

# ERO Early Childhood Akatea | Governing Organisation Evaluation Report

Governing Organisation Name: Auckland Kindergarten Association

Head Office Location: Auckland

## 1 ERO's judgement of Auckland Kindergarten Association:

Indicator	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
Organisational conditions	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
Learning conditions	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 process.*

Children's health and safety	Improvement required	Taking reasonable steps
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## 2 ERO's Judgements

A **Governing Organisation Evaluation** evaluates the extent to which organisational and learning conditions support equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. [Te Ara Poutama Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most](#) is the basis for making judgements about its effectiveness. The [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) - Improvement Framework \(teacher led services\)](#) derived from the indicators, is used to inform the ERO's judgements about the organisation's performance. Evaluation for improvement | Ngā Aronga Whai Hua is integrated across all of the above areas.

### 3 About the Organisation

Auckland Kindergarten Association trading as Ngā Tamariki Puāwai o Tāmaki, is a regional organisation comprised of 108 kindergartens and four KiNZs early learning services across Auckland | Tāmaki Makaurau. These services, referred to by the association as a network, support a wide range of ethnically diverse communities.

A board of directors made up of iwi Māori, community groups and education, teacher and parent representatives are responsible for governance and the enactment of the organisation's vision, mission and values. The association's strategic priorities and outcomes include educational excellence, whānau and community engagement and being future focused to grow as leaders within the early learning sector.

The chief executive officer (CEO) has overall responsibility for the operation of the network. She works with the executive leadership team, and closely with the board of directors to support the network. Since ERO's 2023 Akatea | Governing Organisation Evaluation a new general manager of education and innovation has been appointed to lead a team of curriculum, operations and professional specialists. This team holds curriculum oversight, provides pedagogical leadership, conducts research, and supports professional learning and development for leaders and teachers. The association values are underpinned by the Māori concepts of manawanui (commitment to purpose) kotahitanga (collaboration), manaakitanga (respect), ngākau pai (positive outlook), ngākau pono (trust), whakamana (empowerment) and atawhai (kindness). The association is committed to ensuring all children can access, participate and be included within their services.

Findings from ERO's evaluation at the governance and organisational level include evaluating the extent to which Auckland Kindergarten Association's strategic intentions, quality improvement systems, processes and practices support the provision of quality education and care at individual service level.

### 4 Organisation Progress

Overall good progress is evident toward most of the improvement actions identified in ERO's 2023 Akatea | Governing Organisation First Evaluation report. However, work is ongoing across all areas.

Four key areas for improvement were identified. These were to:

- strengthen board induction and training to better support and build overall governance capability and sustainability
- develop cohesive intentional planning to enact the strategic priorities
- strengthen targeted reporting to the board in relation to the association's vision, mission and priorities
- develop indicators of quality, in relation to curriculum, and use these to guide regular review and evaluation of curriculum, teaching and learning.

Good progress has been made in relation to board induction, training and capability building. A newly developed induction training manual provides guidance for new board members to support shared knowledge and understanding for those responsible for governance.

Good progress has been made to intentionally plan and align workstreams to the overarching strategic priorities. The CEO monitors progress of these strategies and regularly reports to the board.

Current reporting to the board includes brief accounts of how strategic priorities and outcomes are being progressed. The reports are currently descriptive in nature and have limited evaluative narrative to demonstrate the impact of work undertaken within the association.

Good progress has been made to collaboratively develop, in consultation with teaching teams, the Kūmanutia Te Rito (KTR) framework to promote educational equity and excellence. This framework includes a self-assessment tool for teachers relating to key areas of curriculum, teaching and learning. Leaders from the education and innovation team provide feedback that contributes to the development of individual services' quality improvement planning. However, area leaders and head teachers are yet to develop shared understandings of what informs the judgements they make on the improvement continuum within the framework.

The use of KTR is in the early stages of implementation and early findings are contributing to knowing about, and reporting on the quality of curriculum, teaching and learning across the network. These findings have begun to support decisions made at board level focused on the quality of education and care.

## 5 Evaluation findings for April 2025

An established culture of collaboration across the organisation has collectively shifted the focus from operations to the quality of education and care. This has been achieved by:

- senior management valuing and using the differentiated knowledge and expertise across the organisation to enable a focus on improvement
- continuing to build the capability of area leaders and teaching teams
- fostering a commitment across the organisation to progress the association's vision, values and strategic priorities.

The 2023 Akatea | Governing Organisation First Evaluation report identified that most services were in the early stages of developing elements of a local curriculum. This remains an area for growth. The education and innovation team continue to work with head teachers and centre managers to develop their shared understandings to identify priorities for children's learning and consistently align these to the learning outcomes described in *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

The 2023 report also identified that work with Pacific children, their families and respective communities was an area that required development. The education and innovation team use the KTR process to identify levels of Pacific knowledge and areas for improvement across the organisation.

Association support to develop teachers' cultural competence to integrate tikanga Māori and te reo Māori across the services is in the early stages of development. Curriculum leaders have self-identified working with tamariki Māori and their whānau is an area for further development within curriculum decision making, planning and implementation. Some individual services have demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of Māori culture and language. Association leaders are beginning to identify which teaching teams and/or individuals hold knowledge and expertise in te ao Māori and to use this knowledge and expertise across the organisation.

Evaluation for improvement remains an area for development at all levels within and across the association. Area leaders engage in some review and inquiry as part of their assurance and reporting processes. However, they do not yet fully use the internal evaluation framework to understand the effectiveness of their actions and better support their decision making across the network.

## 6 Leadership to support quality education and care for children

Eight area leaders have responsibility for clusters of services and engage with the wider support services team to offer guidance in operational and administration matters. They work collaboratively with two curriculum specialists to provide guidance in curriculum, teaching and learning, and internal evaluation. Building capability of head teachers and teaching teams to provide a responsive curriculum continues to be a key focus.

Area leaders and curriculum specialists are establishing the conditions to develop leadership capability of teaching staff to better support teaching and learning.

- Collaboration and improvement are promoted. Area leaders and curriculum specialists deliberately build relational trust to promote positive growth mindsets.
- Future leaders are identified across the network. Opportunities to develop leadership capability are aligned to individual teachers' professional growth cycles but are not strategically planned for at the wider association level.
- A closer focus on the quality of teaching and learning is still developing.
- Area leaders do not yet have a shared understanding of evaluation for improvement. This limits how well they can support services to develop their knowledge in this area. The current reporting system does not clearly focus on the quality of the curriculum to show what is, or is not, happening for children.

## 7 Summary of findings from visits to sample services

ERO visited a sample of 21 kindergartens and one KiNZs early learning service to verify what Auckland Kindergarten Association knows about the quality of each of the services' learning conditions and to what extent the organisational conditions support service improvement. ERO selected the service sample in consultation with the governing organisation.

Teachers across most services implement responsive teaching practices to foster the social and emotional competencies of children.

- Teaching teams respond well to individual and groups of children's interests and needs.
- Positive working relationships between teachers, families and external agencies enable teams to plan and implement useful strategies to support children with additional learning needs.
- Children's agency and independence are well promoted through curriculum provision and learning environments. The range of mixed-age settings enable ako or peer learning that supports inclusion and engagement.
- Teachers implement a range of useful strategies to foster children's oral language development and relevant forms of communication.
- Almost all services are yet to determine priorities for children's learning with parents and whānau.
- Assessment documentation shows limited evidence of the planning to extend children's thinking and learning.
- Teachers have good knowledge of children within their family contexts. However, they do not consistently use this information to inform individual planning.
- Head teachers and teachers access relevant professional learning and development building their capability.

Understanding and use of internal evaluation is in the early stages of development across the services.

- There is an established framework for internal evaluation. Research and new knowledge are not yet well used to inform collaborative sense making to decide planned actions for improvement.
- Curriculum specialists give timely feedback to some teams at each phase of the evaluation process. They do not yet have the capacity to support all teams.
- Teams engage in reflection, inquiry and action research as part of their improvement processes with some evidence of these leading to positive shifts in teacher practice. Curriculum specialists track the progress of teams as they undertake this work and provide some feedback to support them to develop their understanding of improvement actions and the impact of these.

## 8 Where to next for improvement?

Prior to the next ERO evaluation Auckland Kindergarten Association will progress the following actions through its quality improvement planning. This includes to:

- Build the evaluative capability of area leaders to establish a robust shared understanding of how to undertake effective internal evaluation for improvement. Use this knowledge to support services to confidently do and use internal evaluation.
- Effectively implement and embed Kūmanutia Te Rito, to develop shared knowledge and understanding of what quality teaching and learning looks like within the context of the association. Use the information generated to better inform improvement planning and decision making for individual services, and to support robust reporting about the quality of teaching and learning across the network.

## 9 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

As part of this review, a representative of Auckland Kindergarten Association completed an *ERO Governing Organisation Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they stated that the organisation has the systems, processes, and practices to be assured that service providers for licensed services within the organisation are meeting legal requirements related to:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management, and administration.

The licensed service provider/s of the sampled services listed at the end of this report also completed an *ERO Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist* for their service. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements, including those detailed in Ministry of Education Circulars and other documents, related to these areas.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.

## 10 Next ERO Review

The next ERO evaluation is likely to be in 12 months.

*Lisa Oldridge*

Lisa Oldridge  
Director of Early Childhood Education (Acting)

10 June 2025

[\*Further information about how ERO evaluates Akatea / Governing Organisations is available here.\*](#)

## 11 About the Governing Organisation

Service types	Free Kindergarten; Education and care service	
Total number of licensed services	112	
Total number of children licensed for across all services	4270	
Total number of children enrolled across all services	4809	
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 11%; NZ European/Pakeha 39%; Indian 8%; Chinese 7%; Samoan 6%; Tongan 5%; Southeast Asian 5%; Cook Islands Māori 2%; Middle Eastern 2%; Latin American 1%; African 1%; Niue 1%; other Asian 8%; other European 4%; other Pacific 1%; other ethnic groups 1%.	
Number of full-time equivalent teachers	Qualified	483
	Unqualified	2
Review team on site	March/April 2025	
Date of this report	10 June 2025	
Most recent ERO report(s) These are available at <a href="http://www.ero.govt.nz">www.ero.govt.nz</a>	Akatea   Governing Organisation Evaluation First Report, October 2023	

## 12 List of sampled services

All sampled services are on a full licence.

Services sampled in this evaluation included:

Profile Number	Name of service	Service Type
45455	KiNZ Mission Heights	Education and care service
5622	Aorere Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5565	Birdwood Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5035	Blockhouse Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
10353	Dannemora Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5052	Glenfield Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5054	Henderson Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5061	Kingsdene Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5070	Mayfield Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5069	Massey Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5066	McNaughton Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5075	Mt Eden Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5076	Mt Roskill Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5078	Murdoch Park Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5554	Oranga Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5087	Owairaka Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5089	Papatoetoe North Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5360	Pigeon Mountain Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5094	Ranui Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
10314	Summerland Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5106	Sunnyvale Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten
5077	Sylvia Park Kindergarten	Free Kindergarten



#### Activities undertaken by the evaluation team

- Pre-visit contact with the service provider/organisation leader(s).
- Meetings and / or conversations with governance, management and leaders.
- Verification and validation of what the organisation knows about the quality of education and care in its services.
- Reading documentation.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

#### Activities undertaken by the evaluation team in the service sample visits

- Pre-visit contact with the service leader.
- Meetings and / or conversations with leaders and teachers.
- Verification and validation of information shared by the organisation at service level.
- Reading documentation as service level.
- Scanning the learning environment and resources.
- Observations of interactions and teaching practice while onsite in the sample services.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

#### 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 organisation is excelling in the learning and organisational conditions to support high quality education and care for children.
Embedded	The organisation has embedded its learning and organisational conditions to support ongoing improvement in the provision of quality education and care for children.
	Below the threshold for quality
Working towards	The organisation is working towards establishing the learning and organisational conditions to support improvements in the provision of quality education and care for children.
Improvement required	The organisation has not yet developed the learning and organisational conditions to support the provision of quality education and care for children.