

ERO External Evaluation

Rongomai School, Otara, Auckland

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

Rongomai School is a small Year 1 to 6 school in Otara. The roll consists of students who are mainly of Māori and/or Pacific heritage. The school has a high percentage of English Language Learners (ELL). The school roll has remained stable over time.

The school's vision is to create conditions for students to take risks in their learning and to succeed. The vision is underpinned by values of respect, integrity, courage and heritage.

Rongomai School aims to create a curriculum that reflects students' cultures, backgrounds and interests. The intent is to develop students' mana, sense of identity and relationship skills.

The school states that its current key aims are to improve leadership, teaching and learning and partnerships with families and communities. It has targeted plans and actions to raise students' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- provision for students with additional learning needs
- progress and achievement in relation to school targets.

Since the 2014 ERO review a new principal and senior leadership team have been appointed. The board of trustees consists of newly appointed members including the chairperson. Teachers have participated in professional learning in literacy and from 2017, in mathematics. The school was involved with a Ministry of Education support programme to develop a school improvement plan in 2016 and 2017.

Since 2017 the school has been a member of the Tangaroa Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako (COL).

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?

Rongomai School is developing its effectiveness towards achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for students.

Over the last three years, school achievement data for all students show an upward trend in writing and mathematics. By the end of their senior year at the school, the majority of students achieve at expected curriculum levels in writing. Less than half of all students achieve at expected levels in reading and mathematics.

School reading data show some variability over the last three years. There has been a trend of disparity for boys in writing and mathematics achievement. The school has a focus on lifting achievement in mathematics with good planning and professional learning in place.

School data show a positive lift in Māori children's achievement as they move through the school.

Students achieve well in relation to other identified valued outcomes. Students are:

- enthusiastic learners who demonstrate good levels of engagement in their learning
- able to show the school values of respect, integrity and heritage
- achieving success in sporting, the performing arts and cultural activities
- confident in their language, culture and identity.

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

Rongomai School is developing its effectiveness in responding to students whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

Positive shifts in achievement have been achieved through a multi-layered approach to accelerating progress that supports each child to develop their ability to learn. Improved assessment practices underpin this school development.

Teachers adapt their teaching for students who require acceleration. They monitor progress and outcomes through targeted teacher inquiries that support learning for these students.

The leadership team prioritises responding to the learning requirements of all Māori children. Teachers have high expectations for Māori learners to experience success as Māori.

The school has developed strong relationships with local kohanga reo. Whānau are welcomed and fully participate in school kawa. Whānaungatanga is valued and promotes a positive school culture and a strong sense of belonging. Te reo Māori is upheld with mana in a Year 1 to 3 Māori enrichment class.

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?

Rongomai School is developing a working definition of accelerated learning, particularly for students who require learning support.

School leaders are connected to, and committed to serving, the school community. The school values are reflected in its inclusive culture. The staff are aware of students' capabilities and strengths. Student success is promoted at all levels of the school and across different learning areas.

Teacher participation in relevant professional development in mathematics is supporting their use of effective teaching practices to promote students' active involvement in their learning. They are beginning to provide students with opportunities to collaborate, discuss, question, think critically and problem solve. This has contributed to students being more engaged in their learning in mathematics. The next step is to build on this success by supporting students to use these learning strategies across the curriculum.

Teachers' self-reflection and evaluation contribute to improving the school's curriculum design and increasing the use of effective teaching strategies. Teachers should continue to develop a responsive curriculum that challenges students and actively engages them in learning. This will promote better opportunities for students to connect with their cultural identity, home language, and interests, and to extend into wider and deeper learning.

School leaders and teachers are effectively engaging with the community and welcoming them into the life of the school. They recognise and value the integral role that whānau play in nurturing children's learning. It would now be useful to develop shared strategies for whanau/parents to actively support their children's learning at home.

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

School leaders and teachers acknowledge that a next step is to extend opportunities for students to learn within a more challenging and interactive curriculum. This development supports teaching emphasis given to literacy and mathematics. Increasing opportunities for students to actively engage in critical thinking, creativity and oral language would contribute to the school's goal of developing students' mana and sense of identity.

The school could use data more effectively to support the achievement of groups of students such as students with additional needs and English Language Learners (ELL). This use of data will inform teachers' practice that is focused on improving student achievement. More specific and meaningful target setting on disparity of achievement will help teachers to prioritise areas of learning that require further attention.

It would be useful for teachers to ensure good strategies are in place to support those students who are English Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) so that they make better progress in their learning. This includes appropriate links made between the classroom programme and specialist English language support. Teachers could monitor the progress of these students to ensure they are able to learn in all areas of the curriculum.

The board of trustees should continue engaging in governance training to build their capacity to evaluate progress towards strategic goals. This development would also help them determine the school's effectiveness in achieving valued 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*.

Areas for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should ensure attendance trends and patterns are reported to the board of trustees.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- a committed and collaborative leadership team that has developed a shared vision to promote students' learning
- the valuing of students' cultural practices that enhances their language and identity in their learning
- teachers' positive and supportive professionalism that provides a foundation for continuous school improvement.

A strong school culture of whanaungatanga and mahi tahi that creates a learning environment that promotes students' confidence and engagement.

Next steps

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

- continuing to develop a responsive and interactive curriculum that extends and challenges students' learning
- establishing and embedding teachers' professional learning to promote students' oral language, collaborative problem solving and leadership
- developing more effective use of data to show progress and achievement for groups of students such as students with additional needs and English Language Learners (ELL).

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Julie Foley
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Te Tai Raki - Northern Region

31 May 2018

About the school

Location	Otara, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1468	
School type	Contributing Primary (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	174	
Gender composition	Boys 50% Girls 50%	
Ethnic composition	Māori Samoan Cook Islands Māori Tongan other	30% 25% 18% 17% 10%
Provision of Māori medium education	No	
Review team on site	March 2018	
Date of this report	31 May 2018	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	October 2014 February 2013 November 2009