

**Waitohu School  
Otaki**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Waitohu School

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

## Findings

### 1 Context

#### **What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?**

Waitohu School is located in Otaki and provides education for students from Years 1 to 6. At the time of this ERO review there were 258 students enrolled. Thirty-five percent of this roll identify as Māori and 5% Pacific. The school enjoys strong community support. Parents experience a welcoming environment that values their involvement in their children's learning and participation at school. An active home-and-school committee significantly supports the school.

The school's vision, "TO BE OUR BEST", is well articulated and clearly evident in practice. Students demonstrate shared values that promote their positive inclusion in all school activities. The school environment visually reflects the community and the history of the district.

### 2 Learning

#### **How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?**

School leaders, teachers and trustees use assessment information well to make positive changes to student engagement, progress and achievement.

School-reported data shows that at the end of 2013 many students, including Māori learners, achieved National Standards expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. However, information identified that Māori students, particularly boys, were over-represented in not achieving National Standard expectations in reading, mathematics and writing. Pacific students were over-represented in mathematics. School achievement targets for 2014 were set as a result of this information.

Senior leaders gather data to identify school priorities and inform their annual targets. Student progress toward the National Standards is well tracked. School leaders recognise, through discussions with ERO, that narrowing current achievement targets to identify specific groups within priority learners, should further support trustees' focus on the progress of target students.

Since the November 2011 ERO report school leaders have continued to develop processes in response to the needs of priority learners.

Tracking procedures provide useful information about individual student progress. The Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and senior leaders suitably identify students requiring inclusion in specialist programmes to improve their achievement. Teacher predictions of National Standards achievement, at midyear, contribute well to decision-making on how best to meet individual needs.

Teachers appropriately use analysed data to group students with similar needs for instructional learning. They moderate assessment information collaboratively to determine achievement in relation to the National Standards. In 2014, teachers have introduced a process to document the needs of priority learners. Barriers to student learning and achievement are recorded. Continuing to develop this process to clearly show the actions undertaken to address these barriers and accelerate progress should strengthen teaching and learning outcomes.

Reports to parents provide useful information showing their child's achievement in relation to the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Midyear written reporting is accompanied by a conversation with parents. Parents receive relevant information on how they can assist learning at home.

Reported information to the board of trustees informs their resourcing decisions to promote student achievement.

### **3 Curriculum**

#### **How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?**

The Waitohu School curriculum successfully promotes and supports student engagement and participation. They experience a comprehensive range of motivating and considered opportunities, which are locally-based.

The school climate is inclusive and supportive. Relationships are positive and affirming between teachers, students and their peers. Students' achievement and participation is celebrated in classes, the school and the wider community.

Inquiry-learning enhances students' development of skills and attitudes. They participate in whole-school themes in authentic contexts. Opportunities for specialist music, the arts and physical education contribute to the broad range of curriculum experiences for students.

Curriculum statements in literacy and mathematics provide clear guidelines for teaching and learning. Classrooms have a positive and settled tone. Examples of effective teaching meet the school's agreed expectations. Continuing to build highly responsive teacher practice across the school, matched to the learning needs of students, should further improve the progress and achievement of priority learners.

Teachers have opportunities to discuss and share practice. Collectively, they have developed a highly collaborative culture that includes reflection on their practice. As a next step, the school is exploring models to support teacher inquiry. ERO's external evaluation confirms that strengthening teachers' goal-setting and further providing critically reflective observational feedback, linked to school expectations, should increase the rigour of teachers' inquiry and impact positively on teachers' and students' outcomes.

Pacific student achievement is monitored and reported. Their culture is valued and reflected in the school environment. Pacific themes are incorporated into inquiry-learning.

Useful liaison with local early childhood centres and the high school supports student transition into and out of the school.

Students with special and complex needs receive comprehensive support. Trustees provide significant resourcing to cater for individual needs. An experienced SENCO effectively supports teaching and learning outcomes. Staff participate in professional learning and development linked to identified priorities. Students access a range of interventions in literacy and mathematics. External agency support is accessed when required. Programmes are designed to accelerate achievement or promote social outcomes. Individual education plans are collaborative and revisited regularly.

#### **How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?**

Māori students experience positive relationships and inclusion in all aspects of school life. The reflection of Māori culture and language is highly evident. Students see, hear and participate in curriculum experiences that acknowledge the significance of mana whēnua. Teachers demonstrating highly responsive classroom practice support the cultural development of other staff. They know Māori learners and their whānau well. Students value leadership opportunities and share, with staff and whānau, high expectations for success. Teachers have multiple ways for engaging and sharing student learning with whānau, and continue to explore how best to extend working relationships to benefit student outcomes.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

#### **How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?**

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

Leadership provides clear direction for improvement. Leaders promote a collective focus on promoting positive outcomes for students. Teachers contribute to curriculum leadership and initiatives across the school. Individual strengths are recognised and utilised. School leaders are continuing to strategically build teachers' leadership practice.

Trustees govern effectively. Strategic goals align to the school's priorities. The makeup of the board is representative of the local community. Trustees demonstrate a commitment to ongoing improvement to promote successful outcomes for all students.

Leaders, teachers and trustees have a focus on ongoing development of practices to strengthen curriculum outcomes for students, parents and whānau. Developing improved evaluation practice is a next step. Gaining a greater understanding of the effectiveness of initiatives and the performance of the curriculum should positively impact on student progress and achievement.

## Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees 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:

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

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

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

## Conclusion

Student engagement and participation is successfully promoted through the school curriculum. Many students, including Māori learners, achieve the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a strong reflection of individual students' cultures, languages and identities. School leaders are strengthening practices to improve evaluation and further promote positive curriculum and achievement outcomes for students.

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



Joyce Gebbie  
National Manager Review Services  
Central Region

23 December 2014

## About the School

Location	Otaki	
Ministry of Education profile number	3065	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	258	
Gender composition	Male 51%, Female 49%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	34%
	NZ European/Pākehā	52%
	Pacific	5%
	Other ethnic groups	9%
Review team on site	October 2014	
Date of this report	23 December 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2011
	Education Review	January 2007
	Education Review	September 2004