

# Onewhero Area School Education Review

- 1 Context
- 2 Learning
- 3 Curriculum
- 4 Sustainable Performance

## About the School

Location	Onewhero, Tuakau	
Ministry of Education profile number	108	
School type	Composite (Years 1 to 15)	
School roll	510	
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	20%
	NZ European/Pākehā	73%
	Pacific	3%
	Asian	4%
Review team on site	April 2014	
Date of this report	13 June 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2011
	Education Review	April 2008
	Education Review	June 2003

## The Purpose of an ERO Report

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.

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# 1 Context

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

Onewhero Area School is a co-educational school for students from Years 1 to 13. The school serves the rural Onewhero community in the Waikato district, with some students travelling from Tuakau and Pukekohe.

The school roll includes a high percentage of Pākehā students, twenty percent Māori, and seven percent Pacific or Asian students. Since the last ERO review, new staff have been appointed, including a deputy principal and heads of departments. Leadership responsibilities have been restructured, resulting in the appointment of two key staff as specialists in English and mathematics. New buildings and renovated classrooms provide improved learning environments. Roll growth has enabled the school to offer new courses for students in the senior school.

Important initiatives introduced in 2013 include an enhanced learning programme to meet the specific learning needs of students, the development of Te Kete, a programme in the middle school, and an ongoing focus on learning and technology through a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative.

The 2011 ERO report acknowledged the supportive community and a cohesive team approach to improving teaching and learning in the school. The promotion of values across the school led to an increased focus on learning in a settled and supportive environment.

The 2011 ERO report made a number of recommendations for school improvement. This review finds that the board and staff still have considerable work to do in implementing these recommendations, which were to:

- set specific and measurable targets, particularly for Māori students
- develop succinct reporting about overall student achievement
- strengthen self-review practices through evaluative thinking.

## 2 Learning

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

The school has an increasing focus on using achievement information to make positive changes in student engagement, progress and achievement.

Te Kete, a pilot programme for teachers of Years 9 and 10 students, is an initiative created in response to concerns about student engagement and achievement. An effective learner and teacher profile promotes shared understandings across the school to increase the effectiveness of teaching and improve learning. This initiative promotes teacher learning through a process of guided self review and inquiry. Newly developed performance management processes align with the initiative. Ongoing review of Te Kete, including monitoring of student progress and achievement, is significant as a lever for changing teachers' practice across the school.

Special education students and those requiring additional learning support are identified for a range of programmes and interventions from Years 1 to 12. An Enhanced Learning Programme, introduced in 2013, aims to meet the diverse specific needs of a group of Year 8 and 9 students. Teacher aides are employed to support student learning in the junior and middle school.

Teachers in the junior school use assessment data to group students for instruction. Some teachers use analysed assessment to provide specific and focused teaching. Teachers agree that students need to have a better understanding of their achievement information so that they develop greater ownership of their learning.

The school's data about achievement in relation to the National Standards suggests that students continue to improve in reading, but achieve below expected national achievement levels. Data on achievement in mathematics shows progress for some students, but most students achieve below expected national achievement levels. In 2014 teachers are implementing a school-wide focus on improving achievement in writing. Sharing the effective strategies used by the specialist English teacher could help all teachers to improve student engagement, progress and achievement in writing.

School leaders have noted that all teachers could use teaching as inquiry to develop more innovative approaches for accelerating student progress. Teachers and school leaders should engage in a deeper analysis of the needs of students who are achieving below National Standards. Clearer reporting of student progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards would enable parents to understand and contribute more usefully to their child's learning.

Senior school achievement information shows that overall achievement levels in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) fluctuate. There were some improvements in 2013. Level 1 and 2 results have improved since 2010. School leaders recognise that to improve student retention and engagement, they should examine data on students who leave school without achieving NCEA Level 2 before the end of Year 13. The school should continue to explore vocational pathways for all students.

ERO acknowledges and supports Ministry of Education advice on school planning and reporting that suggests that teachers could make more effective use of achievement information across the school to set targets to improve student achievement. The setting of targets to increase Māori students' success and to support the learning of students with special needs is a priority.

Trustees, school leaders and teachers should continue to increase their understanding and use of achievement information. This would better enable them to make decisions to support students to meet national qualification targets. Trustees, leaders and teachers should:

- set specific and measurable targets for raising the achievement of students at all levels and the achievement of specific groups of priority learners
- develop strategies to reduce achievement gaps between genders and ethnicities
- improve the school's capacity to evaluate the impact of strategies and programmes adapted to bring about positive improvements for priority learners
- use information gained from evaluation of student progress and achievement at all levels to further develop teachers' professional practice.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum promotes and supports student learning well.

Students benefit from positive relationships with their teachers and a sense of connection with each other across the school. They value the school's learning environments and the teachers who provide individual support and encourage them to care about their learning.

Students speak positively about the teachers who foster a love of learning and provide opportunities to learn about their cultural heritage. They appreciate opportunities to write a record of their lives to share with their families and whānau.

Numeracy and literacy are the basis of the school's curriculum design in the junior and middle school. A strong emphasis is placed on these areas.

Some classes are mixed ability and some classes are streamed for a range of different purposes. Teachers in some departments are offering a wider range of education out of the classroom to support in-class learning. Senior leaders and teachers should monitor the outcomes of these different approaches through ongoing self review.

Some good work has started in developing a seamless curriculum from Years 1-13, thus providing a greater sense of cohesion between the primary, middle and senior school. Related initiatives involve:

- employing specialist mathematics and English teachers who model effective practices that focus on students as capable learners
- enabling teachers to experience teaching at different year levels to increase their professional understanding and improve their practice
- providing integrated curriculum opportunities in the middle school to enable students to make greater connections and explore innovations in their learning
- developing whole-school effective teacher and learner profiles.

A range of opportunities is provided for students from Year 7-13 to continue the school's focus on developing life-long learners. This focus includes career competencies, developing career plans to support subject choices in Year 11, and work experience. Senior students learn about tertiary education and networks so they can explore options for the future. Work-based programmes, such as Gateway, are currently available.

School leaders have identified future priorities for reviewing and developing the school's curriculum. These include continuing to give learners a greater voice in, and ownership of, their learning. Leaders also should continue developments towards the provision of a bicultural curriculum.

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

A new teacher of Māori has been recently appointed and the board has co-opted a Māori trustee. The history of iwi in this region is reflected in art displays throughout the school environment. Students report that they feel proud to be part of the school's recently established kapa haka group.

School leaders discussed with ERO a range of options for developing a more focused approach to promoting educational success for Māori as Māori. Possible options include:

- developing a Māori Education Plan through consultation with iwi, whānau, community, staff and students
- forming a bicultural leadership team to build capability and set a direction for promoting the success of Māori students.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is developing its capacity to sustain and improve its performance. The principal and board are in a good position to strengthen school self-review processes and increase the school's capacity to sustain and improve its performance.

The board has a long-term chairperson and new trustees who bring a range of expertise and capability. Trustees could consider whole board training to help them carry out their governance roles and responsibilities more effectively. This training should help to ensure trustees are well informed about how to develop and sustain high quality governance practices.

A significant number of students have been stood down or suspended from school. The board and school leaders need to review who these students are and the appropriateness of support provided. Professional learning could help the board, senior leaders and teachers develop a greater understanding of restorative practices. Trustees should ensure a greater correlation between the school curriculum and the board's charter goals.

The principal and leadership team are continuing to build a cohesive team, and provide new leadership opportunities across the school.

Self review could be strengthened through a greater consultative and evaluative focus. Increasing opportunities for students and whānau to contribute is critical in making self review robust and effective at all school levels. During the next developmental period, the board should continue to prioritise developments that accelerate student learning.

### 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 238 of the Education Act 1989. At the time of the review there were no international students attending the school.

The school has attested that it complies with the Code.

### 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.

During the course of the review ERO identified one area of non-compliance. In order to address this, the board of trustees must:

- Ensure requirements for police vetting of non-teaching staff are met [Education Act 1989, 78C, D].

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Dale Bailey  
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