

# ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Liberty Montessori

Profile Number: 40334

Location: Tauranga

## 1 ERO's judgement of Liberty Montessori is as follows:

| Domains: Ngā Akatoro   | Below the threshold for quality |                 | Above the threshold for quality |           |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| The learner and their learning<br>He Whāriki Motuhake  | Improvement required            | Working towards | Embedded                        | Excelling |
| Collaborative professional learning and development builds knowledge and capability<br>Whakangungu Ngaio | Improvement required            | Working towards | Embedded                        | Excelling |
| Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement<br>Kaihautū   | Improvement required            | Working towards | Embedded                        | Excelling |
| Stewardship through effective governance and management<br>Te Whakaruruhau                               | Improvement required            | Working towards | Embedded                        | Excelling |

*For an explanation of the judgement terms used and of the evaluation process please refer to the last page of this report. These judgements are based on the evidence provided to ERO during the evaluation.*

Children's health and safety

Improvement required

Taking reasonable steps

## 2 ERO's Judgements

[Akarangi | Quality Evaluations](#) evaluate the extent to which early childhood services have the learning and organisational conditions to support equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. [Te Ara Poutama Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most](#) and [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) Improvement Framework \(teacher led services\)](#) are the basis for making judgements about the quality of the service in achieving equity and excellence for all learners. Evaluations for improvement | Ngā Aronga Whai Hua is integrated across all of the above domains.

## 3 About the Service

Liberty Montessori is a privately owned service managed by the owner and deputy principal. The philosophy is underpinned by Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum and the insights of Maria Montessori (that prioritises a child-centred approach to learning and nurturing of children's independence and individuality). The service values the whakatauki "te ara o te aroha" – the way of love, to guide a philosophy of wairua, connections with family, devotion to individuality and modelling of grace and courtesy. Children enrolled are from diverse cultures, including Māori and Pacific.

## 4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's previous report in 2022 identified a key next step relating to continuing to develop a service philosophy and local curriculum based on priorities for learning that matter to children, families, teachers and the community. Significant progress has been made to implement a revised philosophy that reflects Te Whāriki and Montessori approaches. Development of a local curriculum has been well-supported by the service's involvement in the local Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning, as well as increased connections with hapū and iwi Māori.

A second key next step was to increase opportunities for parents and whānau to become more involved in their child's learning at the service. Some progress has been made towards this priority through gathering parents' goals and aspiration for their child's learning.

## 5 Learning Conditions

### The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

The service's philosophy is clearly evident within a curriculum that suitably blends Montessori approaches with a focus on the learning outcomes in Te Whāriki.

- Intentional strategies are used by teachers to foster children's curiosity through supporting their independence and decision-making as learners. Teachers' assessment of children's dispositions and working theories about the world show children's progress and learning over time.
- The service has developed partnerships with parents and whānau that focus on children's learning. Children with additional learning needs are very well supported.
- There is a wide range of resourcing and learning experiences available that promotes children's choice and exploration. Children demonstrate leadership in using te reo Māori and incorporating aspects of tikanga Māori as they participate in the service's daily routines.

### Collaborative professional learning and development builds knowledge and capability | Whakangungu Ngaio

Leaders are working towards creating conditions that build teachers' professional knowledge and understanding to implement a responsive curriculum.

- Professional growth cycles are in place and support teachers to inquire into the effectiveness of their practice. This is providing opportunities for teachers and leaders to build their professional knowledge.
- While regular professional learning opportunities are provided for teachers, there is variability of information to show that changes are made to teachers' practice as a result of new learning.
- Teachers use te reo Māori and integrate tikanga Māori in their interactions with children. Developing cultural knowledge and understandings that respond to the diverse backgrounds of children and families is an ongoing area for development.

## 6 Organisational conditions

### Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders have implemented processes and practices that are beginning to support improvements to teacher practices.

- Leaders work collaboratively with teachers to enact the service's vision and Montessori philosophy. They continue to build relational trust within the team.
- A systematic process for internal evaluation is in place with some positive shifts made since ERO's previous review. Leaders and teachers are not yet consistently making sense of the information gathered to identify actions for improvement.
- Internal evaluation is not yet used as a tool to evaluate the impact of improved teaching practices on the learning of individuals and groups of children.

### Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

Those responsible for governance and management have embedded systems and practices that focus on improved provision for children.

- A useful framework of policy review guides policies and practices.
- Respectful relationships with parents are maintained and leaders work collaboratively with external agencies. Children's learning and wellbeing are at the core of decision-making, particularly in ensuring sufficient learning resources are available for children.
- An ongoing commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and collaboration with whānau Māori, kaumatua and the local Kāhui Ako is evident.

## 7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Liberty Montessori completed and *ERO 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 system for managing the following areas that have a potentially high impact on children's health and safety:

- emotional safety (including positive guidance and child protection)
- physical safety (including supervision; sleep procedures; accidents; medication; excursion policies and procedures)
- suitable staffing (safety checking of staff, ratios)
- relevant evacuation procedures and practices.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.

## 8 Where to next for improvement?

Liberty Montessori will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Deepen teachers' and leaders' collective understanding of how to document children's learning in relation to the valued learning outcomes in Te Whāriki.
- Further grow teachers' and leaders' knowledge of how to use internal evaluation as a tool to evaluate the impact of improved teaching practices on the learning of individuals and groups of children.

### Activities undertaken by the evaluation team

- Pre-visit contact with the service provider/manager.
- Reading documentation and records of children's learning and development.
- Scanning the learning environment and resources.
- Observations of interactions and teaching practice while onsite.
- Meetings and / or conversations with leaders and teachers.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

[Further information about how ERO evaluates early childhood services is available here.](#)



Patricia Davey  
Director of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

4 October 2024

## 9 Information About the Service

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Service Type   | Education and care service  |
| Number licenced for  | 47 children, including up to 9 aged under 2   |
| Percentage of qualified teachers   | 80-99%  |
| Ethnic composition<br><i>Using rounded percentages</i>   | Māori 6%, NZ European/Pākehā 55%, Indian 13%, South African 9%, other ethnic groups 17% |
| Service roll   | 46  |
| Review team on site  | July 2024   |
| Date of this report  | 4 October 2024  |
| Most recent ERO report (s)<br>These are available at<br><a href="http://www.ero.govt.nz">www.ero.govt.nz</a> | Akanuku   Assurance Review, October 2022  |

### Description around ERO's judgement terms

ERO's judgements are based on *Te Ara Poutama* and the *Early Childhood Education Improvement Framework (teacher led services)*.

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
|                      | <b>Above the threshold for quality</b>  |
| Excelling            | The service is excelling in the learning and organisation to support high quality education and care for children   |
| Embedded             | The service has embedded its learning and organisational conditions to support ongoing improvement to the quality of education and care for children.             |
|                      | <b>Below the threshold for quality</b>  |
| Working towards      | The service is working towards establishing the learning and organisational conditions to support improvements in the quality of education and care for children. |
| Improvement required | The service has not yet developed the learning and organisational conditions to support quality education and care for children.                                  |