

ERO External Evaluation

Mahinawa Specialist School and Resource Centre, Porirua

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

Mahinawa Specialist School and Resource Centre provides individualised learning programmes for students aged from five to twenty one who have autism, intellectual and/or physical disabilities. At the time of the review there were 80 students on the roll, with 21 identifying as Māori and 18 as of Pacific heritage.

The base, Mahinawa Specialist School, is located in Porirua. Five satellites operate in five other schools that cater for primary and intermediate school students. A new community hub caters for students transitioning beyond school. Many students travel from the wider Wellington area to attend.

All students are funded by the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS). The school currently employs six specialists to provide therapy support to students, their families and whānau.

The school's whakataukī 'he taonga tatou katoa' (where all are valued) underpins the culture of care and nurturing across the school. Strategic planning is focused on achieving the schools vision "to be New Zealand's premier centre of expertise and resources for young people with autism and special needs". In order to achieve this vision the school has identified three key focus areas: "to develop talented staff, to develop programmes to enrich student lives so that we are offering the best and to improve and extend our delivery network".

Upgrading the learning environments has been a priority for the board. These promote the learning conditions for equity and 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
- achievement in relation to the key competencies
- progress and achievement in relation to students' individual goals.

The school is a member of Te Puna Matauranga 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?

The school has a very clear focus on defining equity and excellence in relation to the individual learner. There are high expectations that each student will progress and achieve based on their individual abilities. Almost all students made suitable progress in relation to their individual goals, with many achieving them. These outcomes include reading, writing, mathematics and the key competencies.

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

Senior leaders use achievement data to appropriately identify target students. In 2017, of the students identified, a large majority were able to progress to the next level.

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?

Trustees, leaders, teachers and specialists have a cohesive approach to support the progress and achievement of all students, including Māori and Pacific learners.

The school has developed useful processes to track, monitor and report student progress in relation to their individual goals. Outcomes for Māori and Pacific learners are well known and documented.

Individual education plans developed in collaboration with teachers, specialists, parents and whānau guide teaching and learning. Goals are responsive to each student's current learning needs and interests. These strongly support their learning in reading, writing, mathematics and the key competencies. An assessment framework enables teachers to monitor student progress and achievement in relation to each goal, across a range of learning contexts.

Strategic leadership is providing a strong framework across the school to promote improved and consistent systems and processes for equity and excellence.

The principal with the support of the senior management group has prioritised the provision of a supportive environment to promote consistent teaching practices for successful student learning and wellbeing.

A strategic approach to responding to learner needs through a range of well-considered and appropriate professional learning and development is building teacher capability and meaningful success for learners. Priority has been given to developing strategies that support student engagement in learning. A robust appraisal process supports teachers' professional growth and development.

The Mahinawa School Curriculum is well aligned to *The New Zealand Curriculum* and clearly identifies the valued outcomes for students. Priority is given to literacy, mathematics and the key competencies. Useful frameworks have been developed and implemented to respond to each student's individual needs, inform teaching programmes and monitor progress. High levels of collaboration and a shared understanding of these frameworks, enable teachers to identify small learning steps necessary to meet the complex needs of students.

Parent and whānau aspirations for their child are valued. They work in partnership with the school, to develop appropriate goals for learning.

Students engage and participate in purposeful learning environments where their successes are celebrated. Relationships between adults and students are positive, caring and respectful. Teachers view all students as capable learners.

Well-designed programmes and collaborative relationships with parents and specialists support learners' successful transitions into and through the school. The recently established hub for students aged from 19 - 21 years is focused on preparing students for life beyond school. A well-considered transition curriculum supports planning for this.

Trustees actively support the school's vision for ongoing improvement and are focused on promoting positive outcomes for all students and resource appropriately.

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

For sustained improvement and future learning success the school has identified these next steps for development:

- building internal evaluation systems and practices to better understand the impact of improved systems and processes on outcomes for students. This includes strengthening the analysis of achievement information to better know about learner progress and to respond accordingly
- the concepts of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, ako and mahi tahi are evident across the school. Further promoting a shared understanding of these concepts and culturally responsive teaching strategies is a next step. Providing meaningful opportunities for Māori whānau and Pacific families to contribute to decision making will support this.

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:

- strategic leadership that is focused on improved systems and processes for consistency of practice that promotes successful outcomes for all students
- professional development that prioritises student needs and supports their engagement in learning
- well-developed frameworks for curriculum delivery that enable teachers to identify the small learning steps necessary to meet the complex needs of students.

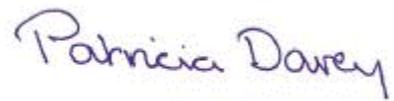
Next steps

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

- practices that consistently respond to the cultural aspirations of Māori whānau and Pacific families to foster meaningful contribution to decision making
- internal evaluation processes and practices to better identify what is working well for students' learning and where improvements are needed
[ERO will provide an internal evaluation workshop for trustees and senior leaders.]

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Patricia Davey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central (Acting)
Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

2 May 2018

About the school

Location	Porirua								
Ministry of Education profile number	2872								
School type	Special School								
School roll	80								
Gender composition	Male 56, Female 24								
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pākehā</td> <td>34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic groups</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </table>	Māori	21	Pākehā	34	Pacific	18	Other ethnic groups	7
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Provision of Māori medium education	No								
Review team on site	February 2018								
Date of this report	2 May 2018								
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>August 2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>December 2011</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>May 2006</td> </tr> </table>	Education Review	August 2014	Education Review	December 2011	Education Review	May 2006		
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