

**SUPPLEMENTARY REVIEW REPORT:
RAKAIA SCHOOL
FEBRUARY 2007**

- 1. Background**
 - 2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation**
 - 3. Findings**
 - 4. Recommendations**
 - 5. Future Action**
- Community Page**

Disclaimer

Individual ERO school and early childhood centre reports are public information and may be copied or sent electronically. However, the Education Review Office can only guarantee the authenticity of original documents which have been obtained in hard copy directly from either the local ERO office or ERO Corporate Office in Wellington. Please consult your telephone book, or see the ERO web page, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>, for ERO office addresses.

1. 1. Background

Introduction

A supplementary review is undertaken at the discretion of an Area Manager in the Education Review Office (ERO).

A supplementary review evaluates the extent and effectiveness of actions a school has taken towards addressing issues specified in a previous education review and/or any additional areas identified since that review.

This supplementary review report was prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

Terms of Reference

This supplementary review is based on an evaluation of the performance of the Rakaia School board of trustees and management in relation to areas identified in the June 2005 ERO report or issues identified since that review. The terms of reference for this review are to investigate:

- curriculum management and review;
- assessment practices;

- performance management;
- safety of the school environment;
- complaints procedures; and
- any other matters arising during the review.

About the School

Location	Rakaia, Mid Canterbury	
Ministry of Education profile number	3480	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1-8)	
Decile rating ¹ [1]	3	
Teaching staff:		
Roll generated	4.8	
entitlement	0.15	
Other	5	
Number of teachers		
School roll	78	
Gender composition	Girls 43; Boys 35	
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā 71; Māori 7	
Review team on site	December 2006	
Date of this report	23 February 2007	
Previous ERO reports	Supplementary Review 2005	June
	Education Review September 2003	
	Discretionary Review 2001	February
	Accountability Review 2000	June
	Discretionary Review Accountability Review May 1998	June 1999
	Assurance Audit 1996	February
	Assurance Audit 1993	August

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

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

The board, the principal who was appointed at the school at the beginning of 2006, and the staff have responded positively in addressing the recommendations contained in the 2005 supplementary review report of the Education Review Office. They have made significant progress in addressing previous concerns about curriculum management, assessment procedures, performance management and students' behaviour. The school is in a period of positive change and is building on an increasingly stable learning environment. Parents, students and teachers are confident about the leadership being provided at the school.

The new principal has developed a clear vision for future development. Staff and the board support the direction and expectations for improvement. They understand what needs to be done. The teachers are responding constructively to change and development. They are working as an effective team. Relationships are positive among the students, trustees and teachers. These groups told ERO that there had been a significant improvement at the school in late 2005 and during 2006. These attitudes result in an affirming school culture.

Senior students confirmed that they have increased responsibility and leadership opportunities in the school. A school council, comprising one representative from each class, has been introduced in 2006. Students appreciate the increasing number of sporting, outdoor education and curriculum opportunities in which they can take part.

There is now an effective performance management system for the teachers. Staff appraisal is ongoing, thorough and closely linked to classroom performance and professional development. The principal has carried out regular observations of all teachers and maintains detailed records of any areas of need. Teachers develop personal, professional goals. They carefully evaluate their teaching. They support the appraisal process and believe it is bringing about meaningful change to their teaching practice. The principal's appraisal is thorough.

The teachers are gathering increasingly accurate information about student achievement, particularly in numeracy and literacy. They use this information to focus more closely on students' needs. Teacher-aide support is provided for those students identified to be at risk of underachieving. Teachers have clear guidelines about what and when to assess. Assessment is now used more purposefully to report to parents and the board. The board has received extensive information about student achievement in reading. The next step is to analyse the mathematics assessment information that is collected to provide a clearer picture of student achievement and progress.

Classroom teaching practice is now more consistent than in 2005, with clearer direction being provided for the teachers. Teachers are using a wider range of teaching strategies to engage students. They plan integrated units of work together based on common themes. Students told ERO they appreciate the practical and meaningful contexts that add interest and relevance to their learning. A next step is to develop more comprehensive curriculum guidelines, especially in mathematics and literacy to help ensure that students have a progressive programme and to provide teachers with clear expectations about classroom practice and curriculum coverage.

The teachers, trustees and students have worked together to develop a set of school values. These values underpin the progress that has been made in developing a more positive school culture. The principal and teachers have reviewed the behaviour management system which has resulted in the reduction of the number of incidents of poor behaviour. The students respect the school rules, and consider them to be fair and consistently implemented. They told ERO that they feel safe in the playground and that any behavioural concerns are promptly addressed. The board should now survey parents and children on a more regular basis to confirm that the environment continues to be safe.

The principal has spent some time on resolving issues that arose at the school towards the end of 2005. The board should now revise its complaints procedures to define the role of the board in dealing with complaints more precisely and to formalise procedures for bringing complaints to closure.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO will review the school again as part of the regular review cycle

3. 3. Findings

Curriculum Management and Review

Background

The 2005 supplementary review report noted that guidelines for teaching curriculum programmes had been prepared immediately prior to the review. These guidelines were not being followed by all teachers. In addition, there was no process for reviewing the impact of curriculum programmes on student learning and little assurance for the board that the New Zealand Curriculum was being taught in all classes.

Areas of progress

- *Curriculum leadership.* The principal is providing clear direction for learning and teaching. He has high expectations for further development. Teachers are focused on improving the teaching and scope of the programmes they offer. At the beginning of 2006, the principal, staff and board identified the most important ways in which they could improve the learning experiences for students. Plans for teaching, assessing and reviewing the curriculum are in place. Teachers are aware of what needs to be done and the areas needing further development.
- *Shared planning.* Teachers are sharing the planning of integrated studies. They plan a common theme for all year levels. Teachers develop learning intentions to cater for the needs of students at different achievement levels. This process is leading to increasingly consistent practice and a shared sense of purpose. For example, all students studied the theme study of 'kiwiana' that involved a whole-school production. Students told ERO that they appreciated

such real-life contexts and experiences that made their learning meaningful and interesting.

- *Meeting student's learning needs.* Teachers have a clear understanding about appropriate teaching approaches that can be used. They plan effectively to meet the needs of students in numeracy and literacy. Long-term plans ensure that students have exposure to all areas of the New Zealand Curriculum. They work regularly with students in small groups with similar learning needs. As a result, students get focused individual attention from their teacher.
- *The use of information and communication technologies (ICT).* The school is one of a group of schools involved in ICT development. The staff are undertaking professional reading and are beginning to develop new integrated approaches to teaching and learning in areas outside literacy and numeracy. Students have good opportunities to use ICT for research, planning or presentation purposes. Students also enjoy a computer programme that helps them practice and maintain basic mathematical understandings.

Areas for further improvement

- *Curriculum guidelines.* At the time of the review, there was only limited school-wide direction for teachers to follow to help them deliver high quality teaching programmes. The next step is to develop more comprehensive curriculum guidelines, especially in mathematics and literacy. This would ensure students have a coherent and continuous programme and would provide teachers with more detailed information to guide their classroom practice and help ensure curriculum coverage. [Recommendation 4.1]
- *Involving students in their own learning.* Students would benefit from more opportunities to be self-directed learners. ERO observed a few lessons that were mostly teacher directed. Although teachers share the purpose of the learning with students, they also need to give them more opportunities to assess their own and that of others work. The further use of verbal and written feedback would assist students to develop learning and thinking skills. Teachers could also share the criteria for success with students to help them understand what they need to do to improve and progress. [Recommendation 4.1]

Assessment Practices

Background

The 2005 supplementary review report indicated that the principal at the time had begun gathering and analysing student achievement information in reading, writing and spelling. However, there was some uncertainty about the accuracy of some of the assessment methods being used and the level at which students were being assessed. In addition, the needs of some under achieving students were not being sufficiently identified.

Areas of progress

- *Identifying achievement and progress.* The board is now being provided with useful achievement information. The principal and teachers have gathered and analysed reading achievement using a variety of assessment methods. Analysis at

the beginning of 2006 showed that the reading achievement of many students was below expectations. Teachers' assessment records show that achievement levels are now beginning to improve and programmes offered are making a difference.

- *Consistent classroom practice.* Clear assessment guidelines provide some good direction for teachers in assessing student work. Teachers follow a school plan that indicates what information to collect, when to collect it and how to record and use it. As a result, the teachers have gathered some worthwhile information particularly in reading.
- *Purposeful assessment.* Teachers use assessment information to group students accurately for mathematics and reading and to identify those who are underachieving. Teacher-aides provide students with extra support. Teachers are now able to report to parents on their children's achievement with increasing accuracy. The use of student portfolios of work is also providing parents with some useful information to complement written reports.

Area for further improvement

- *Analysis of student achievement in mathematics and writing.* Staff are collecting some worthwhile information in mathematics that could be used to analyse school-wide levels of student achievement and progress. Further decisions about which mathematics assessments to use and how they can be used effectively will make this information even more useful. In 2007, the teachers will begin using exemplars to help them analyse the levels of student ability in writing. This development should give teachers valuable information about how well their students are writing and which aspects of the writing process require more attention. [Recommendation 4.2]

Performance Management

Background

In 2005, the then acting principal had improved the process for managing teachers' performance. However, the guidelines that were in place were not always followed. Further development was needed in the appraisal system to improve the quality of teaching. Observations of classroom practice were also not sufficiently regular or focused and the beginning teacher programme needed to be improved. An outside provider assisted the board in appraising the performance of the principal, but this system required further documentation and rigour.

Areas of progress

- *Links from teaching practice to professional development.* Teachers are improving the quality of their teaching through ongoing professional development. For example, professional development in numeracy and literacy has increased the range and quality of strategies teachers are using. There was some variation between classes in the quality of teaching observed during the review but this variation has reduced during 2006. The appraisal process is helping teachers identify, address and improve their teaching practice.
- *Staff ownership.* Teachers are finding that the appraisal system is valuable in helping them develop and evaluate their teaching goals. Staff have good input

into, and some control over, their own appraisal. Staff meeting times are used to read about and consider best teaching practice and reflect on how this practice could be developed within the school. Teachers feel that they are working together to develop school direction and improve their teaching.

- *Structured system.* Teachers use five dimensions to guide the evaluation of their classroom practice. They consider the teaching of numeracy and literacy, their expectations for good quality teaching, the quality of the learning environment, the creation of powerful learning experiences and how well they are helping children to develop thinking skills. All teachers have carefully evaluated how well they have achieved within each of these areas of teaching. The principal carries out regular observations of each teacher, gives feedback and helps teachers set new goals for development.
- *Principal's appraisal.* The principal is appraised by an external appraiser. This is a thorough process that identifies strengths and helps him to plan the future developments and direction of the school.

Safety of the School Environment

Background

In 2005, concerns about students' playground behaviour had resulted in the implementation of a new behaviour management programme. Teachers believed that further improvements to students' behaviour were possible. There had been a high number of incidents and accidents in 2004.

Areas of progress

- *Shared values and understanding.* A set of shared values underpin interactions and relationships in the school. Expectations about acceptable behaviour on the part of the students are clear, widely understood and reinforced. Relationships among the students were positive during the review. School records indicate there are now very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Students confirmed that the environment at the school is more positive, bullying is not a problem and any concerns are quickly addressed.
- *Behaviour management system.* The principal has introduced a new behaviour management system in 2006. This system is detailed and contains clear expectations about behaviour. It establishes expectations about the consequences of unsatisfactory behaviour. The students understand what is required of them and respect the boundaries that are in place. Students told ERO that the school rules are fair and are consistently implemented.

Area for further improvement

- *Parental and student surveys.* The trustees, teachers and students spoken to by ERO confirm that the school environment is now safe for the students. As part of its self-review procedures, the board should survey parents and students on a regular basis. This process would help assure trustees that the safe physical and emotional learning and working environment continues to be provided at the school. [Recommendation 4.3]

Complaints Procedures

Background

Since the previous review, there have been some concerns about the way the board and principal deal with written complaints. ERO decided to evaluate the procedures the school uses to address parental concerns should they arise.

Area for further improvement

- *Complaints policy.* The principal has conducted a thorough investigation of previous complaints received at the school. The trustees have followed his recommendation that no further action was required to be taken by the board. The board, however, now needs to revise its complaints procedures to ensure that there are distinct lines of demarcation between the respective roles of the principal and the board in receiving and responding to complaints and that the resolution of complaints is clearly documented. [*Recommendation 4.4*]

4. 4. Recommendations

ERO and the board of trustees have developed the following recommendations to improve student achievement.

- 4.1 The principal and the teachers will continue to develop teaching guidelines for literacy and mathematics and to maintain a consistent quality of learning and teaching across the school;
- 4.2 The principal and teachers will extend the way they assess, analyse and report student achievement in learning areas beyond reading.
- 4.3 The board will survey parents and students on a regular basis to assure trustees that a safe learning environment continues to be provided at the school.
- 4.4 The board will revise its complaints procedures to ensure that the roles of the board and principal are clear and the resolution of any complaints are accurately recorded.

5. 5. 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 will review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

Isabell Sinclair Irwin *signed*
Area Manager
for Chief Review Officer

23 February 2007

23 February 2007

To the Parents and Community of Rakaia School

This supplementary review evaluates the quality of education received by students and the performance of the Board of Trustees in relation to specific terms of reference.

The Education Review Office [ERO] evaluation of Rakaia School follows.

The board, the principal who was appointed at the school at the beginning of 2006, and the staff have responded positively in addressing the recommendations contained in the 2005 supplementary review report of the Education Review Office. They have made significant progress in addressing previous concerns about curriculum management, assessment procedures, performance management and students' behaviour. The school is in a period of positive change and is building on an increasingly stable learning environment. Parents, students and teachers are confident about the leadership being provided at the school.

The new principal has developed a clear vision for future development. Staff and the board support the direction and expectations for improvement. They understand what needs to be done. The teachers are responding constructively to change and development. They are working as an effective team. Relationships are positive among the students, trustees and teachers. These groups told ERO that there had been a significant improvement at the school in late 2005 and during 2006. These attitudes result in an affirming school culture.

Senior students confirmed that they have increased responsibility and leadership opportunities in the school. A school council, comprising one representative from each class, has been introduced in 2006. Students appreciate the increasing number of sporting, outdoor education and curriculum opportunities in which they can take part.

There is now an effective performance management system for the teachers. Staff appraisal is ongoing, thorough and closely linked to classroom performance and professional development. The principal has carried out regular observations of all teachers and maintains detailed records of any areas of need. Teachers develop personal, professional goals. They carefully evaluate their teaching. They support the appraisal process and believe it is bringing about meaningful change to their teaching practice. The principal's appraisal is thorough.

The teachers are gathering increasingly accurate information about student achievement, particularly in numeracy and literacy. They use this information to focus more closely on students' needs. Teacher-aide support is provided for those students identified to be at risk of underachieving. Teachers have clear guidelines about what and when to assess. Assessment is now used more purposefully to report to parents and the board. The board has received extensive information about student

achievement in reading. The next step is to analyse the mathematics assessment information that is collected to provide a clearer picture of student achievement and progress.

Classroom teaching practice is now more consistent than in 2005, with clearer direction being provided for the teachers. Teachers are using a wider range of teaching strategies to engage students. They plan integrated units of work together based on common themes. Students told ERO they appreciate the practical and meaningful contexts that add interest and relevance to their learning. A next step is to develop more comprehensive curriculum guidelines, especially in mathematics and literacy to help ensure that students have a progressive programme and to provide teachers with clear expectations about classroom practice and curriculum coverage.

The teachers, trustees and students have worked together to develop a set of school values. These values underpin the progress that has been made in developing a more positive school culture. The principal and teachers have reviewed the behaviour management system which has resulted in the reduction of the number of incidents of poor behaviour. The students respect the school rules, and consider them to be fair and consistently implemented. They told ERO that they feel safe in the playground and that any behavioural concerns are promptly addressed. The board should now survey parents and children on a more regular basis to confirm that the environment continues to be safe.

The principal has spent some time on resolving issues that arose at the school towards the end of 2005. The board should now revise its complaints procedures to define the role of the board in dealing with complaints more precisely and to formalise procedures for bringing complaints to closure.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO will review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

When ERO has reviewed a school we encourage boards to inform their community of any follow-up action they plan to do. You should talk to the board or principal if you have any questions about this evaluation, the full ERO report or their future intentions.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Isabell Sinclair Irwin *signed*
Area Manager
for Chief Review Officer

