

Tawhai School Education Review

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1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Tawhai School, in Stokes Valley, caters for students from Years 1 to 6. At the time of this review it had a roll of 365 students with just under a quarter identifying as Māori. The senior leadership team has been in place since the November 2012 ERO report. Several new teachers have been appointed, some due to roll growth.

Significant property developments since the previous ERO report include the creation of a cycle track, classrooms to accommodate additional student numbers and refurbishment of the administration block.

Trustees and school staff demonstrate a commitment to promote educational success for all students. Relationships with whānau are reciprocal and respectful, providing a positive platform for students' holistic development.

Teachers have been engaged in a professional learning network with a focus on writing, involving parents in their child's learning and implementing future-focused practices in the classroom, including a considered use of e-learning.

Parents and whānau engage in the life of the school and actively support learning programmes.

2 Learning

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

Leaders, teachers and trustees are highly effective in using achievement information to make positive changes to engagement, progress and achievement for all students. Sound use of data underpins decision-making at all levels of school operation.

The 2015 school achievement data shows that most students achieve well in relation to the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Significant increases in achievement are evident in 2015. The school is able to show which strategies made a difference to student achievement, especially for junior students.

Leaders and teachers make good use of information to identify individual and groups of students in need of additional support. Syndicates develop achievement targets that link to the schoolwide targets for individual students in classrooms. They put programmes and resources in place to assist and accelerate learning of individual students and regularly track their progress.

More focused teaching and changed classroom practices have accelerated the progress in writing for target student groups. Effective plans and tracking of student progress are established practices.

Teachers collaboratively inquire into the effectiveness of teaching practices used. They share and discuss student data and outcomes of their initiatives to improve learners' rates of progress. These developments are part of the school's wider long-term planning that include: further developing students' independence; changed classroom physical environments; and development of related teacher practices.

Trustees are well informed about student achievement through the principal's reports. These provide useful information and progress updates in relation to school goals, annual plans, targets and overall student achievement. Trustees use this information to inform their decision-making in regard to resourcing of learning support, budget and staffing decisions.

Parents receive informative reports. Evidential portfolios supplement written reporting.

3 Curriculum

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

The Tawhai School's curriculum is very effective in promoting and supporting student learning. It provides a wide range of opportunities, strategies and resources for students to be successful learners. A graduate profile of expectations guides the six-year learning pathway.

School values are clearly articulated and evident in practice. Student wellbeing is a priority. Behaviour management practices are clear, affirming and well enacted.

Teachers and leaders have high expectations for curriculum delivery and student achievement. They develop valued and reciprocal relationships with students. This has a positive impact on school climate which is friendly and caring.

Programmes are designed collaboratively to engage students in meaningful learning which enables them to progress and achieve. There is an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy. Other curriculum areas are delivered using an integrated, inquiry-based approach.

Students learn in caring, collaborative communities with well-established routines and expectations for positive participation in learning. They are engaged and active in their learning within classrooms. Teachers have begun to develop students' understanding and ownership of their learning. They have identified a need to continue to grow this practice.

Senior students experience a range of useful opportunities to grow their leadership skills.

An inclusive culture is evident. Students with high needs are well integrated into classrooms. Their needs are known and addressed in partnership with parents and agencies.

The school's recent involvement in a home-school partnership initiative has resulted in increased, meaningful parent involvement in their child's learning.

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

Te reo me ngā tikanga Māori is highly valued and increasingly promoted to support and enable Māori student success.

Māori students are confident, well engaged, and experience learning in authentic Māori contexts. The 2015 data shows increased success rates for Māori in relation to National Standards. Those requiring additional support are clearly identified in school targets and their progress is regularly monitored.

There is a strong focus on developing meaningful partnerships with whānau, and the community. Leaders should continue to further gather and use whānau aspirations to define elements of success for their tamariki.

A next step is to weave identified cultural practices into appraisal processes in order to grow teachers' cultural confidence and competence within the curriculum.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Effective processes and practices enable the school to be very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Development focus is well considered and implemented to promote students' holistic development.

A cohesive, responsive and effective senior leadership team is committed to improving student achievement and school improvement. This is highly evident in school operation.

The board is well informed about its role and responsibilities. Leaders and trustees receive regular and useful reports on school performance. These include: progress towards school targets; effectiveness of programmes and interventions for students receiving additional support; and analysis of community consultation findings.

Leaders work with the community to review and develop the school vision, values and strategic direction. Leaders and trustees continue to build positive relationships across the school community. These partnerships are enhanced through regular community consultation, student-led reporting with parents, an online portal and an active parent-teacher organisation.

Teachers' professional development is well considered and linked to curriculum development, school priorities and students' individual needs.

A strategic and coherent appraisal process is in place to build teachers' professional capability and collective capacity. This process is effectively implemented by senior leaders and makes use of: evidence of student achievement; teachers inquiring into the effectiveness of practice; professional development; and the Practising Teacher Criteria.

Highly effective internal evaluation and reporting guides responsive decision-making. Leaders set and model clear expectations for reviewing and evaluating the quality and impact of programmes and practices. Schoolwide expectations, strategies and actions to promote improvements are shared and known at all levels of school operation. Expected learners' outcomes drive school priorities, goals and targets.

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.

Conclusion

A responsive and inclusive curriculum promotes engagement, learning and success for diverse groups of learners. Students achieve well in relation to National Standards. Relationships are positive and respectful. Partnerships are formed with whānau and parents. An effective leadership team and ongoing teacher inquiry drive acceleration of student progress and schoolwide improvement.

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

Joyce Gebbie
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

3 February 2016

School Statistics

Location	Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt	
Ministry of Education profile number	3036	
School type	Contributing (Year 1 to 6)	
School roll	365	
Gender composition	Boys 52%, Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	23%
	Pākehā	60%
	Pacifica	13%
	Other ethnic groups	4%
Review team on site	November 2015	
Date of this report	3 February 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2012
	Education Review	August 2009
	Education Review	September 2006