



Education Review Office (ERO): Homeschooling background and operational observations

To:	Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date submitted:	20 November 2025	Deadline:	
Security Level:	In-Confidence	Tracking Number:	M25-90
From:	Ruth Shinoda	Drafter:	
Attachments:	Appendix A: Homeschooling regional and ethnic breakdown		

Actions Sought

Addressee

Erica Stanford
Minister of
Education

Action sought

It is recommended that you:

- Note** that ERO has identified issues and concerns from its reviews of homeschooling arrangements.
- Note** that the Ministry can provide policy advice on any of the areas for potential strengthening.

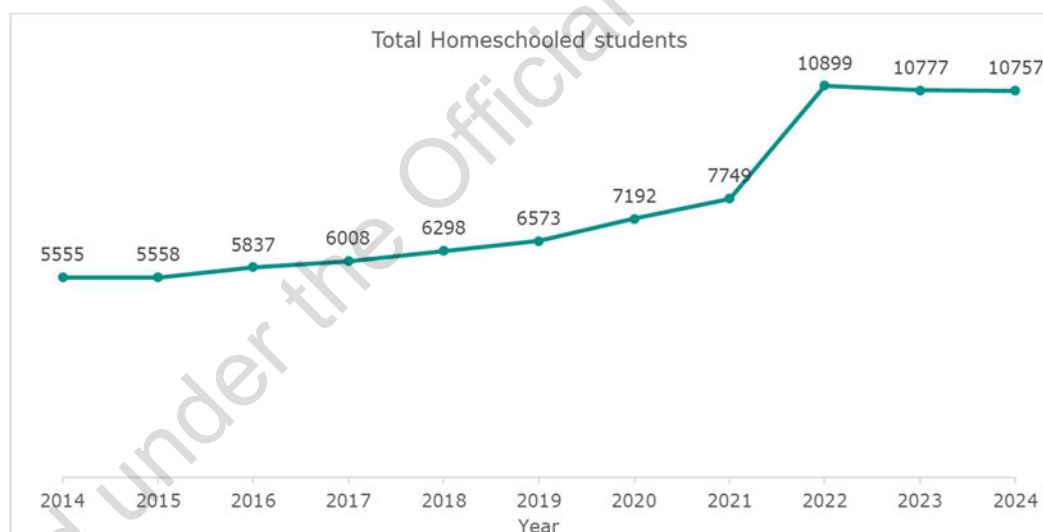
Homeschooling background and operational observations

Purpose

1. You requested a briefing on ERO's experience of how well homeschooling settings are working and if there are areas for improvement.
2. This briefing also outlines options for next steps and possible budget implications.

Background

3. As of 1 July 2024, there were 10,757 homeschooled students in 6,327 families. An annual allowance is paid to families of \$796 for the first child, \$677 for the second, \$557 for the third, and \$398 for subsequent children.
4. The total number of homeschooled students has almost doubled since 2014 (see graph below). This increase began prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and has accelerated since then. Further detail about the regional distribution and ethnic background of homeschooled students is in Appendix A.



5. ERO carried out a survey of home school families in April and May 2022 to find out more about what might be informing parents' decisions to home school and what support home schooling families access. The most common reasons provided for home schooling were that schools did not meet the child's learning needs, children had unhappy experiences at school, health reasons, family circumstances, families wanting to homeschool, and some were prompted by Covid-19 lockdowns.

System settings for homeschooling

6. The Secretary of Education can exempt a student from being enrolled in a registered school under section 38 of the Education and Training Act 2020 (the Act).
7. The Secretary (or a designated officer) must be satisfied that the student:
 - a. is to be taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school; or
 - b. is to be taught at least as regularly and well as in a specialist school or a special service (if the student would otherwise be likely to need special education).
8. When granted, the exemption is essentially in perpetuity, as it expires when the student turns 16, when they are no longer legally required to be enrolled in a registered school. There are no automatic reviews or reapplication requirements.
9. ERO can review homeschooling education either at the discretion of the Chief Review Officer or as requested by the Secretary of Education. ERO's focus is on whether the student is taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school.
10. The table below sets out how ERO's powers differ between schooling and homeschooling.

ERO's powers	Schooling	Homeschooling
Entry	Chief Review Officer (or delegate) can enter school at any time.	Needs the consent of parents before entry. ¹
Reviews	May carry out reviews and must carry out when directed by Ministers., focusing on either general or relating to particular matters .	May carry out reviews and must carry out when directed by Ministers. Must focus on whether the student is taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school .
Reporting	Can publish reports publicly.	Does not publish reports publicly due to privacy considerations.

11. Unlike in registered schools, ERO does not have a mandate to verify that all measures are in place to ensure a child's emotional and physical safety during home schooling, as the duty of care rests with the parent or guardian.

How ERO reviews home schooling

12. In 2009, ERO's funding for home school reviews was removed. ERO now carries out around 10-12 reviews a year on average when concerns are raised by the Ministry or Minister, or when ERO itself is concerned.
13. When reviewing home schooling, we look at the quality of the students' educational programme, and how effectively it promotes the child's learning, engagement,

¹ If ERO does not get consent then we refer to the Ministry, who is able to take action.

progress, and achievement. To establish context, reviewers will also ask about reasons for homeschooling.

14. Our reviewers may use sections of our School Improvement Framework to reach judgements about the homeschooling programme. The framework provides examples of evidence for good quality and effective programmes and practice.
15. In assessing the suitability of the home education arrangement, ERO will take into account any indications that the child's emotional, psychological, or physical safety may be at risk, which could call into question the adequacy of the home-schooling environment.
16. If ERO find an issue with education quality, ERO reports it to the Ministry, which can then choose to revoke their license. If ERO finds an issue with child safety, then ERO reports it to Oranga Tamariki.

Issues ERO is seeing

17. ERO has observed some recurring issues that we are concerned about from the reviews of home schooling that we have carried out.

Granting of exemptions

18. The granting of exemptions in perpetuity creates an issue where there is no visibility of how the curriculum and programming of work is changing to match the educational needs of the learner through the years. Having an appropriate, knowledge-rich curriculum is a key component of high-quality education provision. What this looks like for a new entrant, when an exemption may be first granted, is very different to what that should look like for a student when they move into Year 7, or into Year 9 and beyond. There is no requirement for this to be reassessed at any point. This means that home schooled children may be missing out on the quality education that they should be entitled to.
19. Similarly, the capability of parents to teach to the right level can be limited as the student gets older or if they have special needs. Just as the curriculum should change over time to ensure that a student is making appropriate progress, the capability required to teach that curriculum adequately also shifts. While parents may be well-equipped to support their young children learning at home, this may no longer be the case as the student moves through key transition points and more advanced and specialised curriculum content. Our most recent report on the refreshed English and maths curriculum found that even qualified teachers are not always confident teaching more complex areas of maths.
20. There are no agreed criteria or thresholds to guide decisions about whether a student is being taught at the right level. While a homeschooled student is required to be taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school, what this looks like in practice is open to wide interpretation. Both the Ministry and ERO have operational guidance that at times can be inconsistent with each other. This means that judgement calls are made on a case-by-case basis. There is an opportunity for the Ministry and ERO to work within current settings to clarify guidance.

Monitoring and enforcement

21. ERO is concerned that most homeschooling arrangements are not monitored or reviewed. ERO currently reviews only a very small proportion of homeschooling arrangements, with about 10 reviews undertaken over the roughly 10,000 students being homeschooled. When reviews do occur, they are often not triggered by concerns about educational quality, but by parental conflict or suspected wellbeing concerns. This means that the quality of the education most homeschooled children receive is going unchecked.
22. In addition to homeschooling not being well monitored, no one collects data about the progress of homeschooled students. This means that there is no opportunity to use data to identify any significant issues and take a risk-based approach to review and oversight. Assessment data that provides clear indications of student progress are key measures for maintaining oversight of quality education.
23. Information about homeschool arrangements is not well updated or accessed. Because exemptions are granted in perpetuity, there is little incentive or mechanism to keep contact information up to date. This can make monitoring and enforcement particularly challenging, as parents and students can move anywhere around the country, or overseas, without the system being aware or able to check.
24. The lack of monitoring and paucity of information leads to a potential lack of enforcement. There is little to guide ERO's judgements about what curriculum and education a student should be receiving while being homeschooled, and when issues are identified, they are passed to the Ministry to act on.

Areas you could consider strengthening

25. The Ministry is the policy lead and is best placed to provide advice on options for addressing the issues and concerns identified above, and ERO understands that the Ministry is considering options for improvement. Based on ERO's operational experience, we have provided below some suggested areas that you could consider. Before making any decisions, further advice would be needed to test feasibility and understand broader implications.

Granting of exemptions

26. One thing ERO suggests could improve oversight of the quality of education provided would be considering tightening curriculum requirements before an exemption is granted, for example, by requiring parents to submit education plans, including agreed progressions for different stages of schooling.
27. ERO also suggests that to better enable educational needs to be met as students age, you could consider tightening the granting of exemptions so that they do not last until the student turns 16 (essentially in perpetuity), but need reissuing at age or school milestones on the basis of measurable achievement, progress, and suitable curriculum. This could also involve considering the capability of parents to teach to the right level.

Monitoring and enforcement

28. To provide more consistent oversight of home schooling, you could consider ERO regularly review a sample of homeschooled students. There are options about how this could be done, and this would require additional funding. In addition, you could consider requiring self-reporting with evidence about achievement and progress at key transition points (one year in, at transition to Year 7, at transition to qualifications), that would better enable risk-based decisions and selective monitoring /assurance visits.
29. Another way to provide a level of support and oversight for homeschooled students could be to consider requiring them to register with one of the associations that support homeschooling. This would be a significant change, and the relative benefits and costs of this option would need to be carefully considered. This could take different forms, depending on the level of oversight you wanted to achieve. It could range from ensuring that contact details and information are kept up to date through to checking the adequacy of the curriculum used and capability to teach to it, or a requirement for homeschoolers to report progress. To add additional government oversight, ERO could then have a role in reviewing these associations. This is the model ERO uses for Early Childhood Education Governing Organisations.

Next steps

30. Should you wish to progress further policy work on these options, we can work with the Ministry, who is your policy lead, to support you to properly consider the costs and benefits of these options. Reviewing, monitoring or additional steps for granting exemptions will require funding.

Recommendations

31. It is recommended that you:
 - a) **Note** that ERO has identified issues and concerns from its reviews of homeschooling arrangements. **Noted**
 - b) **Note** that the Ministry can provide policy advice on any of the areas for potential strengthening **Noted**



Ruth Shinoda
Deputy Chief Executive

Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

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Appendix A: Homeschooling regional and ethnic breakdown

Table 1: Regions by the number of homeschooled students (as held by MoE at July 2024)

Regional Council	Number of students
Northland Region	952
Auckland Region	2,441
Waikato Region	1,199
Bay of Plenty Region	921
Gisborne Region	74
Hawke's Bay Region	362
Taranaki Region	340
Manawatū-Whanganui Region	612
Wellington Region	743
Tasman Region	366
Nelson Region	147
Marlborough Region	154
West Coast Region	253
Canterbury Region	1,492
Otago Region	373
Southland Region	257
Unknown	71
Total	10,757

Table 2: Ethnic breakdown of homeschooled students

Ethnicity	Proportion of Homeschool population	Proportion of total school population
European/Pākehā	71.1%	41.8%
Māori	15.7%	10%
Pacific	3.3%	10%
Asian	3%	19.9%



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17 December 2025

Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

Kia ora Minister

Subject: Gloriavale Homeschool Review – Provisional Findings (Updated 15 December 2025)

The Education Review Office (ERO) has undertaken a special review of homeschooling within the Gloriavale community, following a request from the Secretary for Education. Between 20 October and 14 November 2025, ERO reviewed the provision of homeschooling education of 103 children from 28 families who were granted certificates of homeschooling exemptions by the Ministry of Education.

The review of each child's exemption is currently following due process. Unconfirmed reports have been sent to parents, they have 10 days to respond to errors of fact or provide additional information that might change ERO's judgment about provision. In addition to the standard process, ERO has sent the evidentiary files and an explanatory note to parents.

To carry out this review, we considered whether each child is taught as regularly and as well as in a registered school, required under the Education and Training Act 2020. This involved examining the programme delivered against what was approved in the exemption application, the breadth and depth of the curriculum, and the approaches used to assess learning. We looked for evidence of progress and achievement and considered whether the learning environment supported effective teaching and learning. These judgements were informed by documentation provided by families, interviews, observations, and other evidence gathered during the review period.

ERO's provisional view is that children are not being taught as regularly and as well as in a registered school. Weak assessment practices prevent reliable evaluation of progress and achievement, and narrowed curricula constrain future pathways. Overcrowded hostel environments and housing instability present significant safety and wellbeing risks. Access to specialist learning support is limited, and careers education is largely absent. These concerns are systemic and have implications for both educational outcomes and child safety.

This letter provides a summary of ERO's provisional findings and key concerns identified during the review

Scope of Review

Between 20 October and 14 November 2025, ERO reviewed 103 children from 29 families who met the eligibility criteria of being aged from six years until their sixteenth birthday, holding current exemptions, and living in the Gloriavale region while attending community events. This review followed a Ministry of Education request to review 92 children from 37 families. ERO's scoping identified 103 children, including 79 previously reviewed in 2024, 25 new to

homeschooling, and two families who had begun homeschooling since the last review. Some children have since enrolled in the Gloriavale Private School either permanently or on a ten-week trial, and some previously reviewed children have turned sixteen and no longer fit the criteria for homeschool reviews. New exemption applications have also been approved.

The duration of homeschooling ranged from less than six months to over two and a half years, with a significant proportion homeschooling for between eighteen and twenty-four months. Families most commonly cited wanting a successful education for their children, keeping them safe, and concerns about the performance and future of Gloriavale School as reasons for homeschooling.

Curriculum and Assessment

The curriculum remains narrow, typically limited to English, mathematics, social studies, and science. Exposure to health, physical education, technology, the arts, languages and careers education is minimal. Many students complete only one commercial course booklet per term, and learning beyond formal booklets such as cooking, gardening, and crafts lacks clarity about intended outcomes or progression. While some families have adopted new programmes such as Abeka and the Institute for Excellence in Writing, the dominant curricula remain Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) and The Good and The Beautiful. Parents increasingly recognise that dense text in some programmes, particularly mathematics and science, is not working for some children.

Assessment practices are inadequate. The overall focus is on task completion and recall-type tests requiring eighty percent mastery, which does not provide meaningful measures of progress or achievement. ERO could not verify progress and achievement for more than half of the children reviewed and found that none were achieving at expected levels in a way that could be reliably measured. No programme was judged effective in meeting learning needs, and there was no evidence that assessment and planning information was used to monitor progress or inform future learning. Achievement information did not validly show progress over time. Writing was a particular area of concern. Samples were often transactional, confused with handwriting, and frequently transcribed or typed by parents, limiting authentication. While some families have begun using Progressive Achievement Tests and STAR assessments in aspects of English and mathematics, ERO could not verify test administration conditions or how results were used to adjust teaching and therefore could not rely on these data as robust evidence.

Learning Support

Learning support needs have increased significantly since the previous review. Of the 103 children observed, twenty-six were identified with possible needs: sixteen with dyslexic tendencies, 9(2)(a) behind in learning or behaviour, 9(2)(a) with autism spectrum disorder, 9(2)(a). This represents an increase from eighteen children in 2024. Despite this rise, only 9(2)(a) children have received formal diagnoses since the last review, with cost frequently cited as a barrier to accessing professional assessment and intervention.

ERO observed that many children with suspected learning difficulties are not receiving targeted support. Families expressed concern about the lack of specialist services and noted that private provision is often unaffordable. There is also evidence of reluctance among some families to request additional resources from the community fund, which further limits access to help. The absence of reliable assessment information compounds these challenges, making it difficult to identify needs early or monitor progress effectively. Concerns initially noted for eight- to nine-year-olds now extend to younger children from age six, with low oral language, weak writing skills, and fragile reading confidence by ages eight and nine. Without systematic intervention, these gaps risk becoming entrenched and will have long-term implications for educational outcomes.

Learning Environment and Safety

Learning environments were frequently unsuitable. More than half of the children were learning in crowded settings, most commonly in hostel accommodation where rooms served multiple purposes for sleeping, dining, and schooling. Ten hostel families lacked ready access to drinking water and toilets. In one instance, [REDACTED] families comprising eighteen people shared a single toilet and a shower down a corridor. Overcrowding was compounded by infants, preschoolers, and older teenagers being at home during learning times. Age mixing raised concerns in a small number of homes where space constraints limited separation.

Safety concerns were prominent. The community reviewed its Child Protection Policy on 20 October 2025, and each family had a copy in their homeschool folder. Despite this, several families reported that they did not feel their children were safe and considered the policy and processes inadequate in practice. Some exempt learners were on Safety Action Plans requiring constant supervision, which is challenging in large family settings or shared environments. Families did not always know who in their proximity was subject to a plan, citing confidentiality, though many were aware of arrangements on their hostel floor. The positioning of hostel families with young children next to those subject to a plan, coupled with shared facilities and limited access to drinking water, intensified risk. Older students could generally state the policy and identify the team responsible for responding to concerns, but home education about physical and emotional safety appeared minimal and focused largely on fire drills.

Housing Instability

Housing instability further undermined learning continuity and wellbeing. Thirteen of the twenty-eight homeschool families had moved in the past twelve months, including eight of the eighteen hostel families and five families in standalone homes. Movement between accommodations created disruption and variability in available learning spaces and resources.

Younger Learners

Concerns identified in 2024 for eight- to nine-year-olds now extend to children from age six. A global finding is that younger children have a slower start to formal education compared to peers in registered schools. Many do not benefit from structured approaches that accelerate early literacy and mathematics learning. ERO observed low levels of oral language development and limited writing skills, with some children struggling to form letters or write independently. Reading confidence is fragile by ages eight and nine, and foundational numeracy skills are often underdeveloped. Parents reported that early learning is largely informal and integrated into family life, such as cooking or gardening, rather than following a systematic programme. While these activities provide practical experiences, they lack clear learning intentions and progression. The absence of targeted strategies for phonics, vocabulary development, and number sense means that gaps in foundational learning are not addressed early, increasing the risk of cumulative disadvantage as children move into later stages of education.

Careers Education and Pathways

Careers education is largely absent. Senior secondary and tertiary pathways remain restricted, and vocational choices are commonly prescribed by community expectations. Provision does not extend beyond Year 10, further limiting pathways for senior students. ERO observed that some older teenage female family members, while continuing education beyond age sixteen, remained primarily at home assisting their mothers with childcare, cooking, and other household responsibilities. Although Home-school exemption expires when the person turns 16 (refer section 38(7)), these patterns do further substantiate our concerns about direction-setting and gender bias in subject choices and opportunities for younger students across community schooling provision.

Provisional Assurance Position

ERO's provisional view is that exempted children are not being taught as regularly and as well as in a registered school. Weak assessment practice prevents reliable evaluation of progress and achievement. Narrowed curricula constrain future pathways. Overcrowded hostel environments and housing instability present significant safety and wellbeing risks. Access to specialist learning support is limited, and careers education is largely absent.

Next Steps

Following confirmation of each individual report, we will send these to the Secretary for Education, alongside a final summary report. We will update you at this time.

Nāku noa, nā



Ruth Shinoda
Acting Chief Executive/Chief Review Office

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



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17 December 2025

Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

Kia ora Minister

Home schooling concerns

I am writing to outline my concerns regarding the current legislative framework for home schooling. The number of home schooled students has almost doubled since 2014, to about 10,000 in 2024. ERO reviews a very small number of these arrangements, approximately 10-12 every year (less than 1% of total home schooled students). From those reviews, ERO has observed over the past years that the current regulatory and operational settings are not ensuring an appropriate and high-quality curriculum and teaching approach, and most home schooling arrangements go unchecked for long periods of time.

ERO has recently completed a number of reviews of home schooling arrangements relating to the Gloriavale community. These reviews have highlighted the operational reality of the risks we have outlined in earlier advice to you (M25-90 refers) – both in relation to the quality of education that these students are receiving, and child safety. The outcomes from these reviews, combined with the significant increase in home schooled students, have prompted me to alert you to my increasing concerns.

ERO has few levers to respond to this issue directly. Whilst our legislation enables us to review home schooling, our funding for reviewing home schooling arrangements was removed in 2009, and since then we have undertaken a very small number of reviews either in response to a concern from yourself, the Secretary of Education, or where ERO has a concern. Even with funding, the increased scale of home schooling, reviewing home schooling for 10,000 students make regular review operationally challenging.

I encourage you to discuss and seek advice from the Ministry of Education on regulatory options for strengthening the approval and oversight of home schooling arrangements. The granting of exemptions in perpetuity creates an issue where there is no visibility of how the curriculum and teaching approach is changing to match the educational needs of the learner through the years. Even with greater resource available, reviewing more arrangements to identify issues may not be as effective as changing the current regulatory settings in driving quality outcomes for these students, and supporting children to be safe in their learning environment.

Based on what ERO has seen operationally, tightening these arrangements could include requiring education plans with clear progressions before exemptions are granted, introducing milestone-based reassessment of exemptions linked to achievement and curriculum adequacy, or exploring registration with home schooling associations to maintain up-to-date information and provide a framework for oversight. The Ministry of Education will be able to provide advice on the most effective regulatory options.

We remain available to support you and the Ministry in developing advice on these matters and to provide further operational insights as needed. In the interim we will continue to review any home schooling settings where you, the Secretary of Education, or ERO have serious concerns.

Ngā mihi nui,



Ruth Shinoda
Acting Chief Executive/ Chief Review Officer

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Information Update: Gloriavale Homeschooling Review – Final Findings and Assurance

To:	Hon. Erica Stanford, Minister of Education		
Date submitted:	10 March 2026	Deadline:	16 March 2026
Security Level:	In-Confidence	Tracking Number:	M26-17
From:	Ruth Shinoda	Drafter:	
Attachments:	Appendix A: Homeschooling Review Framework		

Purpose

This update provides you with ERO's final findings following completion of the 2025 reviews of homeschooling provision for families associated with the Gloriavale community. This update confirms ERO's final findings following the Chief Review Officer's letter to you on 17 December 2025, which outlined ERO's provisional findings and assurance position.

Background

In September 2025, the Secretary of Education wrote to the Chief Review Officer raising concerns about the quality of homeschooling provision for families associated with the Gloriavale community. In particular, the Secretary was concerned about whether the children were taught at least as regularly and as well as in a registered school.

Subsequently, the Chief Review Officer exercised his statutory authority under section 466(a) of the Education and Training Act 2020 to commission reviews of all individual homeschooling provision within the Gloriavale community.

Between 20 October and 14 November 2025, ERO reviewed the homeschooling provision for 103 children from 28 families holding current certificates of exemption issued by the Ministry of Education.

The reviews examined whether each exempted child was being taught at least as regularly and as well as in a registered school, as required by section 38 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

Judgements were informed by documentation provided by families, interviews, observations, and other evidence gathered during the review period. ERO considered patterns of learning

provision over time (“at least as regularly”) and the overall quality and sufficiency of provision (“and as well as”) through curriculum, assessment information, evidence of progress and achievement, and the learning environment.

Review process, moderation, and due process

Individual child-level reviews were conducted in accordance with ERO’s standard homeschool review processes. For each child, this included onsite evidence gathering, the preparation and issuing of unconfirmed reports, and clear opportunities for families to respond, correct errors of fact, and provide additional information that could materially affect judgements.

Response timeframes were extended where appropriate. All responses received from families were carefully considered alongside the full evidentiary record before final judgements were confirmed.

Judgements were subject to internal moderation and quality assurance, including peer review and senior oversight, to ensure consistency, robustness, and adherence to statutory requirements. Findings are based on the totality of evidence available for each child and were not predetermined.

Following legal correspondence challenging the reviews, I also commissioned an independent external investigation under ERO’s complaints policy and internal governance arrangements. That investigation examined the statutory authority to commission the reviews, the purpose and scope of the review, notice and opportunities for participation, due process and disclosure, application of the statutory test, and moderation and quality assurance processes.

The investigation found that the reviews were lawfully commissioned, that families were provided with adequate notice and opportunities to respond, and that ERO exceeded standard natural justice requirements through proactive disclosure of evidence. It also found that judgements were evidence based, moderated, and not predetermined.

Following legal correspondence, I have also sought and received assurance about reviewer capability and skill mix.

Final educational findings

The findings finalise the provisional findings outlined in December, following completion of due process, moderation, and consideration of family responses.

The findings are set out in an overview below. The Secretary has received a summary table for each child which sets out the judgment against each domain and the evidence that supports it and the individual reports for each child. Individual reports have been sent to each family today (10 March). ERO does not publish homeschool reports to protect the child’s identity.

Of the 103 children’s home school provisions reviewed, 96 were judged as not being taught at least as regularly and as well as in a registered school. The remaining seven children have been classified as too early to judge due to exemptions being granted recently (within 3-4 months).

The table below summarises findings across the key domains for the 96 children for whom sufficient evidence was available to make judgements. The overall “as well as” judgement is derived from assessments across four domains: curriculum, assessment, progress and achievement, and learning environment. Education provision must be assessed as sufficient across all four domains to be judged sufficient overall.

Component	Findings post families’ response and moderation
As regularly as	89 not sufficient 7 sufficient
As well as	96 not sufficient
Curriculum	96 not sufficient
Assessment	92 not sufficient 4 sufficient
Progress and achievement	89 not sufficient 7 sufficient
Learning environment	33 not sufficient 58 sufficient 5* not determined

*For the 5 students with Learning Environment judgements not determined, other domains were not sufficient and therefore, overall, they did not meet the threshold for as regularly or as well as.

Areas of concern

Where the home school provision was judged not sufficient there were common issues across home schools which are set out below.

At least as regularly

Across the cohort, learning provision often did not demonstrate sufficient regularity, frequency, or consistency to support sustained learning over time. Learning was frequently disrupted by competing household demands and caregiving responsibilities. Instruction was often intermittent rather than sustained, with limited evidence of consistent daily engagement across core learning areas.

As well as

Curriculum

For nearly all children, curriculum provision was limited in breadth and depth. Curriculum was often lacking clear learning intentions, structured progression, or alignment with curriculum expectations. There was often limited breadth in terms of subjects taught. Evidence showed repeated or shared topics across children of different ages.

Assessment

For most children assessment practices were insufficient to provide reliable information about learning. Assessment largely focused on task completion and recall based testing rather than tracking progress over time. While ERO does not expect norm referenced assessment in homeschooling contexts, in many cases, assessment evidence provided was at variance with children's work samples or was not used to inform learning provision or improvement.

Progress and achievement

For most children the evidence did not demonstrate sustained progress or achievement over time. Writing and early literacy were particular areas of concern, especially for younger learners.

Learning environments

For more than a third of children learning environments did not allow effective and sustained learning. Children were learning in overcrowded spaces shared for sleeping, eating, and schooling and access to learning spaces was limited. Some learning environments did not allow for supervision of learning.

Safety and wellbeing concerns were also evident, particularly where children were learning in close proximity to individuals subject to Safety Action Plans and where environmental conditions limited effective supervision and risk management. I wrote to the Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki in December to report these concerns.

Review of the findings

To provide additional assurance of the robustness of the findings ERO has taken the following actions:

- Review and refinement of the homeschooling review rubric to ensure alignment with ERO's evaluative approach and the School Improvement Framework, while remaining specific to the statutory context of homeschooling so that the expectations are reasonable for a home school (**Appendix A**).
- Senior leadership review of Gloriavale homeschooling folders at the pre-confirmed report stage, focused on how evidence was analysed and applied to the statutory tests.
- Additional independent scrutiny by an external reviewer with specialist expertise in homeschooling, provided further assurance about evidence interpretation and consistency of judgement across 28 children's files (one child per family).
- Further sampled moderation of 10 children's files including some of those who sat at the threshold between sufficient and not sufficient, undertaken by an independent consultant from Te Amokura.
- Production of individual summary tables for each child, revisiting component findings following families' responses and further review, with active QA oversight.



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Next steps

The Secretary will now consider whether there any exemption certificates that need to be revoked based on ERO's findings.

These reviews have also highlighted recurring issues that ERO is observing in homeschooling and whether the current accountability system for homeschooling is adequate. In November we briefed you on these concerns [M25-90] and we are currently working closely with the Ministry of Education on areas for potential strengthening. [REDACTED]

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Shinoda'.

Ruth Shinoda
Chief Executive

Hon Erica Stanford
Minister of Education

___/___/___

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