

## ERO External Evaluation

### Whangarei Heads School, Whangarei Heads, Northland

#### Summary

Whangarei Heads School has a roll of 108 children, including eight percent who identify as Māori. Low numbers of British and Irish children and other ethnic groups also attend the school.

A new principal appointed in 2015 leads an experienced senior leadership team. The team continues to focus on developing high quality teaching practices that support children who are at risk of not achieving the National Standards. Since ERO's 2014 evaluation, new trustees have joined the board, which is led by a long-serving board chair.

The school has sustained good levels of children's achievement in relation to the National Standards over the last three years. Valued outcomes for children are targeted in the school's strategic planning, professional development for teachers, and the involvement of parents in their children's learning.

Whangarei Heads School is a member of the recently formed Ngā Kura mo te ako o Whangarei Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako – (Group 2).

#### How well is the school achieving equitable outcomes for all children?

Whangarei Heads School responds well to children whose learning and achievement needs acceleration.

Collaborative leadership and teaching approaches to support child-centred learning continue to be developed. This collaboration is building leaders' and teachers' professional capability and collective capacity to accelerate children's progress.

The learning environment is characterised by the school's values: 'belonging, responsibility, creativity and achievement'. Children enact these values by participating in group-based learning activities where they draw on individual strengths to complete group tasks.

Senior leaders are focused on promoting child-led inquiry learning with an emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving. This has resulted in further opportunities for children to take greater ownership of their learning.

Children are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

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

## **Equity and excellence**

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

The school responds well to children whose learning and achievement needs acceleration. Teachers and leaders are addressing a slight disparity for boys in writing achievement, through a targeted acceleration focus.

Senior leaders and teachers know the priority learners and their learning strengths and needs. Targeted support is provided for these children. Teachers use a variety of assessment information to plan programmes that meet the needs of children, and to identify those who would benefit from additional support. Teachers, the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO), external experts and parents are all involved in developing and evaluating the effectiveness of strategies to accelerate priority learners' progress.

Children's progress and achievement is well analysed, monitored, and regularly reported to the board. Effective school-wide moderation helps teachers to make dependable judgements about children's achievement in relation to the National Standards.

Leaders and teachers have been working together to build expertise in the teaching of writing through the Accelerated Literacy Learning (ALL) programme. They set timeframes with key benchmark points to closely monitor children's progress. Rigorous, flexible, responsive planning and targeted teaching is resulting in accelerated learning progress.

## **School conditions supporting equity and excellence**

### **What school processes are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?**

The school processes are effective in supporting equity and excellence for children. Leaders and teachers share pride in the school's vision 'Our Place to Grow and Learn' through mahi ngātahi, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga.

Teachers are reflective practitioners and they follow an inquiry cycle of teaching. They use assessment data to review the impact of their teaching on children's progress, and then change teaching practice to better support children's learning.

Teachers encourage children to be self-managing, reflective learners. Children identify their own learning needs, and use self-assessment skills and criteria to evaluate their own and others' work. Children can apply these skills when working independently or in groups. They have opportunities to talk about and critique what they are learning and how they are learning.

Teachers scaffold and set strategies for children's skills and learning. They gain information about children's progress through observations, engagement and assessment moderation. Teachers give children regular feedback about what they have mastered and what they should focus on next. Children with additional learning needs are included in classroom teaching during literacy time. This practice is beneficial for these learners and for the rest of the class.

Children learn in stimulating, inclusive environments. Curriculum contexts are meaningful and linked to real life inside and outside of the classroom. Children are enabled to follow their own interests in the context of their learning. This has had a positive impact on their ability to see themselves as successful writers. Children are able to recognise and articulate what a good writer does and what their next steps should be. This is promoting children's agency to lead their own learning.

Teachers develop partnerships with parents and some whānau to support their children's learning. Parents collaborate with their child and teacher in planning the child's next learning steps. Teachers support and guide them by providing them with strategies to continue their child's learning at home through daily notebooks or parent evenings and three way conferencing where aspects of the school's learning programmes or assessment processes are shared.

## **Sustainable development for equity and excellence**

### **What further developments are needed in school processes to achieve equity and excellence?**

The school has made progress towards promoting bicultural school practices through pōwhiri, kapa haka and a te reo Māori programme. However, further development is required to enable the achievement of equity and excellence for Māori children and others. This development could include the board and senior leaders:

- reviewing the school's charter using the *Hautū* evaluation tool
- ensuring the school's vision, mission, and values are relevant to Māori learners, reflecting their language and culture
- strengthening partnerships with whānau Māori and the local Māori community.

Senior leaders should continue developing a culturally responsive curriculum that acknowledges the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This would enable all children to learn about te reo Māori me ōna tikanga and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **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
- 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.

## Appraisal audit

The principal has set out a clear process for teachers to gather evidence relating to the Education Council requirements. The principal acknowledges that appraisals should be more individualised, and monitored on an ongoing basis. Professional development could help teachers' shared understanding of the appraisal process and expectations for effective teaching.

## Going forward

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

Children are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

Agreed next steps are to continue developing:

- children's 'agency' by ensuring that children understand their achievement and next learning steps
- partnerships with whānau Māori and the Māori community
- curriculum and programmes that recognise and respond to children's languages and cultures
- collaborative teaching and learning practices.

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



Violet Tu'uga Stevenson  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern (Acting)

7 September 2017

## About the school

Location	Whangarei
Ministry of Education profile number	1128
School type	Full Primary
School roll	108
Gender composition	Boys 57% Girls 43%
Ethnic composition	Māori 8% Pākehā 76% British/Irish 10% Other 6%
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	June 2017
Date of this report	7 September 2017
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review May 2014 Education Review February 2010 Education Review June 2007