

**Ward School
Ward, Marlborough**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Ward 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?

Ward School caters for students in Years 1 to 8. Students are central to developing the school's culture and improving students' learning and wellbeing. This reflects a collaborative and reflective approach to school improvement for the benefit of students.

Ward is a farming community with a well established history. The school has strong links with the community and there is a family atmosphere within the school. A new principal was appointed in July 2013. The board chair and most trustees are new to the board. The school is attractively maintained and well resourced. It hosts the community library and a swimming pool.

2 Learning

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

Teachers effectively support students to learn and progress at their own level. Teachers use a good range of assessment tools to accurately identify students' learning needs, and to design programmes that will meet individual learning needs. They use a good range of assessment tests. The annual assessment plan makes sure there is thorough coverage of assessment in literacy and mathematics. Professional development has helped teachers improve their understanding and use of assessment practices.

Students set goals for their learning and teachers help them to monitor their progress and achievement through regular feedback. Teachers help students to make decisions about their learning and to learn at their own pace. Students are supported to take increasing responsibility for their learning. Students with special needs are well supported and included in class programmes.

Parents can be involved in a learning partnership with their children through conferences. They are kept well informed about the progress their children are making and how they can better support learning at home.

Achievement information reported to the board shows that most students, including Māori students, achieve above National Standards when compared with other students nationally, especially in reading.

The principal and teachers have identified the next step to make sure their judgements for National Standards are accurate is to develop guidelines that will help teachers increase consistency over time, and with teachers in other schools.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum effectively provides students with a wide range of learning opportunities within and beyond the school. Teachers give strong emphasis to learning in literacy and mathematics. Students said they particularly like their involvement in visual arts and drama programmes. All students have access to specialist teaching in music. A strength of the wider curriculum is the range of opportunities that students have to participate in sporting and cultural events, and excursions.

Curriculum documents give teachers clear guidance about learning expectations for students in each curriculum area, and the most appropriate teaching methods teachers can use to achieve these expectations.

Teachers have actively changed the environment to better support students' learning needs. This is helping students to make better use of learning spaces for group and individual learning activities. Students have increased access to information and communication technologies that is enhancing their learning. There are many learning prompts around classrooms that help students increase their independence in learning.

Students have many opportunities to improve their leadership skills and to contribute to improving the learning environment for all students. Students' opinions are frequently gathered through meetings and surveys. They work with each other, and with teachers to set appropriate behaviour guidelines. The student council contributes significantly to school operations, school events, and to achieving a positive school culture. Older students support younger students in a collaborative environment.

The principal and teachers have identified next steps to improve the school's curriculum. These include:

- deciding what they will assess in the inquiry learning programme, and how they will monitor and evaluate students' progress and achievement across learning areas
- extending bicultural perspectives across the school's curriculum.

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

The board and principal have developed an education plan that is improving the support for Māori students to achieve as Māori. The plan gives school-wide direction that is linked to the school's vision. There is increased use of te reo Māori by students and teachers and there are more opportunities for all students to learn about and value tikanga and te reo Māori.

The kapa haka group is active and students perform at the local cultural festival.

Teachers are well supported by professional development and the services of outside expertise. Good use has been made of Ministry of Education resources.

The Māori education plan identifies the next step is to further consult with Māori whānau to seek feedback on the development plan and to determine aspirations for their children.

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 board chairperson and trustees work effectively together and with the principal and staff. Trustees have surveyed the community to inform future directions for the school. They are seeking further training to improve their understanding of governance roles and responsibilities.

The new principal has capably managed change to important areas of school operations that impact positively on students' learning and wellbeing. He works collaboratively with and supports teachers well to achieve high quality learning and teaching. Teachers are given many opportunities to grow their leadership skills that benefit students and their learning.

The principal and teachers have established a clear process for review that is being effectively used to improve learning and teaching. Review is regular and inclusive of all teachers. Teachers use student feedback and achievement information to review and improve their teaching. The outcomes of review are used to make improvements for students' learning and wellbeing.

Recent changes to teachers' appraisal processes are helping teachers to improve outcomes for students. Teachers are supported to extend their range of teaching approaches. They are frequently observed and receive specific feedback about their teaching. This helps them to set appropriate personal goals for improvement.

ERO and the board have agreed that it is appropriate for the new board and principal to now review the school's charter to make sure it provides clear strategic direction for the school's future. This should include:

- simplifying the vision and values to help students better understand how school values can support their learning
- improving the ways that school goals and values are linked to students' achievement and wellbeing.
- changing the way the principal reports to the board so that progress against board goals can be better monitored and evaluated.

The principal and teachers have recently completed important and necessary reviews. The next steps to extend self review are to:

- prioritise long-term and short-term reviews
- develop a plan that will make self-review manageable
- develop a sound research base for self 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.

Conclusion

Ward School provides high quality learning and teaching within a safe and inclusive learning environment. Students are central to developing the school's culture and improving their learning opportunities. The school's curriculum ensures students focus well on improving their learning in literacy and mathematics. They experience a wide range of learning experiences within and beyond the school. The school is well led by trustees and the principal who support a culture of reflection and improvement. There is strong support from parents and the community.

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



Graham Randell
National Manager Review Services
Southern Region

3 July 2014

About the School

Location	Ward, Marlborough	
Ministry of Education profile number	3067	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	33	
Gender composition	Boys 18; Girls 15	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā Māori	22 11
Review team on site	May 2014	
Date of this report	3 July 2014	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review Education Review Education Review	April 2011 November 2007 May 2005