

Parua Bay School Education Review

- 1 Context
- 2 Learning
- 3 Curriculum
- 4 Sustainable Performance
- School Statistics

1 Context

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

Parua Bay School is a semi-rural school located near Whangarei. The school provides education for students from Years 1 to 8. The coastal setting and well maintained grounds provide an attractive environment and meaningful contexts for learning, particularly through the school's commitment to its enviro-school programme.

Students show a sense of well-being and pride in the school. They are confident, articulate and enjoy positive relationships with each other and their teachers. Students participate enthusiastically in classroom activities, and are able to work independently and co-operatively. Parents and whānau are welcomed in the school and have opportunities to contribute to school life in many ways.

At the time of the 2011 ERO review the school had a new principal and a number of improvement initiatives were being developed, particularly in terms of teaching and learning. The school responded positively to the development areas identified in the ERO report and has continued to implement significant changes since then.

There have been further changes in leadership during 2014. An interim principal managed the school during terms 2 and 3. A new principal began in term 4, just prior to this ERO review. Leadership changes have meant that some initiatives and new systems are yet to be consolidated. However, there are good practices in place in the school and staff are now in a position to strengthen and embed these.

The school is preparing for significant property development in 2015 to cater for ongoing roll growth. Planned new classrooms will provide an opportunity to develop modern learning environments to support the school's future direction for teaching and learning.

2 Learning

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

The school is using achievement information increasingly well to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

Students are becoming increasingly involved in their own learning. They can talk about the focus and purpose of their learning. Teachers are developing strategies to support students to understand their learning goals and to discuss their progress and achievement. School leaders are now focusing on consolidating these good practices more consistently across the school. Teachers are continuing to explore ways in which they can further develop student ownership of their learning.

Teachers are making better use of student assessment information. They monitor the progress and achievement of all students closely and use this information to plan teaching programmes. They identify individuals and groups of students who would benefit from additional support.

The school continues to strengthen learning partnerships with parents and whānau. School leaders have trialled formats for reporting student achievement to parents. They acknowledge that some aspects of written reports require further development so that they provide parents with clear information about the National Standards.

The board is receiving more useful and more regular information about student achievement and progress. School leaders and trustees discuss current student achievement information and set targets relevant to groups of learners and curriculum areas.

The school's student achievement information indicates that most students are achieving at or above the National Standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Senior leaders are aware of the need to implement strategies to help Māori students and boys to improve their learning. A recent focus on more targeted teaching and learning in writing is beginning to raise achievement in this curriculum area. The school is part of the Te Whanga Learning and Change Network whose current focus is raising achievement in writing for students in local schools.

The school should now consolidate its assessment processes and continue to strengthen the use of student achievement information by:

- establishing processes to ensure that school-wide student achievement data is robust

and reliable

- developing clear systems for collating and analysing student achievement data to better inform specific targets and goals and enable long term comparative analysis of achievement.

ERO supports the principal's intention to seek external support to clarify systems and processes for the management of assessment information.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum promotes and supports student learning well.

School curriculum programmes reflect all learning areas and the key competencies in The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). A current emphasis on literacy and mathematics supports the school's focus on raising student achievement in these areas. Teachers ensure a balanced approach to other learning areas, which are integrated within broad learning contexts and implemented through an inquiry learning approach. School curriculum documents provide clear and comprehensive guidelines for teachers. School leaders are currently reviewing how teachers can best use these guidelines to support teaching and learning.

The curriculum reflects the importance the school places on environmental education. The enviro-schools programme provides contexts for meaningful learning, and fosters students' knowledge of the bi-cultural heritage of New Zealand. Other features of the curriculum include a strong emphasis on education outside the classroom, sports and the ongoing development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.

The Parua Bay School values are promoted through the curriculum and contribute to the school's positive learning culture. Many leadership opportunities are provided for senior students. Teachers continue to move towards an increasingly student-centred curriculum.

School leaders provide good support for teachers to innovate and improve their practice, within a growing culture of collaboration. A well considered and planned approach to professional development has supported curriculum development and implementation. Teachers are encouraged to reflect and inquire into their practice.

ERO affirms the principal and senior leaders' aim to increase consistency in practice by:

- extending and clarifying the schools shared understandings about teaching and learning
- using the many examples of good practice evident in the school as models for other teachers
- further developing teacher appraisal processes.

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

Māori students in the school are well engaged in learning, in school activities and in leadership roles. There are opportunities for students to be proud of their language, culture

and identity. The school's kapa haka group and pōwhiri provide additional leadership opportunities for Māori students, and encourage all students to understand and value New Zealand's bicultural heritage.

Senior leaders and the board have developed effective relationships and communication with the school's Māori parents and community. They have consulted informally and formally to gain whānau voice and input into school policy and learning programmes.

Teachers use Ministry of Education resources and collaborative approaches to support their inclusion of bicultural perspectives in teaching and learning programmes. Some teachers use te reo frequently in classroom interactions. In previous years staff with strengths in te reo Māori me nga tikanga Māori have provided leadership in these areas. School leaders should now consider strategies to strengthen all teachers' confidence and capability in te reo me nga tikanga Maori, to enhance success for Māori students.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is continuing to build its capacity to sustain and improve its performance.

The school vision provides staff with a clear basis for goal and direction setting. Teachers participate in professional development to support the achievement of school goals and focuses.

The school board is made up of experienced and newer trustees with a range of skills to represent the community and govern effectively. Trustees are knowledgeable about school operations. They access training opportunities and have sought external support and guidance when needed.

Reflective practice is evident at all levels of the school. Reporting to the board has improved in recent years and assurance processes are in place. School leaders and trustees are continuing to extend ways of communicating and consulting with groups within the school community. They use information from parents, whānau, staff and students to inform strategic decisions.

Clear policies and procedures provide a useful framework for governance and guide school operations. Policy review processes are established. The school's charter, strategic and annual plans guide programmes and practices and are regularly discussed at board meetings. Trustees review the effectiveness of their own governance performance.

The principal and board agree that they could further refine and strengthen self-review processes. ERO suggests that the board and school leadership consider accessing external support to help clarify their understanding and use of self-review processes. Improvements could include:

- establishing formal processes to plan and guide formal self review
- documenting self-review activity and its outcomes and making more evident the links between self-review outcomes and the school's strategic goals.

ERO and the school agree that other key steps to support sustainability and ongoing improvement are:

- developing leadership capacity to sustain improvements
- prioritising initiatives to ensure they are embedded in ways that are manageable, cohesive and coherent

- increasing clarity and transparency in systems and processes.

The board has agreed to include the areas identified for improvement in this report in its 2015 charter, strategic and annual planning process, and to forward these to ERO. Documenting and prioritising these actions should support the new principal and the board as they strengthen systems, develop clarity and consistency in practices, and embed strategies for ongoing improvement.

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.

To further improve practice, trustees should ensure that all documents provide sufficient detail to evidence the board's governance assurance role and processes.

Conclusion

Students at Parua Bay School experience varied learning opportunities within a positive school climate. Significant changes in recent years have strengthened teaching and learning.

Although leadership changes have slowed the consolidation of some initiatives, the school is now positioned to ensure clarity and consistency in its systems and embed good practices to enhance further school development.

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

Dale Bailey
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Northern Region

15 December 2014

School Statistics

Location	Parua Bay, Whangarei	
Ministry of Education profile number	1080	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	264	
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	Maori	23%
	NZ European Pākehā	64%
	British	6%
	Pacific	2%
	other	5%
Review team on site	November 2014	
Date of this report	15 December 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	September 2011
	Education Review	June 2010
	Education Review	April 2007