INNOVATIONS IN PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS | KURA HOURUA

First Annual Interim Report

Evaluation of the Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua policy for the Ministry of Education

Martin, Jenkins & Associates Limited

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May 2015

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PREFACE

This report has been prepared for the Ministry of Education by Martin, Jenkins & Associates Limited.

MartinJenkins advises clients in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, providing services in these areas:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context – Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua policy

Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua (PSKH) are a new kind of school/kura outside the state system. The sponsors of PSKH are accountable to the Crown for raising student achievement through contracts to achieve specified school-level targets. Contracts will be renewed or revoked depending on the sponsor's performance. The most significant difference between Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua and other schools (private and state) is that they have more flexibility about how they operate and use their funding, including over curriculum, qualifications, staff pay and conditions, hours of operation, and school leadership. It is expected that this flexibility will provide the opportunity for PSKH to be innovative, but the extent to which they do things differently from state or private schools is up to the sponsor.

In summary, the policy intent is that if the schools/kura have clear outcome-focused accountability, freedom to manage and govern, and a broadly similar level of funding to that for state schools, they will then be able to develop innovative solutions that match local needs while still meeting high quality standards. This, in turn, will enable them to attract students who have previously not been well served by the education system and lead to equitable achievement outcomes for those students.

Five schools/kura opened in February 2014 and a further four schools/kura opened in February 2015.

Evaluation design and methodology – overview

MartinJenkins is conducting a multi-year evaluation of the PSKH policy for the Ministry. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the PSKH policy has delivered what it intended to deliver with regard to flexibility, innovation and student outcomes. Over the course of the evaluation its focus progressively shifts from understanding the early operation and implementation of PSKH, to exploring whether the policy is creating the conditions for success and, finally, assessing achievement of intended outcomes. The evaluation is framed to answer four overarching evaluation questions over this time.

Question 1: What does the policy look like and to what extent is delivery aligned with design intent?

Question 2: To what extent are conditions for successful delivery of the policy in place?

Question 3: What outcomes were achieved and were they achieved through the mechanisms that were envisaged?

Question 4: What lessons can be drawn from the PSKH experience and what are the implications of these lessons for improving the design and delivery of the policy?

The evaluation complements other monitoring and review information that looks at how the schools/kura are performing:

· The Ministry assesses quarterly and annual reports provided by the PSKH as part of their contracts, including information about whether the schools/kura are meeting their agreed targets.

- The Education Review Office (ERO) conducts a readiness review before the schools/kura open, a New Schools Assurance Review approximately 6 months after opening, and an Education Review approximately 18 months after opening, with regular reviews thereafter – this is the same as for state schools.
- The Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua Authorisation Board monitors the schools'/kura's educational performance.

Note all of these activities relate to review of performance at the individual school/kura level. By contrast, to minimise overlap and maximise value-add, the MartinJenkins evaluation focuses more on how the PSKH policy works in practice, rather than the performance of individual schools/kura.

Year 1 of the evaluation: focus on innovation

This report marks the end of the first year of the evaluation (Phase 1). This phase of the evaluation describes how the first PSKH that opened in 2014 are translating the policy intent into practice. At this stage, the evaluation's focus is on the first overarching evaluation question:

What does the policy look like and to what extent is delivery aligned with design intent?

Both the evaluation and the implementation of the policy are in the early stages – this report provides feedback on only the first year of Round 1 PSKH operation.

Phase 1's particular focus was on understanding innovation within PSKH, to look at early indications of how policy was enabling the schools/kura to do this. It involved only Round 1 schools/kura, focusing in depth on three of the five Round 1 schools/kura. Round 2 schools/kura will be included in the evaluation from Phase 2, beginning in mid 2015.

Key information sources for Phase 1 included: qualitative feedback from visits to Round 1 schools/kura (all five were visited as part of scoping, three were visited to examine innovation); a literature scan on innovation in schools conducted by the Ministry; and secondary analysis of relevant information (quarterly and annual reports provided by PSKH to the Ministry as part of their contracts, ERO's New School Assurance Review Reports, PSKH applications and contracts, and policy papers).

The literature scan highlighted how contemporary discussions of innovation in schools are grounded in the perceived need for flexibility in public education, to meet the rapidly changing economic and social needs of a globalised and technology-driven society. Despite the large body of literature that refers to innovation in education, the concept is poorly defined. However, broadly speaking, innovation in schools is understood as something that is intentional, and designed to support changes in practice to create value (ie improvements in teaching and learning). In the context of education, innovation is less about wholescale experimentation and more about the creative application of good practice solutions in a way that is appropriate in a specific time and place. For PSKH, it may not be that the idea itself is specifically new but its application to this particular student group, or in combination with other ideas, is at least uncommon and at best unique.

Findings about innovation within PSKH

The range and nature of innovations we found within PSKH provide early evidence the schools/kura are developing innovative solutions that match local needs while still meeting high quality standards.

Using the literature scan and other sources, we identified eight dimensions of innovation. These are: funding models; governance; management; staffing; student engagement and support; pedagogy (teaching and learning); curriculum; and engagement with community and parents/family/whānau.

The dimensions of innovation are linked and there is an implicit hierarchy across them – some are necessary precursors for others. Figure 1 captures this. Each of the three case study schools/kura had a different mix of innovations, and each emphasised some dimensions over others. The figure also shows our overall assessment of the level of innovation across the dimensions, based on our analysis of the early operation of the Round 1 schools/kura.

Figure 1:   Innovation within PSKH, hierarchy and linkages between key dimensions
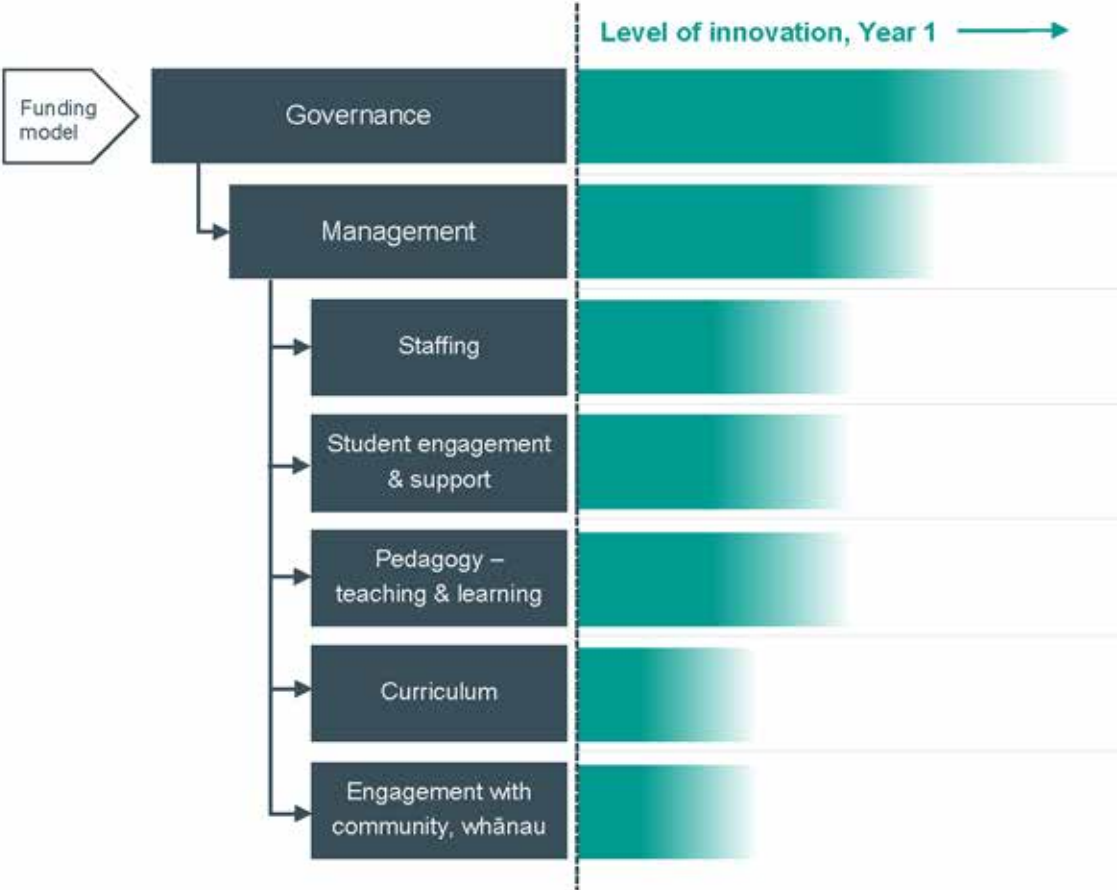
- The funding model is shown to the side, indicating its qualitative difference to the other dimensions: as a structural component, it enables other potential innovation.
    - In addition to being an enabler, funding is *used* in a range of ways – its flexible nature enables innovation across a number of dimensions.
- The greatest levels of innovation in the first year of operation are in the dimensions at the top of the figure – governance and management.

- The key driver of innovation is found at the governance level: the sponsor's vision provides the impetus and mandate for innovation in all other areas.
    - § A key innovation in governance was enabled by the policy – this is that boards are appointed for specific expertise without the need to involve parents.
- Management enacts the sponsor's vision by implementing specific innovations across the school/kura.
    - § A key innovation in management was the split between administration (CEO) and academic leadership (principal).
- Innovative practices and examples of best practice were evident in three dimensions driven by management.
    - *Staffing*: skilled staff support and bring innovation – they are experienced (including the small number of unregistered teachers) and bring a strong focus on improving outcomes for priority students; staff share the responsibility for ongoing innovation with sponsors and management and are employed under individual contracts.
    - *Student engagement and support*: there is a strong focus on student wellbeing and engagement using a range of best practice approaches and innovations.
    - *Pedagogy, teaching and learning*: multiple examples of best practice, with approaches well matched to context and student need – while similar examples can be found in state schools, these practices are not widespread across the state sector.
- The final two dimensions showed many examples of good practice, but little real innovation.
    - *Curriculum*: while not particularly innovative, curricula are being tailored to meet the needs of priority students.
    - *Engagement with community and parents/family/whānau*: this is recognised as extremely important and a range of best practice approaches are used.

Conclusions

Innovation within PSKH

The Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua policy includes elements designed to enable innovation – we saw clear indications that the three case study schools/kura were innovating in these areas: using funding flexibly; appointing governance boards to access specific skills; and splitting their management functions into administration and academic leadership. Innovation in these dimensions supports emergent innovations in other dimensions, with the three case study schools/kura developing innovative educational provision for students who have been under-served by the education system.

As the evaluation progresses we will continue to focus on innovation, to see if and how it grows over time, and across dimensions, in response to students' needs and aspirations. As part of this, we will examine the drivers of innovation. There are some early signs that the case study schools/kura are developing innovative educational provision for their students. It will be critical to see to what extent innovation grows in coming years, and as schools/kura learn how best to respond to students' needs and aspirations. The extent that PSKH continue to innovate may also depend on the capability and

capacity of sponsors, management and staff to drive innovation forward. The accountability framework is also a significant lever for continuous improvement.

In Year 1 sponsors' were focused on the challenge of implementing a new model of education; coming years may provide the opportunity for sponsors and staff to innovate more widely as the schools/kura become established. Currently PSKH staff (at both management and teaching levels) feel empowered to innovate and try new approaches for the benefit of their students, and are excited and energised by this opportunity.

Emerging themes about conditions for successful delivery of the policy

One of the key evaluation questions asks whether conditions for successful delivery of the policy are in place. While this was not the specific focus of this first phase of the evaluation, a number of themes are beginning to take form.

- Opportunities are presented by small school rolls and/or class sizes, combined with a focus on the individual student.
    - Schools/kura believe they are achieving good results for their students (in terms of both engagement and achievement) through quality relationships with individual students and their parents/family/whānau, and individualised academic support. Both these factors are facilitated by low ratios between students and teaching staff. Relatively small roll sizes overall also allow non-teaching staff (management and sponsors) to maintain close connections with students and their parents/family/whānau.
    - Quality pastoral care is also facilitated by small rolls.
    - The Ministry expects school/kura rolls to grow to the maximum capacity each PSKH is funded for; maintaining individual support for students through this expansion will present a challenge to the schools/kura.
- The strong visions of individual sponsors.
    - The sponsors are using principles from business to succeed: they are taking personal responsibility for the success of their school/kura and are determined to succeed. Each is aiming for the best possible results and is aware they are operating in an environment of high scrutiny.
    - Sponsors' visions are driving all aspects of operation: schools/kura are designed to meet the needs of a particular demographic.
- Sponsors' history and capability.
    - Each sponsor is building on a history of success in education – they were able to get underway using networks and trusted and capable staff (though new staff were also employed), and had relevant, transferable knowledge of finance, employment, teaching and learning, and their community.
- The opportunity and freedoms provided by the policy and funding.
    - The fact each school/kura is new was an important factor supporting the implementation of sponsors' visions; the vision and direction is clearly communicated to all staff and they are clear about what they have 'signed up' for. There is no need to change practice or manage a process of change (as would be the case in an existing school/kura).

- The freedoms provided by the funding model and a determination to succeed have created conditions conducive to innovation, including an 'institutional space for risk taking' – sponsors and staff view this as an exciting opportunity and feel empowered to continually test and improve approaches.
- The emphasis on aligning teaching expertise with the school/kura's mission and values.
  - Each school/kura endeavoured to employ the highest quality staff possible; quality staff were identified by the sponsors as vital to achieving their vision.

For the three case study schools/kura we also identified a small number of perceived barriers to success at this early stage of implementation.

- *Negative public perceptions of PSKH*: these were perceived to have had a range of impacts including discouraging parents from enrolling their children at PSKH, discouraging teachers from applying for positions, and limiting other schools' interactions with PSKH.
- *Limited facilities*: all three PSKH are operating out of premises that have been adapted from a previous use – limitations identified included lack of outdoor space and limited access to some specialised equipment. Schools/kura are seeking to address this through accessing external facilities; in their view, time-limited contracts with the Ministry constrain their ability to secure long-term locations and develop facilities.
- *Short lead-in time:* The three case study PSKH all also noted difficulties associated with opening a Round 1 school/kura – the short time period between being approved and opening posed challenges including high stress and difficulty getting policies and processes in place and recruiting quality staff.

All three sponsors had a strong drive to provide a valid alternative to the current system, for students and whānau who they thought were not being well served. This drive pre-dated the policy and the PSKH policy is credited by the three schools/kura as providing them with the opportunity to finally implement their individual visions.

In each case the sponsor was building on a history of providing services to similar groups and the PSKH policy allowed them to expand their offering – something they had all been planning to do. Despite this the sponsors didn't see themselves as unfairly benefitting from the policy (when they had already been planning to open a school); rather the policy enabled them to implement their vision without compromises they believed would have been required if they worked within the state system.

In particular the sponsors valued the opportunity to provide a 'full' solution, or truly integrated approach – having the freedom to use the funding model to focus all aspects of the school/kura on the needs of priority students. From the sponsors' perspective, the flexibility inherent in the policy allows a cohesiveness and coordination across all aspects of the school/kura. Everything is driven by the sponsor's vision and all actions and decisions are clearly linked to achieving improved outcomes for priority students.

INTRODUCTION

Context – Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua policy

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) has a clear focus on improving student achievement, and employs a range of approaches to support the sector's efforts, including provision of strategic leadership, resources, and targeted interventions. Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua (PSKH) is a new policy that provides an innovative addition to this mix.

The design intention is for PSKH to foster quality partnerships between the education sector, business and the community. These partnerships are expected to result in novel and inventive ways to educate and engage groups of students who are not doing well in the current system – including Māori, Pasifika, students with special education needs and students from low socio-economic backgrounds. PSKH also expand on the concept of offering choice to parents – a key feature of the New Zealand school system.

The PSKH policy has been implemented in two rounds to date: five schools/kura opened in February 2014 and a further four schools/kura opened in February 2015.

The PSKH policy was first set out in the 2011 Confidence and Supply Agreement between the National Party and ACT New Zealand. In this agreement, the parties agreed to adopt and implement within the 2011–2014 Parliamentary term an education policy that would enable a charter school system to be implemented within New Zealand.

As outlined in the agreement, the charter school system was to be targeted at:

> …lifting educational achievement in low decile areas and disadvantaged communities where educational underperformance has become the norm.

While the name of the policy has changed, to Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua, the overarching aim remains evident throughout the policy documentation.

Also in 2011, officials identified four key features of the PSKH model:[1]

- greater flexibility than state schools over aspects of governance and management, including staffing, approaches to teaching and learning, curriculum and qualifications

- a clear and ambitious mission that distinguishes the [PSKH] from surrounding state and state integrated schools

- a sponsor who is responsible for ensuring the PSKH meets learner achievement goals

- accountability for outcomes as a strong focus, with a 'tight-loose-tight' model.

Since that time, emphasis has also been placed on the need for PSKH to be strongly engaged with parents/family/whānau and community.

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[1]   Ministry of Education, 20 December 2011, *Education Report: Initial Discussion on Charter Schools*, New Zealand.

Intentions of the PSKH policy

A concise, high-level theory of change for the PSKH policy is:

- IF schools have clear outcome-focused accountability, freedom to manage and govern, and support that is equitable to state schools

- THEN they will develop innovative solutions that match local needs while still meeting high quality standards

- WHICH WILL attract students who have previously not been well served by the education system and will lead to equitable achievement outcomes for them.

Expanding on this theory of change, Figure 2 (following) sets out a detailed Intervention Logic model for the PSKH policy (a printer-friendly A3 version is available at Appendix 1).

- The fundamental issues and problems that the policy is attempting to address are shown at the bottom of the Intervention Logic, with the ultimate outcomes shown at the top – young people are confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners.

- The evaluation is focusing on the structural framework and delivery component of the policy, and the outputs and medium-term outcomes that are expected to lead from this.

  - Note that the Intervention Logic has been refined and updated as part of the first year of the evaluation: it now includes specified dimensions of innovation – enabled by the structural layer, and expected to impact on the delivery component layer (the dimensions of innovation are introduced on page 19).

  - The first year of the evaluation focused on the lower levels of the Intervention Logic (structural framework and the delivery component layer), with a particular interest in the dimensions of innovation (see page 14 for further detail on Year 1).

- The PSKH policy exists alongside a multitude of policies and initiatives that seek to improve educational outcomes for students, particularly those who have traditionally not been well served by the education sector (Māori, Pasifika, students with special educational needs and those in low socio-economic areas) – the right-hand side of the Intervention Logic shows some of the other policies and initiatives that will also contribute to achieving the ultimate outcomes.

Figure 2: PSKH Intervention Logic – updated to show key dimensions of school-level innovation
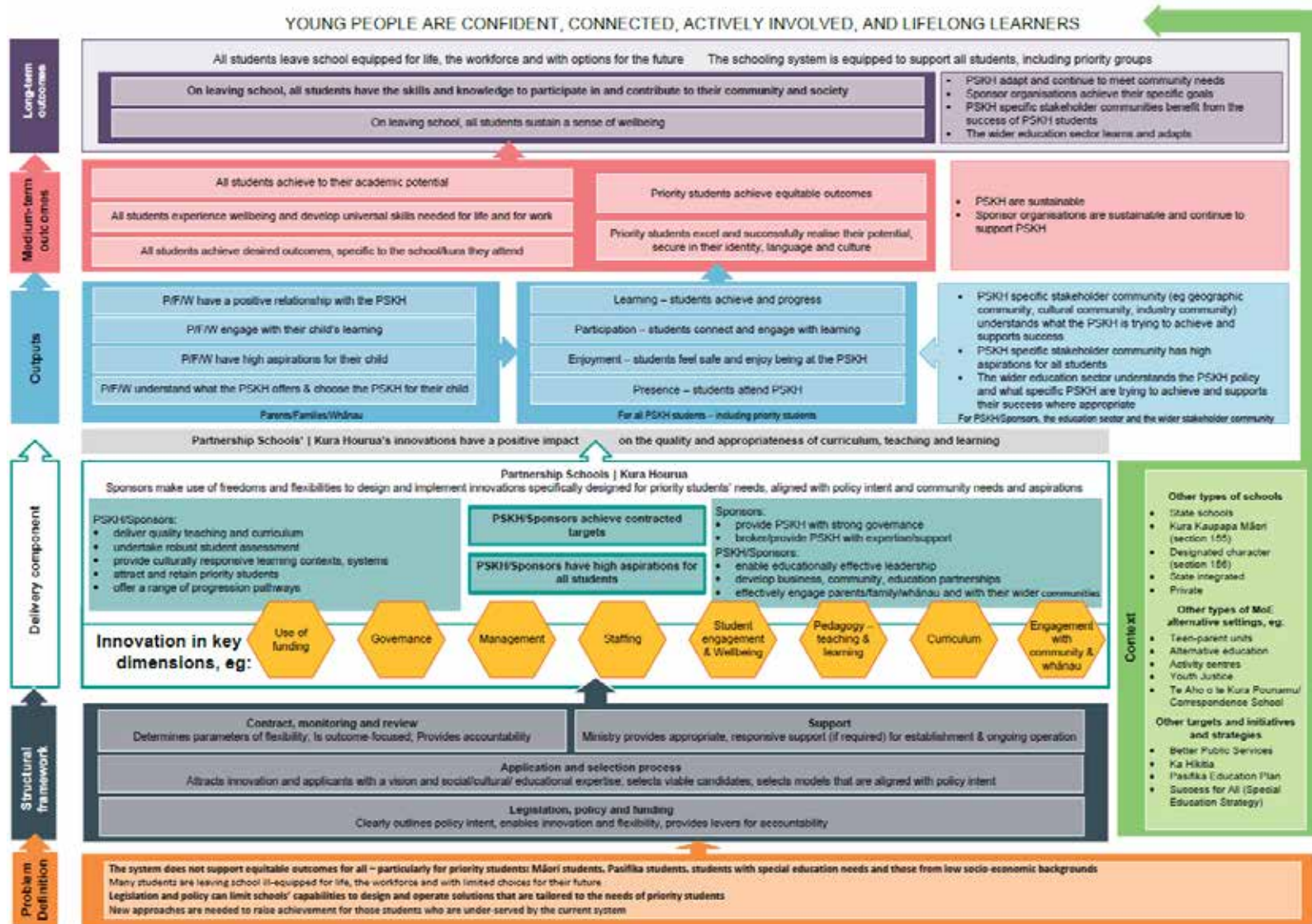
The Intervention Logic model sets out four support components that provide a structural framework for the policy:

· legislation, policy and funding

· application and selection process

· contract, monitoring and review

· non-financial support.

In essence, these elements are within the control of the Government and our assumption is that without them schools/kura would not be able to function.

The actual delivery of education provision by schools/kura is the delivery component of the policy. The Intervention Logic model sets out a number of generic components that, if present, will constitute high quality provision, tailored to local needs and in line with policy intent. While the generic components set a particular standard for provision, eg quality teaching and curriculum, they are not specific about the nature of provision, reflecting the expectation that PSKH will implement innovative solutions.

At the output level, the Intervention Logic model assumes that change will be most evident among two groups of stakeholders: parents and students.

· With regard to parents, we expect to see understanding of what the school/kura has to offer, high aspirations for their child, and engagement with both the school/kura and their student's learning. While these are outputs for the policy overall, reflecting an assumption that schools/kura work closely with parents/family/whānau and communities, they are considered inputs to student learning.

· Outputs for students constitute the fundamentals of learning evident in such documents as the Measurable Gains Framework: presence, enjoyment, participation and learning. These we assume will be affected by the work of the school/kura, support of the parents/family/whānau, and wider influences within the student's life and community.

The final two levels deal with medium-term and long-term outcomes of the policy. While the primary focus of the policy is educational achievement of priority learners, the Intervention Logic model also makes mention of student wellbeing, universal skills needed for work and for life, and security of culture, language and identity. These wider outcomes reflect assumptions inherent within the policy about how priority students will become young people who are confident, connected, actively involved and lifelong learners – the ultimate vision the PSKH policy seeks to contribute to.

PSKH in practice – Round 1 and Round 2 schools/kura

At time of report writing (May 2015), the Ministry has issued two Requests for Proposals (RFP) in order to take applications and select sponsors to be contracted to deliver PSKH.

The Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua Authorisation Board is a statutory advisory group appointed by the Minister of Education. The Board's role is to provide advice to the Minister of Education on the approval of sponsors and the educational performance of PSKH. Specifically, this includes:

· evaluating applications for PSKH

- making recommendations to the Minister of Education about which applications to approve
- providing assistance, where reasonable and practicable, with the negotiation process and the establishment of the schools/kura
- once the schools/kura are established, being responsible for regularly monitoring and reviewing their performance to ensure agreed targets are achieved.

Round 1 schools/kura

The first RFP round was initiated in March 2013, and received 35 compliant applications that were assessed by the PSKH Authorisation Board and the Ministry. Following negotiations, the Minister of Education entered into contractual agreements with five sponsors, who opened five schools/kura in February 2014 ('Round 1').

Table 3 in Appendix 2 sets out the key characteristics of each of the Round 1 schools/kura.

Key points to note about Round 1 schools/kura are:
- the schools/kura are clustered in two geographical areas: Northland and Auckland
- all of the schools/kura are co-educational
- there is considerable variation between the schools/kura with regard to their roll count – maximum roll range is 100–300, opening roll range is 50–108
- all of the schools/kura are delivering the New Zealand Curriculum and/or Te Marautanga
- each of the schools/kura covers a unique, but sometimes overlapping, year range: one is a primary school, one is a middle school, and three are secondary schools
- there is variation across the schools/kura with regard to their focus and ethos.

Round 2 schools/kura

The second RFP round opened in December 2013, and received 19 compliant applications, two of which were submitted by sponsors of established Round 1 schools/kura. Following negotiations, the Minister of Education entered into contractual agreements with four sponsors, who opened four schools/kura in February 2015 ('Round 2').

Table 4 in Appendix 2 sets out the key characteristics of each of the Round 2 schools/kura.

Key points to note about Round 2 schools/kura are:
- two of the schools/kura are run by sponsors who also operate a Round 1 school/kura
- the schools/kura are clustered in two geographical areas: Northland and Auckland
- all of the schools/kura are co-educational
- there is considerable variation between the schools/kura with regard to their roll count – maximum roll range is 150–250, opening roll range is 35–134
- all of the schools/kura are delivering the New Zealand Curriculum and/or Te Marautanga
- each of the schools/kura covers a different year range: two are primary schools, one is a middle school, and one is a secondary school
- there is variation across the schools/kura with regard to their focus and ethos.

Evaluation design and methodology – overview

MartinJenkins is conducting a multi-year evaluation of the PSKH policy for the Ministry. The overall purpose of the multi-year evaluation is to assess the extent to which the PSKH policy has delivered what it intended to deliver with regard to flexibility, innovation and student outcomes.[2] Specifically, the evaluation will:

- provide *accountability* at the policy level (not the individual school level) to support decision making about the future of the policy

- provide *learning* to support ongoing improvement of the policy

- contribute to wider *knowledge* about the nature and effectiveness of innovation in schooling to support development of related policies.

Scope and fit of the MartinJenkins' evaluation with other review activities

The evaluation complements other monitoring and review information that looks at how the schools/kura are performing.

- The Ministry assesses quarterly and annual reports provided by the PSKH as part of their contracts, including information about whether the schools/kura are meeting their agreed targets.

- The Education Review Office (ERO) conducts a readiness review before the schools/kura open, a New Schools Assurance Review approximately 6 months after opening, and an Education Review approximately 18 months after opening, with regular reviews thereafter – this is the same as for state schools.

- The PSKH Authorisation Board monitors the schools'/kura's educational performance.

Note that all of the activities above relate to review of performance at the individual school/kura level. However, having undertaken school/kura level review, each of the above agencies/groups will be well placed to provide an overview perspective.

By contrast, to minimise overlap and maximise value-add, the MartinJenkins evaluation will:

- focus on the performance of the PSKH policy, rather than the performance of individual schools/kura

- provide an end-to-end evaluation of the policy

- include Round 1 and Round 2 schools/kura

- with regard to outcomes, focus primarily on student achievement

- be concerned with outcomes for all students, but with a special focus on priority students.

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[2]   MartinJenkins, November 2014, *Evaluation Plan: Partnership School | Kura Hourua policy,* Final Report Prepared for the Ministry of Education, New Zealand. The full Evaluation Plan can be found at http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Information-releases/Partnership-schools-information-release/evaluation-plan-final.pdf

Key evaluation questions

The PSKH policy is primarily concerned with outcomes for priority students. The evaluation will capture and report on outcomes for all students with a particular focus on priority students where data allows (ie to the extent that priority students can be identified through meta-data and numbers allow for a sensible breakdown).

There are four overarching evaluation questions for the multi-year evaluation:

Question 1: What does the policy look like and to what extent is delivery aligned with design intent?

Question 2: To what extent are conditions for successful delivery of the policy in place?

Question 3: What outcomes were achieved and were they achieved through the mechanisms that were envisaged?

Question 4: What lessons can be drawn from the PSKH experience and what are the implications of these lessons for improving the design and delivery of the policy?

Evaluation framework

To answer the overarching evaluation questions, the evaluation is applying three lenses and is being carried out in three phases (Figure 3):

· a descriptive lens, concerned with describing the policy in theory and practice

· a learning lens, concerned with identifying and feeding back lessons

· an assessment lens, concerned with making evaluative judgements about the extent to which the policy delivers intended outcomes, any unintended outcomes that are achieved (positive or negative) and the factors that support success.

Figure 3: **Overview of the evaluation framework**
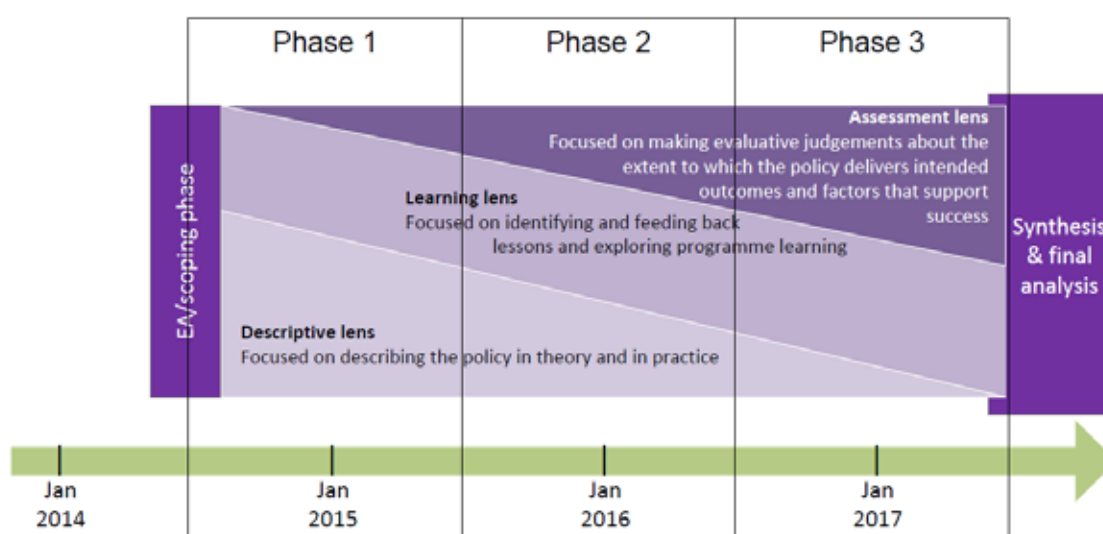
Each phase of the evaluation will primarily apply a particular evaluation lens, but there will also be significant overlap – reflecting the different value that can be gained by applying each lens throughout the four-year period and the staggered implementation across two rounds.

In general terms:

- Phase 1 will run from July 2014 until June 2015 and will coincide with the early operation/establishment period for Round 1 schools/kura and the selection/implementation/early operation period for Round 2 schools/kura.
    - This report is timed prior to the end of Phase 1, the first year focused on a specific aspect of design and early implementation (innovation, see below) in relation to Round 1 schools/kura.
    - Introductory visits to Round 2 schools/kura will occur in 2015.
- Phase 2 will run from July 2015 until June 2016 and will coincide with the stabilisation period for Round 1 schools/kura and the establishment/early stabilisation period for Round 2 schools/kura.
- Phase 3 will run from July 2016 until June 2017 and will coincide with the business as usual/bedding-in period for Round 1 schools/kura and the stabilisation/early bedding-in period for Round 2 schools/kura.

Year 1: focus on innovation

This report marks the end of the first year of the evaluation; it is part of Phase 1 where our lens is primarily descriptive. At this stage we are focusing on the first overarching evaluation question:

What does the policy look like and to what extent is delivery aligned with design intent?

This first year of evaluation took a particular focus on innovation within PSKH, to test key assumptions of the policy. Year 1 involved only Round 1 schools/kura, and examined innovation in depth in three out of the five[3] Round 1 schools/kura (Round 2 schools/kura will be included in the evaluation from this point forward).

The focus for Year 1 was guided at two levels:

- *the high 'theory of change' level*: development of 'innovative solutions' are thought to lead to positive outcomes for students (see page 8)
- *the more detailed level*: our focus was designed to test the lower levels of the Intervention Logic (see Figure 2 on page 9):
    - *structural framework*: the degree to which structures that have been established to support PSKH enable innovation (including contracts/accountability, policy and funding)
    - *delivery component*: the extent to which innovation is seen, as PSKH are implemented/operated by sponsors (looking across key dimensions of innovation).

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[3]   The three PSKH we visited were selected in collaboration with the Ministry and the PSKH themselves – a fourth PSKH was unable to host our visit due to staff commitments.

Specific research questions for Year 1 were:

·   How innovative are PSKH? In what dimensions are innovations evident?

·   What innovations are facilitated by the PSKH policy?

Year 1 methodology

Analysis

Our analysis drew on a range of inputs to provide feedback on the first overarching evaluation question, with a particular focus on innovation.

Our direction and understanding of innovation within PSKH was informed and contextualised by our understanding of the wider policy context, the way the policy is being implemented across all the Round 1 PSKH, and the findings of the literature scan (see below). Initial work was undertaken to identify key dimensions of innovation to guide fieldwork.

The analysis was led by MartinJenkins' evaluation team. Detailed analysis was undertaken on three specific 'cases', ie the three schools/kura visited for the innovation component of the fieldwork. For each case, a detailed picture of implementation was built through review of all key documents relating to that school/kura, including:

·   school/kura documents – information produced by the school for the public/students, and their application and reports to the Ministry

·   the ERO New School Assurance Review Report

·   qualitative feedback from site visits.

Two evaluators analysed each separate case then this information was brought together in an internal workshop. At the workshop the dimensions of innovation were refined and innovation in each of the three schools/kura was discussed in relation to the overarching evaluation question. This involved looking across the three cases to identify overarching themes and conclusions.

Initial findings were tested in an analytical workshop with the Working Group convened for the evaluation. This workshop led to the production of the findings presented in this report. The Working Group also provided feedback on early drafts of this report.

Key information sources

Initial introductory visits (scoping) to Round 1 schools/kura

As part of the evaluation scoping, an initial introductory visit was made to each Round 1 school/kura in May and June 2014.

Relevant interview material from these introductory visits to the Round 1 schools/kura – ie information and feedback relating to innovation – was also used to inform this report.

Literature scan – innovation in schools

The literature scan[4] was conducted by the Ministry to support the evaluation and provide a broad overview of research relating to innovation in schools. The scan focused on literature published in English from 2000 to 2014. The scan found:

- considerable literature looking at innovation, in the context of school choice

- several studies that referred to innovation in particular dimensions including leadership; curriculum, teaching and learning; and parental engagement

- several studies gauging the extent to which innovation exists in schools, and barriers to innovation

- only a few studies describing how particular innovations function at the school level.

Whether and how innovation contributed to student outcomes was out of scope of the literature scan.

The literature scan was a key input into the development of the key dimensions of innovation used in this report (page 19); it was also used to update the Intervention Logic and inform the fieldwork focusing on innovation, and helped guide analysis for this report.

Fieldwork focusing on innovation – three Round 1 schools/kura

The evaluation team visited three of the five Round 1 PSKH over the period October 2014 to March 2015 to observe their operation and conduct interviews. The evaluation team had knowledge and expertise in the following areas: PSKH policy and PSKH implementation in practice; evaluation and research expertise; and school-based expertise (including teaching and learning, student achievement, and school leadership and management).

The site visit methodology and questions were informed by the literature scan completed by the Ministry. Full-day visits were made to three of the Round 1 PSKH over the period October 2014 to March 2015. At each visit we observed operations and conducted interviews and focus groups with sponsors, PSKH staff and students.

The PSKH we visited were selected in collaboration with the Ministry and the schools/kura themselves – one of the four PSKH originally selected for an evaluation visit was unable to host us due to staff commitments.

Each school/kura was given full written information about the visit (covering purpose, key questions and informed consent) and the approach and date was decided in collaboration with them.

The PSKH were all told who we would like to talk to but the schedule was determined by each individual school/kura. Interviewees at each school/kura are summarised in Table 1 over page.

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[4] Fawthorpe, L, September 2014, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature,* Ministry of Education, New Zealand.

Table 1: Interviewees for each school/kura

	Interviewee details
School/kura A	Sponsor Principal Other staff member 5 students – one female, four male
School/kura B	Sponsor CEO Trustee 2 senior teachers 1 teacher 11 students – six female, five male
School/kura C	CEO Principal Two Deputy Principals 4 senior teachers 8 students – two female, six male

Interviews were semi-structured and tailored to capture feedback on issues relevant to the position and context of each interviewee. Prompts were used to ensure questions were fully explored. The actual questions asked, and the order in which they were asked, varied according to the interviewees' knowledge and role.

1   Thinking of all the possible freedoms and areas for innovation available to a PSKH, what would you identify as the *most important* or *significant* for your school/kura?

- In what area(s) have you been the most innovative?
- Which of these area(s) or innovations do you value the most? Why?
    - Following initial responses interviewees were probed to discuss innovation in each of the dimensions of innovation (Figure 4 on page 20).

2   Thinking about [dimension of innovation], how is this done at this school/kura?

- Is there anything unique or innovative about the way you do this?
- Why do you do this in this way?
- Is there anything preventing you from innovating in this? Is there anything that helps you innovate in this?

3   What are the *key* characteristics of your school/kura's mix or package of innovations?

- What makes the school unique? Is practice different in the school from a state school?
- If so, how?

4   What impact is the school/kura's innovations having on the quality and appropriateness of curriculum, teaching and learning?

- Does the school/kura meet the needs of priority students better than their previous schools would have done?
- In what ways? How do you know?

5   To what extent have you achieved your / the school/kura's 'vision'? How do you know this?

The focus groups with students were structured around the following questions and prompts. Students were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences at their previous and current school/kura.

1   Why did you come to this school/kura?

2   How does it differ to your previous school/kura?

·   What do you like about it more?

·   Is there anything you don't like about it?

3   Do you attend more often? Feel safe? Enjoy it more?

4   Do you work more or less hard? Have your goals changed?

5   What are your expectations for the future?

6   What were the barriers at you faced at your previous school/kura? How has this school/kura helped overcome those barriers?

Secondary analysis of other information

This report is also informed by a range of other information and reports including:

·   quarterly and annual reports provided by PSKH to the Ministry as part of their contracts

·   ERO's New School Assurance Review Reports

·   other relevant documents (eg PSKH applications and contracts, and policy papers).

INTRODUCTION TO INNOVATION WITHIN PSKH

While the literature scan identified a large body of literature on innovation, there is no agreed or common definition of the concept of innovation within schools. Broadly speaking, innovation in schools is understood as something that is intentional, and designed to support changes in practice to create value (ie improvements in teaching and learning).[5]

In the context of education, where children and young people's futures are at risk, innovation is less about wholescale experimentation and more about the creative application of good practice solutions in a way that is appropriate in a specific time and place.

> *Educational practices are not considered innovative in an absolute sense, rather innovation is thought of in terms of degree of impact, and relative prevalence in a local, regional or national context (Preston et al 2012). Additionally, innovation is defined by the context within which it is practised: the novelty, the change in practice and the perception of value of any innovation are all context specific. (Kirkland and Sutch 2009).[6]*

Innovation differs from invention. Innovation refers to the use of a better idea or method that is novel in its application. Invention refers more directly to the creation of the idea or method itself. This means that in the context of PSKH, it may not be that the idea itself is specifically new but its application to this particular student group, or in combination with other ideas, is at least uncommon and at best unique.[7]

Dimensions of innovation in PSKH

Innovation in PSKH was examined across key dimensions. The dimensions were identified and shaped from a range of sources including: international literature (the literature scan); expert knowledge of the New Zealand policy context, and teaching and learning within New Zealand (the Ministry, and expertise within the evaluation team); and the design and operation of PSKH (following document review and site visits).

The dimensions have been added to the Intervention Logic, to include this more nuanced understanding of innovation. The Intervention Logic now shows the dimensions in the 'innovation' box: enabled by the structural framework, and expected to lead to positive outcomes at the 'delivery component' level (see Figure 2 on page 9).

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[5]   Ellison 2009, OECD 2014, Kirkland and Sutch 2009 and Lubienski 2009, cited in Fawthorpe, L, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature,* September 2014.

[6]   Fawthorpe, L, September 2014, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature*, Ministry of Education, New Zealand.

[7]   MartinJenkins, November 2014, *Evaluation Plan: Partnership School | Kura Hourua policy,* Final report prepared for the Ministry of Education, New Zealand.

Figure 4:   Dimensions of innovation in PSKH

Essentially, the dimensions of innovation provide a lens to examine a key layer of the Intervention Logic – the 'delivery' component, or implementation of the policy. The reasons each of the dimensions have been included in our analysis are outlined below.

· *Funding*: PSKH receive a payment to cover operational costs, salaries and centrally provided services; the sponsor has control over school finances. This flexibility is identified by the policy as one of the most significant differences between PSKH and both state and private schools – PSKH are expected to use funding flexibility to deliver specific school-level targets.[8] While there was no reference to this dimension in the literature scan, it was included as a dimension, as sponsors identified this as an important enabler of innovation.

   – Funding is different to the other dimensions: it *enables* other innovations (it is included in the 'structural framework' of the Intervention Logic) but it can also be *used* innovatively by each sponsor ('use of funding' is also shown in the innovation box under the 'delivery component' in the Intervention Logic).

· *Governance*: the literature scan identified governance as an area where school reforms have successfully produced innovation. The literature scan identified 'effective school leadership as critical to creating a school culture conducive to innovation'. This area of innovation was specifically provided for by the policy, which allows for sponsors to draw on the expertise they require to effectively manage their school/kura, without requiring the involvement of elected parents or community members.

· *Management*: the literature scan noted that effective school leadership is critical to creating a school culture conductive to innovation. This involves shared responsibility for innovation,

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[8]   Ministry of Education, July 2012, *Developing and Implementing a New Zealand Model of Charter School,* Cabinet Paper, New Zealand.

outward looking practice, and staff feeling empowered to innovate. The policy tacitly encourages a split between PSKH management (the CEO, who is not required to be a registered teacher) and academic leadership (the role of the principal). This is intended to support innovative leadership.

· *Staffing*: the literature scan noted that teacher compensation and tenure is a key area for innovation in schooling, and that innovation can be seen in performance management, recruitment and retention, and the use of teachers without formal qualifications. It also noted the importance of teacher autonomy, capacity, and opportunity to innovate. PSKH are able to use unregistered teachers as part of their teaching staff so long as the staff are appropriately qualified in the subject matter being taught, and have the necessary skills.[9]

· *Student engagement and support for wellbeing*: this dimension wasn't identified in the literature scan but emerged as an important dimension following fieldwork with PSKH. Student engagement is identified as a key output of PSKH in the programme's Intervention Logic – students need to attend, enjoy and participate in order to learn, achieve and progress. PSKH have clear accountability measures that outline expectations around student attendance.[10]

· *Pedagogy – teaching and learning*: the literature scan identified teacher practice as an important area of innovation. A broad set of teaching and learning skills were identified that are generally associated with innovation in the classroom including independent learning, self-management, inquiry-based learning,[11] and project-based learning.[12] PSKH are expected to use novel and inventive ways to educate and engage groups of students who are not doing well in the current system – including Māori, Pasifika, students with special education needs and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

· *Curriculum*: the literature scan noted that curriculum innovation needs to be understood in the context of education aiming to lift social and economic success. Studies show that innovation doesn't necessarily involve change from an academic emphasis, rather innovations in the curriculum most typically involve a focus on particular subjects to meet the needs of students. The policy allows PSKH the flexibility to design a curriculum to meet the needs of their students and community (although it must be mapped to the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum or Te Marautanga of Aotearoa).

· *Engagement with community and parents/family/whānau*: the literature scan noted that this type of engagement is a significant factor in student achievement. Innovation relates to the type of involvement of parents, how they are communicated with and relationships are maintained. The Intervention Logic identifies the importance of sponsors and schools/kura engaging with the community and parents/family/whānau. The intention of the policy is that sponsors will design their school/kura to meet the needs of priority students, and the needs and aspirations of communities.

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[9] The number of unregistered teaching staff and staff who hold Limited Authority to Teach is specified in each PSKH's contract with the Ministry. Contracts also specify the percentage of curriculum time to be taught by Registered Teachers and Holders of Limited Authority to Teach.

[10] Each PSKH has a contract that outlines expected Performance Standards relating to rates of Unjustified Absences, Stand downs, Suspensions and Exclusions.

[11] Williamson and Payton 2009, Fawthorpe, L, September 2014, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature*, New Zealand.

[12] Williamson 2013, Fawthorpe, L, September 2014, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature*, New Zealand.

FINDINGS ABOUT INNOVATION WITHIN PSKH

This section focuses on innovation in three of the Round 1 PSKH. Visits to these three schools/kura were an important input to the analysis, but our analysis was also informed by a range of other inputs (including quarterly and annual reports provided by PSKH to the Ministry, ERO's New School Assurance Review Reports, the literature scan, and other relevant documents).

This section includes:

· a summary of innovation within PSKH (below), looking at the mix of innovations within PSKH (including the hierarchy of innovation, and linkages between innovations)

· discussion and examples of innovation in each dimension (see page 26 on).

Overview: how innovative are PSKH?

This was a key question guiding Year 1.[13] While it is too early to give a definitive answer (both the evaluation and implementation of the policy are in the early stages), the range and nature of innovations we saw within PSKH provides early evidence to support the assumption underpinning the high level theory of change: that PSKH will develop innovative solutions that match local needs while still meeting high quality standards.

· As outlined in the introduction to innovation (page 19), in the context of education innovation is less about wholescale experimentation and more about the creative application of good practice solutions in a way that is appropriate in a specific time and place. Looking across the mix of innovations and practices in PSKH this is the case – PSKH are developing innovative solutions to meet local needs.

· We found multiple examples of 'good practice' approaches that can be found in the state sector but aren't necessarily common, and practices that were specifically and intentionally adapted to better meet the needs of the schools'/kura's priority students.

PSKH were found to be particularly innovative in their governance and management, with some innovations evident in other dimensions (discussed below). We also found that PSKH staff (at both management and teaching levels) feel empowered to innovate and try new approaches for the benefit of their students, and that they are excited and energised by this opportunity.

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[13] The question informs the overarching evaluation question: What does the policy look like, and to what extent is delivery aligned with design intent?

Assessing the level of innovation

Judgements about the level of innovation within PSKH were made with respect to practices and innovation evident in other schools. This judgement was informed by:

· information about the nature and extent of innovations internationally, as captured in the literature scan

· knowledge of New Zealand schools, and teaching and learning practice (from within the evaluation team)

· a report by ERO[14] examining practices within seven low decile secondary schools (decile 5 and lower), that had achieved good results and student engagement: the purpose of the report was to share good practices that are rarely found across the wider sector.

A detailed discussion of specific innovations starts on page 26. Interestingly, a number of specific practices identified as innovative within the PSKH were also identified in the ERO report as practices seen in the seven 'successful' secondary schools – this confirms that while PSKH practices may not be wholly unique (excepting at the governance and management levels), they are still relatively uncommon across the state sector (ie ERO is trying to spread these practices wider).[15] This conclusion is supported by feedback from one of the PSKH, which concluded that their offering was not particularly innovative or unique, based on the fact that most of their approaches could also be implemented by state schools. This PSKH felt that they differed from a state school because *all* their actions are driven by their vision.

> *We're not that different – state schools could do almost all the things we do, like smaller class sizes, if they chose to, and if they prioritised the right things. (Principal and CEO)*

PSKH are innovating more in some areas than in others – the overall 'package' is important

Each of the three schools/kura had a different mix of innovations, and each emphasised some dimensions over others. Looking across the innovation dimensions reveals there are differences between the dimensions of innovation, and the way they are linked and interact is important. Figure 5 (over page) captures this and shows the dimensions as a hierarchy.

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[14]   Education Review Office, 2014, *Towards equitable outcomes in secondary schools: Good practice.*

[15]   In its overview the ERO report identified the following key factors that align with innovations within PSKH: relationships focused on the wellbeing of each student; and a clear focus on achieving positive outcomes for each student. Factors that had some alignment with PSKH included: exciting learning communities with positive cultures built over time; restorative rather than punitive practices; and excellent leadership provided by the principal.

Figure 5:   Innovation within PSKH, hierarchy and linkages between key dimensions
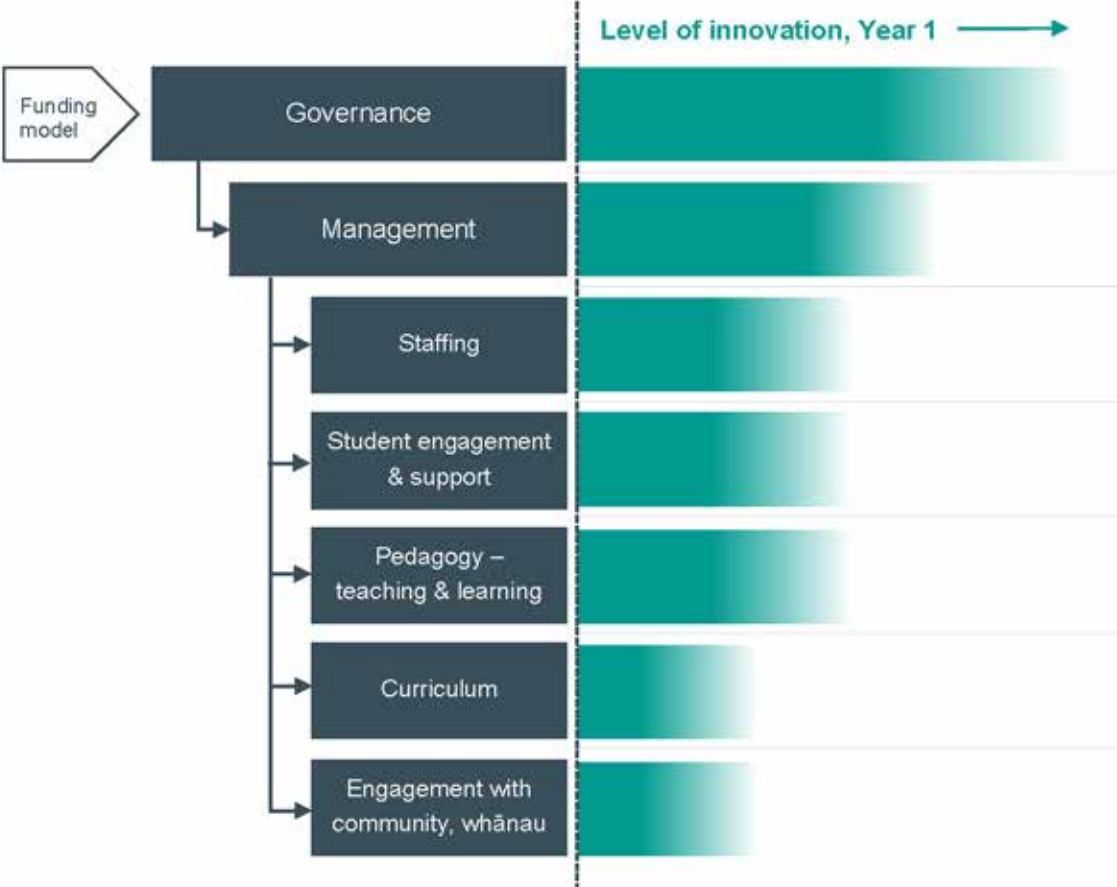
Figure 5 shows:

· the funding model on the side to indicate that it is different to the other dimensions: as a structural component it is the key enabler of all other innovations

  – in addition to being an enabler, funding is *used* in a range of ways – its flexible nature enables innovation across a number of dimensions

· the greatest levels of innovation in the first year of operation are in the dimensions at the top of the figure – governance and management

  – the key driver of innovation is found at the governance level: the sponsor's vision provides the impetus and mandate for innovation in all other areas

    § a key innovation in 'governance' was enabled by the policy – boards appointed for specific expertise without the need to involve parents or the community

  – management enacts the sponsor's vision by implementing specific innovations across the school/kura

- **§** a key innovation in 'management' was the split between administration (CEO) and academic leadership (principal)

· innovative practices and examples of best practice were evident in three dimensions driven by management:

  – *staffing*: skilled staff support and bring innovation – they are experienced (including the small number of unregistered teachers) and bring a strong focus on improving outcomes for priority students; staff share the responsibility for ongoing innovation with sponsors and management and are employed under individual contracts

  – *student engagement and support*: there is a strong focus on student wellbeing and engagement using a range of best practice approaches and innovations

  – *pedagogy, teaching and learning*: multiple examples of best practice, with approaches well matched to context and student need – while similar examples can be found in state schools, these practices are not widespread across the state sector

· the final two dimensions showed little real innovation, but many examples of good practice:

  – *curriculum*: while not particularly innovative the curriculum is being applied as intended to meet the needs of priority students

  – *engagement with community and parents/family/whānau*: this is recognised as extremely important and a range of best practice approaches are used.

Innovation by key dimension

This section discusses the eight dimensions of innovation (Figure 4 on page 20), exploring what innovations were evident in the three Round 1 PSKH for each dimension, and how sponsors are making using of the freedoms and flexibilities to design and implement innovations designed for priority students' needs. Each discussion begins with an overarching summary (in the grey box), followed by important context – why the dimension is important, and how the model intends to facilitate innovation in the dimension.

This section draws on a number of sources:

· feedback from sponsors, staff and students during visits to the three schools/kura

  – student feedback is only provided under two dimensions: student engagement and support for student wellbeing, and pedagogy – teaching and learning

  – student feedback on their experiences within PSKH provides an important perspective on innovation – all of the students talked to as part of the evaluation had previously been enrolled in state schools

  – note the student feedback is from focus groups held with a small number of students in each of the three PSKH,[16] and the feedback is not necessarily representative of all students

· ERO New School Assurance Review reports

  – where the ERO reports for the three schools/kura all commented on a particular dimension ERO's feedback across the three schools/kura is provided; where this is not the case specific quotes are used instead

· information provided to the Ministry by sponsors, including applications in response to the original RFP and annual reports

  – only limited use is made of direct quotes from these sources.

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[16] Details of the numbers of students talked to is in Table 1 on page 17.

Use of funding

The PSKH funding model is innovative in and of itself, and its flexible nature enables innovation across a number of dimensions

Importance of this dimension? This dimension wasn't identified in the literature scan but it was identified by sponsors as a key enabler of innovation – funding is shown as a key part of the 'structural framework' in the Intervention Logic for the policy.

How does the model intend to facilitate innovation in this dimension? The funding model allows sponsors to use funding flexibility to achieve their targets; they receive a payment to cover operational costs, salaries and centrally provided services.

Each of the schools/kura gave positive feedback about the funding model and the ability to make their own funding decisions, seeing it as one of the most attractive aspects of the policy. Sponsors were very aware of the need to produce positive outcomes using the funding, and that they were accountable for this. Sponsors perceived the accountability measures associated with the funding positively, and saw it as being well aligned to a business model of operation.

The bulk funding model is good for us. (CEO)

The government funding covers everything and we are guided by the Ministry about what funding objectives need to be met. (Trustee)

A big freedom we enjoy is the funding model – it means I can work out a budget and not be constrained in how I use the money to meet the school's needs. While there is accountability there are no limits to how we chose to spend the money. (CEO)

Sponsors described using the funding in a range of ways designed to meet the needs of their students. The key areas sponsors identified as being positively supported by funding flexibility were:

· recruitment of quality staff and greater numbers of staff – funding was used to pay some staff at higher than market rates, and to keep teacher-to-student ratios high

· funding particular or specialised staff positions to fill roles aligned to sponsors' visions – funding was used for teachers (including non-registered teachers) of specialist roles, and for roles such as community liaison

· removing barriers for students – funding was used to remove known barriers through the provision of uniforms, stationery, food and transport.

We have budgeted through the PSKH model to provide a uniform, to provide breakfast to those who need it, to provide the resources and stationery and to provide transport or meet transport costs. This will allow the student to focus purely on learning. (Sponsor's application)

Overall, sponsors described the flexibility inherent in the funding as the reason (ie the enabler) they were able to make nearly all of the other innovations. With the funding model primarily seen as the

enabler of other innovations, only limited detail on specific innovative uses of funding was shared by sponsors and management.

In one case study interviewees described the principles of the funding model being used across the school to ensure fair distribution of resources, asking all staff to work together to identify the best way to spend classroom-related funding.

> *We deliberately don't have any departmental budgets, there's no competition or incentive to hold onto resources. Everyone buys into the concept of a pool of money for the good of the kids. (CEO)*

Governance

Governance is highly innovative and provides the impetus and mandate for innovation in all other areas; a key innovation enabled by the policy is the use of appointed (not elected) boards

Importance of this dimension? The literature scan identified governance as an area where school reforms have successfully produced innovation. The literature scan identified 'effective school leadership as critical to creating a school culture conducive to innovation'[17].

How does the model intend to facilitate innovation in this dimension? This area of innovation was specifically provided for by the policy, which allows for sponsors to draw on the expertise they require to effectively manage their school/kura, without requiring the involvement of elected parents or community members.

The governance of the three PSKH differs markedly to that seen in state schools. Each of the three PSKH has used the freedom provided by the policy and has a board appointed by the sponsor (rather than having an elected board that includes parents or community members as state schools are required to do). PSKH board members have been selected by sponsors to cover specific skills and to provide high-level advice and support to the operation of the school/kura. Skills available to these PSKH through their boards included financial, legal, general business, educational, cultural and pastoral. None of the boards have elected parents as members.

> *The Board focuses on the vision of the [school/kura] and where it is going. It is not involved in its day to day operations … the Board is not elected. Board members have a strong capability base and comprise legal and financial expertise… they look at the growth and development of the organisation, and the overall direction. (CEO)*

> *The board is very capable, they have legal, finance, senior teachers and kaumātua – it's a lovely balance. (Ministry of Education Governance facilitator)*

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[17]   Fawthorpe, L, September 2014, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature, New Zealand.*

The appointed boards were described as using a 'business' model – focusing on supporting, improving and growing the school/kura. One of the boards oversaw multiple institutions belonging to the one sponsor – a practice that is not seen in the state system (where each school has its own elected board).

> *The board members aren't elected – it's a private commercial organisation; it's a business model and ensures the right mix of skills. (Ministry of Education Governance facilitator)*

In addition to the professional skills the members bring, a key advantage relative to state schools is the potential for stability provided. State school boards are subject to change every three years whereas PSKH board members do not have set limits to their tenure. This builds board member ownership for the implementation of the sponsor's vision and supports continuity.

The sponsors have well-articulated visions for their schools – all strongly believe that the implementation of their vision will enhance educational outcomes for students who did not fit well into their previous school or who were not succeeding academically. The sponsors' visions shape all aspects of operation, and a key role for the board is to help in the interpretation and expression of the vision.

> *The vision isn't lip service, everyone is genuine…. Everyone works together, it is not hierarchical. (Teacher)*

Strength of leadership

The literature scan identified 'effective school leadership as critical to creating a school culture conducive to innovation'. We found that each of the case study PSKH has strong leadership at the governance level. The vision of each school/kura is distinctive, reflecting the local context and/or the sponsor's history. Each of the three PSKH is building on their own experience in the provision of education, with each having existing offerings in the education space.[18] The sponsors' networks, prior experiences and wider organisational structures bring a number of advantages to the PSKH – while each individual school/kura is new, the three we talked to were all building on a history of success in other education initiatives.

> *The sponsor brings community connections, social agency connections and the support of the local council. We also help with funding – [other parts of our business] can underwrite loans for further development. (Sponsor)*

ERO's New School Assurance Review reports noted strong leadership in two of the three schools/kura[19], including good links between governance and management levels.

> *The principal's enthusiastic leadership of learning is well supported by the sponsors in their respective roles. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)*

> *Organisational leadership is effective. There is a close working relationship between the Trust's chief executive and the [principal] who leads the school. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)*

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[18]   The PSKH all differed from the sponsors' existing education offerings by providing education at a different level and/or within a different system.

[19]   Leadership was not mentioned positively or negatively in the ERO report for the third case study.

Management

Management is an area where PSKH are very innovative: administration and academic leadership is split, and principals and business managers work in complementary roles to enact sponsors' visions

Importance of this dimension? The literature scan noted that effective school leadership is critical to creating a school culture conducive to innovation. In management terms, this involves shared responsibility for innovation, outward-looking practice, and staff feeling empowered to innovate.

How does the model intend to facilitate innovation in this dimension? The policy tacitly encourages a split between PSKH management (the CEO, who is not required to be a registered teacher) and academic leadership (the role of the principal). This is intended to support innovative leadership.

Each of the three PSKH has taken advantage of the freedom provided by the policy and has both a CEO/business manager and an academic leader/principal. In each PSKH the two worked closely together, in complementary roles. This is seen as a valuable feature of PSKH, and allows each to play to their strengths. This approach is not typical in state schools and so it is identified as an important innovation.

My role is key to innovation; as CEO I am responsible for resourcing, management and budgets; Principals don't have business and property skills… [the principal] brings the academic side, I am day to day running. (CEO)

My role is to make sure that the vision doesn't disappear in the day to day routine of the Kura. (CEO)

The Sponsor and the Advisory Board are in charge of Governance and the CEO and Principal are in charge of the Management of the school. Everyone is very clear on their role and we have worked well together. (Sponsor's annual report)

In practice this means that academic leaders/principals do not undertake administrative tasks outside of those relating directly to the academic programme, allowing them to concentrate on teaching and learning.

The Principal is completely responsible for student learning – not for facilities, resources, employment issues or finances. (CEO)

The ability of academic leaders/principals to do this effectively was enhanced by the relatively small number of students and staff; this enabled them to take responsibility for a range of academic areas including:

· academic leadership and structure of programmes/departments

· curriculum and academic outcomes

- quality of teaching staff and professional development
- student wellbeing
- classroom delivery and student focus.

At the same time the CEO/business manager is able to concentrate on the effective management of the school. Their business focus means they are responsible for a number of areas traditionally led by principals, in particular management of property, finance, reporting, and health and safety. This successfully frees up the principal to concentrate on academic leadership.

The CEOs/business managers maintain a close connection with academic issues by working closely with the academic leader/principal and they know individual students well. This knowledge informs the distribution and use of funding, ensuring it is used in a responsive and flexible manner with the aim of meeting the school's/kura's targets.

Staffing

Skilled staff support and bring innovation – they are experienced (including the small number of unregistered teachers) and bring a strong focus on improving outcomes for priority students; staff share the responsibility for ongoing innovation with sponsors and management and are employed under individual contracts

Importance of this dimension? The literature scan noted that teacher compensation and tenure is a key area for innovation in schooling, and that innovation can be seen in performance management, recruitment and retention, and the use of teachers without formal qualifications. It also noted the importance of teacher autonomy, capacity, and opportunity to innovate.

How does the model intend to facilitate innovation in this dimension? PSKH are able to use unregistered teachers as part of their teaching staff so long as the staff are appropriately qualified in the subject matter being taught, and have the necessary skills.[20]

Staff experience and skill

Each school/kura endeavoured to employ the highest quality staff possible and quality staff were identified as vital to achieving sponsors' visions. As part of this, the three PSKH have all taken advantage of the ability to use unregistered teachers to a limited extent. All three have a small number of unregistered teachers on staff – in each case the unregistered teachers are responsible for

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[20] The number of unregistered teaching staff and staff who hold Limited Authority to Teach is specified in each PSKH's contract with the Ministry. Contracts also specify the percentage of curriculum time to be taught by Registered Teachers and Holders of Limited Authority to Teach.

specialised subjects related to the vision of the school. The schools/kura place a high value on the skills their unregistered teachers bring to the PSKH. All brought depth of experience and were seen as adding richness to the overall mix of staff skills, including the ability to work with priority students.

> *The PSKH will have the benefit of [unregistered staff with experience in particular subject areas]… and the registered teachers… it is this mix of staff and leadership that will provide a new and innovative mix of tuition. (Sponsor's application)*

> *[Unregistered teacher] brings a wider expertise and knowledge [of a specialised subject] that wouldn't otherwise be available. (Principal)*

> *…the 3 non-registered teaching staff have been appointed for their specific experience and expertise in [subject A, B and C]. (ERO New School Assurance Review)*

While unregistered staff are used to teach specified subject areas, they are typically supported by registered teachers who provide them with practical guidance around things like classroom management and record keeping. Unregistered teachers were not used in any core subjects, such as literacy and numeracy.

> *[Subjects related to vision] have unregistered teachers – they have appropriate qualifications and credibility… we don't plan to change this balance and wouldn't use them in other subjects. (CEO)*

> *We will also have the challenge of up skilling our entire staff. The registered teachers will be able to pass on knowledge to the [unregistered] tutors regarding their subject matter and classroom methods, while the [unregistered] tutors can pass on their knowledge… and experiences in dealing with priority students. (Sponsor's application)*

Table 2:   Use of unregistered teachers at PSKH, 2014

	School/kura 1	School/kura 2	School/kura 3
Percentage of teaching staff who are registered teachers, or have Limited Authority to Teach	67%	83%	95%
Percentage of the curriculum taught by registered teachers, or teachers with Limited Authority to Teach	67%	60%	80%

Source: Individual PSKH contracts.

Table 2 shows 67-95% of teaching staff in each of the three PSKH is comprised of teachers who are registered or have Limited Authority to Teach, while the proportion of the curriculum they teach is 60% to 80%. All teaching staff (registered and non-registered) appeared to be experienced and well regarded – sponsors and management told us they had aimed to secure the highest calibre staff possible, and two out of three ERO New School Assurance Reviews noted that staff had been recruited for their experience and expertise (no comment was made in the third report).

All three sponsors had specifically sought staff who they believed would support their vision – recruitment focused on teaching expertise, and a desire to improve outcomes for priority students. One school had recruited their staff primarily through their own networks – seeking out staff they already knew and believed would be a good fit. They intend to keep the ratio of registered to non-registered teachers high as the use of registered teachers is seen as important to demonstrating the credibility of the school/kura to parents.

We were looking for teachers with academic qualifications [and] not unregistered teachers. They had to be passionate about their subject and have good teaching experience. (CEO)

We have been able to attract highly experienced teachers, they all have a minimum of eight years experience. (Principal)

All three schools/kura were pleased with the quality of the staff they had managed to recruit, noting this had been particularly challenging due to the short time available for recruitment.

Staff role in innovation

The literature scan identified a link between innovation and teacher autonomy, capacity and motivation. While leadership in each of the PSKH is owned by a strong CEO–principal partnership, each PSKH also had expectations for its staff to take leadership roles and act autonomously. In each case, distributed leadership was facilitated by a relatively flat structure made possible by the relatively small size of their rolls.

We want teachers to be innovative in the classroom too – lessons should be well planned and interesting. (CEO)

While not an innovation in itself (there are state schools of similar size and state schools where leadership is distributed in this way), expectations that staff shared responsibility for innovation led to a feeling of empowerment and excitement amongst staff, and widespread ownership of innovation across staff. There were expectations for staff to show leadership in their own academic area, and for regular staff reflections, with the aim of continually improving teaching and challenging their own and each other's practice. Because of this, it is identified as an important enabler of innovation.[21]

We teachers reflect all the time, plus it is formally timetabled for Friday afternoons. [The principal] brings us all together, he's very good at this. (Teacher)

More and more the vision is becoming a reality – as teachers with different backgrounds and experience find ways to work together… we have a strong culture and a holistic focus. (Teacher)

It's like working in a start-up, we're constantly encouraged to give feedback. (Teacher)

We have very collaborative staff – every day starts with problem and information sharing. (Principal)

Staff conditions and professional development

Rather than being covered by terms and conditions based on collective agreements, teaching staff at each school have individual employment contracts. Pay rates vary – one paid higher than the state sector while the other two were equivalent to the state sector. Individual contracts are seen as an important enabler of innovation – rather than being set by collective conditions the schools/kura expect teachers to work more hours over a year than would be typical in the state sector, with less holidays and less sick leave. There were specific expectations that non-teaching time (ie school holidays) should be used for ongoing professional development, and to focus on curriculum and lesson

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[21] See Kirkland and Sutch 2009, Leithwood et al 2004, cited in Fawthorpe, L, September 2014, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature,* New Zealand.

planning. In one school, teachers are expected to not only be on site, but to be available for students outside set teaching hours.

Ongoing professional development was identified by PSKH leadership as an important enabler for staff innovation – sponsors want staff to be exposed to new ideas, to be open to trying new approaches, and to maintain a connection with the wider teaching profession. Professional development for staff was valued because it was believed to have a direct link to improving outcomes for students.

> *We have a strong emphasis on professional development – staff get one week holiday every term and the second week is spent at [school/kura] on professional development. (Principal)*

> *Good progress has been made in the development of performance appraisal systems to provide accountability, guide teacher development and enable teachers to maintain their registration. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)*

In each school professional development was primarily limited to internal opportunities with staff learning from each other – opportunities to do this were actively supported with time set aside for the purpose. There was a perception that opportunities to participate in external professional development opportunities were limited by participating state school staff not wanting to interact with PSKH staff (eg 'clusters' of state teachers that meet to focus on particular areas of practice or curriculum). Some individual staff members maintain their own professional networks (with other individual teachers, not groups) for professional support.

Staff reasons for working at the school/kura

Staff reported a range of reasons they had chosen to teach in a PSKH. Both management and teaching staff noted the newness of PSKH and the fact they sat outside the state system was a potential barrier to some staff. This included some staff now employed in a PSKH who had been initially wary of working at a PSKH. Ultimately staff had chosen to work at a PSKH for positive reasons, and each PSKH had managed to recruit enthusiastic and motivated staff. Staff reasons for working at the PSKH included:

· more time to focus on quality teaching and learning

> *We trim back teacher responsibilities – they plan, assess, report and teach – they can focus on teaching and aren't required to do a lot of other things… we take away as much admin as possible. (CEO)*

· the chance to make a difference and be involved in an exciting new approach

> *The vision appealed – they value each student and recognise where they are at socially, emotionally and academically. I liked the passionate way [the principal] talked about the school vision. (Teacher)*

> *I'm here because it's a natural progression… I'm learning and I'm 60, it's great. I feel privileged to bring my experience into this at this stage of my career – it suits my skill set. (Teacher)*

– for some highly experienced staff the change to such a new environment was proving difficult and management were having to support them through this change

> *Teachers have to think about their practice and how it fits into the approach and vision of the [school/kura]. This can be hard for some of them. (Principal)*

The learning environment is a learning curve for all [teachers] – we're all still adjusting. (Teacher)

· being able to focus on achievement for priority students

I'm loving my new role, it's a challenge for me. I love not having to justify why we have Māori initiatives. (Teacher)

The school is conducive to Māori achievement and aligns with my teaching philosophy. (Teacher)

We can concentrate on the kids and not the politics. We are here for the right reasons. (Teacher)

I [used to teach] scholarship kids, [I moved because] I wanted the greater challenge these kids present. (Teacher)

Student engagement and support for student wellbeing

Schools/kura have a strong focus on student wellbeing and work hard to keep them engaged – a range of good, innovative practices are used

Importance of this dimension? This dimension wasn't identified in the literature scan but emerged as an important dimension following fieldwork with PSKH. Student engagement is identified as a key output of PSKH in the programme's Intervention Logic – students need to attend, enjoy and participate in order to learn, achieve and progress.

How does the model intend to facilitate innovation in this dimension? PSKH have clear accountability measures that outline clear expectations around student attendance.[22]

Each of the PSKH identified this dimension as important to their overall success – all are working hard to understand the needs and aspirations of individual students, and to match their efforts accordingly. Sponsors and management told us that the relatively small school/kura rolls, and small class sizes enable staff to build and maintain close relationships with students. The students we talked to in focus groups also highlighted the importance of small school roles and class sizes in providing a positive environment and relationships.

I like the focus on the individual. (Student)

There's a good class–teacher ratio. (Student)

The small classes are good, it means better opportunities for us. (Student)

We get to know each other and our teachers well. (Student)

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[22] Each PSKH has a contract that outlines expected Performance Standards relating to rates of Unjustified Absences, Stand downs, Suspensions and Exclusions.

Feedback in ERO's New School Assurance Review reports for the three schools/kura indicated that good progress is being made in this dimension, and that students are engaged in their schooling. The students we talked to in focus groups were all highly engaged and agreed they were more motivated at their new school/kura than they had previously been. On the whole they were enjoying learning and achieving and all had high aspirations for the future. In further support of high levels of engagement, school staff and ERO both reported high levels of attendance by students.

> *There is no truancy and little lateness. (Teacher)*

> *Student attendance figures are very good and reflect students' engagement in the school. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)*

> *Students' commitment to the school is evident in their high attendance rates. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)*

Many of the students we talked to had high rates of unjustified absences at their old schools/kura, and all reported good attendance at their new PSKH.

> *I didn't like my old school and though I only lived 5 minutes away I still didn't show up. I have to get up at 6am to get here – that shows you how much I love coming here.*

> *I came for the level of discipline, I wasn't turning up to classes – here you want to go to class – the environment is really fun.*

Engagement and wellbeing innovations

Student engagement and wellbeing innovations at the three PSKH were evident in three main areas.

· *Removal of barriers*: this is an important innovation, identified by the PSKH as key to supporting their students. Sponsors set aside funds to support this (the flexibility of the funding model allows them to do this).

  – Each of the PSKH has identified a range of barriers that can affect student attendance and engagement; as a result they fully cover the costs of school uniforms, food and stationery to ensure all their students have full access to the basics.[23]

    > *We provide a uniform and books for students. This ensures that all students are seen in the school on an equal footing and that all background barriers to learning are removed. (CEO)*

    > *We remove the barriers and inequalities of home. Everyone is treated the same. (Principal)*

    > *We don't have to pay for anything. (Student)*

    > *Lots is organised for us. All the books are left in the classroom so you can't forget them. (Student)*

  – One school/kura is setting up a charitable trust to ensure they can continue to support students by removing barriers as their roll grows in future.

· *High expectations for student attendance and achievement that are continually and directly reinforced to students*: this is an innovation for this group of students, relative to their

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[23] Note that under the policy none of the schools/kura are able to charge fees for attendance.

backgrounds and experiences in other schools (students told us that they had not had these expectations communicated to them in their previous schools).

- Each PSKH sends clear, consistent messages to both students and whānau about the requirement to attend school/kura every day.

- Each of the PSKH continually reinforce high achievement expectations for their students, and all staff communicate consistent positive messages.

    Students come with a 'I can't do…' mentality, we teach them never to give up and that we are on their team all the way; nothing comes for free and they have to work hard. (Principal)

    Everyone has high expectations for the students. They are motivated, they are in safe surroundings and they like being here. There are no problems with attendance – high expectations are normalised. (Teacher)

    School leaders and teachers are determined that students will [achieve] to enable entry into suitable careers or future study. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

    The teachers want us to succeed. Anything is possible – they go the extra yards, like giving up their own lunch time. (Student)

    They have high expectations of us and encourage us to achieve. (Student)

    Now I realise the importance of NCEA. I'm aiming for 'Excellence', before [at previous school/kura] it was just about passing. (Student)

- One of the three schools/kura took a much stronger approach to discipline than is commonly seen in the state sector; they believe this is an important innovation that works as it provides very clear boundaries for the students. The Principal emphasised that discipline is combined with an understanding of (and compassion for) students' needs.

    We aim to combine and get the right balance of compassion and empathy, and moderate [discipline]. (Principal)

· *Pastoral care*: the schools/kura have adopted good practices to support the well-being of their students.

- The three PSKH use a range of different approaches, including mentoring support (separate to academic support) for all students; access to additional expertise and support (either in the school or externally) for specific issues; and the fostering of strong inter-student connections.

    Students speak of their sense of belonging and personal achievement. They have good access to a trained counsellor and external support networks. School leaders monitor student wellbeing and achievement carefully. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

    Students interviewed were very positive about their experiences… provision for pastoral care is made through [staff member] and a part time counsellor. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

    There is a strong support system for students who are not focused on their learning or have behavioural issues. (Principal)

    [The principal also] has a key responsibility for pastoral care, placing an emphasis on identity, place and skills… the corporate staff also have mentoring roles with students. (CEO)

The teachers care and are like parents to us, they treat us like we're their kids but we have to give something back and focus too. (Student)

The teachers are like parents – they'll do anything for you. They'll hunt for you, push you. (Student)

It's family oriented, it's not just about looking after yourself – you can't let others down. (Student)

The students we talked to also made frequent comments about the safety of the environment and the lack of bullying.

There's no bullying, it's like family. (Student)

We know each other like a family – we feel safe. (Student)

I feel safe here, nobody bullies me. (Student)

While examples of all these things can be found in the state sector, the clearly articulated intentions of these efforts, combined with the comprehensive mix of supports and cohesiveness of overall approaches, mean the PSKH are relatively innovative in this space. A report by ERO[24] identified similar practices in a small number of low decile[25] state secondary schools, including the importance of positive relationships with students, and having high expectations for their success.

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[24]   Education Review Office, May 2014 *Towards equitable outcomes in secondary schools: Good practice,* New Zealand. This report is discussed at the beginning of the Findings section, page 22).

[25]   Decile 5 and lower, note that PSKH performance and funding is benchmarked to decile 3 schools.

Pedagogy – teaching and learning

> Multiple examples of 'best practice', with approaches well matched to context and student need – while similar examples can be found in some state schools, these practices are not widespread across the state sector

Importance of this dimension? The literature scan identified teacher practice as an important area of innovation. A broad set of teaching and learning skills were identified that are generally associated with innovation in the classroom, including independent learning, self-management, inquiry-based learning,[26] and project-based learning.[27]

How does the model intend to facilitate innovation in this dimension? PSKH are expected to use novel and inventive ways to educate and engage groups of students who are not doing well in the current system – including Māori, Pasifika, students with special education needs and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Diverse pedagogies

Each of the three PSKH took a different approach to 'within-classroom' innovation:

- one had predominately self-directed/independent learning and used project-based or inquiry learning
- one mixed independent learning with direction, and used project-based or inquiry learning
- one used a fully instructional/directional style of instruction and used subject-based learning.

All three emphasised the importance of individual learning plans, and the ability of students to advance at their own pace (schools/kura had mixed subjects/classes according to ability rather than age). The ability to do this was supported by the flexibility allowed within the school day – timetables, class length and duration of school day were all seen as tools to allow teaching and learning to be matched to the needs of students.

Students use their independent study time well and are developing useful skills in working together and managing their own learning… The school day is well paced and purposeful. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

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[26]   Williamson and Payton 2009, cited in Fawthorpe, L, September 2014, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature*, New Zealand.

[27]   Williamson 2013, cited in Fawthorpe, L, September 2014, *Recognising innovation in schools – a scan of the literature*, New Zealand.

Progress and achievement are very closely monitored and data enables teachers to develop and adapt individual learning plans for students. Students requiring additional support are quickly identified. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

One of the key strategy [sic] for the [school/kura] is the development of Individual Education Plans (IEP) for all students … [and] a flexible learning day to allow for greater involvement and less rush…(Sponsor's application)

While the schools/kura emphasised the value of individual learning plans, ERO identified a particular challenge for the schools/kura in achieving this. All three ERO New School Assurance Review Reports identified challenges for the schools/kura around using and collecting student achievement data. This included difficulty accessing robust data from students' previous schools, and the ability to use diagnostic tools and data to track student progress to inform individual student plans.

Accessing worthwhile data about student achievement on entry has been challenging. Teachers are developing expertise in using diagnostic assessment tools that will support them to make judgements about student achievement. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

Teaching staff have developed internal, school-based assessment tools to identify students' ability in [literacy and numeracy] upon entry to the school. The school could consider gathering additional baseline data through standardised assessment tools. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

Teachers are aware of the need to improve their written reporting so that it provides helpful feedback and pointers about the way ahead [for students]… Using available data to inquire into practice will provide a sound foundation for developing self review. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

Strong link between pedagogy and vision

The pedagogy and approach to teaching and learning in each school/kura was strongly driven by the sponsor's vision and there was a well-articulated linkage between teaching practice and the needs of their students. The differences in teaching approaches demonstrate that the sponsors' visions encourage and support innovation within the classroom.

The aim is to build a school that fits around the students, not one where the students have to fit into the school. (CEO)

Our size is a critical element of our teaching and learning model … it allows the principal and teachers to get to know every student and their parents really well and to keep them on track. (CEO)

Our teaching style wouldn't suit everybody, but it's perfect for our students – they respond to it really well. (CEO)

We have a different approach to teaching – the traditional way to teach was to talk to the students from the front of the class, [here], with some guidance, students do their own research and consolidate their own learning. (Teacher)

The literature scan concluded that innovation within a school needs to be intentional, undertaken to support a change in practice and with the aim of creating value (see page 19). The schools'/kura's approaches to pedagogy, teaching and learning fulfil these criteria. While the actual teaching practices and classroom structures are not unique in and of themselves, they are relatively uncommon in similar

state schools[28] and offer a 'novel' alternative to the students' parents/family/whānau, over and above what these students had previously been offered. As such, the schools'/kura's teaching and learning practices provide good examples of best practice in matching pedagogy to student need, but do not necessarily demonstrate entirely new or unknown practices.

> *We're different but the same – we had to start with what we know, our learning theory is still evolving. A lot of the teaching and content is similar [to state schools] because it's still early days. We know where we're heading. (Teacher)*

A common pattern across each of the schools/kura was a willingness to experiment and continuously improve, aiming to optimise the match between teaching and learning, and students' needs.

> *We're challenging teachers to think about how they teach and turn learning into research and writing. It also takes time for students to get their heads around the concepts. We're creating new pedagogy, we need to work out how to put it into practice. (CEO)*

Students' feedback related to pedagogy, teaching and learning

The students we talked to in focus groups recognised the way they were taught and were learning was significantly different to their previous school/kura – on the whole they saw these differences as positive, and strongly linked to helping them improve their performance. Students were clear their achievement was much improved at the PSKH, relative to their previous school. The students we talked to gave the following feedback:

· style of instruction

> *I like the project-based curriculum.*

> *The one hour a day we get for independent study is good.*

> *I like the way we learn – it's self-directed. It's better than being in a traditional class.*

> *Instead of cramming over an hour like at my last school, we learn over time.*

> *There's no time for messing about in class – it's given me a big maturity boost. It was time to grow up.*

> *I have to be self-disciplined – which is hard – but I'm proud of myself when I complete my work and do it well.*

· how well their own individual needs are catered for

> *The individualised, personalised learning is different.*

> *We do all our academic work in the morning – it's good, now I look forward to it.*

> *Individual planning is good.*

> *We stay on top of our assignments by prioritising and focusing on one topic at a time. The plan makes it very clear what you should be doing to get to your goal.*

> *It's a totally different approach – we get to do the subjects we want to do.*

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[28] See the Education Review Office's (ERO) 2014 report *Towards equitable outcomes in secondary schools: Good practice* for examples in the state sector. This report is discussed in the Overview section starting on page 22.

- teaching structures or support to ensure success

> *We have a homework club after school if we want to use it – it's good.*

> *After school tutorials are good.*

The majority of students in the focus groups loved the changes. Alongside these students a small number reported difficulty with the changes in pedagogy and teaching from their previous school/kura. At one of the PSKH the female students had found the changes harder to adapt to than the male students.

> *The transition was hard – it's very rewarding now.*

> *I would change some things – a different teacher for each subject doesn't feel efficient, and more secluded areas for individual learning would be good. It is better than my old school though… I like some of the old and some of the new.*

> *Having to work individually was hard at the beginning.*

> *I'm not sure if we are better off, but the freedom is good.*

Curriculum

Little innovation is evident in this dimension, but there is evidence that the curriculum is being appropriately applied and focused to meet the needs of students

Importance of this dimension? The literature scan noted that curriculum innovation needs to be understood in the context of education aiming to lift social and economic success. Studies show that innovation doesn't necessarily involve change from an academic emphasis, rather innovations in the curriculum most typically involve a focus on particular subjects to meet the needs of students.

How does the model intend to facilitate innovation in this dimension? The policy allows PSKH the flexibility to design a curriculum to meet the needs of their students and community (although it must be mapped to the principles of the New Zealand Curriculum or Te Marautanga o Aotearoa).

All of the PSKH we talked to elected to use the New Zealand Curriculum or Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. This aligns with the design intention of the two curricula: they provide a broad framework for schools to implement in response to local needs. Given this flexibility and the findings of the literature scan, it is not surprising the schools/kura are using these existing curricula. The literature scan noted the preference of parents for academic schooling using a tested or known curriculum, and that in this context school-level innovation is most likely to manifest through a clear focus on particular or specialised subjects.

> *We stuck with the [New Zealand] Curriculum because credibility is important. Parents want quality education. (CEO)*

ERO's national evaluation reports identify the need to develop and manage our curricula in a way that is responsive to our students. Teachers and leaders are encouraged to "understand the permissive native and intent of the New Zealand Curriculum". Implementation will ensure inclusion of all principles of the curriculum… (Sponsor's application)

ERO provided positive feedback on the way the curriculum is being implemented in each of the three schools, in their New School Assurance Review reports.

The school curriculum is based on the vision, values and principles of the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa…Good use is made of external providers to ensure breadth in the curriculum… School leaders are aware of the need to provide a curriculum that is engaging for learners and provides for individual extension and challenge. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

The school curriculum, and teaching and learning practices, clearly reflect the sponsor's philosophy and are aligned with values and key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

The school curriculum and teaching and learning practices clearly reflect the sponsor's vision and philosophy. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

Two of the three schools/kura have opted to specialise in particular subjects and express a strong link between the subjects they offer and their sponsor's vision – these subjects are compulsory and are offered as the sponsor believes they will contribute to student achievement.

The curriculum will make certain subjects compulsory as we feel this is critical to improving educational outcomes. (Sponsor's application)

The curriculum has been chosen to better develop students, and for better achievement. (Principal)

The flexibility is great – we have changed the syllabus hugely and all wrote our own workbooks. The curriculum is exactly the same though, it's not dumbed down. (Teacher)

Teaching is mainly to the New Zealand Curriculum but we thread [specified] culture and knowledge across all curriculum areas. (CEO)

All three schools/kura emphasised the need to get the basics of literacy and numeracy in place, rather than offering a wide range of subjects. One of the schools/kura focused on literacy and numeracy within specialised English and mathematics classes, while the other two incorporated literacy and numeracy lessons across learning areas (using project-based learning). One of the schools/kura had recently amended its subject offering to better meet the needs of their students.

Priority learners in our experience face the biggest difficulties to their learning because of poor basic numeracy and literacy skills… by forcing our students to tackle this problem rather than avoid it… we give them the best chance of success. (Sponsor's application)

We initially thought most kids would go down the vocational route, but as more realise they can achieve, more want to go on… we have had to change the curriculum slightly to accommodate kids who want to change pathways. (Principal)

Wide choices aren't appropriate until the basics of literacy and numeracy are achieved. (Principal)

Schools/kura operating at the secondary level felt some constraints were imposed by having to fit within the NCEA framework – rather than being completely innovative, the schools/kura needed to ensure students would be able to achieve sufficient NCEA credits.

The degree to which we can innovate is constrained by NCEA – we innovate around the time we spend and what we can control. (Teacher)

Students need to judge their own work and whether it's good enough to hand in – they ask themselves the question 'is it NCEA quality?' (Teacher)

One of the secondary schools/kura ensured students achieved 80 NCEA credits internally before sitting any external exams. The aim of this was to reduce unnecessary stress for the students and to allow them to concentrate on improving their qualification when sitting external exams (ie to aim for merit or excellence).

The schools/kura believe they take additional responsibility for helping students to cover the curriculum (relative to the way staff had worked in previous schools) – there is an expectation that all work will be completed during the school day rather than allowing students to leave tasks unfinished. Students can stay until work is finished (one school/kura has an explicit 'no homework' policy).

Engagement with community and parents/family/whānau

Schools/kura recognise the importance of this and are generally following best practice

Importance of this dimension? The literature scan noted this type of engagement is a significant factor in student achievement. Innovation relates to the type of involvement of parents/family/whānau, how they are communicated with and relationships are maintained. The Intervention Logic identifies the importance of sponsors and schools/kura engaging with the community and parents/family/whānau.

How does the model intend to facilitate innovation in this dimension? The intention of the policy is that sponsors will design their school/kura to meet the needs of priority students, and the needs and aspirations of communities.

Due to their unique nature – being neither a state or private school – and their newness, the three PSKH have all developed networks with the wider community to fill gaps in what they are able to do or offer (due to limited facilities), and to build and maintain positive relationships. This includes engagement with:

· educational organisations/associations for access to: professional development, expansion of subject choices (eg institutes of technology and polytechnics)

· other schools for access to facilities

· community organisations/public agencies (eg councils, police) for access to: sport/recreation; careers guidance; social, physical and mental health support

· local businesses to maintain positive relationships

- iwi organisations/marae to understand aspirations for education.

The wider community facilities become a part of the school learning environment. (CEO)

Our relationships with local businesses and tertiary providers give expertise, and helps students get out into the real world, and mix with other levels of learning. (Principal)

The three schools/kura are not doing anything particularly innovative in their interactions with community and parents/family/whānau, but all are following good practice. In particular, strong relationships with parents/family/whānau are identified by all three schools/kura as essential to student success. All three schools make a big effort to welcome parents/family/whānau to the school/kura, and aim for good communication about the school/kura in general and about individual students in particular. Communications and contact include a mix of regular newsletters, formal interviews/feedback sessions, prizegivings, social events, and the use of social media.

Parents and caregivers are welcomed into the school at any time and to sit in on class teaching. (Principal)

Our parents feel safe and a part of the school environment – it is a learning environment for all. (Principal)

We keep [parents/family/whānau] properly informed, we don't hide anything about behaviour or performance; right from the orientation evening before sign up we share everything – warts and all. (Principal)

[We] recently conducted a survey of parents which allowed the school to collect feedback from parents and also allowed for parents to have their say… the school communicates and receives feedback from parents through regular emails… monthly newsletters … and information posted on our facebook page and website. (Sponsor's annual report)

ERO's New School Assurance Review Reports confirm the schools/kura are using good practice to engage parents/family/whānau (rather than using overly innovative practices).

Good use is made of restorative practices and contact with families when students are at risk… Good systems and practices are in place to include parents in students' learning. Reports to parents about student achievement are clear and concise… (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

A whānau advisory group is being developed and is a worthwhile initiative to allow parents to have increased input into the school… Reports to parents on students' progress acknowledge effort and achievement in the completion of projects, as well as providing feedback on students' particular skills and interests. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

The strength of the process for reporting to parents/whānau lies in the emphasis placed on meeting face-to-face to discuss all matters involving the learners, including their progress and achievement. There is good attendance at parents/whānau meetings. (ERO New School Assurance Review Report)

The schools/kura do not have selection criteria for students and (if they have not filled their maximum roll) they are required to accept students who wish to attend. However, two of the three schools/kura communicate very explicit expectations to parents/family/whānau that they will need to be highly involved in their child's education, expected to actively participate in their child's individual learning plan, and any disciplinary or social issues. The two schools described this as a partnership, and that they couldn't achieve success for students without the full support of parents/family/whānau. They had experienced some difficulties with achieving full engagement of all parents/family/whānau but were

continuing to prioritise this as an important objective. In practice it is likely this may result in some families or students choosing not to enrol, though there is no evidence on this either way.

> *We take a triad approach: the student, parent or caregiver AND the school are all involved in decision making for each kid. (Principal)*

> *All students AND their whānau are interviewed [before enrolment] – if they want to attend and are going to make an effort then this is the [school/kura] for them. Their whānau have to be involved – we're not offering an easy route. (CEO)*

One school/kura had used funding for a specific role that is tasked with optimising the school's/kura's connection with the community and with helping students' parents/family/whānau access support. This position is not commonly seen in the state sector; as such, this was the clearest innovation we saw in this dimension.

> *We have a Community Liaison Manager who is a trained and experienced Social Worker. He focuses on engaging the community to support the school and the families. He also develops contacts with the community. (CEO)*

CONCLUSIONS

What does the policy look like, and to what extent is delivery aligned with design intent?

Phase 1 of the evaluation examined this evaluation question with a particular focus on innovation in three case study schools/kura from Round 1. Both the evaluation and the implementation of the policy are in the early stages – this report provides feedback on the first year of PSKH operation only.

The policy includes elements designed to enable innovation – we saw clear indications the three case study PSKH were innovating in these areas: using funding flexibly, appointing governance boards to access specific skills, and splitting their management functions into administration and academic leadership. Innovation in these dimensions supports emergent innovations in other dimensions, with the three case study schools/kura developing innovative educational provision for students who have been under-served by the education system.

As the evaluation progresses we will continue to focus on innovation, to see if and how it grows over time, and across dimensions, in response to students' needs and aspirations. As part of this, we will examine the drivers of innovation. There are some early signs that the case study schools/kura are developing innovative educational provision for their students. It will be critical to see to what extent innovation grows in coming years, and as schools learn how best to respond to students' needs and aspirations. The extent that PSKH continue to innovate may also depend on the capability and capacity of sponsors, management and staff to drive innovation forward. The accountability framework is also a significant lever for continuous improvement.

In Year 1 sponsors were focused on the challenge of implementing a new model of education; coming years may provide the opportunity for sponsors and staff to innovate more widely as the schools/kura become established. Currently PSKH staff (at both management and teaching levels) feel empowered to innovate and try new approaches for the benefit of their students, and are excited and energised by this opportunity.

Emerging themes: to what extent are conditions for successful delivery of the policy in place?

One of the key evaluation questions asks whether conditions for successful delivery of the policy are in place. While this was not the specific focus of this first phase of the evaluation, a number of early themes have emerged.

Importantly, all three sponsors had a strong drive to provide a valid alternative to the current system, for students and whānau who they thought were not being well served. This drive pre-dated the policy, and the PSKH policy is credited by the three case study schools/kura as providing them with the opportunity to finally implement their individual visions.

Before [school/kura] commenced, the Trust had been working with the Ministry of Education over an 18 month period to set up a Special Character school. We are really lucky to have got this opportunity – the flexibility and funding suited our plans. (Sponsor)

We wanted to set up a [PSKH] … funding was getting harder to get, we had high demand and were turning people away. (Sponsor)

We always had the dream to expand to kids without the money to access private schooling. The [PSKH] policy provided an opportunity to do this. (Sponsor)

In each case the sponsor was building on a history of providing services to similar groups and the policy allowed them to expand their offering – something they had all been planning to do. Despite this the sponsors didn't see themselves as unfairly benefitting from the policy (when they had already been planning to open a school); rather the policy enabled them to implement their vision without the compromises they felt would have been required if they worked within the state system.

In particular the sponsors valued the opportunity to provide a 'full' solution, or truly integrated approach – having the freedom to use the funding model to focus all aspects of the school/kura on the needs of priority students. In the absence of a counterfactual, it is not possible to know whether the sponsor could only have provided a less 'full' solution without the funding. However, school/kura staff who had previously worked in state schools consistently told us that things were different in a PSKH, and they thought that great results were possible. In their view, the flexibility inherent in the policy allowed a cohesiveness and coordination across all aspects of the PSKH. Everything was driven by the sponsor's vision and all actions and decisions were clearly linked to achieving improved outcomes for priority students.

The policy provides freedom to create a new pedagogy; we can provide flexibility in the curriculum and teaching. The funding allows for innovation. (CEO)

We have an edge that state schools don't have. We can do anything we like. (Teacher)

While the focus of sponsors was on the provision of positive opportunities for priority students, they noted the exclusivity of this focus (compared to decile 3 schools in the state sector who cater for a mix of students) created an additional challenge for PSKH. All three case study schools/kura perceive their students have lower levels of numeracy and literacy than in a typical decile 3 school. All three believed this was exacerbated by students with low literacy and/or numeracy and/or poor engagement being encouraged to enrol in the PSKH. For example:

Other schools are funnelling their 'problem' students to our school – that's not really fair. (Teacher)

The PSKH also noted that students presenting with low literacy and numeracy levels meant accountability measures related to achievement were likely to be challenging, as these students had additional ground to cover. Note some sponsors are attempting to address this through offering education alternatives for a range of age groups, to prevent priority students falling behind in literacy and numeracy.

Emerging themes in the evaluation around the current conditions for supporting success include:

· small size of school rolls and/or class sizes combined with a focus on the individual student

   – schools/kura believe they are achieving good results for their students (in terms of both engagement and achievement) through quality relationships with individual students and

their parents/family/whānau, and individualised academic support – this is dependent on low ratios between students and teaching staff, and a relatively small size overall to allow management and sponsors to also maintain close connections with their students and their parents/family/whanau

*Staff meetings reflect on the learning of **each** student. Students are known as learners **and** individuals. (Principal)*

– quality pastoral care is also facilitated by small rolls

– the Ministry expects school/kura rolls to grow to the maximum capacity each PSKH is funded for; maintaining support for students through this expansion will present a challenge to PSKH

Our success is related to our size – we don't want to grow our roll too high. (Principal)

· strong visions of individual sponsors

– the sponsors are using principles from business to succeed: they are taking personal responsibility for the success of their school/kura and are determined to succeed; each is aiming for the best possible results and is aware they are operating in an environment of high scrutiny

– sponsors' visions are driving all aspects of operation: schools/kura are specially intended to meet the needs of a particular demographic

This works for our kids – it wouldn't work for kids in the middle to upper end of the bell curve, they don't need it. (Principal)

· sponsors' history and capability

– each sponsor is building on a history of success in education – they were able to get underway using networks and trusted and capable staff (though new staff were also employed), and had relevant, transferable knowledge of finance, employment, teaching and learning, and their community

[Summary of relevant experience]: 13 years of experience delivering the New Zealand Curriculum… experience in delivering a programme for [agency] all of which are exactly the priority learners that a PSKH is to target. (Sponsor's application)

The motivation for this project comes from successful learning models of [our] past… the lessons we have learnt from these models give us the best indication of the type of framework we need to create a lasting legacy for [target group] achievement. (Sponsor's application)

Freedoms and flexibility are a double edged sword – you need the capability to do stuff the Ministry usually support you with; we are lucky – we are well placed as we already have HR, systems and contracting. (CEO)

I've been running [Trust for x years]… we've learnt lessons about how to teach different kids, for those that mainstream schools weren't working for… we specifically chose this demographic as that is who we have experience with. (CEO)

· opportunity and freedoms provided by the policy and funding

- the fact that each school/kura is new was an important factor supporting the implementation of sponsors' visions; vision and direction is clearly communicated to all staff and they are clear about what they have 'signed up' for – there is no need to change practice or manage a process of change (as would be the case in an existing school/kura)

- the freedoms provided by the funding model and a determination to succeed have created conditions conducive to innovation, including an 'institutional space for risk taking' – sponsors and staff view this as an exciting opportunity and feel empowered to continually test and improve approaches

- aligning teaching expertise with mission and values

  - each school/kura endeavoured to employ the highest quality staff possible, quality staff were identified by the sponsors as vital to achieving their visions.

    What's important? The quality of our staff – staff are critical. (CEO)

    All the teachers are highly self-motivated. (Principal)

Barriers to success

For the three case study PSKH we also identified a small number of perceived barriers to success at this early stage of implementation.

- *Negative public perceptions of PSKH were perceived to have had a range of impacts including*: discouraging parents from enrolling their children at PSKH, discouraging teachers from applying for positions, and limiting other schools' interactions with PSKH (eg in sports and professional development for teachers).

- *Limited facilities*: all three case study PSKH are operating out of premises that have been adapted from a previous use – limitations identified included lack of outdoor space and limited access to some specialised equipment (eg science, IT); schools/kura are seeking to address this through accessing external facilities; in their view time-limited contracts with the Ministry limit the ability of the PSKH to secure long-term locations and develop facilities.

- *Short lead-in time.* The three case study PSKH all also noted difficulties associated with opening a Round 1 school/kura – the short time period between being approved and opening posed challenges including high stress and difficulty getting policies and processes in place and recruiting quality staff.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVENTION LOGIC – PRINTER FRIENDLY (A3)

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONFIDENT, CONNECTED, ACTIVELY INVOLVED, AND LIFELONG LEARNERS

Long-term outcomes

All students leave school equipped for life, the workforce and with options for the future   The schooling system is equipped to support all students, including priority groups

- On leaving school, all students have the skills and knowledge to participate in and contribute to their community and society
- On leaving school, all students sustain a sense of wellbeing

- PSKH adapt and continue to meet community needs
- Sponsor organisations achieve their specific goals
- PSKH specific stakeholder communities benefit from the success of PSKH students
- The wider education sector learns and adapts

Medium-term outcomes

- All students achieve to their academic potential
- All students experience wellbeing and develop universal skills needed for life and for work
- All students achieve desired outcomes, specific to the school/kura they attend

- Priority students achieve equitable outcomes
- Priority students excel and successfully realise their potential, secure in their identity, language and culture

- PSKH are sustainable
- Sponsor organisations are sustainable and continue to support PSKH

Outputs

- P/F/W have a positive relationship with the PSKH
- P/F/W engage with their child's learning
- P/F/W have high aspirations for their child
- P/F/W understand what the PSKH offers & choose the PSKH for their child

Parents/Families/Whānau

- Learning – students achieve and progress
- Participation – students connect and engage with learning
- Enjoyment – students feel safe and enjoy being at the PSKH
- Presence – students attend PSKH

For all PSKH students – including priority students

- PSKH specific stakeholder community (eg geographic community, cultural community, industry community) understands what the PSKH is trying to achieve and supports success
- PSKH specific stakeholder community has high aspirations for all students
- The wider education sector understands the PSKH policy and what specific PSKH are trying to achieve and supports their success where appropriate

For PSKH/Sponsors, the education sector and the wider stakeholder community

Delivery component

Partnership Schools' | Kura Hourua's innovations have a positive impact   on the quality and appropriateness of curriculum, teaching and learning

Partnership Schools | Kura Hourua
Sponsors make use of freedoms and flexibilities to design and implement innovations specifically designed for priority students' needs, aligned with policy intent and community needs and aspirations

PSKH/Sponsors:
- deliver quality teaching and curriculum
- undertake robust student assessment
- provide culturally responsive learning contexts, systems
- attract and retain priority students
- offer a range of progression pathways

PSKH/Sponsors achieve contracted targets

PSKH/Sponsors have high aspirations for all students

Sponsors:
- provide PSKH with strong governance
- broker/provide PSKH with expertise/support

PSKH/Sponsors:
- enable educationally effective leadership
- develop business, community, education partnerships
- effectively engage parents/family/whānau and with their wider communities

Innovation in key dimensions, eg:
- Use of funding
- Governance
- Management
- Staffing
- Student engagement & Wellbeing
- Pedagogy – teaching & learning
- Curriculum
- Engagement with community & whānau

Structural framework

Contract, monitoring and review
Determines parameters of flexibility; Is outcome-focused; Provides accountability

Support
Ministry provides appropriate, responsive support (if required) for establishment & ongoing operation

Application and selection process
Attracts innovation and applicants with a vision and social/cultural/ educational expertise; selects viable candidates; selects models that are aligned with policy intent

Legislation, policy and funding
Clearly outlines policy intent, enables innovation and flexibility, provides levers for accountability

Problem Definition

The system does not support equitable outcomes for all – particularly for priority students: Māori students, Pasifika students, students with special education needs and those from low socio-economic backgrounds
Many students are leaving school ill-equipped for life, the workforce and with limited choices for their future
Legislation and policy can limit schools' capabilities to design and operate solutions that are tailored to the needs of priority students
New approaches are needed to raise achievement for those students who are under-served by the current system

Context

Other types of schools
- State schools
- Kura Kaupapa Māori (section 155)
- Designated character (section 156)
- State integrated
- Private

Other types of MoE alternative settings, eg:
- Teen-parent units
- Alternative education
- Activity centres
- Youth Justice
- Te Aho o te Kura Pounamu/ Correspondence School

Other targets and initiatives and strategies
- Better Public Services
- Ka Hikitia
- Pasifika Education Plan
- Success for All (Special Education Strategy)

APPENDIX 2: KEY FEATURES OF ROUND 1 AND ROUND 2 PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS | KURA HOURUA

Table 3:   Summary of key features of Round 1 PSKH

Factor/school	The Rise UP Academy	South Auckland Middle School	Vanguard Military School	TKHoWTP	Te Kura Hourua ki Whangaruru
Sponsor's name	Rise Up Trust	Villa Education Trust	Advance Training Centres Ltd	He Puna Marama Charitable Trust	Ngā Parirau Mātauranga Charitable Trust
Key contacts	Sita Selupe (CEO) Bernice Mata'utia (Lead Teacher) Catherine Duncan (Business Manager)	Alwyn Poole (Academic Advisor) and Karen Poole (Business Manager)	Nick Hyde (CEO) Rockley Montgomery (Principal)	Raewyn Tipene (CEO) Nathan Matthews (Curriculum Leader)	Dee-Ann Brown (Interim CEO) Natasha Sadler (Curriculum Director)
School number	693	690	694	692	691
Website	www.riseuptrust.org.nz	www.southauckland.school.nz	www.vanguard.school.nz	www.mokonz.co.nz	http://tkhkwhangaruru.ac.nz/
Location	Mangere East, Auckland	Manurewa, Auckland	Albany, Auckland	Whangarei	Whangaruru
Focus	Pasifika, Christian values	Teaching and learning model, Christian values	Military ethos and methodology	Māori ("Be Māori: Be Educated; Be Rangatira")	Māori, emphasis on education in a culture, land and water environment
Type	Contributing primary Co-educational	Restricted composite Co-educational	Senior secondary Co-educational	Secondary with year 7 and 8 Co-educational	Secondary Co-educational
For profit/not for profit	Not for profit	Not for profit	For profit	Not for profit	Not for profit
Year levels	1–6	7–10	11–13	7–13	9–14
Year levels for	1–6	7–10	11–12	9–12	9–14

Factor/school	The Rise UP Academy	South Auckland Middle School	Vanguard Military School	TKHoWTP	Te Kura Hourua ki Whangaruru
2014					
2014 opening roll (maximum roll)	50 (100)	90 (120)	108 (192)	50 (300)	71 (128)
International student roll	None	None	None	None	5
Hours of operation	8.30 am – 3.00 pm	8.30 am – 3.15 pm	8.45 am – 3.00 pm	9.00 am – 3.30 pm	10.00 am – 4.00 pm
Curriculum and qualifications	NZC	NZC Level 1 NCEA (not in 2014)	NZC NCEA levels 1-3	Te Marautanga NCEA	NZC and Te Marautanga NCEA
Religious instruction	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

Table 4:   Summary of key features of Round 2 PSKH

Factor/School	Middle School West Auckland	Pacific Advance Senior School	Te Kapehu Whetu – Teina	Te Kura Māori o Waatea
Sponsor's name	Villa Education Trust	Pacific Peoples' Advance Trust	He Puna Marama Charitable Trust	Manukau Urban Māori Authority
Key contacts	Alwyn Poole (CEO) Alex Metzger (Principal) Karen Poole (Business Manager)	Falefatu Enari and Parehuia Enari (Co-Principals) Hamish Crooks (Accountant)	Raewyn Tipene (CEO) Nathan Matthews (GM)	Wyn Osborne (GM) Tania Rangiheua (Principal)
School number	713	714	715	716
Website	http://www.westauckland.school.nz/d	http://pass.school.nz/	http://tkw.ac.nz	http://www.waatea.school.nz/
Location	Henderson–Massey, Auckland	Māngere–Otahuhu, Auckland	Whangarei	Māngere–Otahuhu, Auckland
Focus	The Villa approach includes effective governance, excellent teachers of inquiry-based learning, culturally	For Pasifika, by Pasifika and determined by Pasifika. Focused on the provision of vocational pathways	Māori kaupapa based kura that recognises the need to prepare tamariki for a new 21st century, global world	Unique bilingual option for students by incorporating Te Ao Māori with the Rudolf Steiner educational approach

Factor/School	Middle School West Auckland	Pacific Advance Senior School	Te Kapehu Whetu – Teina	Te Kura Māori o Waatea
	responsive whānau engagement and Christian values			
Type	Restricted composite Co-educational	Senior secondary Co-educational	Contributing primary Co-educational	Contributing primary Co-educational
For profit/not for profit	Not for profit	Not for profit	Not for profit	Not for profit
Year levels	7–10	11–13	1–6	1–8
Year levels for 2015	7–10	11	1–6	1–2
2015 opening roll (maximum roll)	134 (240)	35 (250)	38 (150)	45 (200)
International student roll	0	0	0	0
Hours of operation	8.30 am – 3.15 pm	8.30 am – 3.00 pm	9.00 am – 3.00 pm	8.45 am – 3.30 pm
Curriculum & qualifications	NZC, NCEA Level 1	NZC, NCEA Level 1–3, NCEA Level 1	NZC	NZC
Religious instruction	No	Yes	No	No

APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL STUDENT FEEDBACK

Students' reasons for enrolling at the Partnership School I Kura Hourua

Students told us that they had enrolled at their new school/kura for positive reasons – they identified a need to improve their education and that they were dissatisfied with their old school/kura.

My old school was dumb, I wanted to try something new – me and my brother both came here.

I came for the education, my old school was really boring and didn't care if I passed or not.

My old school was really bad, I didn't like it and I wasn't learning, my whole life has changed since I came here.

I was bullied at my previous school, then I was given an opportunity to come here – if I'd stayed at my old school I would have ended up getting a low-life job.

Students had the support of their parents in enrolling at their new school/kura – in some cases the move had been motivated by the parents, in others the idea had been the student's.

I needed better education, me and mum and dad thought it would be the best option.

My parents were hesitant but now they can see the change in me.

I needed a change, I wasn't doing well at my previous school – it was my decision to come.

While most were positive about the change, a small number had found the change to be challenging and unsettling.

Coming here was a big change, it was hard – everything was totally different.

It was initially hard to mould to the self-discipline, now I'm proud of my work – the transition was hard. It's very rewarding now.

Things students would like to change about the Partnership School I Kura Hourua

The students were asked if there was anything they missed from their previous school/kura or anything they would like to change about the PSKH. The things raised by the students were seen as relatively minor compared to the benefits they thought they were gaining, and primarily related to the limitations of the PSKH's facilities or location.

Some of us aren't local and so we have a long commute.

I was a school councillor – I miss that, I liked doing monitoring jobs.

I miss the school library.

I miss the singing – we used to sing in the school hall every Friday.

The open plan class can be distracting and noisy.

I'd like more outdoor space, a rugby field.

I miss the field and sports facilities.

I miss old friends, but it's not hard to make new ones here.