

ERO -Education Review Office report

Koru Montessori takes great pride in holding the highest possible ERO evaluation of 'Very Well Placed' to promote positive learning outcomes for children (evaluation August 15th 2016).

Koru Montessori Sunnynook, Auckland 15 August 2016

Evaluation of Koru Montessori

How well placed is Koru Montessori 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

Koru Montessori is licensed to provide education and care for up to 28 children aged over two years. The centre operates from a converted house and is open between 9:00am and 3:30pm. Children from culturally diverse ethnic backgrounds attend either morning or afternoon sessions, or full days. Some travel quite long distances to attend this centre.

The centre is privately owned. The owner is a very experienced and qualified Montessori teacher and leads a team of four qualified teachers and one teaching assistant. All qualified teachers have completed specialised training in the Montessori philosophy. The owner works as a mentor for other leaders and teachers within the Montessori educational community.

The centre philosophy aligns teaching practices to the Montessori method, and *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum. A calm, orderly environment and the provision of specialised materials are seen as essential to support children's learning through self-discovery. The philosophy says that children will be supported to develop self-esteem and independence through exploration and problem-solving activities.

Previous ERO reports have been consistently positive. The 2013 report described children in the centre as confident, capable and respectful. A high quality programme and good levels of resourcing were acknowledged as providing children with meaningful learning opportunities. The report highlighted teachers' responsive and positive interactions with children, and their strong culture of self review. These positive aspects have been maintained.

Areas identified in 2013 for ongoing review and development were the recognition of children's home languages and cultures, strategic planning and bicultural practices. There have been very positive developments in these areas.

The Review Findings

The centre philosophy is very evident in practice. Children are independent, confident, and conversational with each other and with adults. Strong friendships are evident. Children learn

through self-initiated experiences, and move purposefully from one activity to the next without adult direction.

Children make decisions and concentrate well. They respect each other's right to work uninterrupted for long periods of time. They are articulate and eager to share their learning with others. Children act with grace and courtesy towards each other and adults. Older children mentor and support younger children.

Teachers treat children with the utmost respect. They are good role models for children's developing language, social skills, and in the use of specialised Montessori materials. They acknowledge children to be capable and competent. Each child is recognised as a unique learner.

Teachers provide a programme rich with opportunities for children to explore their own and other cultures, and to develop extensive knowledge of the world they live in. Te reo and tikanga Māori are incorporated into conversations and teaching practices.

Literacy, science and mathematics are included in the programme in meaningful ways. Teachers' ongoing observations of children build a picture of what children know, understand, and are interested in learning more about. The range of literacy practices incorporated into the programme enable children to play with language, use literacy for a purpose, and question critically.

Teachers design and implement curriculum effectively. Portfolios are thoughtfully constructed records of children's individual learning journeys. They show continuity, and deepening complexity, in children's learning in a range of contexts. These records build each child's identity as a successful learner.

Parents who spoke with ERO shared their deep appreciation of the centre's philosophy, practices and programme for children. They felt well supported by the staff to understand how children learn in this specialised environment and how they can support this at home. Parents are well informed about what is planned for children and how they can take an active role in the centre programme.

The centre is well managed and responsive to the needs of its learning community. An effective process for self review is well embedded. There is a strong commitment to ongoing review and recognition of the positive outcomes for children as a result of the process. The centre leader and teachers advocate for young children and their families and ensure that families are able to access other appropriate agencies.

Performance management processes successfully contribute to the achievement of the service's vision and goals. The process successfully incorporates the Montessori Journey to Excellence, the Education Council's *Practising Teacher Criteria*, and teacher cultural competencies as reflected in *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners*. Teaching practice clearly aligns with the centre philosophy, and the expectations of the Educational Council. Emergent leadership amongst the teachers is encouraged and there is a high level of relational trust across the teaching team.

Key Next Steps

In order to enhance their current high quality provision for children, the teaching team plans to:

- continue to develop and refine their programme planning
- deepen their knowledge of te ao Māori and how these perspectives can be included in the curriculum.

ERO endorses these intentions.

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Koru Montessori 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 Koru Montessori will be in **four** years.

Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

15 August 2016

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	Sunnynook, Auckland		
Ministry of Education profile number	20293		
Licence type	Education & Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008		
Number licensed for	28 children, including up to 0 aged under 2		
Service roll	40		
Gender composition	Boys	21	
	Girls	19	
Ethnic composition	Māori	2	
	Pākehā	10	
	Chinese	16	
	Indian	5	
	Japanese	2	
Ethnic composition	Other	5	
	Percentage of qualified teachers	0-49% 50-79% 80%	
<i>Based on funding rates</i>	30%		
Reported ratios of staff to children	Over 2	1:7	Better than minimum requirements
Review team on site	July 2016		
Date of this report	15 August 2016		
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2013	
	Education Review	May 2010	
	Education Review	April 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.

KORU MONTESSORI REPORTS

- [Koru Montessori - 15/08/2016](#)
- [Koru Montessori - 26/06/2013](#)