

Kea Street Specialist School Education Review

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1 Context

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

Kea Street Specialist School's mission statement is expressed in Māori, Samoan and English:

Ma te kotahitanga Ka Ako
Ma te Kotahitanga Ka Manaaki

Tatou galulue fa'atasi
Tatou fetausia'i fa'atasi

Together we learn
Together we care

There is a focus to provide purposeful and meaningful opportunities to enable students to reach their full potential and to take their place as valued and respected members of the community. This focus is highly evident in the school curriculum.

The school provides education for students with intellectual and physical disabilities from the greater Rotorua and Taupō area. It caters for students receiving Ministry of Education (MOE) Ongoing Resource Scheme funds aged between five and 21 years. Students are learning at the Kea Street base school in the western area of Rotorua, and at satellite classes located at Mountview School in Taupō, Kaitao Intermediate School, Malfroy School, Western Heights Primary School and Owkata School.

Since the 2011 ERO review the school's roll has increased to 68 students, 40 of whom are identified as Māori. A new board chairperson and three new trustees have been elected to the board. Three new teachers and many new teacher aides have been appointed. Upgrades to the outdoor environment have resulted in improved safety for staff and students at Kea Street. A new playground has enhanced the learning environment for students at Owkata School. Specialist therapists and teachers continue to make a significant contribution to the education of students and support for families and whānau.

In September 2014 the MOE appointed a Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) to support the board to resolve issues related to employment, communication, finances, and board systems and processes. At the time of the on-site stage of this ERO review the LSM was completing his scoping report for the MOE. A MOE Specialist Services Standards (SSS) report in October 2014 identified a significant number of standards not being met and required the school to develop an action plan to address these. The SSS team will return within 12 months to evaluate the school's progress towards meeting these standards.

2 Learning

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

The school has implemented useful frameworks and processes that guide teachers in the development of individual education plans (IEPs) for each student. These plans are developed in partnership with specialist teachers, teacher aides, families and whānau. Teaching teams make good use of IEPs to provide meaningful programmes that respond to the diverse interests and changing needs of students. Student successes, progress and development is regularly monitored and shared with families and the teaching teams.

The deputy principal responsible for curriculum and assessment collates and analyses school-wide student achievement in relation to the IEPs and reports these findings to the board of trustees. Teachers value the support and guidance they receive from her for aspects of curriculum and assessment. An important step for ongoing development is for trustees and school leaders to make specific use of school-wide achievement information to inform self review and decision-making, including setting charter goals and targets.

Teachers reflect on their practice and use a range of evidence to support their assessments of student progress. Individual student profile books are attractively presented with photographic and anecdotal evidence of learning and progress. These records are highly valued by families and students. A next step is for teachers to recognise and include each child's language, culture and identity in their individual portfolios.

The school has five Pacific students and aspects of their culture are highly evident in the environment and programme. Pacific students and families would benefit from being welcomed into the school by members of the school's community who have a knowledge and understanding of their culture. This is likely to increase the engagement and wellbeing of Pacific students. Management should now implement the MOE Pasifika Education Plan.

3 Curriculum

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

Students benefit from a broad and rich curriculum that engages them in personalised learning. The school's curriculum is clearly documented and provides appropriate expectations and guidelines for its implementation. Priority is placed on integrating key competencies identified in The New Zealand Curriculum that promote the attributes of life-long learning. Student learning and well being is enhanced through positive and trusting relationships amongst teaching teams and students.

There are high expectations for students and their successes and milestones are affirmed and celebrated. ERO observed skilled teaching teams making use of a wide range of effective strategies that respond to students' diverse personalities and learning preferences. Senior students told ERO of their enjoyment of learning and their appreciation of the positive relationships they experience with the teaching teams.

Under the leadership of the principal, the curriculum has been extended to make greater use of the local and wider community. Theme-based learning has been introduced and integrates many aspects of the curriculum. Specialists and teaching teams make good use of community facilities to provide meaningful learning in real-life contexts. Students are motivated by the use of technology as interesting tools for engaging in and extending their learning.

An important part of the curriculum is the emphasis on meeting the health and care needs of students, and increasing their understanding of healthy eating. The school curriculum is inclusive and recognises the importance of family and whānau participation in:

- celebrating student learning
- regular social events
- displays of students' artistic and creative abilities.

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

Māori language, culture and identity are valued and evident in the life of the school. Māori students experience success as Māori by the inclusion of:

- tangata whenua sharing their knowledge of the history, culture and protocols of Te Arawa with students, staff, families and whānau
- powhiri to welcome visitors
- meaningful integration of te reo Māori in some classrooms

- kapahaka, waiata and tikanga Māori
- a recent marae visit and noho marae for senior students
- kāumatua participation and leadership.

An area for ongoing development is for school leaders to implement and align current best practices with the MOE documents Ka Hikitia and Tātaiako into school systems and practices.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

ERO observed positive relationships and interactions between the principal, students and families. The principal has supported a number of initiatives that contribute to positive outcomes for students. Trustees are committed to ongoing school improvement. They have a useful range of skills and expertise and work in the best interests of students and their families.

During this review however, a significant number of staff members expressed concern to ERO about key aspects of school leadership, and the lack of open and transparent communication within the school.

To support school improvement and sustainability there is an urgent need for the board and principal, with the guidance of the LSM to:

- develop and implement a strategic plan that reflects the aspirations of parents, whānau, and the wider school community
- implement robust self-review practices that enable the board and school leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of school operations
- review personnel management practices
- effectively address the recommendations of the SSS report
- review systems and processes for managing school finances and property
- build a positive school-wide culture that recognises and values the contributions of all members of the staff and trustees.

Ongoing training for trustees and professional development for the principal is necessary to build their understanding of these important areas for development.

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 review ERO noted an area of non compliance.

A. The principal must have a signed, annual performance agreement.
[National Administration Guidelines 3(b), s 77C State Sector Act 1988, Principals' Primary Collective Agreement]

Recommendations to other agencies

ERO recommends that the Secretary for Education consider continuing the intervention under Part 7A of the Education Act 1989 in order to bring about improvements in:

- governance
- leadership and school management
- personnel management
- financial management.

Conclusion

At Kea Street students learn in a caring and responsive environment with dedicated teaching teams, and guidance from specialist teachers. Although trustees and senior leaders are benefitting from the involvement of a Limited Statutory Manager, there are ongoing issues linked to management that need to be addressed.

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

Dale Bailey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

12 February 2015

School Statistics

Location	Rotorua	
Ministry of Education profile number	1772	
School type	Special School	
School roll	68	
Gender composition	Boys 45 Girls 23	
Ethnic composition	Māori	40
	NZ European/Pakeha	18
	Indian	3
	Tongan	2
	Fijian	1
	Samoan	1
	Tokelauan	1
	Other Asian	1
	Other European	1
Review team on site	November 2014	
Date of this report	12 February 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	October 2011
	Education Review	October 2008
	Education Review	November 2005