

Matarau School Education Review

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School Statement

Before the review ERO offers schools the opportunity to provide some background in the form of the school's location and context, significant achievements since the last review, and issues being considered by the Board of Trustees.

The principal and board of trustees have provided a statement to accompany this report. This is attached to the signed copy of the confirmed report sent to the board of trustees. If the school's statement is not attached and you would like a copy, please contact the school.

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

About The School

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| Location | Whangarei, Northland |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 1043 |
| School type | Full Primary (Year 1-8) |
| Decile rating | 10 |
| Teaching staff | 9.40 |
| Roll generated entitlement | 1.34 |
| Other | 11 |
| Number of teachers | |
| School roll | 206 |
| Gender composition | Boys 58%, Girls 42% |
| Ethnic composition | NZ European/Pākehā 92%, Māori 8% |
| Review team on site | November 2005 |
| Date of this report | 31 January 2006 |
| Previous ERO reports | Accountability Review, June 2002 Accountability Review, May 1998 Effectiveness Review, February 1995 Assurance Audit, February 1993 |

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Matarau School caters for Year 1-8 students and is situated in spacious, attractive grounds with well maintained buildings. The school has a growing roll due to the surrounding area changing from farmland to lifestyle blocks. Since the last ERO report a large car park and an Information Communications Technology (ICT) suite have been developed. A new initiative in 2005 has been the establishment of specialist classes for students who have strong interests in the performing arts. Previous ERO reports have commented on the school's high performance and this continues to be the case.

Students are friendly, articulate and empowered learners. They are motivated, work well independently and have good relationships with each other and with their teachers. Students are positive about the learning opportunities provided for them, including sporting and cultural activities. Good leadership opportunities are available.

The majority of students are achieving at or above their chronological age in literacy and numeracy. Teachers analyse assessment information at class and school-wide levels. This provides a sound basis for identifying students' learning needs. Parents are kept well informed about their children's achievement.

Teachers and students at Matarau School work together as a community of learners. Planning is of high quality across the school with a strong focus on catering for the needs of individual students. Open-ended questioning fosters a culture of inquiry learning. Meaningful education outside the classroom programmes support learning across the curriculum. A feature of the school is the way that teachers foster students' high self-esteem and self-management skills.

The principal provides effective leadership. He is very knowledgeable about the curriculum and supports new initiatives. He is available to students and parents and has a good knowledge of the academic and pastoral needs of individual students. The senior management team works cooperatively, supports the principal and provides good guidance for teachers.

The board is led by an experienced chairman and supported by trustees who bring relevant skills and experience to their roles. Trustees plan well for continuity, with a mix of experienced and new board members. They have good relationships with teachers and are very supportive of the principal. The board receives comprehensive reports on student achievement from the principal. As a result, the board is able to undertake high quality strategic planning for the future direction of the school.

This report acknowledges the continuing refinements that have occurred in the school. It makes some suggestions and recommendations for further improvement. ERO and the board

agreed that ERO would evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in writing and the extent to which programmes cater for students' individual needs. The implementation of Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum for Year 8 students, Career Education and Guidance (CEG) for Years 7-8 students, and educational outcomes for Māori students are also evaluated.

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 will review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

School Specific Priorities

The Focus of the Review

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 self-review 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 areas for the review:

- the quality of teaching and learning in writing; and
- the differentiated curriculum - catering for individual students' needs

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

The quality of teaching and learning in writing

Background

Effective literacy practice has been a long-term focus at Matarau School and teachers have participated in ongoing whole-school professional development. The board and ERO agreed on this focus area in order to provide feedback on the quality of teaching practices and student achievement.

Student progress and achievement

Teachers have high expectations of their students. Individual needs are identified and documented to inform ongoing planning and teaching. Student achievement information has enabled teachers to develop specific class-based achievement targets in literacy, including writing. Achievement data at class level shows that the majority of students are achieving at or above expected levels in writing. Analysis of the 2004 exemplars reveals that students across the school are making appropriate progress with the deeper and surface features of their writing.

Areas of good performance

School-wide expectations for literacy. The teaching of literacy is emphasised at Matarau

School. At least fifty percent of the programme is allocated to literacy and numeracy, with an appropriate portion of this time devoted to writing. Instructional writing is given priority. Students receive focused, individual and group instruction in writing.

Planning. Teachers follow a school-wide standardised system of planning which is monitored by syndicate leaders. Planning is of high quality, ensuring consistency and coverage of genres. Senior managers monitor teachers' curriculum planning and delivery. The individual needs of students are in the forefront of every teacher's planning.

Integrated approach to literacy learning. Teachers acknowledge that reading, writing and oral language are inseparable. In their planning and programme delivery, teachers link reading, writing and oral language in meaningful ways, building on students' prior knowledge and interests.

Grouping of students for conferencing. Students are grouped according to their learning needs. Grouping enables teachers to efficiently manage student needs and provides a forum for student goal setting and peer and self evaluation. On a flexible rotational basis, students receive specific one-to-one feedback and feedforward. In small groups, students can discuss ideas, strategies and give peer feedback.

Well-structured lessons. Teachers follow a clearly defined and effective format for writing lessons. Lessons include a whole-class motivation session and goal setting. Students then work on writing activities. A plenary session allows opportunities for students to share and reflect on their work. Writing lessons are well managed ensuring that students share goal setting, reflect on their work and have opportunities to work independently.

Use of writing samples. Teachers and students regularly use cameos of selected writing samples to discuss surface and deeper features. The use of writing exemplars makes writing targets explicit for students and provides a catalyst for reflection. These opportunities provide students with structured opportunities to critique samples of writing to strengthen their own understanding.

Teacher moderation and programme evaluation. Teachers work well in syndicates reviewing their programmes. They have ongoing dialogue about expectations for student writing at different curriculum levels. Exemplars and guidelines are used by teachers as tools for assessment and to evaluate programmes. As part of a school cluster group, teachers had developed school-wide exemplars in writing that have been aligned with the national exemplars. Comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of programmes ensures that individual students' needs in writing are met.

Areas for improvement

Making learning outcomes explicit. The quality of learning outcomes shared with students varies across the school and some learning outcomes are task orientated. Senior managers should review the consistency of learning outcomes used by teachers so that they incorporate learning goals and the deeper features of writing. Explicit learning goals further enable students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Collation of school-wide achievement data. Teachers collate assessment information in writing at class level. A possible next step is for the principal and teachers to build on classroom exemplars and compile and analyse school-wide achievement data in writing. School-wide aggregated data, levelled from exemplars, will give teachers and parents more information about the progress of students in relation to other students. School-wide aggregation will also further assist in the identification of cohorts of students who could be targeted for extension or special needs programmes.

The differentiated curriculum - catering for individual students' needs

Background

Interest in developing a differentiated curriculum is linked to the participation of a senior manager in a Gifted and Talented contract in 2000. A school-wide differentiated curriculum designed to cater for individual students' needs was introduced in 2005. This initiative has been partly funded by the Ministry of Education. The funding will continue until 2007 in exchange for programme updates and the right to publish and share the differentiated curriculum planning developed by the school.

Student progress and achievement

At Matarau School, teachers monitor and report on student achievement in a variety of ways. Assessment tools include nationally formed tests in mathematics and literacy. Examples of these include the Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) and assessment tools for assessment and learning (asTTle). Exemplars and school assessment tasks such as pre-tests and post-tests are also used by teachers to inform them about student progress and achievement. Senior students have opportunities to participate annually in the University of New South Wales tests. Formative assessment processes are used widely by teachers to inform ongoing planning and teaching. They also provide opportunities for feedback to students. These processes enable teachers to plan for individual needs and to inform parents of their child's progress.

PAT results indicate that the overall levels of attainment in literacy are high with a significant skew towards the upper quartile (75% to 100%). The asTTle results for number operations show that the majority of students across the school are achieving at national expectations.

Parents share in goal setting and are informed of their child's progress through student portfolios, conferences, interviews and a written report. Target setting, analysis of variance and reporting on school-wide student achievement are shared with parents and made readily available. High quality reporting by the principal to the board on student achievement enables trustees to strategically plan for student needs.

Areas of good performance

Innovations class. In 2005 an innovations class was established. Students in this class are grouped according to their common interests and methods of learning. The innovations class teacher plans integrated programmes that are compatible with students' learning styles. The innovations class provides opportunities to extend students who are gifted in performing arts and music.

Support and extension programmes. A variety of extension programmes are provided for students. These include an extension writers' group and the training of literacy mentors. Trained adults and senior students work with students who require further assistance after completing reading recovery or special needs programmes. As a result, students who have completed learning support programmes continue to receive support to reinforce their learning. Able students in writing can work with peers and be motivated and extended.

Catering for special needs. A variety of special needs programmes are provided for students. Programmes include reading recovery and oral language programmes. Resource Teachers of Literacy (RTLits), teacher aides and a part-time teacher provide support for individual students. Teacher aides also work alongside students in classrooms. Teachers use Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) to plan and set goals for individuals and small groups. Their plans are regularly reviewed. Teacher aides receive high quality management and there is good dialogue about student needs between classroom teachers and support staff. Teacher aides are valued members of staff and their expertise is used effectively in classrooms and one to one with students.

School-wide curriculum guidelines and planning. Senior managers have developed school-wide guidelines for planning and a clear, comprehensive planning template. Units are integrated across the curriculum. There are clear links between planning, assessment and the evaluation of units. The quality of planning is consistent across the school.

Inquiry learning. Teachers use open-ended questioning to support inquiry learning for their students. Students are grouped flexibly by teachers in response to the curriculum area and learning needs of the students. Grouping enables teachers to highlight different thinking skills, learning styles and multiple intelligences.

Professional development. Staff meetings provide opportunities to share and reflect on ideas

to support the development of the differentiated curriculum. Teachers have opportunities to be innovative and to trial new ideas with their classes.

Areas for improvement

Integration of tools to support students' learning needs across the curriculum. Teachers have identified that a next step in the differentiated curriculum is the development of graphic organizers to be used by students, primarily for social studies. The use of these tools could be extended to other curriculum areas such as mathematics and science. Tools such as graphic organizers support inquiry learning and learning pathways as models for teaching and learning.

Collation and analysis of mathematics achievement data. The principal is aggregating student achievement data for mathematics across the school. The reporting of school-wide achievement would be further strengthened if year groups were analysed as separate cohorts. Analysis of student achievement by year groups will enable teachers to reflect on trends and patterns in relation to national norms.

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.

Quality of teaching for Year 8 students: social studies

Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum is one of the seven curriculum statements covering the essential learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum. Social studies at Year 8 was not taught during the review and findings are gathered from interviews with the Year 8 teacher, students and an evaluation of programme plans and student work samples.

Areas of good performance

Planning. Teachers follow a comprehensive, school-wide standardised system of planning and prepare social studies units cooperatively at syndicate level. Social studies planning is of a good quality and consistent across the school. This ensures coverage of the curriculum and the provision of meaningful and relevant learning activities for students with varied needs and interests.

Sharing learning intentions with students. Teachers share learning intentions and success criteria with students. Student goals are monitored by teachers and through self and peer assessment. Students receive feedback from teachers and peers and are able to formulate next steps for learning. Ongoing feedback by teachers and dialogue with peers supports students to be motivated and responsible for their own learning.

Tikanga Māori integration. Māori culture is often incorporated into aspects of the programme including a marae visit, the study of pre-European Māori society and the Treaty of Waitangi. Students report very positively about these opportunities and the learning achieved.

Use of Information Communications Technology (ICT). Teachers and students make good

use of ICT to support social studies programmes. Teachers use it to locate relevant material for planning and as a tool for teaching. Students use ICT to support an inquiry approach to learning. Students also use a range of ICT tools, including PowerPoint, to present their work in a variety of ways.

Evaluation of programmes. Teachers use set criteria and include the use of achievement information to carefully evaluate social studies programmes and to inform future units. Teachers are reflective and committed to continuous improvement in their teaching.

Resources. A variety of resources are used to support programmes. Teachers research and locate relevant resources, including library books. Where appropriate, they invite parents and members of the community to share their knowledge and expertise. Students are supported in their learning by good quality resources and are proud when their parents make contributions.

Education outside the classroom. Visits outside the classroom are an integral part of relevant social studies programmes. School visits are relevant to the topics being studied and well researched by teachers. Students report positively about school visits which enhance and support their learning.

Area for improvement

Student achievement. Teachers assess students' social studies learning in relation to carefully chosen and relevant learning outcomes. However, social studies processes should also be selected and assessed. Assessment of these processes will enable teachers to identify student progress and learning needs.

Careers Education and Guidance (CEG)

Schools are required to provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in Year 7 and above.

Areas of good performance

Curriculum plan. Careers education and guidance provides valuable opportunities for teachers to meet students' individual learning needs. A comprehensive careers education programme was developed in 2005 with targeted resourcing and ongoing support for teachers in programme delivery. Programmes were initially developed based on values identified by the board of trustees through community consultation. Careers education is taught both as a stand-alone unit and is meaningfully integrated with literacy and other curriculum areas.

Student participation and identifying individual needs. Relevant contexts have been selected to cater for student needs. These include an essential skills focus, emphasis on the work

ethic, use of websites, a preparation for secondary school strand and preparing students for leadership opportunities at the beginning of the year. Students report positively about careers programmes, the identification of job requirements, exploring career pathways and how they can prepare for the future. Good use is made of community resources and programmes are planned so that they are useful and relevant.

Area for improvement

Evaluation and self review. The lead teacher and principal should develop a process of meaningful review of the career education programme. This will facilitate reporting to the board and improvements to teaching and learning in this subject area. Self review should include unit evaluation information as well as student assessment data.

The achievement of Māori students

During the review, ERO evaluated the extent to which the school has knowledge of and strategies for promoting the achievement of Māori students. Eight percent of students at Matarau School identify as Māori.

Areas of good performance

Student achievement. Senior managers analyse the achievement of Māori students in literacy and mathematics separately. Achievement data reveals that the progress of individual Māori students at Matarau School is comparable to that of non-Māori students.

Te reo me ōna tikanga Māori programmes. Māori culture and language are acknowledged at Matarau School. Te reo Māori is taught regularly across the school and Maori perspectives are sometimes integrated as part of social studies and other curriculum areas. Students report very positively about marae visits and their participation in waiata.

Areas for improvement

Sequential programming across the school. The board and principal have identified a long-term goal to develop a sequential school-wide te reo me ōna tikanga Māori programme which supports students as they progress through year levels. Professional development for the curriculum leader and staff would support this initiative.

Consultation on achievement targets. The board regularly consults with its Māori community through written surveys. The surveys cover a number of areas and the principal analyses the feedback received. Future surveys should include consultation on achievement targets in literacy and numeracy for Māori students.

The principal and board are reviewing suggestions put forward by Māori parents who

responded to the most recent survey. They should also investigate further ways of consulting with the Māori community to develop achievement targets.

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.

Matarua School takes all steps to provide a safe emotional and physical environment for students. However, the board should review and rationalise related policies. As part of this process the complaints policy should be amended to make provision for possible complaints from parents as well as staff. The board should also ensure that support programmes for provisionally registered teachers are collaboratively developed by the principal, tutor teacher and beginning teachers.

Recommendation

ERO and the board of trustees agree that:

6.1 the board, principal and staff should continue to utilise the existing self-review systems to further improve the quality of teaching and learning programmes.

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 will review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

Signed

Charlene Scotti

Area Manager Reporting Services

for Chief Review Officer

31 January 2006

31 January 2006

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>.

Charlene Scotti

Area Manager Reporting Services

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.

Review Coverage

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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.