

**CONFIRMED**  
**EDUCATION REVIEW**  
**REPORT**  
**KUMEU MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL**  
**May 2005**



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### **Centre Statement**

Prior to the review ERO offers every early childhood centre the opportunity to provide some background in the form of the centre's location and context, significant achievements since the last review, and issues being considered by the management.

The centre and management have provided a statement to accompany this report. This is attached to the signed copy of the confirmed report sent to the management. If the centre's statement is not attached and you would like a copy, please contact the centre.

## **CONFIRMED EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT: KUMEU MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL**

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

### **1 About the Centre**

Location	Kumeu, West Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	20339
Type	Education and Care Service
Number licensed for	22
Roll number	29
Gender composition	Girls 15, Boys 14
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 27, Tongan 1, Other 1
Review team onsite	March 2005
Date of this report	16 May 2005
Previous ERO reports	Accountability Review, March 2002 Accountability Review, March 1998 Assurance Audit, November 1993

### **2 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation**

Kumeu Montessori Preschool is located in rural West Auckland. The preschool provides an educational programme based on the philosophy of Maria Montessori. The previous ERO review found that high quality learning opportunities were provided for children within a safe, nurturing environment. Since that review, a new owner has continued these good practices.

The programme is consistent with the philosophy of Maria Montessori. The learning environment is well planned around the five main groups of Montessori exercises and

learning activities and materials. Children freely access the plentiful and well-maintained resources and their growing independence is encouraged in the practical life area through the use of real tools and equipment.

The teachers have developed systems of planning, evaluation and assessment that are consistent with the preschool's philosophy and guided by the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. Children's interests inform both spontaneous and long-term planning, and evaluation and assessment practices are guided by detailed systems.

Children are well settled and make choices about their work independently. They engage in many learning opportunities throughout the session. Children are confident and articulate communicators, and positive relationships are evident in their sustained periods of co-operative and collaborative interactions. Opportunities for children's literacy and numeracy concept development are well integrated and supported through the programme.

Families support the philosophy of the preschool and feel welcome at the centre. The management provides opportunities for parents to be informed about the preschool philosophy through parent induction evenings and regular newsletters. Opportunities are also given for parents to discuss their child's learning and development formally with teachers.

The manager has a clear understanding of self review. Annual planned reviews and spontaneous reviews address issues as they arise and both contribute to the success of self-review. Good practices have been developed which document reviews and inform on-going development.

The focus of this review is the quality of education provided for children. It evaluates the programme, the interactions between children and between children and teachers, and the learning environment. The report identifies areas of good performance and areas for improvement. The report also evaluates the quality of self-review practices and the impact on the centre in meeting the 2005 qualification requirements. The report concludes with a recommendation that the teachers access professional development to assist them in the implementation of te reo and tikanga Māori. It also recommends that the manager develop a strategic plan to guide the future development of the preschool.

## **Future Action**

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO will review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

### **3 Review Priorities**

#### **The Focus of the Review**

Before the review, the management of Kumeu Montessori Preschool 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 Kumeu Montessori Preschool.

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***

Kumeu Montessori Preschool was last reviewed in March 2002. That report highlighted the high quality learning opportunities provided for children within a safe, nurturing environment. The preschool has had a new owner since December 2003 and she has continued these good practices.

##### ***Areas of good performance***

*Philosophy in practice.* Children experience an education programme consistent with the philosophy of Maria Montessori. The manager and the teachers successfully combine this philosophy with the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, in an early childhood programme that is applicable to New Zealand children.

*Children's well being and belonging.* Children are settled, involved and confidently choose activities that interest them. Teachers make time to welcome and speak to each child on arrival. They are positive and affirming and quick to respond to children's needs. Teachers are respectful of children and consistently work at their level. The teachers and manager have developed effective strategies to manage children's transition in to the preschool, which includes consultation with parents.

*Support for growing independence.* Children independently select activities that are designed to promote problem solving and support their growing competency. Teachers encourage children to reflect on what they are doing and encourage thinking and reasoning. Routines and activities in the practical life area are designed to be supportive of children's growing independence and they confidently use real tools and equipment such as the toaster and the laminator. Teachers have high expectations of children, which they respond to knowledgeably and with enthusiasm.

*Interactions.* Children are confident, articulate communicators who have frequent opportunities for sustained conversations with each other as they go about their work. There are frequent interactions between children and teachers, and children confidently engage with new adults. Teachers make good use of questioning to encourage deeper level thinking and reflective listening. They promote positive relationships through interactions that are affectionate and respectful.

*Literacy and numeracy.* Children's development of literacy and numeracy concepts is promoted by the readily available Montessori materials and resources that support this learning. Children are free to explore these resources individually and develop basic concepts through the investigation of concrete equipment. Teachers also work on a one-to-one basis with children with these materials. They demonstrate the correct use of the materials and support children to use them independently. Story reading at group times provides an enjoyable, interactive experience for children and opportunities for children to dictate, illustrate and retell their own stories also support their growing understanding of the written word.

*Creativity.* Children's creative work is encouraged and affirmed by teachers. Their ideas are valued and opportunities to develop dramatic themes are supported with the provision of some resources and equipment. Children's friendships are evident in the sustained collaborative times that they spend involved in co-operative extension of each other's ideas. Shared experiences such as the retelling of stories with puppets made by the children also affirm their individual creativity.

*Curriculum management.* Planning is responsive to children's interests within a Montessori framework. Teachers identify and record children's emerging interests on a daily basis and these are used to inform both spontaneous and long-term planning. Teachers have developed good, in-depth systems for evaluation and assessment. They regularly monitor children's achievement in the five main groups of Montessori materials and write more detailed assessments of learning every six months.

*Partnership with parents.* Parents gain an understanding of the special philosophy of this centre through parent induction evenings and regular newsletters. Other parent evenings are held regularly. All families are members of the Montessori Association of New Zealand and receive their regular newsletters. Parents report that staff and management are approachable and open to discussion. They have opportunities for formal interviews to discuss their child's progress should they wish. Parents feel consulted with regard to centre review and are kept informed by the documentation that is available to them.

### ***Areas for improvement***

*Te reo and tikanga Māori.* Te reo and tikanga Māori are not well integrated into the programme. On the day of the review, teachers did not use te reo Māori in their conversations with children nor did they include waiata during group singing times. They should now focus on the development of their confidence to integrate te reo Māori in to their daily work with children. They could also extend the ways that tikanga Māori is reflected in the environment.

*Cultural diversity.* The manager and teachers have made a genuine attempt to incorporate other cultures into the programme with changes to the children's lunchtime menu to include an international flavour and the collection of international music to develop and stimulate children's appreciation of a diverse range of music. They could now consider ways in which they could ensure the acknowledgement of all the cultures represented in the preschool through both programme implementation and the provision of appropriate resources.

*Learning environment.* Some changes could be made to the environment to further support children's learning. Provision could be made for some display of children's work at their own level. The selection of books that are readily accessible to children could be extended to not only promote the current focus but to include children's favourites and promote other emerging interests. The addition of more resources and equipment to support the extension of children's ideas and dramatic themes could also be considered.

*Records of children's learning.* Teachers have developed portfolios which are comprehensive records of children's learning. These are kept in the office and are available to parents and children on request. To encourage further involvement by children and families, the manager should consider making these more readily available by displaying them in an area that is accessible to both children and families.

*Health and safety.* In general, health and safety practices are well implemented. However, there are two issues for the manager to consider. Staff should strengthen their monitoring of children's hand washing before their individual preparation of food. Soap should be used for hand washing before meal times. The current practice of individual face cloths could be retained for children's use during and after the meal. In addition, some shelving needs to be fixed to the wall to minimise the risk to children in the event of an earthquake.

## **4 Areas of Specific Government Interest**

### **Overview**

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to the Government. This information will be used as the basis for long term and systemic educational improvement.

ERO collected information about Kumeu Montessori Preschool. These findings are included in this report to ensure that information about the centre is transparent and widely available.

### **Current Areas of Specific Government Interest**

ERO is currently collecting information for reports to the Government on:

- the quality of self review practices in early childhood services; and
- qualification requirements.

### **The Quality of Self Review Practices in Early Childhood Services**

#### ***Background***

Self review is a process through which early childhood education services evaluate the effectiveness of what they do, with the aim of improving the quality of their practice and ultimately the outcomes for children.

ERO is currently investigating self review in early childhood services by seeking specific information about:

- the nature, extent and effectiveness of self review in the service;
- the potential or actual contribution of self review to improved outcomes for children; and
- the implications for improved early childhood service delivery.

#### ***Areas of good performance***

*Clear purpose for self review.* The manager demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose of self review. In this preschool, the process identifies the improvements necessary for both individuals and the centre as a whole. Reviews are planned as a response to specific observations or as a result of teachers' further knowledge gained through professional development.

*Annual and on-going review.* The preschool manager has established processes for the annual review of the centre's charter, mission statement, policies and procedures. Families are consulted and opportunities given for them to provide feedback. Hazards checks are undertaken regularly to ensure the centre remains safe for children and continues to meet its legal obligations.

*Documentation.* Good tools and practices have been developed to implement and strengthen self review. The manager's well-documented systems contribute to the success of the self-review process. Teachers are free to add to meeting agendas and minutes of all meetings between management and staff are recorded.

*Review leads to action.* The manager and teachers are responsive to the results of reviews and improvements to the centre are a result. While some reviews are planned for annually, others are planned spontaneously to address issues as they arise.

### ***Areas for improvement***

*Strategic plan development.* The preschool does not have a strategic plan to guide future centre goals and priorities. The development of a strategic plan that is broader than a maintenance programme will assist in the ongoing future progress and improvement of the centre.

*Teacher appraisal.* The manager chose not to appraise teachers' performance during her first year of ownership. Now that she is familiar with centre operation, it is her intention that the appraisal process will now be re-introduced.

### **Qualification requirements**

Under the Education (ECC) Regulations 1998, licensed early childhood services must be supervised by a person responsible. From the beginning of 2005 all staff who are 'persons responsible' are required to hold a Diploma of Teaching (ECE) or an equivalent qualification. The person responsible is also required to be a registered teacher or a provisionally registered teacher participating in a suitable programme of advice and guidance. There may be an extended transition period for registration in certain circumstances, specified in regulations 9 and 10 of the Education (Registration of Early Childhood Service Teachers) Regulations 2004.

Kumeu Montessori Preschool employs one teacher who holds a Diploma of Teaching (ECE). She is the person responsible and is fully registered. It is her choice that she remains at the centre all day. The manager has contacted the Ministry of Education to ensure this provision is adequate. The second teacher has recently attained a Diploma of Teaching (Primary) and has applied for provisional registration as a teacher in the primary sector.

## **5 Management Assurance on Compliance Areas**

### **Overview**

Before the review, the licensee and staff of Kumeu Montessori Preschool completed an ERO *Centre Management Assurance Statement* and *Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they have attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- administration;
- health, safety and welfare;
- personnel management;

- financial and property management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they 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.

During the course of the review ERO found one area of non-compliance. The manager/operator must:

- 5.1 secure shelves to ensure children's safety in the event of an earthquake, [*Education ECC Regulations 1998, 23(2)*].

## **6 Recommendations**

ERO and the Centre Management agreed to:

- 6.1 access professional development which enables teachers to confidently utilise the resources within the centre to implement te reo and tikanga Māori, and
- 6.2 to develop a strategic plan that reflects the future development of the preschool.

## **7 Future Action**

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interests of the children. Therefore ERO will review the service again as part of the regular review cycle.

*Signed*

Charlene Scotti  
Area Manager Reporting Services  
**for Chief Review Officer**

16 May 2005

16 May 2005

## **To the Parents and Community of Kumeu Montessori Preschool**

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Kumeu Montessori Preschool**.

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The focus of this review is the quality of education provided for children. It evaluates the programme, the interactions between children and between children and teachers, and the learning environment. The report identifies areas of good performance and areas for improvement. The report also evaluates the quality of self-review practices and the impact on the centre in meeting the 2005 qualification requirements. The report concludes with a recommendation that the teachers access professional development to assist them in the implementation of te reo and tikanga Māori. It also recommends that the manager develop a strategic plan to guide the future development of the preschool.

### **Future Action**

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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 licensee 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>.

Charlene Scotti  
Area Manager Reporting Services  
**for Chief Review Officer**

## **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.
- **Areas of Specific Government Interest** – information about how Government policies are working in early childhood centres.
- **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.

