

ERO External Evaluation

South Westland Area School, Harihari

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

South Westland Area School is a rural school with a roll of 94 students in Years 1 to 13. Of these, 17% identify as Māori. The school is situated in the remote West Coast township of Harihari, and students travel significant distances to attend.

The school's mission is to prepare students to meet the demands of life confidently, and to ensure the effective, efficient use of its available resources. Its agreed values are respect, honesty, excellence and tolerance.

The school values academic and creative excellence, and providing a quality and inclusive environment to enhance learning. To achieve this trustees and leaders have identified strategic aims and goals in the areas of mathematics achievement, improvement of NCEA outcomes, collaboration as part of its Community of Learning (CoL), transitions into and from school, connecting with support services and the wider community, and the use of current resources.

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

- achievement in Years 2 to 8 and in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs), and for students identified as having special learning needs
- engagement, especially attendance.

Since ERO's January 2015 review, there have been ongoing building developments and classroom replacements. There has been a recent change of principal.

The school is a member of the Top of the South Kāhui Ako I CoL, and participates in a range of CoL initiatives, including sports tournaments and teacher professional development.

The school is a community hub, hosting the local library, support services, and activities for pre-school children and their parents.

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 progressing well towards reaching its achievement targets for equitable and excellent outcomes for all students.

Learning information from 2016 to 2018 shows that the majority of students in Years 1 to 8 achieved at or above the expected curriculum level in mathematics, reading and writing. There is some disparity in Years 1 to 8 for girls, and for Māori students in mathematics achievement in relation to school expectations.

In Years 9 and 10, a large majority of students targeted for improvement achieved the expected curriculum level in mathematics and reading. Less than half of targeted students achieved the expected curriculum level in writing.

In the NCEAs, small student cohorts have experienced variable achievement over time. Achievement information for 2017 and 2018 shows that students who remain at school until Year 13 attain positive outcomes in NCEA Level 3. In 2018, the majority of students gained NCEA Levels 1 and 2, and most gained Level 3.

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

The school can show that in 2017 and 2018 some progress was made by students identified as needing accelerated learning.

All students identified as requiring support in mathematics made accelerated progress, following completion of a 10 week support programme in 2017.

Less than half of the students in Years 3 to 10 identified as requiring support made accelerated progress in mathematics, reading or writing in 2018.

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 is addressing its students' wellbeing and achievement challenges effectively within its unique geographical context. Leaders are developing and pursuing the school's vision, goals and targets for equity and excellence, with appropriate support. Students participate in a caring, collaborative, inclusive learning community.

Relationships within the school and with the wider school community are respectful, responsive and productive. The learning environment is increasingly managed in ways that support student participation, engagement and agency in learning. Much of the school's play equipment was designed and built over time by senior students. Students are actively supported to be confident, connected citizens and are progressively encouraged to pursue personal excellence.

Leaders and teachers know most students very well as learners and individuals. They have systems for identifying individual learning needs. Students benefit from the school's proactive engagement of a wide range of pastoral support partners from across the region.

Māori perspectives and culture are increasingly evident in school practices, and are valued and being strengthened. As a result, student identities, and whānau and community knowledge and culture, are now represented in the wider curriculum.

Leaders and teachers proactively manage transitions for students into the school, between learning contexts, and beyond school for further education and employment. Development of teachers' digital skills is building technological fluency for students and staff.

Leaders have identified and are beginning to develop internal teacher expertise, with appropriate external support, to further strengthen a responsive local curriculum. The challenges and opportunities presented by the school's geographical isolation are being systematically addressed by forward thinking governance and leadership.

The school is capable of developing and sustaining its progress for ongoing improvement.

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

Trustees and leaders need to continue developing and strengthening the processes and practices they have identified for sustained improvement over time. They are in the early stages of building collaborative practices that include whānau and student voice for implementing strategies that respond to individual needs and promote engagement.

Leaders and teachers need to strengthen internal evaluation processes and practices. They need to use the achievement and wellbeing information they gather to evaluate the impact of teaching programmes and the sufficiency of student progress in their reporting to the board.

The school is committed to developing more culturally responsive learning programmes to enable all learners to be confident in their identity, language and culture. Leaders and teachers need to continue to develop schoolwide practices that include increasing understanding and knowledge of te ao Māori, and understanding and use of tikanga and te reo Māori in classroom programmes.

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 South Westland Area School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Developing

[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:

- the provision of learning pathways that respond well to most students' interests and needs within a positive family atmosphere
- its cohesive and committed board and leadership team who are future focused in their aspirations for all learners
- its position as an educational leader within a geographically expansive area that benefits the entire community.

Next steps

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

- embedding recently developed school processes and practices so that they support trustees, leaders and teachers to deliver consistent achievement and progress for all learners
- building culturally responsive content and practices into the local curriculum to improve schoolwide understanding and appreciation of te ao Māori
- deepening internal evaluation to better know the impact of programmes, interventions and practices on students' learning and wellbeing.



Alan Wynyard
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Southern Region
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About the school

Location	Harihari
Ministry of Education profile number	306
School type	Composite (Years 1 to 13)
School roll	94
Gender composition	Male 49, Female 45
Ethnic composition	Māori 16 NZ European/Pākehā 72 Other ethnic groups 6
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	No
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	April 2019
Date of this report	29 May 2019
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review January 2015 Education Review January 2012