agrees that refinement of self-review processes and self-review documentation would support enhanced learning outcomes for children.

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 ACG Strathallan Preschool 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 ACG Strathallan Preschool.

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.

The Quality of Education

Background

The senior centre is one of three centres in a purpose-built facility and caters specifically for children from approximately three and a half years old to school age. The programme provides a good balance between structured teaching sessions, directed by children's interests, and free play.

The centre manager has responsibility for the three centres and reports to, and is supported by, the executive principal of ACG Strathallan Campus. Most children from the preschool continue their education in the ACG Strathallan Campus schools.

Areas of strength

Children's engagement in learning. Children are highly engaged in the well resourced, calm and inviting learning environment. Factors contributing to children's engagement include:

- the child-centred programme and teaching practices that are guided by, and planned to cater for, children's interests and needs;
- the extent to which teachers support and facilitate children's learning by encouraging them to think laterally and critically, take risks, and to problem solve;
- effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT), and the natural inclusion of literacy and numeracy throughout the programme;
- relevant activities and conversations that provide continuity in children's learning; and
- acknowledgement of, and support for, children as capable and independent learners.

Children's engagement in sustained and imaginative play, as individuals and in groups, is building a sound foundation for their future learning.

Positive interactions. Children, teachers and parents interact in respectful and supportive ways. Children are confident in an environment where teachers and children learn from and with each other. Their sense of worth and belonging is developed through opportunities for sustained periods of cooperative and collaborative play. Teachers' inclusive practices acknowledge children's needs and encourage parents' involvement in their children's learning.

Progress in assessment and planning. Since ERO's 2008 review, professional learning and development has contributed to the significant progress made in assessment and planning practices. Teachers identify children's learning well, and record it in learning stories in children's portfolios. Planning is now well documented and is displayed to inform parents and include them in their children's learning. Children's learning is supported by assessment and planning practices that respond to their emerging interests.

Collective responsibility. Teachers work collaboratively to develop a teaching programme that is responsive to children's needs and interests. The centre is well led by the manager, who acknowledges and helps to build teachers' leadership capacity through a system of rotated areas of responsibility. Generous non-teaching time allocations support teachers' work in assessing and planning for children's learning. Teachers share a collective responsibility for supporting children's learning experiences.

Area for development and review

Further developing self review. The centre manager has identified the need to better document self-review processes. Self review could be further improved by:

- ensuring that planned and spontaneous self review is focused on improving learning outcomes for children, and that implications for teaching and learning are identified;
- extending the review of the centre philosophy to include bicultural perspectives and links to *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum;
- reviewing the purpose and uses of the annual plan and its alignment with the centre philosophy and teaching practices; and
- planning formal self review of aspects of curriculum, teaching practice, and governance and management to complement the regular informal self-review practices already in place.

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

Two Māori children are enrolled in the centre.

Area of strength

The manager has interviewed Māori families to ascertain their goals and aspirations for their children. The manager reports that the families are satisfied that the centre is providing their children with good quality and appropriate care and education.

Children and teachers sing both the Māori and English versions of New Zealand's national anthem each day. In this way, children are learning to value the identity, language and culture of Māori.

Area for development and review

The manager agrees that the centre philosophy and programme could better acknowledge Māori as tangata whenua. This emphasis could enable all children and their families to develop a sound understanding of and appreciation for New Zealand's bicultural heritage. It would also support the development of strategies aimed specifically at building relationships and working in partnership with Māori families and whānau.

Recommendation

The manager and teachers should ensure that the centre philosophy and curriculum acknowledge and reflect the place of Māori as tangata whenua of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

4 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of ACG Strathallan 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; 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.

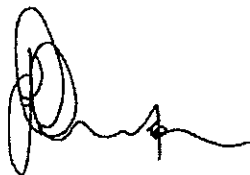
In order to improve current practice, the manager should ensure that the professional performance of all teachers is appraised annually against the appropriate criteria.

5 Recommendation

ERO, the centre manager and the executive principal agree that refinement of self-review processes and self-review documentation would support the achievement of enhanced learning outcomes for children.

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

Type	All Day Education and Care Service
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008
Number licensed for	46 children over two years of age
Roll number	54
Gender composition	30 Boys, 24 Girls
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 44, Māori 2, Asian 6, South American 2
Review team on site	February 2011
Date of this report	11 April 2011
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, February 2008 Education Review, February 2003