



**EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
SEATOUN SCHOOL**

AUGUST 2008

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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	Seatoun, Wellington
Ministry of Education profile number	2987
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 - 8)
Decile rating ^[1]	10
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated	19.10
entitlement	1.32
Other	19
Number of teachers	
School roll	396
Gender composition	Girls 51%

	Boys	49%
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā	65%
	Other European	13%
	Māori	9%
	Asian	6%
	Other ethnic groups	7%
Review team on site	June 2008	
Date of this report	27 August 2008	
Previous ERO reports	Education Review	October 2005
	Supplementary Review	July 2002
	Accountability Review	June 2001
	Effectiveness Review	June 1997
	Discretionary Review	March 1995
	Assurance Audit	July 1994
	Discretionary Review	June 1993
	Review	November 1992

2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Seatoun School is situated in a suburb of Wellington. Since the 2005 ERO review, the Board of Trustees has continued to develop the grounds and buildings, providing a sheltered, well-furnished and appropriately resourced environment for student learning and well-being. Features of the school include a well-resourced library and the recently constructed food technology suite.

The committed board of trustees has a strong strategic focus that guides school operations. The charter, strategic and annual plans provide a framework to support teaching and learning that is based on sound goals and focused on student achievement. The school is well supported by an active parent community. The principal has developed a collaborative approach to continual improvement and provides effective professional leadership.

The board, principal and staff implemented an appropriate plan to address the areas identified for improvement identified in the 2005 ERO review. As a result, writing programmes and assessment practice have been refined.

Progressive Achievement Tests in reading comprehension, vocabulary and mathematics demonstrate that the majority of year 4 to 8 students are achieving at or above national expectations. Comparative analysis of literacy data for five year olds on entry to school, and at six years of age, shows that students are making good progress. The school keeps parents well informed about events, programmes and student achievement. A recent good example is the development of a comprehensive booklet to inform parents about learning support programmes.

This review evaluates the quality of teaching and learning in the integrated curriculum, progress in improving the achievement of Māori students and professional learning and development. ERO also considered compliance with requirements related to health and safety.

There is a strong culture of ongoing teacher learning and development in the school. Priority is given to strategies that promote consistency and shared understandings about effective teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is consistently good with examples of high quality practice. A sequential plan for the use and introduction of thinking strategies guides the inquiry learning process. Students demonstrate a growing understanding of learning tools including, for inquiry, the “icycle”; and, for literacy, the “author cycle” frameworks.

Curriculum integration planning effectively links school-wide themes to team and classroom learning. Meaningful contexts include food technology to enhance the application of learning, the local seaside

environment and related issues with student participation in the green footprint and penguin projects. Student-centred learning is promoted and enabled through the emphasis on inquiry learning.

Teachers have established positive classroom cultures. The focus is on learning with an emphasis on students developing their thinking, actively participating and taking responsibility for their learning. They are articulate, engaged and confident within a stimulating and supportive environment. Students demonstrate a good understanding of the school's values and how they contribute to a culture where respectful relationships are prominent.

The integrated curriculum approach has been well established across the school to provide an effective learning pathway. Areas for improvement noted in this report, support the continued exploration and strengthening of school-wide planning and assessment processes, including differentiation and strategies to further capture students' interests within integrated curriculum programmes.

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. 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.

Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs) in reading comprehension, reading vocabulary and mathematics, undertaken in March 2008, show that most year 4 to 8 students are achieving either at or above national norms for these tests.

Achievement information in grammar and punctuation has been gathered for those in years 2 to 8 using Assessment Resource Banks and school-developed tests. It indicates that most students are able to independently edit their written work.

Assessment information is also collected on entry to school for all five year olds. Diagnostic tests in literacy at six years of age are also administered. Comparative analysis of data demonstrates that students are making good progress during their first year.

During 2007 the school gathered information, for students in years 4 and 8, using National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) assessments in addition and multiplication. This shows students at Seatoun School achieved at similar levels to those that other students across the country achieved during national data collections using these same assessments in 2001 and 2005.

Information on achievement in the integrated curriculum is outlined in the focus area of this report.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Seatoun 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 Seatoun School.

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

- the quality of teaching and learning in integrated curriculum programmes.

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

The Quality of Teaching and Learning in Integrated Curriculum Programmes

Background

The 2005 ERO review focused on literacy, specifically writing programmes, and on numeracy in years 1 to 4. It noted that the principal had worked with trustees, senior managers and staff to foster a collaborative culture. The quality of teaching was reported as high and classrooms were interactive. The report commented on the need to consolidate professional development to maintain consistently high quality teaching practices.

The board requested that this review focus on the quality of teaching and learning in integrated curriculum programmes and student learning culture following considerable development in these areas. ERO agreed. Aspects of the school's culture that were observed during the review are reported in this section.

In conducting this evaluation reviewers read the school's documentation, observed integrated studies teaching in most classrooms and talked with the board, principal, teachers and a sample of students.

Student progress and achievement

During 2007 the school gathered achievement information for students in years 4 and 8 using NEMP assessments in clarifying, analysing and using information. It shows, for this period, significantly higher levels of achievement than 2001 and 2005 national data collections using the same assessments.

Decisions about student outcomes for the integrated curriculum, that includes science, social studies, technology, health and physical education and the arts, are based on syndicate-developed specific learning objectives and success criteria. This information is not aggregated at a school-wide level.

Areas of good performance

- The charter, strategic and annual plans cohesively guide school development. Together they present a considered and collaboratively developed framework focused on goals and student achievement, and support the teaching of the integrated curriculum.
- Across the school the integrated curriculum approach has been well established to provide an effective learning pathway. A framework based on a sound theory directs implementation. This is supported by clear guidelines for teacher planning and the use of inquiry learning tools.
- The integrated curriculum team provides effective leadership in this area. They are consultative in their decision making, have set realistic goals and expectations, and provide direction for teaching, learning and future programme development.
- Planning effectively links school-wide themes to team and classroom learning. Staff plan collaboratively. They incorporate common learning intentions within authentic contexts and use external experts to develop appropriate teaching and learning programmes.
- There is an appropriate progression of learning for achievement levels 1 to 4 of the curriculum. The school has a sequential plan for the use and introduction of thinking strategies and information organisers to guide the inquiry learning process. Teachers are continuing to develop effective exemplars to guide implementation and assessment.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school with examples of high quality practice. Teachers use a wide range of effective pedagogical strategies to promote thinking and understanding. Students demonstrate a growing understanding of learning tools including the "icycle", and "author cycle" frameworks. As a result, students are focused and engaged in their

learning.

- Teachers write comprehensive classroom descriptions that effectively demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the learning and social needs of their students. This enables teachers to provide appropriate programmes for diverse needs.
- Key values have been adopted to underpin the culture of the school. These were established in collaboratively by the board, teachers and parents. Priority has been placed on developing annual school culture goals to maintain and further enhance positive relationships through a variety of initiatives. Students demonstrate a good understanding of these values and how they contribute to a strong school culture where respectful relationships are prominent.
- Teachers have established positive classroom cultures. The focus is on learning with an emphasis on students developing their thinking, actively participating, and taking responsibility for their learning.

Areas for improvement

- The school has identified the following areas for further consideration and development. ERO agrees with this direction:
 - continuing to develop exemplars to guide assessment in the inquiry process;
 - formulating a cohesive assessment strategy to capture the integrated curriculum and the implications of *The New Zealand Curriculum*; and
 - setting more specific learning intentions with well developed success criteria to better guide teaching and assessment of the integrated curriculum.
- Teachers' written planning in the integrated curriculum is yet to be sufficiently differentiated to reflect the learning needs of students as identified by achievement data and anecdotal information.
- As the school continues to develop its approach to teaching the integrated curriculum, it is timely to consider strategies to further develop student skills to enable them to independently undertake their own inquiry.

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 Seatoun 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 2005 review in improving the achievement of Māori students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement. 9% of students at Seatoun School identify as Māori.

Areas of progress

- The school continues to use a variety of reliable assessment data, including NEMP and PATs, to

demonstrate that Māori students are generally achieving at or above expectations. The annual curriculum report identifies goals at different year levels for teaching and reports the positive attitude of students toward learning te reo Māori throughout the school. Analysed information shows Māori students are well represented in achieving awards and leadership positions.

- A variety of programmes to develop Māori language and culture includes: the appointment of a teacher with proficient language to assist in building skills and knowledge with teachers and students; the introduction of regular whakatauki and kiwaha; the purchase of supporting resources; the ongoing year 5 and 6 biennial overnight marae experience; a designated weekly interchange programme across the school; and years 7 and 8 involvement in kapa haka enrichment.
- A recent parent information evening was held and featured the sharing of Māori curriculum goals. Consultation with whānau is scheduled this year as a part of the school's strategic planning cycle.
- Relationships between students and adults are positive and supportive. Students articulate that they enjoy the opportunities provided for them. In some classes observed, te reo Māori was used for greetings and commands. Māori students are actively participating and engaged in their learning.

Area for further improvement

The consistent inclusion of a Māori perspective in integrated studies programmes has been identified by the school as an area for further development. ERO agrees with this direction to strengthen the planning and teaching of te reo and tikanga Māori.

Professional Learning and Development

In this review ERO evaluated how well Seatoun School is managing professional learning and development. This includes how well the school makes decisions about professional learning and development (PLD), 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

PLD is systematically planned and closely aligned with strategic and annual planning and quality management systems. As a result, it supports a focused and cohesive approach to ongoing school development. Significant whole-school professional development has included: examination and discussion about effective pedagogy; the integrated curriculum; information and communication technologies; planning and assessment; and other areas and aspects of teaching and learning. The predominantly whole-school approach and supporting systems encourage consistency in practice, collaboration, shared understandings and rigorous debate. There are regular opportunities for reflection and dialogue in both formal staff forums and informal discussions.

Areas of good performance

- The school takes a long-term and considered approach to PLD. It runs parallel to curriculum development and while responsive to review and current pedagogical thought, builds effectively on previous development to assist in progressing a focused culture of improvement.
- The key curriculum development objectives of the previous year are reviewed annually. This includes PLD, core values and beliefs and the implementation of initiatives. It provides a consultative, reflective base for the identification of development needs in subsequent action plans.
- While external expertise is a key component, most PLD is led by staff from the school. Responsibility is given to suitable leaders who work collaboratively to facilitate the design of school-wide initiatives where all teachers have the opportunity to contribute to the reflective process.
- There is a culture of ongoing learning and development. Teachers report they collaborate with each other to plan units of work and that professional discussions are important in providing support and

guidance. The priority that the school puts on school-wide development assists in promoting improvements in practice. Teachers work and plan together and develop effective working relationships, efficient systems and common expectations.

- Systems and opportunities are designed to enhance PLD. For example, a strategic approach to fostering effective pedagogy has involved all teachers targeting four students in their class on whom they focus to monitor progress in both teaching and learning. At regular team meetings teachers reflect on their own practice, introduced strategies and their impact on student achievement.
- PLD is closely connected with performance management, which enhances its effective implementation. Teachers have appraisal goals on which their PLD is based. These include the current strategic focus as well as individually relevant external and internal support for personal development goals or school responsibility. As a result, PLD provides relevant growth opportunities for staff to meet both school priorities and individual development.
- PLD is inclusive of all staff. It involves teacher aides, comprehensive development for provisionally registered teachers and leadership opportunities as appropriate. The principal initiates professional discussions that incorporate reflection on practice and relevant professional reading, with all staff individually.
- Teachers consider the school's approach to PLD as highly engaging and encouraging. They report significant benefits from participation in the range of PLD activities available to them. These include: more focused teaching; increased reflection on teaching practice; and the development of quality resources. Staff indicate that they are encouraged to try new approaches and that in-depth initiatives have added richness to teaching and learning.

Area for improvement

Teachers have identified that it is timely to develop and critique student exemplars in the integrated curriculum within whole-school forums. This is likely to extend shared reflection and experiences of current aspects of curriculum development across the school.

5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Seatoun 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

During the course of the review ERO identified an area of non-compliance. The board does not make it clear to parents/whānau that the school fees are voluntary donations.

In order to address this the board of trustees must:

- 5.1 Ensure the school's practices relating to the collection of fees and donations comply with free enrolment and education legislation.
[Section 3, Education Act 1989]

6. Recommendation

ERO and the board of trustees agree that:

- 6.1 The board of trustees will support management and staff to continue to further explore and strengthen school-wide planning and assessment processes, within the integrated curriculum, including differentiation and strategies to further develop students' independent inquiry skills.

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.

Alan Wynyard
Acting Area Manager
for Chief Review Officer

27 August 2008

27 August 2008

To the Parents and Community of Seatoun School

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

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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>.

Alan Wynyard

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.