

# Sand Dunes Quality Early learning Centre Education Review

- [The Education Review Office \(ERO\) Evaluation](#)
- [Review Priorities](#)
- [National Evaluation Topics](#)
- [Management Assurance Onlegal Requirements](#)
- [Recommendation](#)
- [Future Action](#)
- [About The Centre](#)
- [Community Page](#)

## Disclaimer

Individual ERO school and early childhood centre reports are public information and may be copied or sent electronically. However, the Education Review Office can guarantee only the authenticity of original documents which have been obtained in hard copy directly from either the local ERO office or ERO Corporate Office in Wellington. Please consult your telephone book, or see the ERO web page, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>, for ERO office addresses.

## The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

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

Sand Dunes Quality Early Learning Centre provides high quality early childhood education and care for children aged over three years in Plimmerton, Porirua. The owner and manager are highly reflective and use self review for continuous improvement.

At the time of the 2007 ERO review this was a mixed-age centre. The owner has now developed two separately licensed services on the original site to better cater for the particular developmental needs of infants and young toddlers in a purpose-built facility, Sand Dunes Harakeke. While this report evaluates the quality of education and care for children at the over-threes centre, staff from both services work as a cohesive team to ensure children transition smoothly between the adjoining centres around the time of their third birthday.

Children show a sense of fun and excitement in their activities, learning through play in a safe and nurturing environment of respect and care. The centre philosophy values children as competent, confident learners. A high quality outdoor space has been created based on children's ideas. Creativity, problem solving, self-management and inquiry skills are fostered in the stimulating, well-resourced environment. Literacy and numeracy are promoted in authentic contexts. Te reo me ngā tikanga Māori are naturally woven through the programme.

Teachers effectively notice, recognise and respond to individual strengths, needs and interests. Programme planning and assessment are thorough. This centre values ongoing professional development to keep up to date with current best practice. A spacious new staff training area is nearing completion. Strong relationships with local primary colleagues enhance children's transition to school.

Partnership with families/whānau is valued. Parents have good access to their child's learning stories and photographs online and in attractive profiles. Teachers undertake regular reviews of children's individual learning and development, and offer two formal parent-teacher interviews each year to discuss development and progress. Policies are developed through consultation with parents, providing a sound framework to guide centre operations and shared understanding of expectations.

### Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interest of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.



## Review Priorities

### The Focus of the Review

Before the review, the management of Sand Dunes Quality Early Learning Centre 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 Sand Dunes Quality Early Learning Centre.

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

Since the 2007 ERO review this service has grown and developed into two distinct yet adjoining centres, each with its own licence and both operated by the original owner. This review evaluates the quality of education and care provided by Sand Dunes Quality Early Learning Centre for children aged 3 to 5 years of age. The new Sand Dunes Harakeke caters for the needs of infants and toddlers below three years, but is not the focus for this review.

The 2007 ERO report indicated that high quality interactions were evident, children were happy in their play, and staff welcomed a high level of parent involvement. While there has been some staff turnover since that time, teachers in both centres continue to work together as a collaborative team, winning Porirua City Business Awards for their work in education in the local community in 2007 and 2009. The centre manager also won the individual title of Porirua Young Employee in 2009.

Areas for improvement in the previous ERO report have been addressed satisfactorily. A new

second storey development is nearing completion and will provide staff with an on-site, spacious facility. The centre has recently been relicensed under the 2008 regulations. A new outdoor environment has been recently completed.

## Areas of good performance

High quality education and care is provided for children. This is evidenced through:

- collaborative and effective leadership from the owner and the manager who have a strong focus on continuous improvement. A shared vision and purpose is embedded in team practice and is reflected in the centre philosophy;
- clear, well-structured strategic and annual planning and policies. These documents, developed through consultation with staff and parents, provide a sound framework to guide centre operations;
- value given to ongoing professional development of staff, enhanced by generous release time, planned and informal opportunities for reflection and review, team discussion, visits to other centres and to local schools, mentoring and professional reading;
- sound programme planning and assessment guidelines and a useful step-by-step planning cycle. These guidelines support teachers in their team approach to planning for centre-wide themes, and small group and individual learning experiences. Planning and assessment documents are thorough, easy to follow and reflect up-to-date theory and practice;
- the provision of high quality resources, including an abundance of natural materials, in a well-organised and stimulating environment. Equipment is positioned for ease of access by children. They show ownership over their environment and move seamlessly from the interior to the outside space as they explore. A high quality outdoor area, created through consultation with children, provides a range of levels and areas for play and exploration;
- teachers valuing play as rich learning. They consistently notice, recognise and respond to children's evolving strengths, needs and interests. Teachers use open questioning to guide and extend children's knowledge, attitudes and skills as they explore different resources, equipment and materials. Emphasis is given to developing problem solving, creativity, inquiry and self-management skills;
- strong emphasis on developing children as competent and confident learners in literacy and numeracy. This is enhanced by good lines of communication with primary colleagues that assist children in transition to school;
- te reo Māori naturally integrated through the programme by teachers, including in conversation, waiata, use of poi and rākau, action songs, karakia, routines, displays and

mihi; and

- valuing partnership with families/whānau. The owner, manager and teaching team continue to develop an interactive website that provides useful and relevant information. Parents have access to their child's learning stories and photographs online and in attractive profiles. Teachers undertake regular three-monthly and six-monthly reviews of children's individual learning and development, and offer twice-yearly formal interviews, enabling parents to reflect on their child's achievement and progress.

Children enjoy their time at this centre. They show a sense of fun and excitement in their activities and participation in daily routines. Affirming relationships are evident at all levels, with teachers modelling and promoting warm, nurturing and respectful interactions.

Self review is valued as a tool for continuous improvement. Targeted professional development following the 2007 ERO review resulted in the implementation of the centre's good quality framework for planned in-depth reviews. Overall, a culture of reflective practice continues to be actively promoted.

#### Area for development and review

The owner and manager are both keen to build on existing good self-review practices by posing more focused and specific questions to guide planned, in-depth review.

# National Evaluation Topics

## Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole through its national reports. This information will be used as the basis for long term and systemic educational improvement.

## Literacy Teaching and Learning

When children understand, enjoy, engage with, and use language and symbols they are better able to express their individual identity and become active participants in a literate society. As part of this review, ERO looked at literacy practices, particularly the opportunities provided for children to develop strong literacy learning foundations.

In this service children's literacy learning opportunities included:

- enjoying oral stories and sharing picture books and texts;
- discussing shared experiences and reflecting on special occasions, including family events;
- playing with letters, sounds and words in the environment, with most children recognising a range of letters and associated sounds as well as their name;
- interacting with, and revisiting, pictures, photographs and other culturally significant symbols;
- practising writing using pencil, crayon or pen, water, paint or computer;
- creating or retelling stories using dramatic play, art work or writing;
- using oral and visual literacy to gather information, and engage in entertainment and social interactions;
- contributing ideas to group story writing and enjoying the books and wall displays that teachers create as a result of their activity; and
- giving their opinions and ideas, asking and answering questions and developing skills as a speaker and a listener in group situations.
- Teachers are skilled at maintaining high quality, authentic conversations with children one to one, with small groups and during whole-group mat sessions.

## Management Assurance Onlegal Requirements

Before the review, the staff of Sand Dunes Quality Early Learning Centre completed an ERO Centre Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they have attested that they have 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.

ERO's investigations did not identify any areas of concern.

## Recommendation

ERO and the centre management agreed that:

5.1 the centre will continue to use self review to enhance outcomes for children.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interest of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again within three years.

Kathleen Atkins

National Manager Review Services

Central Region

## About The Centre

Location	Plimmerton, Porirua
Ministry of Education profile number	60064
Type	Education and Care Service
Number licensed for	37 children aged over 2
Roll number	33
Gender composition	Boys 17, Girls 15
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā and other European 31, Māori 1, Chinese 1
Review team on site	March 2010
Date of this report	5 May 2010
Previous ERO reports	Education Review May 2007

## Community Page

5 May 2010

To the Parents and Community of Sand Dunes Quality Early Learning Centre

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Sand Dunes Quality Early Learning Centre.

Sand Dunes Quality Early Learning Centre provides high quality early childhood education and care for children aged over three years in Plimmerton, Porirua. The owner and manager are highly reflective and use self review for continuous improvement.

At the time of the 2007 ERO review this was a mixed-age centre. The owner has now developed two separately licensed services on the original site to better cater for the particular developmental needs of infants and young toddlers in a purpose-built facility, Sand Dunes Harakeke. While this report evaluates the quality of education and care for children at the over-threes centre, staff from both services work as a cohesive team to ensure children transition smoothly between the adjoining centres around the time of their third birthday.

Children show a sense of fun and excitement in their activities, learning through play in a safe and nurturing environment of respect and care. The centre philosophy values children as competent, confident learners. A high quality outdoor space has been created based on children's ideas. Creativity, problem solving, self-management and inquiry skills are fostered in the stimulating, well-resourced environment. Literacy and numeracy are promoted in authentic contexts. Te reo me ngā tikanga Māori are naturally woven through the programme.

Teachers effectively notice, recognise and respond to individual strengths, needs and interests. Programme planning and assessment are thorough. This centre values ongoing professional development to keep up to date with current best practice. A spacious new staff training area is nearing completion. Strong relationships with local primary colleagues enhance children's transition to school.

Partnership with families/whānau is valued. Parents have good access to their child's learning stories and photographs online and in attractive profiles. Teachers undertake regular reviews of children's individual learning and development, and offer two formal parent-teacher interviews each year to discuss development and progress. Policies are developed through consultation with parents, providing a sound framework to guide centre operations and shared understanding of expectations.

### Future Action

ERO is confident that the service is being managed in the interest of the children. Therefore ERO is likely to review the service again within 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

National Manager Review Services

Central Region

## 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 contribute 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.