



**Grovetown School
Blenheim**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Grovetown School

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Grovetown School is a small country school. The make-up of the school community is changing as the roll steadily increases. There is a high percentage of boys attending.

The school curriculum is strongly focused on physical activity and caring for the environment. In response to students' initiatives, teachers, trustees, school leaders, parents and students have worked together to develop a bike track, beehives, grapevines and chicken coops to integrate with learning programmes, raise engagement and provide authentic contexts for learning.

The school has made progress in meeting the recommendations in the 2012 ERO report. The school now reports twice a year on student progress in relation to the National Standards. Teacher appraisal has been strengthened by formal observations of teaching practice. Aspects of student assessment and self review remain areas for improvement.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

Students are well engaged in their learning but some aspects of achievement and progress need to improve.

Students achieve very well in mathematics. Teachers use effective strategies to help students understand mathematical concepts and apply them in real-life situations.

Students have many opportunities to discuss their learning with their teachers. They develop learning goals together and regularly monitor their progress towards the goals. Students are happy, settled and take pride in their learning and progress.

Students who are at risk of not achieving successful learning outcomes are prioritised by teachers. Individual or small group plans are well used to ensure teaching is targeted to student needs and regularly monitored by teachers and students.

Teachers are participating in professional development in reading and writing and making changes to their teaching in these areas. This includes a greater focus on supporting students, particularly senior students to use their literacy skills across all learning areas.

Areas for review and development

The board, principal and teachers should further improve the quality of assessment by:

- continuing to refine existing processes and explore other useful approaches to accelerate students' National Standards achievement in reading and writing
- looking at ways of documenting school-wide student achievement and progress over time and in all learning areas
- reviewing assessment practices including when teachers make decisions and report to parents about students' progress and achievement against the National Standards, particularly in Years 1 to 3
- extending assessment processes for literacy including increased use of nationally recognised assessments.

The board should further develop annual student achievement targets so that the school's action plans are more specific in how the progress of targeted students will be accelerated.

3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

The school makes good use of its curriculum to promote and support student learning and wellbeing.

The school's curriculum is strongly focused on developing students' interests and extending their learning. Very good use is made of the school environment, particularly the well-developed, natural outdoor area to engage students in purposeful learning.

School values of responsibility, hauora, respect and enthusiasm are well integrated into all aspects of school life. Students have supportive and respectful relationships with each other and their teachers. Teachers know each student's strengths and the best ways to help them work considerately with other students.

Teachers skilfully use students' interests to make literacy, mathematics and other curriculum areas relevant to each student's learning. They provide programmes that are practical, challenging and that require students to be inclusive and value the opinions and ideas of others.

Teachers use a range of approaches to get to know their students well and the ways that they prefer to learn. The teachers discuss students' strengths and needs to ensure they are well supported in their learning.

Students are actively involved in all decisions about their learning. Teachers regularly ask students for their views and what they would like to learn next.

Parents and members of the wider community are very involved in the learning programmes. They regularly support the teachers and students in classroom programmes. They share their skills and expertise to help students increase their knowledge and understandings in a wide range of learning areas.

Areas for review and development

The principal and teachers should:

- develop systems to support teachers to inquire more deeply into the effectiveness of their teaching practices
- review and document more fully guidelines for curriculum areas beyond English and mathematics.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

The school is in the early stages of promoting educational success for Māori, as Māori.

The school has an increasing Māori roll. The board, principal and staff have taken some initiatives to establish a more bicultural school. They have asked for support from members of the local Māori community, found out about the Māori history of their area and visited the local marae. Class programmes are also including more te reo and tikanga Māori.

Māori students are achieving very well in mathematics.

Areas for review and development

The board and teachers have identified, and ERO agrees, that the next steps to increase success for Māori, as Māori include:

- consulting with Māori families about their aspirations for their children
- continuing to foster relationships with local Māori
- investigating ways that teachers can help Māori students increase their achievement in reading and writing
- continuing to integrate te reo and tikanga Māori into all aspects of the school curriculum
- developing a planned approach with parents of Māori students about key priorities for further promoting Māori, success as Māori.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school needs to strengthen a number of its governance and management practices to meet the demands of an increasing school roll and a changing community.

The board, principal, staff and wider community work well together. Families and the wider community willingly share their skills and are involved in many aspects of school life. The board and principal use a range of effective ways to keep the families and wider community informed about the school and to involve them in decision making.

A review of the teacher appraisal process is resulting in an increased focus on teaching practice. Teachers are receiving affirmation of good performance and well-targeted guidance to continue to improve teaching practices.

Areas for review and development

To meet the needs of an increasing roll and changing community the board has identified, and ERO agrees, a next step for the school is to consult with the community, staff and students to review the ongoing strategic direction of the school. The principal should continue to identify and access professional development that would support her leadership role in meeting the changing needs of the school.

ERO has also identified that the board, principal and staff would benefit from continuing to build on and deepen their understanding of self review. Better understanding and use of self review will have a positive impact on learning outcomes for all students. Extending training for trustees to better understand their governance roles and responsibilities would also be helpful.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the *ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists*. 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
- asset management.

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

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

Conclusion

The board, principal and staff are strongly focused on student wellbeing. Students achieve very well in mathematics.

The curriculum is built around the interests and needs of the students. Students have a major role in deciding what and how they learn. The school's outdoor environment is used well to engage students in learning. Many parents and community members are very involved with the school and its programmes.

Next steps for the school include improving assessment practices and self review.

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Randell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern

2 June 2015

About the School

Location	Blenheim	
Ministry of Education profile number	2851	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	49	
Gender composition	Girls 17; Boys 32	
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā Māori	42 7
Review team on site	March 2015	
Date of this report	2 June 2015	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review Education Review Education Review	February 2012 January 2009 April 2003