



**Portland Kindergarten
Portland, Whangarei**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Portland Kindergarten

Portland, Whangarei

9 September 2015

1 Evaluation of Portland Kindergarten

How well placed is Portland Kindergarten to promote positive learning outcomes for children?

Not well placed	Requires further development	Well placed	Very well placed
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ERO's findings that support this overall judgement are summarised below.

Background

Portland Kindergarten services a wide rural area to the south and west of Whangarei. Session hours were extended in 2014 and the kindergarten now provides a six hour programme for up to 29 children between two and five years of age. Twenty percent of children currently enrolled have Māori heritage.

A relatively new teaching team is building a positive team culture. The kindergarten's philosophy focuses on building positive relationships with children and their families and making meaningful connections with the natural environment. The 'Enviroschools' initiative supports the kindergarten's commitment to providing a nature-based programme. This includes regular outdoor sessions in the local bush area.

Positive features identified in ERO's 2012 report have been sustained. Responsive teaching practices support children to explore and investigate. Teachers have developed their use of self review as a tool to guide ongoing improvement in the programme.

The kindergarten operates as part of the Northland Kindergarten Association. The Association provides governance, leadership and policy frameworks to meet operational management expectations. Association personnel assist teachers to maintain good standards of health, safety and to improve the quality of educational programmes. The Association's *Pumanawatanga* Plan reflects a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and support for the development of bicultural practices across the organisation.

This review was part of a cluster of 10 kindergarten reviews in the Northland Kindergarten Association.

The Review Findings

Children are self-motivated learners who enthusiastically participate in a stimulating nature-based programme. They demonstrate a sense of themselves as kaitiaki (nature guardians) who care for the environment. A respect for people, animals and nature and knowledge about their local area is highly evident in children's play. Meaningful programme experiences empower children to develop their thinking and talk confidently about their learning. Children are knowledgeable about basic Māori protocols and participate confidently in mihi whakatau, karakia and waiata.

Teachers are responsive to children's ideas and work alongside children to support their play. They guide children to effectively manage their relationships with others. Teachers are growing in their confidence to increasingly use te reo Māori in the programme. They agree they could review how well the programme provides for younger children.

The programme is underpinned by a commitment to environmental sustainability. It is guided by *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, and values the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand. A nature-based focus has resulted in increased family engagement in the programme and a greater sharing of families' skills and expertise at the kindergarten. Strong connections with local schools and involvement of the wider community in the programme are also evident.

Children's learning is highly visible in wall displays. Individual learning records celebrate children's positive relationships with others and the natural environment. Māori children's identity is celebrated through sharing information about their Māori heritage. Teachers could strengthen assessment practices by making more regular links in learning records to clearly show individual children's progress over time.

The teaching team values opportunities to grow their leadership and utilise individual strengths. Appraisal systems are well used to improve teacher's practice. Teachers are developing a shared understanding about effective teaching and team approaches. Ongoing professional learning is likely to further contribute to improved teacher practices. The kindergarten's long-term and annual goals have been reviewed to reflect teachers' vision for ongoing development.

The Northland Kindergarten Association provides effective governance for kindergartens. Its long-term direction focuses on making decisions to improve learning outcomes for children. Positive strategies include:

- good support and guidance by Association personnel to improve the quality of kindergarten programmes and teaching practice, particularly the development of bicultural practices and integration of *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) into programmes in meaningful ways for children
- effective teacher appraisal and professional learning and development that contributes to improved teacher skills, knowledge and practice, especially in supporting children's social competence, and strengthening the quality of assessment documentation
- significant investment in property and environment upgrades to promote children's exploration and investigation
- a focus on distributed leadership practices amongst kindergarten teaching teams to utilise teachers' individual and collective strengths.

Association leaders are considering ways to enhance teacher appraisal processes and systems for self review. ERO suggests that the Association strengthens systems to ensure that all health and safety requirements are being implemented.

Key Next Steps

To build on existing good practices teachers agree they could:

- review the programme and teaching practices to better provide for two-year-old children
- continue to develop and implement shared team practices and understandings
- strengthen self review by improving the quality of evaluation practices
- continue to develop a bicultural curriculum and make connections with the local Māori community to enhance the programme for children.

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Portland Kindergarten 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:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management and administration.

During the review, ERO looked at the service's systems for managing the following areas that have a potentially high impact on children's wellbeing:

- emotional safety (including positive guidance and child protection)
- physical safety (including supervision; sleep procedures; accidents; medication; hygiene; excursion policies and procedures)
- suitable staffing (including qualification levels; police vetting; teacher registration; ratios)
- evacuation procedures and practices for fire and earthquake.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.

Next ERO Review

When is ERO likely to review the service again?

The next ERO review of Portland Kindergarten will be in three years.



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern (Acting)

9 September 2015

The Purpose of ERO Reports

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the government department that, as part of its work, reviews early childhood services throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. ERO's reports provide information for parents and communities about each service's strengths and next steps for development. ERO's bicultural evaluation framework Ngā Pou Here is described in [SECTION 3](#) of this report. Early childhood services are partners in the review process and are expected to make use of the review findings to enhance children's wellbeing and learning.

2 Information about the Early Childhood Service

Location	Portland, Whangarei	
Ministry of Education profile number	5016	
Licence type	Free Kindergarten	
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008	
Number licensed for	29 children, including up to 0 aged under 2	
Service roll	41	
Gender composition	Boys 26 Girls 15	
Ethnic composition	Māori NZ European/Pākehā other	8 31 2
Percentage of qualified teachers 0-49% 50-79% 80%+ <i>Based on funding rates</i>	80% +	
Reported ratios of staff to children Over 2	1:10	Meets minimum requirements
Review team on site	June 2015	
Date of this report	9 September 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	April 2012
These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review	February 2009
	Education Review	March 2006

3 General Information about Early Childhood Reviews

ERO's Evaluation Framework

ERO's overarching question for an early childhood education review is 'How well placed is this service to promote positive learning outcomes for children?' ERO focuses on the following factors as described in the bicultural framework [Ngā Pou Here](#):

Pou Whakahaere – how the service determines its vision, philosophy and direction to ensure positive outcomes for children

Pou Ārahi – how leadership is enacted to enhance positive outcomes for children

Mātauranga – whose knowledge is valued and how the curriculum is designed to achieve positive outcomes for children

Tikanga whakaako – how approaches to teaching and learning respond to diversity and support positive outcomes for children.

Within these areas ERO considers the effectiveness of *arotake* – self review and of *whanaungatanga* – partnerships with parents and whānau.

ERO evaluates how well placed a service is to sustain good practice and make ongoing improvements for the benefit of all children at the service.

A focus for the government is that all children, especially priority learners, have an opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood education. ERO will report on how well each service promotes positive outcomes for all children, with a focus on children who are Māori, Pacific, have diverse needs, and are up to the age of two.

For more information about the framework and Ngā Pou Here refer to [ERO's Approach to Review in Early Childhood Services](#).

ERO's Overall Judgement and Next Review

The overall judgement that ERO makes and the timing of the next review will depend on how well placed a service is to promote positive learning outcomes for children. The categories are:

- Very well placed – The next ERO review in four years
- Well placed – The next ERO review in three years
- Requires further development – The next ERO review within two years
- Not well placed - The next ERO review in consultation with the Ministry of Education

ERO has developed criteria for each category. These are available on [ERO's website](#).

Review Coverage

ERO reviews are tailored to each service's context and performance, within the overarching review framework. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to positive outcomes for children and useful to the service.