

## ERO External Evaluation

### Rapaura School, Blenheim

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

Rapaura School is a semi-rural Years 1 to 8 school, with a roll of 155 students.

The school is undergoing development and refurbishment, including new purpose-built classrooms for use as modern learning environments. It is well established in the local area and maintains some unique traditions and sense of belonging for whānau and community.

Since the last ERO review in 2014, a new principal and some new teachers have been appointed. The board is a mix of experienced and new trustees.

The school aims to provide a positive environment for learning, incorporating collaborative approaches to teaching and learning, and integrating digital technologies. It wants its students to be caring, well-rounded, self-managing and future-focused learners.

The school has been involved in a number of professional-learning initiatives. These include collaborative inquiry, mathematics, writing, GATE (provisions for gifted and talented students) and NPDL (new pedagogies for deeper learning). The school is part of the Piritahi Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning.

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

- trends, progress and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- outcomes in relation to student engagement, wellbeing and success
- outcomes in relation to students' inquiry learning.

## 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 achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all students very well.

The school has maintained increasingly high levels of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics over time for all groups of students, including Māori students.

The school has a range of evidence that indicates students are well supported in developing the school's valued outcomes, to be confident, articulate participants in their learning and life of the school.

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

The school responds very effectively to those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration. For example, in 2016 it very successfully accelerated mathematics and reading achievement for most students in the target groups.

### 2 School conditions for equity and excellence

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

The school has a strong priority for ensuring the individual needs of all students, particularly those students whose achievement requires acceleration, are met. All students with identified needs have action plans which are closely monitored and regularly reviewed in consultation with parents and whānau. There is shared responsibility for students' progress and achievement within and across teaching teams. The school works closely with local high schools to ensure transitions cater for individual student needs.

The positive school culture provides a safe and inclusive context for students' learning. Students' strengths, interests and needs are quickly identified and responded to. The school's 'REACH' values are evident across interactions between adults and students. There is a strong trust between teachers and students, which encourages openness and preparedness to take risks in learning. Staff collaborative inquiries significantly contribute to teacher success in accelerating student achievement.

The school benefits from the strong professional leadership of the principal and senior staff. Teachers are enthusiastic about their teaching and students' learning. These are supported by well-established structures and processes. Decisions for improvement made by teachers and school leaders are current and informed by a range of evidence, such as achievement information and survey data. The school's internal evaluation and teacher development programme are closely linked to students' learning and progress.

The vision for students to be at the centre of learning is highly evident. The school's inquiry curriculum provides a significant platform for students to explore topics of learning that are meaningful to them. Students' voice is sought to inform improvement to learning programmes. The expectations for learning and achievement are made known and visible. Students have many opportunities to develop their key skills, competencies and leadership. This includes opportunities for students to lead whole-school activities, to be involved in the community and to pursue initiatives the students have created. The school's value for Māori language and culture is evident and being meaningfully integrated throughout the school. Māori students are supported to develop their language, culture and identity.

The school board of trustees has well-developed systems and processes for accountability and improvement. Trustees are well informed about student progress, achievement and engagement and use this to inform their decision making. The school engages well with parents, whānau and the school community. There are strong links between the school vision for student success, school strategic planning, and evaluations of effectiveness.

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

School leaders have identified, and ERO agrees, that leaders and teachers need to:

- strengthen and inquire more deeply into the effectiveness of targeted teaching
- develop the quality of evaluative thinking applied to teacher inquiries
- continue to build culturally responsive practice and pedagogy, including a shared understanding of/for success as Māori
- more clearly show students' progress in developing their skills for deeper learning.

A next step for the board is to more closely align its planning and review processes to the cultural goals set for school 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.

## 4 Going forward

### Key strengths of the school

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

- responsiveness to student needs
- its collaborative, collegial culture
- relational trust with and care for students and whānau
- strong professional and improvement-focused leadership.

### Next steps

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

- inquiring more deeply into the impact of teaching and learning
- building school-wide capacity and capability for providing culturally responsive education for all students.

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

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



Dr Lesley Paterson  
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## About the school

Location	Blenheim
Ministry of Education profile number	2971
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)
School roll	155
Gender composition	Boys: 50% Girls: 50%
Ethnic composition	Māori: 12% Pākehā: 87% Other: 1%
Review team on site	November 2017
Date of this report	21 February 2018
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review: September 2014 Education Review: July 2011 Education Review: June 2008