

**Patricia Avenue School  
Hamilton East**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Patricia Avenue School

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

## Findings

### 1 Context

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

Patricia Avenue School is a specialist school catering for students with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities between 5 and 21 years of age. It is located in Hamilton East and has sixteen satellite classes in Hamilton, Cambridge and Te Awamutu. Four of these classes are new since the 2010 ERO review. The school also provides a specialist teacher service for students in mainstream schools in the Waikato area.

Since the 2010 ERO review, the school has appointed a new principal and made changes to the leadership team. The board has had a change of membership and chairperson. The school has accessed extensive professional learning, including a focus on building leadership capacity and on aspects of specialised teaching. It is currently awaiting the commencement of a major building project that will upgrade the facilities at the base school in Patricia Avenue.

The school aims to provide 'learning for living' education that builds and respects students' dignity and challenges them to reach their full potential. A special feature of the school is the highly intentional approach to the inclusion of all students and their families/whānau. The school's roll has risen slightly to 158 students, including 52 who are identified as Māori and 6 identified as Pacific. In addition to employing classroom teachers, the school also employs therapists, specialist teachers and learning support assistants. Students are placed in very small classes, with high adult-to-student ratios.

### 2 Learning

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

The school uses student achievement information effectively to make positive changes to students' engagement, progress and achievement.

Teachers work with parents, therapists and specialist staff to develop specific learning and care plans that identify individual students' strengths, achievements, and development goals. They use this information to develop programmes that respond effectively to students' individual needs and

reflect parent aspirations. These are regularly reviewed, and progress is reported to parents and senior management.

Recently, the school has introduced valuable individual portfolios. These enable parents, students and teachers to recognise, document and celebrate students' participation in their learning and successes.

School leaders use achievement information to support teachers and therapists to improve the quality of individual programmes and outcomes for students. The board is well-informed about student achievement in the programme, and uses the information to allocate resources.

Students are transported to school using Ministry of Education funding.

### **3 Curriculum**

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

The school's curriculum is highly effective in promoting student learning and development.

The school's broad and responsive curriculum prioritises:

- developing meaningful literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge
- developing students' self-care skills
- providing opportunities for participation in real-life learning experiences
- including students in community and host school programmes and activities
- implementing well-managed and planned transition processes at all levels of the school.

These features support students to participate to their full potential in community life.

Skilled, focused teachers maintain positive, responsive relationships with students that are caring, nurturing and supportive. They use a wide variety of highly effective strategies that engage and motivate students to learn. Therapists and specialist teachers provide systematic and intensive programmes to meet each student's development and learning needs. Students and teachers benefit from knowledgeable learning support assistants who work intensively with individuals and groups of students. Teachers make good use of computers and other technologies to enhance students' learning opportunities and communication skills.

Professional learning leaders support the practice of teachers and therapists at the base school and in the satellite classes. Senior leaders need to develop clear guidelines and expectations to assist these important leaders of learning to enhance their professional leadership.

Comprehensive guidelines that reflect *The New Zealand Curriculum* support teachers to develop and extend students' social and self-management skills. Teachers implement effective strategies that promote a positive tone and culture for learning. Staff and students are equipped with well-chosen, specialised equipment, resources, and multiple learning spaces. ERO observed students interacting positively and encouraging each other to participate in class life and celebrate their learning.

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

The school has had a recent focus on strengthening Māori perspectives. Regular meetings are held with whānau to build partnerships and gain their aspirations. The principal has recently met with representatives of Tainui to establish relationships and has led the development of Māori protocols, such as pōwhiri to welcome guests. Teachers are implementing programmes that promote students' understandings of tikanga, te reo and important Māori celebrations. Many students enjoy participating in kapa haka, and singing waiata in the daily programme.

ERO and school leaders agree that to further promote success for Māori as Māori, there is a need to further strengthen:

- links with the local marae
- Māori dimensions in classroom programmes and school environments.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

Patricia Avenue is well placed to sustain and improve its performance because:

- trustees provide effective and supportive governance for the school
- the knowledgeable principal and senior leaders are focused on school improvement and on working in partnership with parents and staff to provide effective outcomes for students
- staff members work collaboratively in the best interest of students and their families, and have a special understanding of their students' abilities and needs
- the school maintains close relationships with its parent community and receives a high level of support from the wider community
- the board, leaders and staff are reflective about their practice and focused on sustaining and improving student learning.

The school has recently introduced a new teacher appraisal system. ERO and senior school leaders agree that there is a need to continue to review and develop this system. The review should focus on the effectiveness of the process to further strengthen teaching practice, and to include regular, ongoing, documented feedback to teachers.

### **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 school provides highly effective education and care for students with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities. Students benefit from individualised teaching in small classes with skilled teachers, support assistants and therapists. The school is highly inclusive and warmly welcomes students and their families.

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



Dale Bailey  
National Manager Review Services  
Northern Region

24 June 2014

## About the School

Location	Hamilton East	
Ministry of Education profile number	1891	
School type	Special School	
School roll	158	
Gender composition	Boys 110 Girls 48	
Ethnic composition	Māori NZ European/Pākehā Fijian Samoan Chinese South East Asian Other European Other	52 80 3 3 3 7 3 7
Special Features	16 Satellite Classes	
Review team on site	May 2014	
Date of this report	24 June 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	April 2010 June 2007 June 2004