



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Little Discoverers

Profile Number: 46199

Location: Hamilton

1 ERO's judgement of Little Discoverers 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

Little Discoverers previously known as Curious Cubs, changed ownership in December 2022. The owner is a registered teacher managing daily operations supported by a curriculum lead teacher. Together, they support a team of qualified and unqualified teachers. The philosophy is underpinned by whanaungatanga, reflecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi, promoting curiosity and encouraging learning for children at their own level and pace.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's 2023 Akanuku | Assurance Review shows the service addressed areas of non-compliance identified under previous ownership.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children experience a curriculum that enables them to actively engage with others and make choices through play.

- Teachers use a variety of intentional teaching strategies such as questioning, modelling and providing specific feedback that supports children's learning and development.
- Reciprocal and respectful relationships are fostered by teachers, promoting children's social and emotional competence, contributing to a stronger sense of belonging and wellbeing for children.
- Assessment and planning information is based on children's interests and parent aspirations for their child's learning. The service has identified variability in teacher assessment practices, and are yet to consistently plan and evaluate children's learning in relation to the learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

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

Organisational conditions increasingly support and enable leaders and teachers to build their professional knowledge and expertise to design and implement a responsive curriculum for all children.

- Leaders and teachers access relevant professional learning that enables growth and informs improvements to practice. This contributes to the design and implementation of a curriculum that responds to children's interests, strengths and the service's valued learning priorities.
- Leaders and teachers weave te reo Māori and some aspects of tikanga Māori into daily practices. They are beginning to build their cultural competency to design and implement a culturally responsive curriculum for all children.
- A well-established inquiry process is in place that supports the ongoing professional learning of teachers. They regularly reflect on shifts in teaching practice however, they are yet to evaluate the effectiveness of improvement actions on outcomes for groups of children.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders work collaboratively to build relational trust that enables improvement and are increasingly accountable and collectively responsible for the wellbeing and learning of children at the service.

- A level of high relational trust between leaders and teachers and prioritising teacher wellbeing, contributes to a positive work environment. This fosters staff retention and supports positive outcomes for children.
- Leadership supports resourcing for professional practice and curriculum implementation aligned to the service's learning priorities. This contributes positively to children's learning and development.
- Leaders and teachers regularly engage in internal evaluation that is improvement focussed. They are not yet monitoring the impact of improvement actions on outcomes for groups of children.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

Governance prioritises the learning and wellbeing of children as the primary consideration in decision-making.

- Governance is improvement focused with a clear vision and strategic goals that foster ongoing improvement and growth. Those in governance enact a range of equity initiatives to ensure children and their whānau are well supported and that contribute to positive educational and social outcomes.
- Governance ensures that resourcing aligns to the learning and wellbeing needs of children and the service's priorities. Connections and community relationships promote progress toward the service's goals and priorities for children and their whānau.
- Governance promotes a shared understanding of health and safety requirements and the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure these requirements are met.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Little Discoverers 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?

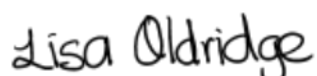
Little Discoverers will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Fully implement processes for planning, assessing and evaluating children's learning that show the effectiveness of intentional teaching and, evaluate children's progress over time in relation to the service's valued learning outcomes and the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki*.
- Build leaders' and teachers' capability to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement actions for individual and groups of children.
- Increase leaders' and teacher's cultural competency to design and implement a culturally responsive curriculum for all children.

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)

4 June 2025

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	44 children, including up to 10 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 8%; NZ European/Pākehā 43%; Indian 28%; Chinese 8%; Cook Island 5%; Sri Lankan 5%; other ethnicities 3%
Service roll	41
Review team on site	March 2025
Date of this report	4 June 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akanuku Assurance Review, November 2023; Akarangi Quality Evaluation, August 2022

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.