



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Blue School

Profile Number: 46128

Location: Greytown

1 ERO's judgement of Blue School 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

Blue School is a privately-owned early childhood service for children aged three to school-age. The owner is responsible for governance and management, and a new team leader oversees teaching and learning. There have been significant staff changes since ERO's previous review. Blue School's philosophy focuses on collaboration, communication, creativity and confidence.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's 2021 report identified three improvement actions. These were to reflect children's languages, cultures and identities in documented assessment; build kaiako capability to use te reo Māori in their everyday practice; and continue to build the capability of leaders and teachers to effectively use internal evaluation for sustained improvement. There has been good progress in reflecting languages, cultures and identities of tamariki Māori that includes referencing Māori principles. While individual cultural celebrations of Diwali, Songkran and Matariki and use of children's home languages are evident in some assessment information, this remains an area to strengthen.

Limited progress has been made to build leaders and teachers use of te reo Māori. Limited professional development has been undertaken and minimal te reo Māori was heard integrated into teachers' daily practice. Limited progress has also been made to build leaders and teachers capability to do and use internal evaluation for improvement. A policy and framework are in place but do not support effective practice. These improvement actions remain a high priority to support the service's growth.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children's learning and wellbeing and developing social and emotional competencies are well-supported through leaders' and teachers' relationships with parents and whānau.

- Teachers advocate for children's transitions into and out of the service providing support for learners, especially those with additional learning needs. Information from parents and whānau supports transition processes.
- An intergenerational playgroup, as well as nature and project-based programmes encourage children's critical thought, wondering and creativity through challenging them to explore and become fully involved in a wide variety of learning experiences, including some te ao Māori aspects. However, these programmes are not being evaluated to know the impact of teaching or outcomes for learners.
- Whilst individual working plans are in place for some children, intentional teaching strategies are not incorporated or evaluated to know their effectiveness. Assessment is not well linked to children's individual working plans and vary in content which limits the visibility of children's progression of learning over time.

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

Teachers are taking individual responsibility for professional learning and engage in inquiry. However, these practices are not currently contributing to ongoing improvement.

- Each teacher and leader have a professional growth cycle in place with regular and ongoing mentoring meetings occurring. The mentoring provided is variable, which is limiting teachers' continual growth.
- Research is undertaken by teachers and leaders; however, this information is yet to include an understanding of what is or is not working and for which individuals or groups of learners.
- Leaders need to build their understanding of internal evaluation processes, to better support teachers in how to do and use evaluation for improvement.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders are establishing the conditions to build leadership capability to support quality teaching.

- A newly implemented leadership structure is in place with shared responsibilities for some decision-making. Leaders are yet to monitor and evaluate the impact of recent changes and the effectiveness of these.
- Distributed leadership is promoted through individual teachers and leaders taking responsibility for aspects of the curriculum and health and safety.
- Leaders and teachers participate in regular staff and strategic planning meetings. They are yet to document decision making to identify teaching strategies on outcomes for learners.

Established relationships with external agencies and the wider community support children's learning and development.

- Management actively works with external agencies to advocate and support children with diverse learning needs. This provides equitable opportunities and inclusion within the service and for transitioning to school.
- Organisational conditions support teachers and leaders' wellbeing. This includes professional learning and development provisions, above ratio staffing and support for teachers who are also parents.
- Those responsible for governance have established the service's values of resilience, kotahitanga, manaakitanga, creativity and kaitiakitanga alongside parents, whānau and teachers. These core values underpin the curriculum through some te ao Māori practices for children.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Blue School 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 Area of Concern

ERO found an area of concern in the service relating to:

- regular excursions not being consistently documented as required by the licensing criteria.

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008, HS17.

9 Where to next for improvement?

Blue School will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Implement assessment and planning for individual children's learning that shows their learning progress over time, alignment to parent aspirations, specific teaching strategies and an evaluation of the effectiveness of those strategies to progress children's learning.
- Increase teachers' capability and knowledge of te reo Māori so children have regular opportunities to experience this as part of the curriculum.
- Build teachers' and leaders' collective knowledge and understanding of evaluation for improvement to be able to know the impact of shifts in practice on outcomes for learners.

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 February 2025

10 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	40 children aged over 2 years
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 14%; NZ European/Pākehā 72%; other ethnicities 18%
Service roll	43
Review team on site	October 2024
Date of this report	7 February 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, December 2021; Education Review, March 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)*.

	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.