



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Ruawai College
Ruawai, Kaipara

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Ruawai College

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Ruawai College is a well established secondary school in the Kaipara region with strong intergenerational links to the local community, including Naumai Marae. The roll has fluctuated over the past three years and is currently 152. The college is a bicultural school with 46 percent of students identifying as Maori, a significant increase over the past three years. Most Māori students whakapapa to Ngāti Whātua or Ngāpuhi.

Through its vision to be an outstanding rural school of choice for Years 7 to 13 students in the community, the school aspires to offer young people an educational experience where they are challenged and supported to become lifelong learners. Values of respect, resilience and responsibility, developed with the school community, define the expectations of staff and students at every level of the school.

There have been significant changes in school leadership since the previous principal's resignation at the end of 2015. The new principal took up the position at the beginning of Term 4, 2016 and has initiated a process of reflection and consultation to confirm the school's strategic direction. A positive, inclusive school culture has been sustained and continues to underpin school initiatives.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

The school makes effective use of achievement information to make positive changes for learners. Students are actively engaged in their learning and are motivated to achieve personal success across a wide variety of school activities. Initiatives to improve outcomes for students are well considered, evidence based, and focused on strengthening learner centred relationships.

Ruawai College students' results in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 1, 2 and 3 compare favourably with national and similar schools' results. Over the past three years more than 70 percent of students leaving school have achieved NCEA Level 2 or better. Māori student achievement is similar to that of non-Māori at all levels. In 2016 performance in Level 1

NCEA was significantly lower than expected. This has provided a positive catalyst for change in the school, including a sharpened focus on learning strategies that promote engagement and accelerate progress.

Students in Years 7 and 8 achieve well against the National Standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. The school has identified that student achievement in writing needs improvement, particularly for boys. Appropriate targets have been set and there is a school-wide focus on improving student outcomes in writing. Students use writing skills across the curriculum and this helps them to increase their knowledge about what they do well and where they need to improve.

The school systematically collates achievement information about students in Years 9 and 10. Teachers are increasingly confident in monitoring student progress and achievement across the curriculum. Analysing achievement information across Years 7 to 10, including information about accelerated learning progress, would further support decision making and resourcing. Working collaboratively with teachers from contributing schools to establish consistent moderation practices would help to make transition seamless for students entering at Years 7 or 9.

School leaders continue to make positive changes to improve learning outcomes for students who are not achieving to expectations, especially in the senior school. Teachers provide mentoring to help students set goals and plan pathways to achieve success. Students in Years 11 to 13 receive regular updates on their progress and achievement and are increasingly monitoring their own learning. Students in Year 10 have the opportunity to achieve a diploma, based on their progress and achievement across learning areas, which gives them confidence in their readiness for NCEA study.

Leaders agree that it is timely to place a more strategic emphasis on accelerating progress and achievement at Years 9 and 10. This shift in focus could better prepare students for NCEA success, and make use of many of the strategies that have proved effective at senior school level.

Achievement information is well used to identify students who require additional support. Learning assistance is well coordinated, with personalised programmes helping students to make progress towards their learning goals. Regular monitoring and review provides students and their families with ongoing information about their learning.

3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

The school's broad curriculum is well aligned with *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) and is very effective in engaging students in learning. It is designed to be inclusive and culturally responsive, and provides a range of high interest, topical contexts for learning for students in Years 7 to 10. There are relevant academic and vocational pathways at senior level. Learning environments promote and support learning and school values.

Relationships between students and teachers are mutually respectful and learning focused. Teachers are committed to improving outcomes for students and respond to individual student strengths and learning needs. The personalised curriculum for senior students is being expanded through access to the FarNet online learning community.

Adults are committed to guiding young people in their chosen pathways. School systems and processes support students to make considered choices and prepare for their future education, training and employment. The school proactively identifies and draws on community resources to enhance learning opportunities, achievement and wellbeing.

Leaders and teachers are building a culture of professional inquiry to help them develop and share effective teaching practices. The findings from these inquiries have the potential to improve teacher practice and influence further development of the curriculum.

School leaders agree that a key next step for further improving the school curriculum is developing and implementing a localised, connected, future-focused Ruawai College curriculum.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

Trustees, leaders and teachers strongly support and accept shared responsibility for educational success for Māori students, as Māori. The school has a well established kawa and an understanding of tikanga and whakawhānau that is reflected in the school values. Teachers, the curriculum and the school culture affirm Māori students' identity as Māori.

Māori students achieve well at all levels and leaders place a high priority on ensuring positive outcomes for Māori students. Their achievement and success is evident.

There is a range of opportunities for Māori students to explore their language and culture. Priority is given to senior Māori students learning te reo Māori for NCEA by accessing FarNet. Teachers and leaders are committed to continuing to develop and lift their bicultural awareness and classroom practice.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is well placed to sustain its current good practices and continue to improve its performance. The school's vision and values are promoted and shared by all members of the school community.

The board and senior leaders share a commitment to school improvement through the school's strategic goals and targets set to raise student achievement. Trustees understand their governance role well. Senior leaders provide the board with comprehensive reports on progress towards strategic goals, enabling trustees to make well informed decisions. Trustees are aware that they could now take a stronger role in strategically supporting and examining the effectiveness of initiatives for school improvement.

Shared respect and understanding are evident in the way the principal and board work together to establish a purposeful and successful learning environment for their students. Leaders at all levels of the school take responsibility for maintaining and sustaining improvement and innovative practices. To support this improvement leaders recognise that a next step is to strengthen teachers' evaluation capability.

The performance management system for teacher appraisal is clearly aligned with the school's charter goals and school-wide professional learning priorities. School leaders acknowledge the importance of continuing to strengthen teachers' use of evidence to inquire into the effectiveness of their practice.

Relationships with parents, whānau and the wider school community are constructive and positive. The school continues to foster these relationships and build learning-focused partnerships with whānau and community, for the benefit of students in their learning and future pathways.

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:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

Conclusion

Students at Ruawai College benefit from a broad, relevant curriculum that supports their learning and achievement and fosters their wellbeing. The school engages positively with its community to promote and celebrate student success. School leaders continue to seek new approaches and opportunities to improve outcomes for students.

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



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

21 April 2017

About the School

Location	Ruawai, Kaipara	
Ministry of Education profile number	22	
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 13)	
School roll	152	
Gender composition	Girls 54% Boys 46%	
Ethnic composition	Māori Pākehā Pacific other	46% 49% 4% 1%
Review team on site	March 2017	
Date of this report	21 April 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	September 2013 June 2010 May 2017