



ERO Early Childhood Akatea | Governing Organisation Evaluation Report

Governing Organisation Name: Hutt City Kindergartens Association Incorporated

Head Office Location: Wellington

1 ERO's judgement of Hutt City Kindergartens Association Incorporated:

Indicator	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
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
------------------------------	----------------------	-------------------------

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

Hutt City Kindergartens Association Incorporated (the association), is a regional organisation comprising of 20 kindergartens. Since the September 2022 ERO evaluation the association has transitioned from a parent-led governing board to the New Zealand Kindergartens governing board (NZK). NZK is a not-for-profit incorporated society that currently represents 19 local Kindergarten Associations.

Two general managers share responsibility for operational support and pedagogical leadership, including the day-to day management of the association. They work collaboratively to guide the operational and learning conditions across the association and in the kindergartens. Two senior teachers, the Pouako (Māori advisor), an early intervention specialist and a speech language therapist, have active leadership roles within the Professional Advisory Team. Together they provide professional expertise and guidance to grow the capability of teachers to support the learning and wellbeing of all children.

Findings from ERO's evaluation at the governance and organisational level included evaluating the extent to which Hutt City Kindergartens Association Incorporated strategic intentions, quality improvement systems, processes and practices support the provision of quality education and care at individual service level.

A sample of eleven services contribute to ERO's findings about Hutt City Kindergartens Association Incorporated.

4 Organisation Progress

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

In September 2022, the association participated in the test of ERO's new approach to the review and evaluation of governing organisations. Since then, the association has made several significant operational changes. The association's strategic priorities are now aligned to NZK's strategic intentions.

Three improvement actions were identified. These included strengthening review and implementation of health and safety processes, progress, monitoring and evaluating the organisation's Ka Hikitia Plan and internal evaluation.

The appointment of a new Human Resources Manager and newly created Property Manager position, with oversight of compliance, has significantly improved assurance of health and safety within the kindergartens. Existing systems have been adapted to increase staff capability and compliance monitoring and reporting to the board. A new digital compliance accountability process has been introduced that when fully implemented will give greater assurance of the completion of health and safety tasks in real time.

The association's Ka Hikitia Plan is enacted at kindergarten level through individualised te ao Māori and te reo Māori plans. Several initiatives have been put in place to build cultural capability and shift teaching practice including guidance and support from the Pouako (Māori advisor) and a te ao Māori rūpu (Māori advisory group). This systematic approach and targeted professional development and mentoring has resulted in positive shifts in teaching practice and some outcomes for learners, including Māori learners.

The association's shared understanding of quality improvement processes has been strengthened through engaging external expertise. An effective approach to evidence-based evaluation has been developed that enables managers, leaders and kaiako to do and use review and evaluation for improvement. This process informs decision making and improvements to resources, teaching practices and learning outcomes for children and guides association operations well.

Managers regularly monitor, evaluate and report to NZK on how well the association is meeting regulatory and professional requirements, as well as progress made towards strategic priorities.

5 Evaluation findings for the association November 2024.

The association has embedded systems, processes and practices that support decision making to improve and drive the provision of quality education and care for each learner. They seek the perspectives of all parents, whānau and kaiako to inform priorities that reflect what is most important to communities and their children.

A new te ao Māori rūpu is at the early stages of establishing priorities and expectations to build capacity to make improvements to culturally responsive teaching and learning. Defining what Māori success as Māori looks like, in collaboration with Māori whānau, will better support the evaluation of how well the Ka Hikitia Plan is supporting Māori learners throughout the association.

Those responsible for governance and management allocate resources in ways that clearly align with the association's shared philosophy, vision and priorities for teaching and learning. There has been a deliberate focus on promoting Froebel's teaching and learning principles and practices to support each kindergarten's connection to the founding philosophy of kindergarten. This has been to ensure that all kindergartens meet association expectations of having 16 areas of play available for children at all times. ERO observed well-considered learning areas that gave emphasis to learning through play, nature and hands-on experiences that foster a child's intellectual, emotional and physical growth. Targeted professional development supports kaiako to engage children in a rich curriculum that builds their holistic development.

Managers and leaders actively foster a culture of trust and collaboration. They model and expect professional accountability and collective responsibility for the wellbeing and learning of all children. The professional advisory team regularly work with teaching teams to provide support and guidance.

The association has identified and is considering ways to remove barriers to learning for all children. They regularly advocate for children and their whānau and make deliberate use of funding to promote equity. Leaders, kaiako and children benefit from this resourcing and management of targeted funding to provide Pouako, Early Intervention Teacher and Speech Language Therapist knowledge to build capability and promote equity of experiences and outcomes for all learners. Equity funding and additional association funding are well used to provide additional teaching support that enables kaiako to have the capacity to work closely with all learners. The provision of van transportation and fee exemptions are considered on a case-by-case basis to support equity of access and participation for all learners.

6 Leadership to support quality education and care for children

The Professional Advisory Team provide a collaborative leadership approach to developing professional knowledge and competence across the association to support quality education and care for children.

- The Professional Advisory Team, including the senior teachers, know and purposefully respond to the strengths and areas for improvement of individual kindergartens well. They provide targeted professional development that is focused on current teaching and learning needs. This is informed by review, internal evaluation, and surveys across the kindergartens.
- Senior Teachers provide differentiated support to their allocated teams. They encourage kaiako to engage in critical reflection, problem solving and collaborative practice that contributes to ongoing improvement to teaching and learning.
- Pouako and Māori rōpu expertise is well utilised to build leader and kaiako understandings of Māori culture supporting the provision of a bicultural curriculum. Advice and guidance are provided to develop and implement kindergarten specific te ao Māori and te reo Māori plans. This has resulted in increasing kaiako capability to provide a responsive bicultural curriculum for children.
- A termly learning support hui, and access to internal expertise (Early Intervention Teacher and Speech Language Therapist) is available for all kaiako to continue to build on understandings and strategies that make a positive difference for children with additional developmental and learning needs.
- The senior leadership team, including the early intervention teacher and speech language therapist, utilise their expertise to assess the needs of children with diverse learning requirements and identify key areas for support. They work closely with kaiako and whānau to create tailored strategies and individualised planning, goals and action steps. Ongoing support and resources are provided to kaiako to support effective plan implementation, with whānau support available.

7 Summary of findings from visits to sample services

ERO visited a sample of 11 kindergartens to verify what Hutt City Kindergartens Association Incorporated knows about the quality of each of the kindergartens' learning conditions and to what extent the organisational conditions support service improvement. ERO selected the kindergarten sample in consultation with the governing organisation.

Kaiako implement a range of effective teaching strategies to support and progress the wellbeing and learning of all children.

- The services' curricula are inclusive and responsive, they reflect the depth and breadth of Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum. Kaiako use assessment information well to make children's interests visible, and to inform planning, curriculum and intentional teaching strategies to progress children's learning over time.
- Kaiako seek ways to maintain children's connections to their home languages and cultural identities in inclusive learning environments. Families are consulted and invited to lead and /or contribute to celebrations that acknowledge and value their cultures.
- The bicultural curriculum is meaningful for children, respectful of te ao Māori values and includes aspects of te reo Māori me ngā tikanga Māori.
- Many kaiako are at the early stages of developing teaching strategies that reflect Pacific ways of being and learning. Some teams are currently engaged in targeted external professional development to build their cultural competence and capability to work more effectively with these children, their families and communities.
- There is an intentional focus on supporting children's social and emotional confidence, their oral language and communication skills. Kaiako use a range of useful strategies, including visual aids and the modelling of social language, to help children express their ideas and preferences.

Internal evaluation is well embedded across the association and is well used to inform change and improvement

- All kindergartens are using the association's approach to internal evaluation and are making good use of prompts provided to guide the process. Kaiako work collaboratively on internal evaluation to promote ongoing improvement. They evaluate the effectiveness of their internal evaluations, regularly assessing what is working well and identifying areas for improvement for both individuals and groups of learners.
- Annual review, teaching and learning plans, kaiako inquiries and internal evaluation are well aligned. These quality improvement processes provide a useful and cohesive approach to making judgements about the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching practices.
- Information from kindergarten level internal evaluations is well used by the professional advisory team to look for emerging themes and patterns and respond to the identified needs of each kindergarten. This supports leaders to focus on what matters most at this time for learning communities and results in improvements to learning and operational conditions.

8 Where to next for improvement?

Prior to the next ERO evaluation the association will progress the following actions through its quality improvement planning. This includes:

- Consult with whānau Māori to gather viewpoints about what educational success for tamariki Māori, as Māori learners, looks like in the association's learning community.
- Clearly define the role and purpose of the Māori rūpu to support the planning and implementation of priorities and expectations that enable positive outcomes for tamariki Māori.
- Continue to implement the strategic approach to supporting learners of Pacific heritages and build Kaiako cultural capability to provide a culturally responsive curriculum for Pacific learners.

9 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

As part of this review, a representative of 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:

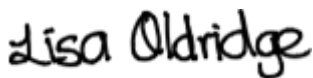
- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management, and administration.

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 two years.



Lisa Oldridge
Director of Early Childhood Education (Acting)

20 March 2025

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

11 About the Governing Organisation

Service types	Free Kindergarten	
Total number of licensed services	20	
Total number of children licensed for across all services	890	
Total number of children enrolled across all services	897	
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 24%; NZ European/Pakeha 33%; Samoan 4%, Other Pacific groups 6%; Indian 11%, other ethnic groups 22%	
Number of full-time equivalent teachers	Qualified	82.6
	Unqualified	2
Review team on site	November 2024	
Date of this report	20 March 2025	
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
5325	Arakura Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5338	Boulcott Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5327	Dyer St Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5546	Holborn Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5329	Kelson Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5331	Maungaraki Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
47901	Nettie Riley Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5333	Parkway Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5336	Sun Valley Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5620	Waiwhetū Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5340	Waterloo Kindergarten	Free 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.