



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: The Cottage Kindergarten Ltd

Profile Number: 45871

Location: Waimauku, Auckland

1 ERO’s judgement of The Cottage Kindergarten Ltd is as follows:

| Domains: Ngā Akatoro | Below the threshold for quality | | Above the threshold for quality | |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| | Improvement required | Working towards | Embedded | Excelling |
| 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

The Cottage Kindergarten Ltd is managed by an owner who is a qualified teacher. The service provides for a diverse ethnic community in a mixed-age learning environment. The philosophy is underpinned by Froebelian approaches that emphasize the importance of play, nature and children learning through exploration, and is implemented alongside *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The service has made good progress relating to three improvement actions identified in ERO's 2021 report. This includes seeking, documenting and responding to parent aspirations for their child's learning, improving teachers' use of the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki* to identify curriculum priorities, and monitoring how improvement actions impact on children's learning outcomes. Useful internal evaluation processes and reflective teachers have contributed to the progress made in these areas.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

The service's curriculum is consistent with priorities identified in the philosophy, through a deliberate focus on teachers' supporting children's exploration and encouraging child-led play.

- Teachers capably use intentional teaching practices to support and enhance children's learning. They are respectful and responsive to the needs, social and emotional development of children.
- Teachers have worked to build and maintain learner-focused partnerships with parents and whānau. This provides opportunities for teachers and families to share ideas and discuss children's learning.
- The teaching team works collaboratively to assess children's learning, including planning for how they can further support children's growing capabilities.

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

Leaders and teachers demonstrate skilful teaching practices and continue to build their professional knowledge and cultural competence to implement a curriculum that is responsive to all children.

- Teachers engage in relevant professional learning and development to help them design and provide an inclusive curriculum.
- Service leaders and teachers have engaged with Kāhui Ako | Communities of Learning and connected with local iwi to extend their understanding of te ao Māori. This collaboration has contributed to their knowledge and resulted in increased culturally responsive approaches at the service.
- Teachers' participation in a documented professional growth cycle has helped to enhance their teaching practices. As part of this process, teachers reflect on changes to their practice and if these changes have made a difference for children's learning.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders and teachers are collectively responsible and accountable for the wellbeing and learning of all children at this service.

- The owner works pro-actively with teachers to identify barriers to children's learning and collaborates with parents to support learning outcomes for their children.
- A culture of relational trust to enable collaboration and improvement is evident. The owner is yet to give or document regular feedback to teachers to extend teacher capability.
- A consistent process of internal evaluation to inform improvement is used by the owner and teachers. They are developing a shared understanding of how to monitor and evaluate changes made, including how these changes have impacted on learning for individuals and groups of children.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

The owner works collaboratively with agencies and supports initiatives that contribute to positive outcomes for children.

- The owner and teachers collectively enact the service's philosophy and strategic plan priorities. Children's wellbeing is considered in decision-making and resourcing.
- Human resource policies and practices encourage a positive working environment, facilitating a low turnover of staff. Sustained relationships with teachers promote children's sense of belonging at the service.
- The owner seeks the input of the teaching team in continuing to refine organisational systems, policies and practices that promote positive learning conditions for children.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of The Cottage Kindergarten Ltd 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?

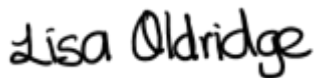
The Cottage Kindergarten Ltd will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Build the capability of all staff to evaluate how well improvements to practices and systems have made a difference for children, including groups of learners.
- Refine the implementation of a professional growth cycle, to include written feedback intended to support teachers to continuously improve their practice.

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)

13 May 2025

9 Information About the Service

| | |
|--|---|
| Service Type | Education and care service |
| Number licenced for | 34 children aged 2 and over |
| Percentage of qualified teachers | 80-99% |
| Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i> | Māori 16%, NZ European/Pākehā 51%, Australian 6%, Indian 5%, Dutch 3%, French 3%, Pacific 3%, other ethnic groups 8%, not stated 5% |
| Service roll | 42 |
| Review team on site | February 2025 |
| Date of this report | 13 May 2025 |
| Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz | Akarangi Quality Evaluation, June 2021; Education Review, November 2016 |

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. |