

EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
RED BEACH SCHOOL

JUNE 2008

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

1. 1. About the School

Location	Red Beach, Rodney District
Ministry of Education profile number	1194
School type	Contributing Primary (Years 1-6)

Decile rating ¹ [1]	9
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated entitlement	42.8
Other	0
Number of teachers	42
School roll	612
Number of international students	7
Gender composition	Girls 49%, Boys 51%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 90%, Māori 3%, Samoan 2%, Asian 3%, other 2%
Special features	Attached Special Needs Unit; Motuora, for students with Ongoing Reviewable Resource Scheme (ORRS) funding Host School for local Resource Teachers; Learning and Behaviour, and Supplementary Learning Support Teacher
Review team on site	May 2008
Date of this report	27 June 2008
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, August 2005 Education Review, April 2002 Accountability Review, June 1998 Assurance Review, April 1995

2. 2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Red Beach School provides high quality education for students from Years 1 to 6. The principal is the professional leader of the school and, together with senior managers and the board, skilfully guides the implementation of the school vision. Students are capable, confident, and proud of their learning progress and achievement. Teachers have high expectation of students' learning and behaviour. Students with identified learning needs receive good support, including those who attend the well managed special needs unit, Motuora.

Students benefit from the consistently high standards of teaching evident in classrooms. The school's well resourced learning environment enriches the curriculum. Student

¹[1] Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.

achievement overall is well above national benchmarks in reading and numeracy. Teachers work collegially to plan classroom programmes that promote shared values and key learning competencies. A strong professional culture underpins the work of teachers and fosters ongoing reflection and self review.

Recent school-wide initiatives are impacting positively on student engagement in learning. These new developments focus on raising expectations in teaching and learning, and include skills for life-long learning and formative assessment approaches. The curriculum is designed to help students make connections in their learning and become self-motivated and critical thinkers. Teachers make good use of analysed achievement data to monitor students' learning progress, and are strengthening the use of learning intentions and success criteria. These strategies enable students to set goals and gain greater understanding of their achievements.

Planning, reporting and target setting is well developed and closely aligned to the school vision. These robust management systems promote regular self review and evaluation with a focus on continual improvement. Analysed information enables the board to evaluate its own strategic goals. Recent board training has raised trustees' awareness of school governance processes. As a consequence, the board makes well informed decisions for supporting staff and students, and for extending learning opportunities.

Designing and implementing a plan for the future has been a key goal for the board and the staff over the past three years. Staff, students and community have contributed to the establishment of shared goals for school development. In discussion with ERO, the school vision of a "*a community empowering life long learners to achieve and make a difference*" and its impact on school operations and outcomes for students, was selected as a focus for this report. In addition, the review examined the school's programme of professional learning and development, its progress in supporting the achievement of Māori students, and its provisions for maintaining a safe physical and emotional environment.

Very good progress is evident in the ways that the vision permeates school operations. School leaders have made good use of the New Zealand Curriculum in developing an implementation plan, and reviewing current teaching and learning practices. Literacy, numeracy, communication technology and inquiry learning have been strengthened through continuous, school-wide development and review. Transparent consultation, educational research and professional development have been used effectively throughout this process.

In the next stage of school development, the school's effective self-review strategies will enable the community, students and staff to identify and plan relevant learning experiences across each of the curriculum learning areas. As an effective learning community they are well prepared to consider and plan for this next phase of school improvement.

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 is likely to review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

3. 3. The Focus of the Review

Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall. The school seeks to empower students as life-long learners; experiencing success in a range of endeavours that enable them to make a difference. This broad definition of achievement guides school assessment, target setting, and planning and reporting practices. The school collects both quantitative and qualitative information about student achievement and progress. These data are used effectively for self review and programme evaluation.

Student achievement in reading and numeracy is above national benchmarks. Annual achievement targets in literacy and numeracy have been attained each year since 2005. Rather than continuing to increase these same targets, it could be more useful for the principal to more specifically target identified cohorts. This could provide analysed information on the progress, for example, of different year levels or ability groups. Or, it might be useful to compare the progress of students who enter the school as new entrants with those who transition from other schools.

The school's variance reports for 2006 and 2007 presents an analysis of students' understanding of life-long learning qualities. This qualitative data, gathered from interviewing students at each year level, indicates positive shifts in students' understanding and awareness of the factors that influence to life-long learning. Teachers report anecdotally that students make greater connections in their learning as a result of using these learning competencies. Professional observations about students' knowledge of healthy eating and enjoyment of physical activity also contribute to what the school knows about student achievement.

Teachers have contributed to the development of achievement indicators. Developing success criteria, together with students, has increased the reliability of assessing achievement and progress in writing, behaviour, values and learning skills. The collaboration of staff in benchmarking achievement levels increases the validity and usefulness of this qualitative data.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Red Beach 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 Red Beach School.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus area for the review:

- • the extent to which the school's vision of "*a community empowering life long learners to achieve and make a difference*" impacts on students, staff and the board, and is aligned to school practices.

ERO's findings in this area is set out below.

The extent to which the school's vision impacts on students, staff and the board, and is aligned to school practices

Background

The school's 2008 progress statement describes the process of developing a new school vision over a three-year period from 2005. In consultation with staff, students and members of the school community, the board adopted a vision for the school as "*a community empowering life long learners to achieve and make a difference*". Over the past three years the principal, board and staff have worked collectively to embed the vision into the school curriculum, through teaching practice, achievement targets, and planning and reporting systems.

School leaders emphasise that each aspect of the vision; community, empowerment, lifelong learning, achievement and making a difference, has been carefully considered through the consultation process and given special meaning in the life of the school. The five concepts have been depicted visually and graphically and incorporated into school practices. Students have been active participants in contributing to the school's vision for the future.

The board used the opportunity of ERO's external review to seek feedback on the alignment and impact of the vision on school performance.

Student progress and achievement

The school continues to collect individual student achievement data on literacy and numeracy. Achievement reports to the board indicate that targets for improving student learning outcomes are achieved. The variance report from 2007, demonstrates that 88% of students in Years 2 to 6 are reading at or above expectations for their age. Of these students, 93% achieved at expected levels in numeracy and 87% achieved expected levels in written language.

Over the past two years teachers have also collated data on targets based on the school vision. Qualities of '*life-long learning*' have been specified and baseline data collected through interviewing students. Targets measured in 2007 indicate that 75% of students demonstrate progress in understanding and using these qualities. Student achievement data is also used to indicate progress in developing '*Assessment for learning*' skills.

The use of qualitative data is commendable as it demonstrates to students and their parents that the school values key learning competencies such as planning, motivation, perseverance, reflection, questioning and taking risks in learning.

Areas of good performance

Development of the vision. The vision has been developed progressively over the last three years. Consultation and involvement of staff, students, parents and the community at each stage of its development has assisted in a building a shared understanding of its purpose and intentions. The vision statement is well known amongst students, who can identify its key components.

Impact on daily life. The vision, which encompasses learning competencies, values, and aspirations for the future, is highly visible throughout classrooms, on school documentation and in displays. The words are strengthened by the visual symbols that reflect local community features. Constant reference to the vision by school staff reinforces its impact on the daily life of all members of the school community, including students.

Well documented expectations. The vision is clearly evident in all key school procedures. It forms the basis of the school's prospectus, the teaching manual and the curriculum plan. Reports to parents on student progress emphasis the acquisition of values and competencies. The vision underpins the board's strategic plan, performance expectations, annual goals and reporting requirements.

Alignment with management practice. Over the past three years the school vision has been thoughtfully and systematically embedded within management systems and practices. It has been a major focus of teacher development, classroom teaching, and student assessment. In particular, the vision has impacted on self-review practices. Ongoing evaluation and reflection contribute information for use in annual management planning and reporting.

Alignment with the national curriculum. The school vision is forward-looking and closely aligned with the strategic overview of the national curriculum. The New Zealand curriculum for schools has a three-year implementation phase from 2007 to 2010. The school is working well in advance of this timeframe and its curriculum plans mirror expectations for incorporating values and key competencies within student learning programmes.

Involvement of students. Students demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and take pride in the school. They are consulted about developments and as a result express good understanding of the changes that have occurred in teaching and learning. The new vertical learning communities have increased opportunities for students of different ages to learn from one another and share responsibilities.

Learning community. The principal and senior managers model high levels of professionalism. They are familiar with recent education research about teaching and learning and contribute nationally to discussions on school leadership and development. They support the professional growth of teachers and have high expectations of the school as a community of learners.

Intentional teaching. The school vision has guided the development of new teaching and learning approaches. Teachers are focused on developing learning intentions with students. These strategies allow students to identify their own successes and set new learning goals. Students are developing life-long skills for managing their learning and recognising their achievements.

Student centred-learning approaches. The commitment of staff to empowering students as life-long learners is evident in their changing approaches in classroom management. Many teachers report that the emphasis on empowerment is significantly changing the locus of control in their classroom. Many teachers are now confidently adopting more student-centred approaches.

Student enjoyment of learning. Teachers and students enjoy positive and constructive learning conversations. They acknowledge that the emphasis is more on students taking responsibility for managing their own learning. The increased focus on learning has reduced the need for teachers to use disciplinary procedures for managing classroom behaviour.

Area for improvement

Extending the school overview for learning across all areas of the national curriculum. The school's curriculum has clearly identified literacy, numeracy, arts and physical education programmes. It would now be useful to review the integrated components of the learning programme to ensure that other areas of the national curriculum are more fully developed. Curriculum leaders should continue to work alongside teachers to ensure that the new formative assessment approaches of the Assessment for Learning contract are also utilised in each area of learning.

4. 4. 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 Red Beach 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.

The Achievement of Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of Māori students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement.

Areas of progress

Maintaining good practices. Approximately 3% of students identify a Māori heritage, one percent less than reported in the 2005 ERO review. The good management strategies for supporting the achievement of Māori student reported in 2005 have been sustained, including;

- • personal invitations to Māori parents and whānau to attend organised hui;
- • reporting patterns of Māori student achievement to parents and the board;
- • responding to recommendations from Māori parents about learning support; and
- • maintaining a popular kapahaka group, supported with local expertise.

Progress in using te reo Māori. Staff have shared expertise in using greetings and basic instructions in te reo Māori. This has been a deliberate focus to support teachers, who now appear more confident and encouraging of te reo Māori being spoken in classrooms.

Ongoing monitoring of student achievement. The regular collection and analysis of achievement information enables senior teachers to compare the achievement of Māori students with that of their peers. Māori students demonstrate achievement similar to that of their non-Maori peers. No disparity in attendance or student management matters is evident.

Area for improvement

Bi-cultural learning contexts. School managers should review the extent to which the curriculum provides opportunities for students to learn about New Zealand's bi-cultural heritage.

The Achievement of Pacific Students

During the review ERO evaluated the extent to which the school has knowledge of and strategies for promoting the achievement of its Pacific students. There are 11 Samoan students at the school. This group is too small for any reliable analysis of data, or to support any valid comparisons with the achievement of other student cohorts. Individual Pacific student achievement is monitored and reported to parents, consistent with school-wide practice.

Professional Learning and Development

In this review ERO evaluated how well Red Beach School is managing professional learning and development. This includes how well the school makes decisions about professional learning and development, the extent to which these decisions are influenced by principles of effective practice, and the changes that have occurred for students and teachers as a result.

Background

The board has a strong commitment to supporting the professional growth of teachers. The annual budget includes opportunities for teacher's individual professional learning and development (PLD), as well as initiatives designed to improve teaching and learning across the school.

The 2005 ERO report acknowledged that the effective implementation of numeracy and ICT developments were benefiting students. These previous developments have been well managed and the benefits sustained while new professional learning and development initiatives have been introduced over the past three years.

Areas of good performance

Well-coordinated management of PLD. The overall programme for PLD is comprehensive and well planned. The key strategies of 'Assessment for Learning' (AFL) and 'Life Long Learning' (LLL) are well integrated with the school's vision for empowering students as learners.

Integration of PLD with performance management. Observation of classroom teaching practice is integrated with teachers' performance appraisal. This good practice ensures that teacher's individual appraisal goals are based on negotiated priorities for improving performance and linked with PLD targets.

Professional tone of the school. The principal and other school leaders model reflective practices and goal setting, and take advantage of professional learning opportunities. They provide professional leadership for the school and value the contributions made by staff to the school's professional development programme.

Strategies for improving practice. Staff have good strategies for supporting each other's professional learning. Working in groups of three, they mentor each other as they give feedback about classroom observations and effective teaching practice. Many facilitate clinics related to their specific areas of expertise as part of the school's ongoing programme of PLD.

Deliberate teaching. Teachers have developed new skills in making learning more explicit to students. The co-construction of learning intentions and development of success criteria enables teachers to share expectations for learning with students. Teachers are reporting significant increases in student engagement and motivation as a result of these deliberate teaching strategies.

Programmes for beginning teachers. Provisionally registered and beginning teachers are well supported. Their advice and guidance programmes are documented and well managed. Beginning teachers are valued by the school and are appropriately prepared for full registration by experienced supervising tutors.

Area for improvement

Analysis of future professional development and learning. As the school enters its next stage of curriculum development, it would be useful to identify teachers' individual strengths and expertise in relation to each of the national curriculum areas. There could

be good opportunities for curriculum leadership in these areas that would complement the leadership currently provided by the AFL lead teachers and by the numeracy and ICT curriculum leaders.

Provision for International Students

Compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students and the Provision of English Language Support

Red Beach School is a signatory to the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. This is a requirement of all schools that enrol international students in terms of the Act. Schools are also required to provide English language support for their international students.

The school accepts groups of up to ten students from Korea for the period of a school term. There are currently seven international students enrolled for Term 2. These students have a group induction during their first week in the school. They are allocated approved home-stays and, following the group orientation, they are individually placed in selected Year 5 and 6 classes. The students are required to provide evidence of their plans to return to their home country at the end of their stay.

The school complies with all aspects of the Code concerning pastoral care and accommodation. However, there are some aspects of the programme provided by the school that are not entirely consistent with Code requirements for group instruction.

Areas of good performance

Experienced support agencies. The school engages experienced agents and tutors to assist them in supporting international students. The agency arranges after school language tuition at school and also visits each home-stay parent every two weeks. The Korean tutors have their own room at the school and work closely with the international student co-ordinator. First language support for the students, including guidance and counselling, is provided each day for two hours after school.

Language development. International students are assigned two buddies, chosen by the class teacher. An English as a second language (ESOL) teacher assesses and monitors the students and liaises with the classroom teachers who provide close supervision. Teachers report a positive attitude to having international students in the classroom. They consider that students make progress in English language acquisition over the course of a term. Some home-stay parents expressed a similar view, noting improvements gained since students first arrived in their home.

Social activities. International students arrive in New Zealand with some experience in speaking English. They are able to express their needs and make friends with students in the class. They enjoy social opportunities and join in a range of activities including sport and cultural experiences.

Area for improvement

Programme for students. The placement of international students in separate classes is not entirely consistent with Code requirements for group instruction. However, as the Ministry of Education is currently undertaking a revision of the Code with respect to this requirement, it would be prudent of the board to maintain contact with the Ministry and respond to any changes in the revised Code.

5. 5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Red Beach 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.

The school has developed new systems that allow students greater involvement in monitoring interactions between peers. A peer support programme, the Wave Riders, has been effectively implemented. Year 5 and 6 student volunteers are trained as mediators to help resolve conflict. The student mediators can be easily identified by students in the school grounds and can be asked to assist by individuals or groups during breaks and lunch times. The values outlined in the school vision: respect; inclusion; care and honesty (RICH); are encouraged and reinforced through the role of the student mediators.

Compliance

As a result of recent board training, trustees are undertaking a restructuring of the school's policy and procedures framework. This process has provided a timely opportunity for trustees to review the management and governance relationship, and the purpose of accountability and reporting. The board should ensure that policies relate

closely to the National Administration Guidelines, and that management reports provide assurance of how NAGs are implemented.

The board should improve current practice by clarifying the weekly “Values in Action” programme. Despite reassurance to parents that the programme is not ‘religious instruction’, the Education Act requires the school to be closed for instruction during these times while volunteers deliver a Bible-based values classroom programme. Information to parents should more clearly identify options for withdrawing children from these programmes.

6. 6. Recommendations

ERO, the board and school managers agree that the next steps in curriculum development should involve the staff in developing a structure and rationale, linked to the school vision, that embraces essential learning experiences in each of the key learning areas of the national curriculum.

7. 7. 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 is likely to review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

Signed

Elizabeth Ellis
Area Manager
for Chief Review Officer

27 June 2008

27 June 2008

To the Parents and Community of Red Beach School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office’s latest report on **Red Beach School.**

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Future Action

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ERO is likely to review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

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>.

Elizabeth Ellis
Area Manager
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.
