

# Alexandra Kindergarten Education Review

- 1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation
- 2 Review Priorities
- 3 National Evaluation Topic
- 4 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements
- 6 Future Action
- About the Centre
- Community Page

## Disclaimer

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# 1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

## Confirmed Education Review Report: Alexandra Kindergarten

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

Alexandra Kindergarten is one of six kindergartens administered by the Central Otago Kindergarten Association. The kindergarten has recently relocated to a site on the Alexandra school grounds and is in a state of transition. Community funding has helped with the construction of a new purpose-built facility.

The focus of this review was on the quality of education. ERO reviewed the programme, the learning environment and the quality of the interactions, to see how these contribute to children's learning and development. ERO is evaluating children's social and emotional competence in all reviews in 2010. ERO also checked aspects of the kindergarten's practice that related to children's health and safety.

A major development since the last review is the move to the new purpose-built facility located on school grounds. Children play and learn in a spacious, well-resourced indoor and outdoor environment that is finished to a high standard.

The teachers and parents have developed positive and supportive partnerships and have built a sense of community within the kindergarten. The children work well together.

Children's learning and development is supported by:

- a range of choices and experiences for them to enjoy;
- an environment where their work is attractively displayed and reflects Central Otago and the dual heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand;
- a teaching team that works well together to develop programmes, and provide learning opportunities such as numeracy, literacy, drama and creative expression;
- some teachers who use good quality interactions to encourage children's thinking and problem-solving skills and build children's oral language;
- a speech-language programme funded by the kindergarten association; and
- records of learning that show children's progress over time, that are regularly shared with children and their families.

The managers, teachers and ERO agreed that there are some aspects of the teachers'

practice that could be further reviewed and developed so that there are further benefits for children. Records of children's learning and the centre programme could be further developed to show more clearly and consistently the parents' aspirations, the priorities for learning and what the teachers intend to do to support these priorities.

In addition, teachers should continue to build their capability in self review. They need to develop a schedule for review so that over time they review all aspects of their service that contribute to a high quality teaching and learning environment.

### 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

Before the review, the management of Alexandra Kindergarten 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 Alexandra Kindergarten .

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 teachers aim to provide a place where individuality is celebrated and where teachers, children and families are acknowledged as educators and learners. They aim to foster a centre culture of true partnership that values and promotes responsive and reciprocal relationships.

#### Areas of strength

Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities and experiences in a new purpose-built kindergarten. The facility is light, warm and spacious and reflects New Zealand's bicultural heritage. Children have easy access to good quality resources and equipment designed to support their learning and development. Teachers are welcoming and friendly. A key priority for them is to promote and maintain caring, supportive relationships and partnerships with families in their community. Children learn and play in the company of teachers who value them and their families.

Other features of the kindergarten that promote children's learning include:

- the positive relationships children have with one another;
- the wide range of activities and experiences that engage children for sustained periods of time;
- the collaborative approach teachers take to establish shared understandings about children's learning and the programme's intentions;
- the records of learning that summarise children's progress and development as it occurs;
- the good quality of interactions between children and teachers; and
- the progress being made to develop effective self-review processes and practices.

### Areas for development and review

Teachers plan together and implement a variety of activities and experiences that support children's interests and provide opportunities for learning. They gather a wide range of good information about children and regularly reflect on their progress and development. Teachers now need to make better use of this information to help them set more specific learning priorities for individuals and groups of children. [Recommendation 5.1]

Teachers have made good progress developing their self-review processes and practices. They now need to develop a review schedule to ensure all aspects of the service that contribute to the quality of education are regularly reviewed. They also need to further develop self-review processes and practices and widen the scope of their reviews. This may help add depth and complexity to children's learning and ensure the continuous development of programmes and teaching practices. This should include the quality of the learning programme, aspects of the environment, the quality of interactions, and a review of the role of routines in supporting children's learning. [Recommendation 5.1]

## 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.

### Promoting Children's Social and Emotional Competence

As children learn to make sense of their world they develop an understanding of themselves in social contexts, including the early childhood service. As part of this review ERO looked at how each service's curriculum supports children's developing social and emotional competence.

The findings are reported in the Quality of Education section of this report and used as part of a national evaluation report on this topic.

## 4 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of Alexandra Kindergarten completed an ERO Centre Management Assurance Statement 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; 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.

## 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

20 December 2010

## About the Centre

Location	Alexandra
Ministry of Education profile number	5486
Type	Kindergarten
Number licensed for	30 children, including up to 0 aged under 2
Roll number	48
Gender composition	Girls 32 Boys 18
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 42 Māori 6 Indian 1 Chinese 1
Review team on site	October 2010
Date of this report	20 December 2010
Previous three ERO reports	Education Review March 2008 Supplementary Review October 2005 Education Review August 2004

## Community Page

20 December 2010

To the Parents and Community of Alexandra Kindergarten

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Alexandra Kindergarten.

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In addition, teachers should continue to build their capability in self review. They need to develop a schedule for review so that over time they review all aspects of their service that contribute to a high quality teaching and learning environment.

### 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.