# Karori Normal School Karori, Wellington

# **Confirmed**

# Education Review Report

## Education Review Report Karori Normal 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

### Context

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

Karori Normal School is a large Years 1 to 8 school situated in the suburb of Karori, Wellington. The current roll of 769 is increasing. Thirty-three students identify as Māori and six as Pacific. A large number of students are of Asian ethnicity. There are thirty-one classes, organised into five learning and teaching teams.

The school has strong links with Victoria University, Wellington. As employees in a normal school, all fully registered teachers are expected to act as associates for student teachers. A number of teachers have a visiting lecturer role at the university.

Since the August 2012 ERO review the school has developed a new curriculum, changed the structure of the senior leadership team and enhanced the performance management process for teachers. Documents guiding the functions of governance and management have been aligned. The school’s vision has been refreshed. There is a culture of ‘managed change’ achieved through a cycle of investigation, trial, implementation and review.

The school community is characterised by mutually respectful relationships, inclusive practices, striving for improvement and clear, agreed direction to prepare students for the future. Students’ learning at home and at school is interwoven, with strong parental support for a curriculum that challenges and excites.

A significant upgrade of the school’s premises is required and major refurbishment work has begun. The board has spent considerable time and energy on improving conditions for students and teachers. Trustees have appointed a project manager to manage building works, enabling the board to sustain its focus on providing high quality education for students.

The board of trustees and senior leaders have made significant gains and built on the strengths identified in the previous ERO report.

### Learning

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

Assessment information is well used to plan programmes that impact positively on student progress and achievement. The school’s information shows that the majority of students achieve at or above the National Standards in literacy and mathematics. There is evidence that some students excel, particularly in reading and mathematics. All students make gains across the year, with some making accelerated progress. Māori student progress is well known and successfully supported.

Decisions about students’ next goals for learning and whether their progress is sufficient are made from teachers’ individual assessments and through discussion across the teaching team. Expectations are set and teaching strategies decided. A key part of the process is teachers evaluating their own practice and, when appropriate, making adjustments in response. Students lead learning, working with their teachers to identify their next goal, the steps to take and how they will measure success. They develop the ability to monitor and assess their own progress.

Challenging and specific targets for achievement are set and explained in the school’s charter. These are relevant to groups of students whose rates of progress need to increase. Accompanying action plans provide a framework for deliberate teaching, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. Every student’s progress is under scrutiny.

School culture is highly inclusive. Equitable opportunities to learn and experience success are a stated priority. Students with more complex needs, those who achieve and learn differently and English language learners receive carefully planned assistance. The board funds assistive technology, enabling students to have prompt access to resources. Special needs staff are experienced and knowledgeable in particular fields. Classroom teachers have also developed their confidence and capability in dyslexia and sight-impaired education. Students learn in class with additional support where required. There is a deliberate strategy to promote student wellbeing. Special needs staff and class teachers have a very positive approach to catering for diverse learners.

Parents receive informative and clearly written reports about their children’s progress and achievement. Students play a key role in providing evidence of learning and discussing their next steps during conferences.

Trustees engage in robust discussions about the impact of resourcing and the amount of progress achieved by students. Board planning is sufficiently flexible to respond to changing needs.

### Curriculum

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

The curriculum is highly effective in promoting student progress and achievement. Regular review ensures that it is learner-centred, challenging and continues to evolve towards the future. There is clear direction for teachers, broad interpretation and scope, and recognition of students’ interests and ability.

Teachers are very aware of the importance of students mastering foundation skills in the early years. The curriculum is rich and has challenging achievement expectations so that students’ academic, social and physical learning continues successfully from their early childhood experiences.

Connecting the rich with the core curriculum is providing meaningful ways for students to learn in different ways, apply their learning in various contexts and to make links across tasks. Teachers evaluate the effectiveness of strategies and gauge students’ understanding and knowledge across a range of situations. Relationships between teachers and students, and students and their peers, are trusting. Teachers communicate their enthusiasm for learning and encourage students to attempt new things. There is a strong work ethic.

An environment where students are motivated, persevere and cooperate with others is evident. Teachers and students have high expectations of each other. Debate, questioning and conversation are part of learning. Complex thinking and problem solving encourage group collaboration. This is especially so in senior classes.

Senior students, through the options programme, have opportunities to choose from six languages. The programmes are highly interactive, well planned and motivating. The scope of the senior curriculum introduces possibilities for choosing future learning pathways.

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

Māori students’ high levels of academic, social and physical achievement are outcomes of the effective school curriculum and parent partnerships for learning. Parents of Māori students have a forum to share their aspirations and views on the school’s direction.

In addition to whole school kapa haka, a performance group combines with other students in the local area. A specialist teacher of te reo Māori is employed to work with each class. This contributes to teachers’ expertise and assists with complexity of language development. In Years 7 and 8, te reo Māori is an option in the languages programme. Students have opportunities to teach and to learn. A number of teachers have expertise in te reo me ngā tikanga Māori and te ao Māori is increasingly part of teachers’ planning for rich topics. A programme of learning supports students to be confident participants in marae visits.

Māori students show pride in their achievement and are leaders and role models. There is a sound foundation for senior leaders to further develop teachers’ cultural knowledge to enrich the curriculum.

### Sustainable Performance

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

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Trustees govern the school capably and are committed to meeting parents’ aspirations and expectations. The board plans wisely for the future, making carefully-considered decisions to support high quality teaching and successful learning. Innovative ideas are welcomed and resourced. Equity of educational opportunity is a priority. Regular, critical review and evaluation demonstrate the board’s commitment to improvement and making a positive difference for students.

Senior leaders are highly professional in leading the focus on excellence and commitment to equitable opportunities for learning. They promote and guide improvement, use teachers’ strengths to best advantage across the school and empower individual teachers to grow as experts. Diversity is seen as the key to innovation. Leaders and teachers have high expectations of themselves and colleagues. Improving each student’s achievement is prioritised. The well-considered, distributed leadership model is resulting in a more cohesive approach to delivering a seamless curriculum across this large school.

Years 7 and 8 students are resilient and confident. They play a significant role in leadership across many facets of school life. The skills of leadership are taught deliberately with emphasis on good citizenship and personal responsibility. Students’ opinions are valued as trustees and teachers evaluate what is working well and consider what needs to change. There is a high degree of mutual trust.

Students’ transition pathways to school and on to secondary school are managed with care. Social and emotional needs, interests and strengths are part of information sharing at every level of students’ learning. The growing relationship and cooperation with secondary schools has further potential to capture senior students’ enthusiasm for learning and high levels of achievement as they transition to Year 9.

Teachers’ professional learning and development is making a significant difference to their practice. The school has adopted a thoughtful, planned approach to developing a future-focused curriculum, with students playing a greater role in decisions about their learning. Teachers continually evaluate the impact of the curriculum and focus on strategies that best develop highly successful and confident lifelong learners.

The board and staff respect the roles of parents and community as partners in students’ education. Consultation, communication and involvement occur in a range of ways that support students to achieve their goals. Digital communication is confidently used by students and teachers to link with parents, other students and worldwide. Senior leaders agree that there is further potential to use digital technology as part of reporting students’ progress to parents.

The school actively contributes to the wider education community.

#### 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.

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#### Conclusion

School information shows that the majority of students achieve at or above expectation in relation to the National Standards. The curriculum is learner-centred, challenging and focused on developing lifelong learners. Equitable opportunities to learn and experience success are a priority. Trustees and staff respect the role of parents as partners in students’ education.

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.



Joyce Gebbie  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

20 August 2015

### About the School

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| Location | Karori, Wellington | |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 2874 | |
| School type | Full Primary (Years 1 to 8) | |
| School roll | 769 | |
| Gender composition | Male 55%, Female 45% | |
| Ethnic composition | Māori NZ European/Pākehā Asian Pacific | 4% 82% 13%  1% |
| Review team on site | June 2015 | |
| Date of this report | 20 August 2015 | |
| Most recent ERO report(s) | Education Review Education Review Education Review | August 2012 March 2011 November 2009 |