

ERO External Evaluation

Devon Intermediate, New Plymouth

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

Devon Intermediate is located in New Plymouth. The school caters for 374 students in Years 7 and 8, including 36% Māori students and 2% of learners of Pacific heritage. Since the July 2016 ERO report, the school has experienced significant roll growth.

The vision is to inspire students with opportunities that empower them to discover and develop their strengths and passions.

Strategic goals to 2020, identify an ongoing focus on progress and achievement, development of teaching, learning, access to curriculum, providing strong leadership and monitoring through review and evaluation.

Achievement targets for 2019 are for a quarter of students to accelerate their progress in writing.

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

- student progress and achievement.

Several changes have occurred to staffing and trustees, including the appointment of a new principal in 2016.

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?

Strengthening and accelerating progress of more Māori students and boys are ongoing priorities for equitable achievement outcomes for these students. Leaders are purposefully building the professional capability of teachers to raise achievement overall.

School reported assessment information, gathered for Year 7 students on entry in reading, writing and mathematics, shows the majority require their progress accelerated to achieve year level expectations.

From 2016, trends show many Pākehā/New Zealand European students achieved year level expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The school achieves lower outcomes for Māori students when compared to their non-Māori peers. From 2016, the achievement of Māori learners has increased in writing and decreased in reading and mathematics. Girls' achievement is higher than that of boys in literacy and mathematics. The school enrolls a small number of students of Pacific heritage. Their achievement is tracked and reported.

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

The school has made good gains in accelerating the learning of some students in 2018. Greater levels of accelerated progress were achieved for Year 7 students when compared to Year 8 students.

Leaders and teachers continue to strengthen assessment processes and practices to increase their effectiveness to accelerate the learning of Māori and other students.

Professional learning and development for teachers and support staff in reading and writing impacted positively in accelerating the progress of many Māori and other students in 2018. Students attitude to writing over the same period improved significantly.

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?

Senior leaders are purposefully strengthening processes and practices to achieve the school's strategic priorities. They work cohesively and collaboratively to guide ongoing improvement. Decision making reflects relevant priorities. A literacy leadership group, in conjunction with external specialist support, is impacting positively on building the consistency of teachers to meet student literacy learning needs. Regular collaboration between staff and the use of teacher inquiry are used well to share teaching strategies that support improved student learning.

A comprehensive range of strategies and initiatives are in place to respond to the diverse needs of students. Transition in, through and out of school is well planned and individualised for families and learners. Relevant additional personnel and external specialists are accessed to promote learner progress and improve student engagement at school. A community liaison person connects with Māori whānau and families to strengthen learning partnerships and mentor individual students. Appropriate communication strategies are used to engage parents, whānau and the community.

Curriculum provision promotes equitable opportunities for students. All learners access a broad range of experiences to meet their interests. Extension and enrichment activities are inclusive of the community and make purposeful use of the local environment. Curriculum contexts reflect Māori and Pacific student culture and language and includes participation in kapa haka and Pacific performance.

Classroom conditions promote positive relationships between teachers, students and their peers. *MANA* values are a visible part of the learning environment, reflecting the desired characteristics for students and encouraging the demonstration of 'Diligence, Respect, Integrity and Service'. *Attitude for Excellence* is an initiative to acknowledge student success in a range of areas. Student leadership is valued and contributes in promoting a positive school culture.

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

Senior leaders are implementing relevant strategic priorities to guide further development of teaching practice. Staff are currently involved in a range of professional learning and development (PLD) initiatives to build their collective capability. Embedding effective practice should improve the consistency of teaching and learning and raise student achievement.

The school has introduced integrated unit planning to improve guidance for teaching and learning in the classroom. Further documenting of shared curriculum expectations is planned to reflect learning gained from staff involvement in PLD initiatives. Documenting expectations should provide a basis for evaluation into how well changes are enacted by teachers and impact on student learning, progress and engagement.

The school is purposefully building assessment practice. To further improve practice, leaders agree to review achievement targets to support better monitoring, reporting and evaluation of outcomes in relation to groups requiring accelerated progress. Further development of teachers' and team leaders' capacity to use data for teaching, learning and to evaluate outcomes should also support the school to achieve their identified priorities.

3 Other Matters

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989.

No international students were enrolled at the time of this ERO review.

4 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 Children’s Act 2014.

Areas for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- review and revise policies to ensure they match current school practice, and
- ensure education outside the classroom procedures are robustly implemented.

5 ERO’s Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO’s overall evaluation judgement of Devon Intermediate’s performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Developing

6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- strategies and actions that respond to individual students identified with complex learning needs
- provision of broad curriculum experiences that support equitable learning opportunities for students
- relevant strategic goals that provide sufficient guidance for senior leaders for developing practices to achieve the school’s identified priorities.

Next steps

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

- improving the use of assessment to assist teachers and team leaders to plan for, address and evaluate student outcomes
- strengthening target setting, monitoring, and evaluation of progress and achievement
- documenting shared curriculum expectations to support a consistent understanding of effective practice between teachers to better meet the specific learning needs of all students.



Phillip Cowie
Director Review and Improvement Services Central
Central Region

21 October 2019

About the school

Location	New Plymouth								
Ministry of Education profile number	2161								
School type	Intermediate (Year 7 and 8)								
School roll	374								
Gender composition	Male 51%, Female 49%								
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>36%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NZ European/Pākehā</td> <td>54%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic groups</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> </table>	Māori	36%	NZ European/Pākehā	54%	Pacific	2%	Other ethnic groups	8%
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Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes								
Provision of Māori medium education	No								
Review team on site	September 2019								
Date of this report	21 October 2019								
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review, July 2016 Education Review, May 2013 Education Review, May 2010								