

## ERO External Evaluation

### Te Totara Primary School, Hamilton

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 those students who need it. 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

Te Totara Primary School located in Rotorua North, near Hamilton city, provides education for students in Years 1 to 6. The school continues to experience rapid roll growth. Student numbers have grown by approximately three hundred since the last ERO review in 2013. The current roll of 812 includes 91 Māori students and a significant number of English language learners. The school has become increasingly diverse, with less than half of the school population identifying as New Zealand European/Pākehā. The school is a member of the Te Pae Here Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako.

The school's fundamental belief is that the children are STARS, and this is captured in the school-wide vision of 'Growing and Learning Together'. STARS stands for Smart decisions, Trying our best, Always learning, Respectful and Self-managing. These five key themes aim to guide learners to improve. The school's charter articulates its commitment to growing achievement for learners, encouraging family and community involvement and growing infrastructure to support students, staff and the community.

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

- reading, writing and mathematics
- social sciences, science, technology and the arts.

#### Evaluation Findings

### 1 Equity and excellence – valued outcomes for students

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

The school is achieving equity and excellence for almost all of its students. Their achievement data from 2014 to 2017 shows a consistent pattern with almost all students achieving at or above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This data indicates that girls and boys achieve at comparable levels. In 2017, almost all Māori students are achieving national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This information shows that the proportion of Pacific students achieving at or above national expectations is slightly lower than other groups in the school. Data from 2015 to

2017 indicates almost all students, including Māori and Pacific, are achieving at or above the national expectations in social sciences, technology, science and the arts.

## **1.2 How effectively does this school respond to those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration?**

The school is highly responsive to Māori and other students whose learning needs acceleration. The school's 2017 data shows that most Māori students made accelerated progress in mathematics and reading, with a small majority making gains in writing. This information shows that most other at-risk students made accelerated progress in reading. In writing and mathematics approximately half of these at-risk students made accelerated progress.

## **2 School conditions for equity and excellence**

### **2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?**

The board of trustees provides high-quality stewardship for the school. Trustees set clear expectations through their strategic approach to school development. The board receives extensive data from school leaders which they closely scrutinise to determine the effectiveness of programmes and to set ongoing school priorities. There is a commitment to generous financial provision for additional staffing, resources and initiatives that specifically focus on improving student outcomes.

Senior leaders provide effective leadership for learning. They have consistently high expectations for teacher performance and a planned approach to providing appropriate professional learning and development. There is a strategic focus on building leadership capability across the school. This approach maximises the use of teacher expertise and contributes to ongoing sustainability of programmes, and initiatives. The leadership team has worked responsively to strategically manage rapid school growth and cultural diversity to maintain high levels of student participation and achievement.

School-wide systems and processes are used effectively to track and monitor student achievement. Information is gathered and reported across a wide range of curriculum areas. The introduction of a shared teaching and learning document to closely monitor progress of all priority learners is ensuring a relentless focus on accelerating achievement. There are appropriate and comprehensive systems to respond to children with additional learning needs. These practices contribute to a coordinated approach to improving learning outcomes for at risk students.

Teachers have a highly professional approach to accelerating student achievement. They provide productive learning environments for all students. Teachers make good use of assessment information to inform their programme planning and targeted actions for individual and group teaching. They work cooperatively to share successes, challenges and effective strategies to accelerate progress for at-risk students. Teachers engage in deliberate acts of teaching that align learning tasks, school resources and home support. Respectful relationships and sharing of knowledge within and across school teams strengthens teacher practice.

Students experience a positive culture for learning. They have a strong understanding of the school values and are highly engaged in all aspects of the curriculum. The school values reciprocal learning opportunities with families and other community groups. Students are provided with equitable opportunities to learn from a rich curriculum that promotes well-being and belonging.

## **2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence?**

To further support equity and excellence, ERO and the school have agreed that teachers:

- continue to strengthen practices that promote student ownership of learning
- expand professional learning on strategies to support English language learners within their classroom programmes
- broaden the range of evidence and consistently include reflections about the impact of their teaching on student outcomes

## **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.

## **4 Going forward**

### **Key strengths of the school**

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

- the board's strategic approach that focuses on equitable and excellent outcomes for students
- leadership that sets and monitors high expectations for teaching and learning in an orderly and supportive environment that promotes student well-being and learning.

## **Next steps**

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

- improving teacher reflection on the effectiveness of their practice
- promoting teaching strategies to strengthen students ownership of their learning.

## **ERO's next external evaluation process and timing**

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynda Pura-Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Lynda Pura-Watson  
Deputy Chief Review Officer  
Te Tai Miringa - Waikato / Bay of Plenty Region

31 January 2018

## About the school

Location	Hamilton
Ministry of Education profile number	577
School type	Contributing (Years 1 – 6)
School roll	812
Gender composition	Boys 51% Girls 49%
Ethnic composition	Maori 11% Pakeha 45% Chinese 13% Indian 9% Other Asian 7% Other European 2% Pacific 3% Other 10%
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	November 2017
Date of this report	31 January 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review March 2013 Education Review April 2010