



Ruahine School
Dannevirke

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Ruahine 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?

Ruahine School is a rural Years 1 to 8 primary school located on the southern outskirts of Dannevirke, in the Tararua District. About 20% of students identify as Māori, with local iwi affiliations with Rangitāne and Ngāti Kahungunu.

Significant changes have occurred since the April 2011 ERO report. These include the appointment of a new principal and deputy principal at the start of 2013. Most board members were elected mid-2013 and teaching staff changes have also occurred.

School leaders have focused on re-establishing sustainable school systems to accelerate the progress of students not yet reaching the National Standard. Good progress is evident in how school leaders, teachers and trustees use inquiry and review to improve teaching and learning.

Strong community and parent involvement continue to be strengths of the school. The recent school curriculum renewed the 'The Best I Can Do, The Best I Can Be' vision statement and the values represented by the 'ROCKERS' acronym. Students learn in a positive and well-resourced school environment.

2 Learning

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

The school is improving its use of achievement information. School leaders and teachers have sharpened their focus on using assessment data. Teachers consistently plan and closely monitor students' progress in literacy and numeracy. Responsive support programmes are in place for writing and reading. Appropriate achievement targets are set to increase students' progress and action plans are well monitored by trustees.

The school reports that high proportions of students achieve at and above, in relation to the National Standards, in reading. A well-considered approach is addressing lower achievement in writing and numeracy. End-of-year data for 2014 shows significant progress in these two areas. Māori learners achieve well in reading and at similar levels to their peers in writing and numeracy.

The school reports students' progress in numeracy to parents and the board and has yet to report achievement in relation to mathematics.

Students lead and share their learning with their families and whānau through formal mid-year conferences. Individual goals are set, reviewed and discussed with parents. Students share their learning each term and parents provide feedback. School leaders plan to further strengthen the flow of information between home and school. This should contribute to more productive learning partnerships.

Well-developed schoolwide quality assurance in writing assessment includes moderation across classrooms and with other schools. There is a focus on strengthening teachers' use of evidence in assessment. Some initial moderation in numeracy has occurred. It is timely for school leaders and teachers to:

- continue developing school assessment practices, particularly moderation practices in reading and mathematics
- report student achievement in relation the National Standards in mathematics to students, families and trustees.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum effectively supports student learning. It is well-considered and reflects the aspirations and wishes of the current school community. The recent review contributes to a shared understanding of how the vision, values and key competencies work for students. Clear expectations promote consistency in the use of effective teaching strategies in literacy, mathematics, physical activity and other learning areas.

Students are purposefully engaged in learning. They are confident and have a shared sense of responsibility as members of the school community. Leadership roles are valued and successes are regularly celebrated. Students are enthusiastic and enjoy positive relationships with others in the school. Opportunities for students to lead their own learning continue to develop.

A focus on local Māori history increases older students' knowledge and understanding of te ao Māori. Teachers are continuing to develop this aspect of the school curriculum.

A two-year action plan to improve mathematics teaching is well informed by students' learning needs. School leaders' considered approach is well-informed by research. End-of-2014 results show collaborative teaching and learning is significantly promoting students' confidence and progress.

Teachers are improving their use of reflection to inquire into effective teaching of mathematics. Closer monitoring of student progress is helping teachers to identify successful strategies. Effective practices are shared at staff meetings. Teachers are strengthening their understanding of what makes the biggest difference for students.

Trustees have appropriately included in the school strategic plan the need to improve digital strategies to maximise the benefits from information and communication technologies. Other next steps for the school are to:

- continue to extend effective teaching practices that empower students to lead their own learning
- further develop culturally responsive learning contexts for students.

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

Māori students' progress and achievement continues to be well supported. Growth in kapa haka provides students with meaningful leadership roles and regular opportunities to celebrate their culture and identity. Support from the local secondary school deputy principal provides continuity in kapa haka. Recently, a whānau group met for the first time after a long recess. Trustees set appropriate improvement targets to support Māori learners and are aware of their obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

All teachers have undertaken some formal professional learning to strengthen their knowledge of te reo and te ao Māori. Most teachers' use of te reo Māori and provisions for te reo Māori learning programmes from Years 1 to 8 are at early stages of development.

It is timely for trustees, school leaders and staff to:

- strengthen specific provisions for supporting Māori student success, through ensuring whānau wishes and aspirations for students inform the board's strategic direction and decision-making
- increase staff use of te reo Māori and provide Years 1 to 8 students with a well-planned and sequential te reo Māori language programme.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is well placed to sustain and continue to improve its performance. Through leaders' and teachers' inquiry, more students who require support with their learning are making increased progress. New school systems and developments are informed by research. Robust monitoring and tracking of progress identifies areas that require attention. High expectations for staff are supported by clear and well implemented school processes.

Student-centred professional leadership from the principal and deputy principal underpins strategic school improvements. Plans to extend leadership opportunities to all staff are in motion. Robust staff appraisal practices are well linked to teachers' individual inquiries into their practice. School leaders actively affirm effective teaching practices and support individual development.

The board provides sound governance. Trustees are clearly focused on improving student achievement and wellbeing, and broadening learning opportunities. Self review contributes to the development of a governance framework and an induction manual. Trustees are increasingly confident about their collective role and individual responsibilities.

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.

Conclusion

Students at Ruahine School participate in a carefully considered curriculum that supports improved learning and wellbeing. School systems promote effective teaching, particularly for students who require extra help to achieve well. The school is well placed to continue to improve its performance for its learners, families and whānau.

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



Joyce Gebbie
National Manager Review Services
Central Region

22 January 2015

About the School

Location	Dannevirke	
Ministry of Education profile number	2669	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	162	
Gender composition	Female 52%, Male 48%	
Ethnic composition	Māori NZ European/Pākehā	17% 83%
Review team on site	November 2014	
Date of this report	22 January 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	April 2011 June 2008 May 2005