

National Report Summary

ERO publishes evaluation reports on education issues of national importance. This handout is a summary of a recent national report - it captures the key points and highlights findings which you may find useful. The full report is available on our website - www.ero.govt.nz

Inclusive practices for students with special needs in schools

ERO evaluated inclusive practices in 152 schools reviewed in Term 2, 2014. Most schools had enrolled one or more students with special education needs. Three quarters of the schools were mostly inclusive of students with special needs, compared with only half in ERO's 2010 evaluation.

Students with special education needs

ERO's evaluation focused on students who need teaching adaptations and/or individual support to access *The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC)* or *Te Marautanga* and achieve at or above the level for their age and students who are likely to learn within level one of the NZC throughout their time at school.

Inclusive systems and practices

Most schools had developed useful procedures and plans to guide practices and support the participation of students with special needs. For example, they carefully planned the transition of students into, through and out of the school.

Leadership

Leaders of inclusive schools set high expectations for students, and ensured that staff understood their responsibility to meet the needs of all their students.

Planning to improve provision and capability

The 'mostly inclusive' schools were more likely to have a coordinated systematic approach. They identified priorities for building staff capability and allocated resources equitably.

Schools accessed professional learning and development (PLD) to support students with special education needs or to improve their practices. Effective PLD was focused and relevant to the needs of particular students.

Schools that reviewed the outcomes of their programmes were better placed to decide how to provide effectively for students with special education needs.

Sharing responsibility

Regular meetings between school staff, specialist teachers and specialists helped meet the needs of students with special education needs.

Special education needs coordinators or heads of learning support were responsible for identifying specific needs, coordinating support and monitoring student progress and programme effectiveness.

Schools allocated time for staff to meet regularly to identify needs, plan programmes together, monitor progress, share effective practices, discuss successes and challenges and identify specialist advice needs.

A Year 5 boy with cerebral palsy was confident, articulate, a leader and good with technology. His school helped him build on his strengths by nominating him a 'techno kid' responsible for supporting his class and teachers in technology and running the technology for school assemblies. He was supported to run his own Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings and report on his progress and achievements.

Responding to individual needs and IEPs

Schools carefully identified students' needs and provided specific support. Effective practices included differentiating the curriculum, modifying activities and providing guidance for teacher's aides.

Schools involved parents, teachers, specialist teachers and specialists in developing IEPs with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) goals. They regularly reviewed progress towards these goals.

Self-review questions on including students with special education needs

School values, culture, and commitment

- To what extent is the school committed to including students with special education needs and meeting their needs?
- To what extent do the school's relationships with the families and whānau of students with high needs support the inclusion and achievement of these students?

School-wide systems, initiatives and practices to meet the needs of students with special education needs

- How well does the school plan and coordinate its provisions for students with special education needs?
- How well do staff understand their responsibility for students with special education needs and collaborate to meet their needs?
- How effectively does the school use a range of information to identify students with special needs and monitor their progress?
- How effective are the processes for transition into, through, and out of school?
- To what extent has PLD supported leaders and teachers to improve inclusion and achievement of students with special education needs?

Teaching and support to promote participation and engagement

- How well does the school consider the requirements of students with special education needs when deciding on their placement and selecting staff to work with them?
- How well does the school respond to the needs of individual students?
- To what extent do IEPs provide specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and time-bound goals for students?
- How well do teachers differentiate teaching and adapt the curriculum to promote inclusion and achievement of students with special education needs?
- How effective is the guidance for teacher's aides to provide effective support for students with special education needs?
- How well does the school promote positive relationships between students with special education needs and other students?
- To what extent are students with special education needs included outside the classroom?

Outcomes for students with special education needs

- To what extent do students with special education needs progress and achieve their goals?
- How well does the school provide a caring culture where students with high needs feel valued, comfortable and safe from bullying?

FIND OUT MORE

For more ideas and information, you can read the full report online at www.ero.govt.nz/national-reports

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The Child – the Heart of the Matter