

ERO External Evaluation

Opunake High School, South Taranaki

Summary

Opunake High School is a co-educational state secondary school in coastal south Taranaki. The roll of 331 students includes 41% who identify as Māori.

Since the September 2014 ERO report, significant changes of leadership and responsibilities have occurred in senior and middle management. The DREAM values of diligence, respect, exceeding expectations, aroha and mana are highly evident in the school's thinking, planning, actions and relationships.

Several new developments and ongoing improvements have occurred across the school including in the areas for development identified in the 2014 ERO report. Improved achievement and reduced disparities are evident, especially in the senior school.

School leaders and the board chair are actively involved in and value the expected benefits of collaboration and shared professional learning within the South Taranaki Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL).

How well is the school achieving equitable outcomes for all learners?

Learners are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

In the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs) in 2016, more than 80% of students overall achieved success at Level 1 and nearly 90% at Level 2. Students who left with NCEA Level 2 went on to further education, training or employment with many leaving for employment and trades. NCEA data for the past three years shows steadily improving achievement. Trustees, leaders and teachers have continued to increase their focus on strategies to further reduce in-school disparity and promote equity.

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

Equity and excellence

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

The school provides increasingly responsive programmes and support to improve learning and engagement for those Māori and other students whose achievement needs acceleration.

Cohesive and embedded vision and values underpin the inclusive learning culture that is promoted across the school. Trustees, leaders and teachers maintain a focus on strategies to reduce in-school

disparity and promote equity, particularly for identified groups of boys, girls and Māori at risk of poor educational outcomes.

Previous disparity for Māori has been reduced, especially at senior levels. Since the 2014 ERO report, achievement for Māori in the NCEAs has improved significantly to be similar to their peers in the school for Level 1 and 2 and above their peers for Level 3 and University Entrance in 2016. Retention at school up to age 17 and percentages leaving with NCEA Level 2 are equitable with their peers.

Improved collection and use of student achievement, engagement and wellbeing information supports programmes and initiatives to promote improved outcomes for learners. Information is gathered for year groups, target groups of boys and girls, and literacy and mathematics in Years 9 to 11. Next steps are for trustees and leaders to:

- use this information to better understand what works and what needs to improve, leading to more effective and deliberate targeting of acceleration for learners at risk of not achieving
- more explicitly align actions for identified groups of target students, at classroom, faculty and board level, to enable a more coherent approach to promoting equity and excellence.

The Whare Atawhai centre provides a supportive environment and specific programmes for a range of students to learn and access the curriculum. Students' additional needs are catered for in the learning support centre and in mainstream classes. Interventions focus on students' literacy and mathematics needs. The school reports on progress of individual students, and the support in place, including from external agencies. Transitions for students with high needs is individualised and well catered for.

Leaders and ERO agree that the next steps are to review:

- department improvement plans so that they includes goals that focus on students whose achievement needs acceleration
- students' individual education plans (IEPs) to meaningfully link to specific goals that can be used to evaluate and report on progress.

School conditions supporting equity and excellence

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

Responsive curriculum design, pathways and timetabling for diverse groups of learners to achieve valued outcomes, has continued to develop. Recent reviews of the curriculum led to increased course flexibility and the development of learning academies to further extend opportunities that cater for students' interests and strengths. The design and provision of these programmes are driven by student choice and use of consultation and feedback to review and refine-programmes.

Senior leaders drive, model and support ongoing innovation and improvement in teaching programmes. They build strong educational relationships across the school community to increase opportunities for student learning and success.

A collective focus on building positive relationships and a sense of belonging for Māori learners promotes success and supports meaningful participation and leadership. Teachers and leaders are strengthening the curriculum to reflect te ao Māori and local perspectives. Hapū Awhina student grouping supports individuals and models tikanga Māori and the school's values within a Māori context and culture. The school has committed to long term professional learning and development

(PLD) in collaboration with the CoL to continue to build teachers' cultural knowledge, capability and understanding and further strengthen iwi relationships.

The school has developed some effective processes to strengthen teaching and schoolwide capacity for improvement through:

- responsive and regular PLD
- ongoing development of teacher inquiry to improve outcomes for learners
- an emergent good teacher profile to define expectations for effective teaching practice.

An improved process for appraisal is being implemented in 2017 to provide closer support and building of teacher capability.

Experienced trustees drive innovation and are future focused in their strategic priorities and resourcing to promote equity. They actively promote the school vision and motto of "Growing good people for a rapidly changing world".

The school continues to build strong community relationships through:

- regular consultation and communication about priorities and initiatives
- using local expertise and contexts in learning programmes
- collection and use of student voice to inform ongoing improvement
- building more productive relationships and links with the wider education community and agencies to support learning and transitions.

Critical reflection on effectiveness of programmes informs change and improvement initiatives. Senior leaders increasingly make evidence-based decisions to promote ongoing improvement. They are developing their knowledge of internal evaluation processes, concepts and frameworks.

Sustainable development for equity and excellence

What further developments are needed in school processes to achieve equity and excellence?

Many school processes and systems work well to support improved achievement and quality of education programmes to meet diverse groups of students' needs and interests.

Key next steps for trustees, leaders and teachers are to:

- further refine and robustly implement appraisal to support greater consistency in meeting the school's expectations for highly effective practice. This includes strengthening evidence collection, evaluative feedback and links between goals and outcomes
- continue to build understanding and use of internal evaluation to inform ongoing school improvement, with emphasis on increasing use by heads of faculty to develop their focus on improved outcomes for priority learners
- improve monitoring and responses to those students whose achievement needs acceleration through greater alignment of systems and processes across the school.

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.

Going forward

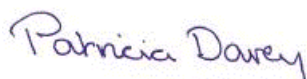
How well placed is the school to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it?

Learners are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

Agreed next steps are for leaders to:

- closely align processes and monitoring practices across the school to coherently focus on identified groups of priority learners whose achievement needs acceleration
- further develop internal evaluation capability schoolwide.

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



Patricia Davey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central (Acting)

14 November 2017

About the school

Location	South Taranaki
Ministry of Education profile number	181
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)
School roll	331
Gender composition	Male 57%, Female 43%
Ethnic composition	Māori 41% Pākehā 53% Other ethnic groups 6%
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	September 2017
Date of this report	14 November 2017
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review September 2014 Education Review September 2011 Education Review September 2008