



ERO External Evaluation

Tauranga Special, Tauranga

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

Tauranga Special School caters for students with very high and complex needs living in the wider western Bay of Plenty Tauranga region. Students at the school range in age from 5 to 21 years. The base school in Tauranga consists of four classrooms. The school includes eight satellite classrooms that operate on other school sites in the Tauranga, Pāpāmoa, and Te Puke areas. A specialist outreach service provides support for students living in areas of the wider Bay of Plenty more distant from satellite classes.

Since the previous ERO review three new satellite classes have been established and the roll has grown. The principal continues in his role and there have been some changes to the leadership team. There have been some recent changes to the board of trustees including a new chairperson. Several new appointments have been made to the teaching team to accommodate roll growth.

Learning programmes are supported by a large team of teacher aides and specialist therapists. The school's vision is to provide opportunities for each child to access learning at their level and develop to their full potential as learners and members of their community.

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

- listening, reading and viewing
- speaking, writing and presenting
- numeracy
- managing self/communication.

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?

The school is highly responsive to Māori and other students' needs for wellbeing and learning and is achieving equitable outcomes for all learners.

Collated school-wide data shows that in 2018 all students, including Māori, made progress in relation to goals in individual plans. This data also shows that patterns of student achievement have been consistent over time.

Data collated and analysed school-wide shows levels of progress in relation to standardised learning frameworks that align with early Level 1 of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). The expanded English Framework developed by specialist schools and informed by the Ministry of Education handbook includes the numeracy framework and literacy learning progressions.

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

The school's individualised approach to planning and monitoring student achievement shows that all Māori and other students have the opportunity to make progress and accelerate their learning in relation to expected levels.

The time taken for students to experience accelerated progress and the degree of acceleration varies considerably across the school. This variation is a reflection of the wide variety of high and complex learning needs that are being addressed by the school.

Rates of progress for individuals and groups of students are closely monitored, collated and reported to trustees.

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?

Teaching and learning programmes are highly responsive to students' individual learning and wellbeing. Teachers, school specialist personnel, and teacher aides know students well. They demonstrate adaptable and flexible expertise and address a very wide range of student learning and developmental needs. Programmes are planned in response to each student's interests, strengths, wellbeing and holistic needs.

Relationships and partnerships at all levels of the school are strongly supportive of student learning and wellbeing. Parents and whānau share information about their children's successes and challenges. They are involved and able to contribute to school decisions and practices. Parents are kept well informed and involved in decisions about their child's education and key transition points. Parents appreciate the open communication and the support the school provides for their children and whānau. Partnerships with parents and community support student wellbeing and learning.

Progress is closely monitored and shared with parents through assessment narratives and use of a web-based system. The curriculum includes many opportunities for students to work in the community and develop life skills that promote independence and communication skills.

Teacher aides and specialist therapists provide targeted and ongoing support to enhance students' holistic, physical and communication capabilities. The school actively draws on community resources and partnerships to ensure students are able to engage with the wider community events and people.

Achievement information is effectively managed and used at all levels the school. Teachers use achievement information to plan programmes that cater for all students high and complex needs. The development of school-wide learning progressions supports teachers to assess, plan and monitor individual student progress.

Leaders collate and use school-wide data to report to the board. This enables trustees to evaluate programme effectiveness for individual and groups of students including Māori and boys and make well considered governance decisions.

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

ERO and the school have agreed that leaders and teachers continue the current focus on reviewing and refining the local curriculum. This is consistent with school strategic goals and direction and will support recent developments in culturally responsive practice.

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 Children's Act 2014.

4 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Tauranga Special School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Strong

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

5 Going forward

Next steps

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

- continued whole school professional development to further strengthen the school's local curriculum and culturally responsive practices.

This is consistent with school strategic goals and direction. It is also likely to enable ongoing improvement to local curriculum responsiveness and design.

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- leadership for learning focused equity and ongoing improvement that is highly responsive to the holistic wellbeing and achievement of all students
- relationships for learning that are underpinned by relational trust, genuine care and respect.
- shared values and collaboration among the school community that prioritises positive outcomes for all students
- a curriculum, teaching and learning practices that is highly responsive to students' individual needs.



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Director Review and Improvement Services Central
Central Region
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About the school

Location	Tauranga
Ministry of Education profile number	1762
School type	Special School
School roll	91
Gender composition	Male 71 Female 20
Ethnic composition	Māori 44 Pākehā 36 Pacific 5 Othe 6
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Number of Māori medium classes	
Total number of students in Māori medium (MME)	
Total number of students in Māori language in English medium (MLE)	0
Number of students in Level 1 MME	
Number of students in Level 2 MME	
Review team on site	June 2019
Date of this report	12 September 2019
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review November 2015 Education Review September 2019