

ERO External Evaluation

Highlands Intermediate, New Plymouth

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

Highlands Intermediate, New Plymouth, provides education for students in Years 7 and 8. At the time of this ERO review there were 703 students attending, 19% of whom identify as Māori. The school is organised into four teaching teams. In addition, a team of teachers provide specialist teaching in technology, visual and performing arts and science.

The school's recently reviewed values of Respect - Manaakitanga, Responsibility - Kaitiakitanga, and Leadership - Rangatiratanga underpin the school curriculum.

The school describes its valued outcomes for students as – a broad and balanced set of outcomes that are relevant to each individual student, and to the society they are part of.

Current goals and targets for improvement in student outcomes are to provide a responsive curriculum through effective teaching and quality opportunities to learn (ako), accelerate the progress of targeted students in reading and mathematics and raise achievement in writing, especially that of Māori boys.

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

- reading, writing and mathematics, with a specific focus on the progress of Māori and Pacific students in writing
- attendance, engagement and wellbeing.

There have been several changes in staffing, including appointment of three team leaders, since the July 2015 ERO review. A new board of trustees was recently elected.

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 consistently achieves excellent outcomes for the large majority of students in reading, writing and mathematics.

Girls consistently achieve better than boys in writing. There is an ongoing disparity for Māori that is most significant in writing.

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

Recently introduced teaching strategies and programmes are beginning to impact positively on the learning of Māori and other students whose learning requires acceleration. Accelerated progress in writing and mathematics during 2018 is evident in for many students, including Māori.

Trustees identify specific groups and the raising of Māori achievement in the school's 2019 targets. However leaders are not currently specifically tracking and reporting the progress of those students whose achievement requires acceleration.

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?

The leadership team is improvement focused and work collaboratively to promote consistency and to progress school targets. There is a schoolwide focus on equity, excellence and improved outcomes across the curriculum. Specific actions have been taken to reduce disparity and to raise overall achievement.

Leaders set high expectations for participation and achievement. Students are encouraged to actively participate in academic programmes. They have opportunities to join in a wide range of additional enrichment experiences that include the arts, culture, sports, service and leadership. A focus on students' language, culture and identity is evident. Te reo Māori is now explicitly taught to all classes. An award system, introduced in 2017, provides opportunities for all students to have their achievements and efforts recognised.

There is an appropriate focus on student wellbeing. This includes weekly meetings and identification of specific actions to assist individual students. The introduction of consistent student management strategies in 2017 further support a focus on learning and wellbeing throughout the school.

Leaders and teachers have strengthened their use of assessment tools to inform teaching and to show achievement and progress in literacy and mathematics. Improved moderation practices have resulted in more reliable and accurate assessment information. Students who are at the risk of underachievement are identified and provided with additional support, intended to improve outcomes. Overall achievement is well tracked and monitored. Teachers are increasingly using data to respond to students' individual learning needs.

Leaders are collaborative and operate with clear and complementary roles and responsibilities. They are systematic in their overview of school operations and performance. They have a deliberate and planned approach to change. They trial and evaluate identified changes and then systematically implement these once value is proven.

There is an ongoing focus on supporting teachers to build capability and improve their practice. The current focus is on changing the approach to the teaching of writing and mathematics and growing teacher understanding about student wellbeing. All staff have access to a range of whole school professional development which is linked to priorities for school improvement. A useful appraisal process is in place that has the potential to support improved teacher practice. Teachers are strengthening their understanding and inquiring into the effectiveness of their practice.

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

Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance and process of internal evaluation. A framework for policy review is in place and followed. Useful evaluations inform and guide changes to schoolwide practices. Through its internal evaluation processes school leaders have identified a need to:

- continue implementation of curriculum initiatives to further improve student achievement in writing and mathematics
- better track and report the progress of students at risk of lower achievement
- continuing to seek ways to further involve parents, whānau and the community in their children's learning and school activities.

ERO affirms these as appropriate areas for continued development.

3 Other Matters

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

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

4 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.

5 ERO's Overall Judgement

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

Well placed

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

6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- leadership that is collaborative and improvement focused
- curriculum that offers students a wide range of opportunities to learn and succeed
- teacher development that improves teachers' abilities to support student achievement and wellbeing.

Next steps

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

- implementing curriculum initiatives to further improve student achievement
- better track and report the progress of students at risk of lower achievement
- continuing to seek ways to further involve parents, whanau and the community in the school.



Phil Cowie
Director Review and Improvement Services Central
Central Region
26 August 2019

About the school

Location	New Plymouth
Ministry of Education profile number	2172
School type	Intermediate (Years 7 and 8)
School roll	703
Gender composition	Male 51%, Female 49%
Ethnic composition	Māori 19% NZ European/Pākehā 80% Pacific 1%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	June 2019
Date of this report	26 August 2019
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review July 2015 Education Review June 2012