

ERO External Evaluation

Whakarongo School, Palmerston North

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

Whakarongo School in Palmerston North, has students in Years 1 to 8. The multi-cultural roll of 546, includes 22% who identify as Māori and 4% as of Pacific heritage. The roll has continued to increase since the February 2016 ERO report. An enrolment scheme is in place. Property development has continued in response to roll growth.

The stated vision and valued outcome for students is to 'Be the best Whakarongo Kid I can be'. This is promoted through the four dimensions of the 'Whakarongo Kid: Innovator, Navigator, Connector, and Collaborator'.

The school recognises Rangitāne iwi as mana whenua.

In 2018, the school's strategic priorities are raising achievement for identified groups of students in mathematics at Year 4, writing at Year 5, and developing the key competencies at Year 6.

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to the levels of *The New Zealand Curriculum*
- wellbeing for learning
- specific literacy interventions
- key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum* and dimensions of the Whakarongo Kid.

Recent initiatives to support student learning and wellbeing include: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics); a Foundation Curriculum; a Conceptual Curriculum; and cultural responsiveness. External and internal professional learning and development (PLD) is supporting the implementation of these initiatives.

The school is part of the Palmerston North East Kāhui Ako.

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?

Since the previous ERO report, achievement has remained consistently high. The school continues to achieve equitable and excellent outcomes for most students.

At the end of 2017, school reported data indicated that most students, including Māori and Pacific learners, achieved at or above curriculum achievement expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Boys and girls achieve at equivalent levels in reading and writing. Girls achieved slightly lower than boys in mathematics. Māori students achieve similarly to their peers in literacy and slightly lower in mathematics.

Mid-year 2018 student achievement information, indicates that most students including Māori are on track to meet end-of-year expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

The school is successful in accelerating the learning of most students, especially Māori students in mathematics. Students whose learning requires acceleration are well known to leaders and teachers.

In 2018, the school has successfully accelerated the learning for almost all target students in writing, most of Year 6 students in relation to their key competency focus and the majority of target students in mathematics. There is also evidence of students accelerating their learning as a result of specific interventions in literacy. Targeted teaching and a range of interventions are responsive to the needs of individual students.

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?

Leaders collaboratively establish clear goals and expectations that ensure an organised, well-aligned and supportive environment for student wellbeing and learning. Inquiry and evaluation are used effectively to inform decisions for school improvement. A well-considered approach and the collective knowledge and skills of staff, successfully support the implementation of new initiatives and innovations to promote positive outcomes for students. A culturally responsive framework informs board operation and school practices.

Learner-focused relationships are highly evident across the school. Learning environments are managed in ways that promote students' participation and engagement in purposeful learning. They work capably and confidently at challenging tasks across the curriculum. Teaching and learning in STEM and the foundation and conceptual curriculums, support students to think creatively and critically and prepare them for a changing world.

The school's innovative approach to curriculum development gives teachers license to trial and implement new ideas, as they seek to actively engage all learners and help them meet with success. Literacy, mathematics and the dimensions of the Whakarongo Kid underpin teaching and learning and ways of being. Students personalise their learning through following their interests and strengths and are encouraged to be self-managing. Learner progressions guide students to understand and know about their learning as they move through the school.

Well-established systems and processes, including clearly defined assessments practices, enable leaders and teachers to identify, respond, track and monitor student learning progress and achievement. This is regularly reported to trustees, enabling them to make well-informed resourcing decisions.

Collaboration with parents, whānau and external agencies ensures the learning of students with more complex needs is suitably supported. Appropriate use of resourcing promotes students' participation and engagement in the programme alongside their peers. Careful consideration and responsiveness to students' and their families' aspirations supports the successful transition of students into, through and beyond the school.

The school has developed and implemented comprehensive, useful guidelines and processes for appraisal of staff. This promotes inquiry and fosters collaboration and sharing evidence of good practice. Teachers' professional learning and development and inquiry are closely aligned to the school's goals and priorities.

Leaders and teachers continue to actively participate and contribute to wider education networks.

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

Trustees, leaders and teachers should continue to use internal evaluation to systematically evaluate how well and to what extent strategies, approaches and innovations promote improved and accelerated learning. Findings should then be used to further inform decision-making for ongoing and future development.

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.

Provision for international students

The school became a signatory to the *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989 on 8 November 2018. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code. At the time of this ERO review no international students were enrolled.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- a culture of collaboration among leaders, teachers, parents and whānau that maintains high expectations for teaching and learning throughout the school
- a focus on wellbeing that is responsive to students' needs and supports their learning success
- an innovative approach to curriculum delivery that supports students to think creatively and critically and be prepared for a changing world.

Next steps

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

- continued use of internal evaluation to systematically evaluate the impact of approaches and innovations to improve and accelerate learning.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

ERO is likely to carry out the next external evaluation in four-to-five years.



Phil Cowie
Director Review and Improvement Services
Central Region

20 December 2018

About the school

Location	Palmerston North								
Ministry of Education profile number	2481								
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)								
School roll	546								
Gender composition	Male 53%, Female 47%								
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pākehā</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic groups</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> </table>	Māori	22%	Pākehā	60%	Pacific	4%	Other ethnic groups	14%
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Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes								
Provision of Māori medium education	No								
Review team on site	November 2018								
Date of this report	20 December 2018								
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>February 2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>October 2012</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>September 2010</td> </tr> </table>	Education Review	February 2016	Education Review	October 2012	Education Review	September 2010		
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