

**Ellerslie School**  
**Ellerslie, Auckland**

**Education Review Office**

**External Evaluation**

# ERO External Evaluation

## Ellerslie School

### 1 Context

Ellerslie School, established in 1877, has a long history of strong intergenerational connections and significant links with the Ellerslie community. The school acknowledges and values its history, heritage, and place in the district. The school's enrolment scheme is helping it to manage rapid roll growth. This growth is a sign of the high regard the school is held in by the parent community. A long awaited new multi-story twenty-four teaching space building opens in mid-2016. This will provide modern facilities for the school's growing roll. With the impending retirement of the long serving principal and deputy principal the board is currently appointing new senior leaders.

### 2 Equity and excellence

The school's mission, "to enable students to be the best they can be" and vision "acknowledging yesterday, learning today and preparing for tomorrow" are strongly promoted throughout the school by staff, families and whānau.

Valued outcomes for all learners in this school community are grouped around the ideas of acknowledging the past, learning for today, and preparing for tomorrow. The outcomes identified for learners under these headings include showing respect, being tolerant, knowing about sustainability and enquiry and growing responsibility, independence and a sense of whanaugatanga (belonging).

The school's achievement information over the last three years shows that the large majority of children achieve at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2015, between 83 percent and 88 percent of all children achieved at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Māori children achieve at levels consistent with other children in the school. Overall Pacific student achievement is below that of other groups of children. In 2015 between 69 percent and 81 percent of Pacific children achieved at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school's strategies to address the disparity in Pacific children's achievement in reading and writing include setting targets for accelerating progress, teacher professional development in writing and tailored instruction for identified individuals and groups. Other recent initiatives to lift Pacific student achievement in mathematics will be evaluated once they've had time to show an impact.

The school effectively identifies and targets support for other groups of children and individual children who need to make accelerated progress. Accelerating children's progress in writing is a strategic goal for 2016. This goal, together with teacher professional learning in writing, is the basis for teachers' inquiry into their own practice.

Information gathered shows that the school is experiencing very good levels of success in accelerating the progress of children. The majority of Year 8 children achieve at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they complete their schooling at Ellerslie School.

Since the last ERO evaluation the school has worked actively to promote positive outcomes for all learners. Systems for tracking and monitoring children's progress continue to develop and are used well to promote differentiated teaching programmes that respond to children's needs.

Professional learning and development programmes for teachers have been strategically aligned to the priorities identified through the analysis of student learning outcomes. In addition, over the past three years the focus has been on guiding, developing and changing teaching practice ahead of moving into new collaborative learning environments.

### **3 Accelerating achievement**

#### **How effectively does this school respond to Māori children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?**

The school responds well to Māori children whose learning and achievement need acceleration. Charter targets and strategic goals prioritise Māori achievement.

The vast majority of children have been at Ellerslie School since they were five years of age. This combined with a collective and collaborative 'village' approach results in all teachers knowing the strengths, abilities and needs of children.

Systems and process for identifying and responding to the needs of at risk Māori learners are well implemented. Teachers collaborate and share good practice to support them. Teacher aides provide additional learning support in classrooms. This contributes to high levels of student engagement. The intervention programmes and targeted teaching strategies being implemented are resulting in accelerated progress and improved achievement for the majority of at risk Māori learners.

Parents and whānau appreciate the open collaborative communication with teachers and the shared focus on promoting successful outcomes for their children. Senior leaders and teachers are continuing to evaluate the impact and improve the quality of these approaches and programmes.

Ministry of Education publications and resources designed to strengthen teachers' bicultural practice have been well used for staff professional learning and development programmes. However, this continues to be area that requires focus and further development. Making this a long term goal should help to further improve Māori children's learning and progress.

In addition, leaders and trustees should prioritise the development of strategies to extend learning partnerships with Māori whānau. This should help to ensure that the goals and aspirations Māori whānau and parents have for their children's success are reflected prominently in the school's strategic goals.

#### **How effectively does this school respond to other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?**

The school responds well to other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

School leaders collate and analyse achievement data well. They inquire into any trends that emerge for specific year levels, groups and individual children. As a result, teachers and leaders know the children who are at risk of not achieving. This means that they can set appropriate achievement targets and goals and take the deliberate actions necessary to accelerate the progress of these children. Children receive a good range of in-class and other individualised intervention programmes.

Leaders are building collective staff responsibility for children's progress. Systems for tracking and monitoring target children are well applied. An online software programme is assisting teachers to track children's progress over time. Teaching teams meet fortnightly specifically to discuss the impact of their teaching strategies and how to better support the progress of individual children.

Leaders and teachers are open to new learning and continuous improvement. Professional learning opportunities for teachers and teacher aides and teacher mentoring groups are helping teachers to refine and adapt programmes to maximise children's success.

#### **4 School conditions**

##### **How effectively do the school's curriculum and other organisational processes and practices develop and enact the school's vision, values, goals and priorities for equity and excellence?**

Ellerslie School's curriculum and organisational processes are effective in promoting equity and excellence.

The school's curriculum reflects *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). It appropriately prioritises reading, writing and mathematics as the foundations for learning. Since the last ERO report the school has reviewed its curriculum and developed an effective framework to guide students' inquiry learning. A recent review of curriculum coverage resulted in children being given more time to explore inquiry themes and topics in greater depth.

Children experience a responsive curriculum and have good opportunities to experience success. Learning languages, technology and music are special features of the school that support and enact the school's mission and values and its commitment to educating the whole child. Specialist teachers deliver rich technology and music programmes that give breadth and depth to children's learning.

Children participate enthusiastically in learning tasks in response to child-centred teaching approaches and settled classroom environments. They are confident and feel proud of their school. Parents are well informed and have good opportunities to have open and honest learning conversations with staff. Strong connections between home and school contribute to children's emotional security and engagement in learning.

The principal and senior leaders have high expectations of children and staff. During a lengthy period of building and redevelopment they have effectively maintained their focus on children's learning and wellbeing. School leaders and teachers work collaboratively. They use their professional skills and information gathered about children's achievement, engagement and wellbeing to resource programmes and provide equitable outcomes for children.

The school is a member of the recently established One Tree Hill Community of Learning, (CoL) that comprises a number of learning services in the area. Staff also participate in local education networks and clusters as part of wider community work to improve outcomes for children.

The board governs effectively and trustees, including the principal, work well as a team to utilise their collective strengths. The board seeks relevant external expertise when needed and has processes in place for succession planning. Trustees put children first and show commitment to improving learning outcomes for all. Student achievement information is carefully scrutinised by the board and resources are allocated strategically to meet children's learning needs.

## 5 Going forward

### How well placed is the school to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children?

Leaders and teachers:

- know the children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated
- respond effectively to the strengths, needs and interests of each child
- regularly evaluate how well teaching is working for these children
- act on what they know works well for each child
- build teacher capability effectively to achieve equitable outcomes for all children
- are well placed to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children.

School leaders foster a school culture that is open to new learning, professional inquiry and change. The school's long-serving principal is well supported by a highly professional senior leadership team and an effective board. High levels of relational trust and professional pride underpin developments.

Leaders, teachers and children are now looking forward to the opening of a twenty-four space modern learning environment. The new building will provide opportunities for closer and collaboration and greater coherence between teaching teams. This should help ensure that children experience a more seamless education as they transition through the eight year levels at Ellerslie School.

School leaders and ERO agree that the next steps in school development include:

- continuing to develop the Ellerslie curriculum and expectations for teaching and learning as part of building greater coherence across Years 1 to 8
- documenting the school-wide approach to accelerating student achievement to embed and help sustain the school's new initiatives
- deepening and documenting consultation with Māori whānau and strengthening the school's culturally responsive practices
- strengthening evaluative reporting across the school to enhance internal evaluation.

ERO affirms these next steps for further strengthening its capacity to sustain and improve educational outcomes for all students.

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

## 6 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 the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- 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
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance
- compliance with the provisions of the *Vulnerable Children Act 2014*

## 7 Recommendations

School leaders continue strengthening and document consultation with Māori whānau regarding their aspirations for their children and how the school's future direction can best support Māori children's success.



Graham Randell  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

31 May 2016

## About the school

Location	Ellerslie, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1268	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	659	
Gender composition	Girls 51% Boys 49%	
Ethnic composition	Māori 6% Pākehā 56% Chinese 6% Indian 6% Tongan 3% Filipino 3% Samoan 3% Middle Eastern 2% Sri Lankan 2% African 1% Australian 1% British/Irish 1% Fijian 1% Japanese 1% Korean 1% other Asian 2% other Pacific 1% others 4%	
Review team on site	March 2016	
Date of this report	31 May 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	April 2013 March 2010 June 2007