

ERO External Evaluation

Waitohu School, Ōtaki

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for those students who need it. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

School Context

Waitohu School in Ōtaki provides education for students from Years 1 to 6. At the time of this ERO evaluation, there were 295 students enrolled, 43% who are Māori, 5% of Pacific heritage and a similar number Asian.

The vision and valued outcomes for all children are to value and nurture individuals to be themselves and to be their best in all things. The school's 'language of learning' supports this vision and describes how students can be their best, through: curiosity, collaboration, resilience, creativity, excellence, perseverance and reflection.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement and progress in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to curriculum expectations and school targets
- participation and success in wider curriculum activities including cultural, sporting and community events.

Ngāti Raukawa are respected as mana whenua. The cultures represented in the school are recognised and valued. The environment visually reflects the community, the physical features and history of the local area. The roll has increased since the 2014 ERO evaluation.

The school is part of the Ōtaki Kāhui Ako.

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – valued outcomes for students

1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

The school's achievement information indicates that most students achieve at or above year level expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Since the December 2014 ERO report, overall achievement has remained at a similar level in reading and slightly declined in writing and mathematics.

During their junior years of schooling Māori students as a group achieve less well than their peers. By the end of Year 6, while there is still some disparity, this has reduced and most Māori and other students achieve the expected curriculum level. The small number of Pacific students achieve well.

Overall boys achieve at a lower level than girls in reading and writing. Since the previous ERO evaluation the disparity between these groups by the time they end Year 6 has reduced and they achieve at similar levels.

1.2 How effectively does this school respond to those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

Achievement data for 2016 and 2017 indicates that many Māori and other learners accelerate their progress over a year of learning. Most students reach the expected curriculum level in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

The progress of all students achieving below expectation is closely monitored to inform teaching. The learning of those students with additional learning needs and English second language learners is monitored against their individual goals.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence

2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?

Effective processes and strategies respond to learners whose achievement needs acceleration.

Culturally responsive conditions for learning and wellbeing are well established. Language, culture and identity are valued and developed in a nurturing environment. Students and adults work collaboratively to achieve learner-centred goals. Cultural responsiveness is strongly reflected in community connections. The school promotes and respects Māori ways of being.

Māori students' sense of belonging is actively supported. Te reo me ngā tikanga Māori are integral to programmes and relationships. Kapa haka and cultural rituals allow Māori children to make connections to their whakapapa. Staff prioritise building knowledge and understanding of tikanga and te reo. The curriculum reflects te ao Māori, often within the context of Ngāti Raukawa. Local marae and wānanga, Kāpiti Island and other places of cultural significance are visited by students.

Purposeful, reciprocal, learning-centred relationships value parents' and whānau involvement in children's learning. Home-school partnerships focus on accelerating progress and achievement for children. In the first year of schooling, particular emphasis is given to effective transition and supporting parents to assist their children's learning.

Students access a broad and challenging curriculum to develop confidence and capabilities for lifelong learning. Priority is given to literacy, numeracy, oral language and inquiry. Science and technology are emphasised. Visual art and music encourage students' creative expression. Community links and contexts, and significantly increased use of information technologies, enrich and extend learning opportunities.

Collaboratively developed expectations for teaching and learning connect clearly to the school vision. Senior leaders effectively support and monitor expectations. There is a shared understanding of expected teaching practice. Teachers use a range of strategies for effective interactions and relationships with learners. Within well-managed classroom environments, students are enthusiastic and confident. Well-designed systems and responsive resourcing cater for students identified with complex needs.

Well-established processes support learners needing accelerated progress. Teachers know well the learning level and next steps of each student. The learning of individual students and the wider effectiveness of teaching approaches are considered as part of reflection and regular discussion by teachers and leaders. Teachers continue to refine formative assessment. This contributes to learners' greater understanding of their own learning.

Senior leadership purposefully supports knowledge and capability building of teachers. Professional learning is valued and informs practice. Access is provided to relevant expertise and research. Teachers take leadership roles that promote student outcomes.

There has been significant development in teacher inquiry to improve outcomes for children. Teachers are well supported to be innovative and work collectively to effect change to benefit learners. This contributes to the focus on accelerating learners' progress. Appraisal effectively supports teacher development and capability building for greater responsiveness to the needs of all students.

Knowledgeable and experienced trustees focus on ensuring the school successfully supports a range of valued outcomes for students. Strategic planning clearly states future educational priorities. Annual targets appropriately focus on specific groups of students requiring additional support to accelerate their progress.

2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence?

Capability and collective capacity to use inquiry and knowledge building contributes to improved outcomes for individual students. The board receives a range of information related to student activities, achievement and the progress of targeted students. Trustees and leaders should strengthen systematic evaluation of the outcomes of annual targets and wider school interventions that provide additional support for students. This should enhance decision-making for improvement to the progress and achievement of those students who remain below expectation.

3 Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board and principal of the school completed the ERO board assurance statement and self-audit checklists. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- finance
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student safety and wellbeing:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- powerful connections, relationships and collaboration that promote children's engagement in learning and participation in school activities
- culturally responsive approaches that support a sense of belonging and engagement for Māori, other students, and whānau
- professional leadership, systems and processes that purposefully support building of teacher capability and practice
- a school curriculum that provides opportunities for students to learn in areas across *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, development priorities are in:

- ensuring that reporting to the board supports evaluation of the impact of practices to support targeted decision making for the future
- continuing to build internal evaluation for further improvement in the achievement of children whose progress needs acceleration and for equitable outcomes across all groups.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

ERO is likely to carry out the next external evaluation in three years.



Alan Wynyard
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central (Acting)
Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

6 April 2018

About the school

Location	Ōtaki								
Ministry of Education profile number	3065								
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)								
School roll	295								
Gender composition	Female 53%, Male 47%								
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Pākehā</td> <td>47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>43%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> </table>	Pākehā	47%	Māori	43%	Pacific	5%	Asian	5%
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Māori	43%								
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Provision of Māori medium education	No								
Review team on site	November 2017								
Date of this report	6 April 2018								
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>December 2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>November 2011</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>January 2007</td> </tr> </table>	Education Review	December 2014	Education Review	November 2011	Education Review	January 2007		
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