



# School Evaluation Report

---

**School Name:** Southern Health School

**Profile Number:** 1631

---

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 kawē, 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.

Every New Zealand state and state integrated school has an ERO review at least once every four years to evaluate what is working well for learners and what needs to be improved.

The report is part of a nationally coordinated evaluation of three regional health schools during the second half of 2025.

## About the school

Southern Health School is one of three regional health schools that provides support for students in Years 1 to 13 with high health needs. The school is governed by a Ministry of Education appointed school board. Students are dual enrolled in the health school and their local school of enrolment. If a student is not in hospital, enrolment is supported by a medical certificate from a registered medical practitioner. The majority of students have high mental health needs.

The school's geographical region encompasses all of the South Island, Stewart Island and the Chatham Islands and includes 16 regional offices. The central office is based in Christchurch. Students may be educated in hospital, their own homes and/or in the school's own student support centres based at satellite units, where teachers work with individuals or groups.

In 2024, the Southern Health School supported education for 680 learners, of whom 68% identified as New Zealand European/Pākehā, and 22% identified as Māori. On average, students spend 33 school weeks on the Southern Health School roll. The school reports that 84% of students successfully transitioned back into their school or vocational pathway. The school has oversight of some learners in the care of Oranga Tamariki.

An experienced principal was appointed from mid-2025 after the passing of a long serving principal.

The school's mission statement '*Ko te whai mātauraka. Ko te Hauora; Seek health and wellbeing through learning*' is underpinned by the vision '*Every child has the right to learn and flourish through education.*'

Education Counts provides further information about the school's student population, student engagement and student achievement, school enrolments and school zones. [educationcounts.govt.nz/home](https://educationcounts.govt.nz/home)

An explanation of the terms and judgements used in this report can be found here: [Reporting | Education Review Office](#)

## What we know about learner success

*This is a summary of learner success, which guides the school board's future strategic direction, including any education in Rumaki/bilingual settings.*

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%

### Learner Success and Wellbeing

*This section provides a summary of learner success and wellbeing.*

The Southern Health School supports learners to successfully engage in learning and transition back into school or vocational pathways.

- Learners benefit from caring and highly supportive relationship-based teaching that supports their wellbeing and readiness to engage in education.
- Learners and families actively participate in decisions about their individual learning goals which are well supported by staff who know their learners well.
- Leaders, teachers and other agencies focus on preparing learners for successful transitions back to their local school of enrolment or vocational pathways.
- Leaders and teachers collect information about learner progress and achievement based on individual goals and curriculum objectives. This is an area for improvement as the new leadership team work to define the school's valued learner outcomes.

### Conditions to support learner success

*This section provides a summary of leadership, teaching, curriculum and foundation school conditions for improvement.*

School leadership foster a culture committed to enabling positive outcomes for learners.

- The new leadership team are focused on building a model of distributed leadership across the school.
- A renewed focus on extending professional relationships and partnerships with other education providers and agencies is enhancing student transitions and learning opportunities.
- There is a focus on strengthening communication between staff and leaders to support collaborative practices and inclusive teaching and learning strategies.

Learners benefit from focused teaching and achieve their learning goals.

- Teachers demonstrate an understanding of their learners and are highly flexible and adaptive in providing intentional and responsive programmes to meet changing individual learning needs
- There is a sustained focus on learners gaining foundational skills in literacy and mathematics.
- Teaching is responsive, with clear learning goals, scaffolding, and high expectations schoolwide; culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches underpin classroom practice.
- Learner self-management, wellbeing, and engagement are promoted; a respectful and inclusive environment contributes to cohesive learning for students.

Learners experience a caring, inclusive environment where their wellbeing and engagement in learning is prioritised.

- Individual learning plans are developed with each learner, their whānau, and a range of other agencies, to support engagement in learning, build on learner interest, and identify next learning steps.
- Staff participate in well-resourced professional learning that closely aligns with schoolwide priorities and individual staff interests and needs, to enhance outcomes for learners.
- The school, guided by the cultural team, has established schoolwide practices that reflect Māori tikanga and te ao Māori; this is an area for further development.
- The school Board is strategic in its decision making and works with school leaders to ensure a sustained focus on supporting individual learner's wellbeing, progress and achievement.

## Next steps for improvement

*This section provides more detail for the school to include in its strategic and annual planning for ongoing improvement across the school.*

### Key priorities

- Refine the strategic plan's goals to focus on clear key priorities for improved learning outcomes.
- Develop a collective understanding among all staff and learners of the school's valued learner outcomes.
- Clarify and define leadership roles and responsibilities to build on the strengths of the new leadership team.
- Create a school framework for evaluating the impact of systems, programmes and practices on improving outcomes for learners.

### Actions to bring about improvement

*Within three months:*

- leaders and teachers develop shared schoolwide understandings about valued learner outcomes with an initial focus on students on the roll for an extended period
- leaders clarify and define school leadership roles and responsibilities

*Within six months:*

- staff establish systems to facilitate the gathering a range of data to inform targeted strategic planning
- leaders survey all stakeholders to determine valued learner outcomes to guide teaching and learning
- leaders refine new leadership structure and build leadership capability across the school
- leaders identify and implement an evaluative framework, to understand what is working and what is making the biggest difference for learners

*Annually:*

- the school Board and leaders evaluate how well the strategic plan provides clarity and alignment to inform the future direction of the school to improve outcomes for learners
- staff evaluate how well the established valued learner outcomes are used to underpin teaching and learning
- the school Board and leaders review and adapt school leaders' roles and responsibilities to meet changing needs across the school
- leaders use the school evaluative framework to monitor progress towards meeting school priorities.

### **Expected outcomes**

- Greater alignment of practice to achieve strategic goals focused on improving learning outcomes.
- Shared schoolwide ownership of valued learner outcomes that informs teaching and learning practice.
- Increased leadership capacity across the school to respond to changing learner needs.
- Evaluation used to inform strategic priorities and enables the school's vision to be achieved and meets the needs of all learners.

The next public report on ERO's website will be a School Report and is due within four years.

Me mahi tahi tonu tātau, kia whai oranga a tātau tamariki

Let's continue to work together for the greater good of all children



Sharon Kelly  
Director of Schools

19 November 2025