

# ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

**Early Childhood Service Name:** Fountain City Montessori

**Profile Number:** 46977

**Location:** Claudelands, Hamilton

1 ERO's judgement of Fountain City 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

Fountain City Montessori is one of two early childhood services under the same ownership. The service reflects a Montessori approach to learning that values children's self-directed and hands on learning. The service's philosophy values of grace, courtesy and respect are evident across the three age-based rooms. Older children in Young Community and Casa rooms share an outdoor playground. Since the ERO's previous report, there have been significant changes in staff and in the leadership structure.

## 4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The service addressed areas of non-compliance identified in ERO's Akanuku | Assurance Review report in 2023. The service has maintained compliance with regulatory requirements.

## 5 Learning Conditions

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

Children experience a curriculum that reflects the Montessori approach to teaching and learning and aspects of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

- Infants and toddlers experience predictable routines in a calm, unhurried environment that helps build their sense of security. Current resourcing does not sufficiently provide for complex learning across a range of experiences for children in this age group.
- Children's independence and self-help skills are promoted through the Montessori learning experiences and routines. There are some effective teaching strategies used to support children's developing social competence, however there is variability in how well these are implemented.
- Children with additional learning needs are well supported in an inclusive environment where they play and learn alongside their peers, supported by partnerships between teachers, whānau and external agencies.

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

Teacher capability and knowledge is variable to be able to design and implement a responsive curriculum.

- Teachers and leaders have varied understanding and knowledge of the theories that underpin *Te Whāriki*. A stronger focus on the valued learning outcomes and the ways children learn is required to be able to implement a responsive curriculum for all children.
- Professional growth cycles and mentoring systems are in place. Whilst these reflect some new learning, they are yet to consider the impact of this learning on outcomes for children.
- A recent focus on growing partnerships with parents is supporting individual planning for children. Where aspirations are collected, these are well responded to within assessment information and children's progress toward these are evident.

## 6 Organisational conditions

### Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders are working towards establishing conditions that enable collaboration for improvement to meet the service's plans for improvement.

- Internal evaluation and self-review practices and processes identify some change. However, these are yet to show the outcomes and impacts for individuals and groups of children over time.
- Quality monitoring systems for compliance and teaching practices are required to determine the effectiveness and robustness of service operations and teaching practices.
- Relational trust between leaders, teachers, whānau, children and external agencies promote positive partnerships. New leaders are supported by the pedagogical leader to implement systems and practises.

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

Those responsible for governance clearly prioritise a Montessori philosophy in resourcing and decision making.

- A regular system of review is in place for compliance. Expectations for curriculum and teaching practices are yet to be monitored.
- Since the previous review, pedagogical leadership is now in place and management is now distributed to three people across leadership and management areas. The provisions of work life balance for leaders and teachers support their health and well-being.
- Networked relationships are in place to support the needs of diverse learners.

## 7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Fountain City 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?

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

- Increase the resources and opportunities for younger learners that includes increasing complexity of play and a range of experiences indoors and out.
- Deepen leader and teacher knowledge and understanding of the theories underpinning *Te Whāriki*, including increasing their understanding of children's developing social competencies to be able to better respond to the different ways children learn.
- Implement quality monitoring systems to ensure quality teaching processes and practices, and regulatory compliance is maintained over time.

### 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  
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23 December 2024

## 9 Information About the Service

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Service Type   | Education and care service   |
| Number licenced for  | 95 children, including up to 20 aged under 2   |
| Percentage of qualified teachers   | 80-99%   |
| Ethnic composition<br><i>Using rounded percentages</i>   | Māori 10%; NZ European/Pakeha 28%; Pacific 2%, Indian 26%, Philipino 12% Other ethnicities 22% |
| Service roll   | 58   |
| Review team on site  | September 2024   |
| Date of this report  | 23 December 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, January 2023; Akanuku   Assurance Review, June 2021                |

### 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.                                  |