



Maitai School
Nelson

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Maitai 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?

Maitai School is a special school for students with complex learning needs. Students range in age from five to 21 years and live throughout the Nelson region.

The school provides several placement options for students. Most students attend the base school but some go to one of two satellite classes at local schools. The school also has an itinerant service that supports students with significant special needs in regular schools.

Students learn in small multi-levelled classes with a high ratio of adults to students. The base school is located in the centre of Nelson. Very good use is made of the community to extend learning opportunities for students.

There have been some significant changes at the school since the October 2010 ERO review. The school now employs many of its own specialist staff, including therapists and a psychologist. One of the school's satellite classes has relocated to a new purpose-built classroom. In 2014, a new principal was appointed and an experienced trustee was elected as the board's chairperson.

Since the 2010 ERO review, the board, school leaders and staff have successfully maintained and built on the many strengths evident at that time. Significant progress has been made towards addressing the recommendations in the 2010 report, particularly in regard to improving self-review practices and promoting te reo and tikanga Māori.

2 Learning

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

The school makes very good use of achievement information to promote learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

Leaders, teachers and specialist staff use an extensive range of suitable assessments to accurately determine student progress and achievement. Good plans, guidelines and monitoring help to ensure that assessments are completed well and teacher judgements are sound. Extensive individual student records are readily accessible to staff, students and their parents.

Leaders and teachers make effective use of this achievement information to:

- develop focused individual education plans for each student (IEP's)
- affirm students' progress and achievement and keep parents very well informed about their child's learning and development
- analyse and report patterns of student progress and achievement in regard to the achievement of learning goals
- set clear annual achievement targets that are based on each student's IEP.

This effectiveness of the school's curriculum in promoting student progress and engagement is most evident in the increasing numbers of students either achieving or making significant progress towards achieving their personal goals. For example, in 2014, a high proportion of students achieved their three individual priority learning goals.

Other analysed achievement shows that students are making good progress towards achieving their personal goals. Students also experience success in a wide variety of other activities they take part in, including the arts.

School leaders and the board are well informed about student achievement and progress. They use this information to make well-considered decisions about how best to raise student achievement and accelerate their progress.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum effectively supports and promotes students' learning and wellbeing. It is clearly aligned to the New Zealand Curriculum and effectively adapted to reflect the uniqueness of its students. An updating of curriculum guidelines has made these more extensive and useful. They clarify expectations and successfully link a diverse range of learning experiences into a coherent curriculum.

The school's curriculum provides students with a well-balanced, integrated and rich variety of learning experiences. These experiences continue to expand in response to students' strengths, interests and needs. Students have many opportunities to have fun and experience success.

Teaching programmes give strong and appropriate emphasis to successfully supporting students to:

- develop the skills needed for successful learning (key competencies)
- extend their learning and skills in literacy, maths, health and physical education
- take part in activities and develop everyday living skills
- transition into and from the school.

Students learn in a positive and inclusive school culture where diversity is recognised and celebrated and the school's values are actively promoted. Respectful, supportive and caring relationships exist between staff and students. Such relationships, along with school practices, promote students' wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Staff know their students and families very well and this enables them to be responsive to both students' needs and parents' situations. They use an effective range of practices to recognise and respond to students' immediate needs and behaviour. These responses are guided by well-developed individual management and response plans.

Teachers make consistent use of a variety of effective teaching practices to help promote students' learning and development.

Other key features of the curriculum and teaching practices include the way teachers focus on making learning meaningful for students. The strong teamwork amongst the teachers, support and specialist staff is also a critical factor in fostering student learning and wellbeing. The effective role specialists play was affirmed in a recent external review of their work.

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

The school effectively promotes success for Māori students as Māori. The strong leadership of the school's kaiwhakahaere (leader of Māori), along with support of the board, kaumatua and principal, has fostered ongoing school improvement in this area. Māori staff provide students with good role models and support.

Māori students have a wide range of opportunities to experience success as Māori. Their engagement in learning is successfully fostered through the way elements of te reo and tikanga Māori are increasingly integrated into the curriculum. Kapa haka within the school is strong and school protocols incorporate aspects of te ao Māori.

Staff members are well supported to include elements of biculturalism within their programmes through regular professional development and ongoing support. Future plans provide a useful basis for building on the many positive practices that already exist to promote success for Maori as Maori.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

The principal and other school leaders provide highly effective leadership and management. The school's recently appointed principal is bringing new insights, making well-considered decisions and clarifying future priorities in ways that retain and build on the best of existing practices.

The school leadership team is united and collaborative. Leaders have high expectations of students and themselves and are committed to fostering high-quality teaching and services. Middle managers successfully sustained the school's good performance during a period of significant change.

Leadership and management responsibilities are clear and delegations continue to be extended to develop and make better use of staff strengths. Professional development and support, along with increasing opportunities for professional discussions foster a positive, supportive and improvement focused school culture.

The school has a well-established, ongoing programme of curriculum self review. Reviews are systematic, regular and varied. Review findings are both useful and used to promote improvements to the quality of education for students.

The school is very well governed. Trustees and school leaders work together effectively. Well-established governance practices and guidelines exist. Trustees bring a good range of skills and experiences to their roles.

Strategic and annual plans help to focus action. Reports to the board and board self review provide trustees with the information they need to make informed decisions. The board is responsive to requests that focus on fostering student progress and wellbeing.

A strong sense of partnership exists between the school and students', parents/whānau. Regular communication and a variety of support for parents contribute to positive relationships. Parents actively participate in the planning and evaluation of their children's programmes. Family events and workshops help parents to link up with other parents and foster a strong sense of community.

The school's relationship with the wider education community continues to expand. There is increasing demand for the school's well-delivered itinerant services. Associated staff are increasingly involved in providing professional development to staff in local schools.

Areas for review and development

ERO agrees with the priorities the board and school leaders have established for ongoing review and development. These include:

- aligning student's IEP's more closely to the school's revised curriculum
- developing a better overall framework for self review and extending teachers' evaluation of their own practices ("teaching as inquiry")
- exploring ways of raising the profile of the school in the area and extending the support the school provides for students with special needs, and their staff, in other schools.

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

The school is very effective in providing education and care for students with complex special learning needs. This is particularly evident in the way students are making significant progress towards their individual goals. The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance because of strong governance, leadership and management practices and a positive, improvement-focused school culture.

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



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer
Southern Region

23 March 2015

About the School

Location	Nelson	
Ministry of Education profile number	3202	
School type	Special School (Years 1 to 15)	
School roll	32	
Gender composition	Boys 22 Girls 10	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā Māori Asian Other Ethnicities	26 2 2 2
Special Features	Two Satellite Classes Specialist Teacher Outreach Service	
Review team on site	December 2014	
Date of this report	23 March 2015	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review Supplementary Review Education Review	October 2010 July 2007 June 2006