



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Aurora Tamariki Early Years Care and Kindergarten

Profile Number: 47091

Location: Dunedin

1 ERO's judgement of Aurora Tamariki Early Years Care and Kindergarten 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

Aurora Tamariki Early Years Care and Kindergarten is owned and governed by The Southern Stars Waldorf Trust, a not-for-profit community trust. A centre director oversees daily operations. There have been some staffing changes since the ERO's previous evaluation, including the introduction of a new leadership structure. Children play and learn in a mixed-age setting. The philosophy is based on the Rudolf Steiner approach, which emphasises holistic development, imagination, creativity, and a connection to nature. This approach underpins the kindergarten's three core values: rhythm and routine, support for children's developing senses, and nourishment through meaningful food rituals.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The 2022 ERO evaluation identified two improvement actions:

- continue to deepen the bicultural curriculum, incorporating te reo Māori and te ao Māori in ways that are meaningful for children, including consultation with local iwi
- more explicitly use the learning outcomes in *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, when planning and assessing children's learning.

Good progress has been made in both areas, and changes in practice are evident through documentation and observations. Children hear te reo Māori spoken and experience a curriculum that promotes the Māori principles of kaitiakitanga (guardianship of the land, sea, and sky) and ako (learning from one another). Steps have been taken to increase and make more explicit use of the learning outcomes from *Te Whāriki*. An evaluation of these changes by leaders and teachers is in the early stages.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Intentional teaching across the mixed-age setting promotes an inclusive approach to play and learning for all children.

- The environment is intentionally designed to reflect seasonal planning and daily rhythms, while also providing children with time and space for uninterrupted play. Teachers engage with children in responsive and meaningful ways, focusing on developing their social and emotional skills and supporting their oral language development.
- Ongoing partnerships with parents and whānau focus on supporting children's learning by fostering meaningful connections between home and the centre. Families are encouraged to share their wishes for their children's learning, which teachers use to guide curriculum decisions.
- Documentation provides clear evidence of children's learning through curriculum experiences and demonstrates alignment with the learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki*. Leaders and teachers have yet to evaluate which teaching strategies are effective in supporting and extending children's learning.

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

Leaders continue to enable and support professional collaboration for ongoing improvement.

- Leaders engage in relevant and useful professional learning opportunities, which they share with the team. This contributes to change and improvement, with some positive impacts already evident.
- A new team meeting structure has been introduced to help teachers record, share, and document knowledge gained from professional learning.
- Guidance and expectations for most aspects of the curriculum are in place, and some measures of quality are known. Leaders have yet to develop indicators and expectations for the quality assessment of children's learning.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders continue to improve the conditions that enable effective leadership.

- Leaders have a good understanding of the service's philosophy, vision, and values, and consistently promote their enactment.
- Leaders include sustainable succession planning in their decision-making. A recent change in the leadership structure has been made to strengthen the focus on building leadership capability.
- Effective monitoring practices support an internal evaluation process that leads to improvement. There is not yet clear evidence of which children, or groups of children, have benefited most from the changes following this evaluation.

Governance and leadership collaborate and use informal systems to monitor the service's progress.

- Those responsible for governance are regularly informed about the curriculum, evaluation findings, and operations through informal information sharing.
- Parents and whānau of children attending the service have many opportunities to contribute to its operations, guiding philosophy, valued learning priorities, and aspects of internal evaluation. There is not yet a specific approach to gathering the voices of whānau Māori and Pacific children, families, and communities to improve the service's cultural responsiveness.
- Children's learning and wellbeing are central to decision-making processes. This is demonstrated by the focus on improved outcomes for children resulting from internal evaluation systems.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirement

Before the review, the staff and management of Aurora Tamariki Early Years Care and Kindergarten 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?

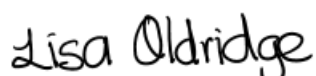
Aurora Tamariki Early Years Care and Kindergarten will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Assess the effectiveness of teaching strategies to determine whether they are achieving the intended impact on children's learning.
- Develop clear indicators for high-quality assessment and use these to guide and monitor how well children's learning is documented.
- Refine internal evaluation practices to systematically assess the impact of improvement actions on the learning outcomes of all children, clearly identifying what is working well, what is not, and for which children and groups.

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)

11 June 2025

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	30 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 75%, European 24%, Asian 8%, Tongan 8%, American 4%, Arab 4%, Cook Island 4%, Dutch 4%, German 4%, Korean 4%, Samoan 4%, Spanish 4%
Service roll	24
Review team on site	May 2025
Date of this report	11 June 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, March 2022; Education Review, December 2018

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.