



ERO Early Childhood Akatea | Governing Organisation Evaluation Report

Governing Organisation Name: He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated

Head Office Location: Porirua, Wellington

1 ERO's judgement of He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated:

Indicator	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
Organisational conditions	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
Learning conditions	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 process.

Children's health and safety	Improvement required	Taking reasonable steps
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2 ERO's Judgements

A **Governing Organisation Evaluation** evaluates the extent to which organisational and learning conditions support equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. [Te Ara Poutama Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most](#) is the basis for making judgements about its effectiveness. The [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) - Improvement Framework \(teacher led services\)](#) derived from the indicators, is used to inform the ERO's judgements about the organisation's performance. Evaluation for improvement | Ngā Aronga Whai Hua is integrated across all of the above areas.

3 About the Organisation

He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated (the association) comprises 108 centre-based and two home-based services that operate across several geographical regions. The association also includes Piri'anga Alofa Pacific and Community Services who provide a range of family and community social supports. A governing board has overall governance responsibility, and delegates day-to-day management to the chief executive and senior leadership team. A self-managing teaching and learning team provide operational support and pedagogical leadership to services.

The association's vision is to be a respected leader in early childhood education and a strong advocate for children and whānau. Nurturing the mana of tamariki underpins their values of kounga | quality, pono | integrity, mahi tahi | partnership and kaitiakitanga | stewardship and sustainability. The association has maintained commitment to removing barriers to children and whānau participation, attendance and inclusion.

In November 2022, the association participated in the test of ERO's new approach to the review and evaluation of governing organisations. Since the 2022 evaluation, the association has progressed a number of significant operational changes and sought contributions from staff, parents and whānau to reinforce and clarify its values and reset strategic intentions. Current strategic intentions include:

- Strengthening capability and capacity as a Te Tiriti o Waitangi based organisation.
- Innovations and continuous improvement in teaching and learning.
- Strengthening financial and organisational health.
- Improving access for tamariki, their parents and whānau to increasingly relevant services.
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of relationships with communities.

Findings from ERO's evaluation at the governance and organisational level included evaluating the extent to which He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated's strategic intentions, quality improvement systems, processes and practices support the provision of quality education and care at individual service level.

4 Organisation Progress

The association has made significant progress in addressing the improvement actions identified during the 2022 ERO evaluation.

Three improvement actions were identified. These included strengthening processes to support maintenance of licensing criteria, fully implementing the revised annual review process and continuing to strengthen understanding and use of evaluation in services.

Improved oversight of compliance systems, processes and practices has been achieved by creating health and safety and policy advisor roles. Changes in systems and the introduction of compliance and policy project teams has resulted in increased collective capability building and better monitoring and reporting to the board on compliance.

The revised annual review process has been embedded across all parts of the association. Change management has been well considered to socialise and build capability to implement system, process and practice changes. These changes have resulted in better collation of data and reporting to the board in relation to accountability, supports, interventions and aspects of curriculum.

Good progress has been made in relation to strengthening evaluation and remains an ongoing focus for the association. Team Strategy and Action Plans were implemented in January 2023 to strengthen evaluation of local curriculum implementation. This has resulted in some increasing evaluation of the impact of changes in relation to desired outcomes for learners. Further progress is planned. The association has developed an evaluation framework and has plans in place to implement the framework in 2025. The framework gives emphasis to culturally and contextually responsive evaluation practice for both teaching and non-teaching evaluations. An increased focus on building evaluation leadership capability is required to support implementation and effective use of the evaluation framework.

5 Evaluation findings for July 2024

The association has reset its strategic intentions and planning. Five key strategic intentions have been identified as a focus for 2024 – 2028. A Pacific strategic plan has also been developed and is aligned to the association's strategic intentions.

Operational changes have resulted in additional leadership and team roles being established. There have been several improvements to systems, tools and practices which are having a positive impact on operations. A tool for collating data has been created that is cohesive and generating useful information related to curriculum, accountability and differentiated support provided for individual service level, cluster level and nationally. Data and narrative information are reported to the board to inform decision making.

The association supports children's learning and development well through networked relationships between services, agencies and the wider community. Senior leaders promote and initiate projects that contribute to positive social and community outcomes. These include collaborations with the Ministry for Social Development and Open Polytechnic to facilitate study support programmes, and contracts for delivering a job and skills hub, Pacific financial capability, Pacific futures, supported playgroups and engaging priority families. They facilitate collaboration between the association and mana whenua as well as Pacific communities.

Feeling to Learn is a new initiative that is currently underway. The project is progressing the internal development of a co constructed social and emotional programme to enhance children's learning. Planning includes alignment of policies and procedures, communication strategies and the development of a range of teaching tools. Association wide implementation and professional development is being considered.

6 Leadership to support quality education and care for children

The senior teaching team operate through a self-managing team approach. Senior teachers are allocated responsibilities for individual kindergartens or homebased licences, portfolios, projects and functional roles. Services are organised geographically to create clusters. Senior teachers operate in cluster groups supporting services and have opportunities to work in the larger senior teacher group. An evaluation of this operating model was completed in June 2024. Recommendations were made and shared with the board.

Senior teachers know and respond to each service's strengths and areas for improvement well.

- The leadership team effectively monitors a range of improvement actions focused on teaching and professional practice in line with the association's vision.
- Good sharing of information across the senior teacher team enables ongoing individualised support for services.
- Leaders coordinate internal and external professional learning and development relevant to the context of the service. They facilitate access to te ao Māori and Pacific leadership and expertise at all levels of the organisation.
- The associations' learning support programme is well utilised and provides valuable additional support to children with diverse learning needs. It creates leadership opportunities for some teachers and is focused on effectively working with external agencies and building teacher capability to meet the needs of children and families.

Senior teachers provide differentiated support for services to implement Team Strategy and Action Plans that are focused on evaluating localised curriculum. This approach has been refined and senior teachers are now focusing on the quality of strategy and action plans. Mentoring and leadership of good evaluation practice is still developing.

7 Summary of findings from visits to sample services

ERO visited a sample of 19 services to verify what He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated knows about the quality of each of the services' learning conditions and to what extent the organisational conditions support service improvement. ERO selected the service sample in consultation with the governing organisation.

Services visited by ERO included two Pacific homebased and four Pacific centre-based services. All services have been well supported to implement and embed association expectations as a result of organisational changes. The curriculum implementation policy and Te Manawa (the association's expectations and criteria for weaving curriculum) has been revised to further embed communities of learners throughout guidance and teaching practices. Te Manawa describes community of learners as developing communities and engaging collectively to enrich and impact upon learning.

The majority of teachers at the sample services implement a range of effective strategies to support learners and their learning.

- Intentional and responsive learning environments foster children's engagement, agency, curiosity and exploration.
- Relationships with whānau and children are prioritised as foundational to support all children's learning. These enable learners, particularly those up to the age of three to be well nurtured and cared for within whānau settings.
- Implementation of strategies that enhance children's developing social and emotional competencies promote inclusion and engagement of children with diverse learning needs.
- Clear expectations are consistently implemented in relation to the principles, strands and teaching goals of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum underpinning teacher and educator practice.
- Assessment for learning practices and documentation are not yet consistently showing consideration of the learning outcomes from *Te Whāriki* or evaluating the impact of teaching practices in relation to these.

All services are deepening their understanding and enactment of a localised curriculum in consultation with their community of learners and wider community cultural experts. This has led to defining what matters most for learners and strengthening aspects of the bicultural curriculum. Children hear te reo Māori and waiata and increasingly have opportunities to hear histories of significance to hapū and iwi. Some children experience tikanga and te reo Māori significant to local mana whenua. Educators in homebased services are well supported to build their capabilities and consider their localised curriculum.

Pacific services visited by ERO highly respect, value and respond to family and community and their aspirations. Children who attend these services experience a localised curriculum that promotes Pacific language revitalisation well and meaningfully integrates Pacific ways of knowing, being and doing.

Some evaluations are in depth and contributing to improvements towards desired outcomes for children's learning

- The association has clear plans in place and useful processes, that when fully implemented, are likely to continue to grow collective capability in relation to the depth of evaluation knowledge and practice.
- Support for teachers to undertake evaluation is monitored and reported to senior leadership and the board. How well this support facilitates good evaluation practice should be considered alongside the implementation of the association's evaluation framework in 2025.
- Aspects of evaluation are regularly reported to the board to monitor progress towards strategic intentions.

The association is involved in a Networks of Expertise (NEX) programme facilitated by Teacher Development Aotearoa | Whanaketanga Kaiako Aotearoa on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The programme is focused on building professional capability through growing professional networks. Pacific, curriculum and learning support representatives from the association are involved. The programme is currently supporting representatives to explore understanding and gather information in relation to the impact of professional learning and resources on changes in teaching practices.

8 Where to next for improvement?

Prior to the next ERO evaluation He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated will progress the following actions through its quality improvement planning. This includes to:

- Build leadership for evaluation across the association to more consistently focus on measuring the impact for learners specific to communities and contexts.
- Provide professional learning focused on integrating the learning outcomes from *Te Whāriki* in assessment for learning and monitor the impact of this over time.

9 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

As part of this review, a representative of He Whānau Manaaki o Tararua Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated completed an *ERO Governing Organisation Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they stated that the organisation has the systems, processes, and practices to be assured that service providers for licensed services within the organisation are meeting legal requirements related to:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management, and administration.

The licensed service provider/s of the sampled services listed at the end of this report also completed an *ERO Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist* for their service. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements, including those detailed in Ministry of Education Circulars and other documents, related to these areas.

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

10 Next ERO Review

The next ERO evaluation is likely to be in 12 months.



Patricia Davey
Director of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

20 December 2024

[Further information about how ERO evaluates Akatea / Governing Organisations is available here.](#)

11 About the Governing Organisation

Service types	Kindergarten; Home-based service	
Total number of licensed services	110	
Total number of children licensed for across all services	4371 including up to 220 aged under 2	
Total number of children enrolled across all services	4980	
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 19%; NZ European/Pākehā 47%; Samoan 7%; Cook Island 3%; Tokelauan 1%; Tongan 1%; Fijian 1%; Niuean 1%; Tuvalu 1%; other Pacific groups 2%	
Number of full-time equivalent teachers	Qualified	728
	Unqualified	110
Home-Based Educators	28	
Review team on site	July – September 2024	
Date of this report	20 December 2024	
Most recent ERO report(s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	No previous Governing Organisation Evaluation report.	

12 List of sampled services

All sampled services are on a full licence.

Services sampled in this evaluation included:

Profile Number	Name of service	Service Type
5344	Brooklyn Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5318	Doris Nicholson Kindergarten	Kindergarten
46140	Etu Ao – Niu	Home-based service
45926	Etu Ao – Saeala	Home-based service
5544	Fanau Pasifika	Kindergarten
5240	Gonville Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5314	Greytown Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5350	Hataitai Kindergarten	Kindergarten
60185	Kahurangi All Day Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5359	Miramar Central Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5366	Ngahina Kindergarten	Kindergarten
50077	Nuanua Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5369	Onslow Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5375	Parsons Avenue Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5382	Tairangi Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5383	Taitoko Kindergarten	Kindergarten
45428	Toru Fetu Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5352	Waitohi Kindergarten	Kindergarten
5312	York Street Kindergarten	Kindergarten

Activities undertaken by the evaluation team

- Pre-visit contact with the service provider/organisation leader(s).
- Meetings and / or conversations with governance, management and leaders.
- Verification and validation of what the organisation knows about the quality of education and care in its services.
- Reading documentation.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

Activities undertaken by the evaluation team in the service sample visits

- Pre-visit contact with the service leader.
- Meetings and / or conversations with leaders and teachers.
- Verification and validation of information shared by the organisation at service level.
- Reading documentation as service level.
- Scanning the learning environment and resources.
- Observations of interactions and teaching practice while onsite in the sample services.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

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 organisation is excelling in the learning and organisational conditions to support high quality education and care for children.
Embedded	The organisation has embedded its learning and organisational conditions to support ongoing improvement in the provision of quality education and care for children.
	Below the threshold for quality
Working towards	The organisation is working towards establishing the learning and organisational conditions to support improvements in the provision of quality education and care for children.
Improvement required	The organisation has not yet developed the learning and organisational conditions to support the provision of quality education and care for children.