

13 October 2011

To the Parents and Community of Grace Kindergarten

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

Grace Kindergarten is a Christian, community-based centre catering for children aged over two years. A charitable trust, associated with the Church, oversees the running of the service. A board of management made up primarily of parents provides support for operation. The organisation of fundraising and social events is undertaken by a parents' committee.

Children are supported by kind and caring teachers who know them well. A range of activities is provided to engage their interest. These include learning opportunities linked to literacy and mathematics and Christian principles and values. Some good teaching strategies are effectively used to encourage cooperative play, social learning and participation in group activities. Teachers observe children at play and note much anecdotal information about their development, emerging interests, play preferences and relationships with others. This is used in individual children's profile books and to inform planning for learning.

Staff work positively as a team, supporting each other in their roles. They work hard to keep parents well informed and to encourage their participation in aspects of the service.

Teachers need to better define the curriculum at Grace Kindergarten in relation to the principles, strands and goals of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum. They also need to improve aspects of their teaching practice, such as, the quality of their interactions and engagement with children, assessment, provision for older children and the implementation of a bicultural perspective.

The board of management provides effective support for operation. Members bring a range of complementary skills to the team and show high levels of commitment to their governance roles. Management and teachers are very responsive to the particular needs and requirements of individual children and their families. There is good support for community engagement with the service.

ERO, the board of management and head teacher have agreed on priority areas for development and review. Professional support will be sought to build teachers' understanding of best practice in relation to curriculum and redefine the philosophy underpinning teaching and learning at Grace Kindergarten. Development of teachers' understanding and use of self review should enhance decision making about appropriate plans to improve their practice in the future.

Future Action

ERO is likely to review the service again in 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>.



Kathleen Atkins
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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.