

ERO External Evaluation

Aoraki Mount Cook School, Aoraki Mount Cook

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

Aoraki Mt Cook School is situated in the Aoraki Mt Cook National Park village and is an integral part of the small community. The school has a roll of 13 children from Years 1 to 8, representing 6 ethnicities. A significant number of these children have English as a second language (ESOL).

A new principal and a new part-time teacher both began at the beginning of 2018. Several of the board trustees are also new.

'Success for All' is the school's vision and the values are Respect, Responsibility and Relationships. The expected valued outcomes for all children are to achieve personal excellence in a learning culture which values all and reflects the unique mountain environment.

The school's current key aims, goals and targets for improving outcomes for children are to provide :

- a meaningful curriculum
- quality teaching and learning, relating especially to sustainability and EOTC
- opportunities for Pacific children to be engaged in learning and achieve success.

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- outcomes for ESOL children.

The school is a member of the McKenzie District Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning.

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 very effective in achieving equitable outcomes for most of its students. In 2017 almost all children met or exceeded national expectations and those that didn't made good progress. Achievement has been consistently high over time.

The small number of children enables a strong focus on individual needs, progress, achievement and wellbeing.

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

The school successfully accelerates the learning for those students who need it. The high number of ESOL children receive targeted support and the majority make good rates of progress and reach expected levels.

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 school's localised curriculum is a major strength in enabling children to engage in learning and achieve success. Activities and programmes are based around children's interests and are adapted to respond to individual learning needs. Teachers use a variety of targeted teaching strategies to engage children and to ensure positive learning opportunities for all.

Teachers draw effectively on the rich, local environment to provide meaningful and comprehensive learning experiences. They are mindful of the specific needs of the children living in a remote community and focus strongly on broadening their skills, knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

The school's values are well known and are actively promoted and embedded within the daily programme and school culture. Children and teachers have respectful and productive relationships. Cooperation, empathy and teamwork are highly visible within the learning environment. Māori values are clearly reflected in school practices. Teachers naturally use Te Reo in the daily programme.

A strong, active partnership is evident between the school and both the parent and the wider community. Difference and diversity are accepted and valued, and children's language, culture and identity are well understood and integrated. Teachers recognise and affirm what families and whānau bring to the school and community. They actively communicate with families and encourage participation. The school is an integral part of the local community and receives very good support. Teachers proactively identify and draw on community expertise and resources to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.

The principal has a strong child-centred vision and clear sense of direction for teaching and learning. The learning environment is well managed. The principal is developing useful and appropriate ways to support children to have a greater understanding and ownership of their learning.

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

The board and principal agree that they need to develop a deeper understanding of, and planned approach to, internal evaluation. This will enable them to base decision-making on a knowledge of what is working effectively and what needs to change to ensure ongoing positive outcomes for children.

In order to ensure the sustainability and robustness of school systems and practices, school documentation should be reviewed and updated to reflect current practice and requirements.

The principal recognises that there is a need to provide concise, useful reports to the board to ensure trustees are regularly and fully informed about children's learning and achievement across all curriculum areas.

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 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- a rich, localised curriculum that enables children to engage in meaningful learning opportunities
- powerful partnerships with families and the local community that enhance a sense of belonging and support positive outcomes for children
- strong leadership that provides cohesion and a clear sense of direction.

Next steps

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

- building a deeper understanding of internal evaluation in order to guide how the school plans for and takes action to enact its vision, values, goals, targets and practices.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Dr Lesley Patterson
Deputy Chief Review Officer
Te Waipounamu - Southern Region

11 May 2018

About the school

Location	Aoraki Mount Cook
Ministry of Education profile number	3442
School type	Full Primary
School roll	13
Gender composition	Female 8 Male 5
Ethnic composition	Pākehā 2 Fijian 4 Asian 7
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	February 2018
Date of this report	11 May 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review November 2014 Education Review October 2011 Education Review June 2008