



**Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School
Pukekohe**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School

Pukekohe

14 October 2015

1 Evaluation of Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School

How well placed is Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School 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

Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School provides very good education and care for children. The centre is located in a renovated bungalow in central Pukekohe and is one of three centres owned and managed by the same long-serving director. All three centres are in close proximity on the same residential street. Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School and Little Pukekos Pre-School both cater for children from birth to four years of age. When children turn four, parents can choose for them to move to Flying Turtles Preschool until they are ready to attend school.

Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School is licensed for 30 children, with a maximum of 10 children under 2 years of age. The centre promotes a mixed-age programme, which supports younger and older children to play and learn together. Younger children also have their own enclosed space that provides them with the option to play and rest in a smaller quiet area. Teachers are responsive to children's home sleeping and eating routines. They provide nutritious morning and afternoon tea for all children, and parents bring healthy food from home for children's lunches.

Most teachers, including the head teacher, have worked together in the centre for some years. They are mostly very experienced and well qualified. Teachers take pride in the presentation and cleanliness of the indoor and outdoor environments, which are spacious, attractive and well resourced.

The centre's philosophy is underpinned by *Te Whariki*, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum. It is based strongly on respecting children as capable, competent learners and parents as first teachers. The philosophy is supported by the theories and practices of Magda Gerber and promotes trust in children to be initiators, explorers, and self learners.

The centre director continues to provide very good governance and management support for all three centres with the aid of a capable centre manager. The centre's 2009 and 2012 ERO reports recognised the positive relationships within the centre, strong partnerships with parents and good child-initiated programmes. The 2012 ERO report noted that the centre's self review and strategic planning needed strengthening. Very good progress has been made in these areas.

The Review Findings

Children are confident and content in their centre environment, settling easily into different areas of play in their own time and at their own pace. The calm, child-focused environment supports children to create meaningful friendships and play well with each other. Teachers communicate effectively with parents and whānau, and engage them as partners in their children's learning. The move to e-portfolios makes the sharing of learning stories with parents more immediate and meaningful. It encourages parents to contribute to their children's learning, and supports teachers as they respond to children's emerging interests, strengths and needs.

As skilled practitioners, teachers notice, recognise and respond effectively to children's care and learning needs. They are gentle, nurturing and affectionate with children, and listen respectfully and carefully to children's ideas and concerns. Babies and toddlers receive very good quality care and learning opportunities. One teacher acts as the primary caregiver for these younger children and she is joined by a different teacher from the centre each week. This good practice ensures that younger children have consistency of care and know all teachers in the centre.

Children's free access to all areas of play and resources is very well managed by teachers. Older and younger children play well together, with older children caring and taking responsibility for their younger friends. Teachers follow children's lead in their learning, moving with children to areas in the centre that appeal, and supporting and extending their individual and emerging interests. They promote children's oral language, encouraging good opportunities for children to express themselves and pose questions. Teachers are continuing to strengthen their use of te reo Māori naturally with children throughout the day, supporting children's familiarity with the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Children's creativity, writing and mathematics are promoted and valued in the context of children's play. A number of animals are included in the centre's attractions, helping to support children's curiosity about and knowledge of the living world. Teachers are also keen to explore how they might increase the inclusion of science experiences in learning programmes. They value and promote meaningful and ongoing improvements so that children's enjoyment in play and learning are continually enhanced.

The head teacher provides strong professional leadership that is focused on promoting child-centred learning. She has high expectations of herself and teachers to reflect on and improve their teaching practices and to ensure that the centre's philosophy is evident in practice. Other aspects of self review are also very well understood and used throughout the centre as a tool for ongoing improvement. Strategic planning is well aligned to a meaningful teacher appraisal process and to teacher professional learning.

The director resources the pre-school generously, enabling managers and teachers to achieve their shared vision of a high performing centre. The management team work collaboratively to promote centre-wide improvements and sustainable practices. This approach includes deliberately recognising and growing teacher strengths, and providing opportunities for them to lead in different ways.

Key Next Steps

The director, centre leaders and ERO agree that using the Ministry of Education resource *Tātaiako - Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners*, would strengthen the teachers' appraisal process. This useful next step would also help the centre to meet the new requirements of the Education Council, further promote success for Māori, and help provide children with access to a stronger bicultural curriculum.

Leaders also recognise that they could reduce the number of centre policies and enhance self-review processes by using indicators of effective practice.

Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School 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 Prickly Hedgehog Pre-School will be in four years.



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14 October 2015