

ERO External Evaluation

Ruahine School, Dannevirke

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

Ruahine School is a rural primary on the southern outskirts of Dannevirke, in Tararua District. It has a roll of 157 students in Years 1 to 8 and 15% are Māori.

The school's vision is: The Best I Can Do, The Best I Can Be. Values and expectations for students are expressed as ROCKERS: resilient, open to learning, collaborative, kind, enthusiastic, respectful, self-managing. The valued outcomes, expressed in the school's Charter identify that: learning should be student centred; and learning experiences meaningful and inspire personal excellence.

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- progress and achievement in relation to school targets.

Board leadership remains stable. At the time of this ERO evaluation, the school is in the process of appointing a new principal.

Schoolwide professional learning opportunities focused on mathematics in 2014 and 2015 and on writing, with an emphasis on oral language in 2016 and 2017.

The school is part of the Dannevirke Community of Learning | 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?

Reported achievement since 2014, shows that most students continue to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, and that achievement is mostly equitable. Mid-year results for 2017 show that the school is on track to achieve improved outcomes in these areas. Māori students achieve success on par with or better than their peers within the school.

Addressing in-school disparity for boys in reading and writing is an ongoing priority. Data in 2016 indicates increased progress in boys' writing.

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

The school reports that many students, including those with additional learning needs, have accelerated their achievement.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence

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

The school actively promotes practices to achieve equitable and excellent outcomes for students and address any underachievement. Established processes and strategies identify and respond to those Māori and other learners whose learning and achievement need acceleration, and to children requiring additional learning and wellbeing support. The school values guide interactions in a positive schoolwide culture.

The school's curriculum and conditions for learning promote students' engagement as active, independent learners. Expectations for teaching and learning are clearly articulated in the curriculum. This fosters foundational and self-directed learning. Deliberate teaching of learning strategies encourages students to monitor and contribute to their progress and achievement. Students set and track goals matched to their next learning steps. They are well engaged and participate positively in collaborative learning environments.

Leaders and teachers use a sound range of assessment tools and data to inform judgements about students' achievement. Teacher collaboration, clear guidelines and data management supported by leaders, ensure consistency and reliability of assessment. Information about all students' learning and achievement is collated and shared with the board and parents. Teacher inquiries and schoolwide tracking and monitoring of priority learners' progress, provides useful evidence about students whose achievement is being accelerated throughout the year.

Strongly strategic and collaborative approaches by the board, leaders and teachers, and connections with parents and whānau, support the focus on learning and achievement. Resourcing and decision making contribute to achieving the school's vision, goals and targets. Deliberate initiatives cater for students with identified learning needs. Parents and whānau are provided with useful resources to support learning at home.

Building teacher capability is central to the school's professional learning culture. Leaders and teachers regularly discuss student achievement and share teaching and learning strategies. Professional learning and development, inquiry and research are planned for continuous improvement. A consistently implemented appraisal process responds to teachers' development needs and optimises opportunities to improve their practice.

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

The school is aware of the need to continue development of its culturally responsive curriculum to effectively support Māori students to become confident, connected and successful learners in relation to their identity, culture and language. Using community and parent voice to build stronger reciprocal relationships, particularly with the Māori community, should add value to this development.

For further development of internal evaluation, to support robust measures for future decision making, strengthened data collection and analysis should determine:

- how effective specific programmes and initiatives are in making a difference for students
- the impact of practice on acceleration of achievement, particularly for boys
- student wellbeing and other valued outcomes.

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:

- achieving outcomes for students that are equitable for most groups and show sustained high levels of learning success
- a strong culture of collaboration amongst leaders and teachers that consistently promotes high expectations for learning and the quality of teaching
- purposeful leadership and governance that has set a clear direction and expectations for continuous improvement in achieving equity and excellence for all students.

Next steps

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

- inquiring into boys' learning, progress and achievement to ensure sustained improvement, especially in reading and writing
- building stronger reciprocal relationships, particularly with the Māori community, by using parent and whānau voice to ensure a more culturally responsive curriculum
- further internal evaluation to better measure the impact of programmes and initiatives on acceleration and achievement of other valued outcomes for learners at risk of not achieving.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Patricia Davey
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Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

21 December 2017

About the school

Location	Dannevirke
Ministry of Education profile number	2669
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)
School roll	157
Gender composition	Female 55%, Male 45%
Ethnic composition	Māori 15% Pākehā 83% Other ethnic groups 2%
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	October 2017
Date of this report	21 December 2017
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review January 2015 Education Review April 2011 Education Review June 2008