

ERO External Evaluation

Fordell School, Whanganui

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

Fordell School is a small, rural school just east of Whanganui that has students from Years 1 to 8. The roll of 90 students includes 22 Māori learners. Since the June 2016 ERO report, there have been a number of changes to staffing.

The vision and valued outcomes defined by the school for all children are 'community partnership creating confident, connected, life-long learners'. The vision is underpinned by the values of respect/whakaute, responsibility/kawenga, courage/toa, and compassion/aroha.

Strategic goals established by the board of trustees are to:

- implement child-centred learning, through a curriculum founded on aspirations for high quality numeracy, literacy, integrated learning, sporting and cultural experiences
- provide an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supports the wellbeing of the school community
- strategically govern, to support student achievement and the wellbeing of the community.

The 2019 achievement targets have been established in response to an identified disparity in the achievement of those Māori learners and boys in reading and writing at the end of 2018.

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

- achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics in relation to curriculum expectations
- progress and achievement of targeted learners
- wellbeing
- attendance.

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?

Well implemented systems, processes and practices successfully support equity and excellence for students. In 2018, most students achieved curriculum expectations in reading, writing and mathematics with over a third of learners achieving above expected levels. Māori students achieved at similar levels to non-Māori in reading and mathematics and lower in writing. Boys achieved very well in mathematics and slightly lower outcomes in writing when compared to girls.

Reported achievement from 2016 shows the school has generally maintained similar outcomes for students, with nearly all students achieving expected levels by the end of Year 8.

School reported information indicates a high number of students identified positive wellbeing.

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

The school responds well to those Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration. In 2018, nearly all students targeted in reading, writing and mathematics made progress with approximately a third of learners accelerating their achievement to meet curriculum expectations by the end of the year.

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?

A cohesive response to promoting equity and excellence for learners is evident. Well considered assessment processes, planning and inquiry frameworks systematically guide development toward the boards' established priorities. Strategic and annual goals are inclusive of parent and whānau aspirations and align with relevant actions matched to identified priorities. Comprehensive reporting by the principal ensures resourcing by trustees is based on achieving positive outcomes for students. Professional learning and development (PLD) is appropriate to their curriculum priorities. Teacher appraisal, inquiry, coaching and mentoring processes are well planned and foster development of practice.

Students have sufficient opportunities to learn in an inclusive learning environment. Planned curriculum experiences and activities result in the purposeful engagement of learners and the community. Teachers promote the conditions to successfully foster positive student learning in the classroom.

Students identified with additional or complex learning needs receive appropriate support. Their transition to, and through the school, is well planned and flexible to suit the individual needs of learners, parents and whānau.

Achievement targets show clear alignment from the board to classroom planning and teaching. Learner progress is regularly tracked and monitored. Teachers work collaboratively reflecting on student outcomes and developing a considered response in addressing the specific needs of individual learners. Parents and whānau are well informed in relation to the achievement of their child to support learning at home.

Students develop a strong sense of belonging at school. Shared values and expectations are actively promoted and demonstrated in practice. Positive interactions foster the development of purposeful relationships between individuals, peers, teachers and the school community. Senior student leadership is valued and actively encouraged. Useful connections are established with other schools to extend curriculum opportunities for students and to share teaching practice.

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

In collaboration with the community the school has reviewed and redeveloped their vision, values and overarching curriculum philosophy. Re-design and innovation of the documented curriculum is currently being undertaken to align these aspirations and document practice. Detailing curriculum learning statements should provide clear expectations for teaching and learning and provide the basis to inform evaluation.

Leaders and teachers recognise further development of culturally responsive practice is required to comprehensively promote Māori success as Māori. Teachers have participated in PLD and information is currently being gathered from Māori whānau and local iwi to inform expectations. ERO's evaluation findings confirm further development of improvement actions is necessary to bring about the school's desired outcomes.

The school has devised and implemented a range of targeting, inquiry and evaluation frameworks to guide development toward their priorities and achievement targets. To further strengthen the utility of these processes the school should ensure actions provide sufficient detail to guide implementation. Aligning evaluation to determine the quality of outcomes in relation to curriculum provision and in the achievement of targeted learners should enable the school to establish how well ongoing developments further promote equity and excellence for students.

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 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Fordell School performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Well placed

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

5 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- inclusive school and classroom environments that promote positive student and community engagement
- responses that are well planned for students identified with additional and complex learning needs
- a school culture that fosters a cohesive response in promoting equity and excellence for students.

Next steps

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

- further documenting of the school's curriculum to inform shared expectations and provide the basis to support evaluation
- increasing the inclusion of te ao Māori across the curriculum and further building teacher capability to promote Māori success as Māori
- continuing to develop the use of introduced frameworks designed to strengthen planning, inquiry and evaluation.



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Central Region

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About the school

Location	Whanganui
Ministry of Education profile number	2357
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)
School roll	90
Gender composition	Boys 47, Girls 43
Ethnic composition	Māori 22 Pākehā 66 Other ethnic groups 2
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	March 2019
Date of this report	26 April 2019
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review June 2016 Education Review June 2013 Education Review March 2010