



ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Three Mountains Montessori

Profile Number: 20099

Location: Narrow Neck, Auckland

1 ERO's judgement of Three Mountains Montessori 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

Three Mountains Montessori, previously known as Naturally Kids Early Learning, underwent a change of ownership in July 2024. Following consultation with teachers and the service's community, the centre rebranded and adopted a Montessori approach. Children learn within a mixed-aged environment which includes areas for play, creative activities and practical life skills.

Governance and management are the responsibility of the new owners. A significant change in the teaching team has occurred. A Montessori-trained owner / centre manager leads the teaching team.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's Akarangi | Quality Evaluation report identified three improvement actions related to: strengthening a curriculum inclusive of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori and responsive to all children's language, culture and identity; building understanding and use of internal evaluation; and ensuring consistent review of policies and procedures.

Good progress has been made in implementing a curriculum that reflects *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, inclusive of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori. Teachers actively incorporate kupu Māori and simple phrases, supporting children's growing understanding and use of te reo Māori. Children's languages, cultures, and identities are not yet consistently visible across the learning environment, planning and assessment.

Good progress has been made in developing a shared understanding of the purpose of internal evaluation. Teachers have strengthened their evaluative capability by drawing on both internal and external expertise. Confidence to do and use internal evaluation has increased however teachers are continuing to build a shared understanding of each phase of evaluation to improve the effectiveness of the process.

Significant progress has been made to increase knowledge and understanding of the service's policies and procedures. A regular review cycle is now in place to support the service in meeting the regulatory standards.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

Children experience a responsive learning environment where they are increasingly empowered to grow their capabilities.

- Children show growing independence by engaging in curriculum opportunities and responsive interactions that competently foster engagement and learning. The calm, well-resourced environment reflects aspects of te ao Māori and New Zealand culture well and increasingly embraces children's diverse backgrounds.
- Intentional teaching strategies largely make a difference to children's learning, with teachers using approaches such as questioning, commenting, and listening. These strategies foster deeper thinking and sustained engagement, enabling children to confidently express ideas and extend their learning.
- Emergent literacy is enhanced through deliberate teaching, rich oral-language experiences, and a thoughtfully prepared environment that promotes child choice and focus. Teachers use Montessori principles to build literacy through hands-on, self-directed activities that encourage exploration and meaningful communication.
- Assessment and planning practices are consistently implemented, underpinned by clear expectations and robust policy guidance. The new individual learning plan process provides a sound framework to identify teaching to progress children's learning, however it is yet to consider children's cultural connections.

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

Processes and practices to collaboratively build professional knowledge improve teachers' understanding of Montessori approaches to learning and teaching practices that promote a responsive curriculum.

- Teachers have ongoing access to relevant professional learning, with new knowledge shared across the team. This shared learning approach builds collective capability to improve outcomes for children.
- Teachers are taking steps to build their understanding of the Montessori philosophy, purposefully applying its principles to nurture children's critical thinking and problem-solving. This growing expertise enables teachers to increasingly create meaningful learning experiences that cultivate curiosity and collaborative skills in children.
- Teachers and leaders are working to developing a meaningful curriculum that authentically reflects the goals whānau have for their children and the Montessori approach. Shared understanding of strategies to enact community-wide learning priorities is strengthening.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leadership contributes to a collaborative, improvement-focused culture.

- Experienced leaders and teachers work collaboratively to enact the service's vision and values, fostering collective responsibility. This shared approach is strengthening leadership capability and team cohesion.
- Leadership opportunities are actively supported through internal and external mentoring. Teachers are building their understanding of the Montessori philosophy and its application to curriculum, teaching, and learning.
- Relational trust enables teachers to share ideas, engage in critical thinking, and collaborate on internal evaluation that is focused on improvement. Leaders and teachers are building a shared understanding of what needs to happen at each phase of the evaluation process to build robust and sustainable evaluation practice.

Stewardship through effective governance and management | Te Whakaruruhau

Stewardship intentionally creates conditions that promote continuous improvement and contribute to positive outcomes for children.

- Established systems and processes support consistent practice towards regulatory compliance. A shared understanding of expectations contributes to a well-organised and accountable service.
- Deliberate efforts to build trusting relationships with parents and whānau is resulting in increased community input into decision-making and a strengthened focus on children's learning and wellbeing. Feedback gathered through parent evenings and surveys is used meaningfully to shape service priorities.
- Strategic planning and targeted professional learning are guiding improvement-focused practice. Leaders and teachers engage in reflective inquiry that contributes to positive shifts in teaching and benefits for children.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Three Mountains Montessori 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, safety and wellbeing:

- 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?

Three Mountains Montessori will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Improve shared understanding of each phase of internal evaluation to build a more robust and improvement-focused evaluation process.
- Increase the visibility of all children's languages, cultures, and identities across the curriculum, assessment, and planning processes.
- Deepen teachers' knowledge of the Montessori philosophy to enhance curriculum design and identify explicit intentional teaching strategies to progress children's learning.

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.](#)



Vivien Ruth
Director of Early Childhood Education

9 February 2026

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	35 children, including up to 10 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	100%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 4%, NZ European/Pākehā 80%, American 8%, British 8%, Cook Island Māori 4%, Argentinian 4%, Brazilian 4%, Colombian 4%, Portuguese 4%, Taiwanese 4%, Welsh 4%,
Service roll	25
Review team on site	October 2025
Date of this report	9 February 2026
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, November 2021; Education Review, June 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.