

## ERO External Evaluation

### Cust School, North Canterbury

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 those students who need it. 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

Cust School is a full primary (Years 1 to 8) state school. It is located in the Waimakariri District of North Canterbury. It has a stable roll, currently comprising 160 students.

The school's overarching vision is 'Be Your Best'. The vision promotes equity of opportunity and achievement excellence.

The school's learning goals' expectations are to provide the best quality education, a culture of collaborative relationships, and opportunities for children to be self-motivated, positive and responsive citizens. Valued outcomes, expressed through the school's mascot, are for children to be thinking, independent, participating problem solvers.

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- progress and achievement in relation to school targets.

The school is a member of the Puketeraki Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako. School leaders are actively engaged with partner schools. The Kāhui Ako vision statement and achievement challenges have been incorporated into the school's strategic plan.

Since the 2013 ERO review, the school has participated in Ministry of Education professional learning to strengthen teaching and learning in mathematics and literacy.

The school has successfully addressed the recommendations in the previous Education Review report in 2013.

## Evaluation Findings

### 1 Equity and excellence – valued outcomes for students

#### 1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

The school is effective in achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for almost all children.

Positive outcomes in literacy and numeracy have been consistent over time. High levels of whole school achievement, at or above expected levels, have been sustained across the core curriculum since 2014.

Although boys' achievement in writing in 2016 was at expected levels, this was significantly lower than for girls. The school has identified this as a concern and set a target to increase the number of boys at or above expected writing levels.

A wide range of learner achievements is consistently acknowledged by the school. These are celebrated by classroom, whole school and with the local community.

#### 1.2 How effectively does this school respond to those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

Although Māori children are a statistically small cohort, a range of specific strategies is being developed to affirm and strengthen their sense of identity. These target Māori learner needs and support existing strategies to improve their achievement outcomes. Māori learner achievements are consistent with those for the whole school. Strategies to support Māori children are part of a wider school biculturalism focus.

Some targeted learners have progressed from below expected to expected levels of achievement in writing in 2017. There have been positive achievement shifts for numbers of targeted students in mathematics and reading since 2016.

Children whose learning needs acceleration benefit from strong learning support programmes which are responsive to their needs. The majority of learners have made sufficient progress over the past two years. A collective school responsibility for learning support programmes is overseen by a lead group of teachers. Students with additional needs are closely supported to achieve success.

### 2 School conditions for equity and excellence

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

Effective leadership by the board of trustees and the principal has established a clear, student-centred strategic vision that is embedded in all aspects of the school's operations. Thorough and detailed planning and communication ensure that the positive school culture, programmes and practice, strongly reflect the school's vision and values. These are understood and shared by children, staff and families. Community voice about the vision and valued outcomes is sought and highly valued.

Explicit improvement-focused expectations for teaching and learning, aligned with the vision and values, provide a cohesive framework for learning. Children have a range of opportunities in which to achieve through the broad, responsive curriculum which draws successfully on local contexts to enhance learning. Programmes and planning reflect the interests, needs and abilities of individual

students, including those with additional needs. Children are well supported to set and monitor learning goals and to understand and manage their own learning. Teachers effectively reflect on their practice and engage in collective targeted professional learning to improve outcomes for learners.

Consistent, sustainable school-wide systems, planning and documentation ensure staff and leaders gather and respond to meaningful information. Regular reporting provides well understood lines of accountability. The board seeks and receives relevant information on which to base its decisions. Children's progress, learning and wellbeing are closely tracked and monitored.

## **2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence?**

School leaders and teachers need to build on existing practices and understandings to develop deeper shared understanding of tikanga Māori and te ao Māori to fully embed bicultural perspectives and practices across all school operations.

To fully understand the impact of practices, programmes and initiatives on outcomes for learners, school leaders need to ensure there is a consistent approach to internal evaluation.

## **2 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.

## **3 Going forward**

### **Key strengths of the school**

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

- strong professional leadership which ensures that the strategic vision and values form a foundation for all school operations and decisions, resulting in a cohesive, learner-focused approach to all aspects of the school
- clear expectations and systems for teaching and learning that support sustained positive outcomes for learners
- school-wide consistent and sustainable practices, documentation and reporting that ensure ongoing effective monitoring of school practices, understandings and outcomes for learners.

### **Next steps**

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

- continuing to develop and embed school-wide bicultural understandings and practices to reflect more strongly the bicultural nature of Aotearoa New Zealand and affirm Māori learners as Māori
- continuing to develop internal evaluation practices across the school to ensure a consistently evaluative approach.

### **ERO's next external evaluation process and timing**

ERO is likely to carry out the next external evaluation in four-to-five years.



Lesley Patterson  
Deputy Chief Review Officer  
Te Waipounamu - Southern Region

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## About the school

Location	Cust
Ministry of Education profile number	3325
School type	Full State Primary Years 1-8
School roll	160
Gender composition	Female 51% Male 49%
Ethnic composition	Māori 4% Pākehā 96%
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	November 2017
Date of this report	5 February 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review September 2013 Education Review May 2010 Education Review May 2007 Education Review March 2004