

ERO External Evaluation

Tapu School, Thames

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 students. 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

Tapu School is a sole charge school located on the coast approximately 20 minutes from Thames Township. It has a current roll of seven. Students have access to a large area for play and exploration, library/information centre, swimming pool and two classroom teaching spaces. Five of the students are of Māori descent and their whānau are well represented on the board of trustees. The board chairperson continues in her role and the principal also remains in her role as teacher/professional leader. The school mission statement, '*Whakaarohia, akohia, tau ke* (A school where thinking and learning are fun) is supported by the vision 'to encourage life-long learning by providing appropriate programmes and resources in a happy, safe and caring environment'. The school values a strong and visible Māori dimension. A review of culturally responsive practice is taking place during 2018.

The principal regularly reports to the board, school-wide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- reading, writing and mathematics.

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

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

The school is working towards achieving equitable outcomes for all of its students.

Achievement information gathered by the school from 2015 to 2017 shows the following:

- The majority of all students achieved at or above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Comparable achievement for boys, girls and between ethnicities.

1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

The school is able to show progress for the very small group of Māori and other students whose learning and achievement needs acceleration.

The school clearly identifies all students whose learning is at risk. Reports to the board of trustees show that most students, including the small number whose learning is at risk, are making good progress with their learning.

The school is yet to systematically gather, analyse and report data specifically about rates of progress (expected and accelerated) for all Māori and other students who are achieving below expectation.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

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

The school's local curriculum is providing a sound foundation for teaching and learning. Aspects of the curriculum design and implementation that contribute to the achievement of excellence and equity are:

- authentic learning experiences across all learning areas
- learning environments that are managed in ways that support high levels of student engagement
- focused, responsive individual and small group instruction
- ongoing challenge and support for at-risk learners, including the involvement of external agencies and experts
- co-operative learning based on a culture of tuakana-teina.

School governance is effective in supporting ongoing improvements to student outcomes. Trustees are experienced in their roles and engaged with the community. They are well informed about student achievement, progress and wellbeing, and actively promote Māori students' language, culture and identity. Trustees make informed decisions about school priorities based on achievement information provided by the principal. The board works collaboratively with the school's leader to realise the school's strategic goals and targets.

A strengths-based approach underpins relationships within the school and with parents and whānau. Frequent communication and responsive partnerships with parents are supporting student wellbeing and learning successes.

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

Aspects of assessment require strengthening. Further review is necessary to implement progressions across the *New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)*, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics to support:

- teacher planning and assessment focused on accelerated progress
- students setting, monitoring and sharing meaningful and measureable learning goals
- greater student knowledge of their own progress and learning journey

- reporting to parents about accelerated outcomes for their children
- reporting to trustees about the overall effectiveness of learning programmes in achieving excellence and equity.

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:

- a curriculum that promotes individual student engagement and wellbeing
- governance that is focused on improving outcomes for all learners, beginning with those at risk
- partnerships with parents and whānau that are strongly based on learning, wellbeing and inclusion.

Next steps

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

- assessment practice to sharpen the focus on accelerating learning
- teaching strategies to enable greater student knowledge of their own learning, progress and next steps.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Cowie', written in a cursive style.

Phil Cowie
Director Review and Improvement Services

Central Region

19 December 2018

About the school

Location	Thames
Ministry of Education profile number	1980
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)
School roll	7
Gender composition	Boys 4 Girls 3
Ethnic composition	Māori 5 Pākehā 2
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	No
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	October 2018
Date of this report	19 December 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review September 2015 Education Review November 2012 Education Review January 2010