



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Cambridge School
Cambridge, Waikato

Education Review Office

External Evaluation

ERO External Evaluation Cambridge School

1 Context

Cambridge School is located in the centre of Cambridge and caters for students in Years 1 to 6. The school's roll of 410 has doubled over the past four years. It currently includes 49 Māori children and three international fee paying students. The principal and many staff have remained the same since the 2012 ERO review. There have been changes to the membership of the board including the appointment of a new chairperson.

The school is organised into four teaching teams. Each team is overseen by a senior teacher who leads organisation and professional learning for teachers in that team. There is a focus on effective communication with parents, whānau and the wider community.

2 Equity and excellence

The vision and valued outcomes defined by the school for all children are about communication, adventuring and exploring, citizenship, self-identity and thinking.

The school's vision states that 'at Cambridge School, we believe that quality, tradition and innovation are foundations for nurturing dynamic, aspiring learners within a supportive community.'

The school's achievement information shows that over the previous three years, a significant majority of Māori children achieved at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Patterns of achievement for Pākehā and other ethnic groups are similar to those for the Māori cohort. In 2016, a significant majority achieved the National Standard in reading and writing. In writing, these levels of achievement were lower for boys. School leaders acknowledge that there is a particular need to accelerate the achievement of boys in writing.

Teachers use a good range of assessment strategies to support them to make judgements in relation to the National Standards. They are considering further ways to extend their moderation processes through the review of assessment strategies and the use of additional assessment tools.

Since the last ERO evaluation the school has:

- increased the focus on accelerating the progress of priority learners through closer tracking and monitoring and using targeted teaching strategies
- implemented professional discussion groups where teachers reflect on their practice through a teaching-as-inquiry process and share strategies to help priority learners
- accessed externally-led professional development for teachers in mathematics
- reviewed the curriculum, extended self review, and strengthened cultural awareness and responsiveness
- increased the use of digital technologies for children and teachers
- undergone considerable property upgrades and refurbishment to enhance the learning environment for children.

3 Accelerating achievement

How effectively does this school respond to Māori children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

The school's response to Māori children whose learning and achievement need acceleration is making a positive difference to achievement. These children are identified through assessment data gathered by teachers, including National Standards data.

Education plans are developed, in consultation with whānau, to identify learning needs and record strategies to be implemented. Teachers evaluate the effectiveness of these actions in accelerating children's progress through their teaching-as-inquiry reflections. They also track children's progress on data walls in each team area, and collectively monitor the movements children make in their achievement. The proportion of Māori children achieving the National Standards in 2016 is comparable with national expectations.

Teachers are increasing their knowledge and cultural awareness about how Māori children learn best, and they share this information within their teams. The number of Māori children achieving below national expectations in reading and mathematics has decreased in 2016. There is still an identified group who are at risk of underachieving in writing.

The school has recognised the need to strengthen children's awareness of their own learning needs and next steps in relation to the learning progressions in reading, writing and mathematics. Professional development in the teaching of writing is already planned for 2017.

How effectively does this school respond to other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

The school is effective in its response to other children whose learning and achievement needs acceleration. Teachers make good use of appropriate assessment tools to identify children and groups of children whose learning is at risk. Leaders and teachers have developed a range of effective initiatives, programmes and strategies to cater for students with diverse learning needs and for those whose learning needs accelerating.

The progress of these children is closely monitored and evaluated by the classroom teacher, the team leader, and the deputy principal, who is also the special education needs coordinator (SENCO). The school is able to show that most children make accelerated progress as a result of these interventions. School leaders have identified that developing teacher strategies to promote learner agency and ownership of their learning is a next step for review and development. This should enable children to talk about how well they are achieving and what they need to do to be successful.

4 School conditions

How effectively do the school's curriculum and other organisational processes and practices develop and enact the school's vision, values, goals and targets for equity and excellence?

The school's curriculum and organisation effectively contribute to enacting the school's vision, values, goals and targets for equity and excellence. Children benefit from a supportive, well-resourced educational environment that promotes their learning and wellbeing.

Leadership that is clearly focused on building a positive school culture is enabling children to succeed and teachers to improve their practice. The principal and other leaders set high expectations and use internal evaluation to make strategic decisions for improvement. Children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and commitment to the school values and expectations, and are highly engaged in learning.

The school's curriculum has recently been reviewed and is well documented with clear expectations and guidelines for teaching and learning. The learning progressions in literacy and mathematics are shared with children and parents. There has been a deliberate attempt to introduce languages, including te reo Māori, and to strengthen the arts programme. Digital technology is being used in meaningful contexts, leading to more authentic learning opportunities across the curriculum. Children whose learning needs extending are well catered for. Leaders and teachers are supporting and enabling children to be confident and connected learners.

School leaders, with the support of the board have introduced a strategic approach to promoting success for Māori across the curriculum. A next step is to continue to embed Māori language, culture and identity, including local history and places of significance.

The senior leadership team works closely with team leaders to establish clear systems and processes for building teacher capability. These include:

- coaching and mentoring to grow leadership capability in team leaders and teachers
- a well-planned professional learning and development programme that is responsive to children's learning needs and focused on accelerating children's progress
- professional learning groups in which conversations focus on teaching as inquiry in relation to accelerating learning for priority learners
- a robust appraisal process, aligned to Teacher Council expectations, that fosters teachers' evidence-based evaluation of their practice and how they can be supported to improve.

Leaders have identified that a further area for teacher professional development is reviewing the use of formative assessment strategies, aligned to the learning progressions, to enable children to be clearer about how well they are learning, and what they need to do to be successful.

Trustees bring a range of experience and expertise to the work of the board and are representative of the school community. The board is strongly focused on setting strategic direction and monitoring progress in relation to goals for improvement. The board is in the process of reviewing governance processes and practices. Trustees have recognised the need to more closely scrutinise and use achievement data reported by school leaders, to plan strategically for the identified patterns of achievement, and needs of at risk learners.

Teachers are increasingly engaging parents in partnerships that support and promote their children's learning. Parents and whānau to take part in school celebrations and events and are well informed about their child's learning through clear reports. Trustees have surveyed the parent community and, together with the principal, have ensured that there is effective communication with parents/whānau. Children and whānau benefit from a strong sense of belonging fostered by the school.

The principal and school leaders manage change carefully and strategically. They foster a culture of ongoing improvement and have introduced a system of internal evaluation that involves all staff. The principal provides informative reports to the board including data about student achievement. This data is used to set school-wide achievement targets and make resourcing decisions. Targets are also set for numbers of learners at risk of poor educational outcomes. The board has recognised the importance of carefully monitoring these targets to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programmes and interventions.

5 Going forward

How well placed is the school to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it?

Leaders and teachers:

- know the children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated
- respond effectively to the strengths, needs and interests of each child
- regularly evaluate how well teaching is working for these children
- act on what they know works well for each child
- build teacher capability effectively to achieve equitable outcomes for all children
- are well placed to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children.

Significant factors that contribute to the acceleration and achievement of all children are:

- effective governance and leadership that has brought about school improvement and generous resourcing over a sustained period of time
- school-wide internal evaluation that ensure a high quality learning environment for children and teachers
- a broad and holistic curriculum
- high expectations for teaching and learning and professional practice
- teaching strategies that focuses on accelerating learning for children who are at risk of poor educational outcomes
- programmes and interventions for children needing additional learning support.

Agreed areas for further review and development are:

- strengthening formative assessment strategies to enable children to clearly articulate how well they are achieving and their next learning steps in relation to the learning progressions
- continuing to embed Māori language, culture and identity
- regular monitoring of school-wide targets that aim to accelerate achievement for children whose learning needs accelerating.

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

6 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 the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- 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
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance
- compliance with the provisions of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- provision for international students.

Provision for International Students

The *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (the Code) was introduced on July 1 2016. The school is aware of the need to update its policies and procedures to meet the new code requirements by December 1 2016.

At the time of this ERO review there were three international students attending the school.

The school is making good progress in aligning its policies and procedures to meet requirements for the 2016 Code.

7 Recommendation

The board is working collaboratively with leaders and teachers to provide positive educational experiences for all children. There is a high level of commitment to enhancing teacher capability and continuing this approach will have an ongoing positive impact on the achievement and progress for all groups of learners. Effective strategic planning by the board has contributed to the provision of a well-resourced environment for learning and teaching.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lynda Pura-Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

Lynda Pura-Watson
Deputy Chief Review Officer Waikato/Bay of Plenty

16 February 2017

About the school

Location	Cambridge, Waikato	
Ministry of Education profile number	1702	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	410	
Number of international students	3	
Gender composition	Boys 50% Girls 50%	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā	68%
	Māori	12%
	Asian	6%
	Indian	1%
	Pacific	1%
	Other European	10%
	Other	2%
Review team on site	November 2016	
Date of this report	16 February 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	August 2012 October 2009 November 2006