

Tawhai School Education Review

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About the School

Location Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt

Ministry of Education profile number 3036

School type Contributing (Year 1 to 6)

School roll 300

Gender composition Female 52%
Male 48%

Ethnic composition NZ European/Pākehā 61%
Māori 23%
Pacific 6%
Other ethnic groups 10%

Review team on site September 2012

Date of this report 8 November 2012

Most recent ERO report(s) Education Review August 2009
Education Review September 2006
Accountability Review November 2000

The Purpose of an ERO Report

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.

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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 the review it had a roll of 308 students, just under a quarter of whom identify as Māori. The new principal was appointed in 2011 and leads a recently restructured senior leadership team.

Significant developments since ERO's 2009 review include the establishment of new school values, review and development of behaviour management strategies and revised professional development processes for staff. Teachers have spent several years engaged in a professional learning network with a focus on literacy. Property developments have included the refurbishment of the administration block. Parents and whānau engage in the life of the school and actively support learning programmes.

2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Students are well engaged in their learning. The school's achievement information identifies that most students are achieving at and above in relation to National Standards in literacy and mathematics. Teachers are developing good processes for making overall teacher judgements. The board receives achievement information which shows trends and patterns for different groups, including Māori and Pacific students.

Teachers and leaders have useful systems in place to monitor the achievement and progress of students who are not achieving at expected levels and provide a variety of extra learning support. Teachers discuss and share practice, and explore effective strategies to accelerate the progress of targeted students. A next step for teachers is to continue to strengthen the level of assessment analysis to better inform planning for these target groups.

Māori students participate well in their classroom learning. School leaders monitor their achievement and report that generally they are achieving at and above in relation to National Standards. They have identified that Māori students are overrepresented in underachievement in mathematics and are exploring strategies to address this.

Parents receive written reports about their children's achievement twice a year as well as opportunities to discuss their progress. Leaders and trustees are investigating ways to better track and analyse schoolwide progress of students over time.

3 Curriculum

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

Teachers articulate high expectations for learning and behaviour. The school values of respect, responsibility and excellence are promoted and evident in classrooms. These values support positive relationships throughout the school.

The principal is effectively leading the development of a revised curriculum framework and shared expectations to guide teaching and learning. Leaders have appropriately identified priority areas for curriculum development, including the use of digital technologies to support learning. These initiatives are likely to contribute to better consistency of teaching practice and increased engagement for students.

Teachers work together to plan, reflect and share practice. They use a range of effective strategies to support student learning. They know their students well and often group them for instruction according to learning levels and needs. Teachers support students to be clear about their learning. Students know about their next learning steps in literacy and mathematics. Leadership and professional learning initiatives should continue to focus on teaching strategies which promote students' responsibility for their learning.

Teachers use good strategies to support socially appropriate behaviours and to establish useful classroom routines. Teachers and students report that there has been a recent improvement in playground behaviour.

Student learning is attractively displayed and promoted in classroom environments. There is some reflection of the bicultural character of Aotearoa New Zealand in classrooms and programmes. Teachers provide opportunities for students to learn about other nations and cultures. Leaders and teachers are engaging with aiga and continuing to develop ways to acknowledge and celebrate the Pacific cultures of children.

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

School leaders have developed plans to affirm te ao Māori. They have begun to engage with whānau and a next step is to define together their vision of success for Māori, as Māori at Tawhai School.

Strategies likely to strengthen Māori success and the promotion of learning through language, culture and identity are:

- te reo Māori learning for staff to boost confidence, understanding and accurate

pronunciation

- professional learning and development to support teachers' knowledge and awareness of te ao Māori
- establishing ways to increase teachers' contextual knowledge about Māori learners, such as iwi affiliations and whānau aspirations
- strong partnerships with whānau which enable leaders and teachers to seek and receive cultural knowledge and advice.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

School trustees demonstrate clear understandings of their governance roles and responsibilities. They receive good information about student achievement and their decision making focuses on improving student outcomes. Since the previous ERO review they have introduced a systematic selfreview cycle for policies and procedures. Trustees and leaders value positive partnerships with the parent community and implement useful consultation processes.

School leaders articulate high expectations for student learning and achievement. Recent changes, including new staff, leadership and several initiatives have been well managed by trustees and the principal. The recently appointed principal is student focused and articulates a clear vision for school development and improvement. A new model of peer coaching appropriately encourages teachers to be reflective practitioners and share teaching ideas.

The development of the newly formed senior leadership team has been a recent focus. Leaders have complementary skills and function effectively as a team. They should continue to explore ways to extend and share good teaching practice.

The school has been through a period of change and development. Teachers and leaders now need to ensure they strategically evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning programmes as planned. Clear expectations for staff about high-quality evaluation should increase the effectiveness of self review and contribute to ongoing improvements for students.

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
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

At the time of the review interim reports did not use the correct National Standards wording. Therefore, in order to improve current practice, the board of trustees, with the principal and teaching staff, should include progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards in the written interim reports. [National Administration Guidelines 2A (a)] Trustees and the principal have recognised this and have plans to adjust the text of future reports.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

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8 November 2012