



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Totara Hill Montessori

Profile Number: 20064

Location: Matakana, Auckland

1 ERO’s judgement of Totara Hill Montessori is as follows:

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

Totara Hill Montessori is privately owned. The owner who is a registered teacher is responsible for governance and management with the support of a lead teacher. There are six qualified teachers and two unqualified staff, including an administrator. A positive working environment has resulted in a low turnover of staff.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's 2021 report identified that bicultural practices could be enriched by deepening teachers' and children's knowledge and understanding of historical connections in the local area. The service has made very good progress in this area. ERO also identified that evaluating the impact of improvement actions on outcomes for children was an area to enhance. Some progress has been made relating to how well evaluation is used to identify improvements that have been made to curriculum and operational practices.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children have equitable opportunities to learn through a rich curriculum that reflects the breadth and depth of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

- Learning outcomes for children are embedded in assessment records. The service has a range of evidence that clearly shows information about children's developing capabilities and the opportunities children have to re-visit their learning.
- The service is well engaged in learning-focused partnerships with parents. Parents contribute to the curriculum and their aspirations for their child's learning are very well used by teachers to inform curriculum design and planning.
- Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori is authentically and purposefully integrated as part of a localised curriculum. The languages and cultures of children and their whānau, including sign language, are valued and highly evident in teaching practices and the learning environment.

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

Teachers and leaders demonstrate a continued focus on improvement that enables them to enhance their knowledge and expertise and implement a rich curriculum for all children.

- The cultural competencies and effective practices of leaders and teachers contribute to the provision of a responsive and inclusive curriculum for all children.
- Teachers continue to deliberately build their knowledge and expertise through a range of relevant professional learning opportunities. Highly reflective teachers and leaders regularly discuss what is working well and then self-identify areas for further growth.
- A well-established professional growth cycle for staff shows how leaders affirm and validate teachers' practices. There is lesser information to show that leaders provide explicit and constructive feedback that helps teachers to think about the impact of their improved practices on children's learning.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders and teachers work collaboratively to sustain high quality teaching and curriculum practices.

- There are a range of ways provided for whānau Māori to voice their views, be heard and to contribute to decision-making.
- High levels of relational trust amongst staff enable collaboration. Leaders and teachers work closely together to implement the service's vision, philosophy and to progress improvement goals.
- Leaders provide ongoing opportunities for individual teachers to take responsibility for leadership of aspects of the curriculum.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

Those responsible for governance intentionally allocate resources in ways that clearly align with the service's philosophy, vision and improvement goals.

- A positive working environment facilitates low staff turnover and strongly contributes to sustained, high-quality relationships between children, families, teachers and leaders.
- Those responsible for governance deliberately prioritise children's sense of security and belonging in policies, procedures and decision-making.
- A strategic plan provides clear long-term guidance that aligns closely with the service's vision and contributes to improved operations and curriculum provision. While improvement goals, professional growth cycles and internal evaluation processes are monitored very well, these do not yet noticeably evaluate the extent to which changes made have impacted positively on children's learning outcomes.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Totara Hill Montessori completed an *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?


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

- Revisit their indicators and look at what matters most to their context, using these relevant indicators to measure success/effectiveness of teaching and learning.

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)

7 November 2024

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	28 children over the age of 2 years old
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 3%; NZ European/Pākehā 91%
Service roll	32
Review team on site	September 2024
Date of this report	7 November 2024
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, February 2021; Education Review, June 2016

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)*.

	Above the threshold for quality
Excelling	The service is excelling in the learning and organisational conditions 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.
	Below the threshold for quality
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.