

# Mokau School Education Review

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## About the School

Location	Mokau, Taranaki	
Ministry of Education profile number	2200	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	26	
Gender composition	Boys 14 Girls 12	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	15
	Māori	11
Review team on site	August 2013	
Date of this report	8 October 2013	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	September 2010
	Education Review	September 2007
	Education Review	June 2004

## 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?

Mokau School is a rural school situated in the coastal township of Mokau on the north western boundary of Maniapoto and te iwi o Tainui. The roll has remained consistent at 26 students with 11 identified as being of Māori descent. A number of families and whānau have intergenerational relationships with the school and community. The school motto 'Together we can do it' is clearly evident in the high expectations that teachers and families have for student participation and learning. There has been considerable change to staffing and board membership since 2012.

The new first-time principal took up his position in August 2012. A teacher with experience in teaching senior students was also appointed in 2012. A new board chairperson with previous experience on the board has been elected and is supported by a group of newly-elected and continuing board members.

Trustees have participated in some training and are enthusiastic about their governance roles. Governance manuals are being developed for each board member. Clear roles and responsibilities are delegated and a positive working partnership has been established with the principal. The principal and trustees work in the best interests of students and the school's community.

The school is well maintained and presented. Significant improvements have been made to the outdoor environment, including a newly established 'Wild Side' wilderness area. Students have benefited from new information and communication technology (ICT) tools for learning.

The previous ERO report identified the need for the school to further develop inquiry learning and teaching as inquiry. This continues to be an area for growth and development for the new teaching team.

## 2 Learning

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

Teachers use an appropriate range of assessment tools to gather information about student learning in all curriculum areas. The school reports that at the end of 2012 a significant majority of students were achieving at or above National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Māori students achieve at similar levels to their non-Māori peers and in some cases at higher levels.

Students requiring support for their learning are identified and provided with appropriate reading programmes with an experienced and trained teacher aide. Specialist agencies are regularly consulted and students benefit from individual education programmes. Specific interventions, and positive support from classroom teachers, result in the majority of these students making good progress in their learning.

The board of trustees makes good use of this information to set priorities for student outcomes in strategic and annual planning. A next step is to develop a planned approach of how the targets will be achieved and what resources will be allocated to support this plan. Trustees provide generous funds for staffing to meet student needs.

Teachers have attended professional development in mathematics and assessment which has led to improved levels of success for students. Teachers have reviewed and strengthened reporting to parents in relation to National Standards, other curriculum areas and the key competencies. They meet regularly for professional discussion and share useful information about student learning. The teaching team maintains a focus on positive outcomes for students and their families.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum is in the early stages of development. Changes in leadership and teaching staff make this an opportune time to review, and clearly define the Mokau School curriculum in consultation with the community. This should ensure clear school direction and continuity for student learning.

Teachers have reviewed aspects of the school timetable and routines to provide more quality time for teaching literacy and numeracy, and to respond to children's identified needs. Students have many opportunities to integrate their learning with meaningful experiences in the outstanding natural environment that surrounds the school. The community contributes local expertise and knowledge to enrich the curriculum for students, particularly cultural experiences, creativity and natural science.

ERO observed examples of good quality teaching and learning practices. Positive, respectful relationships and high expectations for student success and behaviour have been established and are well understood by the students and families. Teachers make good use of teaching strategies to guide student thinking and problem solving. The classrooms are vibrant, well presented and resourced. Teachers provide students with meaningful contexts for learning and positive feedback about their learning. High quality work is displayed for student and parent viewing. Good use is made of ICT tools for learning, presentation and research purposes.

Student leadership is fostered as students take responsibility for meaningful roles in the life of the school, attend leadership programmes and events, and participate with other schools in sporting and cultural activities. Students are learning in a safe and inclusive environment. They are settled and confident and make many contributions to the life of the school. Families and whānau continue to work in close and supportive partnership with the school to enhance student learning and engagement.

#### Areas for review and development

It is important for the school to revisit, review and continue to develop and document a curriculum that provides programmes and learning pathways for mixed ages and abilities, particularly in the junior room. This is likely to support continuity for student learning through times of change.

There is a need for teachers to develop a clear, documented and well understood philosophy of teaching and learning at Mokau School.

Teachers need to further empower students in their learning through:

- setting clear and measureable targets and goals for priority learners
- planning for and assessing student achievement and progress in the junior school
- informing and assisting students to better understand their own levels of achievement and progress.

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

Māori students are confident learners. They benefit from strong engagement and contribution from parents and whānau. These students experience teaching and learning that is relevant, engaging and positive. The principal's release teacher is tangata whenua. Her skills, knowledge and expertise enhance Māori student identity, language and culture through the implementation of a relevant and meaningful basic te reo and tikanga Māori programme.

The annual plan has identified specific actions to increase knowledge and understanding of local Māori history and culture. There is an acknowledgement of Ka Hikitia and its importance for supporting future developments. Annual marae visits and opportunities to participate in pōwhiri and whakatau strengthen children's understanding of tikanga and Māori protocols.

The school should give attention to developing a planned approach to regular consultation with whānau and the Māori community. This will support the school to create and formalise educational pathways for Māori students, assist each student to achieve to their full potential and prepare them well for their next stage of learning.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school will require assistance to sustain and improve its performance.

There are many aspects of governance and management, such as self review, quality assurance and planning and reporting that require strengthening and consolidation. This also includes improving board meeting procedures and the documentation of discussion and decisions in the minutes.

The board requires ongoing development and support to govern the school, particularly in relation to:

- self review
- strategic planning and monitoring
- performance management.

The board should strengthen support of the principal as the school's professional leader by:

- ensuring delegations are appropriate and critical to achieving school management goals
- developing a performance agreement and appraisal process.

There are aspects of the principal's role as professional leader that require ongoing development and support. His participation in the First Time Principal's training course is not sufficient and his workload should be reviewed to ensure it is manageable and reasonable. Critical aspects of professional leadership requiring development are:

- more effective use of student achievement information in decision making
- development and implementation of a robust appraisal system for all staff
- curriculum 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.

Two areas of non compliance related to appraisal systems were noted during the review and need to be addressed.

A. The board of trustees must have an annual signed performance agreement with the principal and implement an effective appraisal system against the professional standards for principals.

[National Administration Guideline 3]

B. The principal must annually assess teachers against the professional standards and implement a robust appraisal system for all staff.

[National Administration Guideline 3]

### Recommendations to other agencies

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education provide support to bring about the following improvements in:

- trustees' understanding of school governance
- leadership for learning
- systems and processes for self review
- quality assurance and performance management
- curriculum development



- teaching as inquiry and formative assessment practices.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Dale Bailey  
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8 October 2013