

ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Secret Garden ELC Limited

Profile Number: 25418

Location: Albany, Auckland

1 ERO's judgement of Secret Garden ELC Limited 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

Secret Garden ELC Limited is one of six privately owned services, each operating independently but with a shared commitment to promoting collaboration between them. The services' philosophies, policies and procedures are contextualised to meet the specific needs of the local community.

The centre is managed on a day-to-day basis, by a dedicated manager, supported by two room leaders, ensuring smooth operations. The team consists of both new and experienced staff members who reflect the cultural diversity of the children they serve.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The 2021 ERO Akarangi | Quality Evaluation report identified two areas for improvement: staff participation in external professional learning to strengthen curriculum and assessment practices; and the development of a culturally responsive and intentional curriculum that supports children's mana and identity as successful learners. Good progress has been made in these areas. Leaders can clearly articulate the approach taken, including the provision of relevant professional learning and development to enhance the teaching team's knowledge and understanding of key theories. This learning has been applied to develop a culturally responsive curriculum, aspects of this is evident in children's learning records.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

The service is establishing learning-focused partnerships with some of the parents, whānau and families.

- Respectful practice help foster trusting relationships between teachers and the children. Teachers have gathered some parent aspirations, but these are not yet fully reflected in children's planning and assessment.
- Teachers use a range of teaching strategies including questioning, role modelling, demonstrating, praising, facilitating and repetition to support children's learning and play. There are adequate resources in the environment to support children's interests and capabilities.
- Learning outcomes from *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, are purposefully incorporated into some learning stories. However, teachers have yet to intentionally respond to individual children's interests and learning dispositions to make learning more visible.

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

Distributed leadership and shared responsibilities are well promoted within the team through regular staff meetings, fostering a team's collective understanding.

- Collaboration within the teaching team and discussions about the impact on different groups of learners are evident through internal evaluation. The effectiveness of teacher's shifts in teaching practices and what works well could be further strengthened through ongoing monitoring.
- A formalised professional growth cycle has been established, with leaders providing constructive feedback to teachers. The effectiveness of this process is still under review.
- Teachers are committed to engaging in targeted professional learning, which leads to a focused approach in their teaching practice. This has a positive impact on teaching and learning.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders are taking steps to align resources to the service's philosophy, vision, goals and learning priorities.

- The centre manager mentors and coaches all teachers to build their capabilities, enabling them to develop relevant knowledge, theories, skills and confidence through this process.
- Leaders seek perspectives and cultural expertise of parents and teachers to promote learning for children. Leadership is also beginning to identify barriers to learning for some children.
- Leaders develop, implement and evaluate systems, processes and practices that promote ongoing improvement. Internal evaluation is led by the centre manager, who promotes team collaboration throughout the process.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

Governance and management have begun to pursue strategies to ensure equity and eliminate barriers to participation for all children and their whānau.

- Management have started advocating for some children, working together with some agencies and the wider community.
- Management has yet to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the strategic plan, which includes goals and priorities that need to be reviewed to ensure their relevance to the current context of the team and whānau.
- The owner supports and promotes collaboration among the group of managers, who meet regularly and discuss practices that build each other's capability. This is strengthening the collective understanding of systems and processes.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Secret Garden ELC Limited 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?

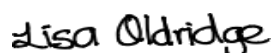
Secret Garden ELC Limited will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Continue to build learning learning-focused partnerships with parents and actively use their aspirations to inform curriculum design and planning.
- Implement intentional teaching and deliberating planning to ensure continuity of learning for children.
- Further explore shifts in teaching practice and identify what works well through monitoring process within internal evaluation.

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	50 children, including up to 10 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 9%; NZ European/Pākehā 21%; Filipino 18%; Indian 14%; Chinese 11%; Sri Lankan 9%; Korean 7%; Pacific 2%
Service roll	52
Review team on site	February 2025
Date of this report	4 June 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, May 2021; Education Review, September 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.