

# Somerset Crescent School - 05/12/2016

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## 1 Context

Somerset Crescent School in Palmerston North caters for students in Years 1 to 6.

At the time of this review, the roll of 231 students included just under half who are Māori and a third Pacific. The school recognises Rangitane as mana whenua. Some students are learners of English as a second language, many in their early years at the school. There are several high needs students.

The school's involvement in Ministry of Education initiatives includes focuses on raising achievement in mathematics and writing, and Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L).

## 2 Equity and excellence

The vision and valued outcomes defined by the school for all children are to: raise the bar and strive for excellence in order to achieve their dreams. Students are encouraged to celebrate

differences, foster a passion for learning and pursue excellence. All aspects of school life are underpinned by the values of U-ROCK: U – You! Respect, On to it behaviour, Co-operation and Kindness.

The school's 2015 National Standards achievement information shows that the majority of students achieve at or above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

Schoolwide achievement in writing and mathematics has significantly improved since the September 2013 ERO evaluation. In reading overall, it has remained the same. Māori and Pacific students' overall achievement is generally similar to that of the whole school. Two thirds of the school roll is boys who achieve much higher than the girls in mathematics, but lower in literacy. School targets for improvement appropriately focus on groups most in need of acceleration.

Most students identified in the school's achievement targets for 2015 successfully reached their goals. Leaders have identified that continuing to improve reading in the junior years and mathematics for the seniors is the priority for 2016. They are responding to Year 6 data showing that while more than three quarters of these students are successfully achieving the National Standards in reading, around half who left the school in the past two years had not met the Standards in writing and mathematics.

Reported overall teacher judgements about students' achievement, in relation to the National Standards, for midyear 2016 indicate continued improvement.

Since the previous ERO evaluation, the school has focused on improving outcomes for students in literacy and mathematics. Teachers have participated in whole-school professional learning and development (PLD) aimed at building their knowledge and understanding of effective strategies that accelerate the progress of at risk learners. Leadership has encouraged collaborative practice to create conditions that more effectively promote collective responsibility for raising achievement.

### 3 Accelerating achievement

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

The school is continuing to develop its response to Māori students whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

Schoolwide National Standards achievement information informs strategic planning and actions that are intended to respond to learners whose progress needs acceleration. Māori students whose progress requires acceleration are identified at class, team and board levels, and targeted for additional support.

The school's data shows that most Māori students who were included in the charter targets in 2015 made progress. Some reporting to the board in 2016 comments on the progress of target students.

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

The school is continuing to develop its response to other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

Pacific students' overall achievement in relation to National Standards has improved significantly in mathematics since the previous ERO evaluation. However, school data shows that improvement to Pacific students' reading and writing achievement was not sustained from 2014 to 2015. Pākehā learners collectively have improved their achievement in literacy and numeracy over recent years.

Pacific students who were included in targets in 2015 showed good progress and, in many cases, accelerated progress. Teachers' classroom targets have been broadened in 2016 to include all children who are achieving below expectations.

Teachers work collaboratively, sharing strategies and practices that successfully promote better learning outcomes. Regular team meetings discuss data and moderate judgements about students' achievement in relation to National Standards. Teachers use a selection of assessment tools, observations and anecdotal evidence as the basis for their assessment judgements for reading, writing and mathematics.

New approaches to the schoolwide teaching of mathematics have been carefully considered and are supported by PLD. Teachers report that these approaches have a positive impact on children's learning. Changes in assessment practices place more emphasis on observations and anecdotal evidence to capture students' learning.

Leaders have identified, and ERO agrees, that it is timely to review aspects of assessment practices in literacy and mathematics. A next step is to strengthen teachers' and leaders' use of achievement information to:

- inform responsive teaching decisions
- show progress and achievement
- contribute to making overall assessment judgements about achievement
- evaluate the impact of practices, programmes and initiatives.

Clearer and more accurate information about the progress and accelerated progress, particularly of targeted students, should better enable the school to improve its response to all students who are at risk of underachievement.

## 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 targets for equity and excellence?

Many aspects of 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.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, with a strong focus on literacy and mathematics, supporting students to learn within the context of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. The school's vision and values are clearly enacted and underpin all aspects of school life. Guiding documents express how the valued outcomes for students can be promoted through relevant contexts for learning.

Student wellbeing is a priority and respectful relationships are evident across the school. Students learn in a highly supportive, inclusive and welcoming school culture, where a sense of connection and belonging is promoted. Children work collaboratively and cooperatively. Tuakana teina, children learning from each other, is clearly evident. Senior students have leadership opportunities through a young leaders' programme.

There is a clear structure and framework for teaching and learning. Building students' engagement, ownership and ability to talk about their learning is a school focus for ongoing development. Teachers value and increasingly integrate students' culture, language and identity into the curriculum to promote success for all. This is evident in:

- the Tauparapara initiative that establishes a platform for belonging, valuing cultural identity and a common purpose
- integration of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori into school the curriculum
- valuing Pacific languages and identity
- an annual language and cultural festival.

There is an appropriate range of support for students with additional needs. Those with high needs learn alongside their peers in the classroom where possible. Collaborative action plans for these students are suitable and well developed. Parents receive regular feedback about progress towards their child's goals.

Reports to parents provide clear information about their child's achievement in relation to National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. These include next steps for learning and suggestions about how parents can support their child's learning at home.

Leaders have established a clear vision and direction for the school. They have prioritised a positive environment that promotes learning and supports wellbeing. They articulate priorities for

improvement and promote a school climate of trust and collaboration that values diversity. Leaders have supported teachers effectively to develop their knowledge of culturally responsive practices. They seek to improve teaching practice and outcomes for students through support and PLD.

Staffing and resourcing has been organised to promote students' engagement and achievement. Schoolwide PLD is well considered and aligns with identified priorities for improvement. Externally facilitated PLD programmes have had an impact on changing teachers' practice and have contributed to improved success for students.

Performance management processes have been further developed. A new model to support teachers to inquire into the effectiveness of their practice has been introduced and, in 2016, includes a focus on improving the engagement of students in mathematics. The school should continue to strengthen the use of achievement information within appraisal and inquiry processes to better show the impact of changes in practice on further improving outcomes for students.

The school enjoys good relationships with its community. Links are well established with local marae, other schools and early childhood services. A range of strategies promote effective communication. Parents and whānau engage with the school through a variety of cultural activities and sports, and opportunities to build their understanding of their child's learning.

A wide range of community partnerships extend opportunities for students to become more confident and actively involved learners. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to extend partnerships with parents and whānau to support student learning. Formalising opportunities for consultation with parents will enable their views to contribute to the school's strategic decision making.

The school continues to build its capacity to understand what works and what makes a bigger difference for all learners. Self-review processes seek improvement to students' achievement, school systems and practices. Systems identify what has contributed to schoolwide gains in student achievement.

The next step is to further strengthen systematic use of evidence-based evaluation to measure the impact of teaching practices and programmes. This should enable the school to better measure the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching in accelerating student progress, and support the school to sustain and continue to improve its performance.

## 5 Going forward

### How well placed is the school to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it?

Leaders and teachers:

- know the children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated
- respond to the strengths, needs and interests of each child
- regularly evaluate how teaching is working for these children
- need to systematically act on what they know works for each child
- need to have a plan in place to build teacher capability to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it.

Action: The board, principal and teachers should use the findings of this evaluation, *the Effective School Evaluation* resource, the *Internal Evaluation: Good Practice* exemplars and the *School Evaluation Indicators* to develop more targeted planning to accelerate student achievement.

Planning should show how processes and practices will respond effectively to the strengths and needs of children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated.

As part of this review ERO will continue to monitor the school's planning and the progress the school makes.

ERO is likely to carry out the next full 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 Recommendation

Leaders and teachers should further strengthen:

- assessment practices to clearly show students' learning and progress
- teachers' assessment judgements about students' achievement in relation to the National Standards
- teaching practices to respond to individual needs
- use of achievement information within appraisal and inquiry processes
- systematic use of evidence-based evaluation to measure the impact of teaching practices and programmes.
- consultation with parents to enable them to contribute to the school's strategic decisionmaking.

Joyce Gebbie

Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

5 December 2016

## About the school

Location	Palmerston North	
Ministry of Education profile number	2363	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	231	
Gender composition	Girls 36%, Boys 64%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	49%
	Pacific	29%
	Pākehā	20%
	Other ethnic groups	2%

Review team on site	September 2016	
Date of this report	5 December 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	September 2013
	Education Review	October 2010
	Education Review	June 2007