EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

School Report – Hillside Primary School 3935

About the school

Hillside Primary School is in Browns, Southland and provides education for learners in Years 1 to 8. Many of these students live rurally and travel to school by bus. The school's mission statement is *'Pathway to the Future; Te Ara Whakamua.'* A full refurbishment of classrooms was completed in 2025, and a new teaching principal was appointed in Term 1, 2026.

About the review

Every New Zealand state and state integrated school is reviewed by ERO at least every four years to assess strengths and areas for improvement. The ERO team visits the school, gathers information by talking to students, parents, staff, and school board members, observing teaching in classrooms, and reviewing school information documents such as assessment data and school planning.

What do we review and report?

ERO reviews and reports on outcomes for students, school conditions that underpin success, and steps for school improvement. This report includes a snapshot, an overview and a full report and our School Reports focus on the following areas:

- **Achievement** and progress including reading, writing and mathematics.
- **Engagement** and belonging.
- **Equity.**
- **Attendance.**
- **Leadership** and school improvement.
- The **curriculum** and **quality of teaching.**
- **Assessment.**
- Provision for students with **additional needs.**
- **Governance** and the school board.
- **Health and safety.**

What do our judgements mean?

Excelling	Excelling means this school demonstrates consistently strong performance. This is the highest judgement.
Doing well	This means the school demonstrates mostly strong and consistent practice. Key conditions for success are in place and there is a focus on improvement.
Workings towards	There are gaps in performance; aspects of improvement are evident but there is variability.
Improvement required	There are significant and sustained gaps in school performance and urgent improvement is required.

Hillside Primary School: Snapshot

ERO makes judgements on 14 areas. The Snapshot below shows how many of ERO's judgements for this school are Excelling, Doing well, Working towards or Improvement required. The judgements are based on the ERO School Improvement Framework and evidence gathered by ERO during the evaluation.

Judgement	Number of areas
Excelling	
Doing well	
Working towards	
Improvement required	
Student health and safety	**Meets expectation.** Hillside Primary School is taking reasonable steps to ensure student health and safety.

Hillside Primary School: Overview

The Overview below shows for each of the 14 areas ERO's judgements on whether this school is Excelling, Doing well, Working towards or Improvement required and why. This provides more information about the judgements in the Snapshot.

Student achievement	**Doing well**	Overall achievement is generally strong. Most learners achieve at expected levels, and outcomes are improving over time.
Student progress	**Working towards**	The school is building consistency so that strong progress is evident for all groups.
Reading and writing	**Doing well**	Most students meet or exceed curriculum expectations for their year level in reading and a large majority of all students in writing.
Mathematics	**Doing well**	Most students meet or exceed curriculum expectations for their year level in mathematics.
Attendance	**Working towards**	Attendance shows some improvement but below the target of 80% regular attendance. A small majority of learners attends school regularly.
Engagement and belonging	**Doing well**	Most students report feeling included and supported. The school addresses barriers to engagement for some learners and continues to strengthen inclusion and partnerships with families and whānau.
Equity	**Working towards**	Achievement levels across student groups are increasingly similar. Further improvement is needed to raise overall outcomes for boys.
Leadership	**Doing well**	Leadership supports improvement and contributes to raising the quality teaching and learning.
Teaching	**Doing well**	Teaching is effective, consistent and supports the progress and engagement of all learners.
Curriculum	**Doing well**	Curriculum planning is increasingly informed by assessment and learner needs, with growing consistency across the school.

Assessment	**Doing well**	Assessment information is used to plan effectively and respond to learner needs.
Provision for students with additional needs	**Doing well**	Learners with additional needs are well supported support to achieve educational success.
School improvement	**Working towards**	The school is establishing planning and conditions that support improvements in the quality of education for learners.
Governance and the school board	**Doing well**	The Hillside Primary School governance practices are established and increasingly support improvement.

How do we report percentages?

Less than a third	Less than half	Small majority	Large majority	Most	Almost all
0 to 33%	34 to 49%	50 to 64%	65 to 79%	80 to 90%	Over 90%

Further information about this school and report can be found on the last page.

Hillside Primary School: Full Report

Tēnā koutou e mau manawa rahi ki te kaupapa e aro ake nei, ko te Tamaiti te pūtake o te kaupapa. Mā wai rā e kawe, mā tātau katoa. We acknowledge the collective effort, responsibility, and commitment by all to ensure that the child remains at the heart of the matter.

Outcomes for students

Achievement

Overall achievement is generally strong. Most learners meet or exceed expected curriculum levels in reading and mathematics and a large majority in writing. Outcomes remain generally consistent over time.

Progress

Learner progress is variable across the school. Some students make more than expected progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, while progress in writing is less consistent. Monitoring and targeted teaching support improvement, however progress is not yet consistent across all groups.

Achievement in reading, writing and mathematics

Most students meet expectations in reading and mathematics, and a large majority do so in writing. Targeted support and close monitoring help improve outcomes for those who need additional support.

Attendance

Regular attendance is below the expected target, with only a small majority of students attending regularly.

In a small school setting, attendance results can be affected by the attendance of a few students. Attendance patterns showed initial improvement followed by a decline over the year. Systems track attendance and identify patterns, including chronic absence.

Engagement and belonging

Learners experience an inclusive environment that supports their sense of belonging. Positive relationships are evident, and staff respond well to individual needs. Staff know students and their families well and closely monitor their wellbeing and learning.

The school continues to develop partnerships with families and is developing greater visibility in the community. Identity, language and culture are acknowledged, with increasing focus on te reo and tikanga Māori to enhance connection and participation.

Equity

Outcomes are becoming more equitable across groups. Girls achieve slightly higher than boys, and consistency across reading, writing and mathematics is still developing. The school continues to strengthen how they respond, so all learners achieve equitable outcomes.

School conditions for success

Leadership

Leaders set clear strategic direction to improve teaching and raise outcomes for all learners. Leaders have clear expectations across the school that promotes collective responsibility for improvement.

Leaders use information about student learning and school goals to help with planning and decisions, and they are working to build stronger links with families and the community. School leaders are working to ensure that whole school systems and practices are used consistently.

Teaching

The teaching principal leads teaching that supports learners to engage and make progress. Teachers use a range of approaches to respond to individual needs. Classrooms are structured and purposeful, with students actively participating and clear expectations to support learning.

Staff engage in ongoing professional learning to strengthen literacy and mathematics practices and build shared understanding. Teachers take responsibility for learner outcomes and work collaboratively to improve practice.

Curriculum

The curriculum is increasingly responsive to student learning needs and programmes are adapted to support a range of abilities. Teachers design learning that reflects student interests and supports engagement. There is a clear focus on strengthening reading, writing and mathematics alongside broader learning experiences.

The school is working to strengthen connections with whānau and the community to guide curriculum development and priorities.

Assessment

Assessment information is used to understand student learning and identify next steps, with teachers drawing on data to plan targeted responses for learners. Progress is tracked at an individual level, supporting timely adjustments to teaching.

The school is strengthening the use of reliable tools and building shared approaches to improve consistency and the quality of information.

Provision for students with additional needs

Students with additional and complex needs are well supported and included. Identification processes, targeted programmes, and ongoing monitoring guide intervention. High levels of support and collaboration with families and external agencies helps improve participation and learning outcomes.

Governance

The Hillside Primary School Board provides supportive stewardship focused on improving outcomes for learners. The board works closely with leadership, particularly in supporting new leadership and priorities for improvement. Information about learning informs resourcing decisions.

Next steps for improvement

All schools look to continue to improve, even those that are excelling. The table below sets out ERO's recommended next steps.

Improvement priority	Action within six months	Every six months / annually	Expected outcomes
Strengthen achievement in English and Maths for all learners.	Review the effectiveness of learning programmes in accelerating student progress.	Evaluate and report Maths and English data to the board, identifying student progress and achievement.	Improved achievement in Maths and English, with all students making progress toward or above expected phases.

Improvement priority	Every six months / annually	Expected outcomes
Implement a consistent whole-school approach to delivering the new curriculum in multi-level classes, with a focus on targeted differentiation to meet students' diverse needs.	Use formative and summative assessments to inform teaching and learning decisions. Leaders and teachers review the effectiveness of learning programmes in accelerating student progress.	The diverse needs of all students within a multi-level classroom are met.
Strengthen and sustain higher levels of regular attendance.	The board and staff review and refine their attendance strategies to ensure they are effective.	Sustained improved levels of regular attendance.

Regulatory and legislative requirements

This section of the report reviews the school's policies, procedures, documentation, and checks that it meets all regulations, maintains a safe environment, and supports students' wellbeing.

During this review the Board has attested to meeting regulatory and legislative requirements in the following areas:

Board administration	Yes
Curriculum	Yes
Attendance	Yes
Management of health, safety and welfare	Yes
Personnel management	Yes

Actions for compliance

ERO and the board have identified the following area of non-compliance during the board assurance process:

- Ensure all staff employed have a current police vet.
  [s 104 Education and Training Act 2020]

The Hillside Primary School Board has since addressed the areas of non-compliance identified.

ERO has identified the following area of non-compliance during the board assurance process:

- ERO has requested that the school board submit a mandatory report due to information shared with ERO that a teacher engaged in serious misconduct and subsequently resigned.
  [s 489 and 491 Education and Training Act 2020].

The Hillside Primary School Board has since taken steps to address the areas of non-compliance identified.

School Improvement

ERO has confidence in the Hillside Primary School Board to bring about improvements required. During the review ERO raised concerns about previous advice and subsequent decision making of the Board.

The next public report on ERO's website will be within four years.

Me mahi tahi tonu tatau, kia whai oranga a tatau tamariki
Let's continue to work together for the greater good of all children



Sharon Kelly
Director of Schools

27 August 2026

Further information about the school

Type of schools	Full primary Co-educational
Year levels	Years 1 to 8
School roll	17
Student population	New Zealand European/Pākehā 53%, Asian 42%, Māori 11%
Equity Index (EQI)	This school's EQI is 454 which places it in the moderate range. This means a small majority students at this school face socio-economic barriers to achievement than average.
Immersion & Bilingual Education	Hillside Primary School does not offer the provision of te reo Māori in Māori medium settings.
Last ERO report	Profile Report July 2022

School information

Education Counts provides further information about the school's student population, student engagement and student achievement, school enrolments and school zones Education Counts Home | Education Counts.

What does EQI mean?

The Equity Index (EQI) is a number assigned to each school, ranging from 344 to 569. It estimates the extent to which students face socio-economic barriers to education and achievement. The Higher EQI the more barriers students in the school face.

EQI is **NOT** a measure of school quality or performance. It's about funding and support needs for the school.