

Wakatipu Kindergarten Education Review

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1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Confirmed Education Review Report:Wakatipu Kindergarten

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

Wakatipu Kindergarten is one of six kindergartens administered by the Central Otago Kindergarten Association (COKA). The manager and the senior teacher of the association provide support for the running of the kindergarten.

This review focused on the quality of education. ERO reviewed the programme, the learning environment and the interactions and the extent to which these contribute to children's learning and development. The review also included an evaluation of children's social and emotional competence and some aspects of health and safety.

The teachers have developed warm and supportive relationships with children and their families. They have changed their session times and have added a school-day option so that they better meet the needs of the families that attend. Parents are encouraged to share information from home and to be involved in aspects of the centre programme. The teachers regularly share with parents how their children are benefitting from early-childhood education.

Children play and learn in a spacious, attractive and well-resourced environment. Teachers have arranged the environment so that children have opportunities to discover, explore and challenge themselves in meaningful ways.

The children relate well to one another. They are independent and confident. They spend lengthy periods engrossed in their play. Children are able to make decisions about what they want to learn and do in the programme. Some of the children have projects that they add to over time.

Teachers value and respect children's learning in many ways. Features that contribute to this positive learning environment include:

- teachers who model high expectations for children's social and emotional competence;
- teachers who extend children's thinking through genuine and sensitive interactions;
- the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and other resources to support children's enquiry;
- clear routines and smooth transitions which support children's wellbeing;

- a teaching and learning philosophy which is well understood and evident in what the teachers say and do;
- a focus on meaningful literacy and numeracy in the kindergarten programme;
- many opportunities for children to build a foundation for life-long learning, including an appreciation for the bicultural heritage of New Zealand, their local environment, gardening and healthy eating; and
- the importance teachers place on maintaining a relaxed and unhurried pace throughout the day so that children are free to explore, play and learn.

The teachers have made considerable progress since the last review on developing their understanding of assessment and self review. They agree that their next steps are to further build on and refine their understandings of these practices. This should give them further assurance that they are meeting the needs of all children who attend the kindergarten.

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 Wakatipu 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 Wakatipu 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 at the Wakatipu kindergarten aim to provide a teaching and learning environment where children will develop knowledge, skills and attitudes to become life-long learners.

Areas of strength

Relationships. Children benefit from warm and affirming relationships with their teachers. The teachers welcome children and families into the centre and make time to regularly share information about the children's learning and development. The teachers have established a number of ways to strengthen family and centre partnerships including: a blog where families can read about the kindergarten and leave comments; a kindergarten teddy for children to take home and use with a kindergarten camera; and opportunities for parents to comment in and contribute to children's profile books. The teachers work well as a team. They regularly reflect on the programme and the teaching and learning environment.

Sense of wellbeing and belonging. Children learn in a setting where there is a high priority

placed on their belonging and wellbeing. There are clear routines and smooth transitions. Children are given advance warning when there are changes coming up in the programme such as mat or music time. The teachers know their roles and responsibilities and have good systems for ensuring the smooth running of the kindergarten. These systems contribute to the relaxed and unhurried pace of the programme. This in turn gives children a sense that there is enough time for everything they need or want to do.

Environment. Children play and learn in spacious, attractive and well-resourced indoor and outdoor environments. The outdoor environment provides many places to discover and explore in a range of challenging areas. This implies teachers' trust in children's competence and confidence to manage themselves in the environment. The indoor environment is welcoming for parents. Parent information and resources are easily accessible. Children have easy access to their profile books. Children's learning is supported by tools such as ICT, a good range of reference books and other materials. The environment is arranged to promote children's independence and resourcefulness.

Interactions and strategies for learning. The teachers model, through their interactions, high expectations for children's social and emotional competence. They are affirming and engage children in genuine conversations to extend their thinking and problem-solving skills. Teachers encourage the children to work one-to-one with a teacher or in small groups. ERO observed children revisiting, recalling and building on prior learning and experiences. The teachers provide many opportunities for children to contribute their own ideas, make their own choices and decide what they want to do and learn in the programme. As part of the core programme, teachers provide meaningful experiences for children to build concepts of early literacy and numeracy, for example, games, making books, songs, stories and wall displays.

Confident, competent children. ERO observed children who were challenging and supporting each other, taking risks and 'having a go.' They were sustained and engaged in their play. Children are developing a view of themselves as learners and, at times, initiate their own learning. For example, some children are using ICT to record their own learning and areas of interest. They are cooperative and enjoy each other's company.

Areas for development and review

Assessment and planning. Teachers have made good progress since 2008 in developing their understanding of assessment and planning. They need to build on this to ensure that they improve the focus on learning in their records. They should develop ways to record the strategies they use to ensure they have made a difference to all children's learning over time. [Recommendation 5.1]

Self review. Teachers need to further develop their understanding of self review. This includes developing a schedule for reviews that includes all factors that impact on children and their

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 Wakatipu Kindergarten completed an ERO Centre 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.

5 Recommendation

ERO and the Centre Managers agreed that teachers:

5.1 improve their understanding and use of assessment and self review.

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	Queenstown
Ministry of Education profile number	5625
Type	Kindergarten
Number licensed for	45 children aged two years and over.
Roll number	79
Gender composition	Girls 38 Boys 41
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 54 Māori 7 South African 5 Australian 1 Italian 1 Pacific 3 Asian 6 British 2
Review team on site	November 2010
Date of this report	20 December 2010
Previous three ERO reports	Education Reviews March 2008 August 2004 Accountability Review November 2000

Community Page

20 December 2010

To the Parents and Community of Wakatipu Kindergarten

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

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Teachers value and respect children's learning in many ways. Features that contribute to this positive learning environment include:

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support children's enquiry;

- clear routines and smooth transitions which support children's wellbeing;
- a teaching and learning philosophy which is well understood and evident in what the teachers say and do;
- a focus on meaningful literacy and numeracy in the kindergarten programme;
- many opportunities for children to build a foundation for life-long learning, including an appreciation for the bicultural heritage of New Zealand, their local environment, gardening and healthy eating; and
- the importance teachers place on maintaining a relaxed and unhurried pace throughout the day so that children are free to explore, play and learn.

The teachers have made considerable progress since the last review on developing their understanding of assessment and self review. They agree that their next steps are to further build on and refine their understandings of these practices. This should give them further assurance that they are meeting the needs of all children who attend the kindergarten.

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.