



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Fern Garden Preschool and Childcare Centre

Profile Number: 40303

Location: Otumoetai, Tauranga

1 ERO's judgement of Fern Garden Preschool and Childcare 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

Fern Garden Preschool and Childcare Centre is one of four early childhood services within the Chrysalis Group. Two directors, a curriculum manager, and an operations manager provide governance and stewardship for the services. The Gaia (Earth) based education philosophy aims to deliver environments, values, teaching and learning that support outcomes for children. Each of the four services has its own philosophy, reflecting its individual values, curriculum, and community.

At Fern Garden Preschool and Childcare Centre, children play and learn in two age-based rooms. A centre manager leads a team of individual room leaders and teachers. The service philosophy prioritises relationships, guardianship, and an environment that promotes discovery and imagination.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The 2022 ERO Akanuku report identified two key next steps relating to developing learning-focused partnerships with families and increasing the visibility of children's home languages and cultures in assessment. Good progress has been made in both areas. A cultural calendar reflects the service community and provides a framework for celebrations and events within the centre. Assessments reflect each child's language and culture and include a deliberate approach to gathering whānau perspectives to contribute to responsive curriculum design.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

The curriculum is inclusive and clearly reflects key elements of the service's philosophy and *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

- Children benefit from intentionally planned, respectful, and responsive teaching approaches that promote successful transitions into and through the centre. These useful teaching strategies also support children's autonomy, their social and emotional competence, and their ability to develop relationships with peers and teachers.
- The centre's priorities and Gaia (Earth) philosophy are considered in planning and assessment to support children's learning over time. Teachers and leaders are becoming more intentional in determining children's individual learning and strategies to support this.
- The needs of the youngest learners are well met through a calm, slow-paced environment with responsive and considered teaching practices. The embedded local curriculum provides older children with a range of opportunities to connect with and learn about the immediate and wider community; however, the structured school readiness programme is not reflective of the holistic nature of *Te Whāriki*.

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

Children's learning and development are well supported by the professional knowledge of leaders and teachers.

- Leaders and teachers actively engage in critical reflection and inquiry, and collaborate for improvement. This supports teachers in designing and implementing a responsive curriculum.
- Teachers take responsibility for their professional learning and development, inquiring into aspects of their practice asking themselves what works and why. There is room for growth in evaluating teacher practices to enable leaders and teachers to clearly understand what is working, what is not, and for whom.
- Teachers and leaders understand that care is an integral part of the curriculum for infants and toddlers. This positively impacts children's sense of autonomy and belonging.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders across the group have established strong relational trust by modelling and promoting a focus on building capability in improvement practices.

- Senior Chrysalis Group leaders and service leaders implement a differentiated approach to foster growth in teachers' professional knowledge. They offer a range of learning opportunities, drawing on both internal and external expertise.
- Leaders monitor and review improvement practices, including internal evaluation, strategic planning at service level, and teachers' professional growth cycles. These processes involve a range of inquiry, review, and reflection; however, they have not been fully evaluated to clarify the impact of changes in practice on outcomes for learners.
- The centre manager provides targeted mentoring and promotes leadership opportunities for teachers based on individual strengths and areas of interest.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

Those responsible for governance across the Chrysalis Group create positive conditions to identify and nurture future leaders, supporting continuity and succession planning across their services.

- Governance and the senior leadership team empower centre managers and their teams to make decisions that support their learners and communities. This helps promote the individual identity of each service, while aligning with the overarching Gaia (Earth) philosophy.
- An overarching strategic plan guides those in governance to make decisions based on the wellbeing of children, their families, and teachers. The alignment between this strategic plan and the outcomes of improvement practices at the service level is not sufficiently clear to enable governance to fully understand the impact and quality of interventions at their level.
- Cohesive policies and practices are well-established by governance and senior leaders to enable service leaders to be autonomous in their centre operations. However, some variability exists across the services in how these policies and practices are understood and implemented.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Fern Garden Preschool and Childcare 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 Garden Preschool and Childcare Centre will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Refine the curriculum for older children to align with *Te Whāriki*, and current theory and practice, to support successful transitions to school.
- Develop individual planning to be more intentional in determining the specific learning goals for each child and the strategies to enhance these.

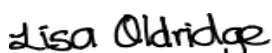
For those responsible for governance to:

- Refine monitoring and evaluative reporting systems to ensure decisions at this level take account of the quality of curriculum provision and improvement practices at each service.
- Identify key strategic priorities and plans at group level to align and advance these alongside service-level strategic priorities.
- Define roles and responsibilities for developing capability across the services in conducting and using evaluation to support a range of improvement practices.

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.](#)



Lisa Oldridge
Director of Early Childhood Education (Acting)

7 May 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 13%, NZ European/Pākehā 87%, British 13%.
Service roll	63
Review team on site	February 2025
Date of this report	7 May 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akanuku Assurance Review, August 2022; Education Review, July 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.