

Te Totara Primary School Education Review

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About the School

Location	Rototuna North, Hamilton	
Ministry of Education profile number	577	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	509	
Gender composition	Boys 51% Girls 49%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	60%
	Māori	12%
	Indian	6%
	African	6%
	Chinese	4%
	Middle Eastern	2%
	Fijian	2%
	Other European	3%
	Other	5%
Review team on site	March 2013	
Date of this report	20 May 2013	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	April 2010

The Purpose of an ERO Report

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.

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1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Te Totara School opened as a new school in January 2008. The school continues to grow rapidly to provide for students from the new suburbs of north Hamilton. There are good systems in place to manage this growth and to introduce and support new families and teachers to the school. While the majority of students identify as NZ European/Pākehā, the student body is becoming increasingly multicultural.

Senior leaders are focused on students and their learning. They promote a positive and supportive culture based around principles that guide adult and student thinking about education. These are referred to as the STARS, and form part of a galactic theme that is reflected in the names of the learning teams and their related buildings. The theme is also referred to in the inquiry approach model for teaching and learning that has been developed at the school.

The 2010 ERO report commented positively on the effectiveness of the school's curriculum in promoting student learning. Together with the school leaders, ERO identified some areas for review and development related to curriculum, leadership, and the success of Māori, as Māori. Significant progress has been made to strengthen the school's performance in these areas.

2 Learning

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

The school has effective ways of knowing about how well students achieve in all areas of the curriculum. As well as knowing about student achievement in relation to the National Standards for literacy and numeracy, teachers also monitor student learning in the other areas of the curriculum. Teachers make informed judgements about student achievement in all learning areas of the curriculum.

A wide range of carefully selected assessment tools are used to ensure that teacher judgements in relation to National Standards are valid and reliable. The school has effective internal moderation systems that are soon to be supplemented by moderation with other schools. The achievement of groups of students is tracked as they move through the school to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Student achievement is reported in ways that enable students, families and teachers to support student learning. Individual student learning plans are developed in consultation with students and their parents. Teachers make good use of achievement information to design and implement programmes relevant to students' learning stages.

Trustees receive useful information that helps them to make appropriate decisions to support learning and raise student achievement. Trustees know that students overall are achieving well, and they continue to set clear annual goals to raise literacy and numeracy levels across the school and to raise achievement for Māori students. Significant gains were made in 2012 against these targets.

3 Curriculum

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

The school curriculum successfully promotes and supports students learning. It provides access to all learning areas of The New Zealand Curriculum. Learning opportunities include sporting activities and the arts. School dramatic and musical productions and educational activities outside the classroom allow students to participate, be leaders, and succeed in many fields. The school is currently reviewing the extent to which students are able to participate in high quality visual arts programmes.

The board and senior leaders are aware of their obligations to the Treaty of Waitangi and are making good progress in addressing this principle of The New Zealand Curriculum. The current focus on supporting teachers to teach te reo Māori has been embraced by staff and good progress is being made in building their competence and confidence in te reo Māori.

There is a teaching focus on literacy and numeracy, and students are making very good progress. Other areas of the curriculum are taught using a school-based integrated inquiry model. The model supports students to develop learning approaches and skills that they can take into new learning situations.

Teaching successfully supports student learning. Relationships in classrooms are respectful and supportive. Wall displays reflect the current learning and provide prompts for students. Te reo Māori is visible and is beginning to be used within other lessons. Information and communication technologies are well used to support learning.

Teaching practices help students understand the purpose of lessons and encourage them to be aware of their next steps in learning. Students use teachers' oral and written feed back to monitor their own progress and to focus on improvement.

Students with special needs are well supported. The special education coordinator ensures that students who need additional support are provided for and that teachers are designing programmes relevant to students' needs. Progress is monitored to ensure that interventions are successful.

School leaders and ERO agree that teachers should continue to reflect and refine teaching practices that promote student independence and ownership of their learning. This could include further developing teachers':

- understanding of student engagement in learning and how teaching can support high levels of engagement

- use of formative teaching practices, including developing success criteria with students.

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

The school is committed to promoting educational success for Māori, as Māori. There are high expectations for Māori students to succeed and achieve, and all teachers are expected to demonstrate their role in furthering Māori student achievement. The school successfully consults with parents of Māori students.

Māori students' identity and language are supported. Opportunities to learn tikanga Māori include visits to marae and participating in pōwhiri for visitors to the school. The Ministry of Education booklet, *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners*, is being used to guide reflection on educational practices.

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. During this period of rapid growth the school is maintaining a focus on student achievement. Trustees are clear about their roles. Self review is well planned and includes regular consultation.

The school's strategic plan provides a clear direction for the school. The plan is based on the school's good self-review information. Progress against the strategic goals is documented and monitored.

The performance management of staff strongly supports the improvement of teaching and learning. The appraisal system encourages teachers to reflect on their practice and to develop a professional culture. Appraisals are improvement focused, with clear links to relevant professional development.

There is good communication within the school community. Information and communication technologies are used to share information among staff, trustees and the community, along with regular newsletters and face-to-face contact. The senior leadership team is very accessible to students and parents.

Staff benefit from strong professional leadership. Learning and teaching is well monitored and supported. Senior leaders know the teachers well and understand how to build their capability. They respond quickly to new information and to adjust to new situations. They are successfully building leadership capacity among the staff.

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.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Dale Bailey
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Northern Region

20 May 2013