



**Maungakaramea School
Maungakaramea, Northland**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Maungakarama 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?

Maungakarama School, established in 1875, is a small rural school located southwest of Whangarei. Of the 54 students, 19 identify as Māori. Many families have been connected with the school over several generations.

The school's Year 1 to 8 students learn in a well-resourced, attractive and spacious environment. The new outdoor learning area is an asset and enhances student learning. School leaders value biculturalism and cultural diversity. Students and parents appreciate the very favourable teacher to student ratios.

As part of ongoing strategic development teachers have participated in Ministry of Education contracts to improve teaching and learning. These include Accelerated Literacy Learning, Positive Behaviour for Learning and Accelerated Learning in Maths. In 2012 ERO recommended that the analysis of student achievement information and cohort tracking be improved and this continues to be an area for improvement.

ERO's 2012 report commended the board of trustees on its clear understanding of governance. Since that review, a board comprised of mainly new trustees was elected. Relationships between the board of trustees and the principal deteriorated and this created tensions within the community. As a result, the board of trustees resigned, and, in June 2015, a commissioner was appointed under *Section 78N (3), (b) of the Education Act 1989*, to govern the school. The principal is working with the commissioner to clarify the distinction between governance and management, and to continue to build effective communication with the community.

Despite the school's difficulties many of its positive features, noted in ERO's 2012 report, continue to be evident.

2 Learning

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

School leaders are now working actively to analyse and use achievement information more effectively to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement. Overall, school data are well analysed to inform decisions about class groupings, resourcing, and professional learning and development for teachers.

Student engagement in learning is promoted. Students benefit from the positive and respectful relationships between themselves and teachers. Both teachers and students are encouraged to see themselves as learners and teachers through the concept of ako and tuakana-teina approaches. Student wellbeing surveys provide teachers with good information about students' perspectives and views of their school experiences.

Over the past three years the majority of students have consistently achieved at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Students who achieve below National Standards benefit from very good support. More regular reports about the progress and achievement of these students would help school leaders to better gauge the effectiveness of support initiatives and interventions. School data show that, for some time, boys have been achieving noticeably less well than girls. In addition, many Māori students are not achieving as well as their non-Māori peers.

Achievement data are well used to identify relevant whole-school professional learning and development. The new strategies teachers have learnt have been particularly successful in improving student achievement in mathematics. The 2015 mid-year results show strong overall student progress, particularly for target groups of students. Teachers work collaboratively and share strategies to improve teaching practice.

Students are gaining skills that strengthen their ability to take greater control of their own learning. Many students, particularly senior students, can talk confidently about their learning, as well as their next learning steps. This enables them to take greater responsibility for their progress and achievement, and provides the foundations for lifelong learning and success.

Teachers have good knowledge of the progress and achievement of each student in their class. They are systematically and more deeply inquiring into their professional practice and this could be further strengthened. Inquiries that are evidence-based and use a variety of information, including achievement data could help teachers provide students with more individualised learning plans and pathways.

Teachers use good internal moderation processes to make and report valid overall teacher judgements in relation to National Standards in writing. Moderating reading and mathematics assessment and moderating assessments with other schools would be a worthwhile next step. This would build teacher capability and improve the consistency, validity and reliability of assessment judgements and achievement information.

Parents receive reports about their child that shows their progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards. They also get good information about how to support their child's learning at home. The school plans to improve reporting about students with special abilities to make it clear how their learning is being enhanced and extended in academic and other areas.

ERO recommends that to successfully accelerate students' progress school leaders could:

- set specific targets to accelerate Māori student progress in line with school charter goals
- continue building students' ownership and understanding of their learning, progress and achievement
- use the student management system more effectively to support deeper analysis and better tracking of student achievement information
- improve the analysis of student achievement data to demonstrate cohort and group progress over time, and to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching practice, initiatives and interventions.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum is strongly underpinned by *The New Zealand Curriculum*. It continues to provide a wide variety of learning contexts and practical experiences that cater for students' interests over time, and engage them in learning.

The school curriculum includes the local context, and draws on and adds to students' knowledge of themselves, their families/whānau, and the community. There is a strong emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics. The inquiry learning model gives students a framework for pursuing topics of interest. Student learning is strongly reflected in classroom environments.

ERO's 2012 report noted that the board did not receive reports about student progress and achievement across the learning areas of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. At the time of this review the commissioner was unable to be assured that students receive appropriate coverage of all areas of the curriculum. The challenge for the principal and teachers is to ensure that all students have opportunities to succeed in all the Essential Learning Areas of the curriculum each year.

Digital technologies are available and well used by students who have individual access to tablets and laptops. The school is committed to an e-learning focus in 2016 with the aim of enhancing student learning, improving communication with the community and building more efficient ways of managing school organisation and systems.

Students have numerous leadership opportunities to enhance their learning, and build their competencies. They have the freedom to explore the environment and to work together or independently, and support each other's learning. Teachers collaborate and demonstrate a shared commitment to high expectations for students.

Improvements to the curriculum would include:

- strategies and programmes designed to better engage and promote the learning of boys
- a review of the current curriculum to ensure coverage of all learning areas each year
- building teachers' capacity to use digital technologies to support learning
- providing systematic and ongoing opportunities for Year 7 and 8 students to engage in careers education
- creating opportunities for parents and families/whānau and the community to understand, actively participate in, and contribute to the school and children's learning.

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

The school promotes educational success for Māori, as Māori very well. The school charter states that it is a priority for Māori children to feel positive about being Māori within the school.

A variety of school initiatives have had a positive impact on Māori students and their whānau. The school's annual planning identifies strategies to promote success for Māori as Māori. Teachers' culturally responsive practices recognise and build on Māori students' culture, language and identity. A staff member successfully coordinates and promotes the school's well considered te Āo Māori plan. Parents of Māori students actively support the school's bicultural development by sharing their cultural knowledge and expertise.

Local themes provide opportunities for Māori students to recognise and value their culture. Students participate enthusiastically in kapa haka and in special events such as Matariki. Māori students are encouraged and supported to share their links to whenua, their tipuna, and each other. There are many examples of Māori students leading learning with their teachers and peers. Respectful relationships forged between the teaching staff and whānau provide a sound platform for improving achievement outcomes for Māori students.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

With the support of the school's commissioner into 2016, the school has the capacity to sustain and improve its performance.

The principal demonstrates professional leadership and leads learning both within and beyond the school. She is working constructively with the commissioner to develop strategies to manage challenging situations and to improve governance and community relationships.

A recent survey of parents, family and whānau has provided some useful initial information. This information will be used to help shape the school's future charter, annual goals and curriculum.

Under the commissioner's guidance, triennial planning and reporting have been documented. Strategic self review and policy review are being planned. Strengthened self review should help to ensure that school policies, systems and practices are underpinned by evaluation and inquiry.

Additional ways to communicate with the community are being explored. There has been a good response to communication through the school's Facebook page and parents indicate that it is a preferred communication tool.

The teacher performance management system has been recently reviewed. It is now focused on professional practice and positive outcomes for students and is well aligned with *Tātaiako - Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners*, and the requirements of the Education Council. Using and building the leadership capability of all staff is a priority.

ERO strongly supports the commissioner's ongoing work with the principal to engage the community. Building shared understandings of trustees' governance and stewardship roles will lay the foundation for establishing a new board of trustees.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the commissioner 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.

ERO identified an area of non-compliance. In order to comply requirements the school must:

- adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum, at least once in every two years, after consultation with the school community.

[Education Act 1989 Section 60B]

ERO also identified some irregularities in the previous board's processes and records. The commissioner noted that he is not confident that he has been given access to all relevant records from the previous board.

ERO, the commissioner and principal agree that current practice could be improved through:

- reviewing all aspects of the school's complaints policy and its implementation to ensure that the school and community share and understand the process and intended outcomes
- maintaining appropriate records of board proceedings when the public is excluded from board meetings
- documenting the appointments policy so it reflects current improved practice
- using better board processes for approving and recording education outside the classroom decisions and information
- reporting regularly to the board about the status of police vetting and teacher registration
- supervising students better at lesson breaks and intervals in areas of the school that are difficult to monitor.

Recommendations to other agencies

While the school is making progress, it is likely to take at least another twelve months before this is sufficiently well embedded to warrant returning the school to self governance. ERO recommends

that the principal continues to work with the commissioner to improve communication and relationships, and to rebuild community confidence in the school.

Conclusion

At Maungakamea School students learn in an environment where biculturalism and student diversity are valued. The principal, and the commissioner have worked together to address the management and governance issues which resulted in the board resigning early in 2015. They are making progress towards rebuilding positive relationships with the community.

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



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

29 January 2016

About the School

Location	Maungakaramea, Northland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1047	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	54	
Gender composition	Boys 29 Girls 25	
Ethnic composition	Māori Pākehā other European	19 34 1
Review team on site	November 2015	
Date of this report	29 January 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	December 2012 December 2009 October 2006