

ERO Early Childhood Service Akarangi | Quality Evaluation Report

Early Childhood Service Name: Montana Early Learning Centre

Profile Number: 70021

Location: Ilam, Christchurch

1 ERO's judgement of Montana Early Learning Centre 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
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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.

ERO visited this service prior to 1 September 2026, at which point the responsibility for regulatory oversight for Early Childhood Education transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Education Review Office. As such, this report is presented under the approach that ERO was using at the time of the visit

3 About the Service

Montana Early Learning Centre is one of two services governed by the University of Canterbury Students Association (UCSA). It is located on the university campus and provides care and education for the children of students and staff at the university, as well as the wider community. Children learn and play in three separate areas according to age groupings.

4 Progress since the previous ERO report

ERO's 2022 Akarangi quality evaluation identified three areas for improvement. These were to:

- Build teachers' understanding of the purpose and use of assessment for learning.
- Support leaders' and teachers' understanding and use of internal evaluation steps (such as, the gathering and analysis of data) to better identify what is going well for children's learning, what isn't and what changes are needed.
- Strengthen improvement planning processes (such as strategic and annual plans) so that plans are specific as to what and how changes will be implemented over time, and progress against these is carefully evaluated and reported to governance.

Good progress has been made. Deliberate professional learning and development, alongside appropriate resourcing, has supported the growth of staff capability and confidence.

Assessment information is increasingly used to support and extend children's learning. Teachers are able to show how children are learning and progressing over time through more robust and relevant evidence. Evaluation is helping to identify what is working well and what requires further improvement. As a result, there is improved alignment between goals, practices and intended outcomes for children. Teachers' use of evaluation to clearly identify the impact of their teaching strategies on children's learning and progress remains variable.

Improvement planning and governance reporting have become more structured and purposeful, with clear priorities and greater visibility of progress. This enables governance to more effectively oversee improvement initiatives and monitor progress.

5 Learning Conditions

The learner and their learning | He Whāriki Motuhake

The curriculum is intentionally designed and well-resourced to engage children in meaningful learning experiences.

- Teachers use a range of teaching strategies, including modelling of skills, that extend children's learning. This helps children become more involved in learning and develop their thinking, skills and understanding.
- Children have regular opportunities to engage with activities that help build their confidence and support the development of early language, reading and writing skills. Teachers ask thoughtful questions and have meaningful conversations with children to develop their spoken language.
- Learning experiences are carefully planned to respond to children's interests, strengths and learning needs. Learning is meaningful, engaging and relevant for each child.
- Leaders provide clear guidance and oversight of the curriculum to support high-quality learning experiences for children. Agreed priorities and regular review processes promote consistent teaching practice across the service.

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

Professional learning is strategically aligned to improvement priorities and builds teacher capability through collaborative and reflective practice.

- Professional learning goals are linked to appraisal, teacher inquiry and improvement priorities. Teachers focus on building their skills and improving outcomes for children.
- Teachers regularly talk about, and reflect on, their practice. They share ideas and learning with each other, helping to build knowledge across the team and support consistent practice.
- Regular feedback and guidance from leaders help teachers improve their knowledge, skills and teaching practice. This supports ongoing learning and helps strengthen teaching and outcomes for children.

6 Organisational conditions

Leadership fosters collaboration and improvement | Kaihautū

Leaders promote continuous improvement through collaborative processes, teaching and learning.

- Leaders promote a culture of ongoing improvement by regularly monitoring, reviewing and evaluating teaching and curriculum.
- Collaboration, strong relationships and shared professional learning enable shared understanding across the service. Teachers work towards common goals and increasingly provide consistent learning experiences for children.
- Leaders respond well to the different needs of children and their whānau. They identify and address barriers to participation and learning, helping to ensure all children have fair opportunities to learn, participate and succeed.

Resourcing allocation is clearly aligned to service and individual learning priorities for children.

- Strategic resourcing contributes positively to quality education provision and support for children's wellbeing and engagement. Long-serving staff and good teacher to child ratios enable responsive, sustained relationships with children.
- Regular operational and financial information informs governance, however there is limited reporting about curriculum quality, the impact of professional learning and outcomes for children to support decision-making. This limits governance's ability to make well-informed decisions that support sustained improvement.
- Systems and processes support the day-to-day operation of the service well. Policies and procedures are fit-for-purpose, and governance demonstrates responsiveness through access to external agencies to meet the diverse learning needs of children.

7 Management Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the staff and management of Montana Early Learning Centre 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?

Montana Early Learning Centre will include the following actions in its quality improvement planning:

- Support teachers to clearly identify the impact of intentional teaching strategies on children's learning outcomes and progress, to inform future curriculum decisions and learning priorities.
- Implement reporting that provides governance and leaders with evaluative information about the quality and impact of teaching practice, curriculum decisions, and professional learning to inform decision-making and ongoing improvement that promotes positive outcomes for children.

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

21 September 2026

9 Information About the Service

Service Type	Education and care service
Number licenced for	38 children, including up to 15 aged under 2
Percentage of qualified teachers	80-99%
Ethnic composition <i>Using rounded percentages</i>	Māori 12%, NZ European/Pākehā 18%, Chinese 25%, Indian 15%, African 6%, Latin American 6%, Australian 3%, Filipino 3%, Japanese 3%, Korean 3%, Sri Lankan 3%, other Asian 9%
Service roll	40
Review team on site	June 2026
Date of this report	21 September 2026
Most recent ERO report (s) These are available at www.ero.govt.nz	Akarangi Quality Evaluation, July 2022; Education Review, April 2019

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.