

ERO External Evaluation

Greta Valley School, North Canterbury

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

Greta Valley School is a small rural school located in North Canterbury and provides education for children in Years 1-8. The school's 36 students are taught in two multi-level classes.

The school's vision is 'Building skills for life'. This vision is underpinned by three values: perseverance, integrity and empathy, which are collectively referred to as PIE. The school's planning documents indicate three strategic goals:

1. increasing capability to empower children with skills for life
2. key competencies to provide a holistic education by embracing the whole child
3. partnership development: to develop a sound partnership between school / parents / caregivers, other schools and the wider community.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- twice-yearly reports to the board on reading, writing and mathematics.

Since the last ERO review in 2014, the school and community have experienced a range of challenges regarding the 2016 earthquakes. During this time, building redevelopments have also occurred at the school.

The school's involvement in a national professional development programme is helping to support positive learning behaviours among students.

The school's principal is the lead principal of the Tipu Māia Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning (CoL), of which the school is a member.

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?

In the school's information on reading achievement for 2017, most children achieve expectations. The majority of students achieve expectations in writing and mathematics.

The school's data also shows that not all groups of children made sufficient progress in mathematics in 2017. Disparity is evident in boys' writing achievement.

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

The school's achievement information does not consistently identify how well student learning is being accelerated for all of those students who are underachieving.

The school's achievement information shows that some Māori students made accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2017, most students participating in a national reading programme made accelerated progress.

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?

The board has a sustained focus on promoting positive outcomes for all students. Trustees seek to ensure ongoing improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of governance in regard to decision making and resource allocation. There are good systems in place to build the capability of board members.

Relationships within the school and with the community contribute to a positive school culture and help to support children's learning and engagement in programmes and activities. The extra support provided by the community to the school is reciprocated by the support leaders and teachers give to children and their families.

Leaders and teachers know the children and their families well. Teachers work in a collegial way to mentor and support each other and the children in their classrooms.

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

The school needs to develop leader and teacher capability in analysing progress and achievement information. In particular, school data needs to be analysed to identify and report to the board, whole-school progress, acceleration and achievement trends over time, including for relevant groups of students. This information should include details about how the school is planning to respond to the data reported to the board.

Leaders and teacher should also investigate and report to the board:

- the impact of particular teaching strategies and approaches on learning outcomes for students

- the impact of interventions for students whose learning is at a slower rate.

Internal evaluation needs to be developed at all levels of the school. To most effectively support equity and excellence and accelerate learning, leaders and teachers should ensure that there is a:

- shared knowledge and use of effective evaluation processes at board, management and teacher levels
- school-wide evaluation schedule and framework to effectively guide internal evaluation processes and practices across the school.

Evaluation of the curriculum should include a sustained focus on:

- promoting student agency and voice in ways that build student engagement, independence and ownership of their learning across the school
- ensuring that programmes are increasingly responsive to students' needs, interests and aspirations.

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.

Going forward

Next steps

Key strengths of the school

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

- the board's sustained focus on school improvement and effective governance
- the positive relationships across and beyond the school that support children's learning.

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

- analysing data to provide timely information about the progress and achievement of all students, including relevant groups
- developing knowledge and effective use of evaluation practices and processes at all levels of the school's operations.

Recommendation

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education provide a Student Achievement Function (SAF) practitioner to the school to improve:

- data analysis and use
- internal evaluation.

ERO will work with the school to determine progress against these two areas for improvement.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Dr Lesley Patterson
Deputy Chief Review Officer
Te Waipounamu - Southern Region

18 May 2018

About the school

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| Location | North Canterbury |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 3359 |
| School type | Full Primary (Years 1-8) |
| School roll | 36 |
| Gender composition | Boys 18 : Girls 18 |
| Ethnic composition | Māori 7 Pākehā 29 |
| Review team on site | February 2018 |
| Date of this report | 18 May 2018 |
| Most recent ERO report(s) | Education Review October 2014 Education Review December 2011 |