

Piopio College Piopio, King Country

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report Piopio College

This review is designed to support schools that were experiencing difficulties at the time of the last review. ERO provides ongoing evaluation over the course of one-to-two years as the school works to improve its overall performance and build its self-review capability.

This report answers key questions about the school's background and the context for the review. The report also provides an evaluation of how effectively the school is addressing areas identified for review and development and the quality of its practices and systems for sustaining performance and ongoing improvement.

Findings

The new principal, leaders, staff and trustees at Piopio College are committed to working in partnership with parents and the wider community to provide educational success for students, including those with additional learning needs. A wide range of authentic learning is offered in this small, inclusive, rural college.

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

1 Context

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

Piopio College is co-educational secondary school catering for students in Years 7 to 13 from the King Country settlement of Piopio and surrounding rural areas, The College is situated on an extensive and attractive site, which adjoins the main contributing primary school. The roll is 171, which includes 97 students who identify as Māori, the majority of whom whakapapa to Ngāti Maniapoto. The on-site wharehau 'Whakaara kia Mataara' provides a focal point for the cultural identity of the college and its students.

The principal was appointed at the start of 2017, following a year when the college was led by an acting principal. A new deputy principal has been appointed since the last ERO review, and seven staff members were appointed at the start of this year. The board actively represents and gives voice to the school community it serves, including strong representation of whānau and iwi. Trustees sought external support and guidance from the Ministry of Education in year 2016. The board has worked successfully with a Limited Statutory Manager to manage school governance through a time of significant change. The college has joined the recently formed Waitomo Kāhui Ako (Community of Learning), which includes another high school and a large number of contributing primary schools.

Charter statements are described in Te reo Māori and English and include Te Ihi o te Mātauranga (Learning for Life) which reflects an understanding and commitment to te ao Māori. The five school values are captured in the acronym PRIDE (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Excellence).

In response to recommendations in the 2014 ERO review the college has strengthened appraisal processes, reviewed the policy framework and supporting procedures, and increased leadership opportunities for senior Māori students. Systems and practices relating to the monitoring of student achievement and progress over time and evaluating the effectiveness of programmes remain as areas for further development.

2 Learning

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

The use of achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement has been strengthened in 2016 and 2017, and can be further developed for greater effectiveness.

College staff gather achievement and background information on students entering Year 7 from contributing schools. This information is well used to identify students at risk of not achieving National Standards in Years 7 and 8, and to plan in-class support programmes and interventions provided by trained teacher aides. Teachers use evidence from a range of standardised tests, assessed work and observations to make overall teacher judgements (OTJs) about student achievement in relation to National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers collaborate to make OTJs in writing. A next step is to extend these collaborative moderation processes to include other curriculum areas. Teachers intend to undertake inter-school moderation through the Waitomo Kāhui Ako, which should add confidence and dependability to teacher judgements.

National Standards data from 2016 indicates that overall achievement levels at Years 7 and 8 are below national averages, especially in the area of writing. Girls continue to achieve at higher levels overall than boys in aspects of literacy. Māori students achieve as well, or at higher levels than their non-Māori peers in writing and mathematics, but lower in reading. School data shows that approximately half of students in Years 9 and 10 are achieving at expected levels in reading and mathematics. Of particular concern is the low proportion of students achieving at expected levels in writing. Achievement targets for 2017 are inclusive of all students in Years 7 to 10 achieving below expected levels, and clearly state the goal that all these students will make more than one year's progress by the end of 2017.

Leaders recognise the need to review the overall management of assessment and reporting, especially at Years 7 to 10. The college is not yet able to monitor and report on student progress beyond the current year. Having greater confidence in data from previous years should allow leaders and teachers to reduce the number of assessments completed, while clarifying the progress information provided for parents.

The Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO) works collaboratively with year level deans and classroom teachers to coordinate support for students whose learning needs accelerating. Additional testing is carried out as necessary, parents advised and informed action plans developed and appropriate support provided. The Accelerated Learning in Literacy (ALL) initiative is focused on providing additional support for students whose learning needs acceleration. The senior academic dean closely monitors the progress of credit achievement for students in Years 11 to 13, ensuring they are meeting expected deadlines.

National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) Data from 2016 indicates that the proportion of students completing the Level 1 and 2 qualifications is above that of similar schools. This data also shows minimal disparity in levels of achievement between Māori/non-Māori and boys/girls. A very high proportion of students gain the compulsory credits in literacy and numeracy. The college recognises that the proportion of students gaining merit or excellence endorsements, or completing the Level 3 qualification is lower than schools of similar profile, and has established these areas as an appropriate priority focus for 2017/2018.

The college continues to build productive partnerships with parents, to support student learning. Parent's access to achievement information and attendance and learning records through the online parent portal allows relevant information to be shared in a timely manner and any concerns to be recognised and addressed.

3 Curriculum

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

Leaders recognise that the college curriculum is effective for some students, but can be further developed to respond to the learning needs of all students.

Parents, whānau and community members are welcomed and involved in school activities, and this allows students to have access to a wide range of sporting, social, cultural and academic experiences. The relatively small roll allows teachers to get to know students well, and this is reflected in effective pastoral care. The college staff are in the early stages of the Positive Behaviour for Learning Initiative (PB4L) with an increased emphasis on restorative approaches to any conflict.

College leaders and staff have strengthened their focus on building productive partnerships with the community to extend the range of authentic learning opportunities available to students. The curriculum includes vocational pathway academies, gateway, secondary tertiary partnerships with Wintec and Taratahi, Te Kura correspondence and local business placements.

The academic programme within the college is being positively supported by the increased use of information technologies to support student engagement and learning. Leaders have taken a considered approach to introducing innovative learning environments at Years 7 to 10. Collaborative teaching and learning approaches are being strengthened and promoted. They recognise that programmes to support literacy across the curriculum are needed to raise overall levels of student achievement, especially at Years 7 to 10. A remaining challenge in Years 11 to 13 is to sustain the range of academic courses available to senior students.

Professional learning for college leaders and staff is strongly focused on improving practice and accelerated outcomes for children. Professional learning has involved teaching as inquiry, culturally responsive practice and teaching strategies associated with innovative learning environments. Appraisal processes have been reviewed and strengthened to include teacher reflections and gathering evidence on educational outcomes for students.

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

The college is successful in promoting educational success for Māori, as Māori. Trustees have undertaken significant training on culturally responsive governance practices, including the Hautū programme and the adoption of tikanga protocols. The principles of Ka Hikitia are woven through charter documents, and the board engage in regular consultation with their Māori community.

Leaders are modelling and actively promoting culturally responsive pedagogy and practices. They ensure staff have access to ongoing wānanga on te reo and tikanga Māori. Links with local Māori communities are strengthening the provision of kapa haka and regular school powhiri to welcome visitors and new families.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The college is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Positive factors include:

- trustees who have a clear focus on raising overall levels of student achievement, with a priority on Māori and other students at risk
- college leaders who have rebuilt relational trust and effective collaboration with staff, students, parents and whanau, and trustees
- teachers who are developing culturally responsive practices to engage students in meaningful learning
- strong intergenerational support from the local community and current parents to work in partnership with college staff
- internal evaluation processes which have brought a clear school-wide focus on accelerating the learning of students, especially in Years 7 to 10.

ERO, college leaders and trustees agree the important next step is to continue with a consistent focus on raising overall levels of student achievement, especially at Years 7 to 10. This focus should include:

- strengthening the use of existing achievement information to better monitor student progress over time
- using this progress information to evaluate the effectiveness of school programmes and initiatives
- aligning staff appraisal goals and department achievement targets with current charter aims.

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

The new principal, leaders, staff and trustees at Piopio College are committed to working in partnership with parents and the wider community to provide educational success for students, including those with additional learning needs. A wide range of authentic learning is offered in this small, inclusive, rural college.

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

Lynda Pura-Watson

Deputy Chief Review Officer Waikato/Bay of Plenty

5 September 2017

About the School

Location	Piopio, near Te Kuiti
Ministry of Education profile number	162
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 13)
School roll	171

Gender composition	Boys 57% Girls 43%	
	Māori	57%
	Pākehā	41%
	Fijian	1%
Ethnic composition	Other	1%
Review team on site	June 2017	
Date of this report	5 September 2017	
	Education Review	December 2014
	Education Review	May 2013
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	May 2010