



**The Learning Ladder
Howick, Auckland**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

The Learning Ladder

Howick, Auckland

19 February 2016

1 Evaluation of The Learning Ladder

How well placed is The Learning Ladder 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

The Learning Ladder (previously known as Adventure Discoveries Early Learning Centre) is located in a large commercial building that is undergoing refurbishment. It offers all day education and care for children from three months to five years. The centre's education and care licence allows for a maximum of 40 children, including 14 children under two years of age. The steadily increasing roll includes 5 Māori children.

The centre is managed by new owners who are committed to improving the quality of education and care. The owners are ably supported by a recently appointed centre supervisor. Most of the teachers employed under the previous ownership remain on the staff and most are registered. Teachers work as a close team to develop their practice.

The service's newly developed philosophy reflects the aims of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum. It emphasises the promotion of children's social competence and independence.

The centre owners are making good progress to meeting the key next steps and areas of compliance identified in the 2013 ERO report.

The Review Findings

Respectful relationships between adults and children are evident. Teachers are welcoming and supportive and as a result, children settle happily into the centre. Children are well cared for and are actively involved in centre activities. The centre owners and staff value close partnerships with parents and whānau and are considering various ways of further strengthening these partnerships.

There is good provision for children aged under two years. The children are in a separate, comfortable area that allows for them to explore their space safely. Positive and sensitive interactions between teachers and babies and toddlers are evident. Teachers are responsive to children's ways of communicating and teachers use many opportunities to foster children's English and early mathematical language. Teachers are respectful of the children and talk with them about decisions that affect them.

The centre's physical environment is large and colourful. Teachers continue to review how well the discrete play areas meet children's needs. They are keen to provide children with more resources and choice. A feature of the centre is children's access to gymnastic equipment in a separate area of the building. This effective resource promotes good opportunities for physical challenge.

Children benefit from the many opportunities available to increase their independence and self-management. Teachers are participating in relevant professional learning and development to increase their understanding of current teaching and learning practices. This new learning is evident in the daily programme. Teachers discuss children's emerging interests during team meetings and use this information to plan opportunities to develop children's creativity, oral language and confidence. The centre owners and supervisor agree that they could consider ways to extend and challenge children's learning through play.

Assessment records identify children's growing skills and understanding. These are highlighted in attractive individual portfolios of learning.

Teachers are participating in appropriate professional learning and development to increase their use and knowledge of te reo Māori. They plan to incorporate te ao Māori more into the daily programme. Teachers value the cultural identities and knowledge that children and their parents bring to the centre. Teachers welcome parent participation and their sharing of cultural experiences with children.

The owners and the centre supervisor are implementing effective systems to guide centre operation. Efficient self-review processes have been introduced by the centre supervisor to ensure ongoing improvement. It could be useful now for the owners to develop a strategic plan based on their philosophy and vision for the centre. Ensuring that staff have a shared understanding of the centre vision and philosophy could provide a good foundation for this strategic plan.

Key Next Steps

The owners, centre supervisor and ERO agree that key next steps include:

- strengthening teachers' understanding of the principles and aims of *Te Whāriki* so they can increase opportunities to extend children's learning and creativity
- increasing teachers' personal knowledge and strengthening teaching practice about the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand
- centre owners considering further professional development to enhance their governance and management roles.

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of The Learning Ladder 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 The Learning Ladder will be in three years.



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

19 February 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	Howick, Auckland		
Ministry of Education profile number	45905		
Licence type	Education & Care Service		
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008		
Number licensed for	40 children, including up to 14 aged under 2		
Service roll	33		
Gender composition	Boys 17, Girls 16		
Ethnic composition	Māori	5	
	Pākehā	16	
	Asian	4	
	Fijian Indian	4	
	other	4	
Percentage of qualified teachers 0-49% 50-79% 80%+ <i>Based on funding rates</i>	80% +		
Reported ratios of staff to children	Under 2	1:4	Better than minimum requirements
	Over 2	1:7	Better than minimum requirements
Review team on site	November 2015		
Date of this report	19 February 2016		
Most recent ERO report(s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review Previous report as Adventure Discoveries Early Learning Centre	October 2013	

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.