

**Te Kowhai School  
Te Kowhai, Hamilton**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Te Kowhai 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?**

Te Kowhai School is situated in Te Kowhai village, seven kilometres north west of Hamilton. The school opened in 1890 and is a full primary school that provides education for students in Years 1 to 8. Ongoing roll growth has resulted in the implementation of an enrolment scheme. The roll is currently 330 and includes 39 Māori students, many of whom are of Tainui descent. Students and their families appreciate the spacious and attractively maintained grounds and facilities. The school prides itself on being friendly, inclusive, family orientated with high levels of community involvement.

The school has a positive ERO reporting history. Since the 2011 ERO review the principal has continued in his position, a new deputy principal has been appointed and there have been minimal changes in teaching staff. The principal is widely respected by the school community. He is well supported by a capable leadership team and together provides well-informed leadership.

The senior leadership team has responded to the areas identified in the 2011 ERO report by further developing the school's curriculum guidelines and expectations in literacy and mathematics.

The board chair is providing effective leadership for school governance and trustees are committed to their roles. The board have extensively funded laptop and tablet computers to enhance student engagement and learning. Teachers have undertaken professional development in the effective use of these digital computers and about the teaching of reading and writing.

School leaders and the board in consultation with the school community, have reviewed the school's vision. A visual representation has been created that incorporates the future and acknowledges the long history of the school. Its motto is 'to be our very best', and the new vision aspires to 'empower learners to be confident and connected 21st century citizens'.

## 2 Learning

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

The school uses student achievement information well to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

School leaders collate and analyse an appropriate range of achievement information particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This information is well used by school leaders to identify additional support for students and to make decisions about teacher professional learning needs. The experienced deputy principal oversees the progress of students who require additional support with learning. She monitors and reports to parents and the board about student progress and the effectiveness of intervention programmes.

Leaders share achievement information with the board and together develop appropriate charter targets, with a particular focus on raising the achievement of students achieving below expected levels. The board also considers student achievement information when making decisions about resource allocations and when reporting to the school community.

A recent successful initiative has been the introduction of teaching as inquiry where teachers reflect on their own practice and plan appropriate programmes to raise student achievement. Teachers make good use of achievement information to identify learning needs and to group students for instruction.

The school's open door policy is strongly evident and families feel welcome. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and achievement through written reports, student learning portfolios, and student-led conferences.

The 2013 National Standards data indicates that a significant majority of students, including Māori, achieved at or above the standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This information shows that in reading the school met the Ministry of Education target of having 85% of all students achieving at or above the standard by 2017. Results for writing and mathematics were slightly below this national target. School leaders are continually refining processes to support teachers to make consistent judgements about individual student achievement in relation to National Standards.

## 3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum effectively promotes and supports student learning. Documented curriculum values promote 'partnerships, respect, integrity, drive and excellence'. These values are well known and strongly underpin the positive learning culture.

Students benefit from a broad range of authentic, academic, social, leadership and cultural learning opportunities that are part of the school curriculum. Many of these opportunities are supported and facilitated by parents and people from the local community.

Other features of the school curriculum include:

- an ongoing focus on literacy and mathematics
- an effective transition to school programmes
- students confidently using computer and digital technologies

- frequent trips, camps, and experiences in the local and wider community
- the active promotion and encouragement of an extensive range of sports
- students' involvement in traditional rural activities and events.

Strengths of the school are the trusting, affirming and respectful relationships among staff and students. Teachers know students and their families well and have high expectations for student learning and behaviour. This is also reflected in the recently developed learner qualities and school values that align to *The New Zealand Curriculum*. ERO observed high levels of student engagement in their learning in well-resourced and attractively presented learning environments.

School leaders and teachers have developed clear guidelines for effective teaching of literacy and mathematics. These guidelines are well implemented in the majority of classes. School leaders have identified and ERO agrees this should also be extended for other curriculum areas.

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

Māori students benefit from a strong sense of belonging and positive relationships throughout the school. They enjoy success in their learning both within and beyond the classroom. In 2012 and 2013 a specialist teacher delivered a programme of te reo Māori for all students and supported the kapa haka. The specialist teacher is no longer available to support the school and the school is currently seeking the right expertise to continue in this role.

In 2013 the school used Ministry of Education guidelines *Ka Hikitia* and *Tātaiako* to develop a school-wide framework for 'building powerful partnerships and cultural competencies'. As part of implementing this school framework school leaders recognise urgent priority should be given to:

- ensuring that a sequential te reo and tikanga Māori programme is implemented at all levels of the school
- increasing a Māori perspective in learning programmes
- including learning about local history and places of cultural significance in the curriculum.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance because:

- the board is providing effective governance
- the principal and leadership team are effective professional leaders
- there are robust self-review practices that include seeking and responding to student, staff, parent and community aspirations
- teachers and support staff work collaboratively in the best interest of students
- there are high levels of support from parents and the community for the school.

The school has recently introduced several very useful initiatives that include curriculum guidelines and a stronger Māori perspective. School leaders recognise and ERO agrees that these are in the early stage of implementation. The next step is for the school to continue its strategic approach to embed the implementation of these initiatives and evaluate their effectiveness. Implementing these strategic plans are likely to further enhance positive educational outcomes 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
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

## Conclusion

Students enjoy a broad and rich range of curriculum opportunities. They are achieving at high levels. Strengths of the school are the trusting, affirming and respectful relationships among staff and students and families. The school is well led and governed and continues to benefit from strong support from its community.

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



Dale Bailey  
National Manager Review Services  
Northern Region

26 June 2014

## About the School

Location	Te Kowhai, Hamilton	
Ministry of Education profile number	2007	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	330	
Gender composition	Boys 51% Girls 49%	
Ethnic composition	Māori NZ European/Pākehā Other European Chinese	12% 83% 4% 1%
Review team on site	May 2014	
Date of this report	26 June 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	April 2011 June 2007 June 2004