



# ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Rural Scholars Early Learning Centre

Profile Number: 70170

Location: Waimate

1 ERO's judgement of Rural Scholars Early Learning Centre is as follows:

Domains: Ngā Akatoro	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
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

At Rural Scholars Early Learning Centre, the owner is responsible for the governance of the service and works closely with two co-managers. The centre managers oversee day-to-day operations and work collaboratively with the wider teaching team. Connections with the local community, families and animals are key aspects that demonstrate the centre's core values of respect, responsibility and empathy.

## 4 Progress since the previous ERO report

There has been significant progress made in addressing the improvement actions in ERO's 2021 report. Centre leaders and teachers have had a deliberate and successful approach to increasing the visibility of the learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, in individual planning and assessment and the environment. Targeted professional development has built leaders' capability in further refinement of a systematic approach to evaluation. This includes developing an evaluative focus and use of valid indicators to guide the evaluation.

## 5 Learning Conditions

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

Children experience a rich, broad curriculum where individual cultures, languages and identities are valued and celebrated.

- The centre's core values of responsibility, respect and empathy are woven into the curriculum. Respectful relationships foster the development of learning-focused partnerships with parents to inform a responsive and meaningful curriculum.
- Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are valued and integrated into day-to-day teaching practice. There is variation in teachers' understanding and reflection of te ao Māori through the programme.
- Curriculum provision for infants and toddlers empowers their confidence and promotes a positive sense of learner identity. Teachers demonstrate an understanding of respectful practices and care as an integral part of the curriculum.

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

A range of relevant professional learning opportunities support teachers to develop and share culturally relevant knowledge and expertise, and design an inclusive and responsive curriculum.

- A collaborative approach to working with children and their families includes cultures in the design and implementation of the curriculum. Leaders and teachers value and celebrate Māori and Pacific children, families and their communities for who they are and what they bring to the centre, promoting their educational success.
- Collective responsibility for the learning and wellbeing of children is demonstrated through the ways teachers work as a learning community. They build on their prior knowledge and experiences to support ongoing improvement.
- Leaders and teachers engage in professional inquiry, learning and reflection aligned to the centre's values and philosophy. Exploration of the impact of professional learning on children's learning is not yet documented.

## **6 Organisational conditions**

### **Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū**

Planning and evaluation of curriculum, teaching and learning focuses on promoting equitable outcomes for children.

- Leaders provide targeted professional development that aligns to the capabilities and needs of teachers and children. They mentor and coach the teaching team to build their capabilities and enact a responsive curriculum.
- A shared leadership model fosters relational trust that promotes collaboration and sustained improvement. Leaders advocate for high-quality and inclusive education for children.
- Internal evaluation focuses on what matters most in terms of curriculum provision for children within this learning community at this time. There is a systematic process for improvement, however this does not yet consistently show if changes are having the desired impact for children.

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

Connections in the community and relevant agencies, and deliberate resource allocation, support broader educational and social outcomes for children.

- Resource allocation is clearly aligned with the centre's philosophy and core values.
- Recent changes to the roles and responsibilities of governance and management are clearly defined. A focus on the collective wellbeing and learning of children and context of whānau relationships are central to decision making.
- A positive working environment facilitates low turnover of teachers. This supports opportunities to build and sustain quality teacher-child-whānau relationships.

## 7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Rural Scholars Early Learning Centre 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?

Rural Scholars Early Learning Centre will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Continue to build the team's collective understanding of te ao Māori and reflect this through curriculum design and implementation.
- Evaluate changes in teaching practice, thinking and attitudes because of professional learning to better understand how these shifts are impacting on children's learning.
- Make better use of identified indicators of quality through internal evaluation to know how well actions taken are achieving the intended outcomes for 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.\*](#)



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## 9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	51 children, including up to 10 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 19%; NZ European/Pākehā 73%; Pacific 9%
Service roll	77
Review team on site	October 2024
Date of this report	21 January 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at <a href="http://www.ero.govt.nz">www.ero.govt.nz</a>	Akarangi   Quality Evaluation, March 2022; Education Review, June 2018

### 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 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.
	<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.