



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Te Ara Huarau:

ERO's school evaluations

Updated August 2026



What's staying the same?



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- Te Ara Huarau remains our approach to school reviews
- We are focused on what matters most for all learners
- We review and report on schools every 3-4 years
- The School Improvement Framework (SIF) forms the basis for our report judgements
- We are interested to see that all learners have rich opportunities to learn across the breadth and depth of the New Zealand Curriculum / Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.



Te Ara Huarau: our approach to school reviews



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- Te Ara Huarau is a collaborative and participatory review process where we work with you to review provision, with a shared goal of supporting learner success.
- We want to understand your school's context: no two schools are the same.
- Your judgements about where you are on the School Improvement Framework (SIF) continuum and the evidence you have about this is our start point.
- Our evaluators work in pairs or small teams, depending on the size of your school. Small schools may have one evaluator.
- We work more closely and more often with schools that need more support.



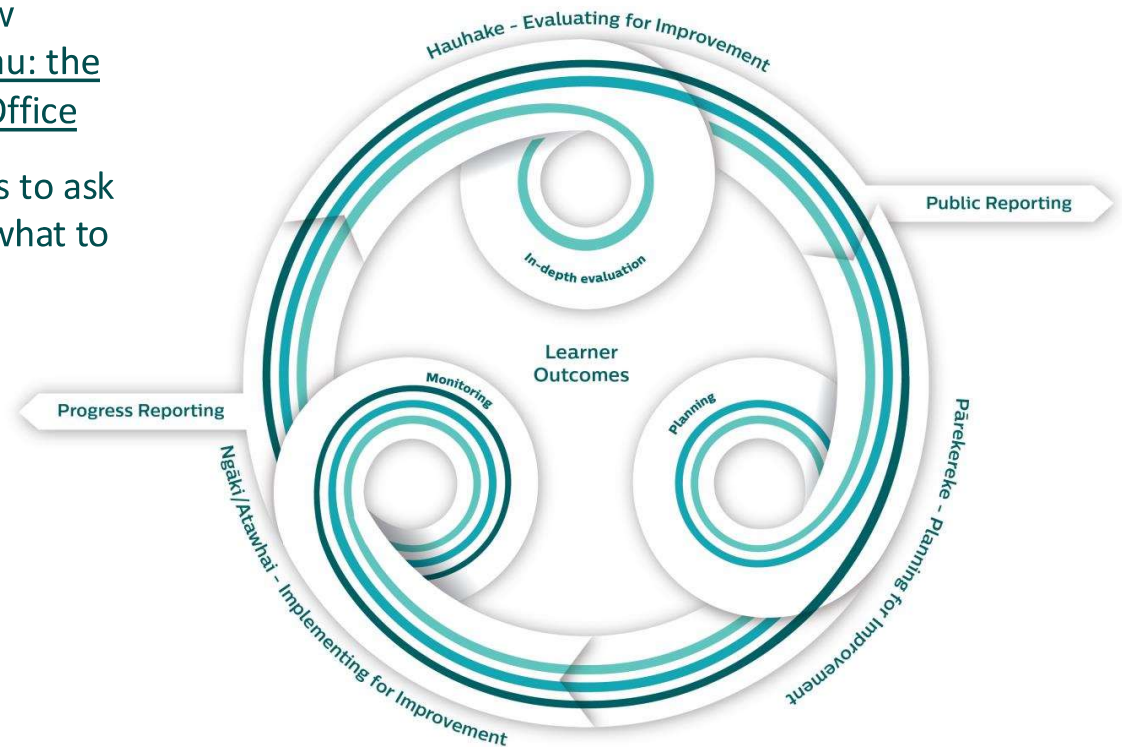
The school review process



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You can find the end-to-end school review process here on our website: [Te Ara Huarau: the school review process | Education Review Office](#)

We host termly online hui for school leaders to ask questions about ERO's review process and what to expect during a review.



Te Ara Huarau: a closer look at the phases



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We introduced Te Ara Huarau in 2020/21. All schools have had at least one school review using Te Ara Huarau.

The phases:

Hauhake – takes place in all schools every 3-4 years, reports are written and published after this phase.

Pārekereke – most schools are able to use our findings and adapt planning for themselves. For most schools, ERO will not engage with you during this phase.

Ngaki / Atawhai – most schools have their own regular cadence of monitoring activity. Our follow up monitoring visits are on a regular cadence with schools that need more support. We are trying to make sure that these visits happen with a trusted known lead evaluator. This phase generates internal reporting.

One Te Ara Huarau cycle takes place within 3-4 years. **Most schools will only engage with ERO during the Hauhake phase.**

Progress visits: We will engage more frequently with schools that need more support. This includes online check-ins or in-person visits to verify the progress the school has made against the improvement plan to bring about better outcomes for learners.

What to expect from a school review



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School undertakes internal evaluation



School & ERO discuss review process



School provides evidence to ERO



School & ERO evaluation team: onsite activities (2-3 days)



School report written, confirmed & published



School implements action plan for improvement



Ongoing monitoring for schools that need more support

Our new school reports



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We are now using our new school reports.

Our judgements in the report are based on the School Improvement Framework (SIF).

We use the four-point scale for the 14 areas that matter most for student success (or 16, if your school has a rumaki or reo rua).

Here is more information about our new school reports: [Reporting | Education Review Office](#)

How ERO uses AI

ERO uses AI-assisted drafting to support the development of initial school report narratives from evaluation evidence.

All synthesis, analysis, judgements, findings, and final report content remain fully human-led and are the responsibility of ERO staff, with all content reviewed, quality assured, and approved prior to publication.



Judgement areas



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The 14 areas which ERO makes judgements on:

- Student achievement
- Student progress
- Reading & writing
- Mathematics
- Attendance
- Engagement & belonging
- Equity
- Leadership
- Teaching
- Curriculum
- Assessment
- Provision for students with additional needs
- School improvement
- Governance & the school board

For schools with a reo rua or rumaki:

- Panui & Tuhituhi
- Pāngarau

Excelling	Excelling means this school demonstrates consistently strong performance. This is the highest judgement.
Doing well	This means the school demonstrates mostly strong and consistent practice. Key conditions for success are in place and there is a focus on improvement.
Working towards	There are gaps in performance, but aspects of improvement are evident but there is variability.
Improvement required	There are significant and sustained gaps in school performance and urgent improvement is required.

We know that context matters



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ERO's evaluators take the time to understand each school's unique context and the story behind the numbers. Through our regular review programme, we have a record of each school's context, progress, and trajectory over time.

In high EQI contexts, evaluators explicitly consider the extent to which achievement outcomes are influenced by structural, historical, and community factors beyond a school's direct control.

This consideration informs how evidence is interpreted, judgements reached, and how findings are described in the narrative.



Reporting on attendance

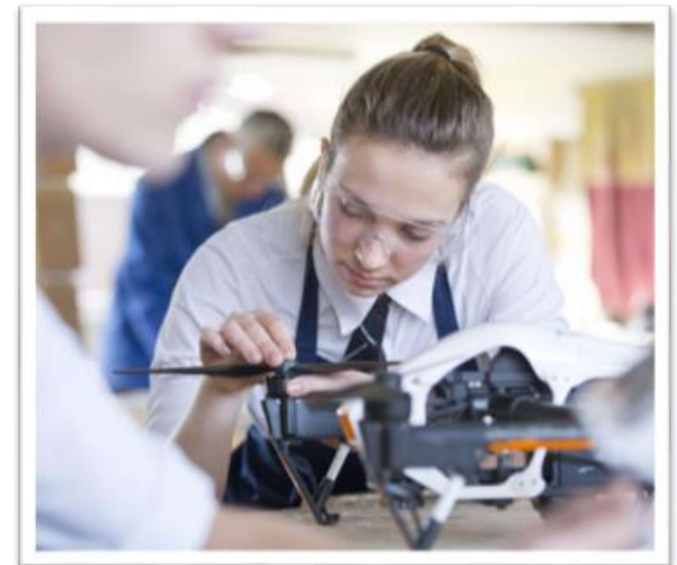


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Attendance is one of the Government's key education targets, and ERO will report on this measure for every school.

We are reporting on this as an outcome measure – so that means we are making judgements about **the level of regular attendance** in all schools and then we are explaining context **and** what the school is doing about raising attendance levels. This ensures that outcome judgements in reports across the country are very consistent and reliable.

We know how hard schools are working to improve attendance. Reports include a clear summary of what the school is doing to improve attendance and the progress being made. These narratives will help the community see the real care, commitment, and hard work that sits behind this school's efforts to improve attendance.



Progress and achievement



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Progress over time is a key part of understanding whether a school's actions are making a difference.

The new reports make visible both where learners are at and how much progress schools are making over time, particularly in contexts where improvement from a low base is a key indicator of effective leadership and teaching.

Each judgement is supported by **narrative commentary to provide context**. *Eg, where attendance is lower, reports also describe the actions a school is taking to improve engagement and attendance.*

Lower achievement outcomes are not treated as a proxy for school quality, particularly in schools serving communities with high levels of need.

The School Improvement Framework (SIF), the Raupapa Ako Framework (RAF) and our reports distinguish school conditions and practices (such as leadership, teaching, curriculum, and inclusion) from learner outcomes (including achievement, progress, engagement, and belonging). A school who makes significant progress for learners from a low base of achievement, due to excellent leadership and teaching practices, would have these factors clearly recognised in their report.

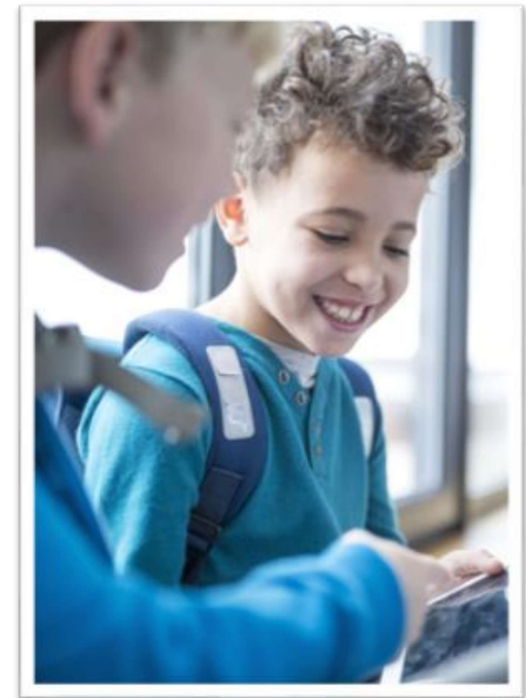
We'll continue to monitor:



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- Feedback from schools as new school reports are published.
- How well reports support constructive conversations between parents, schools, boards, and their communities.
- Whether there are any unintended consequences or misinterpretations that require further refinement or supporting material.

Q&As about our school reports is here on our website: [Reporting | Education Review Office](#)





Making the most of ERO's
tools and resources

Tools: School Improvement Framework (SIF)



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Schools can use the School Improvement Framework (SIF) as an internal evaluation tool to help you to identify where you are on an improvement journey, identify next improvement steps, and to monitor progress.

The SIF focuses on the areas that have the greatest impact on learner outcomes; school leadership, teaching and learning, and curriculum, and aligns to ERO's School Evaluation Indicators.

The SIF was updated in 2026 to align with the Education and Training Amendment Act 2025, and Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand Standards for the Teaching Profession.

We use the SIF as part of every school evaluation, ensuring that our judgements are nationally consistent.

Tools: Teaching Observation Framework (TOF)



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The Teaching Observation Framework (TOF) is part of every school evaluation.

The TOF describes what effective teaching practice looks like at a classroom level and guides you to identify effective teaching practices in your school and make improvements where necessary.

We use the TOF alongside you as part of the evaluation process, to make judgements about where your school sits in the Teaching and Learning domain of the School Improvement Framework (SIF).



The TOF, a guide to using the TOF and the School Synthesis Template can be downloaded from our [website](#).



Tools: Raupapa Ako Framework



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The Raupapa Ako Framework (RAF) is ERO's improvement framework to support high-quality Māori-medium immersion education in English-medium settings.

The RAF aligns with the School Improvement Framework, ensuring that a consistent and considered approach to improvement is taken across an entire school for learners and their whānau.

The framework provides clarity, helping schools identify where they are on their improvement journey, identify next improvement steps, and to monitor progress for learners in the rumaki/reo rua.

Schools will use the RAF as an evaluation tool when considering outcomes for learners in the rumaki/reo rua as part of internal evaluation cycles.

ERO will use the completed framework to guide external evaluation activities with rumaki/reo rua to support the schools' approaches to excellence for all learners.

The RAF was updated in 2026 to align with the Education and Training Amendment Act 2025, and Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand Standards for the Teaching Profession.

Tools: Poutama Reo



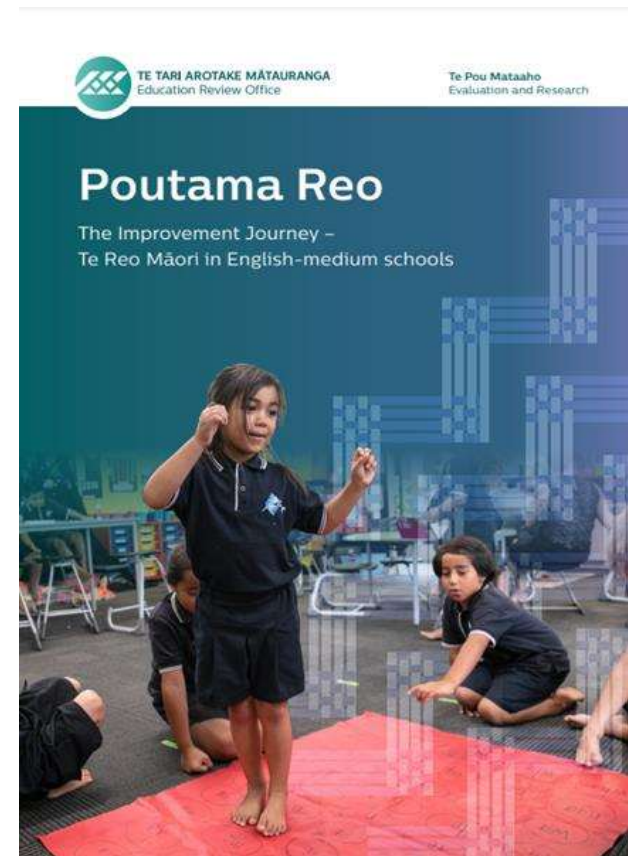
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Poutama Reo supports you to understand your school's provision of te reo Māori and the next steps you can take to drive improvement.

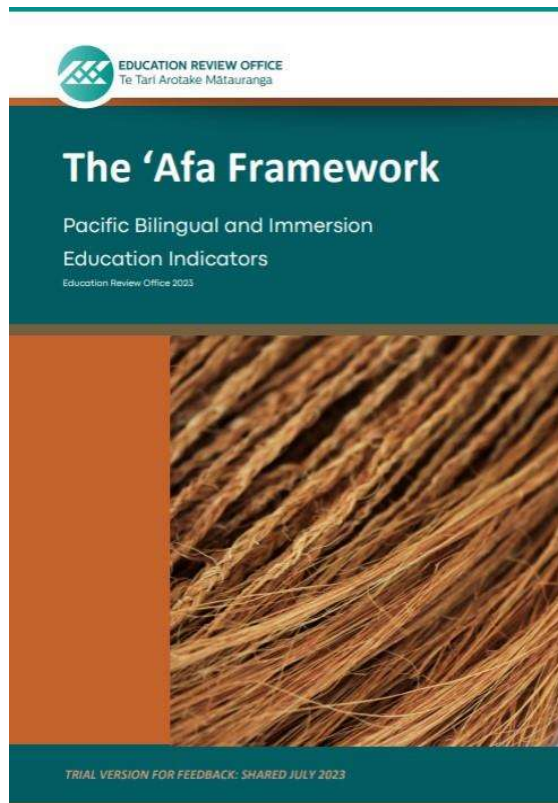
As you work through the framework, you will develop a te reo Māori improvement plan for your school.

Poutama Reo provides examples of effective practice, giving you clarity and support to enable you to achieve your te reo Māori goals.

As part of a review, ERO will discuss your school's provision of te reo Māori and the next steps you can take to drive improvement.



Tools: 'Afa Framework



The 'Afa framework supports quality Pacific language provision in schools. The framework outlines the conditions that support language learning success.

ERO has documented a set of indicators and examples of effective practice to help guide planning, professional development and quality teaching.

The 'Afa Framework is here on our website: [The 'Afa Framework | Education Review Office](#).

As part of a review, ERO will discuss the quality of teaching for learners in Pacific Bilingual and Immersion Education Programmes in your school.

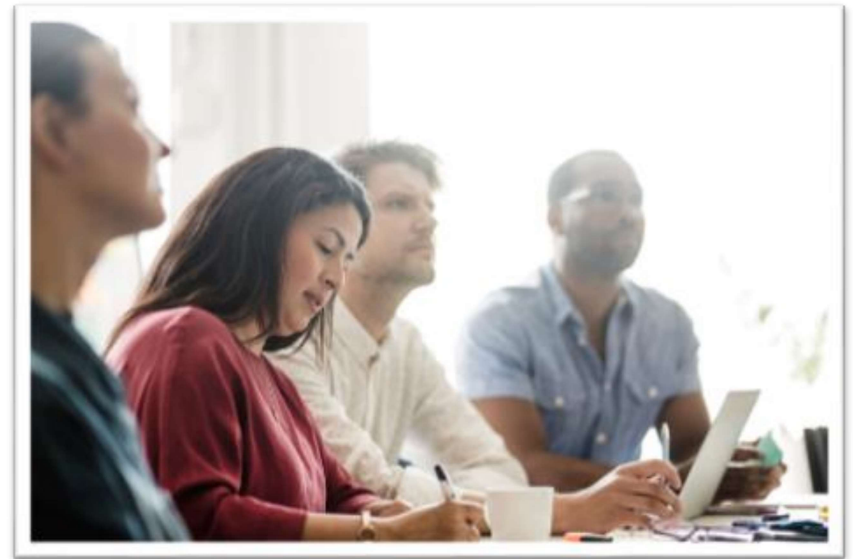
Tools: Board Assurance Statement (BAS)



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The Board Assurance Statement (BAS) and Self-Audit Checklists help your school board check that they are meeting regulatory and legislative requirements.

The BAS has been shortened so it is more sharply focused on what matters most for learners, including health, safety and wellbeing, attendance, progress and achievement.



BAS: Attendance Management Plans



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As part of our Board Assurance Statement, the board attests to the school having an Attendance Management Plan, which sets out a strategy and process for the school to identify and respond to student absences.

The board attests that the school's plan complies with the regulations.

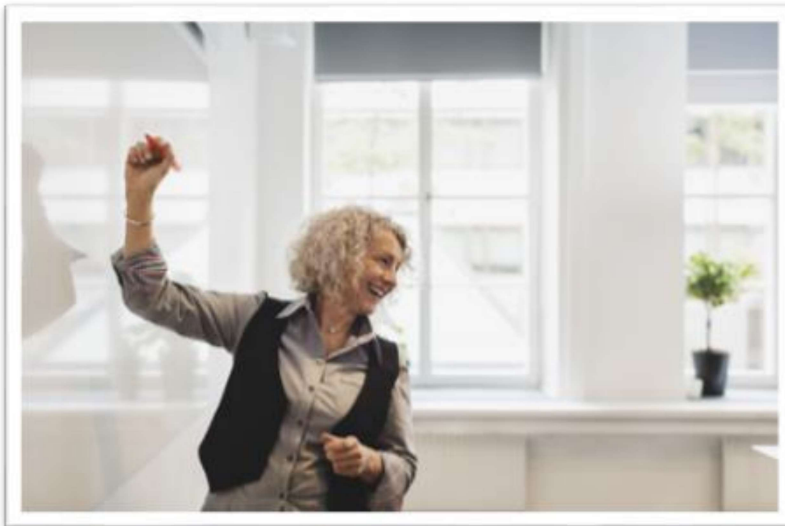
We will ask you about attendance, how you identify and respond to attendance barriers and underlying causes of absences, how you monitor and measure progress in attendance, including any targets set by the board or the government. We will need to see your Attendance Management Plan.



BAS: Open for Instruction



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As part of our Board Assurance Statement, the board attests to ensuring that the school is open for instruction on the number of half-days, terms and times specified by the Minister by notice under the Regulations.

We will ask you how you know that the school is open for instruction for the required number of half-days, if there are any half-days counted as open for instruction where compulsory organised teaching and learning is not taking place for all year levels, and if the board varied the time at which any half-days take place.

BAS: reporting, assessment and aromatawai



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As part of our Board Assurance Statement, the board attests to reporting on progress and achievement of students.

The board attests that the school is using good quality assessment or aromatawai information to report to each student and their parents.

We will ask you how your reporting provides parents with timely and meaningful information about the progress their child is making in line with the curriculum, their areas of strength, improvement and next steps. We will also ask about your assessment information, which determines how each student is progressing with their learning.



The image shows a classroom setting with a green chalkboard in the background. Several hands are raised in the air, indicating an interactive session or a vote. The hands are out of focus, with the one in the foreground being the most prominent. The text "How ERO is responding to legislation changes" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

How ERO is responding to legislation changes

Some schools need more support



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Some schools need more support to bring about the improvements required to lift learner success.

If ERO determines that a school needs more support to bring about the changes necessary to lift learner success, we will recommend that the Ministry of Education provides additional support or intervention. This information is included in the school report.

Schools of serious concern

Amendments to the Education and Training Act 2020 strengthens the role of ERO in identifying schools of serious concern and the process that follows.

When ERO identifies a school may be of serious concern, the Chief Review Officer must notify the Secretary for Education and the Minister within two working days. Within 28 working days of that notification, ERO will provide a report to the Ministry confirming the serious concern status and recommending statutory intervention.

How we support schools of concern



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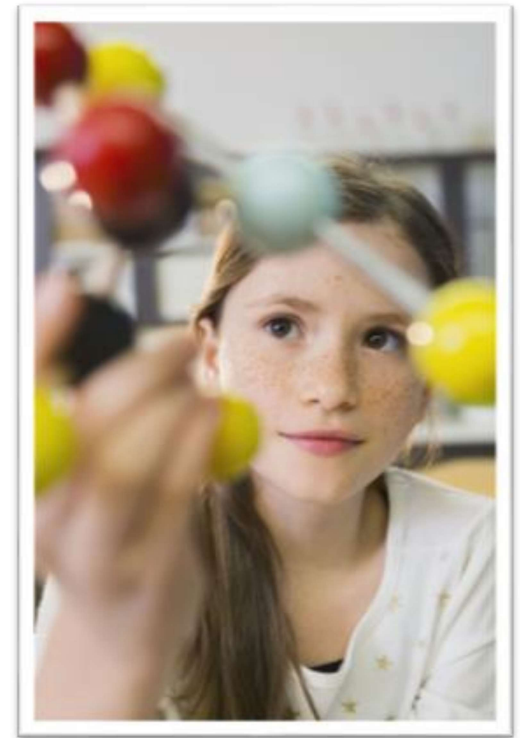
How we support schools of concern and schools of serious concern

We work more closely and frequently with schools that need it most. This includes regular progress engagements, either online or onsite, to monitor the progress the school is making.

We look for evidence that improvement actions are being implemented, that teaching and leadership practices are strengthening, and that learner outcomes such as achievement, attendance, engagement and wellbeing are improving.

Progress is not determined by one meeting or one set of data. ERO considers patterns over time and whether improvement is becoming embedded in the school's systems, practice and monitoring.

ERO will write progress reports that outline the shifts happening.



Equity and excellence for all learners



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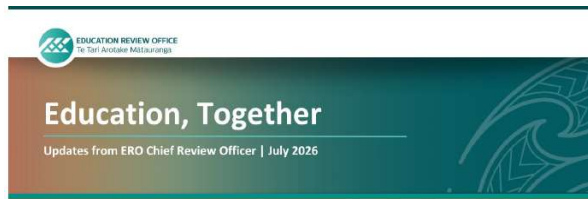
We are focused on equity and excellence for all learners. During a school review, we will discuss how you are supporting Māori learners' progress and achievement.

Māori learner success is supported:

- where school boards, leaders and teachers know about and specifically support the aspirations of Māori learners and their whānau to achieve, and set high expectations for attendance, progress and achievement
- where schools actively engage in respectful working relationships with Māori learners and their whānau - invitational, respectful, reciprocal relationships are evident
- the school affirms Māori learners and provides engaging, challenging and relevant content and curriculum that is progressive and paves the way to success and future learning and careers
- teachers use evidence-based strategies that respond to each learner's diverse needs and reduce barriers to learning, so that every child, can thrive.
- the school is a place where students feel safe and included – a sense of belonging
- school boards, leaders and teachers use a range of high-quality assessment information to look at what is working well for groups of learners – including Māori - and what they could do to improve their provision and success.

We know that many boards, schools and teachers work hard to make sure that these good practices are what children experience every day. We acknowledge your hard work in closing the equity gap between Māori and non-Māori achievement.

Stay up to date: Education, Together



Tēnā koutou katoa,

Ko David Ferguson ahau, Te Tumu Whakarae hou o Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga. Nōku te hōnore, mā runga i te maha ake o ngā aheitunga ki te mahi tahi ā tōna wā.

Nō reira tēnā tātau, tēnā tatou, tēnā tātou katoa.

My name is David Ferguson. I am the new Chief Review Officer at the Education Review Office.

I'm incredibly grateful and humbled to be given this opportunity to serve our education sector. I've spent my whole career working in education, with more than 30 years in schools. I have previously been a principal in Auckland for 15 years and have been involved in several education governance groups nationally and internationally.

Our work as teachers and educators matters, and I am looking forward to doing everything I can in this role to support the great work that you all do.

This newsletter looks a little different. It brings together updates for early learning services, school leaders, and others in the education sector. Going forward, we will keep in touch more often with clear, relevant information about our work with you.

Keep up to date with the latest ERO news and information, by reading **Education, Together** – our newsletter for the sector.

All previous newsletters are available to read on our [website](#).

If you would like to join the mailing list, please email ricomms@ero.govt.nz

Your feedback matters!



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Schools will receive our **Post Review Questionnaire (PRQ)** at the same time as you receive your confirmed report.

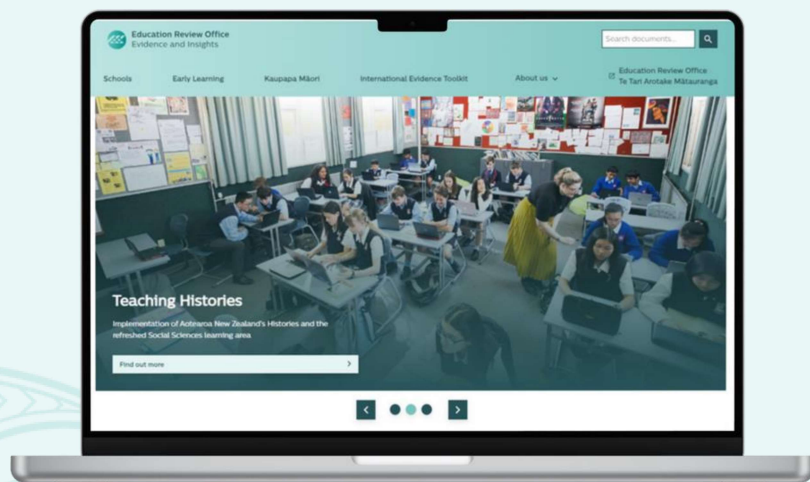
We encourage you to complete the PRQ, giving us useful insights into how well our evaluation has supported your school.

If you have questions for us, please talk to your evaluator.



Where to find ERO's latest research, insights, and guidance

Research website



www.evidence.ero.govt.nz

Our latest evaluation reports, good practice guidance, and more!

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Find us by searching:
Te Ihuwaka Education Evaluation Centre



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Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa | The child – the heart of the matter.