

ERO External Evaluation

Flaxmere College, Flaxmere

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

Flaxmere College, Te Kareti o Paharakeke, has a roll of 327 students in Years 7 to 13. At the time of this ERO review, 86% of students identify as Māori and 11% have a Pacific nation's heritage.

Whakawhanaungatanga remains a strong core value for the school and its community. The school's guiding proverb 'Tuhingia te ururua, kia tupu, whakaritorito te tupu harakeke' and the motto, 'success is the only option' are shared expectations.

The school's achievement goals are: to have all students at or above national expectations; and for those below to have accelerated progress.

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

- health and wellbeing
- achievement of national qualifications
- achievement and progress across learning areas in Years 7 to 10
- progress toward the school's achievement goals
- attendance.

The board of trustees is representative of its community and includes long serving members.

The principal is the lead principal in the Te Waka o Māramatanga Kāhui Ako.

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 has made good progress to achieve higher levels of equity and increased excellence in outcomes for most learners, particularly at senior levels. Attainment in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs) have steadily improved since the June 2015 ERO report. Nearly all students gained NCEA Level 2 in 2017 and most students achieved at Level 1 and Level 3.

Nearly all Māori students gained Level 1 NCEA and most achieved Level 2 and Level 3. Overall, students of a Pacific nation's heritage achieved well in 2017. Nearly all Pacific students achieved Level 2 and 3 and most achieved Level 1.

Data indicates that many students on entry are well below expectations in literacy and many continue to require additional support through their junior years. Data for Years 7 to 10 shows more students are meeting expectations in mathematics. Most Years 8 and 9 students and the majority in Year 10 achieved to curriculum expectations in mathematics in 2017.

Learners with additional needs are well identified and programmes of support are put in place. External resourcing and expertise supports this provision appropriately.

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

School leaders report that they successfully accelerate many students, including Māori, in numeracy and literacy. Good progress for groups of learners whose learning needs acceleration is evident. A significant number of students require more than a one year cycle to achieve this.

There has been a considerable increase in rates of achievement of Māori and other learners, especially at NCEA Levels 1 and 2 since 2015 and Level 3 since 2016.

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?

School leaders systematically identify and work to address disparity to improve equity of outcomes for all students. The school leaders are purposeful and proactive in their approach to engaging with whānau. Established links with a range of cross-sector external agencies assists students and their families to access and increase learning opportunities. This partnership supports students to engage in learning.

The board of trustees is clearly focused on progressing the school's vision and priorities. There is a well-considered approach to manage change and grow leadership for learning. Strong collaboration and strategic alignment of resources leads to improved outcomes for students and strengthens wellbeing.

Effective school leadership creates an environment where high relational trust is evident. Relationships across the school are positive. Strong partnerships with parents and the wider school community continue to extend strategic links that supports students' engagement in learning. Marae-based wananga value local hapū input and these contribute to place-based curriculum design.

Whakawhanaungatanga provides a strong foundation for student inclusion. A focus on ako values students' strengths. Student-led learning conferences involve every whānau. Student and whānau voice provide important feedback on many aspects of their education and school life.

Students have a broad curriculum that gives them opportunities to access and experience success in a wide range of academic, sporting, cultural and leadership activities. Pathways, including Gateway, STAR, industry training and tertiary programmes enable them to have equitable opportunities to learn. Students are encouraged to explore these through a well-resourced programme. Tracking of school leavers' destinations by the school indicates most students make successful transitions into tertiary, training programmes and work opportunities.

Student engagement in learning through increased attendance at all year levels has resulted in some improvement. Aspects of the curriculum are regularly reviewed for relevance and outcomes for students. A focus on strengthening numeracy as part of the mathematics programme has improved engagement and achievement. The school mentoring programme encourages all students to be actively involved in their learning.

Leaders have a clear focus on embedding internal evaluation into practice. The school has developed its use of internal evaluation and inquiry and improved outcomes for students through:

- focused professional learning
- use a cycle of inquiry to improve practice
- use of internal expertise to build capacity and support leadership
- a collaborative approach to working with and using data
- development of a shared expectations for effective teaching practice, 'The Flaxmere Way'.

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

The school has made significant in progress in its use of internal evaluation and inquiry to improve equitable and excellent outcomes for students and sustain trajectories of improvement. Leaders and staff should continue to examine the effectiveness and impact of strategies and programmes designed to improve engagement and achievement to assist in further decision making and resourcing.

These include:

- continued development of ways of measuring and monitoring acceleration of achievement at junior levels over time, with a focus on literacy
- the school identified priority to increase certificates of endorsement and University Entrance, for increased opportunity, students' choices and transitions to further learning
- the range of systems and resources to improve school attendance.

Comprehensive guidelines and expectations for appraisal processes and practices align with Education Council expectations. Further development of some components of this process should contribute positively to the school's strategic priorities to raise achievement through improved teaching practice.

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

- stewardship and leadership that sets and communicates clear strategic direction and goals for improvement in student outcomes
- a collaborative culture promoted by leadership that deepens teachers' knowledge and is responsive to learners
- systems and processes that support student wellbeing and promote inclusiveness
- learning partnerships for a culturally responsive curriculum.

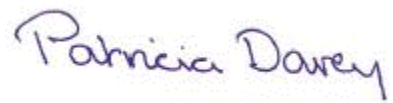
Next steps

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

- continued teaching practices to accelerate the literacy learning of students in the junior school
- continued, in-depth use of internal evaluation and inquiry to explore achievement patterns at all year levels.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Patricia Davey
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Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

29 June 2018

About the school

Location	Flaxmere
Ministry of Education profile number	134
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 13)
School roll	327
Gender composition	Male 42%, Female 58%
Ethnic composition	Māori 86% Pākehā 3% Pacific 11%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	May 2018
Date of this report	29 June 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review, June 2015 Education Review, May 2012 Education Review, November 2010