

Koromatua School Education Review

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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

About The School

Location	Hamilton
Ministry of Education profile number	1784
School type	Full Primary (Years 1-8)
Decile rating	6
Teaching staff:	13.3
Roll generated entitlement	0.78
Other	15
Number of teachers	
School roll	287
Gender composition	Boys 56% Girls 44%
Ethnic composition	NZ Māori 80% Pacific 12% NZ European/Pākehā 8%
Review team on site	November 2008
Date of this report	19 January 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review March 2006 Education Review July 2002 Accountability Review November 1998 Assurance Audit May 1996 Review July 1992

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Koromatua School is located 3km outside of Temple View, on the western outskirts of Hamilton. The school is situated in a rural setting and caters for students in Years 1 to 8. Extensive progress has been made in the areas identified for improvement in the last ERO report of March 2006 about curriculum planning, self review and the management of achievement information.

This report focuses on the influence of school developments in literacy teaching and learning. The board of trustees agreed to this focus area in consultation with the Education Review Office. The report also includes an evaluation of progress since the last ERO review in the achievement of Māori students, the achievement of Pacific students and the school's readiness to implement the New Zealand Curriculum in February 2010. In addition, aspects of health and safety compliance are also investigated.

Since the last ERO review, the roll has grown and two new teaching spaces are being created to be ready for the beginning of the 2009 school year. There have been some staff changes, including the appointment of a new assistant principal and sustained school-wide professional development about literacy teaching and learning using both internal and external expertise. This professional learning is building teacher capability and confidence to deliver exciting and motivating literacy programmes.

Effective management of achievement information is enabling management and teachers to systematically raise achievement for all students, while targeting groups and individual students needing support with their learning. Current information shows that while many students enter the school with low levels of achievement, a significant majority of these students make expected or better than expected progress as they progress through the school. Appropriate targets are set to raise achievement levels in reading, writing and numeracy. These targets are closely monitored and reported to trustees at regular intervals.

In classrooms, teachers make good diagnostic use of assessment tools to plan learning programmes that address individual and group learning needs. They have worked hard to create school-wide expectations for achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at each year level, based on reliable assessment data.

Teaching interactions are characterised by sensitivity, respect and an ongoing focus on student learning. Teachers know their students well and set high expectations for achievement and conduct. Respectful and responsive teaching interactions are increasingly developing students' skills and understandings as communicators and learners.

School management and teachers value the positive contribution that parents and whānau

make to student learning and wellbeing. Consultation with the parent community has been undertaken to establish priorities for learning. These quality relationships are providing a sound foundation for developing students as confident and increasingly competent learners. Parents receive detailed information about their children's achievement, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, which enables each family to be well informed about the achievement of their child and the extent to which they are achieving at nationally expected levels.

The principal is a highly effective educational leader. He is knowledgeable and reflective about current educational theory and its implications for learning and teaching. He works closely with his management team and teachers to lead the process of improving educational outcomes for students.

Trustees are knowledgeable, experienced and strongly focused on raising student achievement. They have high expectations for the school and have established robust review and communication systems to gauge ongoing school effectiveness.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO is likely to review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

The Focus Of The Review

Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

Teachers gather extensive data about student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, which can be found in the 'student progress and achievement' section of this report. Additional qualitative and quantitative information indicates students enjoy successes with subjects outside literacy and numeracy. These learning experiences include kapa haka, sports, topic subjects and a range of other cultural, performing and education outside the classroom (EOTC) activities.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Koromatua School was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and selfreview information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Koromatua School.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus area for the review:

- an evaluation of literacy teaching and learning

ERO's findings in this area are set out below.

An Evaluation of Literacy Teaching and Learning

Background

Since the last ERO report the school has given priority to developing practices about literacy learning and teaching. School achievement expectations have been established for reading and writing, and external professional development has been undertaken in writing. In addition, staff changes to management and teaching positions have occurred.

Student progress and achievement

The school gathers extensive student achievement information in reading, writing and mathematics using a range of externally referenced tools. Teachers have used these tools to create school-wide achievement expectations and set useful targets to raise achievement levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Current information shows that while many students enter the school with low levels of achievement, a significant majority of these students make expected or better than expected progress as they move through the school. The school's approach to the management of achievement information is enabling management and teachers to systematically raise achievement for all students, while targeting groups and individual students needing support with their learning.

Areas of good performance

Governance: Trustees are knowledgeable, experienced and strongly focused on raising student achievement. They receive high quality data about student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics from the principal, which they use to make decisions that support teaching and learning. The board has prioritised literacy learning and is highly supportive of ongoing professional development about improving teaching practice. Trustees hold high expectations for the principal, teachers and students and articulate a strong commitment to ongoing school improvement. Effective governance is playing a major part in the realisation of the school mission statement of "together towards excellence".

Leadership: The principal is a highly effective educational leader. He is knowledgeable and reflective about current educational theory and its implications for learning and teaching. As the lead learner he is successfully building capacity in others within an inclusive professional learning culture. He has a good understanding of the importance of analysed achievement information in making appropriate decisions about teaching and learning. His approach to school-wide professional development is empowering staff to improve their practice and contributing to the development of the staff as a community of professional learners.

Teaching interactions: Teaching interactions are characterised by sensitivity, respect and an ongoing focus on student learning. In many classrooms teachers provide rich contexts for writing and use teaching strategies such as student self and peer assessment, and feedback and feed forward specific to learning intentions. Some teachers are maximising learning through making links to students' prior knowledge and co-constructing learning intentions and criteria for success with students. These high quality interactions are increasingly developing students' skills and understandings as independent readers and writers.

Professional learning: Since the last review there has been sustained school-wide professional development about literacy teaching and learning using both internal and external expertise. This professional development has involved the systematic collection and analysis of student achievement information, moderation and levelling of student writing

samples, some school reorganisation and extensive professional discussions and reflection. Professional learning is building teacher capability and confidence to deliver exciting and motivating literacy programmes.

Relationships: Respectful and reciprocal relationships are evident throughout the school. Teachers have established genuine rapport with students based on the belief that all students can achieve, make progress and experience success. They value the positive contribution that parents and whānau make to student learning and wellbeing. Teachers appreciate the high levels of collegiality, the support they receive from one another and the approachability of management. These quality relationships are providing a sound foundation for developing students as confident and increasingly competent readers and writers.

Use of achievement information: Good quality student achievement information is used to inform decision making at all levels of the school. Trustees receive collated and analysed information that they use to identify and monitor plans and targets for improving student achievement and to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programmes. Teachers, with support from senior managers, use achievement data to identify the learning needs of groups and individual students. This evidence-based approach to decision making is providing opportunities and resources that are closely matched to students' learning needs.

Guidelines and expectations: A comprehensive range of high quality documentation gives clear direction for literacy teaching and learning. These documents provide consistent guidelines for teacher assessment, planning, reporting and expectations for student achievement. As a result teachers have a common understanding of expectations and are increasingly able to deliver high quality literacy programmes.

Assessment practices: Teachers use a range of externally referenced tools effectively to measure student achievement in writing, reading and mathematics. These assessment tools include Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle), the Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading (STAR), Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT), the assessment resource banks (ARBs) and the National Curriculum Exemplars. Teachers have carefully moderated students' writing samples to establish benchmarks for each year level. Diagnostic use of reading running records, particularly in the junior school, is enabling teachers to focus on developing specific reading strategies and behaviours in students. Skilled use and teacher understanding of assessment practice is allowing students' individual and group learning needs to be addressed.

Reporting to parents: Professional development in literacy learning and recent consultation with parents have resulted in improvements to the format for reporting student achievement to families. Parents receive detailed information about their children's achievement, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The reporting format now includes useful information

about the levels of the New Zealand Curriculum and achievement expectations at each class level. The new student report enables each family to be well informed about the achievement of their child and the extent to which they may need extra support with their learning.

Literacy learning environments: High quality literacy learning environments are evident in most classrooms. In these classrooms teachers have worked hard to provide print-rich displays, useful learning prompts, appropriate reference material and information and communication technologies. Student achievement and success is celebrated through classroom displays and opportunities to share their work. Teachers and students have worked together to develop agreed high expectations for learning and behaviour, which is contributing to settled and focused literacy learning environments.

Reflective practice: A feature of the professional learning culture is teacher reflection that is focused on improving their practice. Reflective journals are well used to consider the implications of current theory on teaching practice, along with ongoing discussions, peer observations and videoed lessons. The principal and teachers have worked together to include documented reflection and specific performance indicators during the appraisal process. Ongoing reflections and focused professional discussion is increasing teachers' ability and confidence.

Learning support: The school has comprehensive systems to identify and respond appropriately to students with learning needs. The special education needs coordinator (SENCO) works closely with the principal and classroom teachers to provide interventions with a focus on high quality in-class support. In addition, the SENCO oversees withdrawal programmes that involve a teacher aide and external providers. The approach to planning and monitoring learning support programmes ensures that appropriate assistance is provided to address the learning needs of these students.

Area for improvement

Strategies for empowerment: Some teachers are using strategies designed to involve students more closely in the learning processes. However, these practices need to be extended school wide. More consistent involvement of students in making decisions about their own learning is likely to empower them as independent and successful life-long learners.

Areas Of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of Koromatua School ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

The Achievement of Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of Māori students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement.

Areas of progress

All of the findings in this report about areas of good performance and areas for improvement are inclusive of Māori students. All progress within the school, since the last review, impacts directly on the 80% of Māori students that make up the school roll.

Since the last ERO review the school has consulted with its parent community about te reo teaching and learning. As a result a decision was made to integrate the teaching of te reo and tikanga into classroom programmes in favour of engaging a specialist te reo Māori teacher. There is strong evidence in classrooms that this has been a successful change and students are enjoying te reo Māori, waiata and karakia in meaningful contexts.

The Achievement of Pacific Students

During the review ERO evaluated the extent to which the school has knowledge of and strategies for promoting the achievement of its Pacific students.

Area of good performance

All of the findings in this report about areas of good performance and areas for improvement are inclusive of Pacific students. The school has 35 students that identify as Pacific. Data for these students is not collated separately and reported to trustees. Achievement for these students is included in school-wide achievement information.

Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010

Progress to date

In preparing for teaching the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010 the school has empowered teachers to trial a range of approaches to including the key competencies in their daily teaching programmes. Consultation has been undertaken with the school community to establish curriculum priorities. The school offers Japanese language learning for Year 7 and 8 students.

Next steps

The school has decided that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months are to evaluate the impact of trials that have been undertaken to date and share successful practice. Teachers also intend to undertake professional development through a teacher only day early in 2009.

Board Assurance On Compliance Areas

Overview

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

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

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

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

Compliance

ERO's investigations did not identify any areas of concern.

Recommendation

ERO and the board have developed the following recommendation:

6.1 that teachers continue with reflection and professional development about strategies that enable students to become increasingly involved as independent learners.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO is likely to review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

Kathleen Atkins

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

19 January 2009

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To the Parents and Community of Koromatua School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Koromatua School.

Community Page

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Review Coverage

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If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Kathleen Atkins

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve educational achievement in schools; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on three review strands.

- School Specific Priorities - the quality of education and the impact of school policies and practices on student achievement.
- Areas of National Interest - information about how Government policies are working in schools.
- Compliance with Legal Requirements - assurance that this school has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

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Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a school is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this school.

Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage,
Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.