



ERO External Evaluation

Taikura Rudolf Steiner School, Hastings

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

Taikura Rudolf Steiner School is a co-educational, state integrated school located in Hastings for students from six to eighteen years of age. The current roll of 389 includes 17% of students who identify as Māori and a small number of those with Pacific heritage. Since the June 2016 ERO report, a new principal and deputy principal have been appointed. An elected board of trustees and a proprietors' trust board provide stewardship of the school.

The school is organised into the lower school (classes 1 to 7) and the high school (classes 8 to 12). There is a close relationship with two local Rudolf Steiner kindergartens that most students have attended. The curriculum is informed by both the *Waldorf Curriculum* and *The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)*. Assessment of learning in the lower school is in relation to the Waldorf learning steps, aligned to the NZC. The school offers qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework Levels 1, 2 and 3 through the New Zealand Steiner Certificates (NZSC). These qualifications are managed by the Steiner Education Development Trust on behalf of the Federation of Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Schools Aotearoa New Zealand.

The school states that it provides an education based on spiritual and scientific insights into child development. The special character reflects the educational philosophies of Rudolf Steiner.

The school has specific targets to lift achievement in the lower school in mathematics, comprehension and writing.

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

- reading, writing and mathematics
- New Zealand Certificate in Steiner Education.

The school is a member of the Steiner Waldorf Kāhui Ako.

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?

Trends indicate that outcomes for all students are moving strongly towards being equitable and excellent.

School data for 2018, shows that most students in the lower school achieved at or above expectation in reading, writing and mathematics, as measured by the Steiner Learning Steps. Māori student achievement is comparable to that of Pākehā students in mathematics and writing, with some disparity for Māori learners in reading. Boys and girls achieve at similar levels.

School data shows achievement has improved over time for all students, except for Māori students in reading and this declined slightly in 2018. Pacific students achieved at similar rates to Pākehā learners in 2018.

High school achievement information shows that most students achieve the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE) at all three levels. In 2018, a large majority of students gained either a highly commended or distinction endorsement at Level 1. Almost half gain an endorsement at Level 2 and most gained an endorsement at Level 3. All students who gained Level 3 also gained University Entrance.

Longitudinal data shows that disparity in achievement between males and females has decreased and achievement at Levels 1 and 2 has improved. Most Māori students achieve well.

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

Accelerated learning is evident in reading, writing and mathematics in the lower school, including for those Māori and Pacific students who need this. In 2018, all students accelerated to reach expected levels.

In the high school, all students who were identified as being at risk at the beginning of high school were effectively accelerated to gain either Level 2 or 3 NZCSE 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?

Students have a curriculum that successfully upholds the principles of the Steiner curriculum alongside the key components of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. The lower school curriculum has identified aims for learning and growth at each level and these are closely linked to the developmental stages of children. High school students receive clear information about content and the skills required in the various curriculum areas to enable informed choices to support their success and educational pathway. Te reo Māori is an established part of the integrated curriculum delivery.

Students learn in an inclusive and caring environment. Positive relationships between students and with teachers encourage a strong sense of belonging. Each student is well known by all staff and this contributes to each student's development as capable and confident learners. A wide range of opportunities engage students in learning.

A range of appropriate assessment tools is used to monitor and track individual achievement. Achievement information is also well used for detailed planning that supports the specific learning needs of each student, including those with additional needs.

Students with additional needs are extensively supported to enable them to achieve. Relevant support staff, agencies and specialists are engaged by the school to support individual student development. Teachers work very closely with each student and family to implement targeted strategies. Progress for these students is closely tracked and shared with families. Identified students with higher needs are making progress against the goals in their individual education plans.

Parents and whānau are welcomed and involved in school activities as respected and valued partners in learning. Opportunities for parents to engage in workshops to grow understanding about Steiner practices are further building the reciprocal partnership. There are many opportunities for parents to provide the school with feedback about school priorities. Parents receive detailed information about their child's learning and progress. There is strong support for the school, particularly from those whose children have additional needs. Parents who met with ERO value the many rich opportunities available to their children.

Teachers are supported to grow professionally through targeted learning and development and the appraisal process. Culturally responsive practices have been given priority and these are guided by the school's *He Reo Ora* strategy. The *He Reo Puawai – Te Reo Māori Curriculum*, developed and implemented by Steiner schools has provided the foundation for this work.

The small, newly established leadership team works effectively to align systems and make ongoing improvements across the school. The roles and responsibilities of the Proprietors Trust and the Trust Board are clear. The alignment of strategic and annual plans is being actioned.

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

Achievement targets need to be sharpened to focus more explicitly on students whose learning needs acceleration. This focus should enable trustees to make informed decisions about resourcing to promote excellence and equity. Procedures for learning support for both lower and high school students need to be clear for all staff.

The leadership team acknowledge the need to further develop a shared understanding about best practice for expected curriculum delivery to promote consistency of practice across the school. The school is beginning to develop its localised curriculum.

The board needs to improve in its accountability and improvement functions. It has the collective capacity to do so, with leadership from the board chair. Recently introduced board processes are yet to be fully implemented. To ensure board effectiveness, with focus on equity and excellence in student outcomes, trustees need to build on and implement recently developed systems and processes. This will enable the board to review and reflect on their effectiveness as a board in their stewardship role.

3 Other Matters

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 aspects of the Code.

No international students were enrolled at the time of the 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.

5 ERO's Overall Judgement

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

Well placed

ERO will maintain an ongoing relationship with the school to build capacity and evaluate progress.

ERO's Framework: [Overall Findings and Judgement Tool derived from School Evaluation Indicators: Effective Practice for Improvement and Learner Success](#) is available on ERO's website.

6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- leadership that works cohesively to promote excellence and equity
- learning environments that promote equity and achievement
- learning partnerships that fully involve parents and whānau.

Next steps

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

- its localised curriculum and shared understanding of best practice curriculum delivery through the school's stated Steiner principles
- stewardship to keep up to date with statutory responsibilities and more sharply focus on excellence and equity.

Actions for compliance

ERO identified non-compliance in relation to personnel management.

In order to address this, the board of trustees must:

- ensure records are kept on site that meet requirements in terms of background checks of new employees.
[The Children's Act 2014]

Areas for improved compliance practice

The board is in the process of reviewing all policies and procedures for alignment and to fully implement an ongoing cycle of regular review. It is essential that this process is completed to bring additional rigour to the policy framework and ensure that all policies are current, useful and systematically reviewed. The work on financial management should be given priority.

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should ensure full implementation of the following:

- policy framework for financial management
- annual assessment of the principal against all professional standards for principals
- internal procedures for receiving and dealing with information about serious wrong doing, after a review of these.

Additionally, the board should:

- include a specific response to pandemic planning in school procedures
- be familiar with the requirements of the updated Ministry of Education *Guidelines for Registered Schools in New Zealand Schools on the use of Physical Restraint* and the *Guidelines for the Surrender and Retention of Property and Searches*
- be aware of the requirements of the *Health and Safety at Work Act* in regard to student work experience programmes.

Since the onsite phase of ERO's evaluation the school has provided evidence of the following updates:

- pandemic planning, referenced in the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- procedures for appointments
- policy for the appraisal of the principal.



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11 November 2019

About the school

Location	Hastings
Ministry of Education profile number	231
School type	Composite (Years 1-15)
School roll	389
Gender composition	Male 51% Female 49%
Ethnic composition	Māori 17% NZ European/Pākehā 71% Pacific 3% Other ethnic groups 9%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	August 2019
Date of this report	11 November 2019
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review June 2016 Education Review June 2013 Education Review April 2010