

ERO External Evaluation

West End School (P North), Palmerston North

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for students. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

School Context

West End School, located in Palmerston North, has students in Years 1 to 6. Of the 377 learners enrolled, 31% identify as Māori, 9% of Pacific heritage and 25 children are English language learners.

The school's vision statement is: Mahi Tahī, Whakaaro Tahī, Akoako Tahī: Working Together, Thinking Together, Learning Together. This is promoted through the strategic goals, centred on learning, people, community and environment.

The school has specific year level achievement targets with the overall learning goal stated as: "maximising individual potential through self-esteem and efficacy, and personalised learning so that talents are developed and excellence in academic achievement in all learning areas is the focus".

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- progress for priority students
- additional learning needs
- attendance
- engagement and wellbeing for learning.

The school has a te reo Māori bilingual class of 30 students. A purposely designed special education facility supports provision for learners with additional and significant needs.

In 2017, staff undertook professional learning and development (PLD) in mathematics.

The board, appointed at the last election, is seeking a new principal. The deputy principal is currently acting in this position.

The school is involved in a collaborative cluster of local schools for PLD.

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

School reported information shows progress towards achieving equity and excellence for all students. Most students, including Māori, achieve at or above curriculum expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Improved achievement outcomes are evident for all groups of students in these areas since the April 2014 ERO report.

There is continuing disparity for Māori and Pacific learners, who achieve below their peers in literacy and mathematics. The 2017 achievement information for mathematics, showed significant gains for all students and reduced disparity between girls and boys. Mid 2018 achievement data shows these gains have been sustained.

Learners with additional and complex needs are identified and programmes of support put in place. Collaboratively developed Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and external expertise support students to progress in their holistic learning.

1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

Staff identify and provide for students whose learning needs acceleration. Leaders and teachers respond to students at risk of not achieving through the implementation of 'Priority Learner Plans'. This framework enables teachers to determine students' specific learning needs and plan targeted teaching strategies and interventions to accelerate their progress.

Recent achievement information shows that a large majority of priority students, including Māori and boys, made accelerated progress in reading and mathematics. Data from the bilingual class indicate significant gains are made by all students in reading and writing, especially for boys in writing.

Continuing to establish a clearer schoolwide picture about who for and where accelerated progress occurs, should support the school to measure its overall effectiveness and inform next steps to improve outcomes for priority learners.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Leaders and teachers provide a positive, inclusive environment and respond to the diverse learning and wellbeing needs of their students. Well-developed systems and processes promote children's holistic wellbeing and foster a sense of belonging. Collegial relationships are evident across staff, children and whānau, and tuakana teina interactions promote wellbeing and learning.

Children are supported to be self-managing and agents of their learning through the school's curriculum. Student voice is used well to inform and shape the curriculum and many children are able to talk about their learning and next steps. Teaching and learning are enriched by the use of hands-on resources and digital tools. High levels of engagement and thoughtful questioning from teachers promote students' thinking and problem solving. Teachers promote te reo Māori.

Specialised equipment, resources and dedicated spaces are provided to enhance the education of students with various and complex needs. These areas enable teachers and support staff to provide personalised care for physical needs and specialised learning, in addition to what is provided in students' mainstream classrooms.

Positive transitions into the school are promoted through the new entrants' programme that is aligned to *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum. Transitions through and out of the school are well supported.

Leadership across the school is collaborative and improvement-focused. Developing teachers' leadership capabilities through a distributive leadership model is a priority. Systems and programmes to build teacher capability schoolwide, impact positively on their growth and support student engagement. An appropriate appraisal process guides teacher development. This is being strengthened to ensure the focus remains on changed practice to impact on student outcomes. Professional learning, aligned to strategic goals and student need, is used for growing teacher capability.

Leaders and teachers engage with, learn through and use inquiry and evaluation to support decision making and improvement. Inquiries focus on the improvement of outcomes for students and are closely aligned to the school's strategic planning. Internal evaluations help to identify the effectiveness of practices and are used to make changes and respond to student needs.

2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Leaders have identified that further development in using schoolwide assessments for better measuring acceleration is a next step. Building teachers' data literacy and developing a shared understanding of acceleration should support this development. Continued monitoring, in-depth analysis and reporting of progress and acceleration for all groups of students at risk of not achieving, is important. Moderation should be strengthened so that practice is consistent.

Trustees and leaders have agreed that reviewing the school's strategic plan and ensuring this aligns to their valued outcomes is a next step. This should further enhance practices and processes across the school to focus more deliberately on equity of outcome for all students. The school should engage and build partnerships with whānau to create a clearer picture of how to support language, culture and identity through the school curriculum.

The board is collaborative and trustees bring a range of skills to the position. They have identified, and ERO's evaluation confirms, that it is timely to seek ongoing support and guidance to:

- further clarify their roles and responsibilities
- establish clearly reviewed and relevant policy, procedures and practice to meet legislative requirements
- appoint a new principal
- develop their capacity to scrutinise reported information effectively
- plan for succession.

3 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
- finance
- 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.

Actions for compliance

ERO identified non-compliance in relation to:

- maintaining an ongoing programme of self-review in relation to policies and procedures
- police vetting of non-teaching staff within each three year period.

In order to address this, the board of trustees must:

1. ensure updated policies and procedures meet current legislative requirements. Reviewed policies and procedures need to be signed and dated to show currency, and that these are easily accessible to parents and whānau
Source: [National Administration Guidelines 2(b)]
2. ensure systematic police vetting of non-teaching staff every three years.
Source: [Education Act 1989, Sections 78C to 78CB]

Areas for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- ensure processes and procedures for monitoring and reporting health and safety matters to leaders and the board are robust and transparent, including for hazard management.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- an inclusive learning environment that responds to students' needs and supports their wellbeing and learning
- a broad-based curriculum that supports engagement and achievement
- schoolwide collaboration that promotes responsive teaching.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are in:

- schoolwide assessments for better measuring achievement and progress to accelerate the learning of students
- reviewing the school's strategic plan to better promote equity and excellence
- improving stewardship capability to further strengthen ongoing strategic direction, decision making and ensure legislative requirements are met.

Recommendations to other agencies

ERO recommends that New Zealand School Trustees Association consider providing support for the school to:

- improve trustees' understanding of their roles, responsibilities and legislative obligations
- assist in processes for the appointment of a new principal.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Phil Cowie
Director Review & Improvement Services Central
Central Region

28 January 2019

About the school

Location	Palmerston North
Ministry of Education profile number	2479
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)
School roll	377
Gender composition	Male 54%, Female 46%
Ethnic composition	Māori 31% Pākehā 41% Pacific 9% Other ethnic groups 19%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	Yes
Number of Māori medium classes	One
Total number of students in Māori medium (MME)	30
Number of students in Level 2 MME	30
Review team on site	November 2018
Date of this report	28 January 2019
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review April 2014 Education Review November 2009 Education Review February 2007