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## Disclaimer

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

## About The Centre

Location	Karaka, Papakura District
Ministry of Education profile number	25330
Type	Education and Care Service
Number licensed for	25 children
Roll number	20
Gender composition	Girls 11, Boys 9
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 18, Dutch 1, Japanese 1

Review team on site	December 2009
Date of this report	8 March 2010
Previous ERO reports	No previous reports

## The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

ACG Strathallan Infant Preschool Centre is one of three centres on the ACG Strathallan school site in Karaka. The centre opened in 2007 and became fully licensed in March 2008. The infant centre operates under the same management and framework of policies and procedures as the other two centres on the site. This is the first ERO review of the infant centre.

The centre is purpose-built, attractive and very well resourced. Carefully organised learning areas invite children to investigate and explore. Teachers make good use of the landscaped outdoor area to promote children's active and group play. Children enjoy learning through play and make discoveries in a relaxed, pleasant and nurturing atmosphere.

Teachers provide infants and toddlers with high quality care. Their physical, emotional and cognitive development is fostered in ways that affirm children's capabilities and maintain their dignity. Teachers have developed effective policies and practices that promote positive transitions into and from the centre. Parents are informed about their child's day and ongoing progress. Family involvement is welcomed and parental feedback on the service is encouraged.

Infants and toddlers are becoming confident communicators. Teachers work alongside children, model the use of equipment, and introduce new concepts. They talk constantly with children, respond to nonverbal communication, and encourage them to interact socially with adults and peers. Children are encouraged to make choices and to persist at challenging activities. Their achievements and efforts are noticed and celebrated.

Teachers provide a varied, age-appropriate programme that is underpinned by comprehensive assessment and planning. They integrate aspects of literacy, numeracy and science into play situations. Teachers are aware that aspects of the planning cycle could be more consistently documented. It would also be appropriate to develop a centre-specific philosophy related to the care and education of infants and toddlers.

Self review is integral to the operation of the service and, along with teachers' ongoing reflective practice, enriches the programme provided for children. A useful next step would be to compile more detailed records of the discussions and processes used in reviewing the programme. Centre managers agree they should continue to enhance self-review processes in order to maintain the centre's culture of continuous improvement.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

## Review Priorities

### The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of ACG Strathallan Infant Preschool Centre 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 Infant Preschool Centre.

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.

In addition, ERO decided to evaluate:

- the quality of centre management.

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

## The Quality of Education

### Background

This is the first ERO review of ACG Strathallan Infant Preschool Centre. The purpose-built infant centre is one of three centres on the ACG Strathallan school site and operates under the same management policies and procedures as the other centres. Centre managers employ a high level of qualified staff.

## Areas of good performance

**Relationships.** Respectful and caring relationships are evident in the centre. Teachers know children and their families well. Children are confident and trusting with adults and develop good social skills with their peers. Teachers have developed good policies and practices that promote smooth transitions for children, into and from the centre.

**Provision of care.** Teachers provide infants and toddlers with high quality care. Children's physical and emotional development is promoted in ways that affirm their capabilities and maintain their dignity. Interactions are nurturing and adults respond quickly to children's needs. Staff use information from home to ensure that infants' individual needs are met. They explain the purpose of daily routines to children and encourage their growing independence. Children have a strong sense of belonging in the centre.

**Communication.** Teachers provide very good support for the development of children's oral language. They are particularly responsive to nonverbal cues from infants. Children's language development is also supported by the use of visual aides, reading and singing. As a result of these good practices, infants and toddlers are becoming confident communicators.

**Learning environment.** The learning environment is attractive and stimulating. The centre is well resourced and has carefully organised learning areas that invite children to investigate and explore. The landscaped outdoor area promotes children's active and group play. Children enjoy making discoveries in the relaxed and pleasant centre.

**Programme implementation.** Teachers foster the development of infants and toddlers as capable and competent learners. Sensitive and supportive interactions underpin the effectiveness of the programme. Teachers work alongside children, model the use of equipment, and introduce new concepts. Children are encouraged to make choices, interact socially with adults and peers, and to persist at challenging activities. Their achievements are noticed and praised. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress and are supportive of the staff and the programme.

**Confident children.** Children are adventurous and curious as they engage with aspects of literacy, numeracy and science in the programme. Teachers read interactively with children, asking questions and inviting children to share their ideas. They capitalise on spontaneous opportunities to include mathematics and science in play scenarios. Infants and toddlers are gaining understanding at a pace appropriate to their individual stage of development.

**Assessment and planning.** Good systems of assessment and planning are in place. Planning is based on teachers' assessment for further learning and development and is evident in the very good programme provided for children. Links between children's needs and interests and planned activities are well documented in children's portfolios. Information about each child's progress and development is shared and is readily available to parents.

**Reflective thoughtful practice.** Self review is a reflective, thoughtful practice that is focused on

improving outcomes for children. Teachers discuss what they are providing for infants and toddlers and develop ideas for improvement. Good health and safety practices and systems for policy review are in place. Centre policies and high standards of teaching are reflected in teachers' practice.

## Areas for improvement

Enhancing assessment practices. Educators have developed a systematic, reflective and collaborative approach to assessment and planning. They are aware that they could enhance these practices by:

- encouraging more parent contribution to assessment and planning; and
- documenting the effectiveness of the planning strategies more consistently.

Programme development and documentation. As teachers reflect on and develop areas of their practice, they could consider:

- recording discussions and processes used to gather information for self review and monitoring the impact of changes made as a result of self review;
- developing a centre-specific philosophy related to the care and education of infants and toddlers;
- using information and communication technologies (ICT) to further support children's learning and to involve parents more in the programme;
- displaying and using a wider variety of multicultural artefacts, resources and languages.
- These developments would assist the teaching team to maintain shared good practices and to prioritise ongoing improvements.

## The Quality of Centre Management

### Background

As this is the first review of this centre, ERO decided to evaluate aspects of centre management.

### Areas of good performance

Effective management. Efficient, well established management systems and strong professional leadership ensure the smooth running of centre programmes and operations. Effective processes include:

- comprehensive systems for monitoring and reporting on centre operations;
- the development of annual management plans;
- the use of personnel policies and processes that promote quality teaching practices and collaborative teamwork, including a robust appraisal process and opportunities for professional

development;

- systems for shared leadership so that staff have opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of centre administration; and
- good practices, policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of children and staff.
- Sound management practices, including staff continually reflecting on their practice, contribute to ongoing improvements and positive outcomes for infants and toddlers.

## Area Of National Interest

### 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 include:

- talking with teachers, who add new vocabulary, model good language use, and prompt sensitively for answers;
- enjoying looking at and sharing books, and listening to stories being told and read;
- seeing print and pictures in the environment;
- experimenting with art processes and materials;
- participating in spontaneous and planned group singing and dancing;
- encouragement to develop gross motor skills as a prerequisite for literacy learning; and
- teachers using routines to support the development of infants' and toddlers' oral language development.

## Management Assurance On Compliance Areas

## Overview

Before the review, the licensee and staff of ACG Strathallan Infant Preschool Centre completed an ERO Centre Management Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they have attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

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

## Recommendation

ERO and the centre managers agreed that centre managers should continue to enhance self-review practices to maintain the centre's culture of continuous improvement.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

Richard Thornton

National Manager Review Services

Northern Region

8 March 2010

8 March 2010

To the Parents and Community of ACG Strathallan Infant Preschool Centre

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

## Community Page

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Self review is integral to the operation of the service and, along with teachers' ongoing reflective practice, enriches the programme provided for children. A useful next step would be to compile more detailed records of the discussions and processes used in reviewing the programme. Centre

managers agree they should continue to enhance self-review processes in order to maintain the centre's culture of continuous improvement.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

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 licensee 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

8 March 2010

## 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.
- · Areas of National Interest - information about how Government policies are working in early childhood centres.
- · 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.