



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Life-Start Learning Centres Ltd 2
Lower Hutt

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Life-Start Learning Centres Ltd 2

Lower Hutt

9 March 2017

1 Evaluation of Life-Start Learning Centres Ltd 2

How well placed is Life-Start Learning Centres Ltd 2 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

Life-Start Learning Centres Ltd 2 is situated in Avalon, Lower Hutt and provides education and care for children aged from infancy to three years.

The centre is one of two privately owned services under the Life-Start Learning Centres Limited. They focus on offering family orientated Christian based education and care. Full and part time care and education is provided for 44 children, including 22 up to the age two years. Twelve children identify as Māori and two children as Pacific.

Since the March 2014 ERO report there have been changes in ownership and management. In November 2015, a new owner purchased the centre. Early 2016, a new centre manager and an executive project manager were appointed. Day-to-day operation of the centre is the responsibility of the centre manager with the executive project manager responsible for business operation. They provide administrative and curriculum support for team leaders and teachers. All teachers are fully qualified and represent a diverse range of cultures.

The centre is divided into two adjacent areas. The Cottage caters for infants from birth to approximately eighteen months of age. Toddlers then move across to the Nursery, where they remain until they are approximately three years of age. From here, children transition to the Life-Start Preschool, which is on a different site, until they begin school.

The previous ERO report identified areas requiring further improvement. These included: developing systems and processes that promote collaborative relationships with the pre-school; increasing parent and whānau involvement; promoting literacy; and building teachers' understanding of internal evaluation. In addition, directors and leaders agreed to seek input from parents and whānau to: contribute to the strategic planning process; explore ways to promote Māori children's success as Māori; and strengthen the appraisal process. The centre has made good progress in addressing these areas.

This review was one of two reviews in the Life-Start Learning Centres.

The Review Findings

The centre's philosophy is inspired by *Te Whariki*, the early childhood curriculum and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The principles of partnership, participation and protection form a basis for teaching practice. The centre values are consistent with Christian principles. The centre is currently reviewing its philosophy to ensure it reflects community aspirations and beliefs. Leaders are consulting with whānau Māori and the Pacific community to capture what educational success means to them and their children in this context.

Infants and toddlers are offered choices and opportunities to make decisions about their day in a calm and unhurried environment. A family-like atmosphere supports children to confidently interact together and with adults. Responsive caregiving supports younger children's need for strong and secure attachment.

Parents are warmly welcomed and encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the centre. Regular interactions between parents and teachers contribute to children's learning and progress.

Cultural diversity is embraced and celebrated. Elements of Māori, Pacific and other cultures are incorporated into the environment and programme. Teachers have worked to develop their understanding of te ao Māori and the use of te reo Māori. Targeted professional development has supported teachers' understanding.

Leaders have recently developed a new system for planning children's learning. Teachers notice children's individual interests, recognising opportunities for learning and respond through offering appropriate learning activities.

Attractive profile books capture aspects of children's learning, developing friendships and participation in the programme. Children's voices are features of these stories, providing their perspective of their learning. These are captured and shared digitally with parents and whānau via an online assessment tool. ERO's evaluation affirms teachers' self-identified next step that is to further develop assessment, planning and evaluation practices to guide and improve consistent practice.

Children are supported in their transition within the centre and on to the partner preschool. The two centres exchange relevant information and grow a sense of belonging through visits.

Leaders are supportive, collaborative and improvement focused. They involve teachers in their decision making and use evidence and feedback well to inform decisions about change. Business and administration procedures have been reviewed. The new leaders have established roles and responsibilities. The appraisal system for leaders has recently been implemented. Ongoing improvement should include clearly documenting the outcome of the goals set and strengthening the support provided to inform the next steps.

Managers provide support to teachers through ongoing professional development based on centre priorities and teacher needs. A new appraisal process has the potential to build, improve and support teacher practice.

Self review is useful and responsive to centre priorities. Suitable processes are used. The findings inform decisions and result in improvement. Regular discussion is leading to a shared understanding across the centre. Leaders identify that building teachers' understanding and capability to evaluate practice is an ongoing next step. This should assist them to better measure how their practices impact on children's learning.

Key Next Steps

ERO, leaders and teachers agree that the next steps for improvement are:

- strengthening relationships with local schools
- further strengthening teachers' capacities in implementing aspects of assessment, planning and evaluation
- continuing to grow teachers' understanding of te ao Māori and other cultures within the centre
- building teachers' capability and understanding of internal evaluation
- strengthening the appraisal process for leaders.

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Life-Start Learning Centres Ltd 2 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 Life-Start Learning Centres Ltd 2 will be in three years.



Joyce Gebbie
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

9 March 2017

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	Lower Hutt		
Ministry of Education profile number	60362		
Licence type	Education & Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008		
Number licensed for	44 children, including up to 22 aged under 2		
Service roll	26		
Gender composition	Boys 16, Girls 10		
Ethnic composition	Māori	12	
	Pākehā	10	
	Pacific	2	
	Other ethnic groups	2	
Percentage of qualified teachers	80% +		
Reported ratios of staff to children	Under 2	1:3	Better than minimum requirements
	Over 2	1:4	Better than minimum requirements
Review team on site	December 2016		
Date of this report	9 March 2017		
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	March 2014	
These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review	February 2011	
	Education Review	July 2007	

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.