

Matarau School Education Review

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About the School

Location	Kamo, Whangarei	
Ministry of Education profile number	1043	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
Decile [1]	9	
School roll	219	
Number of international students	6	
Gender composition	Boys 51% Girls 49%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	80%
	Māori	17%
	other	3%
Review team on site	June 2012	
Date of this report	15 August 2012	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	February 2009
	Education Review	January 2006
	Accountability Review	June 2002

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.

[1]

School deciles range from 1 to 10. Decile 1 schools draw their students from low socio-economic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides.

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1 Context

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

Matarau School is a rural primary school near Whangarei, providing good quality education for students from Years 1 to 8. Most families in the community farm or live on lifestyle blocks and work in Whangarei.

Students often attend the school for all of their primary school years and have high rates of attendance. Seventeen percent of students identify as Māori.

The board of trustees has a clear mission to ensure that students are provided with diverse and challenging opportunities to feel valued, to know and build on their strengths, to make good choices about their learning and behaviour, and to have fun.

The school has enrolled international students for a number of years and is in the process of licensing a hostel. This year there are six Year 7 and 8 international students from Korea.

The school has a stable staff and leadership team. Members of the senior leadership team each lead one of the three syndicates. Staff have worked together successfully to implement National Standards and to share student achievement with families.

The culture of the school is open and inclusive with good communication and positive relationships at all levels. Students report that they enjoy school and feel safe.

2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Student engagement is high throughout the school. Teaching and learning tasks involve all students and encourage them to think about their learning. Students can talk about the purpose of what they are doing. Students set learning goals with their teacher and parents, and work towards meeting these goals. Students and their parents are aware of learning levels and how well students are progressing.

Trustees and staff have high expectations of student learning. Teachers and senior leaders have good systems for knowing about student achievement. They use a wide range of carefully chosen assessment tools to make judgements about student achievement in relation to National Standards. Senior leaders take a keen interest in achievement patterns and trends as well as the progress of individual students.

Trustees are well informed about student achievement in literacy and numeracy. The reports they receive indicate that, overall, students are achieving well in relation to National Standards. Reading, writing and mathematics assessment information is analysed by ethnicity and gender. Māori students are achieving well and their progress is closely monitored by trustees, senior leaders and teachers. The achievement of international students is monitored and reported to trustees as well as parents.

Learning in other areas of the curriculum is assessed by classroom teachers, but this information is not yet analysed for patterns and trends across the school.

Literacy and numeracy achievement information is used to target curriculum areas and groups of students who might require additional support. The board makes resourcing decisions based on the analysis of this information. Students who enter the school with achievement levels below expected levels for their age often make accelerated progress so that they are well prepared for secondary school.

The effectiveness of programmes provided for students who are withdrawn from their class for focused teaching are closely monitored. During the review ERO discussed with senior leaders how students' progress might be monitored after their participation in these programmes is complete.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum effectively promotes and supports student learning and reflects the board's mission statement. It is closely aligned to The New Zealand Curriculum and its scope and implementation is guided by a clear set of policies. The curriculum is implemented in ways that promote independence and responsibility, and encourages students to lead their own learning.

The school curriculum reflects the rural community that the school serves. Contexts for study are often relevant to students' lives. While literacy and numeracy are a prime focus for teaching and learning, the school curriculum is broad. Expertise within the staff is used to ensure that curriculum areas such as science are well taught.

Teachers are encouraged to include a Māori dimension when planning units of work. Senior leaders should review the extent to which Māori contexts are actually included in the programme. The review might identify areas where teachers need support to provide a more bicultural curriculum.

All students would benefit from more opportunities to learn te reo and tikanga in meaningful contexts as part of the general school programmes. Teachers could take greater advantage of the expertise within the school and use MOE resources to build their own confidence and capability in these areas.

Teaching is of a consistently good quality. Relationships are positive and affirming, and learning and teaching is inclusive of all students. International students and students with special needs benefit from good quality learning experiences within the general classrooms.

Teachers make good use of achievement data to group students for instruction in literacy and mathematics. They carefully analyse the data for their class and set targets to lift achievement. The progress of individuals and groups of students is monitored against individual and group educational goals.

Teachers share criteria for success in learning with students. The criteria are sometimes lacking in specificity. Teachers could now review these criteria so that they are communicated in ways that enable students to set manageable goals and to monitor their progress against them.

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

While Māori students are achieving well academically, the school recognises that it could do more to support them to learn more tikanga and te reo Māori and to build their identity and culture as Māori.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. The board governs the school effectively. Trustees access training as required. They are guided by an experienced and well informed principal. The principal knows the community and staff well. He takes a keen interest in and is very accessible to students. He is familiar with Ministry of Education requirements and current educational theory and good practice.

Senior leaders manage and lead the school well. They are very reflective and regularly review school operations. Self review is often based on relevant and reliable information, including achievement data, and information received through consultation with parents, students and staff. Strategic planning is well informed by self review and the impact of resourcing decisions is monitored. It would now be useful to document the processes for identifying and conducting self review so that good practices are sustained.

Teachers benefit from, and participate in, an inclusive learning culture that focuses on on-going improvement. They are encouraged to develop their leadership skills and to be innovative. Teachers respond well to this environment by sharing good practice and engaging in professional conversations. Performance management processes support this learning culture.

Three leaders, including the deputy principal and the assistant principal, each manage the day to day running of a syndicate and take a particular interest in the learning and teaching within that level of the school. It would be appropriate to continue to build dialogue and grow understandings across all three syndicate levels of the school to ensure continuity and coherence of learning and teaching practice.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. At the time of this review there were six international students attending the school.

The school caters well for the pastoral care and education of its international students. The students are integrated well into the school community and they are involved in all aspects of the curriculum. The school has good systems for monitoring the effectiveness of its provision for international students.

The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international students is thorough.

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
- 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 three years.

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15 August 2012