

Beachlands School Education Review

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

About The School

Location	Beachlands, Manukau City
Ministry of Education profile number	1224
School type	Full Primary (Year 1-8)
Decile rating	10
Teaching staff: Roll generated entitlement Other Number of teachers	23.64 24
School roll	402
Number of international students	10
Gender composition	Boys 54%, Girls 46%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 87%, Māori 10%, Tongan 1%, Samoan 1%, other 1%
Review team on site	June 2008
Date of this report	18 August 2008
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, August 2006 Education Review, June 2003 Discretionary Review, February 2000 Accountability Review, September 1998 Assurance Audit, July 1996 Assurance Audit, November 1992

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Beachlands School is located in a seaside community south of Auckland and successfully caters for Year 1 to 8 students. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained, attractively presented and reflect considerable community pride. At the time of the previous report there were many changes occurring at the school. A new leadership structure was in place, there were many new teachers and all teachers had started a professional development contract to set the learning direction of the school.

Since the 2006 ERO review the board has addressed the ERO report recommendations and made a significant amount of progress with developing an integrated curriculum. Beachlands School now has a strong sense of being a learning community. Students are achieving mostly above national age expectation in literacy and numeracy. The school community has been presented with a national Green Gold enviroschool award that involves many aspects of environmental awareness.

Students are confident, secure and articulate. They appreciate their teachers and enjoy the learning activities presented to them. There is a strong focus on students learning to the best of their ability. Relationships between children, their peers and teachers are positive and respectful and are based on the school's 'FERN' (friendship, encouragement, respect and nurturing) values. Students know each other well and relationships across the different levels of the school reflect the close-knit nature of the small community. There is a good range of co-curricular activities and many leadership opportunities. Senior students report that they believe they are well prepared for the transition to secondary school.

Teachers work collegially as a team and are enthusiastic and committed to students and their learning. Most teachers are organised, well prepared and provide students with supportive, inclusive well-resourced classrooms. Students' work is valued and displayed with pride. There is good use of achievement information to plan students' learning. Teachers have begun talking to children about the specific purpose of their lessons. They are well supported by teacher aides and other auxiliary staff. Teachers appreciate the professional development opportunities available to them. They are poised to further develop teaching practices in line with the school's curriculum model and to develop children as independent learners.

The principal is well supported by the board and has a key role in promoting the vision and strategic direction of the school. The senior managers have developed into a cohesive and mutually supportive team. The principal, with support from the associate principal, has effectively promoted the school's vision and curriculum model. Good use is made of external expertise for mentoring and supporting the principal to continue to develop the school's

learning community. The senior leadership team have complementary roles, especially in supporting students and teachers in the school. The school has useful procedures for promoting meaningful and respectful partnerships with parents and the school community.

The trustees are effective in their governance role and value and affirm staff and students at the school. They are looking confidently to the future and are fully supportive of the principal. Senior managers regularly report to the board, which assists in the board's resourcing decisions. Trustees have completed some training in their role as governors but with the arrival of new trustees it is timely to complete training as a group. Since the 2006 ERO report the trustees have consulted with their community and strengthened the principal's appraisal. Senior managers conduct exit questionnaires or interviews with leaving staff. It is timely that the board also consider conducting these interviews.

The focus area for this report is an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning for the 'Beachlands learner'. Progress towards promoting Māori and Pacific student achievement, the quality of professional learning and development, and the school's provision for international students are also evaluated. Compliance areas that have a high impact on student safety were checked during the course of the review. The report concludes with the recommendation that senior managers continue to support teachers to embed high quality teaching and learning practices and to further develop students as independent learners.

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.

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.

Teachers and senior managers expect all students to fulfil their potential by achieving at or above the national expectations for their age. Learners achieving below or above expectation are provided with a wide range of support programmes.

School managers collate and analyse student assessment information to give a school-wide view of children's achievement and to identify areas for development. School-wide information is analysed twice a year. The information gained is used to inform parents of their children's progress, plan teaching and support programmes, identify areas for teacher professional development and develop annual achievement targets in literacy and numeracy.

Most students in Years 3 to 8 are achieving at or above the school's expectations in reading, writing and the strands of mathematics. Māori and Pacific students are achieving as well as or better than other students, both within the school and in comparison to Māori and Pacific students nationally.

At the end of term one, 65% of Year 1 and 2 students were achieving below school expectations in reading. In June the teachers' assessment information showed that the students are on track for achieving the school target and should be at or above their expected national level for their age by the end of the year.

The yearly achievement targets in literacy and numeracy are set in November of the previous year. These targets for Years 3 to 8 have often been met following March of the next year after testing has been collated and analysed. Senior managers are considering using the March analysed achievement information to set the yearly targets in literacy and numeracy.

Teachers assess children's learning in curriculum areas other than literacy and numeracy against school developed criteria. These criteria are used to assess children's skill levels as a 'Beachlands learner' and in the 'learning pathways' model. Children are increasingly able to discuss their learning with teachers and assess their own work and comment on the work of peers. Teachers are using assessment information to further develop their programmes to support children as independent learners.

The senior managers use a range of national assessment tools and school criteria to measure

student achievement. While most students achieve at or above school expectations in reading, writing and mathematics the students and parent community would benefit from knowing how the school expectations and criteria relate to national standards of achievement.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Beachlands 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 selfreview information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Beachlands School.

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

- the quality of teaching and learning for the Beachlands learner.

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

The quality of teaching and learning for the Beachlands learner

Background

Senior managers and teachers have made considerable progress in the development of the school's curriculum since the 2006 ERO report. They have created an innovative teaching model with authentic learning tasks which has a focus on preparing children for the 21st century. The development of effective teaching practices and the use of external professional development in learning pathways has ensured that the notion of the 'Beachlands learner' has been a major focus in the school.

The teaching model developed within the school addresses the New Zealand Curriculum. The 'Learning Pathways' model has been well researched and is based on current best practice principles. Staff have been consulted during the development phases. They have been provided with appropriate professional development to help them to implement the new curriculum model, which encompasses planning, assessment and teaching practices. Literacy, numeracy, digital information literacy, and all other curriculum areas are interwoven with provisions related to student well-being. Now that the model is in place, the focus is on further embedding it to promote ongoing positive outcomes for students.

The board and senior managers were interested in ERO providing an independent evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. School leaders felt that this report would contribute to their own self review and encourage further dialogue about possible areas for continued development.

Student progress and achievement

See previous section on student achievement overall.

Areas of good performance

The quality of teaching. The school is characterised by effective teachers, many providing high quality learning experiences. Teachers have good routines and practices that ensure the focus is on learning. They are willing and capable of promoting student engagement in learning. This provides a stimulating environment for children to be enthusiastic learners.

Positive school culture. A positive learning climate is evident across the school. Children have pride in their learning and school environment. Teachers plan collaboratively and are collegial in their shared sense of purpose to improve student achievement. The school is a community of 'Beachlands learners'.

Relationships. Children are friendly, settled and enjoy positive relationships with their peers and teachers. Developing as a 'Beachlands learner' prepares children as life-long learners and impacts positively on their overall behaviour. The inclusive culture within the school and the establishment of positive relationships enables teachers and children to focus on learning.

Learning environment. Classroom environments are well organised and there is a settled tone in the school that is conducive to learning. Teachers provide a safe emotional learning environment that recognises children's cultural backgrounds. Children with special needs and abilities have additional support and guidance. Children are familiar with routines enabling them to feel secure to take learning risks. Most teachers have developed learning environments that prompt children's independent investigative learning.

Behaviour management. Effective classroom management focuses on children's learning as opposed to behaviour. The FERN (friendship, encouragement, respect and nurturing) strategy provides a benchmark for teachers and students. As a result of consistent behaviour management practices children feel secure in their learning environment.

Reflective practitioners. Teachers are reflective about their teaching practice and in the most effective classrooms they encourage children to reflect on their learning. Programme

evaluations are completed regularly, discussed by teachers at cluster level and used to modify classroom programmes. Team discussions are focused on how to better meet all students' learning needs.

Differentiate classroom planning. Teachers use on-going assessment information to differentiate their planning to ensure they are meeting the identified learning needs of students. On-going feedback and feedforward opportunities are completed through individual student conferences. The use of school assessment criteria is evident across the teaching programmes. Teachers use criteria in their teaching teams to moderate and level work samples to plan effective learning programmes to meet the students' learning needs. Students are able to use the same criteria assess and reflect on their learning and plan their next learning steps.

Perceptual motor programme. All students in the Year one and two classes and students with moderate learning needs attend daily perceptual motor classes. The activities assist children with their gross motor skills and support learning. Children enjoy and benefit from this focused physical activity.

Environmental focus. Students have a raised awareness of environmental issues. All school learning topics have an environmental focus that ensures life long awareness of environmental issues. The school was granted a national environmental Green Gold award in 2008. This award focuses on genuine student participation and a Māori perspective that respects all cultures. It also includes recycling, litter free lunches, the school garden, energy saving and reducing the carbon footprint.

Use of information and communication technologies (ICT). The school has a strategic focus on ICT and is well resourced with up-to-date equipment. A specialist teacher helps to develop children's research skills with the intention that these skills are then reinforced in the classroom. Students have ready access to ICT and are becoming confident users of a range of appropriate software to gather and manipulate information. The introduction of the 'Learning Pathways' model has been well planned, includes high use of ICT equipment and is planned to successfully underpin the school-wide integrated curriculum model.

Programmes for provisionally registered teachers. Programmes for provisionally registered teachers are well organised and meet the differing needs of individuals. Tutor teachers, provisionally registered teachers, and teachers new to New Zealand receive support that best addresses their individual needs. As a result, teachers grow in confidence and are provided with a strong introduction to the New Zealand teaching profession.

Support staff. Teacher aide support is available for the large number of students with identified learning needs. The special needs coordinators ensure early identification of

students with specific learning needs and the development of targeted programmes. On-going professional development opportunities are available for support staff to assist individual children and their classroom teachers. Good communication between classroom teachers and the special needs management team is a feature of the school. Tracking and monitoring of these programmes and regular reporting to the trustees informs decisions about resourcing for these children.

Areas for improvement

Formative teaching practices. The use of formative teaching practices varies across the school. Teachers are sharing learning with children but now need to construct learning with children using their own language. There is good oral feedback and feedforward but there is now a need to strengthen the consistency of written feedback and feedforward in children's workbooks. Teachers with identified effective practice need to model good formative teaching practices to help develop more consistent practices across the school. This modelling should encourage children and teachers to discuss learning and collaboratively develop next steps in teaching and learning.

Assessment practices. Assessment practices should be strengthened. Teachers need to continue to review and refine the classroom assessment-tracking book, which records individual and group learning. Teachers would benefit from ongoing discussions as to what assessment should be recorded. School-based achievement levels do not clearly relate to national achievement indicators or levels. It is timely to standardise and align the achievement indicators with national expectations. This would help to develop a clearer understanding of achievement results across the school. Having a standardised recording system in portfolios that included teacher comments would further assist children and parents to interpret the learning and progress reported.

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 Beachlands 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. Over ten percent of the children at Beachlands School identify as Māori.

Areas of progress

Māori student achievement. Senior managers effectively monitor Māori student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. The achievement information indicates that these students are achieving at similar, if not slightly higher levels, than other students in the school. Those students who continue to find mathematics or reading challenging are well supported by targeted teaching and support programmes.

Celebrating and increasing awareness of me ono tikanga Māori. The teachers are well supported by the community. The board and teachers have established liaison with local iwi to ensure protocols and practices are a true reflection of the community. The principal is continuing to further develop the relationships that have been established with a significant Māori trust. Activities and initiatives such as kapa haka, blessing of the pou and the enviroschool project have increased the prominence of tikanga Māori for students.

Consultation with families. The principal and board member with Māori and Pacific responsibility have consulted the Māori community. The principal shares Māori student achievement results and invites suggestions from the community for programme improvement to meet parents' aspirations for their children. The school communicates with the Māori

community and has also sought parents' views informally at school functions and parent meetings.

Areas for further improvement

Cultural understanding. The principal and teacher in charge of Māori needs to develop a school-wide understanding that acknowledges and celebrates Māori culture. Providing teachers and students with positive experiences, such as professional development on a Marae, should further increase their knowledge, skills and understanding of Māori cultures and protocols.

Increasing delivery of te reo and tikanga Māori. The school has developed policies and procedures that acknowledge the special place of te reo me ona tikanga Māori. Further professional development is required to develop teacher confidence in the use of te reo Māori in the classroom. Some teachers on the staff use Māori phrases and words in their daily teaching programmes and could be used as role models for other teachers in the school.

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. Approximately one percent of the students at Beachlands School identify as Pacific.

Areas of good performance

Achievement information. School-wide achievement data shows that Pacific students are achieving at similar levels to that of other children in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. The few students who are below expected levels of achievement attend well-targeted support programmes.

Home school partnership. The senior managers communicate with their Pacific community both formally and informally at activities such as Saturday sport. The sharing of information at these meetings is valuable and informs Pacific initiatives. The board is continuing to seek ways to extend these partnership opportunities with Pacific families to further meet the learning needs of the students.

Professional Learning and Development

In this review ERO evaluated how well Beachlands 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

In addition to individual professional learning, teachers at the school have all been involved in a comprehensive professional development programme to create a cohesive professional learning community. This initiative has drawn together the threads of previous professional development undertaken at the school. These threads include a three-year contract in information technology, learning pathways, the numeracy project, behaviour management, environmental education, cooperative and collaborative classrooms and quality classroom teaching.

Areas of good performance

Positive response. The 2006 ERO report gave impetus for the board and senior management team to extend the quality of professional learning and development across the school. There was a review of the roles of the senior management team and the engaging of external advisors to support teachers to consolidate and refine their school curriculum model. Teachers are now focusing on establishing consistent teaching practices and learning processes that actively involve students in their learning. Teachers have developed into a professionally reflective team and are focused on continual improvement of student achievement.

Strategic approach. There is a strong board commitment to professional learning and development and good links are made between the school's vision, strategic planning and professional learning initiatives. There is an implementation plan to guide and consolidate developments such as the induction of staff new to the school, the strengthening of appraisal processes, building leadership capacity and developing consistent teaching practices. Teachers talk of a greater sense of purpose and shared understanding of professional learning in the school. Regular reporting to the trustees ensures the board is well informed about teachers' learning. The focus is on teachers providing positive outcomes for students, ensuring they have the skills for lifelong learning.

Leadership and decision-making. The principal and teachers have used student achievement information and staff appraisals to identify teacher professional development needs. There has been good use of an external provider to advise and mentor the staff on the Learning Pathways model which is based on recent educational research. Cluster leaders conduct ongoing classroom observations and there has been increased staff involvement in decision-making. These factors have supported the development of a professional, positive culture of adult learning.

Teachers shared responsibly. There has been a growing interest and commitment of teachers to enhance their teaching practice. Whole staff professional conversations, classroom observations, the training of the cluster leaders, the strengthening of the school curriculum

model and the FERN values have promoted sustainable change within the school. Teachers' enhanced classroom practices have had positive outcomes for children's learning.

Impact of professional development. There are strong indications that professional learning and development programmes are having a positive impact on teacher practice and student engagement. Senior managers are confident that the journey has begun and teachers are beginning to embed practices by:

- continuing to refine and develop a shared vision;
- strengthening school appraisal processes and staff developing individual achievement goals;
- a willingness of teachers to acquire new skills;
- students talking confidently about what they are learning; and
- students using cooperative learning strategies and ICT to enhance their learning.

Area for improvement

Consolidate and embed best practice. Teachers have made good progress with developing a professional learning community. The senior management team recognise the need to continue to consolidate and embed best practice by ensuring that:

- teachers focus on the child as the learner;
- the purpose of tracking books continues to be reviewed;
- students increasingly record their own achievements;
- cluster leaders model and mentor less experienced teachers to assist in the development of consistent teaching practices;
- exemplars are more visible and accessible to teachers and students and there is a clear understanding of national expectations in different learning areas and their relationship to school-based criteria; and
- formal reporting to the trustees and community on curriculum developments.

Provision for International Students

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

Beachlands 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. There are presently eight children from Korea attending the school.

The school continues to meet the requirements of the Code.

Areas of good performance

Administration. The school's provision for the wellbeing of its international students continues to be effectively managed. A sound basis of policy and procedure is in place to guide the school in meeting the requirements of the code. All the necessary documents are appropriately maintained and, where appropriate, translated into Korean.

First language support. As at the time of the last ERO review, the school is fortunate to have the services of two speakers of Korean to provide close, full-time first language support for the Korean children. These two young people also liaise on a daily basis with the children's class teachers and other school personnel, counsel the children over any issues or difficulties faced by them, and act as their mentors and friends. Twice weekly Korean lunches are still a feature of the children's programme. The children reported that they feel happy and safe at the school.

English language support. The Korean children are immersed each day in a rich, English language environment, provided primarily by their class teachers. In addition, they receive regular, intensive instruction in English, which is provided by a well-qualified ESOL teacher.

Area for improvement

Self-review. The school's quarterly review of its compliance with the Code, which is reported to the board by the principal, should be formally documented and included in the file kept by the homestay coordinator.

Board Assurance On Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Beachlands 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.

Each school needs to acknowledge that bullying is a risk to be managed. In this school effective behaviour management policies and procedures have been developed and implemented. All teachers, students and parents have made 'promises' to the FERN programme. The school's special educational needs coordinator has well documented programmes and interventions in place to help teachers manage students with behavioural issues.

Compliance

Findings indicate that the school has good health and safety systems in place. However, in order to enhance good practice the board of trustees should:

- review and further strengthen the in-committee minute procedures; and
- conduct exit questionnaires or interviews of resigning staff, as these are currently undertaken by the principal and senior managers.

Recommendation

The board of trustees, staff and ERO recommend that:

6.1 teachers continue to embed the 'Beachlands Learner' concept through consistent formative teaching practices, in order to develop students as self-directed learners and to enhance student achievement.

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.

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

18 August 2008

18 August 2008

To the Parents and Community of Beachlands School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Beachlands School.

Community Page

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Future Action

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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.

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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.

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