



OREWA NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Learning: The Link to the Future

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To the Parents and Community of Orewa North School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Orewa North School**. If you would like a copy of the full report, please download it [HERE](#) or see the ERO website <http://www.ero.govt.nz>

Education Review Report Orewa North 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?

Orewa North School is located in a community with a city growing around its boundaries. The school's previously semi-rural context, valued by the school community, is changing rapidly. The school caters for Year 1 to 6 students. Māori students make up 18 percent of the roll and there is an increasing number of students of other ethnicities.

Since ERO's 2012 report, the board of trustees has appointed a new principal who started at the beginning of 2015. He has begun to review the extent to which students are able to express their interests, strengths and aspirations and have these reflected in the school's curriculum. He is also working with all staff to enhance their professional practice. His collaborative and consultative approach is helping him to build a good understanding of the school community. This should help ensure that any change is well considered.

Previous ERO reports have identified strengths within the school. These included a positive school culture, a supportive climate and settled children. Students had reported that they enjoyed being at school and valued the learning opportunities the school offered. The school continues to benefit from high levels of parent and community support.

The 2012 ERO report also identified areas for school improvement which included developing a more bicultural approach. This report acknowledges the considerable work done to enhance the school's curriculum and promote success for Māori students. The school's Kaumatua and Māori whānau continue to play a significant role in these ongoing developments. Professional learning in literacy is also helping teachers to improve student achievement. Further improvement is necessary in the areas of governance and self review.

2. Learning

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

The school's National Standards data indicates that most students, including Māori students, continue to achieve particularly well in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison to local and

national student achievement levels. The school is well placed to achieve the Ministry of Education goal of having 85% of its students at or above National Standards by 2017.

Student achievement information is used by the school to promote learners' progress and achievement. Teachers use appropriate assessment processes to determine student achievement levels. School leaders use data to set priorities, identify professional learning and development and make resourcing decisions.

Teachers set school-wide and class achievement targets. The progress and achievement of students at risk of not achieving well is monitored. Teachers reflect on their teaching as a syndicate team and support each other to explore a range of teaching practices to help these students. The principal is now establishing specific expectations for teachers to assist them to more systematically plan for, track and report the progress and achievement of these students. School leaders recognise the value of continuing to strengthen the focus placed on outcomes for targeted students.

To promote successful learning and achievement for all students, senior leaders have increased their expectation that teachers identify and use explicit teaching strategies in their planning and practice. Teachers are also being given opportunities to review the impact of their teaching on students' progress. Improving teachers' understanding and use of assessment should help them to share achievement levels and next learning steps with their students. Teachers' use of exemplars and learning progressions displayed in classrooms will contribute to deepening student's knowledge about their individual learning. This should enable students to set more learning focused goals and to better monitor their own progress.

Students with special needs receive focused support for their learning. Students withdrawn from their classrooms receive extra learning assistance in literacy, numeracy and oracy. Additional specialist programmes support students with social, emotional and behaviour needs. A number of special needs students have individual education plans (IEPs). They receive support in class from experienced teacher aides. The SENCO works hard to provide good quality learning programmes for all of these students.

The school's introduction of *The English Language Learning Progressions* as an assessment tool is timely. Greater use of these progressions should help all teachers to better identify, monitor and plan for the progress of students who are new speakers of English.

The leadership team plan to make more effective use of the school's achievement information by deepening their analysis of it. They plan to examine trends and patterns and scrutinise syndicate and individual class level achievement data. This will provide better information to help leaders and teachers shape the school's strategic direction, curriculum development and allocation of resources.

3. Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum is effective in promoting and supporting student learning.

Strong bicultural development is extending the school's curriculum. The school's new Māori values, Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga, Ako, Kaitiakitanga, Kotahitanga and a focus on Whakataukī are being developed with the school community. These values will guide expectations for the culture of the school.

Students have good relationships with each other and their teachers. They cooperate well and classrooms are purposeful and settled environments. The inclusive school tone has a positive influence on students' wellbeing and their sense of belonging. Parents involved in the school appreciate teachers' openness and their opportunities to support children's learning.



School leaders could now consider how they could extend opportunities for all parents to learn more about the school's curriculum and how to support their children's learning at home.

Literacy and numeracy are appropriately prioritised in the curriculum. Improving student learning in writing has been a recent focus. Art, music, kapa haka and taiaha classes compliment sport and physical education programmes and students' opportunities for leadership. Kapa haka now takes place within the school day to increase student participation and reflect the value the school places on this for all students.

Professional development for teachers supports the design of a plan for delivering te reo Māori. This programme is effectively taught by a Māori teacher. It involves students and their teachers learning alongside each other. Students from Year 1 to 3 have been welcomed onto Te Henga o Marama Marae to learn about Māori tikanga. Students have an increasing understanding of New Zealand's bicultural heritage as a result of these developments.

Students have opportunities for inquiry learning about different curriculum concepts through a range of authentic contexts. Some students are developing their own inquiry questions and ideas through the focus on these concepts.

The principal and school leaders recognise that that school's curriculum could do more to respond to students' strengths, prior knowledge, interests and aspirations. Clearly documented curriculum statements and expectations are needed for all curriculum areas to give guidance to teachers. This would help teachers to more consistently implement and sustain programmes. The school is now poised to:

- undertake extensive curriculum review to ensure students experience a rich and balanced curriculum that better reflects the full expectations of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC)
- continue to provide authentic opportunities for students to enrich their inquiries and develop critical and higher order thinking skills across the curriculum
- continue to purposefully integrate information and communication technologies (ICT) to extend and enhance learning opportunities for students.

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

Orewa North School has many effective ways of promoting educational success for Māori as Māori. Accessing a range of successful and appropriate professional learning and extending the skills of staff has supported the school's genuine commitment to building its bicultural responsiveness and capacity.

School strategies, including close connectedness with Te Herenga Waka o Orewa Marae, and careful attention to the perspectives of the school's Kaumatua and whānau have made an important contribution to building bicultural approaches. Kaumatua and whānau play a key role in school powhiri, provide cultural support and skills and are inspiring role models for Māori students. Importantly, the school provides leadership opportunities for Māori students and promotes and monitors their achievement.

The school recognises the positive impact that bicultural school practices, curriculum content and the use of tikanga and te reo Māori can have on Māori student language, culture and identity. Good progress is being made in acknowledging all three within the school. School leaders could consider how they can build on the strengths of their key Māori resource people to extend and strengthen partnership with whānau. Strengthened partnership with whānau would enable them to contribute to decision making and share what they want for their children.

School leaders could also continue to promote educational success for Māori as Māori through their strategic plan, specifying significant and important outcomes.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

The new principal is continuing to improve school performance. As a result, the school is well positioned to sustain its strengths and to embark on further development. The principal is establishing positive relationships with the school and community. He is developing clarity for staff and students around expectations and responsibilities. Appraisal and professional development processes are being developed with school leaders and teachers. Well considered and school-wide teacher professional development has begun.

The principal and senior leadership team are working collaboratively and positively as they embark on new initiatives to sustain and improve the school's performance. The leadership team also plan to enhance their professional skills so that they can purposefully inspire and facilitate new development within and across their teams.

The board of trustees recognise that school governance needs to grow and develop. This report identifies a number of governance weaknesses to do with self review, procedures for appointing staff and aspects of documentation. Trustees should undertake training to help them develop and improve their knowledge and implementation of school governance expectations. They should also review how the board operates. More formal school self evaluation and review processes would help inform trustees and improve board functioning.

The school's self-review processes would benefit from greater depth and focus on how well and effectively the school is improving outcomes for children. Increased community, staff and student contribution to reviews would also significantly improve the quality of the school's self-review processes and findings.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Code of Practice for Pastoral Care of International Students* established under *section 238F of the Education Act 1989*. No international students were enrolled at the time of the ERO review.

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.

During the course of the review ERO identified weaknesses in school governance. In order to address these, the board of trustees with the principal must ensure that the school:

- maintains an ongoing programme of self review in relation to policies, plans and programmes [National Administration Guidelines 2 (b)].

To improve current practices, the board should:

- keep clear documentation of any student stand-downs and suspensions and record the provision of appropriate in-class and wider school support and outcomes for these students
- ensure public meetings maintain the privacy of individuals and improve the recording of minutes when the public is excluded from board meetings
- ensure compliance with its legal obligations and appropriately implement and review policies and procedures.

Conclusion

The new principal at Orewa North School is working collaboratively and inclusively with staff, students and parents to sustain the school's strengths and implement change. He has increased the school's emphasis on providing focused teaching to improve outcomes for students, particularly those at risk of not achieving. Further growth and development of school self-review and governance practices is very likely to promote improvements in school performance.

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



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