

**Opunake High School
Opunake, South Taranaki**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Opunake High School

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. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

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

Opunake High School serves a rural region in coastal Taranaki. It caters for students from Years 9 to 13. The roll of 315 includes 42% who are Māori.

Significant changes of staff and responsibilities at senior and middle management levels have had an impact on setting school direction. The school motto is "Growing good people for a rapidly changing world". This is underpinned by the values, encapsulated in the acronym DREAM. These are diligence, respect, exceeding expectations, aroha and mana.

Trustees and school leaders emphasise building strong relationships with students and parents as key to student wellbeing and effective learning.

The school has a good reporting history with ERO.

2 Learning

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

Achievement information is used well by leaders, teachers and deans to effectively track and monitor individual student progress.

An appropriate range of nationally referenced and local tools provide a wealth of student achievement information about students in Years 9 to 13. Data is collated and analysed to inform class placement, identify students in need of extension or support, and to help set broad annual achievement targets.

The school's 2013 NCEA data shows achievement is similar to all students nationally. Māori student achievement has improved over the past three years and is slightly lower than schoolwide results overall. Teachers are working to increase the number of merit and excellence endorsements.

Year 9 and 10 achievement information contributes to students being awarded the Junior School Certificate, developed to promote participation and success.

The use of different sets of literacy data, for different purposes, in Year 9 has led to an inconsistent picture of the achievement of these students. Although staff have a clear literacy teaching focus, they are not able to show accelerated student progress. Providing clarity about the use and analysis of literacy data should lead to teachers having better data on which to monitor and report student achievement.

All students have individual development plans (IDPs) which support improved rates of achievement. These are generated from student, whānau and staff discussions. Students identified with special learning needs and abilities receive support with well coordinated initiatives organised by the student support centre and the inclusive school philosophy.

Students show engagement in their learning and make good use of the choices available to them. Students demonstrate understanding of the DREAM values. The curriculum provides many opportunities for students to develop leadership. Tuakana teina relationships are strong.

Communication with parents and whānau is a strength. Upgraded technology has meant that students and families can more readily share, and quickly respond to, assessment and other information. Teachers are increasingly using feedback to promote engagement and completion of work, especially in the senior school.

Next step

Data collected can be used more effectively. Deeper analysis of the collated data should enable the setting of more specific targets. This should assist with more effective evaluation of the impact of initiatives and teaching programmes on student outcomes.

3 Curriculum

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

The school provides a range of responsive programmes and learning pathways that cater well for the needs and interests of the diverse student population.

The curriculum is driven by student needs and interests. The philosophy behind timetabling is innovative and responsive. Students participate and succeed in an extensive range of academic, sporting, cultural, artistic, service and leadership opportunities. The school operates whole-day courses every fortnight from which students choose an appropriate range of programmes, often held off-site. Extensive use is made of the local community and environment to extend learning opportunities. This interest-based learning provides students with opportunities for success in non-traditional areas.

High priority is placed on building strong, respectful relationships. A schoolwide focus on restorative practices and the DREAM values, promotes an environment conducive to productive learning. This has a positive effect on school tone and climate.

Next step

It is timely to undertake a review of the school curriculum to consolidate its design, documentation and delivery. This is necessary to evaluate the impact of programmes, schemes, and initiatives on student outcomes. Development of a shared schoolwide approach and understanding of this school's curriculum should strengthen what is offered.

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

There is visible, schoolwide commitment to supporting Māori learners. The number of Māori students has increased over the past five years and retention to Year 13 is in line with that of other students in the school. Improving Māori achievement is a strategic goal and is part of the Māori Achievement Plan. Two kuia and two co-opted trustees guide and advise the school on appropriate kawa. Work is in progress for establishing a dedicated wharehau at the school.

Teacher commitment is seen in the whole-staff kapa haka group, Te Kahui Whetu, competing for the past three years in a local festival. Here, students are the experts and staff the learners. Staff have developed a poutama to individually track their next development steps in te reo Māori. Tikanga Māori is established practice.

Ongoing professional development for teachers has suitably focused on teaching practices to better engage Māori students. Students participate in programmes tailored to their needs, interests and aspirations. Students are able to gain credits in Māori performing arts. Some of the whole-day courses every fortnight, and other initiatives, are deliberately targeted to Māori students. Trustees and leaders actively promote these initiatives.

For the past two years, all Year 9 and 10 students have completed full year courses in te reo Māori as part of their curriculum. The impact of this is currently being reviewed.

Engagement with whānau has noticeably increased over the last few years with more attending whānau hui.

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.

Governance is sound. There are well-developed guidelines to inform trustees' roles and responsibilities. They receive regular reports and data which support board decisions about funding initiatives, for example, increased counsellor hours and resourcing of whole-day courses. Trustees maintain a high level of involvement in school activities.

The principal and senior leaders effectively share and promote a common vision for school development. The school's professional learning groups use internal and external expertise to develop teaching and learning across the school. Continuing to strengthen the appraisal system should support ongoing development of high quality teaching practice.

Meaningful and productive relationships exist with families and businesses in the wider community. The school actively promotes increased involvement of parents and whānau in the school. Students benefit from this close partnership.

Self review, reflection and inquiry practices are developing across the school. It is timely to integrate these into a shared understanding of high quality evaluative inquiry. To make such a process systematic, there needs to be:

- specific, measurable outcomes with clear indicators
- close monitoring of progress against these indicators
- evaluation of the impact of interventions on student outcomes.

This approach should assist ongoing improvements and raising student achievement.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989.

No international students were enrolled at the time of the ERO review.

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.

ERO's review identified an area of non-compliance.

Police vetting of non-teaching staff has not been kept current.

The board must, through the principal, ensure that:

- procedures for maintaining up-to-date police vetting of non-registered staff are coordinated and reviewed regularly so that all staff are vetted at least every three years.
[Education Act 1989 sections 78C and 78CC]

Conclusion

Student learning and wellbeing are the focus of school values. NCEA results match national data. The curriculum, driven by student needs and interests, uses the local community and environment. Schoolwide commitment to te ao Māori is visible. Strong relationships are emphasised. The next step is to strengthen evaluative inquiry.

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



Joyce Gebbie
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Central Region

11 September 2014

About the School

Location	Opunake, South Taranaki	
Ministry of Education profile number	181	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	315	
Gender composition	Female 53%, Male 47%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	42%
	NZ Pākehā	55%
	Other ethnic groups	3%
Special Features	AE provider on site Technology provision for local primary schools	
Review team on site	July 2014	
Date of this report	11 September 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	September 2011
	Education Review	September 2008
	Education Review	November 2005