



**Taikura Rudolf Steiner School  
Hastings**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Taikura Rudolf Steiner School

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

## Findings

### 1 Context

#### **What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?**

Taikura Rudolf Steiner School is a long established New Zealand school reflecting the educational philosophies of Rudolf Steiner. It is a co-educational, state integrated school catering for students from six to eighteen years of age. A proprietors' trust oversees the school's special character.

The school comprises the lower school, catering for classes 1 to 7 students, and the high school for classes 8 to 12. There is close collaboration with the three associated Rudolf Steiner kindergartens in Hawke's Bay, which most students have attended.

The curriculum is informed by both the Waldorf and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). Assessment of learning in the lower school is in relation to Rudolf Steiner Learning Steps (learning steps), aligned to the National Standards.

The school offers qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework Levels 1, 2 and 3 through the Steiner School Certificates (SCC). These qualifications are managed by the Steiner Education Development Trust on behalf of the Federation of Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Schools Aotearoa New Zealand.

Many staff have long associations with the school. Since the June 2013 ERO review, a new senior leadership team is in place. The principal took up her position at the beginning of 2016.

The school has a positive reporting history with ERO. There has been an ongoing focus on improving assessment practices in response to the previous ERO report. Health and safety systems continue to require strengthening.

### 2 Learning

#### **How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?**

The school's use of assessment information continues to improve. Leaders appropriately focus on developing shared teacher understandings and consistent assessment practice.

Practices are becoming more robust as teachers' understanding of the learning steps and SSC requirements continue to be developed and embedded. There are improved systems and practices for moderation of the learning steps, well led by assessment leaders.

Good guidelines and tools for making teacher judgments about students' learning and achievement in writing and mathematics are in place. School leaders recognise development of exemplars, continued focus on gathering evidence of learning, and moderation of reading judgements are next steps.

There is good support for teachers' use of SSC assessments in the high school. Internal and external moderation of these provide a vehicle for consistency. The school works effectively with other New Zealand Rudolf Steiner schools to develop, trial and improve assessment practices.

School achievement information shows many students in the lower school, including Māori, are achieving at or above the expected levels. Leaders recognise there are areas of underachievement in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. They set appropriate targets to promote improvement and monitor progress towards these.

SSC results in 2015 show most students achieve qualifications at Levels 1 and 2. Many students receive certificate endorsements at Level 2. Almost all students gain University Entrance. Teachers acknowledge the need for improving results for some students at Level 3. They are aware of individual students and their progress towards qualifications and put appropriate strategies in place to assist their achievement.

Teachers know students well. They have long associations with students as they progress through the school. There are good systems for the identification and sharing of student information with teachers and parents. School leaders recognise that further development of tracking systems to monitor progress of learners at risk of poor educational outcomes is a next step.

### **3 Curriculum**

#### **How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?**

A broad curriculum supports students' holistic development. They demonstrate a sense of belonging and enjoyment in learning. Staff, trustees and families have a shared commitment to the vision and philosophies of the school's special character.

Teachers support students to make respectful, confident contributions to school life. There are opportunities for students to play and discover. Students collaborate and support each other in their learning. They demonstrate good levels of interest and engagement in learning tasks. Peaceful, attractive learning environments provide for students' positive engagement in learning.

A review of the lower school curriculum is currently underway to reflect and enrich local content and te ao Māori perspectives. There is an appropriate, ongoing focus on ensuring the curriculum incorporates the learning steps. Consideration of how the school's curriculum reflects the 'learning to learn' principle of NZC would be a useful development.

Plans in place for the school to lead a national review of curriculum for high school students are timely. Leaders recognise that revision of the curriculum framework for Classes 8 and 9 is a priority.

There are good systems for ensuring students with specific or additional needs are identified and provided for. Responses to these students are well considered and communicated to staff and parents. Ongoing review and reporting is in place. As demand increases, it is timely for the school to consider ways in which to make resourcing and provision for these students more effective.

Teachers are reflective about their practice and regularly engage in improvement-focused, professional dialogue. Further aligning the identification of students' needs, deliberate teaching actions and evaluation of outcomes is a next step. This is likely to assist in identifying effective strategies to enhance learning, especially for learners at risk of poor educational outcomes.

#### **How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?**

In the lower school, Māori achievement is similar to that of their peers. The school is seeking to improve achievement and retention for Māori students in the high school. The board has consulted with whānau Māori in response to the need to improve school provision for their students.

A specialist teacher supports the development of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori throughout the school. Whānau aspirations and input are actively sought through the parent/whānau group, Tu Mai Taikura.

This forum, along with a recently developed national curriculum for Rudolf Steiner schools, He Reo Puawai, should provide a good basis for ongoing development. Ensuring there are clear expectations for culturally responsive teaching practice should support implementation.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

#### **How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?**

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its practice. Trustees and staff are collaborative and improvement focused. They demonstrate a commitment to the shared values and a vision for Rudolf Steiner education. There has been a strong focus on developing systems and documentation to promote sustainable, robust practice.

Good systems are in place to enable effective evaluation of school developments. Improvement is usefully guided by clear strategic planning. Initiatives are evaluated for their success and to inform next steps. More clearly documenting a school evaluation framework, is likely to support a consistent approach to internal evaluation.

The board is strategic in the way it sets school direction. Trustees seek the views and input of teachers, parents and families and are responsive to suggestions for improvement. They have a clear understanding of their roles. Comprehensive reporting assists their stewardship of school developments and decision making.

The new leadership team collaboratively supports development and improvement. They have a well-considered approach to managing and implementing change. They support teachers to take on leadership roles and participate in decision making.

Teachers demonstrate a reflective, critical approach to their practice. Staff are well connected to their community. Learning partnerships are supported by good levels of communication.

Review of teacher appraisal has resulted in the introduction of elements to support more effective teaching practice. A next step is to develop and consistently implement a schoolwide appraisal process to ensure teacher accountability and support improvement. A performance agreement is in place for the new principal. This should be reviewed to ensure it fully reflects Education Council guidelines.

### **Provision for international students**

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

At the time of the review, two international students were enrolled, and two exchange students were attending.

The school has set up good systems to cater for academic and pastoral needs of students, and their integration into the school and local community. Appropriate criteria have been developed to inform reports to the board about provision for these students.

### **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.

The board of trustees must ensure that:

- the systems in place for identifying and remedying existing and potential hazards are effectively implemented.  
[s7 Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992].

In order to improve current practice, the board and senior leaders should continue to review and refine policy guidelines and practices to meet legislative requirements, particularly in relation to health and safety.

## Conclusion

Students are supported to be confident, successful learners through a curriculum well aligned to Rudolf Steiner philosophy. Trustees, leaders and teachers work collaboratively to enact the school's vision. The new leadership team strategically supports development and a greater alignment of robust school systems and processes aimed at improving learner outcomes.

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



Joyce Gebbie  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

28 June 2016

## About the School

|                                      |                             |                |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Location                             | Hastings                    |                |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 231                         |                |
| School type                          | Composite (Years 1 to 15)   |                |
| School roll                          | 373                         |                |
| Number of international students     | 2                           |                |
| Gender composition                   | Male 52%, Female 48%        |                |
| Ethnic composition                   | Māori                       | 17%            |
|                                      | Pākehā                      | 75%            |
|                                      | Asian                       | 5%             |
|                                      | Other ethnic groups         | 3%             |
| Special Features                     | Integrated (Rudolf Steiner) |                |
| Review team on site                  | May 2016                    |                |
| Date of this report                  | 28 June 2016                |                |
| Most recent ERO report(s)            | Education Review            | June 2013      |
|                                      | Education Review            | April 2010     |
|                                      | Education Review            | September 2007 |