



Piritahi

Community of Learning|Kāhui Ako

Report March 2019

This report is based on information ERO already has about the members of this community, including the latest ERO reports. It tells a recent story about the Piritahi Community of Learning|Kāhui Ako and outlines what is working well and what could be developed or improved.

It provides a context for community discussion when developing their Achievement Challenges and deciding on a framework to monitor progress towards meeting these challenges.

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Overview

The Piritahi Kāhui Ako was formed in 2015 by schools in the Marlborough region. It has 21 member schools, 19 primary and two secondary. Six early childhood services have since joined the group. All of these are kindergartens and, as part of the Marlborough Kindergarten Association (MKA), are supported by MKA.

This report focuses on changes and information gained from those schools and services that have undergone an educational review in the past two years. Thirteen schools were reviewed during this period, eight in 2017 and four in 2018. The two secondary schools were not reviewed during this period. All services were reviewed as a cluster in September 2018. Names of institutions reviewed and the review outcome of each institution, in terms of return time, is listed in the table below.

Four of these schools have recently had, or are currently receiving, external support from the Ministry of Education (MOE) through a Student Achievement Facilitator (SAF). In addition, one school has two ministry representatives on its Board of Trustees (BOT). One kindergarten was required to provide an action plan to ERO.

Reported review information together with strengths and areas for development identified in these institutions have been used to as a basis to this report.

Common strengths include:

- a focus on effective teaching and building teacher capacity to respond to students' needs
- a collaborative, collegial culture
- professional, improvement focused leadership/effective change management
- a broad, rich meaningful curriculum - child responsive in kindergartens
- culturally responsive curriculum
- clear, active vision and values
- positive relationships with whānau
- partnerships for learning with whānau
- useful transition processes (kindergarten to school)
- a focus of children's wellbeing – kindergartens

Common areas for improvement include:

- raising student achievement in literacy and/or mathematics
- improving internal evaluation practices
- increasing cultural responsiveness
- strengthening stewardship
- deeper inquiry into the effectiveness of teaching
- strengthening assessment, planning and evaluation practices – kindergartens
- a need to revisit the philosophy - several kindergartens

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Several key areas have been identified at MKA level and impact on all kindergartens. These are to:

- articulate MKA values more clearly
- strengthen strategic planning and action plans to implement these
- develop guidelines that outline expectations for teaching and learning
- strengthen appraisal through fully implementing observations of teacher practice.

Institution reports considered in the production of this report are:

Institution Name	Ministry of Education Profile Number	Date of last ERO report	Return time
Bohally Intermediate	2812	20 September 2018	4-5 Years
Ward School	3067	9 December 2017	3 Years
Witney Street School	3071	9 February 2017	3 Years
Blenheim School	2811	6 September 2017	3 Years + RAP
Redwoodtown School	2877	30 June 2017	3 Years + RAP/IEWS
Renwick School	2978	24 July 2017	4-5 Years
Richmond View School	421	27 April 2017	3 Years
Seddon School	2988	30 August 2017	3 years
Springs Creek School	2995	14 July 2018	3 Years
St Mary's School Blenheim	3012	17 June 2018	3 Years
Tua Marina School	3050	5 May 2018	4-5 Years
Wairau Valley School	3062	9 May 2018	3 Years
Mayfield School	2912	18 June 2017	1-2 Years
Rapaura School	2971	21 February 2018	4-5 Years
Mayfield Kindergarten	5392	4 September 2018	3 Years
Redwoodtown Kindergarten	5394	4 September 2018	3 Years
Renwick Kindergarten	5631	4 September 2018	4 Years
Seymour Kindergarten	5395	4 September 2018	3 Years
Springlands Kindergarten	5555	4 September 2018	3 Years + action plan
Witherlea Kindergarten	5396	4 September 2018	3 Years

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1 Context

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The Kāhui Ako's overall goals are '*Achieving standard in Literacy and numeracy*' and '*Addressing underachievement - Achieving Potential*'. Initially the community challenges were set to raise achievement in reading, writing and numeracy, and NCEA Level 2 to 85% for all groups of students. These formed the basis of the Kāhui Ako's focus for improvement from 2016-2018. These challenges are now under review and new challenges are required.

Achievement challenges are underpinned by a 'wellbeing kete'. This acknowledges '*An unhappy, unhealthy or absent child is less able to learn.*' Modern learning practices that seek to develop '*creative thinking, questioning, critical analysis, problem solving, team work and entrepreneurship*' underpin the Kāhui Ako's approach to raising achievement. Transience and an increasing number of students for whom English is a second language have been identified as factors influencing overall student achievement.

The Kāhui Ako is co-lead and is supported by two expert partners.

It is evident that the Kaikōura earthquake in November 2016 has had a major impact on many schools within the Kāhui Ako. Those most affected have received support from the MOE but staff and student welfare in these schools has been a priority in 2017/18.

What ERO knows about this Community of Learning|Kāhui Ako

2 Equity and Excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

2.1 How well are the schools and services achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all their students?

Achievement is variable in schools across the Kāhui Ako.

High levels of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is evident in six schools. There is little disparity evident in these schools. It is also reported that effective responses for those students needing additional support are in place and impacting positively on their achievement. This is especially evident for boys in writing.

There is an urgent need to improve student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in three of the schools, and to further increase achievement in two further schools. Better planning for identified students would support improved outcomes in these schools. This is needed at both classroom and strategic levels.

There is ongoing disparity evident in some schools. This is particularly evident in for boys and in writing. This is reducing in a few schools but remains a key area for ongoing improvement.

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A need to improve assessment and moderation practices to ensure accuracy of assessments has been identified as an area for improvement in five of the schools. This should be addressed with some urgency, especially as schools are now free to establish their own benchmarks for student progress and achievement.

2.2. How well are the schools and services accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this? outcomes for all their students?

Strategies in place to accelerate learning are having a positive impact in six schools. This is most evident in writing for boys. Acceleration for Pacific students and English Language Learners has also been identified in one school.

Some reduction in disparity is evident in three of the schools where lower achievement has been identified. While strategies are beginning to impact positively in these schools, there remains a need to further reduce disparity and raise overall student achievement, especially for boys and in writing.

The impact of initiatives in place to accelerate achievement is unclear in three of the schools reviewed.

3 School conditions for equity and excellence - processes and practices

3.1. What processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and accelerating learning?

There is considerable variance in the performance of institutions within the Kāhui Ako. While some are high performing and achieving positive outcomes for their students, four schools and one early learning service require support to ensure better performance.

Curriculum

Strengths in curriculum have been identified in many of the institutions. Specific strengths vary for school to school. Clear values that are visible and well known by students and others are common to most. That these values are clearly integrated into all areas of the school operations is a common factor. Curriculum is also a strength in many of the kindergartens.

Other aspects of a strong curriculum common to many of these institutions include:

- being child-centred, making connections to students' lives and interests
- a broad, progressive and coherent curriculum that builds skills and deepens understanding as they progress through the school
- meaningful contexts and multiple opportunities to learn
- purposeful and engaging learning activities
- student input into decision making
- increasing student ownership of learning and self-management
- teachers having in-depth knowledge of students and their individual learning needs
- a clear focus on building positive relationships for learning and engagement
- high expectations, enabling students to achieve and excel in a range of contexts

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- including parents aspirations and goals - kindergartens
- cultural responsiveness is actively promoted.

Inclusion of te reo me nga tikanga Māori into the curriculum is progressing in many of the Kāhui Ako institutions. These institutions have, or are on the way to developing, a localised, culturally responsive curriculum and the cultural competency of teachers. Te ao Māori is meaningfully incorporated into a range of learning and schoolwide contexts. This is having a positive impact on the achievement of their Māori students. This development appears to be highly variable across the institutions.

A collegial culture and collective responsibility for students' progress and achievement.

In high performing schools, leaders, trustees and teachers accept there is a pressing need for increasing the levels of achievement for identified students and groups of students. Schoolwide areas of common need are clearly identified, and appropriate goals set. A common focus is on those Māori and boys who need improved outcomes and raising achievement in writing. Individual priority learners and their needs are well known. Clear actions are in place to support those students whose learning requires acceleration, with their progress monitored regularly. Well considered, useful tracking of student achievement is in place for both individuals and groups of students.

Robust processes build teacher capability.

Building the capacity and collective capability of all staff to respond to students' needs and interests is an ongoing priority in many schools. In these schools a culture of high expectations exists for both teachers and learners. A focus is maintained on effective teaching. In schools where this is the case, professional development, school targets, syndicate and teacher inquiries are well aligned. Teachers are collaborative and share practices and innovations regularly in many institutions. Teacher inquiries are clearly focused on modifying and improving teacher practice in relation to identified students. Very clear and useful guidelines and practices are in place to support provisionally certificated teachers to develop as competent teachers. A clear and comprehensive appraisal framework builds and supports professional practice.

A strong and deliberate focus on building ongoing, relevant learning partnerships with parents and the wider community

This is apparent in four schools and many of the kindergartens. Sound relationships exist between families, trustees and staff. This is further developed into true partnership for learning in four others. Teachers, parents and whānau work together to support wellbeing and extend children's learning. Leaders work together with the school community and iwi leaders to create a positive environment that is inclusive, values diversity and promotes wellbeing and cultural understanding. A focus on the child's overall wellbeing was reported in all kindergartens.

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Relationships between sectors

The building of relationships between kindergartens and their local school is benefiting children in four areas. Strong transition and purposeful processes to support the child to move between institutions are in place. These impact positively on children and their whānau.

Use of achievement data

Good use is made of achievement information in many of the schools. Where this is the case, data is regularly used to identify student needs, design targeted classroom programmes and monitor student progress. In addition, it is also used to monitor the impact of established support programmes and to evaluate the impact of interventions introduced to ensure these are effectively meeting the specifically identified needs of the students. This is the evident in six of the schools.

Effective change management

A few leaders have a strong and systematic approach to change. Robust processes to support the development of school priorities are evident to effect positive improvement. Sound systems and processes are clearly documented and effectively implemented. Additional resourcing to support students within the classrooms and assist teachers to deliver the curriculum, is strategically considered and used.

3.2 What further developments are needed in school or centre processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Raising student achievement in literacy and/or mathematics

This remains an urgent issue in several of the schools. In these schools little or no improvement has been made to address this. A SAF is, or has been, involved in four schools to support school priorities and raise overall achievement.

Curriculum

Further development and/or documentation of the localised curriculum is required in several institutions. Their revised curriculum should acknowledge areas of local significance and historical importance. Schools should seek student and community input through this process to ensure the resulting curriculum is responsive to student needs, interests and community priorities. In some kindergartens, there is a need to revisit their philosophies and ensure these better reflect children's learning.

Improving culturally responsive practices and integrating these authentically across the curriculum are identified areas for improvement in several schools. Strengthening the inclusion of te ao Māori through a curriculum that better reflects its local context, should support Māori students to be confident and successful in their identity as Māori learners. ERO affirms the importance of continuing to involve whānau and iwi in this process. Ongoing building of teachers' understanding and capacity is essential to successfully implement new practices.

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Deeper inquiry into the effectiveness of teaching

There is a need to focus more deeply on effective teaching in some institutions. Teachers' understanding of how to inquire into the impact of their practice is at an early stage of development. It is necessary to strengthen the way teachers inquire into the impact of their practices on student outcomes. Developing an understanding of how they are accelerating the learning of priority students is also necessary. Increased scrutiny of data and outcomes for all students should also help leaders' and boards' evaluation of the school's performance in achieving equity and excellence.

Assessment

A need to improve assessment and moderation practices, to ensure the accuracy of assessments, has been identified as an area for improvement in five of the schools. This should be addressed with some urgency, especially as schools are now free to establish their own benchmarks for student progress and achievement.

The need to strengthen, or continue to strengthen, assessment, planning and evaluation practices in relation to children's learning and teacher practice has been identified in many of the kindergartens. A strengthening of the documentation of this is also required in two centres.

Strengthening stewardship

Improving stewardship through better understanding of the role and responsibilities is an issue identified in several schools. In general, trustees are committed to the wellbeing of students and the development of an engaged community. Most trustees are focused on student achievement and wellbeing and are responsive to both the needs of students, and the wishes of parents. To grow their stewardship capacity there is a need to receive and interrogate useful reports that include better data. This is needed to inform decisions, set targets and monitor those students whose progress and achievement need acceleration. This should also ensure all trustees are vigilant in seeking to understand how children will benefit from proposed changes.

Improved appraisal practices

Appraisal procedures, expectations and processes need to be implemented with more rigour and consistency in two schools and kindergartens. This should include:

- more timely feedback and feed forward from regular observations to support improvement
- more specific judgements and agreed future development areas identified in the annual summary statements.

Improved internal evaluation practices

Improving internal evaluation practice has been identified as necessary in nine of the schools recently reviewed and majority of the kindergartens. These leaders are at an early stage of understanding and implementing evaluation practices. They have not yet developed a defined process for decision making or for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of decisions made. A stronger focus on measuring and documenting the impact of actions and initiatives should support these leaders to evaluate the impact of the curriculum and initiatives, and to measure their impact on student outcomes. A focus on improving the data literacy of leaders, trustees and teachers should further support evaluation and planning processes.

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Key next steps for institutions within Piritahi Kāhui Ako

Areas for improvement include:

- further developing teacher's cultural competencies, together with further development of a localised curricula that value and integrate cultures across all schools
- a pressing need for increasing the acceleration of the achievement, especially for those Māori and boys
- developing a more coherent change process. Clarifying strategic planning to better identify the actions and measurable outcomes should better guide actions required to promote improvement
- strengthening the use of internal evaluation at the strategic level. Further development of trustees' and leaders' understanding and use of evaluation should improve planning and resourcing decisions
- continuing to extend teachers' understanding and use of inquiry to better measure the impact of their practice on the progress of priority/target students
- further develop appraisal process through targeted observations of teaching practice and feedback to improve teacher practice
- strengthening assessment, planning and evaluation of children's learning in kindergartens.



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March 2019