

ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Whenuakite Country Kids

Profile Number: 30176

Location: Whitianga

1 ERO's judgement of Whenuakite Country Kids 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

Whenuakite Country Kids is a rural, community-based early childhood service that is governed by an Incorporated Society. The committee is responsible for staff employment, property and financial management. A manager oversees the daily running of the service alongside a curriculum leader and a team of qualified teachers. The service's philosophy emphasises community relationships and environmental sustainability.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The September 2021 ERO Akarangi | Quality evaluation identified four areas of improvement for the service. These were to intentionally use the learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, to document children's developing capabilities over time; strengthen the visibility of all children's culture, language and identity in assessment; build internal evaluation capability focused on outcomes for children; and to strengthen committee members' understanding of their legal responsibilities.

Limited progress has been made in using the learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki* to show children's learning over time. Leaders and teachers acknowledge this is an ongoing area of development. Some children's culture, language and identity are gathered via individual learning plans; however, this is not yet consistent for all children. Leaders and teachers have worked collaboratively to build understanding and capability of internal evaluation processes and good progress has been made in establishing a coherent process that focuses on outcomes for children.

Committee members and leaders have made significant progress to develop induction processes and monitoring systems to ensure the understanding of legal responsibilities of committee members.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children play and learn in large, well-resourced indoor and outdoor areas, in which their independence and decision making are supported.

- Children have opportunities to engage in sustained interactions with teachers. Teachers use a range of intentional teaching strategies to support children's thinking, learning and communication skills.
- Children regularly attend excursions into the local community enhancing their sense of belonging and connections with people, places and things. Wider community relationships have been strengthened through coastal restoration and habitat planting projects.
- Individual plans used to document teacher goals and parent aspirations for their child's learning are useful. However, these are yet to be consistently completed or regularly evaluated to inform teaching and assessment practices for all children.

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

Teachers are taking positive steps to grow their professional knowledge to implement a curriculum that increasingly supports children's learning.

- Some teachers are building their capability to integrate te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into the curriculum. The service has identified developing all teachers' capabilities to better reflect the bicultural nature of *Te Whāriki* as a priority.
- All teachers engage in a professional growth cycle aligned with a service-wide improvement focus. Processes are yet to consistently show shifts in teaching practice and the impacts on children's learning.
- Positive relationships with parents are developed through daily contact and regular community events. Parents are well informed of their children's learning and progress.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders have established conditions and some processes that contribute to ongoing improvement in outcomes for children.

- Leaders have established relational trust across the team. This promotes collaboration and provides stability and wellbeing for teacher's, children and their families.
- Leaders provide opportunities and time for teachers to lead aspects of service operation and improvement practices. This supports building leadership capability across the teaching team.
- Leaders and teachers have engaged in professional learning to develop an understanding of the use of internal evaluation that guides ongoing improvement. While there is some evidence of positive outcomes from this process, leaders are yet to consistently put children's learning at the centre of evaluation and monitoring.

Children's wellbeing is prioritised in decision making and resource allocation.

- Committee members are well known within the learning community. Frequent and collaborative communication between the centre leaders and the committee focus on children.
- Significant progress has been made to deepen the understanding of roles and responsibilities of committee members. A comprehensive and effective process of induction, alongside informal mentoring, has been implemented.
- Committee members use a range of information to develop strategic priorities and make resourcing decisions. They have prioritised seeking and including whānau aspirations in upcoming strategic planning.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Whenuakite Country Kids 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?

Whenuakite Country Kids will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Leaders and teachers to embed internal evaluation processes and systems to consistently evaluate the impact of shifts in practice on learning outcomes for children.
- Leaders to support teachers across the team to increase confidence and capability in the use of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori to fully enact the bicultural intentions of *Te Whāriki*.

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

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	39 children, including up to 12 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	100%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 8%; NZ European/Pākehā 96%; Samoan 4%; Australian 13%, Other ethnicities 16%
Service roll	48
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	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, September 2021; Akarangi Quality Evaluation, March 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.