

ERO External Evaluation

Wakefield School, Wakefield, Nelson

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

Wakefield School is a long-established, rural school for children in Years 1 to 6. The school has a roll of 278 children. Close to 20% of children enter or leave the school within the year.

The school's vision is for children to be confident, life-long learners. The valued outcomes for children are to have the competencies, skills, knowledge and dispositions to achieve the school's learner profile. This is underpinned by the following values:

- showing respect
- taking responsibility
- aiming high
- never giving up
- doing the right thing.

The school's aims and goals include raising achievement for all children through an effective curriculum that engages learners and continuous improvement through review.

The school's targets:

- to specifically raise achievement in writing and mathematics against National Standards:
- to increase the percentage of students at or above the National Standards
- for Māori students to achieve National Standards if below or well below and engage in tikanga Māori.

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

- achievement in relation to the National Standards
- engagement, progress and achievement of target children

- student perceptions about their learning, school-wide attendance and use of the library.

Since the 2014 ERO review, there have been some senior leadership changes including the appointment of a new deputy principal. The board is made up of experienced and new trustees.

Leaders have established relationships with a number of local agencies. The school has been involved with two Ministry of Education support programmes, including Accelerated Literacy Learning (ALL) and research funding provided through the New Zealand Teacher Led Innovation Fund (TILF).

Some children learn in open and flexible spaces. School facilities, such as the swimming pool, hall and library are shared with the community.

The school is a member of Kāhui Ako ki Waimea | Community of Learning (CoL). The principal has a shared leadership role of this CoL.

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 very effectively achieving equitable and positive outcomes for children.

Over the last three years, more than 80% of children achieved at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. A greater proportion of girls achieved this in writing than boys. There is a decrease in the disparity in boys writing with respect to National Standards for 2017.

Overall, Māori children are achieving at similar or higher levels to other students across the school. Almost all Māori children, at the mid-point progress assessments for 2017, are at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

The school very effectively responds to those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration. The school has high quality information about the progress and achievement of individual children.

Within 2017, there is evidence to show that two thirds of the children who were reading below or well below the National Standards have made accelerated progress. Close to 40% made accelerated progress in writing and mathematics.

The school can show that for the small number of Māori children who were below the National Standards for reading, writing and mathematics, they have made positive progress.

For those children in the writing target group, some students have made accelerated progress so far in 2017.

The school is yet to show for this year accelerated progress for target children in relation to the mathematics. However, learning information clearly shows that there has been significant improvement in students' confidence and attitude to mathematics.

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 many processes and practices that are very effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence. These relate to the school's engaging curriculum, approaches to building capability and knowledge and its relentless focus on improvement.

There is strong, improvement-focused leadership in the school. The principal, board and teachers have a clear vision and aspirations for learners that are well supported by coherent plans and practices. Trusting relationships and effective communication are evident at every level of the school. This fosters strong collaboration, risk taking and openness to change.

Children benefit from a rich, broad curriculum that is very well documented and planned. The curriculum is deliberately aligned to the school's vision and valued outcomes for learners. School leaders and teachers place strong emphasis on the key competencies from the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) by developing and embedding self-awareness in learners. Collaborative teaching and learning supports children to become self-managing and directed learners.

Leaders and teachers respond in meaningful ways to children's needs, abilities, wellbeing and interests. Children with additional needs are well supported to achieve their goals and personal best. Children have many opportunities to develop leadership skills by supporting each other and leading learning. They work closely together to co-construct their learning.

Shared learning (mahi tahi) energises teachers and leaders allowing them to be innovative, collaborative and flexible. Leaders and teachers are purposefully involved in relevant professional learning and development that is well aligned to school priorities. They regularly engage in whole-school moderation to ensure the consistency of teacher's assessment judgements.

School leaders and teachers have built strong partnerships with the local community. The community is highly supportive of the school and children's learning. Leaders and teachers create purposeful partnerships with parents that benefit children's learning. School personnel contribute positively and in an ongoing way to the wider education community.

The principal, teachers and children strengthen and share leadership across the school promoting ownership and sustainable practices. Leaders and teachers gather relevant data and information, including research, as a basis for the effective evaluation processes within the school.

The principal and trustees ensure their strategic approaches and deliberate programmes of action are strongly improvement and future focused. The board's decision making and resourcing is contributing to equitable opportunities for all children.

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

The next step for the school is to extend (beyond the target children) the analysis, evaluation and reporting of learner outcome information, particularly with respect to the sufficiency and expectations of progress school-wide and for specific groups such as:

- girls and boys
- children from different ethnic groups

- those receiving learning support
- those not at national expectations
- children who enter the school with in the year.

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:

- providing a very positive and inclusive school culture, building meaningful relationships with each child and family as partners in learning
- the strongly engaging and rich curriculum that inspires children to become self-directed learners
- collaborative practices that build teacher capacity and capability and promote positive outcomes for children
- strong improvement-focused professional leadership that extends leadership across the school to promote ownership and sustainability.

Next steps

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

- extending the analysis, evaluation and reporting of learner outcome information, particularly with respect to the sufficiency and expectations for progress school-wide and for specific groups, to better inform the board, teachers and parents about what promotes progress for all learners.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Dr Lesley Patterson
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern
Te Waipounamu - Southern Region

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About the school

Location	Wakefield, Nelson
Ministry of Education profile number	3234
School type	Contributing Primary School (Years 1-6)
School roll	278
Gender composition	Males: 146 Females: 132
Ethnic composition	Māori: 11% Pākehā: 88% Pacific: 1%
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	November 2017
Date of this report	22 January 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review May 2014 Education Review November 2010 Education Review September 2007