

ERO External Evaluation

Maihihi School, Ōtorohanga

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

Maihihi School is a rural school located east of Ōtorohanga. It provides education for students in Years 1 to 8. At the time of this ERO evaluation the roll had rapidly increased to 107 over a short period. Approximately 21% of students identify as Māori.

The school motto is 'nothing great is easily won / kāore te mea nui e māmā te whiwhi.' The school mission is to teach children to be confident, actively involved, life-long learners.

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

- Reading, writing and mathematics.

Both the principal and deputy principal have been at the school for less than a year. The board is led by an experienced chair and trustees bring a range of relevant skills and experience to their roles.

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 not yet achieving equitable outcomes for all its students. There is significant disparity between boys and girls in reading and writing, but not in mathematics.

In 2017 the majority of students achieved at or above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement has remained relatively stable over the past four years in reading and mathematics, and has risen in writing. In 2017 the majority of Māori students achieved at or above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Special needs students are well tracked and monitored, and are progressing appropriately according to their individual learning goals.

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

The school is not yet achieving equitable outcomes for those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration. The school is able to provide data about students' rates of progress for the second half of 2018. This shows that a few of the at-risk students made accelerated progress.

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?

Leadership promotes an orderly and supportive environment that is conducive to student learning and wellbeing. There is a clear vision and direction for the school. Leadership is supportive and allows teachers freedom to follow their strengths and interests. Leaders are responsive and 'solutions focused' to ensure stability and continuity of learning for students. They take a considered and collaborative approach to change. Leadership is building and maintaining relationships within and beyond the community that promote success for all learners.

Students participate and learn in a caring, supportive and inclusive environment. There is a positive approach to behaviour management, which has an emphasis on promoting values and virtues. This has reduced incidents of inappropriate behaviour and is contributing to a positive school tone. There are strong, respectful relationships among teachers and students. Children with special needs are well supported in an inclusive environment. Leaders are increasingly taking a restorative approach to behaviour incidents and fully involve parents and whānau to support students. Classrooms are settled and students are well engaged in their learning.

The school and community are engaged in reciprocal, learning-centred relationships. Parents, whānau and the wider community contribute to the curriculum in a number of different ways including an electives programme, and excursions into the community. The wider community also provides financial and material assistance to the school. Trustees are representative of the community and use their local networks to support the school. They have established a trusting and open relationship with school leadership.

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

Assessment practices and systems need to be strengthened. Reporting against acceleration targets to the board of trustees, and teacher professional discussion about strategies that promote accelerated progress, also need to be improved.

Teachers need to strengthen the way they use learning progressions. Informed use of learning progressions of the *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC), should:

- inform teacher planning and lead to deliberate teaching to raise achievement
- lead to greater empowerment of students as self-managing learners
- involve parents as partners in their children's learning.

The curriculum needs to be reviewed. Agreed expectations for teaching and behaviour management that reflect current best practice should be developed and documented. This review process should also include the identification of local curriculum emphases and how these will be delivered.

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.

Actions for compliance

ERO identified non-compliance in relation to physical restraint.

In order to address this, the board of trustees must:

1. develop guidelines for all staff to ensure that current guidelines for physical restraint are followed.
[Education (Physical Restraint) Rules 2017]

Areas for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- review bullying prevention guidelines to ensure all forms of bullying are included.

4 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Maihihi School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Well placed

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

5 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- leadership that is responsive and solutions focussed
- an environment that is caring and inclusive
- a community that is supportive and involved.

Next steps

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

- strengthening assessment to more clearly identify and respond to students' learning needs
- improving the quality of teaching to enable students to take more ownership of their own learning
- reviewing the curriculum to ensure local emphases and priorities are clearly reflected.



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Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

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About the school

Location	Ōtorohanga
Ministry of Education profile number	1793
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)
School roll	107
Gender composition	Girls 52% Boys 48%
Ethnic composition	Māori 21% Pākehā 75% Other 4%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	December 2018
Date of this report	27 March 2019
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review March 2015 Education Review November 2011 Education Review August 2008