



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: The Farmyard

Profile Number: 46155

Location: Gisborne

1 ERO’s judgement of The Farmyard is as follows:

Domains: Ngā Akatoro	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
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 Farmyard is one of eight services under the same ownership. One of the co-owners is a certificated teacher and provides governance support alongside another director. A recently appointed centre manager alongside a newly forming teaching team supports daily operations. The service provides for children in four age-based rooms and separate outdoor play spaces. The philosophy embraces a Rudolf Steiner learning approach alongside a play-based, nature-based philosophy. These curriculum priorities focus on children's engagement in a learning environment that supports their developing confidence, creativity, exploration and curiosity.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's 2022 Akanuku | Assurance Review identified a key next step to strengthen the extent to which information documented about children's learning reflects their identity, languages and cultures. Limited progress has been made in assessment information to responsively reflect children's languages and cultures in addition to group experiences planned by teachers.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Teachers implement a responsive curriculum that clearly reflects the service's play-based, nature-based and Steiner-inspired philosophy.

- Teachers foster children's exploration and independence in large indoor and outdoor areas. Their intentional practices promote children's social competencies and children's learning experiences, including appropriate risk-taking.
- Steiner-inspired teaching practices support children to participate in daily rhythms and rituals that provide predictability. As a result, children have developed a sense of belonging and take responsibility for caring for the environment.
- Records of children's learning are being refined. Currently written documentation is variable in showing the progress made by children based on the valued learning outcomes of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

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

Teachers and leaders are taking steps to improve their professional knowledge and to consider the impact their teaching practices have on children's learning.

- Ongoing professional learning about Steiner approaches helps experienced teachers to refresh their knowledge and is supporting newer staff to develop their understandings. As a result, teachers' practices are increasingly consistent with the service's philosophy and valued teaching approaches.
- Children experience an authentic bicultural curriculum that enables them to develop knowledge of the te Ao Māori (the Māori world). Teachers frequently use te reo Māori, and karakia, waiata and kapa haka as well as other tikanga Māori practices are very evident.
- Teachers reflect on their teaching, engage in review, and make changes to their practice. An established framework for professional growth does not yet show how changes in teachers' practices have benefitted children's learning.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Good support is in place to grow the capability of leadership to enact the service's improvement priorities.

- The centre manager continues to build her knowledge of systems and grow relational trust with existing and new team members. Governance actively supports leaders through providing additional resourcing that has ensured consistency of staffing as the new teaching team is forming.
- Internal evaluation systems for improvement are established. Leaders and teachers do not consistently document evaluations undertaken, the effectiveness of changes or whether changes have impacted on children's learning over time.
- Leaders are connected to other centre managers across the organisation. This is enabling capability building through the input and shared experiences of other Learning Links leaders.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

Governance effectively implements and monitors systems and practices that inform the organisation's strategic priorities and decision-making.

- Governance implements, monitors and evaluates a range of improvement planning processes across its' eight services. These systems contribute well to ongoing improvements that positively support children's learning.
- Relational trust, positive working conditions, and systematic sharing of practices and processes between governance, leaders and teachers supports collaboration and professional growth. The service's vision, values and philosophy are reviewed in consultation with whānau, with governance ensuring their perspectives are valued and enacted.
- Children enrolled benefit from well-resourced environments, good adult: child ratios and equity strategies that promote inclusion and remove barriers for participation.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of The Farmyard completed and *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?

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

- For teachers to better use the professional growth cycle to record how changes to their teaching practices have made a difference for children's learning.
- For teachers and leaders to deepen their knowledge of how to do, use and document internal evaluation information to demonstrate how improvements made have impacted on children's learning.
- For governance to continue to support developing leadership capability relating to systems and processes aligned with Learning Links, and the Farmyard's vision, philosophy and priorities.

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)

22 April 2025

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	110 children, including up to 30 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	50-79%
Ethnic composition	Māori 26%, NZ European/Pākehā 37%, Fijian 1%, other ethnic groups 36%
Service roll	68
Review team on site	November 2024
Date of this report	22 April 2025
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akanuku Assurance Review, April 2022

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.