EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
TE TARI AROTAKE MATAURANGA

Including Students with High Needs
Primary Schools

July 2013

Foreword

The Education Review Office (ERO) is an independent government department that reviews the performance of New Zealand's schools and early childhood services, and reports publicly on what it finds.

The whakataukī of ERO demonstrates the importance we place on the educational achievement of our children and young people:

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

In our daily work we have the privilege of going into early childhood services and schools, giving us a current picture of what is happening throughout the country. We collate and analyse this information so that it can be used to benefit the education sector and, therefore, the children in our education system. ERO's reports contribute sound information for work undertaken to support the Government's policies.

Through its *Success for All* policy, the Government expects all schools to demonstrate inclusive practice for children with special education needs. This report focuses on inclusive practice in primary schools and comments on progress towards the *Success for All* inclusion target. The findings are promising but reiterate the importance of a coordinated, school-wide response for these students.

Successful delivery in education relies on many people and organisations across the community working together for the benefit of children and young people. We trust the information in ERO's evaluations will help them in their work.

Diana Anderson
Chief Review Officer (Acting)
Education Review Office

July 2013

Contents

Overview

In 2010 the Ministry of Education completed a review of special education and subsequently *Success for All*[1] was launched. *Success for All* included a target that, by 2014, 80 percent of schools would be doing a good job and none would be doing a poor job of including students with special needs. This target was informed by ERO's 2010 report – *Including Students with High Needs*.[2] High needs students are those in the top three percent of need for support for learning. ERO's 2010 report found that 50 percent of schools were mostly inclusive (doing a good job) and that 30 percent had some inclusive practices, with 20 percent having few inclusive practices (doing a poor job).

This new evaluation builds on ERO's 2010 findings using information collected in Term 4, 2012. It reports on how well 81 primary schools have included students with high needs. It also provides a perspective on the actions and the targets developed under *Success for All*. In 2014 ERO will conduct a larger-scale evaluation focusing on how well primary and secondary schools are including students with high needs.

The findings of this 2013 ERO report are encouraging in terms of the targets developed under *Success for All*. ERO found that 77 percent of schools were mostly inclusive, 16 percent of schools had some inclusive practices, and seven percent had few inclusive practices.

In schools with mostly inclusive practices, good performance related to coordination between school staff and outside personnel, professional learning and development, transitions, and the appropriate use of teacher aides to support students with high needs in the mainstream class context. Schools that were less inclusive had some of the characteristics of the mostly inclusive schools but needed to improve their school-wide coordination in support of students with high needs. The significant development areas for all schools were self review and monitoring and responding to their high needs students' achievement information.

Caution should be used when making any definitive judgements about the extent to which schools are on track to meet the Government's *Success for All* targets. This report is focused on students with high needs and does not reflect what is happening for students with moderate or low needs. It is also a smaller sample and does not include secondary schools.

It is of concern that six schools in the sample had few inclusive practices. One of the key reasons for the lack of inclusive practice in these schools was linked to the quality

---

[1] http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/OurWorkProgramme/SuccessForAll.aspx

[2] Education Review Office. (2010) *Including Students with High Needs*. Wellington: ERO.

of their teaching overall. Most of these schools did not 'do a good job' for most of their students, not just those with high needs. The low quality of teaching found across these schools also suggests that improving the responsiveness of these schools, for students with high needs, should be part of a broader whole-school development process for each school. The significant work implied by such a professional development process for these schools, and others like them, presents a difficult challenge to the *Success for All* targets of 80 percent of schools 'doing a good job' and none 'doing a poor job' of including students with special needs.

Next steps

In line with the Government's *Success for All* targets, the following recommendations are focused on all students with special needs, and not just on students with high needs.

On the basis of this report, school staff should:
- use the findings and self-review questions in this report to review the extent to which all students with special needs are included across the school and have effective, coordinated support for their academic, social and health needs
- ensure that all students with special needs have their achievement regularly monitored and analysed and that suitable responses are in place where students are identified as under-achieving
- review the extent to which the school's SENCO, in partnership with other staff, families and the community, can effectively support a coordinated and effective response to each student with special needs.

On the basis of this report, the Ministry of Education should:
- consider improving the guidance given to schools about how they should monitor and respond to the achievement information of students with special needs
- consider ways to improve SENCOs' focus on their role in coordinating the school's response to students with special needs
- ensure that schools identified as requiring support to improve their overall quality of teaching also receive advice and guidance specifically related to improving programmes for their students with high needs.

Introduction

Success for All

The Ministry of Education (The Ministry) launched *Success for All – Every Child, Every School* in October 2010 as a result of its review of special education. *Success for All* included some significant initiatives, for example:

- extending Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) funding to an additional 1,000 students

- extending the Communications Service to 1,000 students aged 5 to 8 years with communication needs who don't qualify for ORS

- publishing and distributing best practice guidelines to assist schools with student transitions from school to post-school life

- extending support for students with sensory needs

- transforming the Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) service

- improving complaints and disputes resolution systems within the Ministry of Education

- developing additional content for board of trustees' training programmes.

Success for All also established a new performance target for inclusive schools that, by 2014, 80 percent of New Zealand schools will be 'doing a good job' and none will be 'doing a poor job'.[3] These categories were derived from ERO's 2010 report, with 'doing a good job' corresponding to ERO's judgement of 'mostly inclusive', and 'doing a poor job' corresponding to ERO's judgement of 'few inclusive practices'. This current evaluation was conducted to determine progress towards the *Success for All* target.

In addition to the actions developed under *Success for All*, several other initiatives have been introduced that are relevant to inclusive education. These include:

- The Ministry released updated guidelines for Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in 2010.

- New Zealand Council for Education Research (NZCER) is developing a self-review tool for schools to reflect on how well they support inclusion, for release in Term 3, 2013.

- The Inclusive Education Capability Building project to support professional practice and develop provision in the wider education sector, with a focus on support for classroom teachers.

---

[3] http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~/media/MinEdu/Files/EducationSectors/SpecialEducation

/CabinetPaperSuccessForAll.pdf

- Ministry programmes and initiatives under the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) framework, such as:
  - the school-wide framework to help create a culture of positive behaviour
  - the behaviour crisis response service
  - the intensive behaviour service
  - the Incredible Years programme for teachers and parents.

ERO's 2010 report - *Including Students with High Needs*

ERO's 2010 report, *Including Students with High Needs*, found that approximately half of the 229 schools reviewed demonstrated mostly inclusive practice. These schools were marked by ethical leadership,[4] coordinated and informed approaches, and innovative and flexible practice.

A further 30 percent of schools were found to demonstrate some inclusive practice. These schools had 'pockets' of inclusiveness, but also had some areas of weakness which led to less consistent inclusion for students with high needs. The remaining 20 percent of schools were found to have few inclusive practices, which led to significant forms of exclusion for students with high needs.

The level of appropriate funding that schools could access was identified by schools as one potential barrier to inclusion. However, ERO concluded that this was of secondary importance compared with strong ethical leadership and differentiated teaching for students with high needs. Consequently, one of the key recommendations of the 2010 report was for the Ministry of Education to support school-wide professional development to raise the capacity of teachers and school leaders to support students with high learning needs.

Methodology

Evaluation approach

This evaluation used a matrix which was developed using the findings of the 2010 evaluation to provide indicators for the various levels of inclusion. The matrix is included in Appendix 3.

The current evaluation was designed to collect information on school-level changes that have taken place since 2009 as a result of *Success for All* and improvement in individual schools. ERO also collected information on good practice during the course of this evaluation.

---

[4] I.e. school leaders understanding and supporting the rights of students with high needs to enrol and be included in school activities

ERO gathered and analysed information in response to the following questions:

- How well do schools include students with high needs?
- What issues and challenges exist for schools in enrolling and supporting the inclusion of students with high needs?
- What changes have been made by schools in their inclusive practice since October 2010?

ERO collected documentary evidence from schools, including student enrolment and induction processes, student achievement information, classroom planning and Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Teachers, school leaders and teacher aides were interviewed by ERO at most schools. ERO talked with parents and students at some schools.

Methodological challenges in this evaluation

Two of the three methodological challenges outlined in the 2010 report (ERO, 2010, p. 9) applied to this evaluation as well. These relate to identifying students with high needs and the low numbers of students with high needs at most schools.

Identifying students with high needs

As with the previous evaluation, ERO has taken a practical approach to identifying students with high needs. The Special Education Framework defines students with high needs as being those in the top three percent of need for additional support to access the curriculum and learning. These students typically receive support through ORS, the Behaviour Initiative, the Communication Initiative or through the School High Health Needs Fund. While some students receiving ORS funding may always work within Level One of *The New Zealand Curriculum* others who need mobility or such support can achieve at the same rates as their peers.

ERO discussed with schools which students they considered to be approximately in the top three percent of educational need. Many of these students received some form of additional support, while some did not. There was therefore some slight variance across schools in terms of which students were interpreted as having high needs.

Low numbers of students with high needs

ERO's analysis was based on what was observed in schools. Reviewers made judgements on the inclusive processes and practices as they related to the high needs students that were currently enrolled at the school. ERO did not make judgements about how well these schools might include future students with high needs.
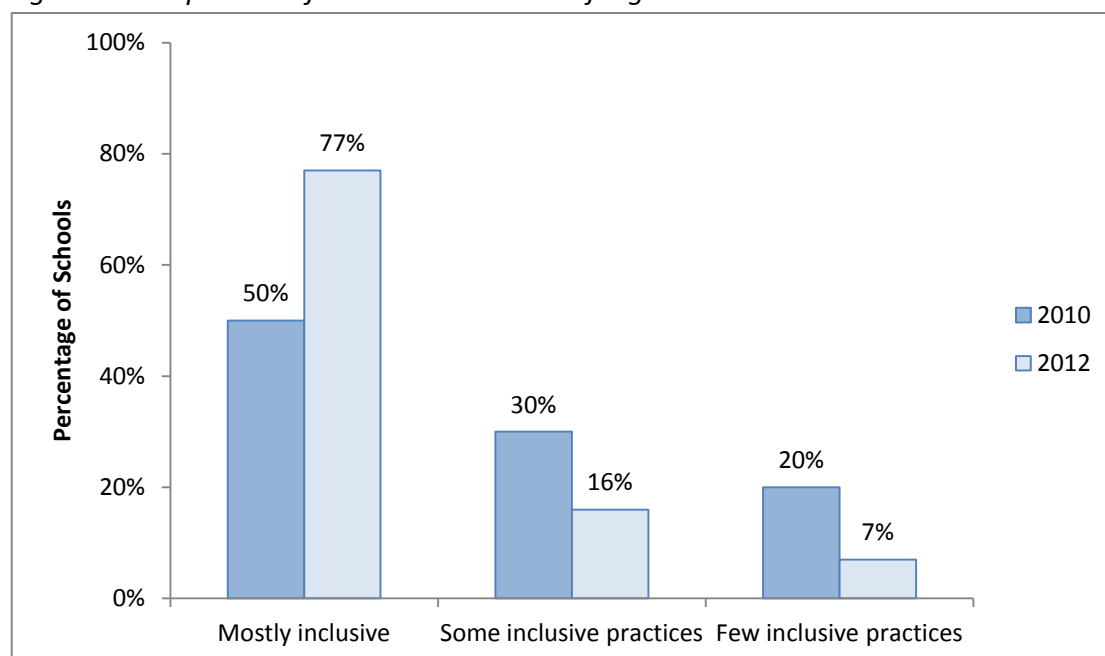
Findings

Overall judgements

ERO found that 77 percent of schools were mostly inclusive, 16 percent demonstrated some inclusive practices and seven percent demonstrated few inclusive practices. This is compared to the results from the 2010 evaluation in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Comparison of school inclusiveness judgements 2010-2012

These findings are encouraging in terms of the *Success for All* targets. However, caution should be used in making any definitive judgements about the extent to which schools and the Ministry of Education are on track to meet the *Success for All* targets. In both reports, ERO did not focus on how well students with moderate or low needs were included. Moreover this report only included evidence from 81 primary schools and, unlike the 2010 report, does not report on the inclusiveness of secondary schools.

Changes at the school level since 2010

ERO investigated what key changes schools had made since October 2010 with their approach to including students with high needs.

Many of the 'mostly inclusive' schools had not made any obvious substantial changes in their approach to students with high needs since October 2010. Where schools had made key changes, these were most commonly related to professional learning and development (PLD), review of teacher-aide strategies, and how collaborative their approaches for high needs students were.

ERO found that PLD had been a focus for about one-quarter of the schools in the sample. This was targeted and related to the particular needs of students enrolled at the school. Approximately one-fifth of schools in the sample had reviewed the ways in which teacher aides were used. The focus from schools was on how student needs could be met in the classroom without using strategies involving the withdrawal of students. Many schools had increased the extent to which they had involved parents and whānau in their children's learning, as well as working to improve the coordination between the school and relevant outside support.

These changes are discussed in more detail in the section on mostly inclusive schools below.

Other key changes made by schools included:
- making improvements to IEPs
- making greater use of achievement information to respond to student needs
- implementing transition and tracking systems for students with high needs
- implementing specific programmes or resources, such as Talk to Learn and Steps (Literacy Programme).

In the schools that ERO judged as demonstrating 'some' or 'few' inclusive practices, very few key changes had been made, or changes did not necessarily support the inclusion of high needs students.

Schools with mostly inclusive practices

ERO found many elements of good practice in these schools related to coordination between school staff and outside personnel, professional learning and development, transitions, and the appropriate use of teacher aides to support students with high needs in the classroom with their peer group. However, few schools had completed self review to determine the impacts of their inclusive practices. ERO identified self review as an area for development in many schools.

Elements of good practice

Coordination

In schools with mostly inclusive practices a high level of coordination was evident between the different people and groups of people involved in the teaching of students with high needs. In most cases, such coordination was the responsibility of the SENCO. Many of the mostly inclusive schools had appointed a SENCO with appropriate training and experience. This was instrumental in promoting a cohesive, school-wide approach to inclusion.

Mostly inclusive schools included families/whānau at every stage of their children's progress. The key to family involvement was open communication. This began during the transition process, where principals, teachers and SENCOs would build

relationships with children and their families before the child started at school. School leaders, in particular, were warm and welcoming to families. This approach is highlighted in the example below.

> *The child's parent visited several schools for her older child who also has special needs. She chose this one because the school leaders were the most welcoming and open. So when student A was due to start school the parent approached the new entrant teacher to talk about her son. A meeting was set up with the parent, acting principal, SENCO, new entrant teacher and ECE teacher to discuss the child, what he is able to do, resources that would be needed and strategies to support his transition to school. From this meeting the mother felt "uplifted" and trusted that her child would be safe.*
> [A large, mid-decile, contributing school in a main urban area]

By modelling warm and welcoming behaviour, leaders had a significant role in creating an environment in which students with high needs were included and their contributions to the wider school were valued. ERO found a noticeable welcoming tone and inclusive culture in the majority of mostly inclusive schools. In particular, there was a sense that students with high needs were not just the responsibility of their main classroom teacher, or teacher aides, but were the responsibility of all staff.

ERO found many examples of other students showing inclusive behaviours and expressing inclusive attitudes toward students with high needs. In some cases, schools had an organised 'buddy' system where peers took a role in assisting high needs students with classroom activities. In other cases, ERO observed students spontaneously taking it upon themselves to help include students with high needs.

> *The ERO review team observed one high needs student who had severe behavioural challenges shouting outside a room. The teacher asked one of the students who had a connection with the student to go and talk with him. Within a very short time the student brought the boy into his classroom and sat at a computer with him and they began working on some maths games together.*
> [A medium-sized, low-decile, composite school in a minor urban area]

Achievement

In the most effective schools, staff had high expectations for the achievement of students with high needs. They developed IEPs in a responsive and collaborative way, with input from teachers, teacher aides, families, whānau, and outside support staff. In the best cases, the individual plans contained social, cultural and academic achievement goals that were specific, measurable and achievable. Mostly inclusive schools also took care to express goals in terms that valued what the child *could* do, rather than focusing on barriers to achievement.

In many cases, however, ERO found that IEPs had more of an emphasis on social and cultural achievement rather than academic achievements. Even in the mostly inclusive

schools, setting academic goals presented more of a challenge for children whose high needs led to learning delays.

One aspect of good practice in mostly inclusive schools was to have well-developed academic goals within IEPs which were sufficiently fine-grained to enable progress to be reported and celebrated even when it fell short of expected progressions. Some schools were using *The New Zealand Curriculum* Key Competencies to help inform the development of academic goals. This was particularly useful for those students who were likely to remain below or within the first level of the Curriculum for the duration of their schooling.

In a few cases, schools expressed concern that the requirements of reporting progress against National Standards could be damaging to the morale of students who were unlikely to achieve at a level equal to their age. The Ministry of Education has provided guidance on how to integrate the National Standards into IEPs, and this is available online.[5]

Under the National Administrative Guidelines (NAGs), schools are required to include students with high needs in their school-wide reports on achievement against the National Standards. Reporting to parents must also include student's progress against National Standards. ERO reminded a few schools of their obligations in this respect. Overall, the mostly inclusive schools were generally able to report on student progress in terms of specific individual goals.

Professional Learning and Development

In mostly inclusive schools, ERO found that the most common key shift that had taken place since 2010 was a greater focus on PLD. Schools chose PLD which was relevant to the particular high needs of the students enrolled. In most cases this was specifically for staff who had direct contact with high needs students, rather than all staff. School-wide professional development had been undertaken in six cases. However, ERO has previously identified that targeting professional development only to staff that have contact with high needs students can contribute to creating pockets of inclusive practice.

PLD took place in a variety of ways, including:
- discussions with outside specialists, such as visiting resource teachers, or health specialists
- teachers providing informal advice and guidance to teacher aides
- training of teachers and teacher aides led by the SENCO
- attending courses or seminars on, for example, autism, Down syndrome, dyslexia
- training in the use of specialised equipment.

---

[5] http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/National-Standards/Key-information/Fact-sheets/Special-education-needs

Transitions

Mostly inclusive schools had a flexible approach to transitions both into and out of the school, which could include:

- multiple visits before enrolment to help students with high needs get to know their teachers and teacher aides, and adapt to school routines and the school environment
- sharing information with early childhood services, intermediate or secondary schools
- liaison with Special Education or RTLB
- gradual introduction into classroom activities
- parents' presence in the classroom
- teachers visiting the child at home
- modification of the physical environment of the school, when necessary.

The transition process was responsive to the child's specific needs – the school would fit around the student, not the student fit into the school.

Outside support

Good coordination meant that mostly inclusive schools were effective in accessing appropriate support from external agencies and individuals. This could take place during the process of identifying the students' needs and, later, as a response to the needs that had been identified. Outside support was sought from:

- Ministry of Education - Special Education
- Child, Youth and Family (CYFs)
- health specialists, including psychologists
- occupational therapists
- special schools, and their outreach and itinerant services
- speech and language therapists
- RTLB service.

Outside support could take the form of visiting specialists spending time directly with students, where appropriate. Additionally, teachers and teacher aides were able to benefit from discussions with specialists which helped to build the school's internal capacity.

Teacher Aides

Many schools had reviewed their approach to how teacher aides work with students. ERO has taken the view in the 2010 report that in inclusive schools the students with high needs should spend as much time within the normal classroom setting as possible. Teachers in inclusive schools were skilled at adapting classroom activities to enable students with high needs to participate. Teacher aides would then provide targeted assistance to support this participation, under the supervision of the classroom teacher. Where withdrawal did take place it was for assessment purposes,

as a response to particular high needs (e.g. anxiety), or for specific interventions which required a distraction-free environment.

In one school, teacher aides were involved in creating resources for students with high needs. In many schools, teacher aides contributed to conversations around teaching strategies and the development of IEPs.

Areas for further development

For schools with mostly inclusive practices, the most common area for further development was self review. Approximately a quarter of mostly inclusive schools had little inquiry into the effectiveness of their inclusive practices. They needed to focus more on useful achievement or other data to inform their self review. Robust self-review practices should enable schools to continuously improve outcomes for high needs students and to sustain inclusive practices for future students who may enrol.

A list of self-review questions was included in ERO's 2010 report, and these can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

Other areas for development in mostly inclusive schools included:

- accessing up-to-date and relevant PLD
- reporting separately on outcomes for high needs students to boards of trustees
- improving IEPs so that goals reflect appropriate progressions, and enable tracking of achievement in manageable increments
- improving coordination of support with external agencies.

Schools with some inclusive practices

Schools with some inclusive practices had strengths in some aspects of inclusion and had 'pockets' of inclusive practice. ERO found significant areas for development in these schools. In comparison to mostly inclusive schools, cohesion and coordination was lacking between the various groups of people involved in teaching and supporting students with high needs. This led to a degree of inconsistency in the level of inclusion for students moving around the school. The specific strengths and weaknesses varied from school to school.

Elements of good practice

Most of these schools had a welcoming tone and culture. School leaders were supportive of families and involved them in their children's learning in meaningful ways. Other specific strengths included:

- employing an experienced and/or skilled SENCO
- accessing necessary external support
- inclusive and individualised transitions between classes and schools
- differentiated teaching which supported inclusion within the mainstream classroom setting

- developing and using high quality IEPs.

Areas for development

To become mostly inclusive, schools with some inclusive practices needed to focus on improving coordination between teachers, teacher aides, outside support and families/whānau. This could be achieved by appointing a SENCO, where this role was not filled, or by accessing appropriate training or release time for existing SENCOs.

The SENCO role was pivotal in tracking the achievement of students with high needs. As with some of the mostly inclusive schools, ERO found that many of the schools with some inclusive practices needed to develop their processes for monitoring students' achievement of their goals and then using this information to target specific interventions and differentiated teaching in classrooms. Additionally, a small number of schools in this category were not meeting their obligations to report separately in their annual reports on the progress of students with high needs.

Another related area for development was self review. To some extent, this was dependent on the quality of the information they collected about individual students. These schools often had only informal evidence of progress, particularly academic progress. In some cases, progress was monitored by teachers, but there was no aggregation of this information to provide a school-wide picture. Robust self review based on information of students' achievement of their goals should help these schools to evaluate the impact of their teaching practice and interventions on their students with high needs.

In some cases, variable practice among teachers led to inconsistent levels of inclusion across the school. While some teachers were capable of effectively differentiating their practice in order to meet students' high needs within the classroom, others were relying on teacher aides to provide materials and activities for their high needs students.

Other areas for development for schools with some inclusive practices included:
- developing specific policies to support inclusion
- improving the development and monitoring of fine-grained achievement progressions within IEPs
- improving the uptake of access to outside support
- reducing reliance on withdrawal strategies
- accessing appropriate PLD.

Schools with few inclusive practices

ERO found six schools with few inclusive practices. Two of these schools demonstrated a welcoming and inclusive tone. However, all of these schools had several areas for development, which together contributed to significant forms of

exclusion for students with high needs. In many of the schools, ERO had concerns about the quality of teaching and leadership, which led to poor performance for *all* students, not just those with high needs.

The quality of teaching was a concern in the majority of these schools. In one case, responsibility for a high needs student had been given almost entirely to a teacher aide. The student worked in isolation alongside the teacher aide for most of each day, and the classroom teacher had limited involvement in the child's learning programme. This school also had no SENCO and had collected very little information about this child's achievement and progress.

In another school, teachers showed limited knowledge of teaching strategies to cater for the learning needs of students. Teaching practice was not differentiated to support inclusion and ERO observed that students were disengaged and participating in activities with a loose connection to learning.

ERO identified that the majority of these schools needed to access appropriate and relevant PLD to support improvements for their teachers and teacher aides.

Other areas for development for schools with few inclusive practices included:

- developing specific policies to support inclusion
- collecting achievement data for students with high needs
- consulting with communities
- improving IEPs
- identifying the needs of students.

ERO's 2010 report found that one of the characteristics of schools with few inclusive practices was that leaders did not display the commitment to including students with high needs that was found in more inclusive schools. This lack of commitment was less evident during the 2013 evaluation. Leaders often discussed the need for inclusion, even in schools where systems and teaching practices were not sufficiently inclusive.

Conclusion

In this evaluation, ERO found that a higher proportion of schools were mostly inclusive, compared with the 2010 evaluation. The majority of schools were found to have a welcoming and inclusive tone, and fewer schools expressed overtly exclusionary attitudes towards students with high needs than previously.

Self review continues as an area needing development in many schools. Trustees, leaders and teachers need more than informal anecdotal evidence about what is working for these high needs students. A greater focus on the achievement of students with high needs would assist schools to monitor how their programmes and initiatives are helping these students reach their potential.

ERO found few cases where schools had made an overall transformation in their approaches for students with high needs. In many cases small incremental shifts resulted in positive outcomes for their students. For the schools already operating with mostly inclusive practices, small incremental improvements and a greater focus on self review are likely to sustain and improve their practice. However, schools with some inclusive practices needed to increase the coordination of their approach to including students with high needs. Without this key change, the 'pockets' of inclusive practice ERO found in 2010 will remain and result in students with high needs only being included for parts of their time at school. Schools that introduced school-wide professional learning to support their high needs students made sure every teacher knew how to fully include all students.

A small group of schools present the greatest challenge to achieving the *Success for All* target. Improvements in the quality of teaching across these schools are required to help all students in their school achieve and be included.

Next steps

In line with the Government's *Success for All* targets, the following recommendations are focused on all students with special needs, and not just on students with high needs.

On the basis of this report, school staff should:

- use the findings and self-review questions in this report to review the extent to which all students with special needs are included across the school and have effective, coordinated support for their academic, social and health needs

- ensure that all students with special needs have their achievement regularly monitored and analysed and that suitable responses are in place where students are identified as under-achieving

- review the extent to which the school's SENCO, in partnership with other staff, families and the community, can effectively support a coordinated and effective response to each student with special needs.

On the basis of this report, the Ministry of Education should:

- consider improving the guidance given to schools about how they should monitor and respond to the achievement information of students with special needs

- consider ways to improve SENCOs focus on their role in coordinating the school's response to students with special needs

- ensure that schools identified as requiring support to improve their overall quality of teaching also receive advice and guidance specifically related to improving programmes for their students with high needs.

Appendix 1: Sample of schools

This evaluation involved 81 primary schools in which ERO carried out an education review in Term 4, 2012. The types of schools, roll size, school locality (urban or rural) and decile ranges of the schools are shown in Tables 1 to 4 below.

Table 1: School type

School type	Number of schools	Percentage of sample	National percentage[6]
Full Primary (Years 1–8)	33	41	55
Contributing Primary (Years 1–6)	42	52	39
Intermediate (Years 7–8)	6	7	6
Total	**81**	**100**	**100**

Table 1 shows that intermediate and full primary schools were under-represented, and contributing primary schools were over-represented, in comparison to national figures. These differences were statistically significant.[7]

Table 2: Roll size

Roll size[8]	Number of schools	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Very small	4	5	10
Small	12	15	23
Medium	37	46	39
Large	23	28	19
Very large	5	6	9
Total	**81**	**100**	**100**

---

[6] The national percentage of each school type is based on the total population of schools as at February 2013. For this study it includes full and contributing primary and intermediate schools. This applies to roll size, locality and decile in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

[7] The differences between observed and expected values in Tables 1-4 were tested using a Chi square test. The level of statistical significance was $p<0.05$.

[8] Roll sizes for full and contributing primary schools, and intermediates are: very small (between 1-30); small (between 31-100); medium (101-300); large (301-500); and very large (500+).

Table 2 shows that very small, small and very large schools were under-represented, and medium-sized and large schools were over-represented, in comparison to national figures. These differences were statistically significant.

Table 3: School locality

Locality[9]	Number of schools	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Main Urban Area	49	60	51
Secondary Urban Area	6	7	6
Minor Urban Area	9	11	10
Rural	17	21	33
Total	**81**	**99[10]**	**100**

Table 3 shows that main, secondary and minor urban area schools were over-represented and rural schools were under-represented, in comparison to national figures. These differences were not statistically significant.

Table 4: School decile ranges

Decile[11]	Number of schools	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Low decile (1-3)	28	34	30
Middle decile (4-7)	31	38	39
High decile (8-10)	22	27	31

---

[9] Based on location categories used by the Ministry of Education and Statistics New Zealand as follows: Main Urban population > 30,000; Secondary Urban 10,000 to 30,000; Minor Urban 1,000 to 9,999; Rural < 1,000.

[10] These figures do not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

[11] A school's decile indicates the extent to which a school draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10 percent of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10 percent of schools with the lowest proportion of these students.

Total	81	99[12]	100

Table 4 shows that low decile schools were over-represented and middle and high decile schools were under-represented, in comparison to national figures. These differences were not statistically significant.

---

[12] These figures do not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Appendix 2: Self-review questions for your school

School culture and leadership for including students with high needs

- To what extent do the staff at your school expect to adapt their practice to support the achievement of students with high needs?
- How caring is the culture of your school towards students with high needs?
- To what extent do staff at your school have access to a wide range of knowledge, strategies and networks to support students with high needs and their whānau/families?

Teamwork, working with families, using information and transitions

- To what extent does the school hold internal meetings, and meetings with external people, to support students with special needs?
- To what extent do the school's relationships with the families of students with high needs support the inclusion and achievement of these students?
- How well does the school use various forms of information about students, including information about achievement, social and physical skills, to better include and support students with high needs?
- To what extent does the school have the systems, coordination, links with external agencies and internal expertise to support the transition of students with high needs both to and from their school?

Cultural identity, ORS, individual learning programmes and school safety

- To what extent does the school support the cultural identity of students with high needs?
- To what extent are the school's ORS applications accepted by Ministry of Education – Special Education?
- To what extent do all teaching staff know how to develop differentiated programmes for students with high needs?
- To what extent does the school's IEPs provide specific, measureable, attributable, realistic and time-bound goals for student achievement?
- How does the school know that students with high needs are safe from bullying, both inside the classroom and in the playground?

Appendix 3: Inclusive schools matrix

In the table below are three categories related to levels of school inclusiveness for high needs students. These have been developed from ERO's 2010 report *Including Students With High Needs*.

Mostly inclusive practice	Schools in this category will show strong inclusive practices in most areas. There may be some aspects of school performance that could be improved – but the performance of a school overall sees students with high needs happy, socially engaged and learning in line with their potential. The key features of these schools include: • Students benefit from learning in mainstream education settings and are only withdrawn for justified educational reasons • School leaders consistently demonstrate high ethical standards in striving to support the learning of students with high needs (this includes the principal, middle-management and, where applicable, SENCOs) • A school-wide caring culture exists where students with high needs are integrated into a positive social environment, take part in the extra-curricular life of the school and achieve personal academic success • A high level of teamwork and cooperation exists in support of students with high needs • The school has a flexible and/or innovative approach to meeting student needs • Teachers differentiate their teaching programme in order to engage students, including those with high needs • Relevant changes have been made to buildings and equipment as indicated by the specific requirements of students with high needs • High quality professional development is provided for teachers as well as for teacher aides • There is a good level of communication and collaboration between the school, families, whānau and external professionals (i.e. RTLB, health professionals, Ministry of Education – Special Education, CYF)

	• High quality Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are developed that can track developments in student achievement (academic achievement and, where applicable, behavioural and social achievements)
	• The school has effective strategies in place to support the students' individual needs, including their language, culture and identity. These strategies also take account of the high quality goals developed within IEPs
	• The school manages entry and exit transitions so that students can successfully be included (and achieve)
	• Evidence and feedback about the school's inclusiveness is analysed to support improvements
Some inclusive practices	Schools with some inclusive practices will show some of the above criteria. However, in comparison to mostly inclusive schools, inclusive practices will exist in 'pockets', rather than consistently across most areas. For example, there may be some situations that significantly limit the social and academic potential of students with high needs. Some other examples of practices that may show limited inclusive practice are set out below. These examples need to be weighed up against the overall work of the school in supporting students with high needs to be happy, socially engaged and learning in line with their potential. Specific weaknesses could include: • Weak learning plans or IEPs for students with high needs • Students socially included but not adequately learning • The use of unsuitable strategies to support students' learning • Uncoordinated systems across the school, leading to inconsistent levels of inclusion • Inconsistent levels of differentiated teaching • Unsupportive transition processes • Students with high needs excluded from some activities, such as camps and physical education • Parents having to pay for fundamental resources, such as teacher-aide hours • Some staff with poor attitudes about including students with high needs • No toileting and shower facilities • A lack of training for teacher aides • Ineffective monitoring of initiatives to support students with high needs • Evidence of small-scale bullying
Few inclusive practices	Schools in this category may show inclusive practice in some areas, but have weaknesses in many other areas, leading to significant forms of exclusion for students with high needs. The most important

differences between these schools and those with mostly inclusive practices relate to the ethical approach taken by school leaders and staff. Many staff are likely to show a lack of commitment to educating students with high needs. Some examples of practices that may show limited inclusive practice are set out below. These examples need to be weighed up against the overall response of the school in supporting students with high needs to be happy, socially engaged and learning in line with their potential. Specific weaknesses could include:

- Teachers not convinced about the right of students with high needs to learn and their unwillingness to change to meet the needs of students
- Appointing an inexperienced teacher as the SENCO
- Uncoordinated systems
- Ineffective strategies or policy for supporting students with high needs
- Poor monitoring and evaluation of student learning
- Weakly constructed Individual Education Plans
- Insufficient support and monitoring of the teaching provided for students with high needs
- Students excluded from extra-curricular, sporting and cultural activities
- Insufficient focus on building the student's learning and achievement
- Poor school-wide culture towards students with high needs