



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

The Learning Ladder
Howick, Auckland

Confirmed

Education Review Report

The Learning Ladder

Howick, Auckland

25 October 2019

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 is a small, privately-owned centre located in a refurbished commercial building. The centre provides education and care for up to 40 children with a maximum of 14 up to two years of age. Families from a range of cultural backgrounds attend the centre and staffing reflects this diversity. Some children are learning English as an additional language.

Children play and learn in two separate rooms specifically organised to meet the needs of the age groups. They have access to an inside gym space with climbing equipment, as well as a shared outdoor area.

The centre's philosophy emphasises the importance of a happy, nurturing environment that promotes mutual respect of each other, family and other cultures. It fosters a programme based on learning through play that encourages curiosity and imagination while supporting children's growing confidence.

Since the 2016 ERO review, there have been a number of personnel changes. There has been a shift in ownership to a sole director responsible for the day-to-day operation of the centre, and a new centre manager has been appointed.

Centre leaders and teachers have made useful progress towards addressing the key next steps from the 2016 ERO report. Many of the positive features identified in the report have been maintained.

The Review Findings

Children are well supported to settle into the learning programme. They experience respectful, caring relationships with each other, their teachers and staff. This helps to foster children's sense of belonging and wellbeing while at the centre.

Children confidently engage in their chosen activities. They have many opportunities to work cooperatively in small or larger groups and to play with resources that invite their curiosity. Some children work alone while exploring activities and equipment at their own pace. They have regular access to the gym space that promotes physical development and challenges.

Teachers are welcoming and inclusive. They know children and their whānau well. Teachers value children's cultural backgrounds and languages. Some teachers speak with children in their home language as well as English. Centre leaders have identified that teachers are at the early stages of incorporating te reo and tikanga Māori into the daily programme and will continue providing appropriate support for further development.

Teachers recognise children's strengths, interests and abilities and document these in attractively presented portfolios. They use a range of approaches to encourage their participation. Teachers skilfully use questions to help children think more deeply about their learning and to extend their oral language development. Teachers offer a variety of experiences that foster physical development and creativity. Centre leaders are aware that they need to ensure that the transition to school programme for older children reflects the principles of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, more closely.

Infants and toddlers benefit from the small number of children in this room. They experience calm, unhurried relationships with nurturing adults. They have opportunities to explore and choose their interests from an appropriate range of easily accessible resources.

Transitions into and within the centre are based on the needs of each child and family. Centre staff build positive relationships with parents and whānau. This encourages them to be involved in children's learning and contribute to the centre. Parents who spoke with ERO said they appreciate how teachers care for and interact with their children and maintain friendly relationships.

There is a clear governance and leadership structure to support centre operations. The strategic plan, and policy and procedure framework, guide processes and practices. Centre leaders have identified that the appraisal process could be further strengthened to more clearly reflect Teaching Council guidelines.

Key Next Steps

Centre leaders agree that the key next steps include:

- continuing to evaluate the philosophy and make the centre's commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and bicultural practice more evident
- further developing assessment, planning and evaluation processes and practices to make learning and teaching more visible
- ensuring that the transition to school programme reflects the principles of *Te Whāriki*
- aligning the strategic and annual action plans more meaningfully and reporting on how effectively the goals are achieved
- using evaluative questions to build internal evaluation capability across the centre.

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.



Steve Tanner
Director Review and Improvement Services Northern
Northern Region

25 October 2019

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	52		
Gender composition	Boys 28 Girls 24		
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	25	
	Chinese	10	
	Taiwanese	4	
	Indian	4	
	other ethnic groups	9	
Percentage of qualified teachers	80% +		
Reported ratios of staff to children	Under 2	1:4	Better than minimum requirements
	Over 2	1:8	Better than minimum requirements
Review team on site	August 2019		
Date of this report	25 October 2019		
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	February 2016	
These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Education Review (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

The overall judgement that ERO makes will depend on how well the service promotes positive learning outcomes for children. The categories are:

- Very well placed
- Well placed
- Requires further development
- Not well placed

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.