



Otaua School
Waiuku, Auckland

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Otaua 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?

Otaua School, located in a rural township near Waiuku, provides education for students from Years 1 to 8. Māori students make up 16 percent of the school roll. Respectful relationships promote a positive tone in the school. Long-standing family associations contribute to a sense of belonging for adults and children. The principal and board appreciate the active support that the school receives from families and the wider community.

Several new staff have been appointed in the past 18 months and staff have participated in a wide variety of professional learning and development to enhance students' learning through the effective teaching of mathematics and literacy. The board of trustees and principal work collaboratively and have reviewed governance systems to support continued improvement and meet school goals.

ERO's 2012 report noted that good foundations were in place to support student learning and the school was well placed to maintain and improve its performance. ERO recommended that teachers continue to develop their use of achievement information and inquire into the effectiveness of their teaching to plan appropriate learning programmes. This review finds that significant progress has been made in these areas.

2 Learning

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

Teachers regularly assess students' learning. They make good use of achievement information to cater for students' individual learning needs and to manage their programme planning.

Systems to monitor achievement across the school contribute to the reliability of data about student learning. Leaders and teachers monitor the progress of students with special educational needs and those who are at risk of not achieving to their potential.

The school's 2014 achievement information shows that most students achieve at or above National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. School charter targets for 2015 are appropriately

focused on continuing to improve overall student achievement. Achievement information assists the principal and trustees to make strategic decisions about resourcing classroom programmes and setting achievement targets. Making targets more specific could now support the school to more effectively monitor progress for specific groups, including Māori students.

Parents receive good information in reports about their child's progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards. Using a wider range of information to identify student learning could enable teachers to plan more effectively for students' learning needs and strengths across the curriculum.

School leaders agree that next steps to promote and extend learning include:

- increasing opportunities for students to manage their own learning, discuss the knowledge and skills they are learning, set goals and evaluate their own progress
- strengthening teaching practices so that students increasingly know the purpose of their lessons and receive oral and written feedback throughout the learning process.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum was under development at the time of ERO's 2012 report and is currently being reviewed. Completion of this work is an urgent priority. Draft information shows the curriculum will be aligned to the principles, values and key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) and to the school's vision and values. Curriculum plans will focus appropriately on literacy and mathematics, as well as learning experiences that reflect local contexts, including those that connect to the Enviroschools and Trees for Survival projects.

Welcoming and respectful relationships are a feature of the school. Positive interactions between teachers and students contribute to good levels of student engagement. Students have a variety of opportunities to develop their leadership skills, particularly in Year 8. Students support each other in their learning and in the playground. 'Buddy' relationships between older and younger students are evident. The school offers students a wide range of sports and other inter-school opportunities.

The use of digital technologies to support learning is a current focus for teacher's professional learning. The board is committed to investing in equipment and infrastructure to support this goal.

Recent building refurbishment has resulted in a new learning space where older students and teachers can work collaboratively in flexible ways. Teachers continue to adapt their practices in order to maximise the use of this area and to promote opportunities for different ways of teaching and learning.

Teachers' professional learning programmes help them to work collaboratively, share their practice, and identify goals for improvement. Participation in these programmes is strengthening their subject knowledge and teaching skills. Teachers are using professional learning well to plan classroom programmes that meet the needs of students.

School leaders agree that important next steps are to:

- strengthen students' self management of their learning through an integrated approach to inquiry learning

- increase the extent to which the curriculum reflects the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand
- develop a strategic goal to strengthen the school's bicultural curriculum and evaluate progress against this goal
- build on teachers' critical inquiry into the impact of their own practice on student learning.

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

School leaders recognise the importance of, and promote, positive relationships with whānau Maori and between students and their teachers. They are committed to enhancing Māori students' achievement.

The principal agrees that promoting success for Māori, as Māori, is a priority area for school development. This includes:

- using Ministry of Education resources to improve how the school supports the language, culture and identity of Māori learners
- sharing information with Māori families and students about targeted actions to raise Māori achievement
- strengthening consultation with whānau Māori.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Otaua School continues to build its capacity to sustain existing good practices and promote ongoing improvement in its performance. Its charter and vision provide clear direction and expectations for student learning success.

The school has maintained positive relationships with its community. The board comprises new and experienced trustees. Trustees have attended training to gain clarity about their governance role and responsibilities, and to help ensure they are well informed about effective board processes. Trustees work effectively with school leaders to achieve school goals for the benefit of students. They are committed to ongoing improvement.

The principal leads the school well and is proactive in accessing appropriate professional development for staff to further improve teaching and learning. The growth of leadership within the school is well supported and the deputy principal now has an increased leadership role. She and the principal work well together as leaders of learning. They have supported teachers to establish a professional learning community. Advice and guidance programmes for provisionally registered teachers provide clear expectations and support for beginning teachers.

A focus on raising student achievement helps to promote effective teaching and learning programmes. School leaders recognise the importance of consolidating professional learning to accelerate student progress and achievement. The school's recently reviewed performance management system is likely to further encourage teachers to reflect on and improve their teaching practice.

Self review is used to guide and manage change. These processes could be further strengthened by:

- ensuring strategic goals are specific and measurable
- documenting and evaluating progress against the school's annual and long-term goals

- reporting to parents about how the school has responded to community consultation and aspirations
- developing a manual to describe administrative roles to promote sustainable and consistent practice.

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.

In order to improve current practices, the board should:

- maintain effective procedures for board meeting minutes to protect the privacy of individuals and formally record when the public is excluded from meetings
- ensure that processes for investigating complaints comply with the board's complaints policy.

Conclusion

Otaua School effectively promotes student learning. School leaders and trustees are committed to improving student progress and achievement. Teachers work collaboratively with parents and the wider community to meet school goals. Curriculum development and promoting educational success for Māori, as Maori, are key next steps for the school.

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

Dale Bailey

Dale Bailey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

5 June 2015

About the School

Location	Waiuku, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1410	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	156	
Gender composition	Boys 53% Girls 47%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā Māori other ethnicities	81% 11% 8%
Review team on site	April 2015	
Date of this report	5 June 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Supplementary Review	June 2012 May 2011 May 2009