

## Information for schools - National Evaluation Topic

### Science in the Early Years (Early Learning and Years 1 – 4)

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Why are we doing this NET?

The national strategic plan for science in society ([A Nation of Curious Minds | He Whenua Hihiri i te Mahara](#)) has three action areas aimed at strengthening the place of science in society over ten years (2014-2024). One of these action areas is *Enhancing the role of education* (MBIE, 2014, p.9). This action area is aimed at supporting “all young New Zealanders to be resilient learners with future-proofed skills to understand, assess and apply rapidly changing science and technology knowledge to their everyday lives.” (MBIE, 2014, p. 23).

We are now halfway through the ten-year timeframe for this strategic plan.

[NMSSA \(2017\)](#) reported almost all students achieved at or above curriculum expectations at Year 4, and teachers of Year 4 students enjoyed teaching science. Unfortunately, achievement continues to decline between Year 4 and Year 8.

This makes it a good time to consider the science-related learning opportunities younger children experience, that set them up with the knowledge, capabilities, dispositions and working theories which form the foundation for their ongoing learning in science.

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What does ERO want to find out?

The focus of this review is on how well teachers in the early years promote children’s development of the foundations for ongoing learning in science. The following questions will guide discussions reviewers have with leaders and teachers:

1. How does science | pūtaiao feature in teaching and learning?
2. How is the Nature of Science deliberately woven through contexts?
3. How is science | pūtaiao led in the school?

In a sample of schools, there will be three additional questions.

1. How well does the school’s local curriculum support children to develop their capability as science learners?
2. How well do school conditions for learning impact on positive student outcomes?
3. How effectively does leadership and internal evaluation improve student outcomes?

Your review co-ordinator will advise if ERO will be asking these additional questions in your school.

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Sources of information	<p>Information for this evaluation will be collected through school science documentation, interviews with school and/or science leaders and where possible, observations of science in action.</p> <p>It would be helpful if the following sorts of documents are available for review teams when they are on site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your school's science curriculum statement</li> <li>• any policies, procedures and guidelines for science teaching</li> <li>• school goals for science progress and achievement</li> <li>• science planning</li> <li>• internal evaluation to do with the provision of science education</li> <li>• evidence of science professional development or support given to staff on science teaching</li> <li>• reports to the board of trustees and parents on student progress in science.</li> </ul>
When are we doing this NET?	Term 3, 2019.
Which schools are included?	This NET will be undertaken in all ERO reviews of schools during Term 3, 2019 where the school has students in Years 1 – 4. In a sample of schools there will be additional questions of the provision of science education. These schools will be advised by their review co-ordinator of their inclusion in this sample.

### What will happen with the findings?

ERO is likely to use the findings to produce:

- A general report of the findings
- A good practice report, sharing examples of practice for science teaching and learning in the early years
- Presentation of findings at conferences, such as the NZ Association of Science Educators Conference, and/or early learning conferences.

We may also produce brochures of sector-specific findings targeted to school leaders and teachers.

### Official Information Act

When talking with our review team, please state if you have any objections to the release of any information contained in your submission. Any request for the withholding of information on the grounds of confidentiality or for any other reason will be determined in accordance with the Official Information Act.