

	Requires		
Not well placed	further development	Well placed	<b>Very well placed</b>

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Country Kids is very well placed to promote positive learning outcomes for children.

ERO's findings that support this overall judgement are summarised below.

## Background

Country Kids, previously licensed as Old McDonald's Country Kindy, provides education and care for up to 50 children from two years of age to school age. The centre is located in a semi-rural setting adjacent to a farm in Henderson Valley, Auckland. Māori children comprise 23 percent of the roll, which also includes a small group of children with Pacific heritage, and children from other diverse cultural backgrounds.

The centre director works with a head teacher and six other qualified teachers. The teaching team is culturally diverse and has remained stable for many years.

The service's philosophy is underpinned by *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum. It focuses on family, community and the environment, kaitiakitanga and tūrangawaewae. The director and teaching team are committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi. They have a strong focus on fostering cultural responsiveness, and on supporting individual children's unique identity and capability. Environmental sustainability is also a feature of the philosophy.

The 2015 ERO report identified good quality practices that have been sustained. It also identified a number of next steps to improve the quality of the programme, leadership and management practices. These aspects have been addressed well through teachers' internal evaluation and quality professional learning. Since 2015, there have been significant developments in the learning environment and the centre's management approaches.

## The Review Findings

Children are articulate and confident, and engage in meaningful play. They show high levels of social competence, literacy and numeracy skills, and positive attitudes and dispositions for learning. Children have good opportunities to lead their play, explore, create and express themselves in an engaging environment. Mixed-age groups enable children to interact and play with one another and to establish tuakana/teina relationships. There is good provision to support children with additional learning needs.

Teachers are highly effective practitioners. Their collaboration, responsiveness and care for children, foster positive relationships with parents and children. Teachers have good knowledge about children's strengths, interests, and backgrounds. They use this information well to design a curriculum that is responsive to individual learners.

The learning programme reflects the strengths of the farm environment. It maximises the potential for children to explore, and to fully participate in, a variety of learning experiences that are purposeful and enjoyable. Literacy, mathematics, science and technology learning are

skilfully incorporated into children's play. Good processes support children's transition to local schools, and teachers are proactive in strengthening these processes for children.

Previous ERO reports show that teachers' commitment to bicultural practices is an ongoing strength. Mātauranga Māori, tikanga, values and beliefs are meaningfully integrated in the programme. Whānau Māori make a significant contribution to the curriculum. Teachers plan to continue building their capability in te reo me onā tikanga Māori.

Teachers have established strong partnerships with whānau, and value their contributions and aspirations. They use information that parents share about their children to design learning programmes that promote a sense of belonging and celebrate children's cultures. There are good systems and processes for planning, assessment and evaluation. Teachers gather multiple perspectives, and collaborate to plan strategies for enhancing children's learning.

The centre's philosophy is enacted through strong leadership, high expectations and meaningful teaching practices. A clear vision is articulated through the centre's mission statement. Staff have shared understandings about the service's strategic direction. Explicit links are made to *Te Whāriki*, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Internal evaluation is systematic across all service operations. A relevant policy framework guides practices, and policies are regularly reviewed. Systems and processes for managing resources, finance, property and personnel are robust.

Teachers' professional knowledge, ongoing professional learning and internal evaluation help them to sustain high quality practices, and continually improve outcomes for children.

### **Key Next Steps**

The director and teachers have identified high level goals to enhance current practices that include:

- deepening their understanding of mātauranga Māori, and continuing to build their capability in te reo and tikanga Māori
- strengthening support for Pacific families' languages and cultural identities
- exploring ways to deepen partnerships with whānau, and strengthening connections with local schools.

### **Management Assurance on Legal Requirements**

Before the review, the staff and management of Country Kids 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

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Northern Region

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### **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	Henderson, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	10172
Licence type	Education & Care Service
Licensed under	Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008
Number licensed for	50 children aged over 2 years
Service roll	70
Gender composition	Girls 39 Boys 31