



**Education Review Office**  
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Kelston Deaf Education Centre**  
**Kelston, Auckland**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Kelston Deaf Education Centre

This review is designed to support schools that were experiencing difficulties at the time of the last review. ERO provides ongoing evaluation over the course of one-to-two years as the school works to improve its overall performance and build its self-review capability.

This report answers key questions about the school's background and the context for the review. The report also provides an evaluation of how effectively the school is addressing areas identified for review and development and the quality of its practices and systems for sustaining performance and ongoing improvement.

## Findings

### 1 Background and Context

#### What is the background and context for this school's review?

The Kelston Deaf Education Centre (KDEC) is a special school providing education and support services to children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The centre caters for students from preschool to 21 years of age across the top half of the North Island. An early learning service at the Kelston core school site provides education and care for children up to school age.

KDEC and the van Asch Deaf Education Centre (van Asch DEC) are part of a national educational provision for deaf students and operate under a combined board of trustees. In 2017, the Ministry of Education (MoE) appointed a limited statutory manager (LSM) to support the governance of KDEC in employment matters. In 2018, the powers of the LSM were extended to governance, and the MoE appointed a further LSM with responsibility for finance and property across both centres.

Since the ERO 2017 review, several changes in leadership and teaching personnel have occurred. The centre has a new Acting Chief Executive Officer (Principal), Executive Officer (EO) and Regional Services Manager.

#### Core School

The core school has eight learning hubs that operate at host schools in west, south and north Auckland. The core school also includes a transition unit for older students (18 to 21 years) operating from the Kelston site and the Auckland Deaf Society in Balmoral, Auckland. There are 90 students on the core school roll. A residential hostel is available onsite for up to 19 boys and girls aged 12 to 21 years of age.

#### Regional Services

KDEC provides education and specialist services for deaf and hard of hearing students enrolled in local schools across the wider region. It has 413 students on the regional roll and 1215 on the support services (ASSIST) roll. In some cases, these students are the only deaf student in their school.

Resource Teachers of the Deaf (RTDs) provide support for these students in class and for their mainstream teachers. ASSIST services provide advice regarding individual learning plans (IEPs), transition and the management of assistive listening devices.

## **2 Review and Development**

**How effectively is the school addressing its priorities for review and development?**

### **Priorities identified for review and development**

The 2016 ERO report identified specific areas of concern related to student achievement outcomes, the curriculum design, governance capability, hostel management and therefore the overall effectiveness of centre leadership.

#### **Student achievement outcomes and the curriculum design**

As identified in the 2016 report, KDEC had not yet established effective systems, processes and practices to gather, analyse, report and use student achievement to monitor and evaluate curriculum effectiveness, or to inform planning and decision making to accelerate students' learning.

Areas for development in that report included the need to:

- use more consistent and robust assessment and moderation practices
- extend the use of assessment tools to better monitor learner outcomes
- strengthen teacher capability to use achievement information
- promote teaching practices that accelerate student progress
- report more regularly to the board about student progress and achievement
- review and extend the content of the mathematics curriculum
- ensure that curriculum provision helps deaf students access a wider range of educational pathways.

#### **Hostel**

In 2016 the new student hostel had been recently opened. It was evident that external help was required to support effective day-to-day operations and to improve student wellbeing. Areas of concern included:

- student safety and privacy
- incident reporting systems and action planning
- student wellbeing and care routines, including food and nutrition
- indoor environments and the provision of onsite leisure activities
- supporting older students' independence
- regularity of systems to gather and respond to student input
- hostel staff supervision roles and responsibilities.

#### **Governance**

From 2012 to 2015, the two Deaf Education Centres transitioned to be administered by a combined board. As such, by 2016 ERO external evaluation was the first review of the centres with the combined board. The report for KDEC identified the need to develop:

- high quality stewardship to meet the identified needs of the centre's unique and complex environment
- effective systems and practices to regularly assure the board about the wellbeing of all students and staff
- regular reporting to the board, so trustees are better informed about student progress, achievement and acceleration
- greater evaluative capability, including consideration of the effectiveness of governance and leadership across the centre
- succession planning for schoolwide leadership.

## **Progress**

Over the past two years, KDEC has made progress in some of these areas. However, additional areas of concern, particularly leadership, property, and financial management, have arisen. These are being addressed through a high level of MoE statutory intervention.

### **Student achievement outcomes and the curriculum design**

Improvement in this key area is still in the early stages. The MoE has provided extensive and valuable support and guidance for this work through the Student Achievement Function (SAF).

The SAF has provided the school with a clear and comprehensive plan for improvement. However, the effective core school leadership needed to implement the expected improvements is not yet evident. As a result, an immediate centre focus must be on ensuring teachers create learning opportunities to effectively accelerate students' learning and progress.

Core school leaders need to accelerate the pace of their leadership actions and the implementation of effective assessment practices. Steps to achieve this include:

- introducing a wider range of suitable assessment tools, including some that are standardised
- using student achievement information to track, monitor and report the progress of individuals and groups of students, including Māori students
- building a schoolwide, effective approach to accelerating progress for students who need to make better progress
- developing shared understandings of teaching strategies that are effective in accelerating student progress and achievement
- inquiring into the impact and effectiveness of their planning and decisions through the analysis of student progress and achievement information
- ensuring, on the basis of data and student learning needs, students' equitable access to New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpretation to provide and support communication that accelerates learning.

Teachers in regional services have connected with the student's school to access their achievement information. This student achievement information is beginning to be used strategically to evaluate the impact of the resource service on outcomes for learners. Further work with the MoE must continue to ensure the centres can access and use this information easily, efficiently and effectively.

## **Hostel**

Good progress has been made in improving the conditions and provision for students living in the hostel. An experienced van Asch leader, along with members of the KDEC senior and middle

leadership teams, have worked to develop and strengthen KDEC hostel processes and practices. Their advice has been acted on and better processes are in place to manage the hostel.

Improvements are now evident in:

- physical environments that are more homely and comfortable for students
- improved access to a variety of recreational activities and opportunities
- training and professional development for residential staff to build understanding of their role and how to work with deaf or hard of hearing teenagers who may have additional needs
- systems and processes to support students' wellbeing, that encourage their input into planning and that promote student leadership
- better communication between hostel staff and between the hostel and the centre
- appointments of staff who are positive role models for students and have high expectations for their successful development and outcomes
- policies to guide effective hostel operation.

Hostel managers should now ensure that internal evaluation is effectively used to fully embed and sustain the recently-improved practices in the hostel.

### **Governance**

The board is well led. Considerable progress has been made towards improving stewardship capacity and capability with the ongoing support of the MoE appointed LSMs and the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA).

DEC trustees are developing a new Deaf Education Service Delivery model for the provision of deaf education and other key services for deaf and hard of hearing learners. The significant collaboration between the board, the LSMs, national and regional MoE representatives has informed the proposed model. Key stakeholders are being extensively consulted through to 2019.

The relationship and partnership building strategy between KDEC and van Asch DEC has been well led. This is a key organisational and operational culture shift in the last two years. A higher level of collaboration is promoting the sharing of expertise and practices between the two centres. This includes policy and project work, consultation, strategic leadership, service provision and financial management systems and processes.

Although progress has been made, the board is not yet able to manage all of the highly complex personnel issues and other needs facing KDEC. Further support is required to support leaders to manage and lead change that is in the best interests of students' wellbeing and learning.

The key areas of progress include:

- the appointment of a new acting principal at KDEC
- developing a governance framework with an associated policy review and board work plan
- ongoing training for trustees to build understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including accessing and making effective use of appropriate and relevant external support
- the appointment of an executive officer across the centres to align financial management
- improved financial management systems and processes, including regular reporting
- the nearing completion of the Marae project after a long period of delays
- addressing the short-term property issues with the MoE, and beginning to consider the future property requirements aligned with the new model under development.

Board functioning would be strengthened if the board received more regular reports from the core school and regional services that help trustees to:

- determine how well learners are progressing and achieving across the core school and regional service to then inform decision making
- set appropriate annual achievement targets for groups of learners, and receive evaluative reports about the progress of these groups
- evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and the impact of targeted interventions on student learning and progress over time
- know about student safety and wellbeing, including patterns and trends in attendance and other presence and engagement measures
- ensure the sufficiency and provision of NZSL interpretation in the core school.

## **Leadership**

The 2016 ERO report raised issues about the overall effectiveness of school leadership.

Since that time, a new acting principal and new leader of the regional service have been appointed. The LSM and acting principal work closely together. They are addressing areas identified for improvement at KDEC and are finding better ways of providing for deaf students. Renewed energy and extended leadership capacity are helping to promote positive centre development.

Despite the positive changes, some staff remain challenged by KDEC's new direction. ERO's findings indicate that leaders must build staff cohesion and collaboration and ensure the collective responsibility of all staff members for the achievement and wellbeing of all students. They should also prioritise ways of effectively managing the wellbeing of core school staff and communicating regularly with students.

At the time of the review, the core school's leadership was not effective. More robust quality assurance and staff appraisal processes are required to ensure students have access to high quality care and teaching that actively promotes their wellbeing and achievement. Staffing changes are having a considerable impact on students. Further urgent investigation is required to determine the causes for this and to then respond with appropriate management strategies to address the concerns staff raised with ERO.

Core school leaders should urgently:

- put staffing in place in core school hubs that ensures equity of access to teachers, teacher aides and NZSL interpretation, that meets student learning and wellbeing requirements, and builds consistency of curriculum delivery and staffing
- strengthen staff appraisal processes
- engage regularly with all provisions to ensure high quality educational practices are in place, including student management and support systems and processes
- promote and focus on improvement strategies and longer term solutions.

## **3 Sustainable performance and self review**

### **How well placed is the school to sustain and continue to improve and review its performance?**

The centre currently requires a high level of ongoing external intervention to effectively address areas of concern. The board and centre value the positive working relationships they have with the MoE at both a national and regional level.

Under the new leadership and through the MoE intervention, the management of KDEC has improved. However, overall leadership capability and capacity requires significant improvement. Student wellbeing and achievement outcomes require more targeted action. Greater levels of effective leadership are required, particularly in the core school, to promote accelerated learning and a wider range of communication and other valued learner outcomes.

With the ongoing support of the LSMs and the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA), the board has made considerable progress towards improving its stewardship capacity and capability. The board is well led and is collaborative with external partners. While the board has the powers for curriculum, further robust evaluation is required to fully assess the capacity and capability of the board to resume the powers currently held by the two LSMs.

This is a pivotal time in the New Zealand deaf educational landscape. The complexity of demands on board leadership and trustees have, at times, exceeded their ability to meet the extent of competing needs and priorities. There is an urgency to make considerable strategic change to the design and operation of the National Deaf Education Service. This offers both real opportunities and significant challenges for the board.

This is a time of considerable strategic change. Additional external support must continue to be provided. This should include specific expertise to help the board and leaders effectively progress and implement the new national model for deaf education, while improving the day-to-day services and education for deaf and hard of hearing students.

### **Board assurance on legal requirements**

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the *ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists*. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

## **Actions**

In order to meet its legal and statutory requirements the board and school leaders must:

- adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum, at least once in every two years, after consultation with the school community [Section 60B Education Act 1989]
- in consultation with the school's Māori community, develop and make known to the school's community, policies and/or procedures, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Māori students [NAG 1(e)]
- satisfy the board that student absences are correctly recorded, monitored and followed up [s 25 Education Act 1989; NAG 6; Education School Attendance Regulations 1951].

## **4 Recommendations**

### **Recommendations, including any to other agencies for ongoing or additional support.**

ERO recommends that the current level of intervention continues, and is expanded, if necessary, to meet particular and/or unexpected demands, as they arise.

ERO also recommends that further, additional support be provided, as required, to ensure the Deaf Education Centres and board effectively manage the intended changes to the Service Delivery design.

### **Conclusion**

Kelston Deaf Education Centre (KDEC) is a special school for children and young people in the northern half of the North Island who are deaf or hard of hearing. Statutory and other support must be continued to build the capability necessary to improve outcomes for students.

ERO intends to carry out another review over the course of one-to-two years.



Violet Tu'uga Stevenson  
Director Review and Improvement Services  
Te Tai Raki - Northern Region

23 January 2019

## About the School

Location	Kelston, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	503	
School type	Special School	
School roll	Core school roll	90
	Regional roll	413
	Residential roll	19
	ASSIST roll	1215
Number of international students	0	
Gender composition	Core school:	Boys 53 Girls 37
Ethnic composition	Māori	32
	Pākehā	8
	Samoan	9
	Chinese	5
	Indian	5
	South East Asian	5
	Tongan	5
	other Pacific	10
	other ethnic groups	11
Special Features	<p>Host school partnerships with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kelston Primary School</li> <li>• Kelston Intermediate</li> <li>• Kelston Girls' College</li> <li>• Kelston Boys' College</li> <li>• Ormiston Primary School</li> <li>• Ormiston Junior College</li> <li>• Ormiston Senior College</li> <li>• Oteha Valley School</li> </ul> <p>Tu Kōkiri (Transition), Kelston and Auckland Deaf Society Residential Hostel, Kelston Regional Service and Resource Development Hubs at Hamilton and Tauranga, Resource Teachers of the Deaf Service (RTD) ASSIST Teams</p>	
Review team on site	September 2018	
Date of this report	23 January 2019	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2016
	Education Review	October 2012
	Education Review	June 2010