

ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: The Ark Preschool

Profile Number: 65421

Location: Richmond, Nelson

1 ERO's judgement of The Ark Preschool 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

The Ark Preschool is a community-based service governed and managed by the Richmond Baptist Church Board of Trustees. A manager oversees daily operations, while a head teacher leads the curriculum. Since the previous ERO evaluation, there have been significant staff changes, including in leadership and management roles. Children play and learn in a mixed-age environment. Christian beliefs and values underpin the service philosophy.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The 2021 ERO report identified three quality improvement actions to progress. These were:

- continue to develop kaiako cultural competence and expertise to better implement a culturally responsive curriculum, including exploring the local cultural narrative and greater inclusion of te reo and tikanga Māori in everyday experiences
- explore and implement ways to promote educational success for tamariki of Pacific heritage
- build capability of all kaiako to effectively use in-depth internal evaluation to promote ongoing improvement to teaching, learning and operations. This includes adopting a systematic approach, posing evaluative questions and using indicators of effective practice to guide the process.

Overall, progress has been mixed. Good progress has been made by leaders and teachers in their use of te reo Māori in daily routines and practices. Children incorporate the centre's tuatara and kiwi mascots into their play and learning, and places of significance to mana whenua are acknowledged within the curriculum. There are some opportunities for parents to include their culture and celebrations. Limited progress has been made in relation to tikanga Māori, success for tamariki of Pacific heritage, and internal evaluation.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children experience a rich curriculum underpinned by *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, and the Christian philosophy and values of the service.

- The curriculum effectively encourages children's exploration and independence. Teachers use intentional teaching strategies that align with the service philosophy to promote, support and extend children's understanding and creativity.
- A calm learning environment helps reduce barriers for children and promotes their well-being and social and emotional competence. Leaders and kaiako maintain respectful relationships with parents and whānau; however, they have yet to develop a localised curriculum in consultation with families and the community.
- While a newly developed curriculum policy guides teaching practice, its guidelines are not fully embedded, and the assessment, planning and evaluation of children's learning remain inconsistent across the teaching team.

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

Leaders and teachers are beginning to inquire into aspects of their practice, focusing on what works, what needs to change, and why.

- Recent professional development has supported kaiako to strengthen their practice to better respond to groups of children within the curriculum. This aligns with internal evaluation, which has prompted the use of intentional teaching strategies and learning outcomes to track some children's progress.
- Kaiako take responsibility for their own professional learning. However, leaders have yet to formalise and document feedback to effectively support and guide kaiako.
- Leaders and kaiako carry out both spontaneous and planned reviews of areas they have identified as needing improvement within the centre. They are in the process of establishing systems and practices to guide evaluation for ongoing improvement.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders are creating the conditions needed to develop effective guidance that supports quality teaching.

- Leaders promote strength-based practices and intentionally focus on building a positive team culture. They support new staff through a clear induction process.
- Leaders share an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. However, formal leadership discussions and reporting to support decision-making and monitor progress on identified priorities have not been established.
- A review of centre priorities, including the philosophy, in response to staffing changes has not yet been undertaken.

Governance has not fully established a clear direction to guide decision-making.

- Management has created a strategic plan, and the board is working towards some of its goals. However, trustees are yet to focus on what matters most for children and their learning in relation to the curriculum.
- The board appropriately seeks external expertise to support decision-making.
- The board is allocating resources to enhance the learning environment. Trustees are collaborating with leaders and kaiako throughout the redevelopment process.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of The Ark Preschool 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 Areas of Concern

ERO found an area of concern in the service relating to:

- Maintaining a record of the time each child attending the service sleeps, and checks made by adults during that time.

Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008; HS9

9 Where to next for improvement?

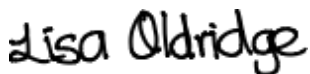
The Ark Preschool will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Implement assessment, planning, and evaluation guidelines to promote consistency in kaiako practice.
- Review the centre's philosophy, in consultation with parents and whānau, to establish a shared understanding of what matters most to underpin a localised curriculum.
- Improve governance and management reporting within the service to enable leaders and trustees to evaluate how effectively they are meeting their strategic direction.

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)

28 May 2025

10 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	42 children aged over 2 years
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 23%, NZ European/Pākehā 60%, South African 7%, Samoan 5%, Indian 4%, Cook Island 3%
Service roll	57
Review team on site	March 2025
Date of this report	28 May 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, December 2021; Education Review, December 2017

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.