

**kindergartens**  
SOUTH

Pūtahi Kura Pūhou o Murihiku

TE MANAAKI I TO  
TAIAO

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1

2

3

**Annual  
Report**

**ska.co.nz**

# Table of Contents



3

**Key Personnel**

4

**Message from the Board**

7

**Overview from the CEO**

8

**The Year in Numbers**

11

**Taiao Tūhura / Discovering Nature**

12

**Enviroschools**

13

**Our Kindergartens**

38

**Financials**

42

**Map of Our Kindergartens**



# The Board



**Louise King**  
Board Chair



**Michaela Bekhuis**  
Board Member



**Ryan Lester**  
Board Member



**Chris Kennett**  
Board Member



**Jess Tapp**  
Board Member

## Association Leadership Team

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - Patrick Edwards  
Finance Manager - Nikki Stodart  
Education Lead - Wendy McLachlan  
Senior Teacher - Heidi Boniface  
HR & Culture Manager - Catherine Frost  
Operations Manager - Debbie Tynan  
Property Manager - Joseph Sanginiti

## Life Members

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Gaynor Logan    | Karen Purdue    |
| Wendy McArthur  | Winy van Rossum |
| Robin McCall    | Gil Wikstrom    |
| Diane McWhirter | Pauline Smith   |



# Message From The Board

**Mā te kimi ka kite, mā te kite ka mōhio, mā te mōhio ka mārama.**

Through seeking comes discovery, through discovery comes knowledge, through knowledge comes understanding.

As we reflect on the journey of 2025, I am filled with a deep sense of pride in what we, Southland Kindergarten Association (SKA) whānau, have achieved. It has been a year defined by strong progress, thoughtful planning, and a steadfast focus on our core purpose: the wellbeing and growth of our tamariki, whānau, and communities. There is a tangible momentum within our Association as we move forward into a new chapter. Before reflecting on our strategic mahi, I wish to extend some very important welcomes and farewells.

First, we are absolutely delighted to welcome Jess Tapp to our Board of Governors team. Jess comes to us with strong connections to our Northern Southland whānau, and we are excited for the energy and insight she brings to the table. During 2025 we also bid a heartfelt farewell to Jay Coote. We thank Jay for his contributions to the Board and are delighted that he can continue to share his expertise and passion for Murihiku in his community role within SKA.

A significant focus for the Board has been supporting and approving initiatives that align with our long-term strategic direction. Looking back at the highlights of 2025, we are proud of the progress made, including the purchase of Northern Southland Kindergarten and the completion of various extensions and upgrades to several kindergartens across our region. These investments ensure our spaces remain fit-for-purpose for our tamariki.





# From the Board - continued

The Board has remained committed to supporting and approving budgets that facilitate this growth. While we acknowledge our 2025 end-of-year financial position, we continue to work hard to provide 30 free hours to our whānau and approve budgets that align with association growth. Despite the current complex economic environment, our goal remains steadfast: to be the first choice for ECE in our communities by providing high-quality, accessible education.

Furthermore, members of our Board have been present at the annual NZK Hui and represented our association at the ECE Conference in Rotorua this year. We engaged in vital kōrero about the future of kindergartens in Aotearoa, reinforcing the strength of our movement and the importance of collective advocacy to ensure the continued growth and sustainability of kindergartens across New Zealand.

Of course, none of our successes this year would be possible without the dedication of our people. He mihi nui, he mihi aroha to our senior leadership team for their unwavering commitment to the growth of our Association, their mahi, and their leadership in shaping a strong future for kindergarten in our region. To our exceptional kaiako, your dedication on the ground is the true heartbeat of our kindergartens. Every day, you bring passion, expertise, and a deep sense of care to our tamariki, nurturing their growth and shaping bright, hopeful futures through your daily practice of manaakitanga. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou—our kindergartens thrive because of you.

As we look to the horizon, the Board is excited about the direction we are heading. We are an Association that is growing, expanding, and moving forward with a clear sense of purpose.









# Message From The CEO

Kia ora koutou,

Reflecting on 2025, it has been a year of strong progress, thoughtful planning, and continued focus on what matters most — our tamariki, whānau, and communities. There is a real sense of momentum across the Association as we continue to build on our strengths while preparing for the next stage of our journey. The connection we see every day across our kindergartens, between tamariki, whānau, and kaiako, remains the heart of who we are. The level of engagement from our communities continues to be strong, and it is this partnership that creates environments where tamariki feel a true sense of belonging. Across the Association, the mahi of our kaiako in 2025 has been outstanding. The care, commitment, and professionalism shown every day ensures high-quality learning experiences for our tamariki. The impact of this work is seen not just in the present, but in the confidence and capability our tamariki carry with them into the future.

Our Board has continued to provide strong and steady governance throughout the year. The time, energy, and commitment given in a voluntary capacity is significant, and it plays a critical role in ensuring the ongoing strength and direction of the Association. A major focus throughout 2025 has been the changes proposed across our Association, with implementation beginning in 2026. These changes reflect a clear shift towards aligning our service models with the evolving needs of our communities. This includes moving towards a model where all of our kindergartens operate on a full-year basis, acknowledging the increasing pressures faced by our whānau.

Alongside this, where required, we are increasing Kaiako ratios to prioritise the wellbeing and sustainability of our workforce. As part of the change proposal, kindergartens transitioning from sessional models are being resourced above minimum staffing requirements, ensuring our teams are well supported through change. This is an important step forward, positioning our Association to remain responsive, relevant, and future-focused. There have also been some standout achievements to celebrate. Being named a finalist in the National HR Awards for our Kaiako Training Programme is a significant recognition of the investment we are making in our people. This sits alongside a strong year of professional learning and development, with continued opportunities being created to grow capability and support pathways for our Kaiako into the future.

From a financial perspective 2025 did not achieve the results aligned with budgets, it has still been a year of meaningful progress. Continued investment in our property portfolio ensures our environments remain high-quality and fit for purpose. We have also invested in our future through changes to our operating models and the ongoing development of our Kaiako workforce. Over the past five years, the Association has achieved a cumulative break-even position. This marks a significant turnaround from the cumulative loss of over \$1.2 million across the four years prior to this period. This shift provides a stable foundation and places the Association in a strong position to continue building, investing, and growing in a sustainable way.

Looking ahead, there is a strong sense of confidence in the direction we are heading. The work underway, the opportunities ahead, and the collective commitment across the Association position us well for the future.

# The Year in Numbers



**24 Locations  
across Southland**

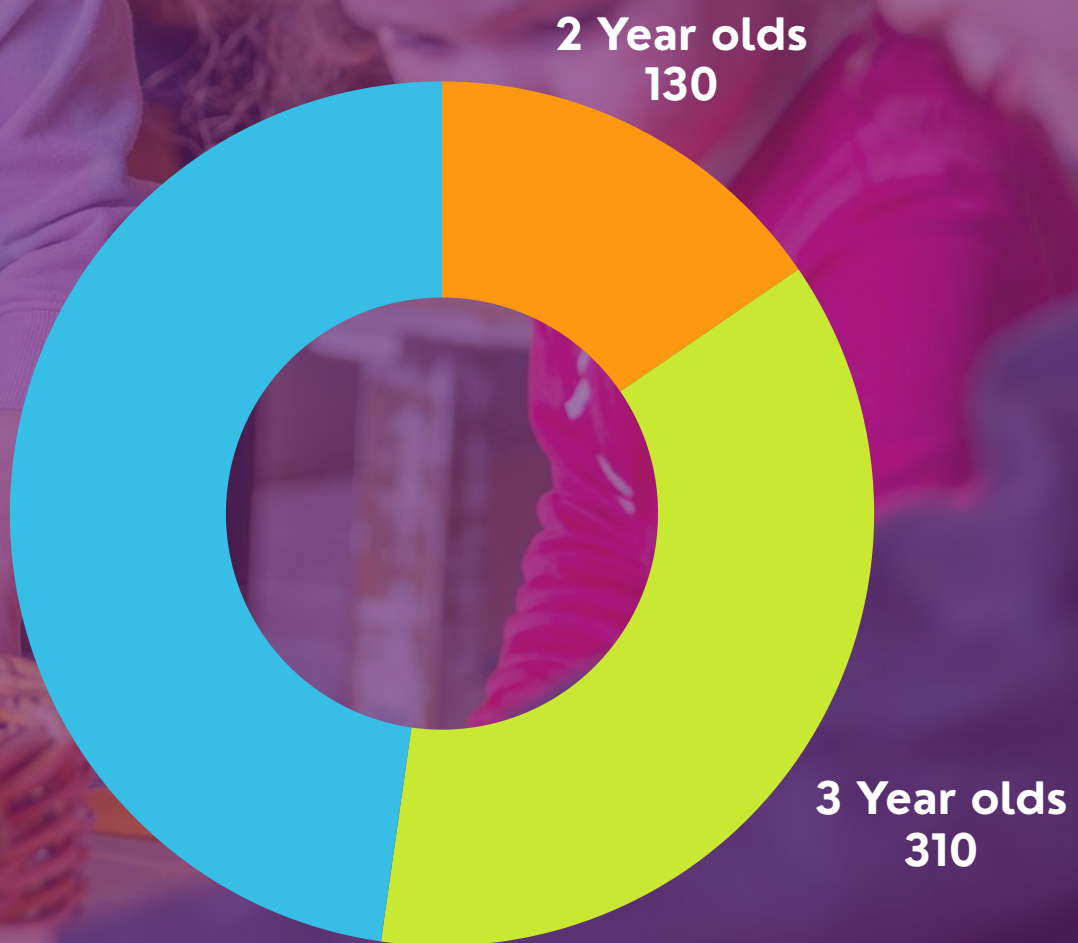


**Over 240 Staff**





**We have**  
**800+**  
**Tamariki enrolled**  
**across Southland**









# Taiao Tūhura

## Discovering Nature

Through outdoor play, tamariki can learn the skills of social interactions and friendship, care for living things and the environment, experience awe, wonder and joy and become 'lost in the deep experience'. (Claire Warden 2007)

We are so lucky to be able to access spaces in our communities where tamariki can go to visit and experience an unhurried, ataahua environment. From Myross Road to Ivy Russell Reserve; from Dolamore Park to Ivor Wilson Park to Mores reserve. We are truly fortunate to have so many exciting spaces for our tamariki.

High quality play outdoors, where tamariki are deeply involved, only emerges when they know they are not hurried. Tamariki need time to develop their use of spaces and resources and uninterrupted time to develop a sense of belonging to that space. At our Taiao Tūhura destinations we can be confident that te tamariki explore in an unhurried manner, with the support of caring adults.

All tamariki who partake in Taiao Tūhura have opportunities to develop then demonstrate a sense of responsibility for the living world and knowledge about how to care for it (Te Whāriki Page 47)

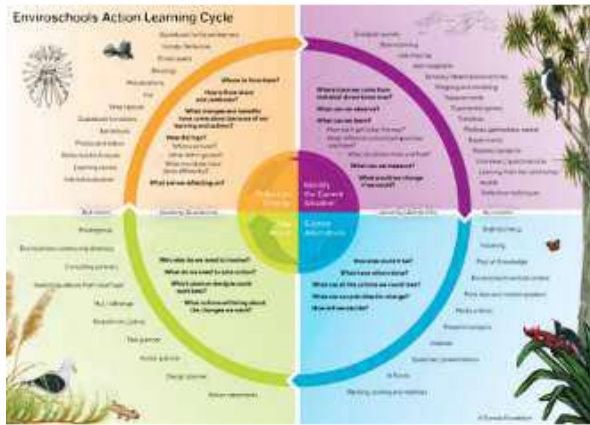
"Passion does not arrive on screens or on devices – passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young, it travels along the grass- stained sleeves to the heart. If we are going to save environmentalism and the environment, we must also save an endangered species: **The tamaiti in nature.** (Richard Louv 2005)

Wendy McLachlan  
Education Lead





# Enviroschools

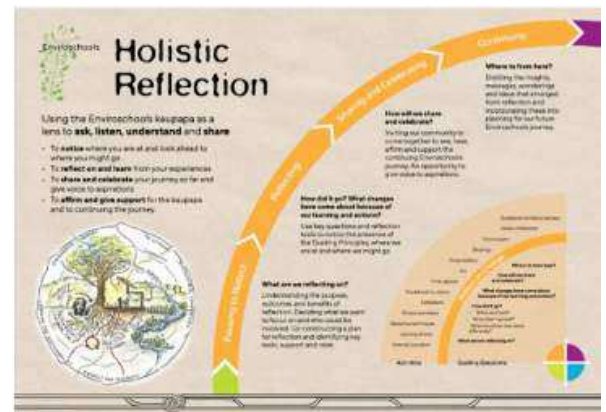


Environmental education is a curriculum area that is embedded in our kindergartens. At the center of EnviroSchools is the Action Learning cycle, kaiako use this to encourage a tamariki directed process of exploration, decision making action and reflection.



The rima Guiding Principles -Ngā Mātāpono of Empowered Learners; Sustainable Communities; Learning for Sustainability; Te Ao Māori and Respect for Diversity guide the whole journey so that all tamariki participate in a genuine way, indigenous wisdom within Te Ao Māori and other cultural traditions is honoured and the action- based learning becomes the basis for sustainable communities. (EnviroSchools Handbook pg9)

We had toru kindergartens undertake the new reflection process this year. Ngā kaiako holistically reflected on their EnviroSchools journey and learning, taking into consideration where they started, where they are now and what direction they want to go on in the future. These reflections are supported by the Regional Co-ordinator from Environment Southland.



**Ko ahau te taiao, ko te taiao, ko ahau.**  
I am the environment, and the environment is me.

Wendy McLachlan (Lead facilitator)





# Bluff Kindergarten

Bluff Kindergarten continues to celebrate and cherish the uniqueness of its location, strengthening ngā hononga in our hāpori. As part of our Enviroschools journey and our internal evaluation, “How sustainable are we at kindergarten?” Bluff Kindergarten continues to deepen our commitment to kaitiakitanga and caring for Papatūānuku. Sustainability weaves through our daily practice, helping tamariki see themselves as active guardians of te taiao.

We revitalise our old pāmu noke with the help of our tamariki, who gather leaves, soil, and sand from our maara to create a cosy home for our noke. At the kai tēpu, we have three sorting buckets - one for noke food scraps, one for rubbish, and one for yoghurt containers - encouraging tamariki to sort their waste and think carefully about where things go. Our Kaitiaki o te Wiki proudly feeds the worms, empties bins, and washes containers, showing that small, consistent actions make a big difference for Papatūānuku.

Our kaitiakitanga also extends to caring for our manu. Tamariki research what foods are safe and helpful, mix sugar water, and refill our bird feeder each day. Together, we sit and listen to the songs of the tūī and wax-eyes, acknowledging our shared connection with te tamariki of Tāne Mahuta’s tamariki. With pinecones gifted by Nana Charlie, we create handmade feeders as another sustainable way to care for our winged friends.

Tamariki and kaiako collect fallen cabbage leaves and sticks to make natural firelighters and kindling for whānau - a creative way to reduce waste and share resources. Since buying bento lunchboxes for each of our tamariki to encourage less rubbish, we notice more “nude food” lunchboxes arriving each week, showing that our sustainability learning continues beyond the kindergarten and into whānau homes. Through these hands-on experiences, tamariki learn that caring for the environment is not just something we do - it is something we live. Our Enviroschools kaupapa inspires us every day to nurture a generation of confident, compassionate kaitiaki of Papatūānuku.



As we move through the year and into 2026, we continue to strengthen our sustainable practices - growing our maara kai, expanding our waste reduction systems, and empowering tamariki and whānau to live in harmony with te taiao every day.



# Clarendon Kindergarten



We continue our Enviroschools journey, exploring ways to reduce our footprint on papatūānuku and embed practices for sustainable living. We installed a large water tank beside the sandpit to catch rainwater and then reuse it in the sand pit ensuring we conserve water. Tamariki have researched rainfall in a bid to conserve water in the tank and make it last until the next rainfall. We extended our commitment to the Enviroschools programme, by joining Taiao Tuhura, Discovering Nature programme, visiting Myross Bush on a fortnightly basis. Bush kindergarten has provided tamariki with many exciting opportunities to explore nature in a calm and unhurried manner.

We undertook a project in collaboration with the property maintenance team to design and create a construction pit in the playground. This project took place over a month with tamariki developing new skills and giving them a sense of responsibility and ownership for the project. To celebrate the completion of the construction pit a group of tamariki headed to town to shop for new toys to add to the area.

We continue to deepen our connections to our local community, collaborating with ISSN and Active Southland, we have set up weekly visits to the ISSN gymnasium. Tamariki have been engaging in large group games, activities and games that extend and refine fine and gross motor skills. Clarendon Kindergarten took to the stage at Polyfest for the first time, tamariki poured their hearts into practicing and took to the stage with such mana, celebrating their hard mahi with their whānau and community.





# Drummond Kindergarten



At Drummond Rural Kindergarten, we are thriving as a connected, confident rural learning community. Our tamariki arrive each day excited, curious and ready to explore. Kaiako intentionally create rich, meaningful learning experiences that reflect our values, our whenua and the aspirations of our whānau.

This year, our commitment to whanaungatanga and manaakitanga is visible in the ways we engage with our community. Our annual Matariki Whānau Evening continues to shine as one of our most loved celebrations. Whānau gather with us to share kai, stories, waiata, a beautiful light and art display outdoors and a sense of renewal as we acknowledge the Māori New Year together. A major highlight for our tamariki is performing at the Mīharo Polyfest. Their pride, confidence and connection to culture is evident as they stand tall and represent our kindergarten with aroha and enthusiasm.

Our annual bus trip once again provides opportunities for exploration beyond our gates, strengthening learning through real-world experiences; performing at the Mīharo Polyfest. Their pride, confidence and connection to culture is evident as they stand tall and represent our kindergarten with aroha and enthusiasm. We also proudly host our well-loved Community Pet Day, where whānau bring beloved animals to share, supporting rich conversations around responsibility, care and rural life with great community involvement. Every day, we see tamariki showing kindness, resilience, creativity and joy. As we continue to grow together, we remain committed to providing a nurturing, inclusive learning environment where every child's mana is valued and uplifted.

**"He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata."**

What is the most important thing in the world? It is people.





# Elsie Street Kindergarten

We are exceptionally proud of the achievements throughout the year, which have been made possible through the dedication of our teaching team and the strong support of our wider Gore community. The highlights of 2025 demonstrate our commitment to holistic development, cultural responsiveness, and learning through play and nature.

A significant highlight was participating in the local Culture Feast event. Our kindergarten, alongside Oxford and Longford kindergartens delivered a fun active performance. It was a fantastic opportunity for mokopuna to showcase their dedication to learning and practicing new waiata and taking the courage to perform in front of a massive local crowd.

We have loved our regular 'learning in nature, with nature' sessions at Nui Ferns. Our mokopuna connected with the natural world, fostering a sense of kaitiaki for our local environment, while exploring and taking safe risks to challenge themselves with new experiences.

Our perennial favourite was our annual spud in the bucket competition. This engaging project taught mokopuna about gardening, responsibility, and the satisfaction of growing their own kai, culminating in a fun competition for everyone to enjoy. Mokopuna have planted many other fruits and vegetables at kindergarten, along with recycling paper and cardboard where we work at maintaining our status as an Enviro Kindergarten.

We have received outstanding support from the Gore community with donations of knitted garments for each child. We have had visits from local schools, volunteer fire fighters, kiwi harvest donations, pets of many variations, and many other miscellaneous resources that support our teaching and learning.

The most important thing in the world...

**He tangata, He tangata, He tangata**

It is people, it is people, it is people.





# Elston Lea Kindergarten

This year, we strengthened our connection with the local community through meaningful initiatives. Our partnership with South Alive saw us join the Adopt a Street program, helping keep our neighbourhood clean. We also shared sunflower seeds with whānau, grown from last year's flowers, as a gesture of joy and sustainability, reinforcing our Enviroschools commitment and care for Papatūānuku. We continue to teach tamariki about sustainability through simple waste systems:

**Red bins** for rubbish

**Green bins** for piggy food

**Paper bins** for recycling

This kaupapa extends beyond our gates through Taiao Tūhura, encouraging families to engage with nature and reduce waste. Incorporating ngā atua into learning helps tamariki see the environment through a Māori worldview.

Their voices reflect this understanding:

"We need to look after Papatūānuku."

"Don't squash our bugs."

"We don't want rubbish to go to Tangaroa."

Through stories, art, and hands-on experiences, tamariki learn that their actions show respect for ngā atua. We take this learning into the community with clean-up events and a focus on caring for local birds and bugs. Our vegetable garden and tunnel house thrived, providing fresh produce and teaching sustainability and healthy eating. The stunning entrance mural featuring kererū, tiwaiwaka, and tui reminds us daily of the biodiversity we cherish.

Whānau engagement flourished through popular events like ten-pin bowling, stadium play pods, a drive-in movie night, and our festive Christmas party at Russell Square Park. A highlight was our Bluff trip, where we shared waiata and kai with Bluff Kindergarten, celebrating culture and building wider connections.

**Waiho i te toipoto, kua i te toiroa**

Let us keep close together, not wide apart.





# Fiordland Kindergarten

This year, Fiordland Kindergarten continued to celebrate our wonderful local environment and our unique location in Fiordland. Kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga, and tuakana-teina are at the heart of everything we do. Our curriculum focus has been on kaitiakitanga — building, strengthening, and exploring our connections with the environment.

A highlight of the year was recreating a historic Fiordland boat to race in a cardboard boat race as part of the Fiordland Classic Boat Festival. Tamariki, kaiako, and whānau all got involved in making the boat. The rules stated that it could only be made from cardboard and newspaper. Our boat was crewed by three adults and two tamariki, and we won very convincingly. The boat did not sink or even fall apart until we tried to pull it up onto the shore. This was a fantastic community event to be part of and helped raise our profile in the wider community.



We joined forces with other educational services in Fiordland to contribute to the Planting Trees with Kids project, where 1,600 trees were planted in the basin using tamariki power. This project, led by Te Waiau Mahika Kai Trust, was selected as a finalist in the Environmental Action in Biodiversity and Biosecurity award category. It was a wonderful initiative to be involved in, and our tamariki showed aroha for Ivon Wilson Park, where our Nature Discovery programme is held, further strengthening their connections to the environment.

We were fortunate to receive \$500 from the Flower Show Committee, \$1,200 from the Fiordland Lobster Company, and \$1,000 from ASB. This funding has been used to purchase resources that support calm, creative, and nurturing learning experiences for our tamariki. Throughout 2025, we have continued to celebrate and strengthen connections through a range of events and initiatives that bring our community together. These included a Matariki celebration, making bags for hampers for the older Te Anau population, contributing to the Flower Show, our Welcome to Spring celebration, and increasing our visibility within the community. It has been an exciting year, and we are looking forward to what 2026 will bring.



# Glengarry Kindergarten

This year marks our first full year working together as a new teaching team and is a time of growth, connection, and shared achievement. As we continue to establish ourselves, we are working collaboratively to develop a clear philosophy grounded in the values of whānaungatanga and kaitiakitanga. These values guide our curriculum design, daily practices, and interactions with our tamariki, whānau, and wider community.

Whānaungatanga is central to our work. We focus on building trusting, meaningful relationships with tamariki and whānau and creating a warm, inclusive environment where every child feels a strong sense of belonging. This year we have welcomed many new tamariki and have prioritised supporting them and their whānau to settle confidently into our kindergarten community.

Kaitiakitanga is embedded throughout our programme. We encourage tamariki to care for one another and the natural world, fostering responsibility, respect, and active guardianship of our environment. Sustainability practices are integrated into daily routines and outdoor play, allowing tamariki to see kaitiakitanga in action.

Our calendar is filled with rich learning experiences beyond the kindergarten. Anderson Park has become our annual Waitangi event, connecting tamariki with nature and heritage. The SLT Concert provides a fun community performance experience, while Polyfest is a highlight of the year, celebrating cultural diversity. This year we proudly included a Filipino song, supported by strong whānau participation. Regular library trips with our eldest tamariki support early literacy, creativity, and community connections, with a special end-of-year excursion planned for our Taiao Tūhura group. Taiao Tāharu continues to strengthen tamariki connection with Papatūānuku, building confidence and resilience. Whānau engagement remains a strength, with shared kai experiences and generous koha enriching our programme and deepening whānaungatanga.

A strong focus on developing our outdoor environment has led to many positive changes, including planting projects, new gardens, a Koha Kete supported by an Environment Southland grant, playground upgrades, building improvements, and collaborative art projects. These enhancements are already having a positive impact on daily learning and development.





# Grasmere Kindergarten



"Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu"

"Adorn the bird with feathers so it may fly"

At Grasmere Kindergarten the aspirations, hopes and visions of tamariki, whānau, kaiako, iwi and the wider community inspire and shape our philosophy written on our new Grasmere taonga outside for all to see this also guides our practices. Our learning priorities of pūkenga pahekoheko/social competence, hauora/wellbeing and whānaungātanga/relationships also support and aligns to these aspirations, hopes and visions, as they represent the learning that matters here at Grasmere Kindergarten.

These priorities guide our ongoing support for tamariki by providing them with the knowledge, resources, support, natural surroundings and hands on experiences that relate to their everyday lives, acknowledging and honouring their language culture and identity, helping them to establish and embed these concepts into their ways of being and doing.

Tamariki experience success and are provided with necessary skills to achieve positive learning outcomes, where overtime they realise their potential as thriving confident, competent learners.

"Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini"

"Our successes are not of our own, but belong to everyone",  
As it takes a village to raise a child.





# Kew Kindergarten

Kia ora e te whānau, a big focus at Kew Kindergarten this year has been around 'Kindness, Kaitiakitanga, Community and Kail!

In March this year, Kew Kindergarten were selected to join the KidsCan FOOD in ECE program, receiving free nourishing kai for all tamariki at our kindergarten. We have 6 week set menu cycles offering morning tea and lunch, then kindergarten are topping up our menu with breakfast and afternoon tea. Supporting our community with free food is empowering tamariki with trying new things whilst coming together to connect and kōrero over a hot meal and supporting our whānau by removing barriers to accessing quality education. The growth in this space, means we needed to hire a cook – we welcomed Alyse to our roopu, a trained chef and a Kindergartens South Alumni Mum.

Community is important, and spending time out in ours supports tamariki to make sense of their world around them. Kew Kindergarten has been strengthening connections with our community through fortnightly AWOL visits, spending time visiting The Pantry, and together with the heritage trust and South Alive we were a part of the panel unveiling for the Heritage walk. Tamariki love getting out into our community, sharing kōrero smiles and waves with our neighbours, in our shiny new safety vests.



We have joined in the Adopt a street programme and take care of the neighbouring streets around our kindergarten. The sense of mana and pride is evident in our tamariki as they walk the streets of their place with confidence, strengthening our numeracy skills one mailbox number at a time.





# Lees Street Kindergarten

At Lees Street Kindergarten we have many learning inquiries during our leaning year. 2025 was no exception. One of the inquiries that supported deeper thinking and learning for our tamariki was an inquiry regarding our tinana/bodies, and the people that help us to keep safe and well. Through this inquiry learning tamariki developed knowledge, and working theories regarding when and why you might need to go to the hospital.

At hui whāriki there was kōrerorero/discussion about the human skeleton. Alongside this, the tamariki developed an understanding of what x-rays show us and why x-rays are important to support the wellbeing of our bodies.

Over the term tamariki also learned about medical equipment, blood, medicines, and jobs in the medical profession. To support this inquiry further the kaiako set up our own 'Lees Street Hospital' to provide dramatic role play scenarios. Providing opportunities for tamariki to make sense of their understandings, and develop working theories alongside their ngā hoa/friends; in regards as to what happens at hospital and who are the people that work there?

To strengthen the learning further, tamariki participated in intentional art creating illustrations of skeletons. During this mahi tamariki learned the correct anatomical names of some of the bones. i.e. skull, patella (kneecap), phalanges (fingers), femur (thigh), clavicle (collar bone), scapula (shoulder blades). Kaiako use Intentional art processes to support, tamariki with opportunities for exploration, expression, creativity, and discussion. This also supports developing contextual language and extending extension of ideas included within the art mahi/process.

To consolidate and revisit the learning, Kaiako invited several visitors including; A radiographer to talk about their job; Hato Hone/St Johns to explain their role first responders; A nurse who works at Kew hospital to talk about their role; A physio to talk about helping people how to mend and manage pain in muscles, joints, and tendons; A pharmacist to teach us about medicines and how medicines are made.



"The wider world of family and community is an integral part of our early childhood curriculum. Children learn and develop best when their culture, knowledge and community are affirmed and when the people in their lives help them to make connections across settings - Te Whaariki - New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum



# Lindisfarne Kindergarten

Over the year at Lindisfarne Kindergarten, ngā tamariki have had fun being great kaitiaki as they looked after, harvested, and prepared the kai - a yummy reward for all their hard mahi. Tamariki happily took ownership of the kindy gardens, caring for the plants, ensuring they were well watered, and enjoying checking them each day to see how big their plants grew with their care. When making dishes from the different produce, tamariki were always keen and eager to assist, many being brave and curious as they tried new foods.

Through the mahi of caring for our garden and produce, we also supported our investigating and learning about Māori atua and how we can all continue to care for Papatūānuku, keeping Mother Earth healthy. Over the year, we continued to look at our own recycling processes - refining them and finding ways to make recycling visual, simple, and consistent for everyone, irrespective of age. We also supported whānau to get on board so we could build strong connections between home and kindergarten, all learning the importance of why we recycle and the benefits it brings.



This year's big shift, which made a great impact, was our curriculum and programme focus on fostering a sense of kia atawhai - being kind. We implemented and supported the aspect of atawhai/kindness within the centre in all areas, exploring what it might look, feel, and sound like. It has been so lovely to see our older tamariki take on roles of care and responsibility for our younger tamariki, taking them under their wing. Each day, we see and hear our tamariki using guided strategies provided by kaiako about how to be kind - using kind words and kind hands, and caring for their resources and their inside and outside play spaces.

A helpful resource that became a favourite at Lindisfarne is Oat the Goat, a story that instils beautiful messages about being a kind friend and how kindness always wins in the end.



# Longbush Kindergarten

The past year has been a busy and highly successful year for Longbush Kindergarten. This was reflected with tamariki learning through play, a committed team of permanent kaiako, and an active energetic committee focused on raising funds for the planned outdoor play space upgrade in early 2026.

A significant highlight was our well-attended Matariki whānau evening, where we gathered to have kai, share manaaki and nurture the growth of whakawhanaungatanga. The tamariki presented a concert that genuinely reflected their learning and showcased why our kindergarten continues to serve as a strong community hub. Throughout the year, our curriculum design was intentionally guided by Tūrangawaewae, providing tamariki with ongoing opportunities to explore identity, belonging, and connection.

We continued to strengthen our transition-to-school practices by utilising the KS van for school visits. We also reciprocated the schools manaaki through hosting the New Entrant classes at kindergarten, further supporting strong relationships and seamless pathways for tamariki transitioning to school.

During 2025, tamariki joined the KS Nature Discovery Programme, Taiao Tūhura, which has offered a highly valuable extension to our programme. This has strengthened our alignment with EnviroSchools and deepened tamariki understanding of kaitiakitanga through meaningful, hands-on experiences in the natural world.

Our living environment continues to play an important role in children's learning as we care for our thriving sheep, Lamb Lamb and Bam Bam, along with Beau and Flo, our inquisitive turkeys. Their presence enriches daily learning and fosters responsibility, empathy, and a strong connection to our place. Tamariki rounded off the year by taking home their 'spud' plant to harvest and share with whānau; an authentic celebration of learning through sustainability and manaaki.



As we look ahead to 2026, we are excited for the many opportunities and plans that lie before us for our tamariki and whānau.



# Longford Kindergarten

2025 saw Longford Kindergarten exploring the different ways that we can nourish our tamariki to explore, connect with and understand our local pūrākau- Matamata the taniwha! The 100 languages supported tamariki to unpack their thinkings around taniwha and Matamata. The highlight of this learning journey was the debut of our Matamata waiata to whānau at our Matariki celebration.

The arts provoked tamariki to explore their thoughts and feelings about taniwha using storytelling, puppetry, drama, waiata and visual arts. Ka rawe tamariki mā – you are becoming wonderful storytellers and kaitiaki of our pūrākau!

Our connections with Papatūānuku continue to thrive with new groups of tamariki. Kaiako are growing our understandings and think about ways that we can share ideas within our programme. We celebrated our bug where mahi through our Enviroschools kaupapa. Tamariki continue to share their knowledge and care with insects by delievering them to the bug house!



At Longford, we intentionally nurture tamariki connection with the natural environment through meaningful, hands on experiences that foster curiosity, care, aroha and a sense of kaitiakitanga. Outdoor play, bush kindy and sustainable practices such as gardening, composting and recycling support tamariki in their role in caring for Papatūānuku. Through these practices, we support tamariki in developing a lifelong respect for nature, build understanding of the environment through play and inquiry that reflects our local curriculum and Te Whāriki our Early Childhood Curriculum.

Ngā mihi nui





# Newfield Kindergarten

We have the best times here at Newfield Kindergarten. Each day is a learning adventure filled with fun, laughter and good vibes. When we come into kindy, we put our lunch boxes on the shelf and sit down to eat delicious toast that no one can make but Anna! It's the best! Marmite, jam or honey spread with lots of margarine and extra thick toast bread. Kapai! We love this time of the day and sit having an awesome, social time with our friends chatting away eating our delicious kai.

After kai we all take responsibility for cleaning up the kai table and get stuck into our mahi. We love being hands on in the paint, playdough and any messy play. We are very good at taking an interest in our outdoor space while we garden, make compost and feed the worms. We also love taking responsibility for our bird life and make bird food from our left-over kai, such as yummy bird seed sandwiches! We have a real commitment to nature and our Enviro Schools involvement with Bush Kindy being a highlight each second week.

Recently we reviewed our Newfield Philosophy which now incorporates Whakawhanaungatanga, Manakitanga and Social and Emotional Competence. We absolutely live our philosophy and love getting out in the wider community to make connections and to explore where we live. We loved going for a walk to Mighty Meats to buy some mince for our teacher Karlie's kai. We talked with the butcher's and walked back again which we loved. On a different day, we went on a hikoi around our kindy block and visited the Newfield Dairy. We know this place well and it was good to go inside and talk with the staff. They even let us pat the dairy cat! Whanaungatanga underpins everything we do here we do at kindy. We love being together, sharing kai together and going to our whānau outings like the train park. We are tight knit and have an amazing community that supports the tamariki and us making Newfield the place it is. Tino pai rawa atu!





# Northern Southland Kindergarten

In 2025 the team at Northern Southland kindergarten has continued to focus on developing our indoor and outdoor environment, adapting our physical spaces to suit our changing roll. We have seen a big influx of younger tamariki and are delighted to have good numbers and significant waiting list built during the year.

The purchase of the building by Southland Kindergartens Association (SKA) has given us a lot more certainty and greater sense of security. We have been watching the transformation of outside areas by Joe and his team as we excitedly look forward to the completion of new carpark and playground areas. The investment by SKA is appreciated by the local community and a pro-active Parent Committee have also rallied, undertaking numerous fundraising activities to ensure we have financial reserves to provide new resources and equipment to fill the space on completion. With younger tamariki, and also recognising the wide area that our whānau travel from each day, our focus has been on building whanaungatanga. These revolves around developing respectful, reciprocal relationships through ;-identifying with tamariki what respect and friendship looks like in our environment, and scaffolding these behaviours.

Fostering a sense of belonging and community, encompassing our bicultural heritage and acknowledging all other cultures within our Kindergarten. We have created visual displays and learning experiences that display the past and present aspects of Te Tiriti o Waitangi alongside cultural aspects of international whanau. We have maps identifying where our whānau members live in the local area, maps of Aotearoa /iwi affiliations and world maps depicting physical places that our tamariki whakapapa to. We have also been working on transforming a wall in our hui room to depict Papatūānuku and Rangi-nui and the various atua. Creating this mural has provided a great opportunity for kōrero about the creation story, our relationship to Papatuanuku and how we need to care for her.

Tawhirimatea is often a talking point at Lumsden where the wind seems to be a constant presence and while the wind storms in Southland in Oct this year caused a lot of damage throughout the region we thankfully sustained little damage. We also talk about the fact that our tamariki travel so far from every direction like the four winds, Ngā Hau e Whā!





# Oxford Kindergarten

This year, to further support our learners, we have focused on manaaki. Manaaki represents cherishing, caring for, supporting, and protecting others, while showing respect, generosity, and hospitality.

For our learners, we have embedded this so it can be seen, felt, and heard daily throughout our programme and within our mahi. This kawa is a value that is deeply cherished by our community. Our older learners have shown great manaaki to our younger tamariki as they take on the role of tuakana-teina — guiding and supporting them as they learn all about kindergarten and how we can be a “Bucket Filler”.

Our whānau also show manaaki to our tamariki and kaiako through the ways they support us on excursions, at our Matariki breakfast, and while celebrating and supporting our tamariki as they perform at the Hokonui Cultural Feast. On a daily basis, our whānau support us in many ways.

Our tamariki have become kaitiaki of our manu at Oxford Kindergarten, caring for them and bringing kai from home to feed them. They have also taken great pride in caring for our gardens.



**“Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere whakamua”**  
“care for the land, care for the people, go forward.”



# Ōtātara Kindergarten

This year has been another busy and fun year at Ōtātara Kindergarten. There has been a lot of growth and development.

We believe in learning through play and to do this we have had a lot of celebration days at kindy such as Waitangi Day (we make our own kindy treaty), mothers day, fathers day, halloween, book day, anti bullying (which we called "kindness day"), to name some. These days are a really meaningful way to learn while showing great manaakitanga to all, which is an important part of our philosophy.

We have been trying to engage and improve our community involvement through our current fundraising endeavours. We are currently raising funds for a new veranda on the north side of our building so we have more covered area to utilise when it is raining, making the most of our outdoor environment. We have had a number of different fundraising ideas that have come from our whānau group.

As of now we are planning a fundraising celebration for our Kindergartens 50th Birthday on the 6th of December this year. We are hoping to get a lot of community involvement from past and present kaiako, tamariki, and whānau who we are hoping will come along.





# Ranui Kindergarten

Throughout the year, we have had a strong emphasis on working together and building connections with our community, whānau, and one another. We have seen our rolls grow with new tamariki and returning whānau/siblings, contributing to our philosophy of whakapapa and relationships.

Through kōrero with tamariki and whānau, our highlights for the year included entering our scarecrow into the A&P show, celebrating Little Heart Day, Polyfest, our mid-winter disco, and our recent Teddy Bears' Picnic. We have also celebrated the opening of a heritage panel at Ness Street Playground, which includes our name on it, along with visits to local kura and communities.



2025 also saw the implementation of our KidsCan Food Programme, where we began providing tamariki with fresh fruit and yoghurt for morning tea, and a healthy, filling lunch approved by the Heart Foundation. Through this programme, tamariki have been able to enjoy new foods and learn about how these options help to fuel our bodies.

We're ending the year with a community I-spy game, our annual Christmas cheer walk, and a celebration of our year at Andersons Park.



**'He waka eke noa'**  
we are all in this together

a well-known Māori whakataukī, has guided Ranui Kindergarten throughout 2025.

We are looking forward to seeing what 2026 brings and are excited for what's to come for our Ranui whānau and community.



# Riverton Kindergarten



2025 has brought many highlights to our tamariki and whānau. We joined the Enviro Schools program and have been working strongly under the guiding principle of sustainable communities. This has include looking at, our local community, collecting resources, creating an artwork of this for the KS Matariki celebration. We had T Shirts made using the artwork from one of our tamariki to add more local flavour to our Polyfest, they looked amazing and everyone was so proud to wear them.

We have been privileged to visit Takutai o Te Titi Marae twice this year, creating connecting and sense of belonging to our Marae, as well as enjoying and learning more about our wider local area. We embrace the story of Kewa and Kiwa ,a pūrākau we retell at kindergarten as well as at bush kindergarten as we overlook te ara a Kiwa. We then created our own book version while at the Marae in November.

We love the end of the year when we can visit the magic of Christmas through the Xmas doors, albeit in a new place this year! Community is at the heart of everything we do here at Riverton. Tangata ako ana I te kāenga, te tūrangi ki te Marae, tau ana.

A person nurtured in the community contributes strongly to society





# Rockdale Kindergarten

Throughout 2025, Rockdale Park Kindergarten continued to embrace both a Te Ao Māori lens and the 100 languages, where all mokopuna are viewed as competent, curious, and capable ākonga. We recognise mokopuna potential, celebrate mokopuna "hundred languages" of expression — from drawing and painting to music and play. Through projects, we documented mokopuna explorations, and working theories were visible to all visitors, ākonga and whānau.

Our learning environment was thoughtfully designed to provoke curiosity and encourage interaction, filled with natural light and open-ended materials. We fostered whakawhanungatanga, where all voices of all ākonga were gathered to create rich learning opportunities. The result was a year of collaborative, in-depth projects and enriching experiences, which empowered our mokopuna to become confident, creative, and critical thinkers.

A SNIPPET OF WHAT WE GOT UP TO in 2025:

- Transport day
- Sunglasses day
- Afternoon tea for special people
- Sausage sizzle for our cool men in our lives
- Dinosaur day
- McDonald's toy day
- Favourite toy day
- Come dressed as the letter of your name
- Colour day
- Wacky Hair day
- Matariki whetū exploration
- Sports FUN day
- Coming to know our superpowers and recognising what others have
- Miharo art exhibitions
- A & P Art entries
- Physicality exploration
- Curiosity, thinking and skills exploration





# The Cottage Kindergarten

2025 has been a busy year at The Cottage Kindergarten where we welcomed new whānau and tamariki within our community and the support of our whānau has been fantastic with fundraising efforts seeing the purchase of new indoor tables and chairs, with a spruce up of our walls our indoor environment is looking new and fresh. Having some amazing whānau nights with great turnouts where whānau can get to know each other and for Kaiako to strengthen our sense of belonging.

Our curriculum design and focus has been around manakitanga and learning to take care of ourselves, others the environment and the wider community. Our focus has also seen some great changes to our program in many areas as we have been investigating and exploring new ways to reduce, reuse and recycle to become more sustainable.

We have continued to strengthen our community involvement with our tamariki excited to participate at Polyfest, creating some amazing whetū for the matariki celebration at the stadium, getting out into the community to visit the residents at Rose lodge and participating in Taiao Tūhura where tamariki are learning to be creative in nature and learning to take care of the creatures of Papatūanuku and Tane.

We are looking forward to continuing these amazing learning opportunities for the coming year ahead.





# Waikiwi Kindergarten



This year we have focused on strengthening our ties to nature through our Enviroschools programme. As part of this we have planted new fruit trees and with the support of our wonderful families we were able to install a second water source for the garden area. This allows us to source water sustainably and ngā tamariki have access to this to water the garden. We look forward to extending this area of the kindergarten and to share the products of all our hard mahi once they are ready to harvest.

We have enjoyed whānau support with visits from tractors, fire engines and being able to learn more about their professions. We had two nurses talking us through what happens if you need to go to the hospital, and sharing with us what equipment they use too. Together we have celebrated Diwali, Matariki and other days of national significance. We also performed at Polyfest too.

We have had a lot of new tamariki and whānau come to the kindergarten and it has been amazing to watch them quickly develop relationships and settle in. We ended our year with a Christmas Party at the Train Park, where everyone could come together, enjoy each others company and reflect on the fun and learning that we shared together in 2025.





# Waverley Kindergarten

At Waverley Kindy, a huge part of our philosophy is caring for people, places, and things.

During 2025, we have been working on adding to our already ataahua playground by creating new and exciting places for our tamariki to learn and explore.

We have added a new mud kitchen, a carpentry table, and a stunning mural on our fence. These projects have been led by our community or supported by Kindergartens South.



Nature around us often leads to inquiries that shape our curriculum design. For instance, this year we have learnt about the lifecycle of butterflies, light and dark, how we can capture the sun, what our manu (birds) eat, and the seed lifecycle. By providing real-life experiences that are meaningful, our tamariki learn to be curious, ask questions, and make new discoveries. These inquiries also lead us to work together as a group - listening to each other, offering ideas, and problem-solving.

Whānau are also encouraged to get involved, and this role models to our tamariki that we all care for our kindy and want it to be the best learning space it can be.

**Ka whāngaia, ka tupu, ka puāwai.**

That which is nurtured blossoms and grows.





# Winton Kindergarten

Winton Kindergarten's Taiao Tūhura program continues to inspire the next generation of environmental advocates by giving tamariki the knowledge, tools and confidence to become active guardians – kaitiaki – of their community and environment.

Through regular exploration of the natural world, tamariki are empowered to notice issues such as rubbish, stream blockages, overgrown trees, or even signs of pests, and work together with their kaiako (teachers) to discuss the impact of these concerns. From here, the children plan and take action – their voices heard not just within the kindergarten walls, but out in the wider Winton community.

This initiative has led to meaningful connections with organisations such as Environment Southland, the local council, nearby schools, and other early childhood centres. It's a model of hands-on, collaborative learning that fosters leadership, advocacy, and a strong sense of belonging. A recent project has brought these values to life in a truly special way.

## Restoring the "Sleeping Kiwi"

Twenty-five years ago, Winton Kindergarten planted an area now affectionately known as the Sleeping Kiwi – a section of Ivy Russell Reserve that was lined with native rākau, including kōwhai, shrubs, and harakeke. Over time, this area became a place of reflection, learning and storytelling for the Kindy community.

During a recent visit, the Taiao Tūhura tamariki and their kaiako, Ellen (Elle) Morrison and Rachel Evans, observed that many of the kōwhai were struggling – with signs of fungi, poor growth, and limited flowering. After some thoughtful discussion as a roopū, they reached out to Winton local legend and Kindy grandmother Margie Ruddenklau, whose long-standing community involvement includes her role as a councillor. Together with the Ivy Russell Stewards Roopū and Environment Southland's Catriona Gower, a collaborative plan was formed to restore the Sleeping Kiwi.

This plan will see Winton Kindergarten tamariki, student volunteers from Central Southland College, and the Ivy Russell Stewards work together to replenish and care for the native planting site. In an exciting development, South Island kōwhai have been donated by Kōwhai Reach to support the restoration, helping to create a more balanced and thriving ecosystem in an area currently dominated by North Island varieties.





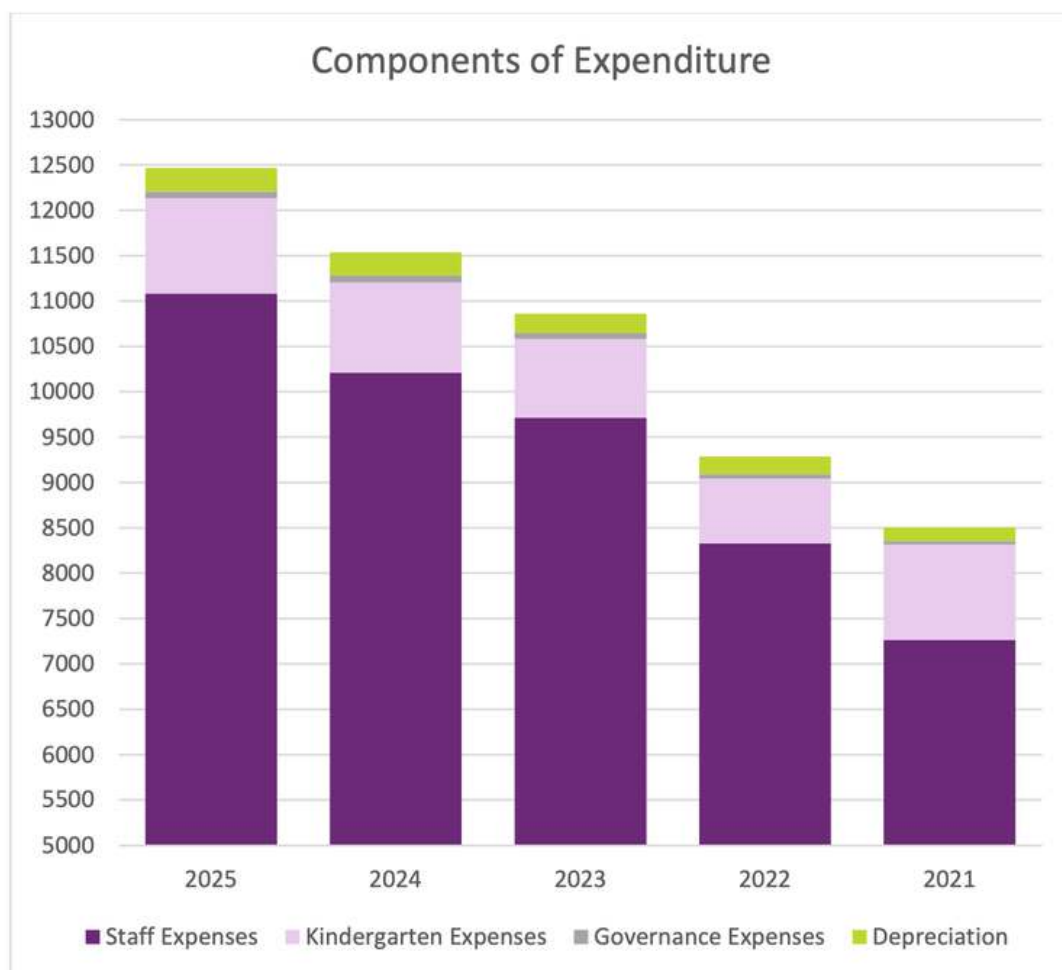
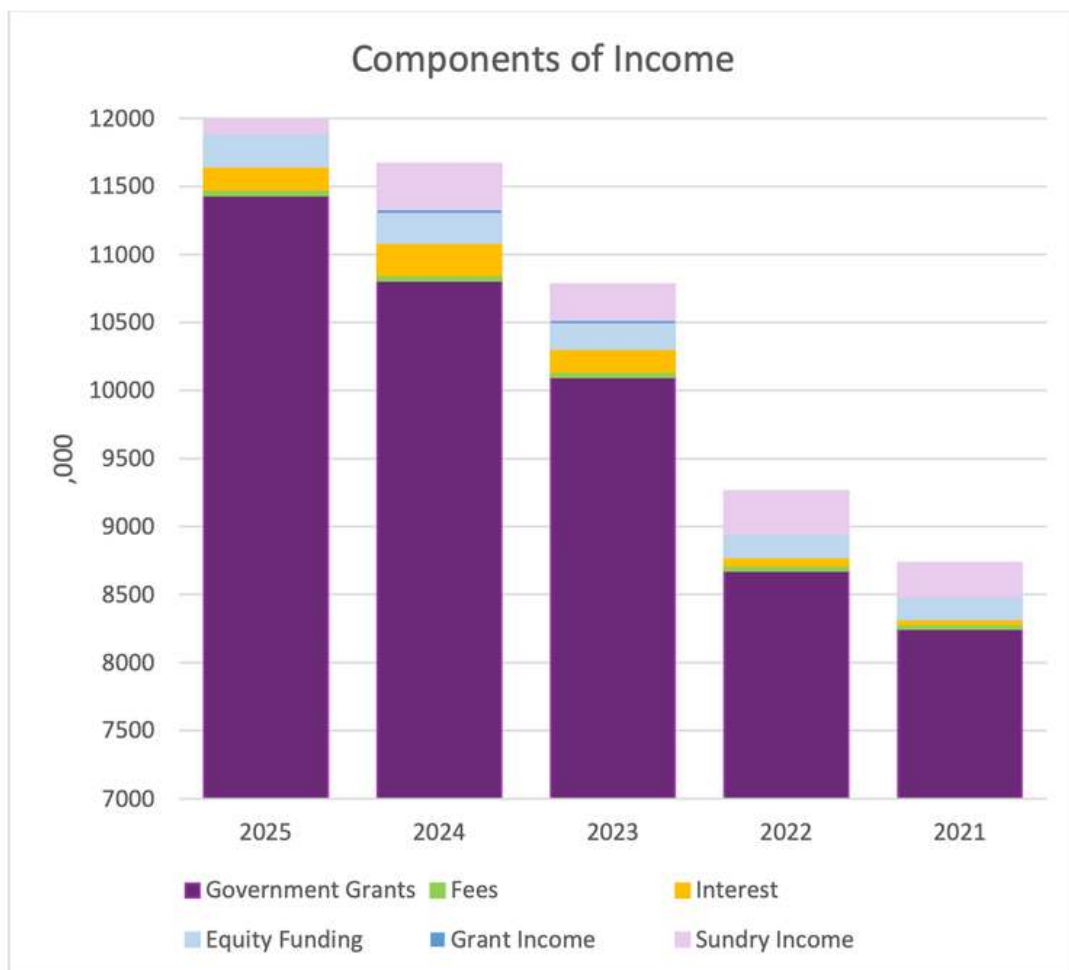




## Southland Free Kindergarten Association Financial Information 2021-2025

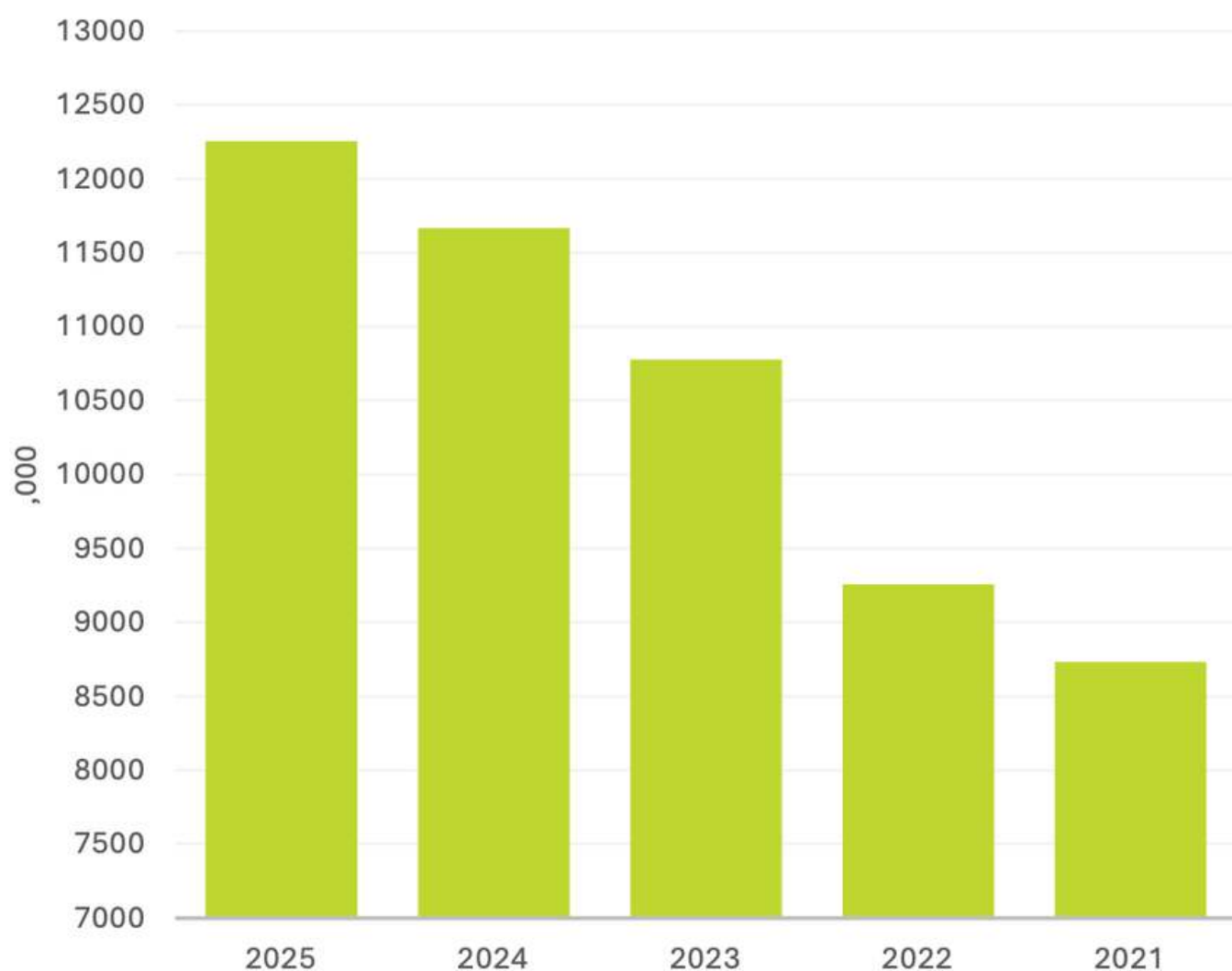
|                                                   | 2025         | 2024         | 2023         | 2022        | 2021        |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Financial Performance                             | \$'000       | \$'000       | \$'000       | \$'000      | \$'000      |
| Income                                            | 2025         | 2024         | 2023         | 2022        | 2021        |
| Government Grants                                 | 11433        | 10807        | 10097        | 8674        | 8248        |
| Fees                                              | 44           | 41           | 42           | 39          | 35          |
| Interest                                          | 168          | 239          | 167          | 61          | 36          |
| Equity Funding                                    | 239          | 220          | 189          | 167         | 166         |
| Grant Income                                      | 1            | 24           | 23           | 2           | 0           |
| Sundry Income                                     | 373          | 336          | 263          | 317         | 250         |
| <b>Total Income</b>                               | <b>12258</b> | <b>11667</b> | <b>10781</b> | <b>9260</b> | <b>8735</b> |
| Expenses                                          | 2025         | 2024         | 2023         | 2022        | 2021        |
| Staff Expenses                                    | 11083        | 10210        | 9714         | 8326        | 7262        |
| Kindergarten Expenses                             | 1051         | 997          | 870          | 715         | 1053        |
| Governance Expenses                               | 73           | 77           | 63           | 50          | 37          |
| Depreciation                                      | 262          | 253          | 216          | 194         | 156         |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                          | <b>12469</b> | <b>11537</b> | <b>10863</b> | <b>9285</b> | <b>8508</b> |
| Net Surplus/Deficit before Transfer from Reserves | -211         | 130          | -82          | -25         | 227         |
| Plus allocation from Reserves                     |              |              |              | 0           | 0           |
| <b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Year</b>    | <b>-211</b>  | <b>130</b>   | <b>-82</b>   | <b>-25</b>  | <b>227</b>  |
| Financial Position                                |              |              |              |             |             |
| Current Assets                                    | 4598         | 5436         | 5080         | 4887        | 4551        |
| Fixed Assets                                      | 3738         | 2871         | 3001         | 2634        | 2608        |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                               | <b>8336</b>  | <b>8307</b>  | <b>8081</b>  | <b>7521</b> | <b>7159</b> |
| Liabilities                                       | 3176         | 2935         | 2839         | 2293        | 1900        |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                                 | <b>5160</b>  | <b>5372</b>  | <b>5242</b>  | <b>5228</b> | <b>5259</b> |
| Ratios                                            | 2025         | 2024         | 2023         | 2022        | 2021        |
| Net Surplus to Income %                           | -1.72        | 1.11         | -0.76        | -0.27       | 2.60        |
| staff Expenses as a % of Bulk Funding             | 96.94        | 94.48        | 96.21        | 95.99       | 88.05       |







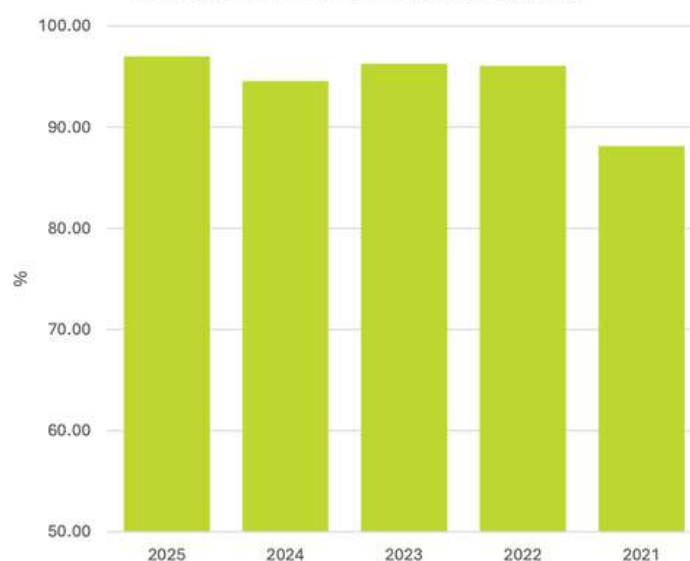
## Total Income for the Year



## Net Surplus to Income %



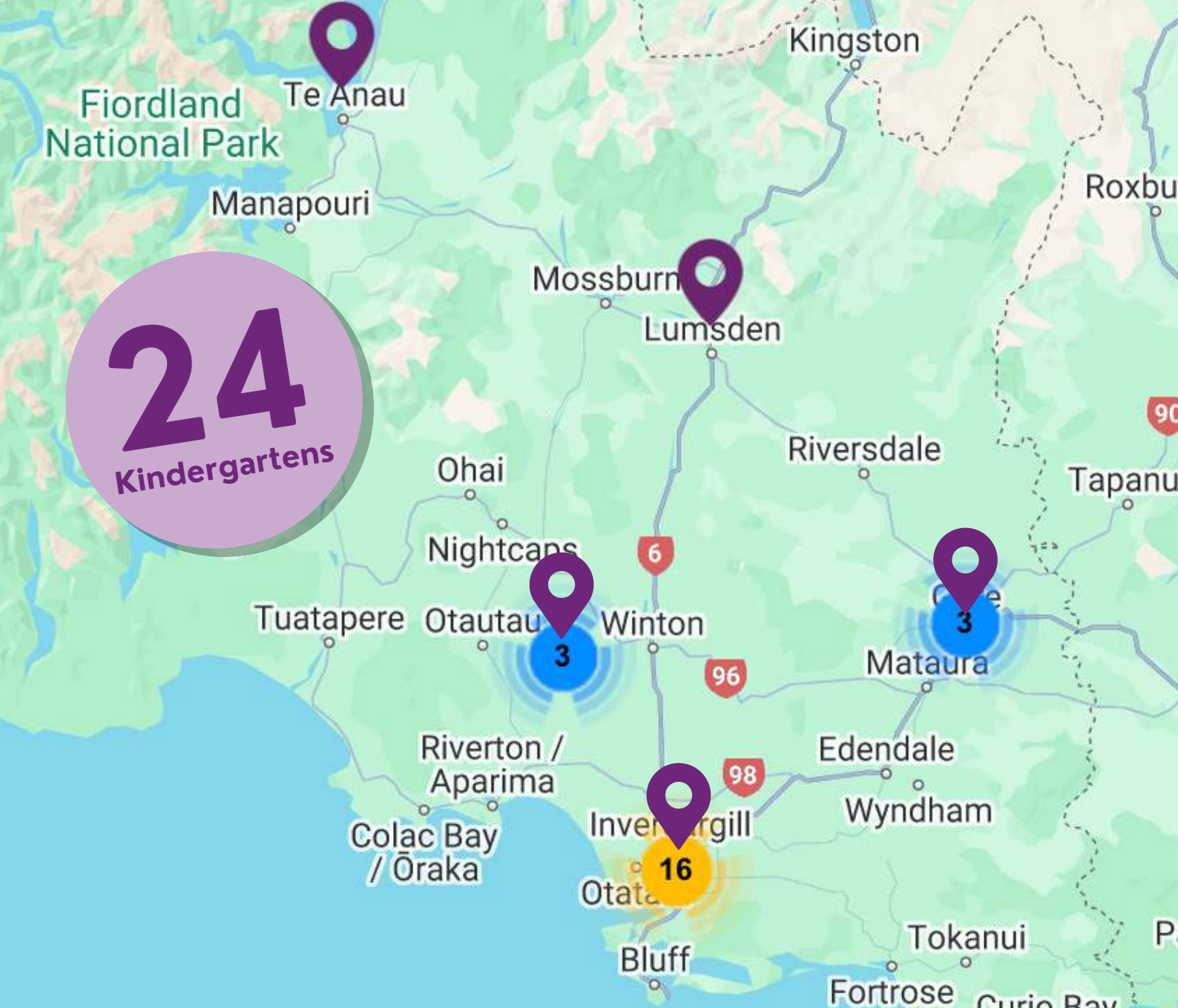
## Staff Expenses as a % of Bulk Funding











# Our Kindergartens

## Invercargill

Clarendon Kindergarten  
Elston Lea Kindergarten  
Glengarry Kindergarten  
Grasmere Kindergarten  
Kew Kindergarten  
Lees Street Kindergarten  
Lindisfarne Kindergarten  
Newfield Kindergarten  
Ōtātara Kindergarten  
Ranui Kindergarten  
Rockdale Park Kindergarten  
The Cottage Kindergarten  
Waikiwi Kindergarten  
Waverley Kindergarten

## Gore

Elsie Street Kindergarten  
Longford Kindergarten  
Oxford Kindergarten

## Rural

Bluff Kindergarten  
Drummond Rural Kindergarten  
Fiordland Kindergarten  
Longbush Rural Kindergarten  
Northern Southland Kindergarten  
Riverton Kindergarten  
Winton Kindergarten



# kindergartens

SOUTH

Pūtahi Kura Pūhou o Murihiku

[ska.co.nz](http://ska.co.nz)



Kindergartens South



Kindergartenssouth