



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
TE TARI AROTAKE MATAURANGA

**EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
PUKETAPU SCHOOL
FEBRUARY 2010**

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

1. About the School

Location	New Plymouth
Ministry of Education profile number	2223
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 - 8)
Decile rating ^[1]	4
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated entitlement	13.94
Other	1
Number of teachers	12

School roll	270
Gender composition	Male 59%
	Female 41%
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā 45%
	Māori 45%
	Pacific 8%
	Asian 2%
Review team on site	November 2009
Date of this report	23 February 2010
Previous ERO reports	Education Review October 2006
	Education Review April 2003
	Accountability Review October 1999
	Effectiveness Review February 1994
	Review March 1992

2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Puketapu School in Bell Block, near New Plymouth caters for students from Years 1 to 8. At the time of this ERO review in November 2009, there are 270 students enrolled, of whom 45% are Māori.

Students embrace and contribute to the positive school values. They are responsive, warm and friendly in their interactions with each other and with adults. The caring environment is focused on promoting student progress and well-being. The principal has a clear vision of providing an environment where all experience success.

Teachers are committed to successful learning outcomes for students. Their achievement is well considered to effectively inform decision making and planning. Using nationally-referenced assessment tools the school can show that most students achieve at levels expected for their age. Teachers continue professional development in the use of data to demonstrate success of teaching strategies and initiatives.

Students are enthusiastic and independent learners who thrive in an environment where learning is valued and affirmed. They are beginning to develop knowledge of their learning and progress. Students are engaged learners. Families and whānau are integral to this learning by supporting students at home. Opportunities for families to better understand the process and content of how they can help their child are shared by teaching staff at appropriate school-based hui. Progress for all students is pleasing and most achieve at or above expected levels in literacy and numeracy.

Initiatives across the school include additional leadership opportunities for senior students. A calm and purposeful atmosphere is evident. Students support each other both within and outside the classroom. They care for, and are tolerant of differences between, their peers.

There is a collaborative and team approach to teaching and learning. A focus on how to better meet the learning needs of students has concentrated on literacy, numeracy and integrated studies as teachers consider the implementation of *The New Zealand Curriculum* in 2010. Teachers have reflected on how they teach and the impact this has on student achievement. Professional development has successfully enhanced their understanding of teaching literacy and numeracy. As a result, students' progress and achievement levels have improved. The team approach contributes to improving quality academic, physical and social education for all students.

Māori students' continual progress and achievement is evaluated to maximise learning opportunities. Success for Māori is realised through teachers' and whānau ongoing positive relationships that are focused on supporting students in academic, social and cultural contexts. Specific initiatives, such as kapa haka are evaluated to ensure learning is continual and relevant to the students at Puketapu School.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are evaluated. With upgraded equipment and careful selection of resources, along with teacher professional development, students are well positioned to take their place with those who are technologically literate.

Trustees receive useful curriculum achievement reports and analysed achievement information to support future resourcing and decision making. Open communication with families and the wider community is actively fostered. These cooperative relationships enhance a sense of belonging for students and their teachers.

Sound self-review practices successfully support a culture of continuous improvement and impact positively on the quality of teaching and student learning. The principal, school leaders, teachers, and board contribute to review and evaluation of the school's operations and provision for students. The principal provides positive leadership to encourage, model and monitor self review, that ensures that school systems are used by trustees and staff to appropriately focus on student achievement and engagement outcomes.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

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.

New entrant teachers liaise closely with neighbouring Puketapu Kindergarten and other early childhood centres. Preschoolers' social interactions during visits, discussion about their specific needs and consultation with parents assist children to confidently begin more formal schooling.

A school-designed assessment tool measures students' readiness for literacy and numeracy learning. The information helps teachers to set goals for individuals and indicates their strengths and interests. During students' first year, teaching and learning builds capability in alphabet and sounds knowledge and develops cooperative and self-management skills. Parents value and support at home specific language-enhancing programmes and story reading. Regular assessment and teachers' observations of learning behaviour indicate progress prior to the formal six year observational survey. Collated results show that most six-year-old students have a good knowledge of the alphabet and letter sounds, but concepts about print require ongoing work.

Senior leaders and teachers expect students to achieve at nationally agreed levels in reading. In March, they set annual targets for improvement to raise achievement for individuals and groups of students. Teachers are also aware that students who meet expectations should be further challenged to maintain progress.

Comparisons between March and November Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading (STAR) and Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) results indicate that most students made significant progress from beginning to end of year. Improvement is attributable to teachers' professional development and deliberate acts of teaching to improve students' comprehension.

In mathematics, in addition to regular classroom assessment, students' progress is formally measured at the end of Years 2, 4 and 6 when learning levels change significantly. Teachers have determined that students' ready recall and application of basic facts is crucial to successful learning. Basic facts knowledge is consistently practised and assessed. Assessment tasks are graded to suit ability rather than limited by age. More capable students are challenged to excel. End-of-year data identify those students who are not meeting expectation and they become the target group for improvement. Teachers develop short-term, specific strategies to address their needs. They explore every option for improvement and closely monitor progress. Resources and teacher-aide assistance are well-considered and regularly evaluated to determine where a different approach is required. A mathematics committee oversees all initiatives to improve students' progress as well as contributing expert advice for teachers. End-of-year achievement results confirm students' progress across all year levels, with some making exceptional gains. As in reading, teachers' identify professional development and use of assessment information to drive teaching and learning, as the key reasons for improvement.

Students participate, with some success, in a wide range of academic, sporting and cultural activities. Opportunities for senior students to develop leadership skills are part of preparation for secondary school. Year 7 and 8 students, including members of the school council, are role models for younger children and have a voice in decision-making.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Puketapu 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 Puketapu School.

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

- the effectiveness of teacher learning and professional development.

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

The Effectiveness of Teacher Learning and Professional Development

Background

Since the 2006 ERO review, teachers participated in considerable, collaborative school-wide professional development in literacy and numeracy. Upskilling is ongoing. Staff are more focused on teaching strategies and continuing assessment and reflection. Trustees agreed that ERO evaluate the impact of teachers' learning on the quality of reading and mathematics programmes, and the benefits these have on student achievement.

Areas of good performance

- Reflective practice
Teachers continually and successfully reflect on their own teaching to improve their practice. Formal and informal fora assist them to interpret their learning to best impact on teaching. Teachers trial, implement and review strategies to determine those most effective in improving achievement. Professional learning is collaborative to gain a shared understanding but also individualised to recognise and support specific

goals. Teachers' shifts in practice and modified approaches improve student achievement.

- **Engaging learners**
Students effectively engage in learning appropriate to their age and maturity. Teachers carefully consider resources and learning materials that appeal to students' differing interests. Contexts are deliberately chosen to maximise learning opportunities. In class, staff provide sufficient and differentiated opportunities for all students to engage in learning. Teachers and students share a high level of expectation for successful outcomes. Learning is individualised, occurs in small groups and in whole-class situations where students learn cooperatively. They believe and trust that adults will support their progress.
- **Using assessment**
Teachers use a range of well-analysed assessment data in highly informative and focused ways. They track and closely monitor the incremental steps needed for all students to progress. Teachers plan and implement specific interventions to support students with particular needs. They continually challenge their own beliefs and teaching practice as they evaluate the impact of strategies. Teachers explore every option to improve students' progress.
- **Professional leadership**
The principal has a clear vision for improvement that includes the active promotion and development of staff leadership skills. The commitment of teachers to increasing their capability and contributing to change is clearly evident, through professional development and trialling new initiatives. The sharing of some strengths, information and strategies provides motivation to others to change. Senior managers continue to lift their own capability and support whole-school development. Their strengths and talents are appreciated. The team approach, focused on developing sound leadership, contributes to improving quality academic, physical and social education for all students.
- **Improved focused teaching**
Students benefit from specific initiatives designed and introduced to capture their interest and to address gaps in their learning. Teachers share beliefs expressed in their guiding documents. They have plans for sustainability. Their reflective and evaluative practice, to identify teaching strategies most successful in raising achievement, contributes to improvement. Motivated students, harmonious relationships, and a strong sense of belonging are evident in classrooms.
- **Relationships**
The principal and teachers work collaboratively to encourage engagement by parents in their children's learning. Families receive helpful suggestions for supporting their child's learning through parent education meetings and learning resources sent home for families. Respectful relationships are clearly evident between students and adults. Students are confident to take educational risks. Partnerships between home and school continue to foster improved student achievement. Opportunities for families to better understand the process and content of how they can help their child is shared by teaching staff at appropriate school-based hui.

Area for improvement

- **Assessment as learning**
Students' use of self and peer assessment to identify the quality features of their work and next steps for improvement is in the early stages. They share and comment on their efforts with teachers and peers as part of the learning process. Teachers allow time for students to persevere with tasks for sustained periods. Developing the skills to closely define what makes a high quality product should further motivate students to produce their best possible outcomes. Increased levels of satisfaction should also be evident.

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 Puketapu 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.

Success for Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the extent to which the school was familiar with the *Māori Education Strategy – Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success* and progress made since the 2006 review in promoting success at school for Māori students.

The school reports it has discussed the document but not yet made changes in the light of it.

Areas of progress

- Using achievement information
Teachers closely analyse student achievement data to inform their next teaching step. Current research and understanding of Māori education trends and patterns are part of the professional development undertaken by staff. Teachers encourage students to set high personal goals and to take their share of the responsibility for achieving these. Students are confident, competent learners supported by teachers and senior managers who understand their learning needs.
- Evaluation
Students' continual progress and achievement are evaluated to maximise learning opportunities. Māori students achieve at similar levels as their non-Māori peers. This attainment is met through teachers' careful, well-considered selection of content and learning activities that are relevant, authentic and interesting.

Across the school, students have leadership opportunities. Specific initiatives, such as kapa haka are evaluated to ensure learning is continual and relevant to the students at Puketapu School. Success for Māori is realised through positive teacher whānau relationships, focused on supporting students in academic, social and cultural contexts. Through effective formal and informal evaluation processes, the principal and teachers demonstrate the belief that students will and can achieve as successful Māori students.

Areas for further improvement

- Strengthening teacher capacity
Teachers are committed to successfully engage in professional development that challenges and further develops their teaching practice. Continual evaluation is in place to encourage strategies and learning that is appropriate for Puketapu School students. It is timely for staff to consider their own learning and capability in te reo me ngā tikanga Māori. Strong relationships within the local community should support

teachers to sustain the initiatives begun and to further develop their capacity and capability to use te reo and tikanga that is focused on Puketapu School students and their whānau.

The Achievement of Pacific Students: Progress

In this review ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the previous review in improving the achievement of its Pacific students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement. Pacific students comprise 8% of the school roll.

Areas of good performance

Student achievement

The principal and teachers effectively collate data on the achievement of Pacific students. They achieve at levels comparable with their peers. Well-considered teaching strategies motivate students to persevere and take educational risks.

- Pacific students with identified needs receive appropriate additional support both emotionally and academically. They are acknowledged as having strengths in literacy and culture. Students achieve and learn through the medium of English. They are well supported and enjoy successful learning.

Preparing to Give Effect to The New Zealand Curriculum

Schools are currently working towards implementing *The New Zealand Curriculum* by February 2010.

During this review ERO investigated the progress Puketapu School is making towards giving full effect to the curriculum as part of its planning, organisation and teaching practice.

ERO found that school leaders and teachers at Puketapu School are making good progress towards giving effect to *The New Zealand Curriculum* in their planning, organisation and teaching.

Including Students with High Needs

During this review ERO investigated the extent to which the board and school leaders of Puketapu School provide an inclusive education for students with high needs. This included collecting evidence about the school's policies, processes and practices to support the enrolment and induction of students with high needs and to support their participation and achievement at school. The information collected during this review will contribute to information that will be reported in a national education evaluation report.

Prior to a review, a board of trustees and principal attest in the Board Assurance Statement that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal requirements including those detailed in Ministry of Education circulars and other documents.

The board of Puketapu School was asked to attest to whether it had 'ensured that teachers of students with disabilities, and other contact staff, have a sound understanding of the learning needs of students with disabilities and, where necessary, have put in place support systems centred on each individual with disabilities.' The board was also asked to attest that 'policies and procedures that relate to students who have special education needs are implemented without discrimination'.

ERO's findings confirm these attestations.

5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas

Overview

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

Compliance

ERO's investigations did not identify any areas of concern.

6. Recommendations

ERO recommends that:

- 6.1 the principal and senior managers further extend and challenge students' use of assessment as learning.

7. Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Kathleen Atkins

National Manager Review Services
Central Region

23 February 2010

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To the Parents and Community of Puketapu School

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Review Coverage

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

Kathleen Atkins

National Manager Review Services
Central Region

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.

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