



25 November 2008

## **To the Parents and Community of Lancaster Learning Centre**

This supplementary review evaluates the quality of education and care received by the children and the performance of the centre's management in relation to specific terms of reference.

The Education Review Office [ERO] evaluation of Lancaster Learning Centre follows.

Lancaster Learning Centre provides education and care for children from six months to five years of age. The 2007 ERO report found that relationships in the centre were positive, children interacted well together, and staff monitored children's activities carefully. However, although children had opportunities to learn early numeracy knowledge and te reo and tikanga Māori, the programme was very adult directed. ERO recommended that centre managers seek external support to better align centre practices with current theories about good early childhood education. This ERO review finds that substantial improvements have been made in response to the 2007 report.

The centre manager engaged external advisory support to identify how to improve teaching practices and the programme. The staff have been very involved in professional development and have made significant changes in teaching and learning practices. The programme is now much more child-centred and is appropriately driven by children's interests.

Communication with parents about their children's learning has improved. Illustrated displays and children's portfolios help to keep parents well informed about the programme. Parents contribute to children's learning stories and to centre self-review processes. Centre managers and staff have communicated well with parents about changes in centre practices and the educational theories on which these changes have been based.

The daily timetable is now more conducive to sustained play and to promoting children's independence. Children's activities are not interrupted by morning tea. Centre routines support children to develop self-help and decision-making skills, and are used as opportunities for conversations between children and staff. Mat times, when they occur, are initiated by children and are voluntary.

Teachers have made good progress in developing assessment systems that help them to know about, and cater for, children's strengths and interests. Portfolios contain current information about children's learning. Children and their families regularly access portfolios and children enjoy reading these records of their learning with their

teachers. Teachers are exploring new ways of planning and this report contains suggestions for some possible future directions in programme development.

The centre has used both external evaluation and self review to inform centre operations. Staff are encouraged to identify good practice, reflect on change, and to make suggestions for further improvement. Review of some areas of play has been completed. It would be useful now to continue the review of the environment to ensure that resources are organised in ways that best support the changes in teaching and learning practices.

### **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.

When ERO has reviewed an early childhood centre we encourage management to inform their community of any follow-up action they plan to do. 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>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Ellis', written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth Ellis  
Area Manager  
**for Chief Review Officer**