

ERO External Evaluation

Pigeon Mountain School, Bucklands Beach, 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 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

Pigeon Mountain School caters for students from Years 1 to 6. It has a growing and ethnically diverse roll of approximately 600 students. Māori children make up two percent of the roll, one percent are Pacific, 47 percent are Chinese, and 24 percent are New Zealand/European.

The school's whakatauki of Mātauranga o te ngākau, 'Education with a heart' sits at the centre of its mission, vision and values. The mission is based on the learning principles of providing opportunities for learners to experience and understand big ideas about their world through cooperation and collaboration. The school's vision is 'Living and Learning with Purpose and Passion' and school values include resilience, responsibility, excellence and respect. These values are well understood and supported by parents, teachers and students. The school's pastoral care programme is based on values of care and respect, and supports the school's broader mission, vision and values.

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- outcomes for students with special learning and or additional learning needs
- overall progress and achievement in relation to school targets
- children's progress and accelerated progress
- outcomes related to student wellbeing for success.

Staff have participated in Ministry of Education (MOE) professional learning contracts in the teaching of mathematics and the use of digital technologies to enhance learning. School leaders and teachers have also engaged in workshops and personalised professional learning opportunities to do with teaching writing, inquiry learning and coaching.

Since the 2013 ERO report, a new principal was appointed in 2015. The board has a range of new and experienced trustees who reflect the school's ethnic diversity. A new whānau structure introduced in 2017, organises the school into six teaching and learning teams which are made up of mixed year levels. A number of new team leaders have been appointed to support this initiative.

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 highly effective in achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students. School achievement information over the last three years shows very high levels of student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.

Leaders and teachers have a deliberate focus, and are successfully addressing a small disparity in achievement for boys in writing. School systems, practices and personalised approaches have resulted in increasing parity for students in this learning area.

Students achieve very well in relation to other school valued outcomes. Students:

- reflect care and respect for each other
- demonstrate co-operation and collaboration in their active engagement in learning
- are inclusive, and accepting of difference
- demonstrate the school's values.

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

The school is highly effective in responding to those students whose learning and achievement needs acceleration.

The leadership team sets clear expectations regarding responsiveness, and prioritises relevant ongoing professional learning and development. Teachers undertake a range of team inquiries and personalised practices that focus on meeting learners' needs. Leaders' commitment to responsiveness is also evident in increased teacher accountability for the progress of children who require acceleration.

Teachers identify children's strengths, interests and needs accurately and quickly. This helps them to plan specific targeted instruction that is well matched to children's needs. Learners benefit from teachers' targeted classroom instruction and from a range of special interventions.

The school's charter and annual targets aim appropriately to accelerate the progress of identified groups of students. Action plans are developed with teaching staff that align with the school's achievement targets. Leaders recognise the importance of making prompt, planned responses to accelerate learning progress. Progress toward school targets is closely monitored.

School data for students who are achieving below expectations show positive shifts in achievement for almost all students and accelerated progress for most.

Leaders and teachers respond well to students with additional learning needs. Almost all students show positive shifts in terms of their wellbeing, confidence and engagement in learning. These positive shifts help students improve and sustain their learning progress over time.

The school has a growing number of children who speak languages in addition to English. These children receive highly effective learning programmes to build their English language skills and competency. Appropriate links are made between their classroom programmes and specialist English Language Learning support. The achievement of these students is carefully monitored to ensure that they have access to the full range of the curriculum.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence

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

The school has high quality processes and practices that are enabling the achievement of equity and excellence.

Leaders and teachers view parents and whānau as valued partners in children's learning. The board of trustees, leaders and teachers have established educationally powerful connections with parents, whānau and the community. Trustees, school leaders and staff recognise and affirm the diverse identities, languages and culture of parents and whānau, and deliberately broker their engagement and participation. Parents and whānau are kept well informed, and their opinions and perspectives are sought regularly. This information is used well to tailor learning, and to support the wellbeing of children and their families.

Leaders and teachers make very good use of rigorous internal evaluation to identify what is going well in the school and where further improvements can occur. There are strong links between the outcomes of internal evaluation and the school's strategic goals, annual planning and professional development.

Highly effective leadership is resulting in a shared sense of responsibility, across all staff, for pursuing equity and excellence for learners. Leaders have a clear line of sight to accelerating the learning of students who are at risk of underachievement. Leaders successfully provide a vision, systems and practices that enable teachers to be confident in their roles and responsibilities, and to remain committed to continuous improvement.

The school's highly collaborative professional environment reflects strong levels of relational trust and professional expertise. Coherent performance management systems support teacher development. Teachers use evidence to collectively inquire into the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and practices. They also provide and receive constructive feedback through collegial coaching and support. Teaching teams closely monitor changes in teacher practice and the impact these are having on student outcomes.

Students enjoy innovative teaching and authentic learning opportunities that engage them and contribute to their high levels of achievement. School approaches are designed to increase students' ownership of their learning. This includes them having good opportunities to confidently articulate their ideas and opinions. The curriculum also features collaborative programmes and digital learning opportunities that help to heighten students' critical and creative problem solving and their sense of connection to their learning.

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

Leaders agree that further developments could include extending the range of inclusive learning practices for children with special abilities and needs. Increasing options for children to learn collaboratively, and develop future focussed capabilities and competencies, would also be likely to enhance the school's curriculum.

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*.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice established under Section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code. At the time of the review there were 10 international students attending the school.

The school provides international students with a very good standard of education. Students benefit from the school's inclusive school culture and opportunities to participate in a range of school activities. The school's monitoring systems are very effective.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- establishing educationally powerful connections and relationships with parents, whānau and community that support wellbeing, and positive social and academic outcomes for students
- school leadership that has established a shared vision and values, and a collaborative and student-centred teaching culture
- a curriculum that provides innovative, authentic and collaborative learning opportunities that promote student 'voice' and high levels of achievement
- the school's highly reflective professional environment that promotes teaching as inquiry, and focuses on improving student outcomes

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, development priorities are in continuing to extend the range of effective inclusive practices that respond to children's additional learning needs.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



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Te Tai Raki - Northern Region

12 December 2017

About the school

Location	Bucklands Beach, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1439	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	602	
Gender composition	Boys 57% Girls 43%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	3%
	Pākehā	24%
	Chinese	47%
	Indian	5%
	African	4%
	Pacific	1%
	other Asian	7%
	other European	4%
	other Ethnicities	5%
Provision of Māori medium education	No	
Review team on site	October/November 2017	
Date of this report	12 December 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2013
	Education Review	April 2010
	Education Review	April 2007