

Foxton School - 07/07/2017

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Findings

Students at Foxton School, Te Kura o Te Awahou, continue to learn in an environment where relationships are valued. A re-established team approach fosters student progress and wellbeing. Improvements guided by school leadership support students and staff. The formation of a board should continue to assist the school to sustain improvements and embed new initiatives.

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

1 Background and Context

What is the background and context for this school's review?

Foxton School, Te Kura o Te Awahou, is a four teacher school for students in Years 1 to 8. Children participate in bilingual learning. The rumaki Māori immersion class caters for students from Years 1 to 6.

There was a period of significant staff changes before and after the August 2014 ERO report. The rumaki class was not in place at the time of the previous ERO review.

Staff from 2016 have, in 2017, provided some stability for students and continuity of school organisation. From Term Two 2017, an acting deputy principal has supported school-wide initiatives.

In 2014, ERO reported that the board of trustees should better its understanding of the governance role. This included:

- embedding the cycle of policy review to ensure policies were up to date and useful
- using reports about student achievement to make meaningful resourcing decisions
- ensuring the annual appraisal of the principal was completed.

The school was not well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Over time board members resigned. A commissioner was appointed by the Ministry of Education to govern the school and support the returning principal. The role included responsibility for concerns about some buildings.

ERO determined that the school needed ongoing support. An education review was initiated to be carried out over a period of two years. This ongoing evaluation involved meetings with ERO and sharing progress related to priorities for review and development identified in the 2014 ERO report. In 2016, staff contributed to a focused professional development programme resulting in a positive rebuilding of the teaching team, with a collaborative focus on students' progress and achievement.

Foxton School is one of a group of schools in the Foxton area working within a Community of Learning|Kāhui Ako.

2 Review and Development

How effectively is the school addressing its priorities for review and development?

Priorities identified for review and development

Priorities for review and development during the two year evaluation process were to:

- support the principal to lead the school effectively
- re-establish the rumaki class to provide Māori immersion learning
- use analysed student achievement information to determine students' progress and to consider their next steps in learning
- build a cohesive teaching team focused on teaching and learning
- appoint a board of trustees to govern the school.

Progress

The school's leadership, with the commissioner, have appropriately given priority to activities that positively impact on student learning. School-wide operation and practices are centred on students' progress. Leadership, focused on student achievement, is now a key factor to the school's well implemented teaching programmes. These are structured so that all students have opportunity to learn and progress.

Whānau and children are well known by the tumuaki and teachers. The underpinning goal to uphold Māori success for students who identify as Māori is ongoing and a school strength.

The re-established rumaki class is in place, with students taught through Māori immersion learning. The teacher is supported by the principal and other professionals, so that learning for children meets the expectations of *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*. A kaiawhina supports students in te reo Māori. A collaborative approach underpins a commitment to this medium of learning and lessens teacher isolation operating as one class within the school. Rumaki class students mix with all children and participate in Foxton School out-of-class activities. Most children make progress in pānui, tuhituhi and pāngarau.

Classroom teaching has improved significantly. Teachers, through well considered internal and external professional development, have built a collaborative culture and better understanding of the purpose and use of student achievement information.

Moderation practice between teachers about students' learning, supports the judgements made about children's progress against National Standards and *Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori*. This practice has been strengthened and is valued by staff. Teachers appropriately focus on literacy and numeracy teaching and learning. It is now timely to evaluate the effectiveness of the wider Foxton School Curriculum, establishing how well it promotes engagement, progress and achievement.

Over the course of this ERO evaluation, the principal's reporting to the commissioner (in the role of the board) and to ERO, demonstrates a commitment to accelerating students' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. However, some students continue to achieve below and well below expected levels. These students are well known and are targeted with appropriate teaching and at times specific interventions. Their ongoing progress is a school priority.

Data analysis identified that the teaching of mathematics and pāngarau is a focus for 2017. Professional development is expected to assist teachers improve teaching with positive outcomes for students.

Although a system for appraising teachers is in place, it should be strengthened to better align with Education Council guidelines. The principal and board agree this is a priority for 2017.

Families and the community indicated a positive interest in governing the school as trustees. A board of trustees has been elected. There is specific ongoing support for members to learn about the roles and responsibilities of governance.

Key next steps

The newly appointed board and principal must:

- develop a clear framework for the review and updating of their policies
- further strengthen the appraisal process with the teaching as inquiry component linked to students' learning, progress and achievement.

Newly implemented initiatives and the deeper use of analysed student achievement information should continue to be strengthened.

3 Sustainable performance and self review

How well placed is the school to sustain and continue to improve and review its performance?

Foxton School is well placed to continue to improve and review its performance. Consolidation of new initiatives should be an important focus.

The school culture is underpinned by well-understood values and high expectations. The strengths of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga continue to be highly evident. Children are empowered to become confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners through a wide range of school activities inside and outside the classroom. They experience success.

The revitalised, positive teaching culture includes regular meetings where teachers collectively inquire into the effectiveness of their practice. Openness to ongoing learning is evident and demonstrated by the principal and staff through focusing on data and evidence-based decision making and planning.

Key next steps

The school agrees to continue to:

- develop targeted planning to accelerate learning for children
- monitor targeted planning, improved teaching and children's progress
- discuss the school's progress with ERO.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees 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:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

Conclusion

Students at Foxton School, Te Kura o Te Awahou, continue to learn in an environment where relationships are valued. A re-established team approach fosters student progress and wellbeing. Improvements guided by school leadership support students and staff. The formation of a board should continue to assist the school to sustain improvements and embed new initiatives.

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Alan Wynyard

Deputy Chief Review Officer Central (Acting)

7 July 2017

About the School

Location	Foxton	
Ministry of Education profile number	2359	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	81	
Gender composition	Male 48, Female 33	
Ethnic composition	Māori	52
	Pākehā	16
	Other ethnic groups	3
Special Features	3 bilingual classes 1 rumaki class Puna ECE attached	
Review team on site	February 2017	
Date of this report	7 July 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	August 2014
	Education Review	July 2011
	Supplementary Review	August 2007

FOXTON SCHOOL REPORTS

- [Foxton School - 07/07/2017](#)
- [Foxton School - 14/08/2014](#)