



ERO Early Childhood Akatea | Governing Organisation Evaluation Report

Governing Organisation Name: Provincial Education Group Limited trading as Busy Bees Aotearoa

Head Office Location: Auckland

1 ERO's judgement of Provincial Education Group Limited trading as Busy Bees Aotearoa:

Indicator	Below the threshold for quality		Above the threshold for quality	
Organisational conditions	Improvement required	Working towards	Embedded	Excelling
Learning conditions	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 process.

Children's health and safety	Improvement required	Taking reasonable steps
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2 ERO's Judgements

A **Governing Organisation Evaluation** evaluates the extent to which organisational and learning conditions support equitable and excellent outcomes for all learners. [Te Ara Poutama Indicators of quality for early childhood education: what matters most](#) is the basis for making judgements about its effectiveness. The [Early Childhood Education \(ECE\) - Improvement Framework \(teacher led services\)](#) derived from the indicators, is used to inform the ERO's judgements about the organisation's performance. Evaluation for improvement | Ngā Aronga Whai Hua is integrated across all of the above areas.

3 About the Organisation

Provincial Education Group Ltd trading as Busy Bees Aotearoa is an early childhood organisation comprising 91 centre-based services nationally. At the time of this evaluation, 90 services were operating with a full licence, and one recently opened Puna Reo was on a probationary licence. The organisation has services within ethnically diverse communities across the country and includes several services based on the Montessori philosophy. The organisation has continued to acquire and integrate additional services since ERO's 2023 evaluation.

The organisation has delegated governance and strategic oversight to a senior leadership team, who hold responsibility for service delivery. Members of this team, along with an education team that includes regional managers, provide operational and curriculum leadership to services.

The created roles of Chief Operations Officer, Policy and Projects Administrator, and Education and Centre Operations Manager align with the organisation's strategic direction. Existing regional manager roles have been filled through internal appointments.

The overarching philosophy and principles of the organisation are underpinned by Te Ao Māori (Māori world) values of manaakitanga (care), whanaungatanga (connection), kotahitanga (collaboration), and ako (learning) and the principles of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*.

Findings from ERO's evaluation at the governance and organisational level included evaluating the extent to which the strategic intentions, quality improvement systems, processes and practices of Provincial Education Group Limited trading as Busy Bees Aotearoa support the provision of quality education and care at individual service level.

4 Organisation Progress

Overall significant progress has been made against the quality improvement actions in ERO's 2023 Akatea | Governing Organisation Evaluation report.

The areas of improvement for organisational leaders were to develop shared curriculum expectations that are consistent with the depth and breadth of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum. This included a stronger focus on:

- the clarity of key priorities for children's learning in partnership with parents and whānau
- greater acknowledgement of Māori as tangata whenua and the educational aspirations of Māori and Pacific peoples
- the implementation of a bicultural curriculum
- guidance for intentional high-quality teaching for equity of learner outcomes
- implementing regular review and evaluation of the curriculum.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive strategic plan and related action plans to address and progress the identified improvement actions. They promote a consistent approach to curriculum implementation through the recently launched Bee Curious/ Kia Pākiki curriculum framework aligned to *Te Whāriki*.

Organisational leaders have actively supported services to engage in learning focused partnerships with parents and whānau. This includes provision of ongoing professional development and resources, and clear expectations to enact the organisation's commitment to whanaungatanga.

The organisation reflects its commitment to Māori as tangata whenua and the educational aspirations of Māori and Pacific peoples in its' curriculum expectations and guidance across services. This includes useful guidance to support a bicultural curriculum and teacher development through intentional policy direction and access to resources that guide culturally responsive practice across services.

Leaders provide guidance and some expectations related to high quality teaching in the *Bee Curious/Kia Pākiki* curriculum design and its implementation.

Regular review is undertaken by the organisation and service leaders to maintain regulatory requirements. Comprehensive guidance and tools to support the evaluation of the curriculum have been reviewed, refined and implemented.

Leaders have enhanced learning environments, established collaborative teaching teams and improved systems for maintaining compliance with the regulatory standards.

5 Evaluation findings for December 2025

A comprehensive current strategic plan identifies key priorities and goals guided by the organisation's vision and values. Overarching strategic priorities include providing a localised curriculum, and a focus on culture and identity, leadership, whānau relationships, equity and inclusion.

An internal evaluation process is used well at organisation level to make ongoing improvements and changes including the monitoring of ongoing initiatives.

The education team uses quality improvement planning well to turn strategic priorities into actions that support organisational wide implementation. Reporting on the quality of curriculum is interwoven across multiple processes to provide the organisation with a good understanding of the effectiveness of its strategic priorities and the performance of services. Regional manager reporting captures operational performance and service updates.

Leadership development programmes implemented since ERO's previous review have increased the capability of leadership to coach, mentor and foster internal leadership networks. These approaches represent an important step toward building a sustainable leadership culture and developing organisational capacity.

Professional learning and development opportunities are available to all staff and are tailored to individual professional learning needs to improve teaching practice and professional capability. A key focus has been ensuring that professional learning is clearly aligned with the organisation's strategic goals.

6 Leadership to support quality education and care for children

An experienced senior leadership team work together with the education team and regional managers to oversee the operations of services. Responsibilities are delegated in ways that utilise individual staff strengths and experiences to foster a culture of collective responsibility.

Leaders have a strong understanding of teaching teams' capability through regular engagement and ongoing involvement at service level.

- Leaders have supported the development of collaborative teaching teams and have purposefully invested in improving learning environments to enhance curriculum provision.
- Monthly shared reports include curriculum related information. However, there is limited evaluative depth to effectively guide improvement in curriculum provision and teaching and learning.
- The development of a formal process with agreed indicators of quality teaching practice has been implemented to help leaders evaluate the quality and effectiveness of curriculum implementation. This process requires clearer guidance to enable leaders to consistently judge teaching quality or provide targeted feedback and support.
- A useful induction programme for new staff and a professional growth cycle for teacher development is in place to support ongoing learning.

7 Summary of findings from visits to sample services

ERO selected and visited a sample of 20 services to verify what Provincial Education Group Limited trading as Busy Bees Aotearoa knows about the quality of each of the services' learning conditions and to what extent the organisational conditions support service improvement. ERO selected the service sample.

Children's learning is generally supported by good quality teaching.

- Teachers provide well-resourced learning environments and use a variety of intentional teaching strategies to support children's learning.
- Teachers promote good opportunities for children's early literacy, numeracy and oral language development.
- Clear expectations for providing positive guidance for children have been developed and are being implemented.
- Learning environments for children up to the age of two years are calm, unhurried, and purposefully designed to respond to diverse ages and abilities. These environments, combined with teachers' positive and responsive interactions, foster infants' and toddlers' social and emotional competencies.
- Shared expectations to support teachers' practice have been developed and are being implemented. However, while assessment information shows children's participation in the curriculum intentional teaching strategies and evaluation of how well these have supported learning are not consistently evident in documentation.

Leaders and teachers are developing a shared understanding of how to undertake internal evaluation to make changes and improvements for children.

- An established systematic framework guides internal evaluation processes and is used within the organisation.
- Leaders have continued to build their capability and understanding of how to do and use internal evaluation processes to provide more targeted feedback and support for improvement.
- Organisational training to support teachers' understanding and use of evaluation to make improvements is currently being implemented.

8 Where to next for improvement?

Prior to the next ERO evaluation Provincial Education Group Limited trading as Busy Bees Aotearoa will progress the following actions through its quality improvement planning. This includes to:

- Grow teacher capability to use a wider range of teaching strategies that better support children's learning and show the effectiveness of these in assessment, planning and evaluation documentation.
- Fully implement the *Bee Curious* curriculum framework and refine guidance to support a shared understanding of what this looks like in practice.
- Provide governance and management with regular evaluative reporting about the quality of teaching and learning to better inform decision making.

9 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

As part of this review, a representative of Provincial Education Group Limited trading as Busy Bees Aotearoa completed an *ERO Governing Organisation Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they stated that the organisation has the systems, processes, and practices to be assured that service providers for licensed services within the organisation are meeting legal requirements related to:

- curriculum
- premises and facilities
- health and safety practices
- governance, management, and administration.

The licensed service provider/s of the sampled services listed at the end of this report also completed an *ERO Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist* for their service. In these documents they attested that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements, including those detailed in Ministry of Education Circulars and other documents, related to these areas.

All early childhood services are required to promote children's health and safety and to regularly review their compliance with legal requirements.

10 Next ERO Review

The next ERO evaluation is likely to be in 2 years.



Vivien Ruth
Director of Early Childhood Education

26 May 2026

[*Further information about how ERO evaluates Akatea | Governing Organisations is available here.*](#)

11 About the Governing Organisation

Service types	Education and care service	
Total number of licensed services	91	
Total number of children licensed for across all services	6968	
Total number of children enrolled across all services	6951	
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 26%, NZ European/Pakeha 58%, Samoan 5%, Indian 10%, other Pacific 10%	
Number of full-time equivalent teachers	Qualified	745
	Unqualified	366
Review team on site	December 2025	
Date of this report	26 May 2026	
Most recent ERO report(s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akatea Governing Organisation Evaluation First Report, September 2023	

12 List of sampled services

All sampled services are on a full licence.

Services sampled in this evaluation included:

Profile Number	Name of service	Service Type
45923	Busy Bees Alfriston Road	Education and care service
65084	Busy Bees Aoraki	Education and care service
70381	Busy Bees Avonhead	Education and care service
70063	Busy Bees Bottle Lake	Education and care service
60349	Busy Bees Greytown	Education and care service
45140	Busy Bees Hardy Street	Education and care service
46009	Busy Bees Judsons Rd	Education and care service
40200	Busy Bees Mangakakahi	Education and care service
65229	Busy Bees Mapua	Education and care service
47199	Busy Bees Motueka	Education and care service
40052	Busy Bees Ngongotahā	Education and care service
47457	Busy Bees Ormiston Road	Education and care service
45580	Busy Bees Pioneer Highway	Education and care service
45605	Busy Bees Richmond	Education and care service
46446	Busy Bees Roscommon Road	Education and care service
48245	Busy Bees Stoke	Education and care service
47144	Busy Bees Terrace End	Education and care service
40054	Busy Bees Whakatau Street	Education and care service
46462	Harewood Rd Montessori by Busy Bees	Education and care service
47580	Montessori Oamaru by Busy Bees	Education and care service

Activities undertaken by the evaluation team

- Pre-visit contact with the service provider/organisation leader(s).
- Meetings and / or conversations with governance, management and leaders.
- Verification and validation of what the organisation knows about the quality of education and care in its services.
- Reading documentation.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

Activities undertaken by the evaluation team in the service sample visits

- Pre-visit contact with the service leader.
- Meetings and / or conversations with leaders and teachers.
- Verification and validation of information shared by the organisation at service level.
- Reading documentation as service level.
- Scanning the learning environment and resources.
- Observations of interactions and teaching practice while onsite in the sample services.
- Sampling of information related to compliance.

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 organisation is excelling in the learning and organisational conditions to support high quality education and care for children.
Embedded	The organisation has embedded its learning and organisational conditions to support ongoing improvement in the provision of quality education and care for children.
	Below the threshold for quality
Working towards	The organisation is working towards establishing the learning and organisational conditions to support improvements in the provision of quality education and care for children.
Improvement required	The organisation has not yet developed the learning and organisational conditions to support the provision of quality education and care for children.