

# Matarau School Education Review

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# 1 Context

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

Matarau School provides very good educational opportunities for students from Years 1 to 8. Most students have NZ European/Pākehā heritage and more than a quarter of students are Māori. Students, staff and parents are proud of their school and of the strong relationships forged with their community. They appreciate the school's commitment to live its mission statement for students to know self, to feel valued and to learn.

The school promotes inclusive and welcoming approaches for all students and their whānau, and especially for students with special educational needs. Teachers focus on promoting students' confidence as learners and leaders in different ways throughout the school.

Students are friendly and kind to each other. They have positive relationships with their principal, teachers and other adults in the school. These aspects, combined with the generational connections that some parents have to the school, promote students' sense of belonging to their school and their engagement in learning.

The school environment is attractive and well maintained. Classrooms are well resourced and include good access to digital technologies for students and staff throughout the school. The board of trustees ensures adequate provision of digital devices so that all students have access for learning. School-wide teaching and learning programmes are based on sound educational philosophy that promotes student-centred learning.

The 2012 ERO report identified that the school had many strengths in areas of governance, leadership, teaching and learning, and in promoting positive outcomes for students. These strengths continue to be evident in the school.

## 2 Learning

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

The school uses achievement information very well to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

The school recognises and responds very well to children's wellbeing to support and promote their engagement and learning. Students and staff value and celebrate each others' unique strengths, differences and successes. Children with special educational needs, including those with specific gifts and talents, are very well catered for. School leaders, staff and the board of trustees provide solutions-based strategies to promote positive outcomes for students.

Most students, including Māori students, throughout the school achieve at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. All students are very well supported to make significant progress during their years at the school. Teachers and school leaders use data effectively to plan and review long and short-term classroom programmes for students.

School leaders and teachers are skilled at using data to identify student needs and set specific goals and targets. Targets include a clear focus on specific groups of students who require extra support. Leaders work with teachers to design and evaluate learning programmes and initiatives that accelerate student achievement. Student achievement information is used strategically by the board and school leaders to align teacher professional learning and teacher aide support to school goals and targets.

A very good example of the school's well considered and strategic approach to using data is the school's focus in 2014 on promoting the mathematics skills of specific groups of students. Teachers and leaders have identified significantly positive outcomes of this approach. They continue to monitor and discuss the mathematics achievement of target students to ensure their continual progress and achievement.

Teachers and leaders work together and with teachers from other schools to ensure that the judgements they make about student achievement are increasingly valid, accurate and reliable. They are keen to further improve student ownership of learning and to strengthen the learning partnerships they have with parents about children's learning. Currently teachers share their well moderated data regularly with parents, and students use their own achievement information to set and evaluate learning goals. Students also discuss their learning and achievement with their parents at student-led conferences.



### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's rural location near Kamo provides useful learning experiences for students and contributes to the localised curriculum design. Students' interests and needs are at the centre of the school's curriculum design and delivery. This promotes and supports student learning very effectively. The curriculum is based strongly on reading, writing and mathematics, with other areas of the curriculum such as science, the Arts and technology integrated into learning programmes during the year.

Skilled teachers design authentic learning programmes around current and local issues, and build on students' own experiences, interests and backgrounds. Teachers connect learning meaningfully to the key competencies of The New Zealand Curriculum. They promote opportunities for students to transfer their learning into action within the local and wider community. Trips outside of the school are well linked to learning programmes and support students to be of service to community organisations.

Students have good choices about what and how they learn, including cooperative and collaborative experiences. Teachers know and understand their learners as individuals and plan responsively for them. School leaders and teachers are continuing to find ways to strengthen opportunities for students to learn about Māori language, culture and the world from a Māori perspective. Students appreciate the many varied co-curricular experiences on offer at the school, and ably fulfil leadership roles.

Students experience calm and focused learning environments. Classrooms are attractive, celebrate children's work and provide good prompts for student learning. Rooms in the middle area of the school have new variable furniture that caters well for student preferences, improving student engagement in, and enjoyment of, learning.

Teachers are hard working and reflective professionals. They are committed to promoting student achievement and enhancing students' learning experiences, including the use of digital technologies. Teachers embrace professional learning opportunities and reflect on and improve their own practice.

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

The school is highly committed to, and strongly supports, educational success for Māori, as Māori. Most Māori students at the school and their whānau affiliate to Nga Puhi.

Since 2012 the school has made significant improvements to promote educational success for

Māori, as Māori that include:

- establishing a whānau focus group that promotes partnerships and consultation with whānau Māori and the wider Māori community
- making connections with the local Ngararatunua Marae
- sharing with students and parents the local history and significance of Māori hapū and iwi in the local area
- increasing the respect shown to te reo Māori me nga tikanga throughout the school
- including Māori cultural practices such as powhiri, waiata and haka in school events and productions.

These developments have resulted in Māori students having increased pride in their language, culture and identity. The confidence of Māori students to stand as leaders in the school has also increased as a result.

The board, principal and school leaders are now keen to explore the development of more strategic connections between their Māori community and the board. This useful next step would support the board to enact the goals and aspirations that whānau Māori have for their tamariki.

## 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.

The school continues to be led by an experienced and skilled principal, who provides strong professional and educational leadership for his staff, the board and community. He is partnered by a capable senior team and together they identify teachers' strengths and build their leadership capability in different ways throughout the school. This productive approach helps to sustain and strengthen school-based programmes and initiatives.

Senior leaders have high expectations of staff and of each other. They work collaboratively to promote ongoing improvements to teaching practices, and to evaluate the impact of learning programmes on positive outcomes for students. Senior leaders ensure that changes to teaching and learning are very well considered and informed by educational research.

Leaders and teachers have a strong strategic focus and a very good understanding of self review as a mechanism for change and improvement. Appraisals encourage teachers to inquire into and improve their practice, and are clearly aligned to the school's strategic goals and achievement targets. The school has very good systems and processes in place to promote children's health and safety and wellbeing.

The board of trustees has a good mix of newer and experienced members. Trustees are dedicated to school improvement. They are very well informed by the principal and other school leaders who keep them updated about the impact of initiatives and resourcing. Reliable information enables trustees to make sound, responsive decisions that support student learning. They are planning very well to provide for the growing diversity in the school roll.

### Provision for international students

The school is signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (the Code) 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 this review there were four international students attending the school.

Students are well integrated into school life and go through a good induction process. Students receive strong emotional support. There is a strong culture of inclusion in the school. Friendships are encouraged and in and out of school time. A buddy system is in place to help them settle. International students benefit from a wide range of opportunities, including sport, outdoor pursuits, cultural experiences and sound academic programmes.

Regular in-depth review of provision for international students is evident. Staff share responsibility for monitoring the wellbeing and learning of these students.

### 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.

### Conclusion

Matarau School provides good quality education for students. Positive relationships between staff, students and families are a strong feature of the school that supports student wellbeing and learning. School improvements are enhanced by experienced, capable leaders and skilled teachers. Most students achieve at or above the National Standards.

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

Dale Bailey

Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

29 June 2015

## School Statistics

Location	Kamo, Whangarei	
Ministry of Education profile number	1043	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	265	
Number of international students	4	
Gender composition	Boys 53%	
	Girls 47%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	28%
	NZ European/Pākehā	69%
	Korean	1%
	other European	2%
Special Features	2 Māori bilingual classes - 30% Māori	
Review team on site	May 2015	
Date of this report	29 June 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	August 2012
	Education Review	February 2009
	Education Review	January 2006