

ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: The Walnut Tree Preschool

Profile Number: 70147

Location: Christchurch

1 ERO's judgement of The Walnut Tree 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

An established leadership team supports a mix of qualified and unqualified teachers. There have been some recent staff changes. The philosophy underpinned by *Te Whāriki* the early childhood curriculum is influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach and supports project focused and group learning for a diverse range of learners. The two learning spaces provide opportunities for both mixed age play and separate learning spaces for younger children.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

The service has made good progress towards the improvement actions identified in ERO's 2022 Akarangi | Quality Evaluation report. The first was to further develop documented assessment for learning practices to clearly show children's learning progress and their unique languages and cultures. The introduction of an online tool has enabled increased opportunities for parents and whānau to view and comment. Individual children's assessment records show children's learning and progress over time. However, building collective capability to better reflect parent aspirations and children's cultures and languages has not yet occurred.

The second improvement action related to building internal evaluation capability. The service has introduced an evaluative framework to guide internal evaluation, build teachers' capability in its use and to clearly focus on positive outcomes for children. Leaders demonstrate some good understanding of collaborative self-review and aspects of internal evaluation which reflect positive outcomes for children and whānau.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

An inclusive curriculum, well aligned to the service's philosophy meaningfully supports children to develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions and ways of making sense of the world.

- Teachers intentionally pose questions to provoke children's curiosity, thinking and enable them to investigate and actively explore their areas of interest. Teachers are well attuned to the needs, strengths and abilities of infants and toddlers who are well supported to settle and explore their environment.
- A well-designed learning environment supports sustained group and individual play. Teachers prioritise children respecting themselves, their environment and others in their interactions and this is very apparent within the curriculum.
- Respectful and responsive relationships with both children and whānau are evident. While aspects of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori are used, there is limited evidence of other cultures including Pacific reflected within the enacted curriculum.

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

Leaders and teachers continue to build their knowledge and expertise to design and implement a responsive curriculum.

- A recently introduced professional growth cycle supported by external expertise is in the early stages of being used.
- Relevant collaborative self-review linked to qualified teachers' professional growth cycles, shows some positive outcomes for both whānau and children's sense of belonging.
- The service is yet to identify the impact of professional learning on shifts in teachers practice and outcomes for children.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Well-established leadership effectively supports the teaching team to enact the philosophy and goals for children's learning and wellbeing.

- Leaders and teachers work closely together to ensure they collaboratively implement an inclusive curriculum that supports children to thrive.
- Aspects of distributed leadership are evident, however there is potential to delegate further responsibilities to make greater use of the strengths within the team
- Leaders and teachers continue to make developing learning-focused partnerships a priority.

Governance clearly prioritises the learning and wellbeing needs of children to ensure they have equitable opportunities to access a responsive curriculum.

- Children’s learning and wellbeing are primary considerations in resourcing and decision making. A range of well-considered strategies, resources and well enacted positive guidance practices aligned to the service philosophy ensures children can meaningfully access the curriculum.
- Governance and management collaboratively advocate for children to provide additional support that enables children to have access to quality care and education.
- Governance is yet to develop robust monitoring systems for some aspects of health and safety.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of The Walnut Tree 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:

- consistently recording that children are checked for warmth, breathing and general wellbeing at least every 5-10 minutes.

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

9 Where to next for improvement?


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

- Explore and implement ways to make children's cultures and languages more visible within documentation and the enacted curriculum.
- Build all teachers' capability to know about and show the impact of professional learning on their practice and outcomes for learners.

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)

25 June 2025

10 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	35 children, including up to 5 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 38%; NZ European/Pākehā 36%; Samoan 18%; other Pacific heritages 5%; Korean 3%
Service roll	35
Review team on site	April 2025
Date of this report	25 June 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, February 2022; Education Review, May 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.