

**WHANGANUI  
KINDERGARTEN  
ASSOCIATION: 1948-1975**

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**its building programme**

# Note as to sources

- Images used accessed from a 1975 NZFKU Photograph Collection of Kindergarten Buildings in New Zealand. Ruahine Kindergarten Association Archives.
- The name Wanganui Kindergarten Association was officially changed to Whanganui Kindergarten Association in May 1912. When quoting from historical sources where the old spelling is used, this spelling is retained. Otherwise the new spelling is used.
- Quotes used come from two sources:
  - NZFKU, 1964, *Seventy-Five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1964* (compiled and edited by Helen Downer),
  - NZFKU, 1975, *Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1975*, (compiled and edited by P.M. Lockhart).

# In the beginning

- August, 1948

The free kindergarten movement in Whanganui came into being with the formation of a committee in Durie Hill. The committee consisted of mothers whose children attended a private kindergarten operating in the St Barnabas Church hall conducted by Mrs Leach, a past primary teacher.

- March, 1949

Mrs Leach and Mrs J McFarland, president of the new committee held a public meeting in the city from which the free kindergarten association came into being. Miss J Sewell was appointed as President.

- September, 1949

The first free kindergarten in Whanganui opened in the Baden-Powell Hall on Durie Hill

# Early Expansion – six kindergarten committees and six services established in first four years

- 1948 Durie Hill
- 1949 Central City
- 1949 Wanganui East
- 1950 Aramoho
- 1951 Gonville
- 1951 St John's Hill

**“But all these kindergartens were in inadequate halls, and it soon became the ambition of each of these committees to erect permanent buildings.”** Seventy-Five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1964, 92

# EARLY KINDERGARTEN BUILDINGS

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Wanganui City Council granted sections in the suburbs of: Wanganui East, Durie Hill, St. John Hill, Gonville and Aramoho.

Seventy-Five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1964, 92

# Wanganui Central

Opened  
March 27,  
1954

No section  
found in  
central city. A  
house was  
purchased and  
converted to a  
kindergarten.



# Aramoho

Opened September  
15, 1956

“Our association’s  
first new kindergarten  
.... What a spur and  
incentive this was to  
our other committees,  
still trying so hard to  
reach that golden  
target.”

Seventy-Five Years of Free  
Kindergartens in New Zealand  
1889-1964, 92



# Wanganui East Opened

September 13, 1958



WANGANUI FREE KINDERGARTEN  
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED



The President and Council  
Members

request the pleasure of the company of

*The Committee & Mothers Club*

To the Official Opening of the

**Wanganui East Free Kindergarten**

corner Kawakawa and Clapham Streets,  
on Saturday, September 13th, 1958 at 2.30 p.m.

R.S.V.P. by 3rd September to,  
The Secretary, P.O. Box 370  
WANGANUI

*reply 12 attending*

## St. John Hill

“On March 21,  
1959  
Wanganui  
Association  
achieved its  
proudest day,  
for, during the  
morning, a new  
building was  
opened on St  
John’s Hill ...  
(see next slide)



# POLSON PARK

... and in the  
afternoon,  
Polson Park,  
Durie Hill was  
opened.”

Seventy-Five Years of Free  
Kindergartens in New  
Zealand 1889-1964, 92



# Gonville

After a long delay and many frustrations on June 11, 1960, their new kindergarten was opened.

“ ..destroyed by an act of arson in December 1967. However kindergarten continued as usual in a nearby hall until a new building was opened to children in May 1968.”

*Kindergartens in New Zealand  
1889-1975.94)*



“THIS WAS A PROUD RECORD FOR THE WANGANUI ASSOCIATION, IN THE SPACE OF 12 YEARS, SIX KINDERGARTENS HAD BEEN BUILT AND WERE SERVING THE YOUNGEST CITIZENS OF OUR CITY.”

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Seventy-Five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1964, 92-93

“IT WAS CLEAR THAT OTHER  
RAPIDLY GROWING SUBURBS  
COULD NOT BE NEGLECTED”

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Marie Mcfarland in 1965

Harriette Vine in 1969

Barsanti in 1971

Hinemoa (Wanganui) in 1972

and finally, Putiki

# Marie McFarland

Opened September  
18, 1965.

"No movement could  
owe more to any one  
person than the  
kindergarten  
movement in  
Wanganui owes to Mrs  
McFarland. ... She  
has been the mainstay  
and an inspiration to  
the Wanganui  
association from its  
inception.

*Kindergartens in New  
Zealand 1889-1975.94)*



# Harriette Vine

Opened March 29,  
1969

“The committee worked for five years, of operating and maintaining Carlton private kindergarten and raising funds for their own building.”

Section was bequeathed to the City by Miss Harriette Vine, “to be used for the enjoyment of young children”

*Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1975.93-4)*



# Barsanti Kindergarten

Opened June 1971

“This kindergarten was financed by the Association on a long term loan basis to enable children to gain kindergarten experience without delay. We have a large population of Maori and Island children in this area and we are very pleased to welcome so many of them into the kindergarten.”

*Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1975.95)*

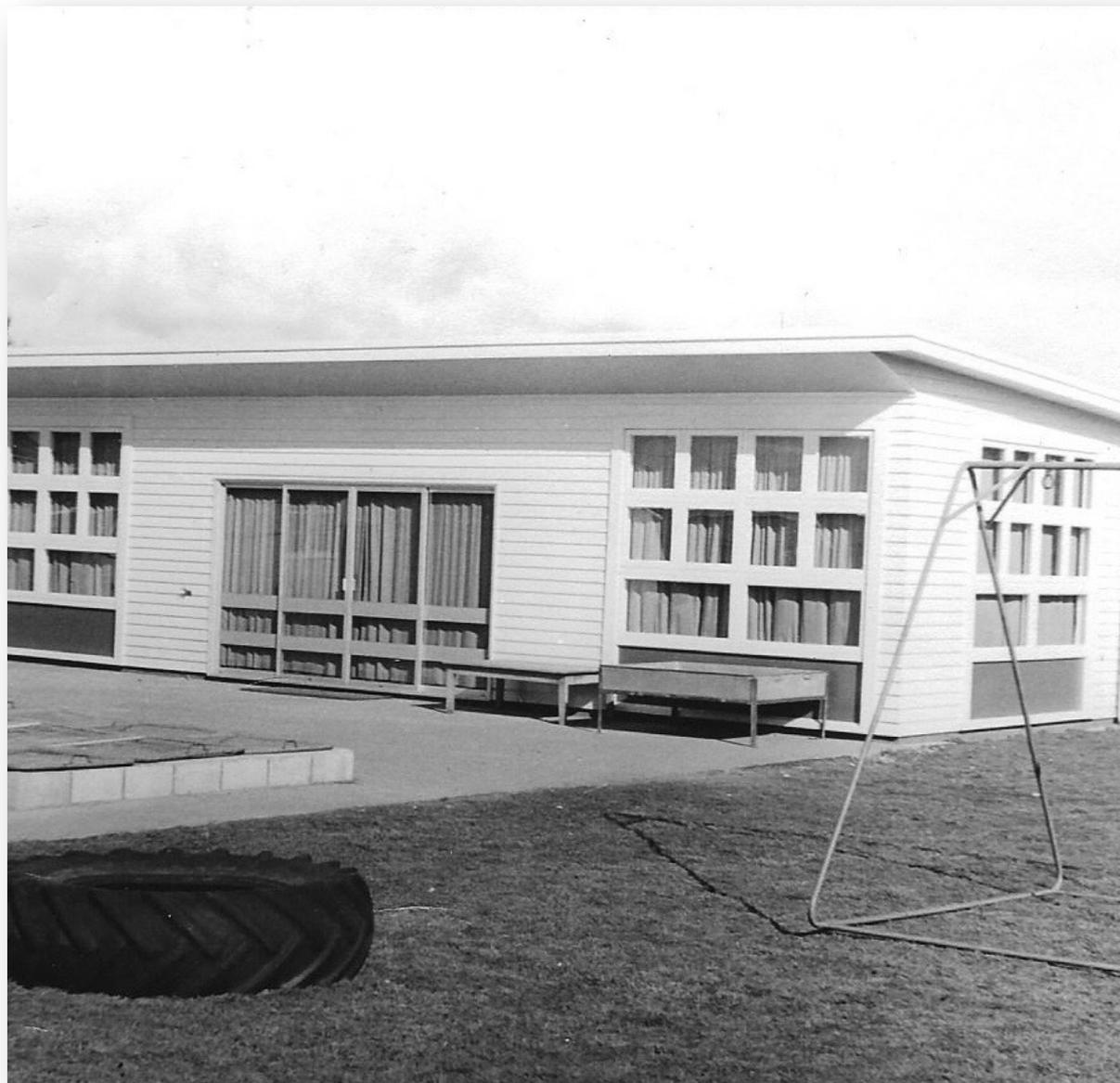


## Hinemoa (Wanganui)

Opened 23.2.1972

“Parents worked for some years for this building while at the same time operating and maintaining the Pepper Block Private Kindergarten. This is the first Grade O kindergarten and one of which we are all justly proud.”

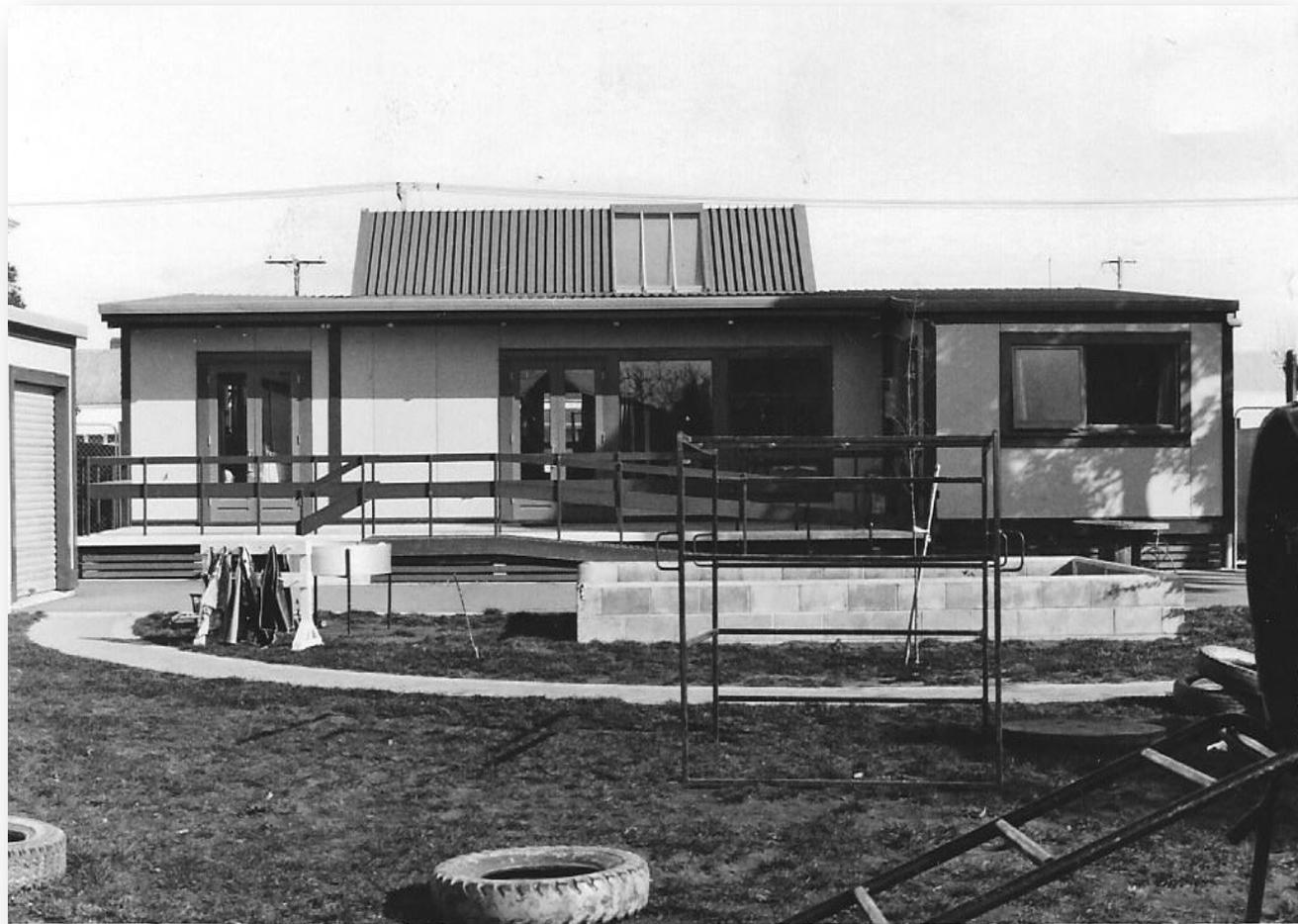
*Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1975.95)*



# Central

Formerly known  
as Keith Street  
Kindergarten

Opened to  
children, January  
31, 1979



# Putiki

Started 1960, mainly through the urging of the Putiki Mothers' club.

Teacher:

trained infant teacher, Mrs M K Greenwood.

Roll 22 children.

Twenty are Maori and two pakeha.

Kindergarten held in Parish hall but plan to build a proper centre next door

'Putiki has New Zealand's first Maori Kindergarten' *Wanganui Herald*, March 30, 1961

1964

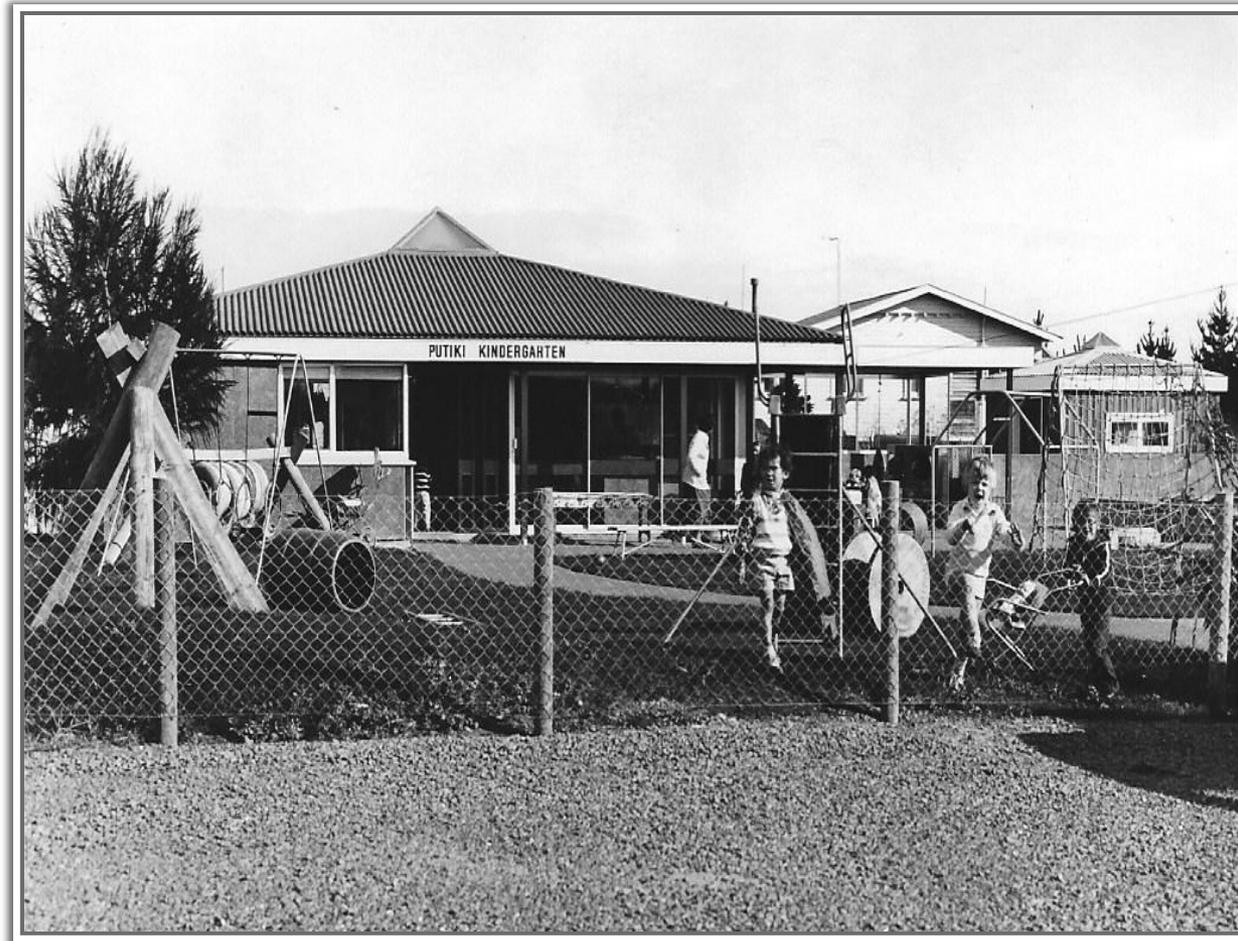
“ A history of Wanganui Association would not be complete without mention of our youngest affiliated committee. In the Maori village of Putiki, steeped in Wanganui's history, parents are operating a private kindergarten, attended almost exclusively by Maori children, but of course 'Free' in the truest sense of the word in that all children are welcome in this happy place. We are indeed proud of our Maori Council members, who bring us the finest and best in their traditions.”

Seventy-Five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1964, 93

# Putiki Kindergarten

Fund raising continued through the 1960s. Their fourteen years of work was rewarded in 1973 with the building and opening of Putiki kindergarten.

The kindergarten was finally recognised by Education Department on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1975



# THE ARCHITECT

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# Mr L S Barsanti Hon. Architect

▪  
“Wanganui Association has been singularly fortunate in that throughout this building programme it has had as its Hon. Architect and Adviser, Mr L S Barsanti of the Wanganui Education Board. Mr Barsanti has probably been our greatest friend, and our kindergartens are a monument to his wonderful generosity for he has given his professional services unstintingly.”

Seventy-Five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1964, 93