



**Whangaroa College**  
**Kaeo, Northland**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Whangaroa College

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?**

Whangaroa College is a small Year 7 to 15 secondary school located beside Kaeo School in Northland. Most students identify as Ngā Puhī. They connect to over fourteen marae from the local and wider area. There are strong ties of whanaungatanga through the school and community. The school culture benefits from these connections.

After the 2011 ERO review the Ministry of Education (MoE) appointed a commissioner. By the 2013 ERO review in May, the Commissioner had appointed a new principal and a new board was in place by October. The school returned to the regular three year ERO review cycle. External professional development provided by the MoE was in place to support teacher development.

Three trustees appointed by the MoE remain on the board. All current trustees have valuable links with the local community. Some trustees are new to trusteeship and are continuing to develop an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The school has joined the Far North Community of Learning (CoL) to widen their educational partnerships and networks.

Since the 2013 ERO review, the college has experienced considerable staff change. A number of new teachers, several of whom are beginning teachers, have been appointed. Staff recruitment and retention remains challenging. Some teachers are currently teaching subjects outside their area of expertise to respond to student choices.

### 2 Learning

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

School leaders and teachers are still to develop the capability to use achievement information effectively and improve achievement outcomes for students. Leaders have made good use of school information to improve students' attendance.

Students reported to ERO that they value the positive relationships they have with their teachers. They appreciated where they have opportunities to make decisions and choices about their learning.

Students would benefit from more knowledge about their own progress and achievement so they can set learning goals to reach their aspirations.

The school is making good use of MoE professional development to create a more restorative, caring student-management approach by leaders and most teachers. There is better use of positive behaviour strategies to engage students in education. Restorative practice training for all staff is now planned to extend this practice.

In Years 7 to 10, leaders have begun to more clearly collate student achievement information. Teachers have developed their use of MoE assessment tools to improve the robustness and reliability of assessment decisions. They would benefit from establishing additional external moderation networks with local schools and further support students transition to and through the college.

The school requires external advice and support to accelerate student progress and raise achievement. More targeted teaching in reading, writing and mathematics is required to help students achieve well in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) at Level 2 and 3 and University Entrance. While some students experience success, the majority are not yet progressing or achieving well.

The board has set aspirational achievement goals and has high expectations. School targets could be more specific and focussed on the groups of students, including Māori boys, who need to make accelerated progress. The board is not receiving clear, useful evaluative reports about student progress and achievement.

Leaders are managing a wide range of complex student learning needs. They should report to the board on the success of interventions and the effectiveness of external agencies to help trustees allocate resources effectively. Increasing leadership involvement with local schools has the potential to improve outcomes for students.

### **3 Curriculum**

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

The school curriculum is not yet effective at promoting and supporting student learning. Students should have greater access to a curriculum that enables them to achieve good quality, meaningful qualifications.

The curriculum has expanded to offer a broader range of vocational and trades pathways which students' value. Students aiming for University require a more careful curriculum design to reach University Entrance requirements.

School-wide the curriculum needs to better align with students' learning interests and talents. Leaders have introduced academic and careers support systems to help students with their whānau to make informed decisions. To realise these aspirations, the curriculum must include a stronger focus on promoting equity of learning opportunities for students to successfully complete their education.

School leaders have identified the curriculum structure requires review to better align this with the vision and values of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. This includes a review of the timetable. A greater focus on ensuring students can access the curriculum by increasing achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 7 to 11 is required.

Trustees and leaders are committed to ensuring students develop as culturally connected and confident learners. It would be helpful for school leaders, in collaboration with teachers, to document agreed understandings of effective culturally responsive teaching practices. Performance management requires significant strengthening to align with school goals and the new Education Council requirements.

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

The school is improving the way it affirms and supports Māori students' culture, language and identity to promote educational success for Māori students. Students recognise and appreciate this change.

Positive relationships between Māori students and their teachers are helping to promote a more settled school tone. Students welcome opportunities to explore Māoritanga in their classroom learning and are proud of their heritage. Te reo Māori and kapa haka further support success for Māori students.

MoE external professional development is in place to promote teacher learning and development. Further external advice and support is required to accelerate Māori student learning. The board has improved consultation with the Māori community and the school has begun to explore the possibilities for a bilingual unit. The timing of, and staffing for, this development require careful consideration and effective management to ensure positive outcomes for students.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

The school is currently not well placed to sustain and improve its performance. At the request of the board, ERO will continue to work alongside the school over the next 1-2 years to help the school improve internal evaluation systems. External advice and support is required to develop robust evaluation approaches that inform school improvement.

School leadership is not effectively promoting a positive working environment. In October 2015, the board commissioned an external review of the professional work environment and the school's communication with the community. This identified a number of key recommendations for trustees and leaders to address in order to improve outcomes for students. Regular formal reviews of staff and student wellbeing should better inform school decision making.

The board are seeking external support from the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA). Additional ongoing advice and support from the MoE would also be helpful for trustees. ERO appreciates the boards and school leaders' willingness to work constructively to improve student outcomes. ERO will also continue to offer support for the school.

School leaders and trustees should strengthen the quality of reporting to ensure the school fully meets its legal responsibilities. A number of matters relating to health and safety, and quality assurance require addressing. Additional training for the board would be welcome and useful.

## 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.

In order to meet its obligations, the board must:

1. develop a programme of self-review that enables the board to be assured about the effectiveness of its own and school operations including:
  - the provision of a safe physical and emotional environment for students and staff
  - regular monthly financial reporting to the board
  - the provision for students with special needs and the use of the Special Education Grant
  - the patterns and trends in student achievement and the effectiveness of the curriculum

*National Administration Guidelines 1, 2b, 5, 6; s25 Education Act; Crown Entities Act s 168*

2. ensure it acts as a good employer including completion of a performance agreement and the regular appraisal of the principal

*National Administration Guideline, 3, State Sector Act s7*

3. complete appropriate property plans

*National Administration Guideline, 4.*

In order to improve practice the board and school leaders should also review the appropriateness of the material presented to board at student discipline hearings and further document the resolution of complaints.

## **Recommendations to other agencies**

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education provide external advice and support to the board of trustees and school leaders to improve personnel management, governance and accelerate student learning.

## **Conclusion**

Whangaroa College has improved the school learning environment to support student engagement in education. The board and school leaders are considering how best to address the current challenges to accelerate student learning and promote a positive working environment. They are in agreement with ERO's decision to continue support for the school.

ERO intends to carry out another review over the course of one-to-two years.



Graham Randell  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

8 June 2016

## About the School

Location	Kaeo, Northland	
Ministry of Education profile number	4	
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 15)	
School roll	139	
Gender composition	Boys 60%	Girls 40%
Ethnic composition	Māori Pākehā	80% 20%
Review team on site	March 2016	
Date of this report	8 June 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Special Review	May 2013 December 2010 September 2009