



huttcity KINDERGARTENS



2025

ANNUAL REPORT



growing young learners

Our Purpose

Vision | Matawhānuinui

Growing Young Learners

Values | Whanonga pono

Relationships / Excellence / Respect
/ Nurture / Inclusion

Mission | Mīhana

Teaching and leading through an empowering
learning environment to grow all learners

Core | Iho

Honour Te Ao Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and
cultural responsiveness

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A message from the Board

He Karere Mai i te Poari



Kia ora koutou katoa,

Ngā mihi o te wā! It's a pleasure to add a few thoughts to tautoko the work of all the Associations' kaimahi over the past 12 months and all that they have contributed to tamariki, whānau and community.

Since the beginning of our pilot 24 months ago, the New Zealand Kindergartens (NZK) approach to Network Governance has been to understand, awahi and support the wider Network through highlighting the excellence found within each Association.

We currently have nine Associations under Network Governance, all of whom are supporting each other's growth, expertise and effectiveness. We have had consistently positive feedback from leaders across these nine Associations that the move to network governance has brought them closer to their colleagues and created opportunities to learn and grow in the fields of leadership, management, teaching practice, processes and policies.

With the demographic and economic changes that lay ahead for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector, we are well positioned to work together and strengthen the place and value of kindergartens for the years ahead. While our role in supporting tamariki and their whānau is increasingly complex, the face of Aotearoa continues to change too. NZK now represents 19 of the 27 Kindergarten Associations in Aotearoa, (an increase of four in the past year), and across all Associations we are now a \$185M income business. More than ever, our support of each other to find out what works, while keeping our local flavour to meet the needs of different communities is a strength we can leverage.

I am incredibly proud to be alongside as we highlight the importance of quality early childhood education, and the relationships, experiences and connections that are made in these pivotal years in children's lives.

A huge congratulations on a successful year, and thank you to all kaimahi for the ongoing commitment and positive impact that you are making in the lives of the people in your community.

Mā te wā,

Sarah Tocker

Board Chair
New Zealand Kindergartens



From the Management Team

Mai i te rōpū whakahaere

Kia ora e te whānau,

It's been another great year at Hutt City Kindergartens, and we are proud to share with you just some of what we've achieved together over the past 12 months.

We now have 22 kindergartens in our association, offering a mix of term-time and all year-round services. We've also expanded our offerings to include longer hours and new options for children under two. As a management team, it's our ongoing goal to listen to the needs of our communities and adjust our services where we can, to ensure we're delivering on our mission - providing affordable, high-quality early childhood education.

This year, we've continued to work closely with New Zealand Kindergartens (NZK), our Board to align with and embed their strategic direction. At the same time, we've strengthened our commitment to embedding Froebel's principles throughout our pedagogy and methodology - supporting a consistent and holistic learning approach across all our kindergartens.

A key highlight of the year was our annual conference, where all our kaiako and kaimahi came together at Silverstream Retreat. This was a valuable opportunity to refresh professional learning, share practice, and reconnect as a collective, reinforcing the strength and unity of our teaching team.

Our senior teaching team has continued their important mahi - supporting our kaiako and kaimahi to ensure we're delivering the best possible education for the tamariki in our care. Alongside this, our early intervention and speech-language therapists have continued their vital work with tamariki across our kindergartens, helping to support positive outcomes for their learning and development.

We were also proud to welcome two new kindergartens into our association this year - Fetu Ao Kindergarten and Titiro Whakamua Kindergarten. It has been an absolute privilege to include these services, and we've really enjoyed supporting the new teams as they connect with and grow alongside their communities.

Ngā mihi,

Norma Roberts & Charmaine Hakaraia
General Managers



Acknowledgement and Thank you

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou!

We are grateful to all those who continue to support our kindergartens and enable us to carry out the important mahi of creating safe, nurturing learning environments for our tamariki each and every day.

To our incredible kaiako and teaching teams - thank you. We acknowledge the dedication you bring to your roles, the relationships you foster with whānau, and the way you continually shape kindergarten spaces that reflect and serve your communities. Your mahi is the foundation of our success.

We also extend our sincere thanks to the NZK Board for their ongoing support, and in particular to Jill Bond for your guidance and leadership. We are looking forward to the opportunities ahead as we begin to embed more of Friedrich Froebel's principles into our practice, aligning with our new strategic direction and continuing to evolve and innovate.

To all our wider staff across the association - administrators, van drivers, association office team - thank you for your commitment and the essential roles you play. Your behind-the-scenes mahi ensures our kindergartens run smoothly and continue to thrive.

We are proud of what we've achieved together this year, and we look forward to continuing this journey with all of you to continue to create equitable and affordable early childhood education in Te Awakairangi.

Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu.

Adorn the bird with feathers so it can fly.

Norma Roberts & Charmaine Hakaraia

General Managers



2025 Highlights

Teaching and Learning

Over the past year, our teaching and learning journey reflected our shared commitment to excellence, equity, and community. Across Hutt City Kindergartens, kaiako have continued to grow their practice, deepening their understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, strengthening cultural responsiveness, and ensuring every tamariki experiences a sense of belonging, success, and mana motuhake. Our work continues to be guided by our Froebelian kaupapa and Te Whāriki, weaving together the best of past wisdom and present innovation to support flourishing learning communities.



Supporting Teachers to work with Diverse Learners

We were delighted to welcome back Claire Fouhy, our Speech Language Therapist, from her year volunteering in Tonga through VSA. Claire's expertise and passion have further strengthened our Learning Support service. Together with our Early Intervention Teacher (EIT), she is exploring new ways to work directly with whānau who are struggling to access Ministry of Education services. As these services have reduced, many families are experiencing significant stress, and we are seeking practical ways to bridge these gaps where possible.

A positive example of how we have supported this was our professional learning and development (PLD) offered during the July term break, which focused on autism and had visible impact. Teachers implemented new strategies, knowledge, and approaches learned from this PLD, improving the experiences and learning outcomes for tamariki with diverse needs.

Research and Quality Improvements

Six of our equity-funded kindergartens participated in a research project with NZCER, Strengthening Early Literacy: Exploring Story Sharing in Diverse, Equity-Funded Kindergartens. The findings affirmed the importance of cultural visibility and inclusion in early literacy, stating that it is a matter of mana, equity, and educational justice to ensure tamariki see their cultures, languages, and experiences reflected in their learning.

ERO

Eleven of our kindergartens were scheduled for Education Review Office (ERO) visits in late 2024. Kaiako, Senior Teachers, and General Managers worked collaboratively to ensure readiness, reviewing compliance requirements and reflecting on their progress since previous reviews. A key focus had been evidencing positive outcomes for tamariki Māori, Pacific learners, diverse learners, and under-three-year-olds.

Following these reviews, we received a positive report from ERO which included statements such as: -

'Managers and leaders actively foster a culture of trust and collaboration. They model and expect professional accountability and collective responsibility for the wellbeing and learning of all children. The professional advisory team regularly work with teaching teams to provide support and guidance'.



Te Ao Māori and Cultural Growth

Our Pouako continued to support each team to develop and implement their Te Ao Māori plans. These plans reflect the needs of their tamariki and whānau, while also growing teachers' own mātauranga Māori.



Two new services joined our Association

This year, we welcomed two new kindergartens to our association: Fetu Ao and Titiro Whakamua. Both are close-knit communities that bring unique strengths and connections. Titiro Whakamua Kindergarten, located in Upper Hutt, is proudly partnered with the Teen Parent Unit, supporting young parents and their tamariki. Fetu Ao Kindergarten is based in the heart of Tui Glen School and celebrates its strong Pasifika identity and deep community ties.

Professional Learning and Development

PLD continues to be a key priority at HCK. It is through ongoing professional learning that our kaiako continue to grow personally and professionally with positive outcomes for all tamariki. As teachers engage in a wide range of workshops and learning opportunities, they return to their kindergartens with renewed energy, deeper understanding, and new skills and strategies that strengthen teaching and learning across our organisation.

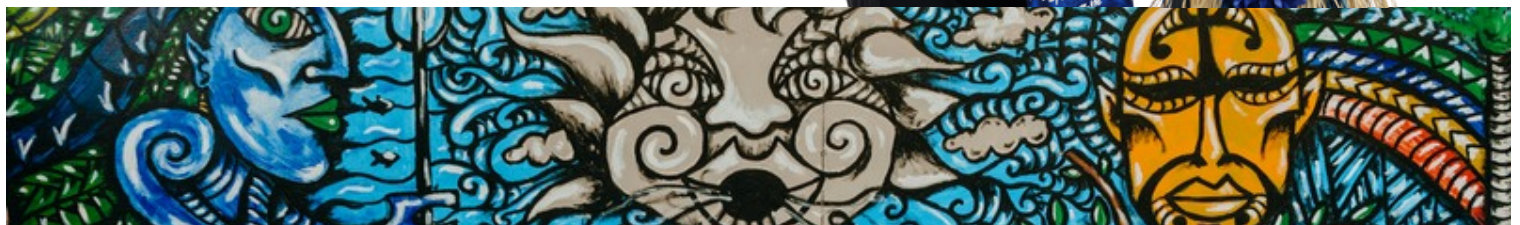
Pasifika Education

In late 2024 four of our teams engaged in the Tapasā SELO PLD through the Ministry of Education. Head Teachers shared their learning across the network, inspiring others to engage in this professional journey in 2025. Our Culturally Diverse Group unpacked the Ministry's Pacific Education Plan 2020-2030, identifying key goals for HCK's ongoing commitment to Pacific success.



Cultural Competency and Curriculum Development

The five teachers who received the Ministry of Education's Cultural Grants, alongside our Pouako, have been instrumental in leading HCK's cultural priorities. Our first HCK Māori Advisory Group met beginning the development of an HCK Māori Education Strategy.



Financial Summary 2025

Pūtea 2025

Financial Overview – Year Ending 30 June 2025

Hutt City Kindergarten Association (HCK) achieved a strong financial result for the year, recording a surplus of \$877,406. This reflects our continued healthy financial position and prudent management. A significant portion of the surplus—\$696,674—was reinvested into capital improvements across our kindergartens.

Enrolment and Demand

HCK continues to experience high enrolment numbers and strong waiting lists, underscoring the sustained demand for our services and the value our kindergartens provide to the community.

Operational Highlights

Income:

Government Grant Income rose by \$1,388,756, driven by:

- A slight increase in Ministry of Education funding rates
- Transition of two additional kindergartens to all-year models, supporting working families

Expenditure:

Expenditure increased by \$889,011, primarily due to:

- Employment and administration costs linked to KTCA salary adjustments
- Pre-integration support for two new services joining HCK

Capital Investments

Capital expenditure of \$696,674 funded key upgrades, including:

- Waiwhetu Kindergarten: New storage room and kitchen
- Taita Kindergarten: Upgraded children's bathroom
- Koraunui & Waterloo Kindergartens: New flooring
- Koraunui, Maungaraki, Naenae & Pukeatua Kindergartens: Outdoor environment enhancements

Locally, Hutt City Kindergartens is thriving. With a 96% occupancy rate and a waiting list of over 1,200 children, demand for services is strong. This year the Association achieved a healthy financial result, which means we can keep investing in things that matter, from upgrading playgrounds and facilities, to introducing new digital learning tools, to investing in new services and strengthening leadership among our teachers.

Financial Overview 2025

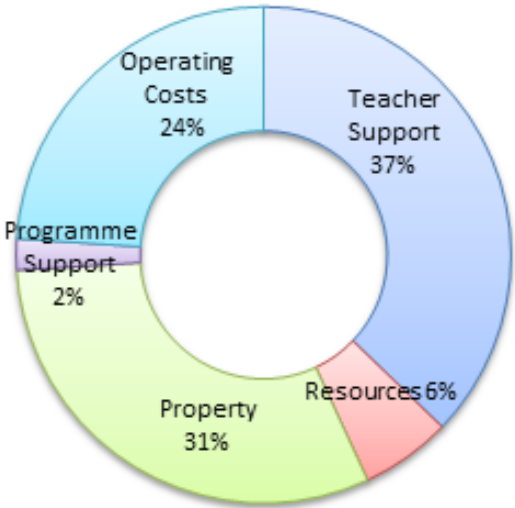
Pūtea 2025

Equity and Targeted Funding

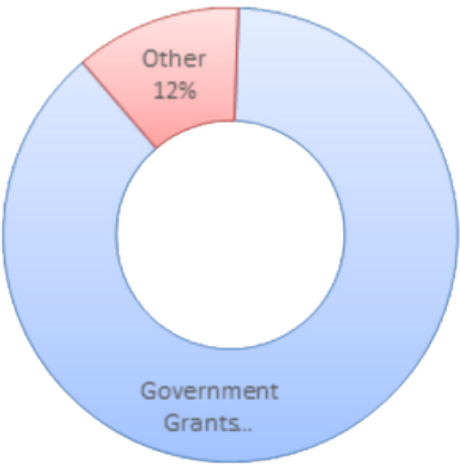
We continue to receive Equity Funding for 12 of our kindergartens. This extra funding allows us to increase participation and enhance the children’s learning experiences.

We received \$58,348 of Targeted Funding during the financial year, this funding contributes towards the cost of our Early Intervention Teacher, Speech Language Therapist and Pou ako, who assist Teachers with diverse learners, speech and language development and implementation of Te Ao Maori curricula.

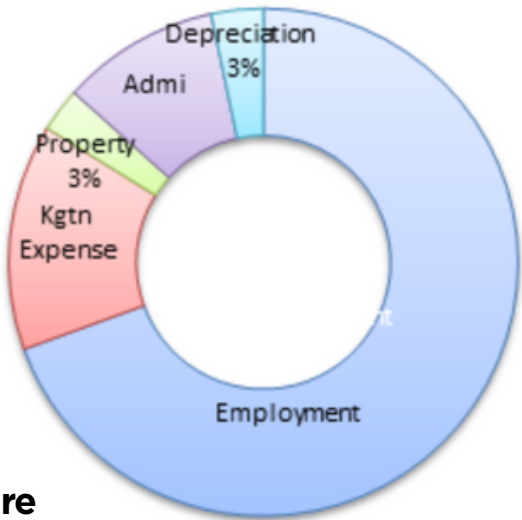
Equiity and Targeted Funding



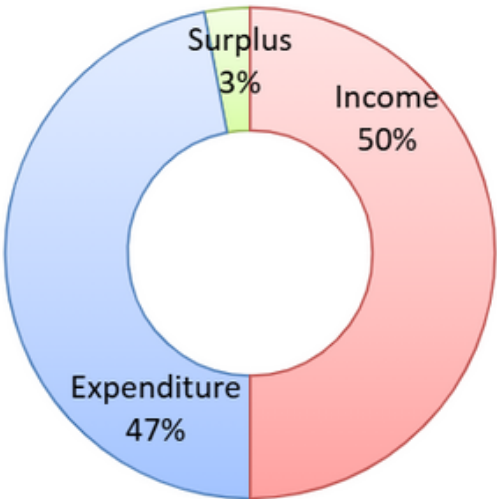
Income 2025



Expenditure 2025



Income & Expenditure



HUTT CITY KINDERGARTENS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

For the financial year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE		
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
Fees	946,925	841,162
Interest Received	262,786	298,572
Government Grants	12,883,063	11,494,306
Whanau Payments/Donations	98,626	96,410
Miscellaneous Income	420,955	894,991
Total Revenue	<u>14,612,356</u>	<u>13,625,441</u>
LESS DIRECT EXPENSES		
Employment	9,537,736	9,202,088
Administration	1,980,082	1,652,836
Property & Maintenance Costs	383,942	326,936
Kindergarten Expenses	1,381,123	1,249,912
	<u>13,282,883</u>	<u>12,431,773</u>
Depreciation	452,110	414,209
Total Expenses	13,734,993	12,845,982
Total Surplus for the year	<u><u>877,362</u></u>	<u><u>779,459</u></u>
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE		
Current Asset	6,402,385	5,773,110
Fixed Assets	<u>3,184,892</u>	<u>2,937,845</u>
Total Assets	<u>9,587,277</u>	<u>8,710,954</u>
Liabilities	<u>885,609</u>	<u>886,648</u>
Total Association Equity	<u><u>8,701,668</u></u>	<u><u>7,824,305</u></u>

NOTE: This is an unaudited summary financial report, if you would like to see the full audited financial statements they are available on request.

Kindergarten Highlights

Ngā mihi nui kindergarten

Arakura Kindergarten - Community connection

The highlight for Arakura was our annual Matariki celebration. We prepared our own hangi and invited our whānau to come in and share kai with us. In the morning, we had parents come into awahi/support us in the preparation of the kai. Whānau arrived later that afternoon and we honoured our future generations by planting trees and plants.

During this time, several helpers were in the kitchen finishing preparing the kai and when the planting was finished it was time to eat. Tepu (table) were set up inside and in the verandah. It was great to see whānau sitting together - grandparents, aunts and cousins. Everyone enjoyed their dinner and afterwards we were able to honour those gone before us by blowing bubbles and sending them wishes.



Avalon Kindergarten - Improvements and celebrating diversity

At the start of 2024, we were thrilled to have a new gazebo installed by Nick, our HCK Property Manager. Funded by a successful raffle, this addition has improved our outdoor area and inspired imaginative, creative play. It's supported our teaching focus on loose parts play and active movement, helping tamariki build skills in creativity, cooperation, resilience, and friendship.

We reconfigured part of our indoor space to extend these learning opportunities, which has been a valuable shift for both tamariki and kaiako. Celebrating the diverse cultures of our whānau remains central to our philosophy. We are fortunate to have strong whānau support, enriching our cultural celebrations and shared learning.

This year we re-established our regular visits to Naenae Library. Whānau have been able to join, and these trips have become a much-anticipated part of our programme, fostering a love of books, supporting early literacy, and strengthening our links with the local community.



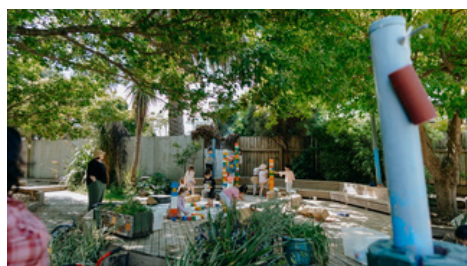
Boulcott Kindergarten - A year of growth

A major milestone at Boulcott kindergarten was completing the revamped outdoor area, which was completed in October 2024, this redevelopment was in preparation for the move to becoming a full-year model. The new design includes a safe climbing space for gross motor development and a bike path, supporting active play.

The teaching team reintroduced carpentry as a key curriculum area. With support from a fundraising group and a successful grant application, a new shed was installed with four workstations. Special thanks to Nick, our Property Manager, for bringing this project to life.

A new initiative, 'Toast Time,' was introduced to tamariki and their morning routine, supporting fine motor skills and helping them to settle into their day. We're grateful for the generous donations of bread, spreads, a freezer from the Anderson family, and a heater for our nappy change room—thanks to Will Strang and Jono Fletcher for their support.

Te Ao Māori and embedding this within the daily practice of the Kindergarten remains a priority for 2025/26 with guidance from Evelyn, our Pouako, and have embraced a range of cultural celebrations including Chinese New Year, Holi, Pink Ribbon Day, Easter, and Matariki, all woven into our Teaching and Learning Plan and Local Curriculum.



Dyer Street Kindergarten - Whanaungatanga and celebrating Matariki

Dyer Street Kindergarten has focused on strengthening whanaungatanga - our respectful working relationships with our whānau and local communities. We've enhanced our connections with Dyer Street School through regular visits and important cultural celebrations. Regular termly visits between our kindergarten and the new entrant class have supported our tamariki in transitioning to school, helping them become more confident in adapting to the changes of starting school.

During the Matariki celebrations, we were invited to attend the school's assembly, where the tamariki performed several waiata they had been practising. Their performance showcased their growing confidence within the kura. This year, we collaborated with the kura for Hutt Fest, further strengthening our connection with the kura and supporting the tamariki in sharing their talents with the wider community.

This involved extensive communications between our kaiako and the school, as well as regular practice sessions for waiata and kapa haka performances. It was a learning experience for our tamariki to build tuakana/teina relationships with the tamariki from the school and to engage in cultural experiences. Our whānau have played a significant role in these events and they were able to take an active part in the learning of their tamariki.



Epuni Kindergarten - Celebrating community and culture

Epuni kindergarten sits within a diverse community, and we take every opportunity to celebrate the cultures of whānau who attend our kindergarten. Our teaching team acknowledges this as an important aspect, and we love learning about new cultures. For the first time we celebrated Sinhala and Tamil New Year that our Sri Lankan family came in to host. It was lovely of them to share their culture and rituals with us and demonstrate how they celebrate New Years in their culture.

Fanau participated in Hutt Fest. Hutt Fest is when schools/kindergartens come together and celebrate our Pasifika heritage through song and dance. Our fanau practiced pese (songs) and siva (dance) with our friends at Epuni School. We were so proud of them all for building that confidence to perform in front of a huge audience.

Te Whāriki expresses our vision that all children grow up in New Zealand as competent and confident learners, strong in their identity, language and culture. It emphasises our bicultural foundation, our multicultural present and the shared future we are creating.



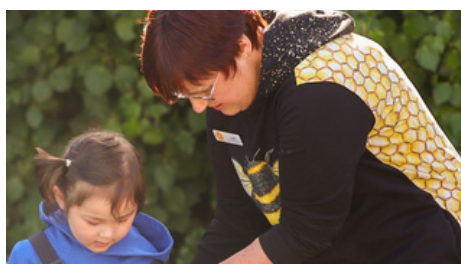
Fetu Ao Kindergarten - New beginnings

In February 2025, Hutt City Kindergartens (HCK) began supporting Stokes Valley Community Childcare Centre (SVCCC). On 1 July 2025, the centre officially became Fetu Ao Kindergarten - part of the HCK Association. This change has enabled us to continue offering high-quality teaching, learning, and care to tamariki in Stokes Valley. Our kaiako now have greater access to professional development, networks, and resources, deepening their practice and strengthening outcomes for tamariki.

Since February, we've focused on building enrolments and developing strong relationships with whānau and tamariki, celebrating our multicultural identity and inclusive philosophy. Highlights this year include a special whānau evening honouring past and present kaiako of SVCCC, and building connections with Tui Glen School, supporting smooth transitions to primary school.

As one of only two kindergartens in HCK catering to under-twos - and the only one with a Samoan name chosen by whānau - our environment reflects our commitment to community, culture, and belonging.

Looking ahead, we're excited to redevelop our outdoor space, enhance our learning environments, and strengthen partnerships with Tui Glen School, our local marae, and whānau, while continuing to grow as a new teaching team united by shared goals and values.



Holborn Kindergarten - Nurturing growth

At Holborn Kindergarten, our focus remains on supporting tamariki to grow holistically through meaningful relationships and an evolving learning environment. The tamariki have had the opportunity to attend regular park excursions, encouraging physical development, connection to the whenua, and whanaungatanga.

Outdoor developments are underway, including a new water play area that promotes hands-on learning. Indoors, we've redesigned our sensory play space to ensure daily access to sustainable, well-organised resources.

Our whānau engaged in the Early Reading Program, strengthening home-kindergarten learning links. This enabled us to purchase an interactive panel, expanding our digital learning opportunities.

We've made changes to our whare kai to better support tamariki during kai time, aligning with a primary caregiving model.

This year, the team began embedding philosophy and practices inspired by the Heart School, deepening our commitment to teaching from the heart and creating an environment that is meaningful for tamariki, whānau, and kaiako.



Kelson Kindergarten - Weaving Te reo Māori through our days

This year we have worked to embed Te Ao Māori in our daily practice; we have included a daily hui at morning mat time. At the hui we follow Māori protocol where tamariki recite their pepeha and kaiako teach children new kupu that we work to embed daily across our kindergarten. These kupu align with the group focus of the term and we often introduce a waiata to support this learning too.

One of our core focuses was developing te reo Māori language in Social and Emotional Competence, we changed the words of, 'If Your Happy And You Know It' to introduce harikoa, pōuri and pukuriri along with strategies that support tamariki growing regulation techniques. It has been rewarding for the kaiako to hear tamariki using Te Reo instead of English and remind each other of what to do if they're feeling pukuriri - take a breath, or pōuri - have a cuddle. Whānau have shared feedback with kaiako on the language use of the tamariki noticing the kupu and waiata their tamariki have been sharing at home.



Koraunui Kindergarten - Embracing tamariki led teaching

Enhancing the outdoor area was a key focus for us in 2024. We took the opportunity to reflect on what changes could be made to improve our outdoor environment. As a result, we redeveloped the space by increasing the open areas available, allowing tamariki to engage more freely in general movement-based games and activities.

We see the importance of keeping our environment and our resources well maintained and engaging for our tamariki, how our spaces are managed impact the tamariki and their daily opportunities to learn, as a team we are committed to ensuring our environment can be adapted to suit the interests, skills and strengths of each individual.

We made improvements to our decking area following the interests of our tamariki. Greenery and a wooden playhouse were added to create a warm and inviting space, new play resources were added to this area and created opportunities for tamariki to engage in dramatic play in an outdoor setting. It has been wonderful to see the friendships that have been made within this space and the conversations had.

We look forward to continuing to reflect on our environment and explore new and exciting ways to extend the interests of our tamariki.



Maungaraki Kindergarten - Transformation of space and sustainability

After several years of fundraising, 2024 marked the transformation of our outdoor environment. New safety turf, full perimeter fencing, and a stunning stained-glass window of Ngake and Whātaïtai now welcome whānau into our kindergarten. We've improved drainage around the sandpit, added a native garden, new sandpit storage, a mud kitchen, and created an accessible vegetable garden. Our verandah now features rubber tiling, and new drop-down blinds are being installed to better protect our play spaces.

We reviewed our planning and assessment practices to ensure strong alignment with Te Whāriki and our learning priorities. Highlights included visits from storytellers Dick Weir and Moira Wairama, and a trip to Rimutaka Gym Sports to support our focus on movement and physical play.

Sustainability has been a key learning theme, with tamariki participating in a 6-week waste audit and enjoying an engaging show from Zappo about recycling and environmental care.

Whānau support continues to be a vital part of our community, with involvement in celebrations such as Matariki, Diwali, Holi, Samoan Language Week, Grandparents Day, and more. Our connections with local kura have strengthened, with regular visits to Maungaraki and Normandale Schools and weekly walks to the Maungaraki School library.



Moera Kindergarten - Purposeful play spaces and professional development

Moera Kindergarten continues to thrive as we create engaging, purposeful play spaces for our tamariki. Recognising the need for a quiet sensory area, we introduced resources to support sensory play and upgraded our outdoor space, including a new retreat seat around our beautiful tree and unique artwork gifted by local artist Jennifer Feek.

Our group planning reflected growing interest in Aotearoa's atua, leading to two terms of learning through Māori legends. Tamariki have proudly created and displayed representations of each atua, with their presence now a natural part of our daily conversations - especially on windy days when we hear, "Tāwhirimātea is really blowing today!"

Kaiako have also been on a learning journey, supported by the HCK Excellence Grant, to better understand and support neurodivergent learners. Our professional development has included Autism, ADHD, Dyspraxia, and Global Development Delay, resulting in an environment more inclusive of all learning styles and needs. Whānau involvement has been incredible - our Matariki celebration welcomed over 60 attendees, working together to share kai and honour the occasion. This partnership continues to shape a curriculum grounded in authentic, whānau-led learning.



Naenae Kindergarten - Transforming our environment

It's been a busy and exciting year at Naenae Kindergarten as we've undergone a series of renovations that have transformed our environment. With new carpet extending into the play area, fresh lino, a repaired ceiling, and both the interior and exterior freshly painted, our space now feels lighter, softer, and more welcoming.

These changes inspired kaiako to refresh our learning areas, creating engaging, stimulating spaces for tamariki. We've noticed our tamariki are more settled and exploring new areas with enthusiasm.

New heaters on the deck have also created a warm, cosy space, allowing for uninterrupted play even during the colder months. Whānau have shared wonderful feedback, noting how inviting the kindergarten now feels - a place where they're happy to stay, relax, and feel at home.



Nettie Riley Kindergarten - Celebrating learning, culture and community

At Nettie Riley Kindergarten, we are incredibly proud of the journey we've taken this past year. A key highlight has been deepening our connection to Te Ao Māori and embedding more authentic practices into our daily teaching.

In Terms 1 and 2, we explored ngā atua and their roles as kaitiaki, which led to tamariki taking on the role of kaitiaki in our kindergarten. A trip to Te Papa and a recycling project grew from this learning, with tamariki and whānau leading many projects now proudly displayed throughout our vibrant environment.

We've also celebrated strong whānau and community engagement. This year we welcomed story-sharing whānau, performers from the Royal NZ Ballet, a violinist from Arohanui Strings, and police officers with a dog handler - all enriching our learning through real-life experiences.

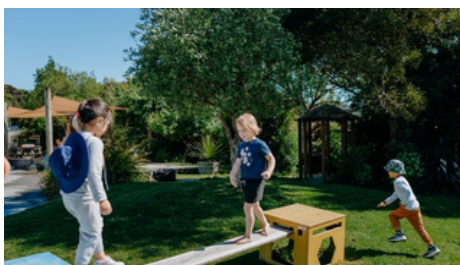
Our Matariki evening was a wonderful success, with most of our whānau joining us to celebrate. We are proud of all we've achieved together and look forward to continuing this mahi in the year ahead.



Parkway Kindergarten - Creating culturally inclusive environments

Over the last year our passion for creating and providing a culturally inclusive learning environment, that nau mai/afio mai all ākonga and whānau has continued. We have been busy over the past year celebrating diversity and inviting tamariki, their whānau and aiga to share what is important to them and join us in celebrating significant cultural events.

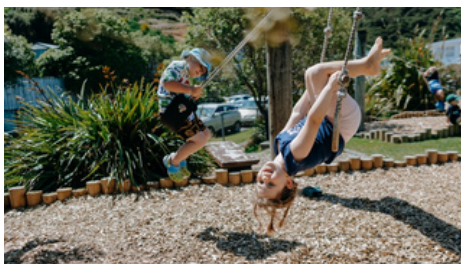
We have also created dedicated spaces within our learning environment that enables tamariki to explore, discover and engage. We have continued to connect with our local schools, Mama Mate and community to provide valuable learning experiences and create lifelong memories for our tamariki.



Pencarrow Kindergarten - Creating inclusive spaces

At Pencarrow Kindergarten we are proud to continue providing a learning environment that is unhurried and inclusive of all tamariki and whānau. Kaiako have attended several professional learning courses to support the ways we work with our tamariki who learn in different ways, how we can show manaakitanga to their whānau, we have purchased new resources for the environment.

Our kindergarten day and routines continue to be flexible so we can meet the individual needs of tamariki. The outdoor natural space that makes this place so special contributes to a calm and peaceful day where tamariki spontaneously interact with nature and have the opportunity to enjoy this in all seasons of the year.



Pukeatua Kindergarten - Allowing tamariki to be their authentic selves

At Pukeatua Kindergarten, one of our goals this year has focused around creating an environment that allows tamariki to be their authentic selves. We have been lucky to have some upgrades in our 'sunroom', with the addition of new carpet and furnishings giving it a more homely feel for our dramatic and family play experiences.

Outdoors we are enjoying how small changes have encouraged tamariki to set new challenges and engage in 'courageous play' by taking calculated risks through exploration with their whole bodies. The addition of a new swing set has enhanced this space with plans for more upgrades soon.

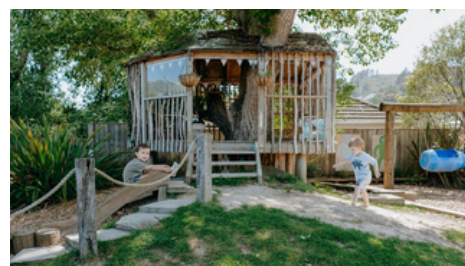
A big highlight for tamariki was our Matariki Dinner and Disco celebration, which received an awesome whānau turnout and still has tamaiti reminiscing about it months later!



Stokes Valley Kindergarten - Connecting with the whenua

We have been redeveloping our gardens outside, looking for authentic ways to grow children's learning and play from a Te Ao Māori perspective. We have worked with Jo from He Puawai Trust, which is a local community service dedicated to helping people learn how to grow their own kai. We have held whānau days where children and their families plant, water and nurture the seedlings they have planted, understanding the importance of Kaitiakitanga which is the concept of guardianship of the sky, sea and the land. A kaitiaki is a guardian, and through storytelling, artwork and Jo's passion we have developed an appreciation for taking care of our land by working in partnership with whanau and our wider communities.

To extend upon this learning we are exploring the idea of an interactive outdoor classroom as we continue to protect and nurture the relationships we have built with the community, the land and living world around us.



Sun Valley Kindergarten - Enhancing outdoor play

At Sun Valley Kindergarten, we've recently added a range of new outdoor equipment to support active movement and enrich tamariki play. These include three play boxes, a slide, a horizontal swinging bar, an abseiling climbing frame, a new twing, and a unique swing set. These additions were made in response to safety considerations identified during our regular playground checks and are part of our ongoing commitment to providing a safe and stimulating environment.

The revamped outdoor space now offers a wider variety of physical challenges, supporting tamariki in developing coordination, strength, and confidence. We've also seen a positive impact on social competencies, with tamariki practising turn-taking and upholding our kindergarten kaupapa. It has been great to observe tuakana-teina relationships in action, as children encourage and celebrate one another's successes.



Taita Kindergarten - Connecting with culture and community

Over the past year, Taita Kindergarten has celebrated significant milestones from honouring the unique identities and talents of our tamariki to embracing the diversity of our community. A standout moment was our performance at Hutt Festival, which reflected our values of culture, creativity, and whanaungatanga.

Our continued focus on creating a safe, inclusive environment has empowered tamariki to confidently share their taonga, mātauranga, and stories, both within the kindergarten and in the wider Taita community. We've strengthened our relationship with Taita Central School and are now building strong connections with Pomare School and St. Michael's through our transition-to-school programme. Our tuakana-teina partnership with Taita College has also supported shared goals for ākonga success.

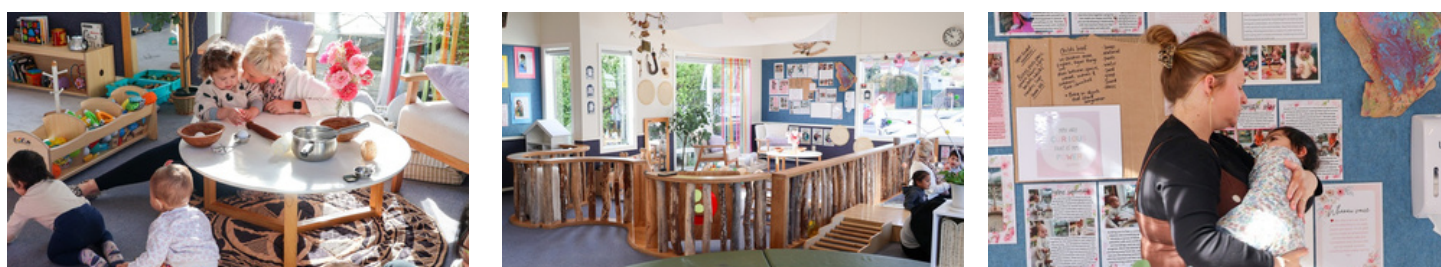


Titiro Whakamua Kindergarten - Creating a nurturing space and developing new relationships

We are proud to be part of Titiro Whakamua Kindergarten. Since HCK took over earlier this year, we've felt supported to create a safe, nurturing space where tamariki and their māmā thrive. Our kindergarten is filled with aroha - a place where relationships, kindness, and joy are at the centre of all we do. Tamariki are growing in confidence, learning to trust, take risks, and explore through play. Strong, respectful connections with whānau have been key. Their values and aspirations are reflected in our environment and daily practice, creating a deep sense of belonging.

What makes us unique is the close partnership between māmā and kaiako. Our philosophy honours whānau as the child's first teachers, carrying deep wisdom and love. Every day, māmā are active in their children's learning alongside kaiako, in a truly special and empowering space.

Looking ahead, we're excited to strengthen these relationships, develop our outdoor spaces, and welcome more tamariki into our play-based learning environment.



Waiwhetu Kindergarten - Enjoying sensory play

At Waiwhetu Kindergarten, tamariki have been enjoying lots of different types of messy and water play. We have found messy play provides lots of opportunity for social engagement. Tamariki experience something new together and share their experiences with one another or use the medium to create social play situations such as cooking, baking, or imitating mealtimes at home with whanau. To meet the needs of all tamariki, teachers have been mindful to provide opportunities to engage with this indoors and outdoors.

This type of play promotes language development as children describe what the attributes of what they are playing with and how it feels. Tamariki learn math and science concepts as they experiment with volume, measurement, three dimensional shapes, space and the properties of the medium they are playing with.



Waterloo Kindergarten - Improving our understanding of language

We participated in the Talking Matters Project (Talking Matters is a New Zealand-based initiative focused on improving early oral language development in children.), working with Jo and Anna to explore and strengthen our language environment. Using observations and LENA recordings, we gathered insights into adult-child interactions and chose to focus on improving conversation-rich opportunities in our busy art area.

We trialled placing a LENA (Language Environment Analysis) device on the art table itself, which helped us understand how to better support focused, meaningful interactions. Changes included repositioning the art table, reducing materials, and limiting foot traffic by closing the nearby door. The project led to increased kaiako confidence and more intentional teaching practices, with greater awareness of how our environment supports language development. This mahi continues to positively shape our daily practice.



Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to the following organisations for their support of our kindergartens:

TG McCarthy Trust

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StoryPark

Resene Paints

Shoe Box Christmas

Lions Club Wainuiomata

KidsCan

Spark

Sport Education, Community & Cultural Foundation (SECC)

We would also like to acknowledge the whānau/families that actively support our kaiako/teaching teams and help with fundraising for our kindergartens.





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