Education Review Report:
Te Kowhai School

The purpose of ERO's reports is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. ERO's reports are intended to be clear, concise, constructive and evaluative. 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.

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

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

Te Kowhai School was established in 1890. Strong rural traditions define the school's special character and underpin the sense of belonging experienced by students and their families. Since the 2008 ERO review, the board and principal have introduced many new initiatives, and appointed new senior leaders and teaching staff resulting in significant school improvement. In response to the growing school roll, the principal and trustees have successfully managed considerable property development and expansion. Additional locally raised funds for resources and co-curricular activities, are contributing to enhanced educational opportunities for students.

The board and principal set high expectations, provide clear direction, and regularly review school operations and systems. They effectively consult with the school community and seek external advice to help them achieve their strategic goals and vision 'to be our very best'.

2 Learning

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

Through well analysed assessment information, the principal is able to show that there has been significant improvement in overall student achievement since 2008. Data indicates that most students are now achieving at or above national comparisons in reading, writing and numeracy. The school's goals and targets are used effectively by teachers to raise achievement and also to identify groups of students and subject areas needing further improvement. Students at risk of underachieving, or who need extra learning support, are well catered for by appropriate learning programmes. These programmes are coordinated by the deputy principal and implemented effectively by teachers and support staff. School management have identified that there is now scope to extend programmes for gifted and talented students.

A range of assessment practices, including nationally referenced tools, provide teachers, students and their parents with good quality information. This information is recorded in student portfolios

and shared at student-led conferences. Reports to parents show students' progress and achievement in comparison to National Standards. Most students have clear understandings about how well they are progressing and their next steps in learning.

Students enjoy learning in a safe, inclusive and fun environment. Warm relationships are evident among students and their teachers, and within the school community, reflecting the school's values. Their successes are now widely acknowledged and recognised.

ERO observed highly effective teaching in all classrooms. Teachers set high expectations for learning and are increasingly inquiring into their teaching practices to improve outcomes for students. Professional development in numerous curriculum areas, particularly in writing has increased their knowledge and understanding of current best practice.

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

Data gathered by the principal indicates that Māori students are achieving at, or above national expectations, and as well as, and sometimes better than, their non Māori peers. The principal has met with Māori whānau to share achievement information. The school provides opportunities for all students to participate in kapahaka and other activities. The principal and teachers are increasing the ways that Māori language and perspectives are integrated and acknowledged within the school curriculum and programmes.

3 Curriculum

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

The board, principal and teachers have consulted widely with parents, including Māori parents, about the school's vision and values that underpin its strategic direction, curriculum and culture. The school's mission statement and goals outline beliefs and expectations for high quality education.

The school's values (TK PRIDE) are visibly evident in classrooms and well understood by students and their parents. Teachers refer to these values, and to the key competencies, when promoting student behaviour and learning.

New entrant students and their families transitioning to the school engage in a highly effective 'Kick Start' programme that is co-ordinated by the assistant principal, and ensures a close learning partnership is established.

Students enjoy a wide variety of co curricular activities such as camps, special events, sports, excursions and cultural events. Senior students have the opportunity to extend their leadership skills through a range of opportunities such as house captains, student council, mentors and monitors.

The school curriculum provides a rationale and guidelines for the implementation and review of each subject area. The school continues to develop its curriculum design showing how students build on their existing learning to achieve at higher levels in all subject areas.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school's engagement with its community, the high quality of governance and leadership, and the effective use of self review ensures that the school is well placed for future development and improvement. Trustees use their governance roles effectively to monitor school growth and progress. The principal has established a school learning culture that promotes open communication, positive behaviours and constructive professional relationships.

The next steps in this development are to:

- continue to develop and embed *The New Zealand Curriculum* including school-wide expectations, and pathways for teaching and learning in each subject area
- further grow teacher professional learning to ensure that teachers remain at the forefront of educational change including the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and te reo and tikanga Māori
- strengthen the teacher review and evaluation process, and the use of student voice, to further improve teaching and learning.

Provision for international students

There are no international students at Te Kowhai School

Provision for students in the school hostel

Te Kowhai School does not have a hostel.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed an ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. 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 students' 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.