



**Education Review Office**  
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Featherston School**  
**Featherston**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Featherston School

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

### 1 Background and Context

#### What is the background and context for this school's review?

Featherston School caters for students in Years 1 to 8. At the time of this ERO review, 82 students attend the school, 50 of whom are Māori. Teachers at the Featherston School technology centre provide technology education for students in Year 7 and 8 from this school and other South Wairarapa schools.

In June 2013 the Ministry of Education appointed a Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) to improve the educational performance and operation of the school, including support for raising student achievement. Since mid-2013 there has been almost a complete change of staff.

The January 2015 ERO report identified issues that were continuing to have a negative impact on student outcomes. The school began a second evaluation process over a period of 1 to 2 years with ERO.

A new principal and two teachers began at the start of 2015. At this time, the Limited Statutory Manager was supporting the board of trustees in their governance role. She continued in this role until September 2015.

In 2015, under the leadership of the new principal, teachers participated in professional development working with a Student Achievement Function (SAF) practitioner who led a change team development. Senior leaders and teachers also worked with a leadership and assessment facilitator, focusing on assessment, with emphasis on writing. In 2016, the school signed up to the Accelerated Learning in Literacy professional development initiative (ALL).

## 2 Review and Development

### How effectively is the school addressing its priorities for review and development?

#### Priorities identified for review and development

In May 2015, the following priorities were agreed:

- to increase staff capability and improve student engagement, progress and achievement
- to focus on strengthening school development and operations
- to strengthen relationships with staff, parents and whānau.

An action plan to address these priorities was established.

#### Progress

##### Staff capability and student engagement, progress and achievement

Good progress has been made with increasing staff capability through school leaders' and teachers' participation in focused professional learning and development (PLD). As part of this PLD, teachers inquire into the effectiveness of their teaching, and the facilitator and principal observe teaching and give feedback. A capability matrix is used to support teachers' reflections.

Useful systems have been established for the collection and use of assessment data to inform teaching. Teachers are using assessment data well to inform their planning and practice, differentiating their teaching to meet individual and group learning needs. Those students who are under achieving are identified as target students, along with those students who are gifted and talented. The progress of individual students is closely monitored.

End of 2015 data showed that most students were achieving at and above the National Standards in reading. The number of students achieving at and above the mathematics National Standards was slightly less and writing was an area for school-wide development. Māori students were achieving at similar or higher levels than their non-Māori peers.

Student achievement has improved. Mid-year data for 2016 shows that some students have made good progress since the beginning of this year in writing, mathematics and reading. Continuing to accelerate the progress of those students who are underachieving is appropriately identified by the school as a priority. The development of a shared understanding of acceleration should support this. Sharing teaching strategies that have successfully promoted student progress will continue to build teacher capability across the school.

The principal and teachers regularly discuss individual students and their progress. The school has systems for data management and record keeping and these are used effectively. Regular reports to the board of trustees inform schoolwide targets and resourcing.

Students are involved in setting their own assessment criteria for their work. They take a leading role in parent/teacher discussions about their progress and achievement. Continuing to develop student knowledge and ownership of their learning is a next step identified by the school and agreed by ERO.

Well-established classroom routines and relevant learning contexts promote student engagement. The documented school curriculum includes learning area statements and useful guidelines for teachers. A next step is to bring the various aspects relating to the curriculum together and define the overarching local curriculum at Featherston School.

### **School development and operations**

Considerable work has been undertaken to strengthen school development and operations. The board chair and principal have worked closely together to lead this development, which has included aligning the charter, strategic goals and annual plan.

The charter was reviewed in 2015. Consultation with parents and whānau led to the revision of the school vision and values to increase their relevance. Charter goals and values are now suitably reflected in teacher planning, in the school environment and in the school community.

The board is reviewing policies at some of its meetings. Streamlining the policy review process is a next step for development. With newly elected board members, it is important to continue training so that all board members have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The principal and board chair are making good use of evaluation to guide ongoing development. A next step is to work with other staff and trustees to develop a shared understanding of evaluation for improvement.

### **Relationships with staff, parents and whānau**

A focus on building positive relationships within the school and with parents, whānau and the wider community is clearly evident.

The principal communicates effectively with staff. Teachers work collegially and are involved in shared decision making. A recent survey has shown that parents and whānau are pleased with the communication they receive from their children's teachers.

A useful appraisal process has begun to be implemented. Establishing this process for all staff is an urgent priority.

Trustees support and acknowledge the work of the staff. The board has discussed the school values - respect, responsible and resilience - and how they can enact these values in their work. The board has recently begun a newsletter to increase its communication with parents and whānau.

The principal is leading a strong focus on building and maintaining relationships with whānau, iwi and the local community. Staff have increased their knowledge of culturally responsiveness teaching and knowledge of the Ngāti Kahungunu education strategy through working with local iwi.

Strong links have been established with whānau and iwi. Puna Kainga, an early childhood playgroup funded by the MoE and Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, has been established at the school site. Te reo me ngā tikanga Māori are very evident in the school curriculum. Views of whānau have been welcomed at whānau hui.

### 3 Sustainable performance and self review

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

Featherston School is well placed to embed and build on new initiatives, and to continue to improve its performance. The school has:

- benefited from external support to develop leadership and teaching capability
- developed a sustainable cycle of planning and improvement, strengthening school development and operations
- developed its capacity to reflect, plan, act and report student achievement information
- built the capability to continue to improve student achievement
- established a foundation of values, leadership, tone, climate and relationships likely to sustain and improve student learning - engagement, progress and achievement.

#### Key next steps are:

- to build on progress and embed new initiatives
- to continue to accelerate the progress of those students who are underachieving
- for the principal and board chair to work with other staff and trustees to develop a shared understanding of evaluation for improvement.

#### 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 has worked with ERO in an evaluation process over the last two years. Under the leadership of the board chair and new principal, school operations have been strengthened and positive relationships established with staff, parents and whānau. Continuing to accelerate the progress of underachieving students is a school priority.

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



Joyce Gebbie  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

17 October 2016

## About the School

|                                      |                                       |              |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Location                             | Featherston                           |              |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 2840                                  |              |
| School type                          | Full Primary (Year 1 to 8)            |              |
| School roll                          | 82                                    |              |
| Gender composition                   | Male 44, Female 38                    |              |
| Ethnic composition                   | Māori                                 | 50           |
|                                      | Pākehā                                | 30           |
|                                      | Other ethnic groups                   | 2            |
| Special Features                     | Puna Kainga early childhood playgroup |              |
| Review team on site                  | September 2016                        |              |
| Date of this report                  | 17 October 2016                       |              |
| Most recent ERO report(s)            | Education Review                      | January 2015 |
|                                      | Education Review                      | June 2012    |
|                                      | Education Review                      | May 2009     |