

Matarau School Education Review

- About The School
- The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation
- The Focus Of The Review
- Areas Of National Interest
- Board Assurance On Compliance Areas
- Recommendations
- Future Action
- Community Page

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

About The School

Location	Whangarei, Northland
Ministry of Education profile number	1043
School type	Full Primary (Year 1-8)
Decile rating	9
Teaching staff:	10.92
Roll generated entitlement	0.4
Other	14
Number of teachers	
School roll	202
Number of international students	5
Gender composition	Boys 56%, Girls 44%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 85%, Māori 15%
Review team on site	November 2008
Date of this report	20 February 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, January 2006 Accountability Review, June 2002 Accountability Review, May 1998 Effectiveness Review, February 1995 Assurance Audit, February 1993

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Matarau School is situated in a rural setting close to Whangarei and caters for students Years 1 to 8. Staff, students and families show strong commitment to and support for the school, which is a focus for its community. Buildings are well maintained and are set in spacious, well cared for grounds. Since the last ERO review a large library/resource area has been developed and should be fully operational by the beginning of the 2009 school year.

Students are confident, articulate and engaged learners who are self-managing and respectful of adults and their peers. Positive leadership opportunities are available to students at all levels of the school both within and outside the classroom. Senior students have opportunities to be sports leaders, members of the school council, and to train as peer mediators. Students report that they feel valued and are proud of their school.

Most students are achieving at or above expected levels in reading and mathematics. Analysed student achievement data are used to track student progress and provide sound information for identifying students' learning needs. Student achievement information is regularly reported to parents, the board of trustees and the wider school community. The school community is able to access school-wide student achievement information at any time from booklets available in the school foyer.

Teachers have positive, affirming relationships with students. Classroom programmes are well planned, with a focus on individual teaching and learning. The whole school environment reflects and celebrates all facets of student achievement. School values are exemplified by the virtues programme, which students, teachers, and parents support and are involved in. Weekly newsletters enable students' successes to be shared with the school community.

Since the ERO 2006 review, teachers have been involved with other local schools in an Extending High Standards Across Schools (EHSAS) project and school-wide professional development in science and environmental education. Literacy exemplars have been developed and the school's virtues programme has been extended. A new student management system has been introduced and is beginning to provide teachers with easier access to student achievement information.

Effective leadership is evident in all areas of the school. The principal supports and encourages innovation and sets high standards for staff and students. Self-review processes are well documented and inform strategic planning and reporting to the board of trustees and parents. The principal is well supported by senior leaders, staff and trustees.

The board of trustees works as team, bringing together relevant skills and experiences for the benefit of students. Trustees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are enthusiastic and committed to the school. The board supports and funds new

initiatives, professional development opportunities for staff and trustees, and special programmes for individuals and groups of students. The principal provides the board with comprehensive reports on student achievement and trustees use this information when setting targets and developing strategic planning.

For this review ERO and the board agreed to focus on the impact of school initiatives on teaching and learning, with an emphasis on teaching programmes, leadership opportunities and students' self-regulated learning. ERO finds very good performance in all areas investigated. ERO and the board of trustees agree that the principal, senior leaders and staff should continue with further planned professional development to strengthen formative assessment practices that will further develop student self-regulated learning.

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.

The board, principal and teachers have high expectations for student achievement. Teachers have a strong focus on students developing self-management and leadership skills that are based on well understood school values. Achievement is celebrated and students are affirmed for academic success and for their successes in sports, community activities and leadership.

Senior leaders have established robust processes for gathering school-wide student achievement information in reading, writing, numeracy and science, using a range of standardised assessment tools and writing exemplars. This information is analysed and specific recommendations contribute to programme development for individuals and groups of students. Information is also gathered on students' development of social skills. Parents have easy access to student achievement information and are encouraged to discuss their child's progress with teachers and school senior managers. Senior teachers report to the board on students' success in attaining school annual achievement targets.

Student achievement information indicates that most students achieve at or above expected age-related levels in reading and mathematics. Students also achieve well in the annual Science Fair and in external testing in literacy and mathematics.

Specific interventions are in place for those students who need learning support and the progress of these students is regularly monitored and reported to parents and the board.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Matarau 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 Matarau School.

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

- the impact of school initiatives on teaching and learning.

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

The impact of school initiatives on teaching and learning

Background

The board and principal were interested in an external evaluation of the impact of school initiatives on teaching and learning, with particular emphasis on EHSAS initiatives, the school virtues programme, and student self-regulated learning. This focus results from a recommendation in the 2006 ERO report that the school develop explicit learning goals, especially in writing, to enable students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Student progress and achievement

Information related to student achievement and progress is covered in this report in the section above on Student Achievement Overall.

Areas of good performance

The quality of teaching and learning. High quality teaching and learning is evident in most classrooms. Since the 2006 ERO review, graphic organisers have been introduced, and explicit learning goals for writing, together with school writing exemplars, have been developed. The new student management system has enabled teachers to collate achievement data in a variety of ways to identify the needs of specific groups of students in order to improve teaching and learning. Achievement data are shared with students and parents.

High expectations. Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their students. Teaching and planning are consistent throughout the school. In some classrooms, teachers are beginning to work with students to develop shared learning concepts across the curriculum. Children with special abilities are identified and are engaged in targeted programmes to extend their learning. Most students are achieving at or above national age-related achievement levels.

Portfolios. Student portfolios have been introduced and are one of the ways in which the school reports to parents on student achievement. Parents, students and teachers discuss the portfolios at report evenings. The school intends to further develop its use of portfolios so that students are better able to reflect on their own learning and achievement.

Student self-regulated learning. Students are developing self-managing learning skills. As a result of school and cluster professional development, most of the senior students are aware of their preferred learning styles and class programmes reflect these. In many classrooms, students use carefully described progressions of skills, or rubrics, to evaluate their own progress in successfully managing their own behaviour and relationships with others. The rubrics are appropriately linked to the school's virtues programme.

Learning processes. Most students understand their individual learning intentions and are generally able to talk about their levels of achievement. Some teachers are beginning to assist students to identify the next steps in their learning and allow students to make their own choices about how to further develop their learning.

Leadership opportunities. Students have many opportunities to take leadership roles within the school and in the wider community. Students are able to be peer mediators, members of the school council, sports facilitators, and can undertake community service activities. The school's virtues programme encourages students to initiate positive interactions with their peers and adults.

Teachers are encouraged to take leadership roles and to lead curriculum areas and contribute to professional development. They take an active part in self-review processes that contribute to the strategic direction of the school.

Virtues Programme. The school's virtues programme underpins all school activities. A different virtue is focused on each month. Information on the focus virtue is circulated to parents and the wider community. The school celebrates student achievement in implementing the focus virtues, as it does academic and sporting success.

Areas for improvement

Agreed next steps. The principal and senior leaders, in association with ERO, have identified a number of next steps for the school in relation to initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

- Now that teachers are sharing learning intentions and achievement data with their students, they should extend this good practice by developing success criteria with students. Teachers should use carefully described progressions of skills to assist students to identify their own levels of achievement and to document their next learning goals.
- Senior leaders plan to access further professional development for all staff in practices for formative assessment.
- Senior leaders should review student portfolios and further develop them to include increased student self-assessment and to show the range of achievement levels, with

actual student achievement highlighted so that it is clear to students and their parents.

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 Matarau 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. At Matarau School 15% (33) of students identify as Maori.

Areas of progress

Maori student achievement. Teachers state that most Māori students are achieving as well as, or better than, non-Māori students in reading and numeracy.

Self review. The board and principal have good systems in place for reviewing the school's provision for Māori students.

Community liaison. A Māori liaison person has been appointed to maintain contact with Māori families. The role of this person is being developed and it is intended that future consultation with the school's Maori community will be face to face instead of by survey.

Kapa haka. A kapa haka group has recently been formed and is well supported by the board. Participation in this group supports Māori students' sense of their cultural identity.

Areas for further improvement

Monitoring the achievement of Māori students. Because of the small number of Māori students in the school, monitoring the achievement of these students as a group, and using achievement data to identify trends and patterns in the achievement of Māori students would

not be statistically reliable. However, teachers should monitor the achievement of individual Māori students to ensure that each student is achieving his or her full potential.

Sequential programming across the school. In 2006, the board and principal identified a long-term goal of developing a sequential school-wide programme for the teaching of te reo me ōna tikanga Māori. Professional development is needed for all staff so that this programme can be documented and taught across the school.

Consultation. The principal and board acknowledge that they must consult more directly with the Māori community. The support of the Maori liaison person may serve as a useful link in providing parents and whānau with specific information about the achievement of Maori students.

Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010

Progress to date

In preparing for teaching the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010 the school has:

- discussed the key competencies;
- begun to integrate these competencies into shared teacher programme planning;
- presented an overview of the new curriculum to the board; and
- developed a time line for its implementation.

Next steps

The school has decided that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months are to:

- present an overview of the new curriculum to the school community;
- continue consultation on the development of the strategic plan; and
- revise the current Matarau School curriculum handbook so that it reflects the new curriculum document.

Provision for International Students

Compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students and the Provision of English Language Support

Matarau School is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International

Students (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. This is a requirement of all schools that enrol international students in terms of the Act. Schools are also required to provide English language support for their international students. Matarau School has five international students from Korea.

The school complies with all aspects of the Code.

Areas of good performance

Student integration. International students are well integrated into class programmes and school activities. Some students are able to participate in the school production and all international students are encouraged to take school leadership roles. International students are settled in the school and report that they enjoy school and have made many friends.

Pastoral care. Effective systems are in place for the pastoral care of international students. Support teachers have established good relationships with the students and their caregivers. The principal is the 24-hour contact person. Students speak positively about the support they receive at school.

Orientation. A carefully planned and well executed approach is used by the school to orientate international students to life as a New Zealand student and to typical New Zealand experiences outside the school. Students are introduced to classrooms slowly and are given buddies for support. A withdrawal language support programme includes developing students' English vocabulary in relation to New Zealand cultural, sporting and farming activities, and taking students on trips so that they can engage in these experiences first hand.

Provision for English Language support. Good provision is made for English language support. International students can attend regular small group English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Two teachers share responsibility for assessing students on arrival and for providing a programme that caters for their language needs. Students' progress in reading, writing, listening and speaking English is monitored regularly. Written reports show that students make good progress in improving their English while they are at the school. ESOL teachers could now work more closely with class teachers to identify the vocabulary and English language structures that students might need to understand class topics.

Board Assurance On Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Matarau 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.

Each school needs to acknowledge that bullying is a risk to be managed. To improve practice this school should provide anti-bullying programmes that cover the following types of bullying: racist bullying, bullying of students with special needs, homophobic bullying, and sexual harassment.

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

Recommendations

ERO and the board of trustees agree that the principal, senior leaders and staff should:

continue with planned professional training on formative assessment practices that further develop students' skills in self-regulated learning.

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.

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Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

20 February 2009

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To the Parents and Community of Matarau School

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

Community Page

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Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

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

Elizabeth Ellis

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.

