

## ERO External Evaluation

### Ward School, Ward

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

Ward School is a small, rural Years 1 to 8 school situated in Ward, Marlborough. It has a roll of 42 students, 14 of whom identify as Maori. There are two multilevel classrooms and a teaching principal. At the time of ERO's review the school had extra Ministry of Education staffing in response to the November 2016 earthquakes. Since the 2014 ERO review there has been a new principal and some teaching staff. At the time of the onsite stage of the review, the board was in the process of appointing a new principal.

The school's vision is, '*Leading our learning together for our future*'. Its valued outcomes are for all students to be respectful, resilient, innovative and visionary. The board aims for students to develop as well-rounded individuals who are confident, connected learners. The school's strategic priorities focus on five key goals. They are to:

- raise student achievement
- develop excellent teaching practice
- raise Māori student achievement
- provide effective governance and leadership
- provide a safe and nurturing learning environment.

The board's annual achievement targets are for all students who achieve well below, below or at the expected standard to make more than one year's progress towards the appropriate National Standard.

The school belongs to the Piritahi Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning (CoL).

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to the National Standards

- progress and accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to the National Standards
- information regarding students' wellbeing.

## 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?

The school is effective in achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for its students.

Almost 90% of students achieve at or above expectations in reading and writing. Mathematics achievement is lower at 83%. This data is analysed to indicate how many students make more than a year's progress in a year, those who are making the expected progress of a year's learning within a year, and those who are making insufficient progress. The school's data at the end of 2016 shows many students made accelerated progress. Interim reports for 2017 show this trend is continuing.

Following the 2016 earthquakes, the school received good support enabling positive and useful provision to support students' wellbeing and a continued focus on students' learning.

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

The school is effectively responding to those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

The school is strengthening its culturally responsive practices so that it is better placed to enable Māori students to be confident in their language, culture and identity and to succeed as Māori. The majority of Māori and other students whose learning needed additional support made accelerated progress in writing and maths. In reading, where many Māori students achieve highly, just under half of those targeted for accelerated progress reached this goal.

Rates of progress for Māori and other students whose learning needs to be accelerated are very good.

### 2 School conditions for equity and excellence

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

School processes and practices are mostly effective in supporting equitable and excellent outcomes for students.

Leaders and teachers engage in systematic, evidence-informed professional inquiry to improve outcomes for students. Inquiry is closely aligned to the school's vision, strategic goals and annual targets. Leaders and teachers appropriately use evidence of students' learning and outcomes to monitor if sufficient progress is being made or if further changes to programme provision are needed.

Students benefit from a wide, rich curriculum. Teachers are very aware of the importance of ensuring the curriculum makes connections to students' lives, draws on students' prior

understandings and represents real world contexts. They effectively build on students' strengths and ably link learning contexts to students' interests. A strong foundation is built in students' early years, providing a useful basis for further learning.

Students' views and opinions are valued and contribute to curriculum decisions. They are well supported to think reflectively, set meaningful goals, try out their ideas and problem solve. Teachers use a variety of effective teaching strategies to increase students' motivation, engagement and success.

The board and school leadership worked collaboratively with the community to update the school's vision and values. Together they remain focused on accelerating students' learning outcomes and set specific targets to promote acceleration. The board makes sound strategic decisions about resourcing to enhance teaching and learning provision and student wellbeing.

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

Processes and practices to achieve equity and excellence for all students are effective. The following actions would further enhance outcomes for students.

Trustees need to ensure that they receive more frequent reports on progress towards annual achievement targets. Action plans that underpin annual achievement targets need to be more specific. This will enable the board, principal and teachers to more effectively identify strategies that are making the most difference in accelerating students' learning.

The principal and teachers have introduced new approaches to strengthen learning partnerships with parents. It would be useful to continue to embed current practice and further explore other options. This would ensure equitable and effective opportunities for all parents to develop learning partnerships with the school. Internal evaluation that measures satisfaction with approaches used would further contribute to effective learning partnerships.

The school has engaged in a range of strategies to build culturally responsive practices and views into curriculum provision and have made steady progress in this area. The school has recently engaged in an opportunity provided by the CoL to significantly enhance cultural understandings. The board and school leaders need to ensure good traction occurs to benefit Māori and all learners.

Curriculum guidelines need to be more explicit about expectations for teaching and learning in essential learning areas to ensure students' learning pathways are consistent and coherent over time.

## **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:

- high quality professional inquiry into accelerating outcomes for students
- teaching that identifies learning contexts that are well connected to students' interests and strengths
- a strong focus on accelerating students' learning and rates of progress.

### Next steps

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

- more regular reporting and development of specific action plans to underpin the board's annual achievement targets
- continuing to build powerful learning connections with parents, family and whānau
- further developing culturally responsive understandings and practice.

### ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Dr Lesley Patterson  
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Te Waipounamu - Southern Region

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## About the school

Location	Ward
Ministry of Education profile number	3067
School type	Full primary, Year 1 to 8
School roll	42
Gender composition	Girls 27, boys 15
Ethnic composition	Māori 14 Pākehā 28
Review team on site	November 2017
Date of this report	19 December 2017
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review July 2014 Education Review April 2011 Education Review November 2007