



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Pouto School
Te Kopuru, Northland

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Pouto School

This review is designed to support schools that were experiencing difficulties at the time of the last review. ERO provides ongoing evaluation over the course of one-to-two years as the school works to improve its overall performance and build its self-review capability.

This report answers key questions about the school's background and the context for the review. The report also provides an evaluation of how effectively the school is addressing areas identified for review and development and the quality of its practices and systems for sustaining performance and ongoing improvement.

Findings

1 Background and Context

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

Pouto School is a small rural school near the end of the northern Kaipara peninsula, south of Dargaville. There has been a drop in student numbers over the last two years. Currently, there are 15 children from Years 1 to 8 enrolled at the school. Most children are of Te Uri o Hau descent.

Over the past eight years three successive ERO reviews have identified concerns regarding leadership, governance, student achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, and curriculum development. The reviews have focused on the progress that has been made towards creating the organisational and other conditions necessary to improve outcomes for students.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) appointed a Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) in 2016 to assist the board of trustees with governance. In December 2019, the MoE deemed that there had been sufficient progress with governance and the LSM intervention was concluded.

The MoE has continued to provide other support including professional learning and development (PLD) about teaching literacy and numeracy and positive behaviour for learning (PB4L). In addition, a Student Achievement Function (SAF) practitioner began working with the school in early 2021. The board has managed property improvements inside and outside of the school with MoE funding and advice.

Through ERO's ongoing longitudinal review evidence has been collected to evaluate the progress trustees and staff have made to address the concerns and recommendations identified in the 2019 ERO report. ERO's findings are outlined in the following sections of this report.

2 Review and Development

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

Priorities identified for review and development

ERO established that the priorities for review and development were to:

- strengthen the analysis, use and reporting of student achievement
- improve the quality of teaching and learning
- improve curriculum design and classroom planning
- build educational leadership and governance capability to sustain and embed improvements
- improve internal evaluation.

Progress

Strengthening the analysis, use and reporting of student achievement

The school's use of assessment for teaching and learning continues to improve. Teachers know how well children are achieving in literacy and mathematics. They use assessment information to plan appropriate programmes for individuals and groups of students. PLD and moderation processes have helped to inform teachers' overall judgements about each student's achievement.

Teachers' assessment judgements are improving because students' understanding of their own learning has increased. Teachers are continuing to refine strategies to support students to lead their learning. Stronger learning partnerships with whānau have developed through student-led conferencing, sharing learning journals, and whānau and community input into the curriculum.

Mid-year data analysis in 2021 shows improved achievement in writing and mathematics. Deliberate acts of teaching and learning, and a focus on lifting writing achievement, have contributed significantly to this outcome.

Improving the quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning relationships are respectful and productive. All staff are using collaborative approaches in the classroom programme. As a result, students participate and engage in a busy, purposeful learning environment.

Teachers increasingly use assessment information to ensure that programmes cater for the range of students' learning needs. Teacher aide support is an integral part of teaching programmes. This gives those students who need extra support the guidance, and confidence to work at their own pace.

Improving curriculum design and classroom planning

Classroom programmes are well planned to provide coverage of the New Zealand Curriculum. The curriculum prioritises literacy and mathematics as foundations for learning. The principal has included an inquiry-based approach to promote science, social science, technologies and understandings of te ao Māori.

Programmes increasingly incorporate local curriculum themes that are relevant and meaningful to learners. Examples of this are students monitoring and assessing the water quality of the local lake and cultivating a newly established school community garden. The local curriculum document continues to evolve.

Building leadership and governance capability to sustain and embed changes

The principal is proactive in drawing on external support for her own development to guide school improvement. She has engaged in leadership programmes and with the local kāhui ako professional learning. This PLD is helping to build collective capacity and individual capability in leadership, stewardship, and teaching.

The board works in collaboration with the principal and represents and serves the school. Trustees are led by an experienced chairperson. They continue to build their governance practice through the use of online workshops with the New Zealand School Trustees' Association. Trustees could now evaluate the effectiveness of the board's performance in its governance and stewardship role.

Improving Internal Evaluation

Internal evaluation is continuing to improve. Analysis and evaluation of student achievement and reporting to the board has progressed. Teachers' inquiry is evidence based, and their reflections contribute well to making teaching practices more responsive and to purposeful appraisal.

Trustees undertake internal evaluation aligned to the school's strategic plan. Whānau and community perspectives contribute to the evaluation. A focus of the SAF project is to continue growing the evaluation capability of the board, leadership, teachers, and staff. This should help build the collective capacity to do and use evaluation to sustain improvement.

Key next steps

ERO, the board and principal agree next steps include continuing to:

- develop the data analysis capability of teachers, leaders, and the board
- develop teaching strategies to cater for the wide range of levels in the single classroom
- finalise the school curriculum framework, including the local curriculum while prioritising literacy and numeracy
- build trustees' shared understanding of their stewardship role and responsibilities.

3 Sustainable performance and self review

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

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing concerns identified in ERO's 2019 report. Improved systems and processes are now in place to sustain and continue improvements. The school is a nurturing learning environment for children and adults.

The school has re-engaged with its community, and the community's confidence is growing. As a result, stronger learning partnerships have developed, and parents now have greater opportunities to contribute to the school curriculum.

The principal has established relevant external support networks to continue improving leadership and teaching capability. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, assessment, and learning. Continuing Ministry support should sustain progress and positively impact on student outcomes.

The principal has strengthened staff appraisal processes and appropriate systems and procedures are now in place for teachers and support staff. With ongoing monitoring and evaluation, these systems should help embed current school improvements and planned improvements to teaching and learning.

To continue and sustain the developments that have been made to date, the board will need to take a strategic approach. It would also be useful for the board to establish a robust and regular review cycle for policies and procedures. More systematic, rigorous internal evaluation processes would assist the board's governance work.

4 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
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the *Children's Act 2014*.

5 Recommendations

Recommendations, including any to other agencies for ongoing or additional support.

ERO recommends the Ministry of Education continues to support the school to build teaching, evaluation, and data analysis capability.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement is that Pouto School has made good progress to now transition into ERO's Evaluation for Improvement | Te Ara Huarau approach.



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About the school

[The Education Counts website provides further information about the school's student population, student engagement and student achievement.](#)