

Wellsford School Education Review

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1 Context

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

Wellsford School, in Rodney District, caters for students from Years 1 to 8. The school roll is increasing. Almost 40 percent of students are Māori.

The 2011 ERO report noted that Wellsford School provided good quality education for its students. Since the last review there has been a focus on introducing teaching practices that use information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance student learning. Staff have participated in professional learning and development about assessing student learning. Because there is low staff turnover the learning from this is likely to be sustained.

Wellsford School is strongly values based. The school charter identifies particular learning and social values. These values are clearly stated by the leadership team and supported by parents, teachers and students.

Students' learning is supported by the settled and inclusive tone in the school. Students are respected as learners and the school environment provides a secure place for them to learn in. A strong sense of community is valued by students, teachers and parents. This is evident in the wairua and kaupapa of the school community. It is also apparent in the connections the school nurtures with the wider community to support learning opportunities for students.

2 Learning

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

School achievement information shows that approximately 75 percent of students are consistently achieving at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

A recent focus on the use of reliable assessment tools is helping teachers to make good well supported judgements in relation to the National Standards. These tools also help teachers track the progress of students.

The board, senior leaders and teachers use achievement information well to make positive changes for learners. The board and senior leaders use achievement information to set school priorities and achievement targets. They also use it to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives, and as a basis for making curriculum decisions. Teachers use achievement information to plan programmes that cater for their students' different strengths and learning needs. Achievement information is also used by senior leaders and teachers to identify the professional learning needs of teachers.

Teachers have changed their practices as a result of professional learning and development. For example, they are now more effectively sharing assessment information with students. They give students the skills and knowledge to be actively involved in decisions about how to improve their work. Senior leaders identify that supporting all teachers to consistently use these practices is the current priority.

Support for students with special learning needs is inclusive and responsive. Teachers and teacher aides have a shared commitment and responsibility for student progress. This ensures students participate fully in appropriate learning programmes and classroom activities.

Student enjoyment and engagement in learning is highly evident. They support each other's learning. This engagement is well supported by the school culture, which embraces the concept of teachers as learners in an environment that supports innovation. A next step for school leaders is to seek ways to actively involve families in their children's learning.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum promotes and supports student learning effectively.

Students benefit from a broad and interesting curriculum. The curriculum has an appropriate balance between literacy and mathematics. It also offers students good access to opportunities in other learning areas, including sport and education outside the classroom (EOTC). Support for students to develop in the visual arts is a particular strength of the curriculum. Students are taught computer literacy and teachers' very good integration of ICT enhances learning. Good use is made of the whole school day to maximise learning time.

The curriculum includes some aspects that reflect the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand. Senior leaders are considering how these learning experiences can be more cohesive and progressive across the year levels.

Teachers are well supported to deliver the school curriculum. Teachers share their approaches and ideas, and are supported to continue to learn. Teacher appraisal processes are effective. Teachers have a growing understanding of the benefits of shifting their focus onto students knowing themselves as learners, and learning how to learn. There are already some very good examples of teachers giving students more opportunities to make decisions about their learning.

School leaders and teachers work with early childhood services and the local college to support students to make smooth transitions into and out of the school.

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

Māori students value the inclusion of aspects of Māori culture and language in the environment, curriculum and school practices. The school's strong kapa haka group and the well planned Māori language week programme are examples of this. Leaders are using strategic staff recruitment to support these strategies to promote Māori success.

Māori students are represented across all achievement bands in the school. Recent school data shows some positive achievement gains in relation to the National Standards. However, the school could do more to ensure that their levels of achievement are improved to better align with the whole school population and national norms. This is a priority for the school to address. Next steps for the school are to:

- include cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners into the school's

performance management system

- implement the new school-wide te reo programme that allows students to develop progressive skills as they move through the school
- identify specific improvement focused Māori student achievement targets in the annual charter.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain its current good practices.

The board provides effective governance. Trustees are well informed about curriculum developments and student achievement. Board decision making is strategic and has a focus on improving outcomes for students. Good working relationships ensure the work of the board and school management is well coordinated through the school's strategic and operational planning processes.

Leadership in the school is effective. Strong school wide systems support the sustainability of successful initiatives. The principal effectively leads curriculum development across the school. He is supported by a team of school leaders who have the knowledge and skills to implement the school's teaching and learning model.

Self review is used well to determine the school's future direction. Ongoing critical reflection and the outcomes of review provide clear rationales for improvements in curriculum design and teaching practice.

To further improve school performance, it would be timely for the board to consider additional ways they can support the growth of school leadership. They could consider:

- resourcing time for school leaders to work more collaboratively
- widening professional learning opportunities for school leaders as a group.

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.

Conclusion

Students benefit from a broad and interesting curriculum in which teachers make very good use of ICT to enhance learning opportunities. Teachers are well supported to deliver the school curriculum. A settled and inclusive tone in the school supports the learning of all students.

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

Dale Bailey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

11 March 2015

School Statistics

Location	Wellsford, Northland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1126	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	342	
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	39%
	NZ European/Pākehā	56%
	Pacific Nations	1%
	other ethnicities	4%
Review team on site	November 2014	
Date of this report	11 March 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	October 2011
	Education Review	September 2008
	Education Review	September 2005