



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Houghton Valley School
Houghton Bay, Wellington

Education Review Office

External Evaluation

ERO External Evaluation

Houghton Valley School

1 Context

Houghton Valley School caters for students in Years 1 to 6. Twenty nine students identify as Māori. The school's extensive grounds are surrounded by native bush. There is continued focus on developing learning opportunities for students to benefit from this environment. The school is a focal point for the local community.

There is continuity of school leadership. A new board of trustees has been elected this year, with one trustee continuing.

Leaders and teachers have participated in a variety of professional learning and development (PLD) opportunities led by external facilitators. A school focus on inclusion, led by senior managers, has involved all teachers and teacher aides.

2 Equity and excellence

The vision and valued outcomes defined by the school for all children are to be confident, collaborative, inspired children and learning for life. This vision is supported by five strategic school objectives that include a focus on children knowing how to learn and embracing and celebrating diversity.

The school's achievement information shows that most students were at or above in relation to the National Standards in reading, mathematics and writing at the end of 2015. Māori students were achieving at similar levels to their non-Māori peers in reading and writing, but lower in mathematics.

Mid-year 2016 student achievement data shows that approximately half of the students who needed to make accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics have done so. A few of the Māori students achieving below the National Standards have made accelerated progress.

While there has been moderation of teachers' overall writing judgements in relation to the National Standards, systems for moderating judgements in reading and mathematics have yet to be determined. Developing these moderating processes across the school is a next step.

Since the last ERO evaluation the school has:

- successfully implemented learning support systems, including the introduction of new programmes
- provided training for staff to deliver these programmes
- developed the curriculum with a focus on student inquiry
- increased engagement with whānau
- undertaken PLD focusing on te reo Māori to enhance teaching and learning programmes for all students.

3 Accelerating achievement

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

The school is implementing some practices that respond to Māori students whose learning and achievement need acceleration. Continued development is needed to support further progress for these learners.

Leaders and teachers know about the achievement of Māori students and value strong relationships with students and their whānau. Formal and informal communication with whānau has begun to focus on partnerships for student learning. Teachers have high expectations that Māori students will succeed.

Māori students meet regularly with a senior leader. The introduction of this Roopu Māori has increased students' sense of identity and enabled more focus on their knowledge and use of te reo Māori.

A board member and deputy principal are leading trustees to develop their understanding of *Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017* and *Hautū - Māori cultural responsiveness self review tool for Boards of Trustees*. A plan has been developed to guide the board in its response to te ao Māori and promoting success for Māori students.

The next steps to improve achievement for Māori students who need to accelerate their progress, and to promote equity, are to:

- develop a shared understanding of both biculturalism for all and promoting success for Māori
- ensure that school targets focus on those Māori students who require targeted support
- report the progress of target students to the board throughout the year
- ensure that guiding documents for the school prioritise authentic, culturally responsive learning contexts for Māori students.

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

While teachers reflect on the progress of target students, the work of teachers, leaders and trustees will be strengthened by the development of a shared understanding of accelerating achievement. This will enable a more effective response to underachieving learners.

Students participate and learn in a caring, collaborative learning community. Those who are achieving at levels below the National Standards are identified and programmes are provided to support their learning.

Measuring each student's progress in relation to the National Standards to determine if they are making accelerated progress is a next step. Evaluating the impact of learning support programmes on outcomes for students should be a priority.

Senior leaders have good systems for monitoring and tracking learning support. The SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator) leads a collaborative approach to working with students with additional learning needs. There are clear guidelines for teachers and teacher aides, who have developed a shared understanding of the learning support process.

4 School conditions

How effectively do the school's curriculum and other organisational processes and practices develop and enact the school's vision, values, goals and targets for equity and excellence?

Some of the school's organisational processes and practices effectively provide conditions that support an ongoing focus on equity and excellence.

Since the 2014 ERO report the board has revised the school charter following extensive consultation, developed a governance manual and established a Board of Trustees work plan.

New trustees add a good range of skills and experience to the board. Trustees understand their roles and responsibilities and have a strong focus on positive outcomes for all students. Digital technologies support collaboration and communication between trustees, leaders and staff. The board has developed a plan to strengthen community engagement and this is ready for implementation.

The principal regularly provides student achievement reports to the board. These include analysis of data and next steps. Reports include a statement about Māori student achievement. Ensuring that there is a process for regularly reporting overall school achievement in relation to the National Standards and the progress of target students should support the board to make responsive, evidence-based resourcing decisions.

Reports to parents give a clear picture of each child's achievement in relation to the National Standards. Three-way conferences provide opportunities for students, parents and whānau and teachers to discuss students' ongoing progress.

A collaborative leadership approach is promoted. The deputy principals hold specific roles that support school initiatives and leadership by teachers is encouraged.

An area of major focus has been the development of an inquiry approach for students' learning. Teachers provide a wide range of experiences with purposeful learning opportunities. These include input from visiting resource people.

Some work has been carried out to develop an overarching curriculum since the 2014 ERO review. This includes documenting links to *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Increasing the use of culturally responsive contexts for learning should strengthen the curriculum.

Teachers are following a sound process to inquire into their practice. Ensuring that all steps of the process are followed is likely to strengthen this process and increase the impact on improving outcomes for students.

The appraisal process is appropriate. Clear job descriptions have been developed and teachers receive specific, useful feedback. To improve this process, the school's appraisal guidelines should be followed consistently.

Internal evaluation for improvement remains an area for attention. Leaders have participated in professional development focused on internal evaluation and are beginning to use appropriate tools to grow their expertise. Developing a shared understanding of evidence-based internal evaluation with a focus on outcomes for students is an important next step.

5 Going forward

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

Leaders and teachers:

- know the children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated
- need approaches that effectively meet the needs of each child
- need to ensure the school is well placed to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it.

While most students are achieving well, school systems should be further developed to support those students who are underachieving to make sufficient, accelerated progress. The school should increase the consistency of specific teaching and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to better meet these students' learning needs.

Action: The board, principal and teachers should participate in an internal evaluation workshop. They should use this workshop, the *Internal Evaluation: Good Practice* exemplars and the *School Evaluation Indicators* to address the findings of this evaluation and develop more targeted planning that includes a significant focus on building teacher capability to accelerate learning and achievement.

As part of this review ERO will continue to monitor the school's planning and the progress the school makes. ERO is likely to carry out the next full review in three years.

6 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 the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- 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
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance
- compliance with the provisions of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

7 Recommendation

ERO recommends that leaders and teachers strengthen their understanding of acceleration for learners who need this support and of evaluation for improvement. This should help the school to promote equity and excellence for all students.



Joyce Gebbie
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

30 November 2016

About the school

Location	Houghton Bay, Wellington	
Ministry of Education profile number	2861	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	228	
Gender composition	Male 51%, Female 49%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	13%
	Pākehā	77%
	Other ethnic groups	10%
Review team on site	October 2016	
Date of this report	30 November 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	January 2014
	Education Review	September 2009
	Education Review	September 2006