

ERO External Evaluation

Greymouth High School, Greymouth

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

Greymouth High School is a co-educational school situated in a rural town on the West Coast of the South Island. It caters for students in Years 9 to 15 and has a current roll of 474 students.

The school's vision is to be the heart of learning within a thriving community. Its valued outcomes are for students to achieve highly, develop strong respectful relationships and make a positive difference throughout their lives.

The board's strategic goals focus on high levels of equity and excellence for all students, provision of a safe, inclusive and engaging learning environment, and developing community links through collaborative relationships. The annual achievement targets are to:

- accelerate writing progress for selected Year 9 boys across the curriculum
- improve skills for learning for selected Year 10 students across the curriculum
- increase achievement at National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 3
- increase Māori student success in NCEA.

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

- achievement within NCEA qualifications
- progress and achievement in literacy and mathematics in Years 9 and 10
- school leaver qualifications and destination data
- student wellbeing.

In 2015, an elected board replaced the Ministry of Education appointed commissioner. There have been some changes in staffing at senior leadership level and across staff since the 2015 ERO review.

The school is a member of the Māwhera Kāhui Ako | Community of learning. The principal has recently become the lead principal for this Kāhui Ako.

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?

The school is working towards achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all students. It is effective in achieving these for the majority of students in NCEA programmes and Year 9 and 10 literacy and mathematics. The school recognises that disparity for a number of boys and for Māori students continues, and is actively seeking to address this at a strategic level and within classrooms.

NCEA Level 1 roll-based achievement outcomes were well below national expectations in 2017. This followed three years of gains in relation to expected levels of achievement. The majority of students have achieved NCEA Level 2 qualifications over time. Level 3 NCEA achievement is lower than national expectations but is showing a positive improvement trajectory over time.

Progress and achievement information for 2017 shows the majority of Year 9, and most students in Year 10, achieved expectations in writing. These results show promising progress in student outcomes as a result of teacher involvement in writing professional development. Achievement outcomes for Year 9 and 10 reading and mathematics are lower than curriculum expectations.

Wellbeing information for Year 9 and 10 highlights some concerns regarding engagement in learning and the impact this is having on student outcomes.

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

The school is increasing the levels of acceleration for some Year 9 and Year 10 Māori students and boys. This is most evident in writing at Year 10. Some acceleration is also evident in mathematics. It is, however, less evident in reading for this group of students.

The school has a number of strategies in place to accelerate student outcomes and reduce disparity. They are working strategically with Mana Whenua and a number of educational networks, including the Māwhera Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning to devise better and more long term solutions to systemic disparity within the local and wider community.

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?

Strong professional leadership practices place students at the centre of priorities and decision making. The board has consulted widely and established clear strategic directions and plans. These are underpinned by a strong, future-focused vision and shared values. Trustees' commitment to continuing to build collective understanding of their stewardship roles is evident.

The principal and senior leaders effectively consult and implement processes and strategies to provide increasingly equitable and excellent outcomes for students. There has been considerable progress in response to the areas identified for improvement in the 2015 ERO report. Progress includes:

- increased engagement with Mana Whenua and Kāti Waewae to build more collaborative, ako based relationships
- more comprehensive use of achievement and wellbeing information to inform decision making at all levels of the school
- clear and consistent articulation of high expectations for teaching and learning, and strengthened accountability processes towards meeting these expectations.

Meaningful use of evaluation, inquiry practices and knowledge building for improvement are supporting positive outcomes for students. Teachers are inquiring more deeply into their practice and trialling different approaches as a result. These inquiries are well considered and aligned to the board's strategic goals. The teacher appraisal process is robust and effectively supports teachers' professional practice when appropriately implemented. Senior leaders and the board have used evaluation effectively to gain a more comprehensive picture of student achievement and curriculum responsiveness to students' needs.

There is a systematic approach to building leaders' and teachers' professional capability and collective capacity to enable positive outcomes for students. Involvement in several key educational networks is providing increased professional learning and development (PLD) opportunities. These are specifically targeted and aligned to the board's goals and priorities. A strategic approach to staffing is enabling the school to better meet a range of student needs. Staffing appointments have strengthened connections between home and school and improved the school's provision for Māori students.

Transparent and clear communications are increasingly contributing towards building a culture of trust within the school and its community. Positive relationships with students are actively fostered. Growing use of students' ideas and opinions is developing and, in some cases, effectively shaping the curriculum and students' choice within lessons. Engagement with the community and its resources is enhancing students' learning opportunities, achievement and wellbeing.

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

ERO has identified four key areas where improvements are needed to further promote equitable and excellent learning outcomes for students, and acceleration for those who need this. A number of these areas were also identified by the board, principal and senior leaders.

There is a need to continue to develop and implement a localised, integrated curriculum that focuses on personalised learning and the skills needed to be a successful learner. This includes promoting greater student ownership over their learning. Curriculum and pastoral care leaders need to take a stronger leadership role in enabling this to occur. Considerable commitment and collaboration from all leaders and teachers is required to ensure that the school's graduate profile is successful in promoting positive outcomes for learners.

A better understanding of what is contributing to outcomes and disparity for Māori needs to remain a priority. There is a need to further develop shared understandings and enactment of culturally responsive practices, to enhance outcomes for Māori and all students. This includes better integration of te ao Māori in the curriculum and increased use of Māori contexts and te reo Māori in classrooms.

The school's processes for reporting student achievement need further strengthening. Achievement information from different areas of the school is used for decision-making. The reporting processes to the board could be streamlined to provide trustees with clear, well analysed overviews of achievement, progress and acceleration. In addition, the board should review its approach to setting and monitoring its annual student achievement targets so these better support outcomes for students, especially where disparity is identified.

Senior leaders and middle management need to ensure closer alignment between learning and wellbeing provision for students. There needs to be greater collaboration between curriculum and pastoral care leaders. Processes for meeting the needs of students with moderate learning needs requires further strengthening.

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 Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- very strong and strategic leadership and a committed board
- a growing culture of reflective practice and evaluation where individual teachers are making a difference
- its powerful connections with Mana Whenua, Māwhera Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning and other community and education clusters and networks.

Next steps

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

- fully implementing a responsive, engaging curriculum that increases students' opportunities to have their learning and wellbeing needs met
- continuing to address areas of underachievement and disparity within the context of the school and its community
- strengthening teachers' understanding and use of culturally responsive practices.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

ERO is likely to carry out the next external evaluation in three years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Wynyard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alan Wynyard
Director Review & Improvement Services
Southern Region

12 February 2019

About the school

Location	Greymouth
Ministry of Education profile number	303
School type	Secondary, Years 9-15
School roll	474
Gender composition	Boys 53% : Girls 47%
Ethnic composition	Māori 16% Pākehā 78% Pacific 2% Other ethnicities 4%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	November 2018
Date of this report	12 February 2019
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review October 2015 Education Review April 2014 Education Review February 2013