

ERO Reports

ERO visited both Deaf Education Centres and met with the Board in August and September. We are now pleased to be able to share the confirmed ERO reports for KDEC and van Asch DEC. This is the first time ERO has conducted a combined review of both centres, which was a highlight for us in our drive for national consistency.

We were really happy that ERO highlighted the successes we have had over the last 3 years.

Each ERO report also highlights next steps (makes recommendations) which are largely consistent with the challenges the Board and staff had already identified, and many of them already have works in progress.

The combined BOT is now 4 years old, and in that time there has been a large amount of progress and rapid change in Deaf education. ERO highlighted to us just how much we were managing, and how much pressure this puts both our board and our staff under. We collectively see that our next challenges are embedding the changes that have taken place recently, while seeking to make future progress in a sustainable way. Therefore as part of our feedback process, the Board asked that ERO consider a shorter review period than the standard 3 year time-frame.

The request for a shorter review period was made in the knowledge that this would ensure joint planning between the Deaf Education Centres, MoE and ERO. The Board's view is that this coordination will help to manage the expectations of and workload on the DECs. A shorter review period will allow our board to take on the feedback, make changes and have the changes reassessed by ERO within the term of the current Board.

Feedback from ERO in 2018/19 will in turn enable the Board to brief their successors even more successfully as the year 2020 appears on our horizon.

Rachel Douglas

Board Chairperson

Combined Board of Trustees of Kelston Deaf Education Centre and van Asch Deaf Education Centre



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Kelston Deaf Education Centre
Kelston, Auckland**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Kelston Deaf Education Centre

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?

The Kelston Deaf Education Centre (KDEC) is a special school providing education and support services to students and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The centre caters for students from school age to 21 years of age.

The centre provides a wide range of educational services and learning support for deaf students in the northern half of the North Island. It is one of two schools operating in this way as part of a national provision for deaf students. KDEC and the Van Asch Deaf Education Centre (van Asch DEC) have operated under a combined board since December 2012.

The combined board has focused on developing a governance strategy and structures to meet the complex and varying demands of deaf education across New Zealand. This is the first report of ERO's findings about KDEC's provision under the new board.

Since ERO's 2012 review, the Kelston base school, hostel and marae have been rebuilt. The base school hosts KDEC administration and resource development. The new base facilities also include an early childhood centre for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing children. The regional roll of students receiving services from the centre has increased substantially.

Core School

Core school leaders are responsible for eight learning hubs operating out of host schools in West, South and North Auckland. The core school also includes a transition unit for older students (18 to 21 years) operating from the base school and the Auckland Deaf Society in Balmoral. There are 97 students on the core school roll.

Students in the core school receive specialised instruction including New Zealand Sign Language. They attend selected classes in the host schools with support from their KDEC teachers, sign language interpreters and teacher aides. Their programme has a focus on language development.

The core school also provides a residential service for up to 23 students aged 12 to 21 years of age. The residential hostel is a mixed hostel has separate wings for boys and girls.

Regional Services

KDEC provides specialist services for deaf and hard of hearing students enrolled in local schools across their wider region. This includes 368 students on the regional roll and 782 on the support services (ASSIST) roll. These students are often the only deaf student in their school.

Resource teachers of the deaf (RTDs) provide support for students and mainstream teachers. RTDs visit students weekly and use other communication strategies to support students.

KDEC regional students who receive services from the centre are eligible for ASSIST services that provide advice regarding Individual Learning Plans (IEPs), transition and management of assistive listening devices. Other support is available through KDEC audiologist and habilitation services for children with cochlear implants.

The regional services in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty are located in a hub alongside other special school providers, which service the same areas. The provision of centralised services supports teachers and families in the regions to meet together and share professional development.

2 Learning

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

School leaders recognise the need to improve the use of achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement. External expertise and support would enable leaders and teachers to accelerate the learning progress and achievement of students over time.

Leaders at KDEC and van Asch DEC have clearly identified a national profile of deaf students across the core, regional and ASSIST services. Leaders are now strengthening the school management and data system (SMS) to create a national student database for deaf students. They recognise that effective development of the SMS is a major priority.

Individual education plans for deaf students are clearly focused on improving a wide range of social, wellbeing and learning outcomes. Leaders are working towards all staff having easier digital access to IEPs that also include more specific goals about accelerating student achievement.

Core School

Leaders and teachers provide a wide range of specialised support for students' learning. They recognise that accelerating learning progress for students who are deaf or hard of hearing is complex and takes intensive, targeted support. This includes support from a new specialist services team to better provide for students' social, emotional and wellbeing requirements. Students in the regional service would benefit from an equivalent support team.

School information shows that some students are making steady progress over time. However, many students require more targeted teaching and additional instructional time so that they are able to make accelerated gains in reading, writing and mathematics up to Year 10. Some learning hubs are providing more teaching time to respond to these students' needs.

Core school leaders have collated student achievement information to show how well students are achieving against National Standards in Years 1 to 8, *New Zealand Curriculum* levels in Years 9 to 10

and in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) in Years 11 to 13. In relation to National Standards, further strengthening of moderation processes would improve the dependability of overall teacher judgements. Teachers in the learning hubs could more consistently moderate assessment with teachers in the host schools to share practice and improve judgments.

KDEC has a school system to track student progress over time. However, it is complex to understand, and is not well used. School leaders report on student achievement once a year. The board requires more regular information about student progress and achievement to inform decision making.

Some students achieve very well in NCEA and others could benefit from further support and guidance to help them achieve well across a wide range of meaningful subjects. This would help students access future educational pathways. Students would also benefit from stronger guidance about the importance of literacy and mathematics NCEA credits as a foundation for future educational pathways. This would help students be in a better position to achieve Level 2 NCEA, consistent with the government goals for school leavers.

Over the past three years, Māori students have mostly achieved at levels comparable with other students in the school. More specific school and teacher plans could assist leaders and teachers to focus on accelerating Māori students' achievement. Consistently developing these plans with whānau could strengthen partnerships that would improve student outcomes.

The school's development of a Pacific achievement plan, in consultation with individual families, is helping create connections between Pacific students, their families and KDEC. Evaluating the success of the plan in accelerating student progress would be helpful in considering what is working well to increase Pacific students' success and outcomes.

Regional Services

Information about the achievement of students enrolled in local schools is clearly collated and reported to the principal and board. The quality of the data is variable, depending on the quality of the moderation processes of the school at which the student is enrolled. RTDs use achievement information as it is available to target their teaching and support. An evaluation of the impact of the RTD support service on student outcomes would help determine the success of the current delivery model in helping deaf students access the curriculum and achieve well.

Teachers and leaders continue to develop relationships with a wide variety of schools to ensure RTDs receive timely and useful information about deaf students' learning requirements, progress and achievement. KDEC leaders could consider promoting additional strategic leadership partnerships with school leaders to improve the exchange of key information about the student and effective teaching practices.

Next Steps

ERO recommends that leaders and teachers build their capability to accelerate learning effectively in order to increase the progress and achievement of all students over time.

Leaders agree that there is the need across KDEC to:

- report more regularly to the board about student progress and achievement
- strengthen teacher capability to use achievement information
- promote teaching practices that accelerate student progress
- use more consistent and robust assessment and moderation practices
- review and extend the content of the mathematics curriculum

- extend the use of assessment tools to better monitor learner outcomes
- ensure curriculum provision helps deaf students to access a wider range of future educational pathways.

3 Curriculum

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

The KDEC curriculum is partially effective at promoting and supporting student learning. The curriculum is focused on supporting students to develop the key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). There is a deliberate focus on promoting students' pride and sense of belonging as members of the deaf community. Students now require more support to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills to successfully engage in life beyond school.

The KDEC curriculum has a strong focus on enhancing students' communication skills. The social, emotional and language development of students is prioritised as the key foundation for learning. To improve the outcomes for students, the curriculum is being strengthened through the development of the New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) curriculum learning pathway.

Leaders could benefit from working with Van Asch DEC staff to help them better document the KDEC school curriculum at the core school and in the regional service. This would also help support teacher induction and provide good guidance for all teachers and their teaching practice. Leaders have also identified future strategic priorities as:

- strengthening partnerships with parents around students' learning, progress and achievement
- developing the centre's e-learning strategy, priorities and directions
- promoting student decision making and ownership of their learning and achievement.

Students in the core school enjoy valuable opportunities to be with other students who can relate to their own experiences. Students experience a broad curriculum and also receive regular specialised instruction from highly skilled teachers, support staff and sign language tutors.

Students benefit from the commitment and respect of teachers and staff. Teachers adapt teaching practices and build positive relationships with students to help meet their aspirations and interests. Many teachers are experienced and have a high level of expertise.

Tū Kōkiri, the transition programme for 18 to 21 year olds, is well structured to align with student interests and aspirations. Students are better able to access relevant future learning pathways to tertiary study and employment. Students value opportunities to develop their independence. They also value the friendships and positive relationships they have with their teachers and each other.

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

In the past, students have experienced very good opportunities at Raumoko Marae to engage with and celebrate te reo and tikanga Māori. At the time of this review, the marae had been moved and a new whare built. Students and staff are looking forward to this being reopened by 2017 and the appointment of a new Māori cultural adviser to work alongside the Māori deaf community.

Some Māori students would benefit from more targeted wellbeing approaches to support their engagement and success in learning. Increasing Māori students' engagement and reducing the number of stand downs would be a worthwhile strategic goal for school leaders to consider. This

would align well with a performance management focus on increasing culturally responsive teaching practices school-wide.

Māori students have benefited from noho marae and from learning te reo Māori and mau rākau in the host schools' curriculum. They also enjoy meaningful opportunities to come together with their whānau and school staff. Consultation processes are in place to offer worthwhile opportunities for whānau to inform the school's Tiriti o Waitangi partnership.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

This is the first full ERO review for the combined board. In the last three years since its inception, the board has developed a governance infrastructure and practices. The board has prioritised the development of a national profile of deaf students' locations and level of required support. It has identified strategic priorities to drive improvement and strengthened internal communication processes. The board has identified that it is timely to increase its engagement with the wider school community.

School leaders are experienced and the demands on them have been significant. External demographic change and growing numbers have added to the increased complexity and diversity in the deaf population for both KDEC and Van Asch DEC. School leaders have been focused on managing the demands of growth. For KDEC, the base school rebuild, the move to the new residential hostel and rebuilding of the marae have been major projects for the board and school leaders. Leaders are concerned about the sustainability and quality of the services they provide. Reviewing the management and leadership structure could help the KDEC to support students more effectively in the new context.

The board has requested ERO's ongoing involvement to help strengthen trustees' evaluation capability. Other external support is required to help leaders and trustees manage the complexity of deaf education nationally and to sustain and improve the school's performance. The board is aware that it would benefit from highly skilled external expertise to help new and existing trustees to focus strategic decisions and resourcing on improving student learning, wellbeing and achievement.

The board and school leaders would also benefit from the support of a Student Achievement Function facilitator (SAF). More specific student achievement targets and goals focused on accelerating student wellbeing and learning outcomes would help. Reporting to the board on student wellbeing and achievement to inform decision making, requires significant improvement.

The board has strategically supported the appointment of human resource managers at both Van Asch DEC and KDEC. To support the board in its role as a good employer, more regular reports about staff and student wellbeing would be helpful and prudent.

ERO's evaluation found that KDEC's performance management process is sound. Leaders have developed guidelines and expectations to promote more consistent practices across teachers and staff. Useful systems are in place to monitor teacher and staff appraisal and ensure that requirements are being met. Teachers have very good access to professional development and benefit from supportive leaders.

Leaders are considering succession planning for school-wide leadership. Developing a leadership pathway for staff and equitably supporting their ongoing professional development is a key priority.

School leaders would also benefit from high quality external appraisal to inform their leadership growth and development.

The board and leaders should also prioritise:

- ongoing board training that strategically targets and promotes high quality stewardship to meet the identified needs of the centre's unique and complex environment
- increasing evaluative capability, including consideration of the effectiveness of governance and leadership across the centre
- regular reporting to the board, for trustees to be better informed about student progress, achievement and acceleration
- ensuring that effective systems and practices are in place to regularly assure the board about the wellbeing of all students and staff.

Provision for students in the school hostel

The KDEC hostel is licensed to accommodate 23 students. Centre leaders have attested that all the requirements of the Hostel Regulations are being met.

Since the 2012 ERO review, the new residential hostel has been built. Staff and students have moved from three smaller residential houses to one large communal hostel, with separate wings for the boys and girls. Students have their own rooms and staff actively promote positive relationships. KDEC has facilities that are available for parents, if they want to occasionally stay at the centre and visit their child.

There has been a period of significant adjustment as students from 12 years to the age of 21 years learn to live together in one facility. The hostel manager is closely involved in ensuring that students' needs are understood and responded to, and that the hostel operates to support students' welfare and sense of belonging.

The new hostel has been in operation for six months. The principal and the hostel manager agree an external evaluation is required to help support day to day operations and improve student wellbeing. Areas for the external review to consider include:

- student safety and privacy
- student wellbeing and care routines including food and nutrition
- hostel staff supervision roles and responsibilities
- incident reporting systems and action planning
- regularity of systems to gather and respond to student input
- supporting older students' independence
- indoor environments and the provision of on-site leisure activities.

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.

Recommendations to other agencies

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education provides support to KDEC school leaders through the Student Achievement Function (SAF) to improve assessment practices and the use of student achievement information.

ERO also recommends that the Ministry of Education ensures that the board receives ongoing specialist advice and support to help trustees develop a shared understanding of governance obligations and effective stewardship practices that promote high quality learning, wellbeing and achievement outcomes for all students.

Conclusion

The Kelston Deaf Education Centre provides extensive support and services that target the diverse needs of deaf students across a wide geographical area. Students benefit from being part of the Deaf community and from supportive relationships with teachers and staff. Ministry of Education support would help trustees and leaders improve school performance.

ERO intends to carry out another review over the course of one-to-two years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Graham Randell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

28 November 2016

About the School

Location	Kelston, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	503	
School type	Special School	
School roll	Core school roll: 97 Residential roll: 21	Regional roll: 386 ASSIST roll: 732
Gender composition (core school)	Boys 56% Girls 44%	
Ethnic composition (core school)	Māori Pākehā Pacific Asian MELAA other	32% 11% 23% 21% 9% 4%
Special Features	<p>KDEC Auckland partnerships with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelston Primary School • Kelston Intermediate • Kelston Girls' College • Kelston Boys' College • Oteha Valley School • Ormiston Primary School • Mission Heights Junior College • Ormiston Senior College • Tu Kokiri (Transition) at Archibald road, Kelston and Auckland Deaf Society <p>Residential Hostel at Archibald road in Kelston Regional Service and Resource Development Hubs at Hamilton and Tauranga Resource Teachers of the Deaf Service (RTD) ASSIST Teams</p>	
Review team on site	August 2016	
Date of this report	28 November 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	October 2012 June 2010 January 2007