



**Maihihi School**  
**Otorohanga, King Country**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Maihihi 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?**

Maihihi School is a small rural school located east of Otorohanga, providing education for students from Years 1 to 8. The current role is 59 students, of whom 16 identify as Māori. Two new principals have been appointed since the 2011 ERO review, the most recent in May 2014. The teaching staff has remained constant.

The school's vision encourages students to 'give everything a go' and develop positive relationships with others. This is supported by the 'Maihihi Learner' qualities which are highly visible and underpin school culture. There is a strong sense of support and community among students, staff and parents.

Progress is beginning to be made in the areas identified for development in the 2011 ERO review in relation to students' taking responsibility for their learning and the appraisal process for teachers.

### 2 Learning

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

The board of trustees is well informed about student achievement. Trustees use the information to develop strategic plans and make resourcing decisions, which are resulting in improved student outcomes. Several programmes are in place to support students at risk of not meeting appropriate standards of achievement.

Teachers make overall teacher judgements about individual student's progress and achievement. They use assessment information to group students, differentiate some learning tasks, and identify target students. Teachers need to further strengthen planning to focus on intentional teaching to meet current learning needs of groups and individual students.

Students are actively engaged in classroom programmes. Teachers use a range of strategies to motivate them and are beginning to promote self-directed learning. Leaders have identified the need for teachers to further investigate ways to support students taking ownership of their learning.

Parents are well informed about students' progress and achievement which enables them to work in partnership with teachers to support their children's learning. They receive two written reports each year and the school has begun using student-led conferences to enable students to share their learning. Learning journals provide examples of work in reading, writing and mathematics. This reporting is strongly supported by ongoing, informal conversations between parents and teachers. Teachers have identified a need to review the format of written reporting to parents.

Achievement information reported to the board at the end of 2014 indicates that the significant majority of students are achieving at expected National Standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. The overall achievement of Māori students is comparable with their peers. The school has set targets for 2015 to increase achievement in writing, particularly for boys.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum reflects the principles, values and key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC), and has a strong rural focus. Teachers, in partnership with parents, are currently reviewing the curriculum to clarify expectations for teaching and learning. Priority is given to progress and achievement in literacy and mathematics. Leaders and ERO agree it would be timely to review the qualities of the 'Maihihi Learner' to more closely link them with the key competency expectations of the NZC.

Teachers have established strong relationships with students. Staff and trustees know students, their families and the local community well, and this is reflected in the deliberate use of relevant and authentic contexts for learning. Student learning is further enriched through parent and community expertise, elective programmes, education outside the classroom events, special rural community days and sporting activities.

Student leadership is fostered and encouraged, with some students actively involved in planning new school initiatives. Such opportunities support the school's aim to develop well-rounded learners. They have ready access to information and communication technology and other resources. Students share a great sense of pride in their school. They appreciate the commitment of the principal and staff to their wellbeing and learning.

ERO observed a range of teaching approaches where the balance of teacher-directed and student-led learning varied. Teachers use modelling books in reading, writing and mathematics. They have been involved in some professional development in writing. A special feature of the school is the significant effort teachers are making to increase boys' motivation and include male role models in the programme.

Students and parents are very well supported to transition into the school. The school maintains a strong relationship with the local playcentre.

The principal and teachers reviewed performance management processes in 2014. This has resulted in an improved system for ensuring that the requirements of the Registered Teachers' Criteria and teacher professional standards are being met. Further development should enhance this process.

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

The school has implemented a regular, teacher-led te reo Māori programme within the school structure. Opportunities are provided for students to learn Māori protocols through kapa haka. To enhance Māori cultural awareness, teachers could now investigate ways to incorporate te iwi ō Maniapoto history within classroom programmes.

## 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 because:

- trustees are well led by an experienced chairperson, make effective use of individual skills, and are providing clear vision and direction for the school
- a strong professional relationship between trustees and the new principal is developing and is leading to improved outcomes for students
- the principal is providing clear expectations and systems for teaching and learning, and has built strong connections with the community
- self review is becoming established with clear purpose and procedures.
- teachers work in the best interests of students and facilitate many additional activities
- parents are strongly supportive and take advantage of the many opportunities to be involved in their child's education and school events.

The next steps for continuing school improvement are to strengthen:

- teacher appraisal processes to ensure ongoing critical inquiry into teaching effectiveness
- the planned approach to self review, with documentation to show evidence of the process and outcomes
- formative assessment practices to enable students to confidently and knowledgeably take responsibility for their learning. This should include regular individual goal setting and monitoring, self and peer assessment, specific feedback and feed forward about learning, and effective use of learning progressions.

### 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.

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should work towards offering students opportunities for learning second and subsequent languages (Years 7-10) as suggested in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

## Conclusion

Maihihi School is a focal point for its rural community and aims to develop well-rounded learners. Teachers encourage students to 'give everything a go' and provide opportunities for them to engage in a range of relevant and authentic learning activities. The school benefits from strong community support and involvement.

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



Dale Bailey  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

31 March 2015

## About the School

Location	Otorohanga, King Country	
Ministry of Education profile number	1793	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	59	
Gender composition	Boys 31 Girls 28	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā Māori Other	41 16 2
Review team on site	February 2015	
Date of this report	31 March 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	November 2011 August 2008 June 2005