

# Kaitaia Abundant Life School Education Review

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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

## About The School

Location	Kaitaia, Northland
Ministry of Education profile number	238
School type	Composite, state integrated (Year 1-15)
Decile rating[1]	2
Teaching staff:	18.82
Roll generated entitlement	1
Other	22
Number of teachers	
School roll	231
Gender composition	Boys 51%, Girls 49%,
Ethnic composition	Māori 63%, NZ European/Pākehā 30%, other European 4%, other 3%
Review team on site	April and May 2009
Date of this report	18 June 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, June 2006 Education Review, March 2003 Accountability Review, July 1999 Assurance Audit, October 1995 In Action Report, October 1993

## The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

The board, principal and senior managers of Kaitaia Abundant Life School are focused on providing educational opportunities within a Christian context to support young people to achieve academic and personal excellence. Since the 2006 ERO report the school has undergone considerable development. The new principal has led a lot of positive changes in the school and there is a strong focus on school improvement and student achievement. A notable improvement has been the significant focus on integrating te reo and tikanga Māori into the school culture and learning programmes. Considerable consultation has taken place to set the future direction and vision for the school.

Students enjoy and appreciate the inclusive and supportive learning environment and culture of respect in the school. They are enthusiastic learners and demonstrate good levels of engagement. Students appreciate the range of learning and leadership opportunities that are provided and the support they receive from teachers. Many teachers make concerted efforts to use relevant and interesting learning contexts to engage students in their learning. Achievement data collected in 2008 indicate that most students achieve very well in the senior school and make good progress over the year. Student achievement data also indicate that Māori students are achieving very well, and have very high levels of achievement in NCEA when compared to other Māori students nationally.

Teachers participate in whole-school and individual professional development opportunities, with positive outcomes evident from the focus on formative assessment. They have positive relationships with students, use good classroom management strategies and have begun to use some effective teaching strategies to support student engagement in the learning process. Teachers use a range of reliable assessment tools well and work collaboratively to analyse student achievement data to inform teaching and learning. The next step for teachers is to increase and strengthen the use of strategies to involve students in their learning.

The principal provides reflective and responsive leadership. The restructuring of the senior management team has been a positive move, with the team now including two deputy principals and three heads of department. Responsibilities for school-wide curriculum, assessment and pastoral care of students are shared between the two deputy principals. Senior managers have established clear guidelines to promote sound and consistent school-wide planning and assessment. Significant improvements have been made in the secondary part of the school to ensure that the national requirements for managing the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are met.

Trustees are well informed about the school's programmes and development and student progress and achievement. They have strong links with the local community. Very good consultation and networking processes assist trustees to gauge parent opinion and gain

insight into local community perspectives. The board successfully meets its governance undertakings and has established sound review and reporting systems for monitoring school operations and development. The board, the principal and staff are well positioned to sustain and enhance the quality of education they provide for students.

This report affirms the positive changes that have been made in the school since the appointment of the new principal in 2007. The report recommends that teachers focus on strengthening the use of formative assessment practices in the school and that the board further increase the provision of resources to support student learning and achievement.

### Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO is likely to review the school again in three years.

## The Focus Of The Review

### Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

#### Primary: Years 1 to 8

Teachers use a variety of reliable assessment tools in literacy and numeracy. Staff have high expectations for students in these learning areas and set annual targets that align with or exceed national expectations.

Senior staff comprehensively analyse achievement data and report to the board on trends and patterns for each year level, including ethnicity and gender. The 2008 analysis of variance of Year 1 to 8 student achievement in literacy and numeracy showed that the majority of goals were met in these learning areas. Through their analysis, senior managers know which groups of students do not reach national expectations or school goals, and take appropriate steps to address these students' learning needs.

#### Secondary: Years 9 to 13

In 2008, Year 9 and 10 achievement data were collected in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading data for these students indicate that they are not achieving according to national expectations. Writing data indicate that Year 9 and 10 students are achieving at or above national averages. In mathematics, Year 9 students are not achieving national averages, while Year 10 student achievement was similar to national averages. Senior managers and teachers are focused on making more effective use of achievement data to plan programmes to meet students' learning needs more specifically.

A notable success for students in 2008 is that National Qualifications Framework (NQF) data indicate that all students who sat Levels 1, 2 and 3 National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) achieved these qualifications. These data indicate that achievement at Levels 1, 2 and 3 is well above that of students in similar types of schools and also well above national averages.

Student achievement in NCEA has improved considerably in the last three years. In 2006 and 2007, just over 60% of students in Year 11 achieved the Level 1 qualification and in 2008, this rose to 100%. In 2006, 33% of students achieved the Level 2 qualification, 40% in 2007 and 100% in 2008. Similar increases in achievement have been made from 2006 to 2008 in the

Level 3 qualification, with 11% achieving Level 3 in 2006, 71% in 2007 and 100% in 2008. The senior manager for secondary school students established a mentoring programme in 2008 to monitor student progress more closely throughout the year. Close analysis of student achievement data and the evident strengths and learning needs of students is undertaken in order to provide learning programmes that are well matched to students' learning needs.

## School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Kaitaia Abundant Life School was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and selfreview information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Kaitaia Abundant Life School.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus area for the review:

- the quality of teaching and learning, with a focus on the effective use of student achievement information.

ERO's findings in this area are set out below.

## Background

The 2006 ERO report recommended that a more coherent school-wide curriculum should be developed. It also recommended school-wide coordination and direction related to assessment and student achievement. This report finds that good progress has been made in each of these areas. The board and senior management team selected the quality of teaching and learning, with a focus on the effective use of student achievement information, as the focus for this review to ascertain the progress that has been made in teacher use of achievement data.

## Student progress and achievement

For student achievement, refer to the section about student achievement overall.

## Areas of good performance

Student engagement. Students display high levels of engagement in learning. In the majority of classrooms, they are interested in their learning and participate enthusiastically in lessons.

Well-established classroom routines help students to work well both independently and co-operatively. Students report that teachers have high expectations for their learning and behaviour and that they are provided with positive learning environments.

**Teacher planning.** Senior managers have established clear guidelines to promote sound and consistent school-wide planning. These include planning templates for units of work and regular meetings to monitor the quality of schemes of work in the secondary school. In the primary area, differentiated planning includes clear information about how teachers will cater for students' learning needs in reading and numeracy according to their levels of ability. Senior managers regularly monitor teacher planning. These expectations, guidelines and monitoring processes promote consistency and ensure that planning has the necessary detail to implement quality learning programmes for students.

**Catering for students' learning needs.** In the primary school, teachers make good use of standardised assessment tools to inform teaching and learning for individuals and groups of students in literacy and numeracy. A rigorous assessment schedule has been established and senior managers undertake comprehensive analysis of student achievement data. Teachers work collaboratively to reflect on the usefulness of different assessment tools and analyse achievement data to inform planning for literacy and numeracy.

In the secondary school, the senior manager and teachers review student achievement and progress in subject areas in order to provide learning programmes that are well matched to students' learning needs. Furthermore, the mentoring programme for all senior students helps teachers to track and monitor student engagement effectively. Progress and achievement are closely monitored and tracked throughout the year. The focus on catering for students' learning needs and ongoing monitoring of their progress promotes high levels of student engagement and achievement.

**Formative assessment practices.** There have been positive outcomes from the school's involvement in a professional development contract that focused on the use formative assessment to increase student engagement and raise student achievement. Most teachers identify the purpose of lessons clearly for students and provide them with verbal feedback about the quality of their work and information about their next learning steps. Some teachers provide or co-construct criteria with students, against which they can evaluate the quality of their work or the extent to which they have achieved the purpose of the lesson. In the secondary school, student achievement in NCEA is closely monitored throughout the year. The use of formative assessment practices is helping students to be more aware of and involved in their own learning and progress.

**Professional development.** Teachers are provided with a range of opportunities for school-wide and individual professional development. They work collaboratively to reflect on

the different initiatives and developments in the school such as curriculum review and rewriting schemes of work. Senior managers provide good support for teachers to administer assessments and analyse student achievement information. These professional development opportunities and the collegial approach to reviewing and reflecting on teaching practices ensure that there is an ongoing focus on programme improvement and promoting high levels of student engagement and achievement.

Effective teaching practice. Effective teaching practices noted during this review included:

- opportunities for students to discuss and share ideas;
- the skilful use of questioning techniques to link new learning to prior knowledge and to challenge students to think critically;
- building on students' interests and prior knowledge and experiences;
- the use of literacy strategies; and
- the use of interactive white boards and multi-media tools in some classrooms.

These teaching practices promote high levels of student interest and engagement in their learning.

### Areas for improvement

Specific target setting to raise student achievement. There are high expectations for student achievement and broad school-wide targets established annually in literacy and numeracy. School leaders could also consider using achievement data to set more specific targets for groups of students who are not achieving as well as they should. Smaller targets would focus teachers' attention on these students for specific teaching and close monitoring. They would also help to inform the decisions made by the board and senior managers about teacher professional development and resourcing.

Year 1 to 8 independent activities in numeracy. Students' independent work in numeracy could be further enhanced through senior managers improving teacher planning and resourcing of these activities. In their daily programme, teachers could help a group or groups of students to select from a wide range of activities that promote open problem solving, rather than offering predominantly practice tasks. Relevant computer programmes also could be researched for student use, that promote both numeracy knowledge and problem-solving skills. These improvements should ensure students have good opportunities to reinforce their knowledge as well as being able to question and explain through problem solving.

Further strengthening formative assessment. To further strengthen the use of formative assessment in teaching and learning programmes, teachers should provide students with:

- · levelled criteria for literacy and numeracy to help them identify their next learning steps and to record their progress;
- · more opportunities for self and peer assessment to help students evaluate their progress and learning;
- · more opportunities to reflect on and discuss their learning;
- · written feedback to ensure students receive focused comments against learning intentions and associated success criteria, and that identifies both progress made and next steps for learning; and
- · relevant learning resources and student groupings in the senior school to better support student understanding of their learning process

Reporting to parents. Senior managers and teachers should review how they report to parents. Currently student reports do not inform parents of how well their child is achieving against age-appropriate levels or national expectations. Consideration should also be given to aligning Year 9 and 10 reports to standards based assessment in order to make achievement criteria explicit for students and to prepare them for achievement in the NQF. Sharing achievement information with parents increases parents' knowledge about their children's progress and achievement.

Programme evaluation. Senior managers should consider further ways to evaluate learning programmes. Programme evaluation could include student feedback, resourcing implications, and student achievement and teacher expectations. Senior managers and teachers should develop shared understandings about how teachers evaluate learning programmes and the implications of these for student engagement and achievement.

## Areas Of National Interest

### Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of Kaitaia Abundant Life School ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

### The Teaching of Reading and Writing in Years 1 and 2

As part of this review ERO looked at how well teachers assess, plan and teach reading and writing to students in Years 1 and 2, and how well the school promotes high levels of student achievement in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.

#### Areas of good performance

**Student engagement.** Children are motivated and enjoy learning. Teachers use task boards so children know what is expected of them and they can take responsibility for engaging in activities. Children are able to make the best use of time to reinforce their skills and make progress in literacy programmes.

**Student achievement.** Teachers use a variety of reliable assessment tools in literacy to monitor children's progress at regular intervals throughout the year. Baseline data is also collected at entry level in Year 1. Particularly in reading, teachers use assessment data well to plan for children's needs. Data are comprehensively analysed for trends and patterns at each year level by the junior school head of department. All children's progress is well monitored and strategies are identified for teachers to address gaps in children's skills and knowledge. Children who are identified as not achieving as well as they should, receive additional support in literacy.

**Group teaching.** Teachers use good strategies during guided reading sessions with groups of children. They know the children and build on their interests and experiences when exploring text together. Teachers use open-ended questioning in their conversations with children. They

listen to children's responses. In these ways, teachers are ensuring children read for meaning and are building on their knowledge and skills.

Classroom environments. Classrooms are inviting environments. Children's work is celebrated in attractive displays. Appropriate prompts for supporting writing are displayed on walls or are available to children. Classrooms are well organised and children are easily able to access the resources they need.

Teacher support. Teachers receive good support to assess children, and plan and teach literacy programmes. They have clear documents that provide guidelines for school expectations and programme planning. Teachers receive internal school and external support to administer and analyse assessment tools. They also participate in relevant professional learning and development programmes to improve the teaching of literacy. Support and guidance is aligned to the appraisal process in which teachers can identify personal goals and receive ongoing feedback from senior managers on their progress.

### Areas for improvement

Resourcing to support reading programmes. Over recent years, senior managers have built on the school library and classroom resources to support learning in literacy. With support from the board, senior managers should continue to review and enhance resourcing, particularly the school and classroom libraries, and other instructional and independent reading resources for children. An improvement to the quality of classroom libraries and variety of reading resources will further enhance children's interest and progress in literacy programmes.

Student knowledge and reflection on their learning. Teachers use the Ministry of Education literacy learning progressions to monitor children's progress in writing. The learning progressions set directions for learning and teachers should use both the reading and writing frameworks as a teaching tool. Levelled criteria should be made available to children so that they know what they have achieved and what they need to master. Teachers are encouraged to use writing exemplars as another way of illustrating to children what criteria and qualities they should aspire to in their writing. These approaches will support children to be informed and responsible for their own learning.

### The Achievement of Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of Māori students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement.

## Areas of progress

Integrating a Māori dimension. The need for senior managers to include a more substantial Māori dimension in programmes was identified as an area for improvement in the 2006 ERO report. The school has undertaken a major drive to address this school-wide.

Māori dimensions are incorporated in curriculum planning at the junior and middle schools. This includes teaching of basic te reo Māori, unit studies and annual marae visits. Most teachers show an increasing confidence in their ability to include this dimension in their programmes and, in some rooms, bicultural perspectives are becoming embedded in teacher practice. In those classrooms, children respond positively to the incidental use of te reo Māori and to visual cues displayed around the rooms.

The board and principal have continued to seek a suitable teacher of te reo for the senior school. Presently senior managers are supporting the teaching of te reo Māori at Years 9 and 10. Māori students commented they would like the opportunity to take te reo Māori at senior levels.

Māori community consultation. Central to the school's mission statement is a commitment to partnership with parents. Since the last review the board has introduced new initiatives to consult with the Māori community. In 2007, the school held a community-wide consultation, with a focus on the Māori community, to identify and respond to the aspirations and expectations of the parents of Māori children. This was held on a local marae and led to the appointment of a cultural coordinator. The Māori community is represented on the school's board.

Cultural coordinator. A staff member with the appropriate knowledge, skills and enthusiasm has been appointed as the cultural coordinator. His main purpose is to increase the range of cultural events occurring within the school. The cultural coordinator also provides student pastoral care and school-wide support for te reo me ōna tikanga. These have included powhiri, whaikorero, school-wide kapa haka, professional development, teaching of te reo me ōna tikanga and noho marae. The need to ensure that this level of support is ongoing has been acknowledged by the principal.

School-wide initiatives. There is an increasing use of te reo in school assemblies and formal school events. Opportunities have been initiated by senior managers to increase staff capacity in te reo through professional development and a combined staff and board retreat. Māori/English dual signage has recently been installed around the school. The board and senior managers agree that they should continue to look at ways to reflect New Zealand's bicultural heritage in the school environment. Appropriate consideration is given to the Ministry of Education's Ka Hikitia document and there has been a focus at board, management and staff meetings on promoting the achievement of Māori students. The

principal has continued to keep abreast of professional development and research and thinking in this area. These developments contribute to the promotion of Māori student success.

Māori student success. Student achievement data indicate that Māori students are achieving very well. Of particular note are the very high levels of achievement in NCEA when compared to other Māori students nationally. Literacy and numeracy data collected in 2008 for Year 1-10 students indicate that Maori children are achieving at similar levels to non-Māori students. Māori students express their appreciation and enjoyment of kapa haka, whole school pōwhiri and the incorporation of Māori perspectives in the school. Over the last three years Māori students have been increasingly well represented in the school student leadership group. The school has invited past students and local prominent figures to speak as role models for students.

The high levels of Maori student participation in and enjoyment of the wider life of the school, and their positive attitudes to school and learning indicate that the teaching and learning programmes and the significant levels of teacher support, are having a very positive impact on Maori student engagement and achievement.

### Areas for further improvement

Improving collection and analysis of attendance data. The school's annual plan acknowledges that good attendance contributes to students' attitudes to, and engagement in, learning. Electronic systems have been introduced to provide reliable data on attendance. School managers are aware that they should improve their reporting on and build a shared responsibility for improving overall student attendance.

### The Achievement of Pacific Students

Kaitaia Abundant Life School has too few Pacific students to enable the reliable identification of achievement trends and patterns. Classroom teachers monitor the progress of each student individually and report this information to their parents as part of the school's regular reporting system.

### Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010

#### Progress to date

The school has made good preparation for the teaching of the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010. The steps taken have included:

- consultation with the staff and community in developing the school vision and values;

- · accessing relevant resources;
- · staff attendance at external workshops and school meetings; and
- · involving staff in developing and trialling curriculum delivery plans and planning templates that incorporate the key competencies.

### Next steps

The school has decided that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months are:

- · ongoing development and evaluation of the curriculum delivery plans and teacher planning;
- · introduction of junior school diplomas incorporating key competencies; and
- · consideration of how best to share with students and report to parents on the key competencies.

### Thinking about the Future

ERO is currently discussing with secondary schools how they are thinking about the future and what it might mean for their students.

The school reports that, after thinking about the future and what it might mean for students, it has done the following:

- · provided a professional development session in 2008 for teachers facilitated by an external provider that focused on preparing students for the future;
- · developed a Year 7 to 13 careers programme that focuses on meeting students' needs currently and in the future; and
- · integrated futures thinking themes such as globalisation, entrepreneurialism and innovation in different curriculum or subjects such as financial literacy, economics and business.

## Board Assurance On Compliance Areas

### Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Kaitaia Abundant Life School completed an ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. 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; and
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment);
- physical safety of students;
- teacher registration;
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions; and
- attendance.

Each school needs to acknowledge that bullying is a risk to be managed. The deputy principal in charge of pastoral care and the special character of the school has undertaken a survey focused on student safety in the school. This provides senior managers and the board with good initial information about student safety and a sound basis on which to monitor student safety in the future.

Attendance. It would be good practice for the principal to analyse and report attendance data to the board of trustees each term.

### Compliance

During the course of the review ERO identified one area of non-compliance. In order to address this the board of trustees must:

5.1 adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum, at least every two years, after consultation with the school community.

[Section 60B Education Act 1989].

## Recommendations

ERO and the board of trustees agree that:

6.1 senior managers and teachers should strengthen formative assessment practices to better inform students and parents about student progress and achievement; and

6.2 the board should focus on increasing the provision of literacy resources and information and communication technologies to further support student learning and achievement.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO is likely to review the school again in three years.

Signed

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

18 June 2009

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To the Parents and Community of Kaitaia Abundant Life School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Kaitaia Abundant Life School.

## Community Page

The board, principal and senior managers of Kaitaia Abundant Life School are focused on providing educational opportunities within a Christian context to support young people to achieve academic and personal excellence. Since the 2006 ERO report the school has undergone considerable development. The new principal has led a lot of positive changes in the school and there is a strong focus on school improvement and student achievement. A notable improvement has been the significant focus on integrating te reo and tikanga Māori into the school culture and learning programmes. Considerable consultation has taken place to set the future direction and vision for the school.

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insight into local community perspectives. The board successfully meets its governance undertakings and has established sound review and reporting systems for monitoring school operations and development. The board, the principal and staff are well positioned to sustain and enhance the quality of education they provide for students.

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### Future Action

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ERO is likely to review the school again in three years.

### Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

### About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

## About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve educational achievement in schools; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

## Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on three review strands.

- School Specific Priorities - the quality of education and the impact of school policies and practices on student achievement.
- Areas of National Interest - information about how Government policies are working in schools.
- Compliance with Legal Requirements - assurance that this school has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

## Review Coverage

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## Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a school is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this school.

[1] Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.