

ERO External Evaluation

Balmoral School, Mt Eden, Auckland

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

Balmoral School is a large urban school that caters for students from Years 1 to 8. It has a growing and increasingly culturally diverse roll of approximately 930 students. Māori children make up 4 percent of the roll, 9 percent are of Pacific heritage, 11 percent are Asian, and 68 percent are Pākehā.

The school's vision is to "develop curious, confident and connected learners". The vision promotes "together we will respect the concept of diversity, inquire, celebrate who we are and discover our nation's heritage". Balmoral School's values are manaaki/respect, mana tū/integrity, tō tātou/inclusiveness and manawaroa/resilience.

Trustees, leaders and teachers have identified valued outcomes that include the key competencies from the *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). Leaders and teachers have developed their own key learning aptitudes based on the competencies, which include thinking, persisting, creativity, managing self and communicating. These key competencies, together with knowledge, attitudes and values, make up the school's valued outcomes.

In recent years staff have participated in external professional learning in the teaching of writing, reading and science. They have also engaged in professional learning about brain development, teaching and learning approaches, and growth mind set. Internal professional support has helped develop teachers' capability in te reo Māori and culturally responsive approaches for teaching Pacific students.

Since the 2014 ERO review, two of the three associate principals have been appointed to their current roles. There have also been changes at middle leadership level and several new teaching staff. The board has a mix of new and experienced trustees.

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

- overall progress and achievement in relation to school targets
- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- students' progress and accelerated achievement

- students with additional learning needs
- student wellbeing for success
- parent and student feedback about the school.

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?

Balmoral School is highly effective in achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for students.

School achievement information over the last four years shows very high student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Comprehensive assessment and trend data are analysed well to inform decision making. Appropriate next steps are put in place and closely monitored to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved, and that timely adaptations are made when necessary.

Achievement information indicates that Māori students achieve highly, particularly in reading and mathematics. Over the last four years, Māori students have significantly improved achievement in these key curriculum areas. In addition, Māori learners at Balmoral School achieve higher when compared with Māori nationally in both reading and mathematics.

Leaders and teachers are successfully addressing a small disparity in the achievement of Pacific students and for boys in writing. School systems, practices and personalised approaches have resulted in increasing parity for students in key learning areas.

Students with additional learning needs benefit from effective, well coordinated and high quality support. School achievement information for the small proportion of students who are achieving below expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, shows accelerated achievement for the majority of students and almost all make progress.

Students achieve very well in relation to other school valued outcomes. Students:

- reflect pride in who they are and relate well with each other
- demonstrate curiosity, confidence and collaboration in their active engagement in learning
- are inclusive, and accepting of diversity
- demonstrate the school's values.

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

Balmoral School is successfully accelerating learning for students who need it.

The school's charter and annual targets aim specifically to accelerate the progress of identified groups of students. Action plans that align with the school's achievement targets are developed collaboratively with teaching teams. Leaders value the importance of timely identification, making prompt and planned responses to accelerate learning progress. Progress toward school targets is closely monitored through collaborative team inquiries.

Leaders have continued to appropriately target the learning of Māori and Pacific students, particularly in writing. An in-depth and broad approach to addressing overall Pacific student achievement is in place.

Teachers identify children’s strengths, interests and learning needs accurately and quickly. This helps them to plan specific targeted support that is well matched to children’s identified needs. Learners benefit from teachers’ collaboration in refining targeted classroom teaching and learning, and from a variety of additional learning support.

Leaders and teachers respond well to students with additional learning needs. Almost all students show positive shifts in wellbeing, confidence and engagement in learning. These positive shifts help students improve and sustain their learning progress over time.

The school has a growing number of children who speak languages in addition to English. These children receive highly effective learning programmes to build their English language skills and competency. Appropriate links are made between their classroom programmes and specialist English Language Learning support. The achievement of these students is carefully monitored to ensure that they have access to the full range of the curriculum.

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’s culture contributes to the achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning. A broad and holistic view of success and achievement is integral to the school’s vision, philosophy and culture. Children are active participants in their education where curiosity, challenge, critical thinking and creativity are valued outcomes. The school promotes the joy of learning.

Leadership is collaborative, promotes ownership and a strong sense of belonging. The school’s vision is clearly articulated among students, staff, parents and the Balmoral School community. Leaders develop clear goals and targets for all learners to achieve valued outcomes. There is a deliberate focus on growing leadership capability at all levels in learning, teaching, managing and governing.

Stewardship is strategic and coherent. The board actively supports the school’s broad curriculum to be inclusive and responsive to learner needs, local contexts and the environment. Trustees ensure that the curriculum enables all students to become confident, connected and active, life-long learners.

The school’s curriculum design draws on research and current educational thinking to meet the learning needs and aspirations of students and parents. It provides students with opportunities to learn, achieve and progress through the breadth and depth of the NZC. Leaders and teachers are exploring ways to promote seamless transition from *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, to the NZC, by delivering a play-based curriculum in children’s first year of school. The use of “Philosophy for Children” continues to be a cornerstone of the school’s curriculum.

Students engage in cognitively challenging and purposeful learning opportunities that relate to real life contexts, issues and experiences. The school’s inquiry learning approach enables students to pursue their own interests and strengths, lead their own learning, and collaborate to make sense of the world.

Evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building are embedded in school systems and practices. Relational trust supports collaboration, risk taking and openness to change. Effective communication supports the sharing of new knowledge to promote improvement and innovation. Leaders and teachers use internal evaluation and inquiry to contribute to evidence based decision making and ongoing improvement.

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

Leaders have identified that continuous upskilling of teaching practices and induction of teachers new to the school, are areas for further development. Strong systems and processes are in place to support this development.

Teachers benefit from internal professional learning in te reo Māori. Leaders agree that continued development in learning and using te reo Māori, and increasing teachers' understanding of te ao Māori, is needed to further build bicultural perspectives in the curriculum.

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*.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (the Code) established under *section 238F of the Education Act 1989*. The school has attested that it complies with all the aspects of the Code.

At the time of the review there were 21 international students attending the school.

Balmoral School provides international students with very good quality pastoral care and education. Students make good progress and achieve well in English language learning.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- leadership that is collaborative, grows future leaders and contributes to building a strong sense of belonging in a community
- stewardship that is strategic, coherent, and resources school initiatives to realise the school's vision
- an inclusive, culturally responsive curriculum that is clearly aligned to the intent of the NZC
- internal evaluation and inquiry that contribute to changes in thinking and practice
- a culture where children are at the heart and are supported to be leaders of their own learning.

Next steps

Leaders agree that for continued improvement trustees, leaders and teachers should continue to:

- refine internal evaluation to critically gauge the effectiveness of initiatives and practices and the impact of these on valued student outcomes
- build teacher confidence and capability in te reo and te ao Māori to ensure biculturalism is more visible in school practices, curriculum, and culture.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



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 Te Tai Raki - Northern Region

20 December 2018

About the school

Location	Mt Eden, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	1219
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)
School roll	926
Gender composition	Boys 51% Girls 49%
Ethnic composition	Māori 4% Pākehā 68% Chinese 9% Indian 8% Samoan 4% Tongan 4% other ethnic groups 3%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	November 2018
Date of this report	20 December 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review February 2014 Education Review August 2009 Education Review August 2006