

ERO External Evaluation

Ruawai Primary School, Ruawai, Northland

Summary

Ruawai Primary School caters for Years 1 to 6 children and continues to provide good quality education. The school roll is just over 100. More than half of all children are Pākehā, slightly less than half are Māori.

Since the 2014 ERO evaluation there have been changes in leadership. The board appointed its third principal in July 2015. Teachers have participated in professional learning to strengthen teaching practice for children's learning in writing. The board has responded very well to the next steps identified in ERO's 2014 report.

How well is the school achieving equitable outcomes for all children?

Ruawai Primary School is becoming increasingly effective at responding to Māori and other children whose learning needs acceleration. The school's processes and actions are mostly effective at helping to achieve equity and excellence for all children. Most notably:

- stewardship is consultative and focused on improvement
- leadership for equity and excellence is strategic and responsive
- evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building is purposeful and useful
- professional capability and collective capacity supports evidence-based decisions
- the school's curriculum is responsive and promotes effective teaching.

Children are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

Agreed next steps include curriculum development, refining achievement improvement plans, strengthening culturally responsive teaching strategies, and using evaluative critique to support ongoing improvement.

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

Equity and excellence

How effectively does this school respond to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

Ruawai Primary School is becoming increasingly effective at responding to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

Leaders and teachers are reviewing and strengthening the school's assessment and moderation

processes. Improved assessment processes are ensuring greater consistency and reliability of overall teacher judgements for children's achievement in relation to the National Standards.

The school's most recent data show that about three-quarters of all children achieve National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. 2016 achievement data, when compared with 2015 data, show small in-school disparities for some groups. Data also show a remaining disparity in achievement for boys. In writing and mathematics the disparity for Māori children has slightly increased.

Leaders and teachers have the capability to address the inequity in achievement. They use action plans to achieve the school's 2017 strategic target, which is aimed at improving writing achievement. Teachers identify and monitor the progress of those children at risk of not achieving. Some children make accelerated progress.

Children's emotional and social competence is promoted, and their special educational needs are well catered for. Leaders and teachers work with parents/whānau and external agencies to support children with additional learning needs. The school's inclusive practices support all learners to achieve more equitable outcomes.

School conditions supporting equity and excellence

What school processes are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?

The school's processes and actions are mostly effective at helping to achieve equity and excellence for all children. Many initiatives are new and are yet to be embedded.

The board and school leaders successfully consult to seek input from the school community and local iwi. Recent consultation processes have included reviewing the school values and developing a student graduate profile. The new school values of Respect/Whakaute, Resilience/Manawaroa, and Responsibility/ Tokohanga are well understood by children.

Strategic leadership is evident. Distributed leadership roles, among staff, are promoting greater equity and excellence for children. The principal is collaborative, and is building relational trust, integrity and openness with the school community. Together they are working to build collective ownership of the school's new direction.

Effective internal evaluation processes guide the school's ongoing development. Evidence-based research and professional learning inform decision making and integrate theory and practice. A strong culture of reflection and a willingness to improve is evident amongst the board and staff.

The graduate profile identifies valued outcomes for learners. These outcomes include success as lifelong learners; confidence in identity, language and culture; and being connected socially and emotionally. Children engage in a range of learning experiences that promote these valued outcomes.

Settled, well organised learning environments support children's learning. Teachers use teaching strategies that engage learners. Learning assistants are an integral part of class programmes and life of the school. Children are confident users of digital technologies to support their learning.

Leaders, teachers and trustees are committed to fostering bicultural practices. A review of the school's logo reflects the pepeha of the local areas. Children enjoy learning waiata and being

involved in the school's kapa haka. Parents value these learning experiences. Teachers are developing a school kawa, including processes that support whakatau.

Māori children are becoming more confident in their language, culture and identity. Teachers' participation in professional learning is having a positive impact on the teaching of te reo Māori. Well-documented improvement plans and schoolwide learning progressions support the successful implementation of te reo in class programmes.

Ruawai Primary School sits adjacent to an early learning service and a secondary school. Leaders and staff continue to develop reciprocal relationships in this 'learning hub', and these connections are impacting positively on children's transition through their education.

New initiatives such as play based discovery in the junior school and personalised learning opportunities in the senior school are providing children with greater choice in their learning. Skilful teaching supports these programmes. These experiences enable children to confidently make choices about their learning, be problem solvers and collaborate with others.

Sustainable development for equity and excellence

What further developments are needed in school processes to achieve equity and excellence?

The board, school leaders and teachers work collaboratively to improve school processes to help achieve children's equity and excellence.

The school's documented curriculum does not yet reflect the curriculum in action. Leaders are planning to refresh the curriculum, and to support children to have greater ownership of their progress and achievement.

Recently developed plans to improve reading, writing and mathematics could more specifically detail the deliberate action needed to reduce the disparity for some groups of learners. This could include how the school will work with parents and whānau so they can help their children at home.

In 2017 leaders and teachers plan to participate in professional learning on developing culturally responsive teaching practices. The Ministry of Education's strategy *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for teachers of Māori learners* will underpin this learning. Gaining a better understanding of these competencies could help promote greater equity for Māori learners.

Internal evaluation processes are used well to support the school's new direction. Leaders could make better use of evaluative critique to further strengthen evaluation, including measuring the impact of how new initiatives and programmes are improving equitable and excellent outcomes for children.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board 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 the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management

- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student safety and wellbeing:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the *Vulnerable Children Act 2014*.

To improve current practice, the board should strengthen risk analysis and management planning for excursions.

Going forward

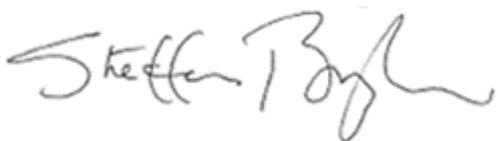
How well placed is the school to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it?

Children are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

Agreed next steps are to:

- document a school curriculum that promotes children's ownership of their learning and achievement
- refine improvement plans to sharpen the focus on reducing achievement disparity
- develop culturally responsive teaching strategies that support Māori learners
- use evaluative critique to support ongoing improvement.

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



Steffan Brough
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern (Acting)

8 June 2017

About the school

Location	Ruawai, Northland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1095	
School type	Contributing	
School roll	103	
Gender composition	Boys 59% Girls 41%	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā Māori other	52% 40% 8%
Provision of Māori medium education	No	
Review team on site	March 2017	
Date of this report	8 June 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	April 2014 June 2011 March 2008