



## ERO External Evaluation

### Somerset School, Palmerston North

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for students. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

### School Context

Somerset Crescent School in Palmerston North caters for students in Years 1 to 6. At the time of this review, the roll of 233 students includes 51% Māori and 24% of Pacific heritage.

Several changes have occurred to staffing, including the appointment of a principal in 2017 and senior leader in Term 3, 2018. The board is comprised of long serving and newly elected trustees.

The school's mission states '*We work toward achieving our dreams We are raising the bar.*'

The school is currently involved in a Ministry of Education initiative focused on developing mathematical inquiry.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board school wide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement and progress in reading, writing and numeracy.

### Evaluation Findings

#### 1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

##### 1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

Senior leaders are in the initial stages of reviewing assessment practice to strengthen their understanding of how well the school achieves equitable and excellent outcomes for all its learners.

Current assessments show most students enter school requiring their achievement to be accelerated in reading, writing and mathematics to meet expected levels. Progress for year groups overtime shows increased numbers of students achieve these expected levels by the end of Year 6.

Reported achievement at the end of 2018 showed approximately half of students achieved at or above expectations in aspects of reading and writing. Multiplication and division results showed a similar pattern with greater numbers achieving expected levels in addition and subtraction. Outcomes for Māori students demonstrate a similar pattern to achievement overall. Girls achieve slightly higher than boys in literacy.

Many Pacific students are English language learners. Their progress is tracked individually.

## 1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

Further developments to assessment and teacher practice are required to increase the effectiveness of the school in responding to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

In 2018, data for students targeted to raise their achievement in aspects of reading, showed many accelerated their progress. Data in writing for targeted students in Years 4 and 6, showed most made progress with fewer numbers accelerating their achievement.

## 2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

### 2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Senior leaders and trustees collaboratively pursue the vision and values of the school. Their internal reflection has identified relevant priorities for ongoing development. Restructured leadership roles provide greater clarity of responsibilities and expectations to achieve the school's priorities. Systems have been developed to ensure children with special and additional needs are regularly monitored to inform a timely response and support evaluation. Professional learning and development (PLD) is suitably focused on building teacher practice and aligned to shared expectations.

A wide range of well-considered strategies and actions ensure students with complex learning needs receive equity in their learning opportunities. School personnel are highly committed to promote the holistic development of all learners and advocate for families and whānau. School culture and daily actions affirm and support the social and emotional competencies of learners. Individual education plans are used appropriately to plan, monitor and review the specific goals of students with high needs. Additional personnel and specialist external knowledge is resourced and well used to promote learner engagement, progress and achievement. Well considered strategies encourage parent and whānau engagement in partnerships to promote student learning.

The school environment is highly inclusive of students, parents, families and whānau. The shared values of '*U-ROCK: U – You! Respect, On to it behaviour, Co-operation and Kindness*' are evident in interactions. A wide range of well-considered strategies encourage positive behaviour for learning (PB4L) and underpin the conditions to promote purposeful engagement and participation at school. Senior student leadership is valued for their contribution to the school culture. The promotion of relational teaching creates a caring and welcoming classroom environment. Student success and events of significance are celebrated and acknowledged collectively.

The school demonstrates a purposeful response to the cultural identities of students, families and whānau. *Tauparapara* and regular involvement in cultural activities celebrates Māori and Pacific languages and cultures. Pōwhiri and performing arts are valued learning opportunities for students to demonstrate their pride to their whānau and wider community. Cultural diversity is celebrated making connections to learners' lives and encouraging a strong sense of belonging at school.

## 2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Assessment practices require further development to support the school in promoting equity and excellence for students. Implementing robust assessment tools to cover the breadth of the curriculum levels should be undertaken as a first step. Improved assessments should then be used to strengthen teaching, learning, moderation and reporting practices.

Teaching requires further development. Involvement in PLD, observation of practice and teaching inquiry should be aligned to ensure teaching is strengthened to meet the school's priorities.

The curriculum requires review to determine priorities for learning and establish expectations for delivery of core and contributing subjects. Leaders are currently reviewing the school values with the community to establish their key priorities. Development of a localised curriculum should ensure greater consistency of practice and provide a foundation of expectations that can be used to inform ongoing evaluation.

Leaders seek ongoing improvement. They are in the initial stages of implementing changes to increase student achievement and further develop teacher and curriculum practices that promotes increased learner agency. As development occurs, the school should align evaluation and inquiry processes to establish the impact of these changes on targeted learner outcomes.

## 3 Board Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the board 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
- finance
- 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 and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the Children's Act 2014.

#### **4 ERO's Overall Judgement**

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Somerset School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Developing

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

#### **5 Going forward**

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- inclusive practices that support the meaningful engagement of students, families and whānau
- strategies and actions that ensure a purposeful response to students with complex needs
- leaders and trustee's working collaboratively to strengthen structures and processes that are aimed to increase equitable and excellence for students
- cultural inclusion that encourages a strong sense of belonging at school.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are to:

- build assessment tools to strengthen teaching, learning, moderation and reporting
- enhance teaching capability to meet the specific learning needs of students
- review and re-development of the localised curriculum to establish valued outcomes and support consistency in delivery
- align evaluation and inquiry practice to determine the impact of introduced changes on strengthening equity and excellence for learners.



Phillip Cowie  
Director Review and Improvement Services Central  
Central Region  
3 July 2019

## About the school

Location	Palmerston North								
Ministry of Education profile number	2363								
School type	Contributing school (Years 1 to 6)								
School roll	233								
Gender composition	Male 57%, Female 43%								
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Maori</td> <td>51%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NZ European/Pākehā</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic groups</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> </table>	Maori	51%	Pacific	24%	NZ European/Pākehā	21%	Other ethnic groups	4%
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Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes								
Provision of Māori medium education	No								
Review team on site	May 2019								
Date of this report	3 July 2019								
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table> <tr> <td>Education Report</td> <td>December 2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Report</td> <td>September 2013</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>October 2010</td> </tr> </table>	Education Report	December 2016	Education Report	September 2013	Education Review	October 2010		
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