



Te Ara Huarau

Your Go-To-Guide

The Education Review Office

The Education Review Office (ERO) is the New Zealand Government department that reviews and reports on the performance of early learning services, kura and schools.

EROs reports are accessed by parents. Teachers, early childhood education managers, school principals and trustees, and by government policy makers.

ERO focuses on equitable and excellent for all learners and our approach is driven by our whakataukī *Ko te tamaiti te uptake o te Kaupapa* | *The Child – the Heart of the Matter*.

We believe that quality education is a right for every New Zealand child and young person.



How we are changing

ERO maintains a regular review programme to evaluate and report on the education and care of young people in schools.

Under Te Ara Huarau ERO has shifted from event-based external reviews to supporting each school in a process of continuous improvement.

This more differentiated approach uses a developmental evaluation approach that reflects an individual schools' context, culture and needs. It aims to strengthen the capability of all schools through embedding a continuous improvement approach, strengthening schools' own engagement with and accountability to whānau.

ERO will become an evaluation partner alongside each school, to support every school to be a great school and every child a success.

What hasn't changed is our commitment to putting the child at the heart of everything we do.



Te Ara Huarau

ERO has been gifted the name Te Ara Huarau for its school evaluations. ERO is now using this name exclusively.

ERO has shifted to a more developmental approach to evaluation, supporting each school's improvement over time.

An ERO evaluation partner will work alongside each school. The evaluation partner will build a professional evaluation relationship with each school.

ERO's evaluation role will connect with each school's strategic planning and reporting cycle as part of an ongoing improvement journey. ERO is supporting schools to build and sustain high-quality evaluation as part of their planning for improvement.

Consideration of a school within its wider network and community is woven throughout Te Ara Huarau.



Our test and learn approach

ERO began introducing Te Ara Huarau in Term 4 2020 with an initial pilot of 75 schools from across New Zealand.

We have continued to introduce schools incrementally into Te Ara Huarau. This has allowed us to learn as we go and gain real-time feedback from schools and our evaluators. The detail is key, and we are using our collective insights to get this right.

ERO's approach to the development of Te Ara Huarau is iterative – if issues arise, adjustments can be made along the way. Key sector stakeholder groups will be working with us to provide feedback loops. Your feedback is also welcomed.



Engaging with your school

Our approach is to build trust and confidence in Te Ara Huarau and in ERO by engaging the sector in working out how best to make the model work in practice.

Your school will understand:

- the advantages Te Ara Huarau will deliver
- the main features, and how they differ from what ERO has done previously

We will work with your school to refine and operationalise Te Ara Huarau, so that it can be introduced with the least disruption.

We have developed some tools to support your school evaluation for improvement cycle in response to requests from the sector.



Your new evaluation partner

An ERO “Evaluation Partner” will be assigned to work with a school’s Board, Principal and Leadership Team.

Your Evaluation Partner is your key relationship and evaluation connector with ERO.

The evaluation process will be collaborative and respond to the school context.

Your school and ERO will work together to report and plan key actions and next steps in the school’s improvement journey. Some report will be internal for specific audiences, and some will be published on ERO’s website.



What we are aiming for

- A collaborative approach: we will work with each school to strengthen its systems, plans and practices through evaluation.
- A tailored approach: understanding your school’s individual contexts, culture, strengths and needs.
- A flexible approach: we will work with your school to ensure the way the model works is practical and can be refined and improved over time.
- A targeted approach: to allow ERO to direct more resource into working with the schools that will benefit most and to focus more on system evaluation and improvement.
- An evidence-informed approach: that focuses on the things that we know from research and practice will make the biggest difference, and that ensure schools are better supported to monitor and assess the impacts.
- Alignment: we will align more closely with each school’s improvement journey.

Our focus on equity and excellence has not changed.





What we have heard

ERO staff continue to work hard around the country to engage with the sector, to listen and to act on the feedback received.

We are continuing to develop and evolve Te Ara Huarau based on feedback and will continue this process while all schools are being introduced to the model.

We are hopeful that the sector sees the opportunity, value and potential that Te Ara Huarau will deliver.

Some comments from those that we have engaged with:

“A promising start and a good concept. Finally, I will be able to tell my school’s story in full.”

“Collaboration, differentiation and linking everything to our strategic goals is pure genius.”

“The new approach to evaluation and building relationships over time and school-led will prove beneficial in improving outcomes.”

“Really like the idea of having a reviewer to work with over time.”

“A positive move.”



Our commitment to your school

In partnership with your school, ERO is working to support improvement in your school and in the system as a whole.

We want to ensure that the intent and main features of Te Ara Huarau are widely understood.

We are appreciating the broad support for this evaluation approach and an enthusiasm for its implementation.

We’re keen to understand any sticking points or concerns so they can be addressed early and efficiently.

We’ve ensured that key sector stakeholder groups are working with us to provide feedback loops to ensure successful implementation.



We have heard you

We have moved from a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach with reviews that were a point in time to an approach based on your school’s individual needs.

This approach is built on a relationship focused on helping your school make improvements in the areas that deliver the greatest shifts to learner success.

We are working in the same spirit of co-operation that underpins Te Ara Huarau: by working with schools to refine and develop the best ways of supporting school improvement through evaluation.



Our commitment to equity and excellence

ERO is committed to supporting improved outcomes and achieving equity for all learners, particularly Māori and priority learners.

The principles that underpin Te Ara Huarau give priority to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi through a focus on partnerships to achieve desired outcomes.

Te Ara Huarau has a focus on understanding the cultural context of each school in order to best serve its needs. By building differentiation into the model, we have given ourselves the flexibility to work with the wider community where it is desired and appropriate.

We are committed to continuing to work with the sector. This will require goodwill and professionalism from all.



Thank you for your support

At ERO, we know what great schools do - and we will support you to be a great school.

We hope that you see the opportunity, value and the potential that Te Ara Huarau will deliver.

We look forward to partnering with you on your improvement journey.

Every school a great school; every child a success

Kia angitū ia tamaiti, kia angitū ia kura



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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government