

## ERO External Evaluation

### Norsewood and Districts School, Norsewood

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

Norsewood and Districts School, located in Norsewood, caters for students in Years 1 to 8. The roll of 79, includes 16 children who identify as Māori.

The stated vision for students is 'On a GREAT Learning Adventure'. The school's 'PROUD' values are 'positive, respect, ownership, united and diversity'.

Strategic goals are focused on high achievement, effective and purposeful teaching and strong community engagement. In 2018, the school's achievement targets are to raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics for all students.

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to the levels of *The New Zealand Curriculum*
- reading recovery interventions.

Professional learning and development opportunities includes a focus on culturally responsive practices, mathematics and leadership development.

Since the beginning of 2017, a new principal and teaching team has been appointed.

The school is part of the Dannevirke Kāhui Ako.

## 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?

At the end of 2017, the school's achievement data showed that the majority of students achieved at or above curriculum expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Māori students are achieving as well as their peers in reading and writing and less so in mathematics.

The need to raise achievement for boys in literacy and Māori in mathematics is well known by the school and is being addressed.

Midyear 2018 progress data indicates achievement continues to be strengthened with most students achieving at or above in reading, and a large majority in writing and mathematics. Significant progress is evident for Māori students in all areas, especially mathematics. This information indicates that in 2018, disparity for Māori in mathematics has been effectively addressed.

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

Teachers know the students and their needs well. Specific targeted teaching and interventions are responsive to the needs of individual students. There is clear evidence of students making accelerated progress as a result of this.

The midyear 2018 progress data indicates that many students are making significant progress.

### 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?

The new principal is participating in professional learning and development and actively seeks external advice and guidance to support the development of her leadership role. There is a strategic and well planned approach to change and improvement, informed by inquiry. Organisational structures and processes have been strengthened. Clear alignment to improving assessment practice is evident. Engagement in a wide range of professional learning and development, aligned to strategic priorities, is supporting curriculum review and the implementation of new initiatives.

Improved assessment practices are resulting in more robust judgements being made by teachers about students' progress and achievement. Teachers are using this information more effectively to guide teaching and learning and support students to develop the skills they need as 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

The review of the school's charter in 2017, sought the perspectives and aspiration of parents, whānau, students and staff. These have been incorporated into the school's new vision that is now clearly articulated and understood. Aligning the school's values to this vision is a next step. The strategic plan clearly sets out long term goals that are prioritised in the annual plan. Success indicators are identified and the board is well informed about actions taken to progress these. Trustees are regularly informed about student progress and achievement.

The board expresses confidence in the new principal to pursue the school's vision. They are working with external expertise to build knowledge and understanding of their stewardship role, and to support and guide them in governance decision making.

Students have a learning environment where interactions between them and with adults are positive and respectful. Students are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning and confident to share this with others. They work well together and support each other. Well considered strategies including increased access to digital technologies is promoting students to be self-managing learners. As new initiatives are implemented students opinions are sought, and changes made as a result.

The curriculum promotes literacy, mathematics and inquiry learning. It is currently under review to ensure it is relevant to the needs of the students, guides teaching and learning, assessment practices and reflects community aspirations and valued outcomes for students. The recently implemented 'electives' are providing further opportunities for students to learn in authentic contexts. This is being well supported by community members who volunteer their knowledge and skills.

The new teaching team is collaborative and focused on improving outcomes for students. The recently implemented appraisal process and the use of an on-line system are strengthening teachers' inquiry into how specific teaching strategies impact on the learning of priority students. The use of *Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* is supporting teachers' understanding of te ao Māori concepts to promote culturally responsive practices.

Responsive systems and processes, and collaboration with external agencies, enables students with additional learning needs to learn alongside their peers. Those with high needs are well supported to participate and engage in the programme through individual planning and appropriate use of resourcing.

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

Refining the student achievement targets, to clearly focus on those students most at risk of underachievement, should contribute to better alignment of more deliberate actions to accelerate the learning of these students.

Reflection and inquiry are used to inform decisions for improvement. Strengthening internal evaluation should enable trustees, the principal and teachers to better know the impact of newly implemented programmes, initiatives and teaching practices on supporting successful outcomes for students.

A new policy framework has been developed. Ensuring that procedures reflect current practice and are well aligned should support implementation.

### 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:

- leadership's strategic and well planned approach to pursuing the school's vision and change management that supports the focus on schoolwide improvement and raising levels of achievement
- the environment that is positive and fosters students' engagement and enthusiasm in learning
- the use of achievement information to guide teaching, learning and assessment, that effectively supports students to develop the skills they need as 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

#### Next steps

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

- refining student achievement targets to more clearly focus on those students most at risk of underachievement
- shared understanding of internal evaluation to know the impact of programmes, practices and initiatives on outcomes for students.  
[ERO will provide an internal evaluation workshop for trustees and senior leaders]

**ERO's next external evaluation process and timing**

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Wynyard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alan Wynyard  
Director Review & Improvement Services  
Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

11 October 2018

## About the school

|                                                |                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Location                                       | Norsewood                                                                                      |
| Ministry of Education profile number           | 2622                                                                                           |
| School type                                    | Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)                                                                    |
| School roll                                    | 83                                                                                             |
| Gender composition                             | Female 47, Male 36                                                                             |
| Ethnic composition                             | Māori 20<br>Pākehā 61<br>Other ethnic groups 2                                                 |
| Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS) | Yes                                                                                            |
| Provision of Māori medium education            | No                                                                                             |
| Review team on site                            | August 2018                                                                                    |
| Date of this report                            | 11 October 2018                                                                                |
| Most recent ERO report(s)                      | Education Review September 2015<br>Education Review May 2013<br>Education Review February 2010 |