



# ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Fern Grove Early Learning Centre

Profile Number: 46351

Location: Te Awamutu

1 ERO's judgement of Fern Grove 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
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## 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

Fern Grove Early Learning Centre is a privately-owned service providing education and care in two age-defined spaces. The owner leads the teaching team and oversees daily operations and governance. The philosophy prioritises play-based learning and respectful teaching practices. The service was previously known as Little Minds Early Learning Centre, and this is the first ERO evaluation under its new ownership. The current priority of the new owner is to grow teachers' and leaders' knowledge and understanding of culturally responsive practices.

## 4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The September 2021 ERO report identified four improvement actions relating to: building teachers' capabilities to support children's social competence and cultural identities; identifying shared priorities for children's learning in relation to the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum; and improving internal evaluation practice.

Good progress has been made in most areas. Assessment practice includes consideration of learning outcomes for all children. Positive steps are in place for parents to regularly share their cultural aspirations and teachers' responses to these are evident in children's planning documentation. Responsive teaching practices support children's social competence.

Limited progress has been made in building teachers' knowledge and understanding of internal evaluation and this remains an area for improvement.

## 5 Learning Conditions

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

Children have regular opportunities to learn in a responsive curriculum that extends their interests.

- Children explore and follow their interests in calm and unhurried learning environments. Responsive interactions with teachers foster a sense of belonging, enabling children to make connections between places and familiar life experiences.
- Teachers and parents work together to track children's progress and plan ways to extend their learning. Teachers now need to strengthen the evaluation of their teaching strategies, to determine what works for individual children and groups, and why.
- Children with additional learning needs are well-supported to participate in the curriculum alongside their peers. Transitions into, within, and from the service are effectively managed.

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

Children's learning is supported by the participation of leaders and teachers in relevant professional learning and development, which contributes to ongoing improvement.

- Leaders and teachers have regular opportunities to engage in professional learning and development to grow their practice.
- A professional growth cycle reflects what leaders and teachers know about children's learning. This has led to some positive changes in teacher practice; however, the process is not consistently implemented to promote sustained changes in teaching practice over time.
- Teachers and leaders are working towards a shared understanding of internal evaluation for improvement. They have yet to identify the impact of curriculum changes for all learners.

## 6 Organisational conditions

### Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders continue to build relational trust to enable collaboration and improvement.

- Leaders and teachers regularly collaborate to reflect on their practice, building professional knowledge and identifying areas for growth.
- Relational trust strengthens collaboration between leaders and teachers, supporting collegial professional practice.
- An effective process for collaboratively reviewing systems, practices, policies, and procedures is firmly established to promote the safety of adults and children at the service.

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

Children's learning and wellbeing are at the forefront of decision-making and resource allocation.

- Those responsible for governance make decisions that align with the service's vision and values, including actions to remove barriers that prevent children from accessing education and care.
- Governance provides the conditions that enable professional knowledge building. The impact of these opportunities on teacher growth and children's learning has yet to be documented and evaluated for use in strategic planning.
- Decisions about resourcing, staffing ratios and group size intentionally focus on achieving quality provision.

## 7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Fern Grove 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?

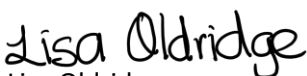
Fern Grove Early Learning Centre will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Improve planning processes to explicitly include intentional teaching strategies and track children's progress in relation to these, to determine what works for individual children and groups, and why.
- Develop the collective understanding and capability of leaders and teachers to use evaluation for improvement.
- Improve the implementation of the professional growth cycle to support teachers' professional growth and inquiry.

### 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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22 April 2025

## 9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	50 children, including up to 12 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 39%, NZ European/Pākehā 70%, other ethnic groups 6%
Service roll	57
Review team on site	January 2025
Date of this report	22 April 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, September 2021; 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.