

ERO External Evaluation

Tapanui School, West Otago

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

Tapanui School is a rural school in West Otago. It provides education for children in Years 1 - 6. The school has a roll of 111 students, 17% of whom identify as Māori.

The school's vision is for students to be confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners. In supporting this vision the school's valued outcomes are for students to:

- achieve across all learning areas in the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)
- exhibit the school's values of perseverance, excellence, equity and respect
- acquire the skills to be active participants in their learning.

In line with this focus the school's current targets and strategic goals include: improving student achievement and engagement in reading, writing and science; teachers developing the school's play-based and future-focused curriculum; and lifting the profile of te ao Māori.

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

- achievement in reading, writing, mathematics, oral language and science in relation to NZC levels
- achievement and progress in relation to the school's targets of reading, writing and oral language
- achievement and progress against the key competencies in the NZC.

Since the school's last ERO review (2015) there have been several staffing changes, including the appointment of a new deputy principal. Staff have participated in sustained professional development in the areas of oral language, play-based curriculum, te reo and tikanga Māori, writing and the digital technology curriculum.

The school is a member of the Pomahaka Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning (CoL).

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 moving positively towards equity and excellence for all its students.

In 2018 the school moved to assessing student achievement against the curriculum levels of the New Zealand Curriculum.

In 2016 and 2017 most students achieved at or above national expectations for reading, writing and mathematics. In 2018:

- almost all students achieved within or beyond their expected curriculum level in reading, writing, mathematics, oral language and science
- all Māori learners achieved within or beyond their expected curriculum levels
- most students were demonstrating the key competencies consistently while at school.

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

The school has had variable success in accelerating the achievement of students whose learning needs to progress at a faster rate.

Between 2016 and 2018 the disparity of achievement between boys and girls in reading and writing was significantly reduced.

In response to identified needs the school has recently placed a greater focus on oral language. The 2018-related target resulted in 30% of targeted students making accelerated progress in this area.

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?

Student wellbeing for learning is a priority of teachers, school leaders and trustees. Students have positive relationships with the adults at the school. Teachers and leaders have a strong focus on the development of the whole child. They are proactive in supporting positive behaviours for learning and regularly reflect on the effectiveness of their approaches. Students are well placed to learn in the positive and caring learning environment provided for them.

The school's curriculum is very responsive to students' needs and interests, and to the aspirations of the community. Students have increasing degrees of agency in their learning to choose their next areas of study and learning steps. Teachers use learning information well to inform their specific teaching and choice of teaching strategies to best meet the learning needs of students. Identified students have their learning supported and/or extended through a range of interventions within and beyond the classroom.

The school's high level of engagement with whānau Māori and the local runaka is leading to increased inclusion of te ao Māori in school practices and learning programmes. The responsiveness of the curriculum is providing students with equitable opportunities to learn.

Effective senior leadership ensures a culture of ongoing improvement. The leaders are actively involved in the planning, co-ordination and evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching. There is a clear line of sight from the school's vision through to class programmes. Senior leaders have established robust practices and processes to guide school-wide teaching and learning programmes.

Effective professional development has resulted in teachers establishing shared understandings of teaching practices and approaches across the school and within collaborative teaching teams. Teachers work together closely and have a shared responsibility for the students who need extra support. Appraisal and the inquiries teachers undertake to investigate the effectiveness of their teaching are consistently based on improving practice for better student outcomes. Teachers have regular and useful formal and informal professional conversations about what is working well and what could be better. The consistent and cohesive practices of teachers and support from senior leaders are key contributors to effective teaching and learning.

Trustees are highly engaged and effective in ensuring improvements to outcomes for students. They carefully scrutinise the data reported to them and information they gather themselves from teachers and school families. From this scrutiny relevant goals and targets are set. Trustees effectively resource professional development and additional staffing to help achieve their charter goals and targets. The board has an ongoing focus on supporting the wellbeing of students and staff. The board works with school leaders and teachers meaningfully to realise the school's vision and valued outcomes.

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

Leaders and teachers need to use the learner information available to monitor and report on the rates of progress of all students to better identify if sufficient progress has been made.

In their charter targets, trustees and leaders need to clarify what curriculum levels they are wanting to achieve and for how many students.

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 ERO's Overall Judgement

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

Well placed

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

5 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- the strong leadership and stewardship capability to work with data to know about student achievement
- teachers' ability to gather and analyse meaningful learning information about the development of the whole child
- the school's ability to evaluate its practices with the intention of improving outcomes for students.

Next steps

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

- using the data already within the school to know about the sufficiency of progress of all students
- establishing targets that give clarity about what the school wants to achieve and for how many students.



Alan Wynyard
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Southern Region
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About the school

Location	West Otago
Ministry of Education profile number	3842
School type	Years 1 to 6
School roll	111
Gender composition	Boys 51%, Girls 49%
Ethnic composition	Māori 17% Pākehā 77% Asian 4% Other 2%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	No
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	March 2019
Date of this report	14 May 2019
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review August 2015 Education Review May 2012 Education Review October 2008