

Windwhistle School Education Review

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1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Confirmed Education Review Report: Windwhistle School

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

Windwhistle School is a small, mid Canterbury rural school for students in Years 1 to 6. A new principal started at the school in Term 4, 2010. Most of the students come from farming families that are spread across a wide geographical area. The school hosts a local playgroup.

The school has continued to build on the areas of good performance outlined in its 2007 ERO report. Improvements are most evident in the analysis and reporting of student achievement information.

Students learn in a positive and supportive school environment. The quality of relationships between teachers and students and among students is a strength of the school. Students told reviewers that they felt safe and well supported in their learning.

Teachers use a wide variety of effective teaching practices. Students benefit from the high expectations teachers have for their learning and behaviour.

Students achieve well and have a positive attitude towards learning. Almost all students are achieving at or above the expectations for their age in listening, reading, mathematics and written language.

The recently-developed Windwhistle School Curriculum provides students with an interesting variety of learning experiences. Features of this curriculum include the:

- emphasis given to literacy and mathematics, the arts and physical activity;
- range of opportunities students have to learn within the school and the community;
- active promotion of the values and qualities the school wants students to develop; and
- efforts made to make learning meaningful for students, and the fostering of biculturalism.

The school is well led. The school's new principal is building on the best of past practices to enhance the quality of education for students. Management practices promote effective teamwork and a willingness to reflect upon and improve teaching and learning.

The board performs its governance role well. Its planning provides clear future direction for

the school with a strong emphasis on continuing to raise student achievement.

The school receives strong support from the community, has well-maintained facilities and a wide range of resources to support learning and teaching.

Effective leadership and governance practices place the school in a good position to sustain and continue to improve the quality of education for students.

The next steps for the board, principal and teachers include:

- consolidating and building on recent curriculum initiatives; and
- extending assessment and self-review practices.

Future Action

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

2 Windwhistle School's Curriculum

How effectively does the curriculum of Windwhistle School promote student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?

School context and self review

The board has a clearly defined ongoing programme of self review. It makes good use of review findings to inform school decision making.

Areas of strength

The learning environment

Students learn in a positive and supportive school environment. Teachers work with students in ways that are positive and affirming. They foster cooperative learning opportunities among students. These relationships create the family-like atmosphere the board aims to provide for students.

The provision of well-established routines maximises the time students spend learning.

The physical environment is well maintained, and students have access to a variety of learning resources.

The quality of teaching

The learning environment helps to promote students' sense of wellbeing and belonging. Students told reviewers that they felt safe and well supported in their learning.

The quality of teaching overall is very good. Teachers have high expectations for students' learning and behaviour. Students benefit from teachers' use of a wide variety of effective teaching practices that result in:

- focused teaching;
- class and group programmes being adapted to address emerging needs and interests;
- students being provided with real life and relevant opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning; and
- opportunities for individual and small group teaching due to low pupil to teacher ratios.

Students are motivated to learn and achieve well.

Teachers assess student achievement regularly and make good use of this information to target their teaching. They are in the process of aligning assessment and reporting practices

to the National Standards.

School curriculum development

The recently-developed school curriculum provides students with an interesting variety of learning experiences within the school and in the wider community. Features of this curriculum include:

- the successful inclusion of the values and qualities the teachers and community want to foster;
- teaching programmes that place an appropriate focus on literacy and mathematics and reflect the community's emphasis on student participation in the arts and regular physical activities;
- the increasing opportunities for students to learn other languages and aspects of biculturalism; and
- the efforts teachers make to integrate programmes in ways that help students to make links to other aspects of their learning and to make learning meaningful.

Leadership and governance

The school is well governed and led. The school's new principal is building on the best of past practices to further promote collaboration and teamwork. Teachers have benefited from undertaking professional development with a cluster of other local schools. A reflective culture exists within the school which results in teachers continuing to improve the quality of their teaching to foster student learning.

The board performs its role well. It adopts a strategic approach to school improvement. Trustees have high expectations and a clear focus on continuing to raise student achievement and provide support for staff.

Effective leadership and governance practices mean the school is well placed to sustain ongoing school improvement.

School and community partnership

The board and staff foster strong links with their school community. These links are promoted through good communication. Parents and the wider community have many opportunities to be involved in school programmes and events that support the operation of the school.

The board consults with its community in a variety of ways and uses feedback to help make decisions about improving school programmes and practices.

Teachers increasingly liaise with the wider Māori community to help extend student knowledge and understanding about New Zealand's bicultural heritage.

Areas for development and review

Consolidating and building on curriculum initiatives

The school and ERO agree that students could benefit from teachers consolidating and building on recent curriculum initiatives. For example, teachers should give priority to:

- implementing school plans to better monitor how well areas of the curriculum, beyond literacy and numeracy, are being included in programmes and being taught, and continuing to extend learning opportunities for older students;
- exploring further ways of promoting student independence and participation in decision making;
- reviewing guidelines for teaching and learning so that they reflect the school's curriculum, particularly in integrated studies; and
- increasing the use of Information and Communication Technologies to support learning and teaching.

Extending assessment and self-review practices

Improvements to aspects of assessment and self-review practices would increase their quality and usefulness. For instance, the principal and teachers should:

- continue their efforts to align their assessment practices more closely to the National Standards to support their judgements about student achievement;
- clarify the purpose of student portfolios, and extend the role of students in reporting about their progress, achievement and next learning steps;
- extend guidelines for undertaking curriculum reviews so that these become increasingly informative about the quality of teaching and learning; and
- further promote teachers' reflective practices through a greater focus on teaching as inquiry as outlined in the New Zealand Curriculum.

3 Board Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Windwhistle 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 legal obligations related to:

- board administration;
- curriculum;
- management of health, safety and welfare;
- personnel management;
- financial management; and
- asset management.

During the review, ERO looked at the school's documentation, including policies, procedures and records. ERO sampled recent use of procedures and ERO also checked elements of the following five areas that 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.

4 Future Action

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Graham Randell
National Manager Review Services
Southern Region

22 December 2010

About The School

Location	Mid Canterbury
Ministry of Education profile number	3597
School type	Contributing School (Year 1-6)
Decile <u>[1]</u>	9
School roll	25
Number of international students	N/A
Gender composition	Girls 13 Boys 12
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā 22 Māori 3
Review team on site	November 2010
Date of this report	22 December 2010
Previous three ERO reports	Education Review November 2007 Education Review February 2005

[1] School deciles range from one to ten. Decile one schools draw their students from low socioeconomic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides.

Community Page

22 December 2010

To the Parents and Community of Windwhistle School

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

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The school has continued to build on the areas of good performance outlined in its 2007 ERO report. Improvements are most evident in the analysis and reporting of student achievement information.

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- active promotion of the values and qualities the school wants students to develop; and
- efforts made to make learning meaningful for students, and the fostering of biculturalism.

The school is well led. The school's new principal is building on the best of past practices to enhance the quality of education for students. Management practices promote effective teamwork and a willingness to reflect upon and improve teaching and learning.

The board performs its governance role well. Its planning provides clear future direction for the school with a strong emphasis on continuing to raise student achievement.

The school receives strong support from the community, has well-maintained facilities and a wide range of resources to support learning and teaching.

Effective leadership and governance practices place the school in a good position to sustain and continue to improve the quality of education for students.

The next steps for the board, principal and teachers include:

- consolidating and building on recent curriculum initiatives; and
- extending assessment and self-review practices.

Future Action

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Review Coverage

This report provides an evaluation of how effectively the school's curriculum promotes student learning - engagement, progress and achievement. ERO's evaluation takes account of the school's previous reporting history and is based on:

- what is known about student achievement information, including the achievement of Māori and Pacific students;
- decisions made to improve student achievement using assessment and self-review information; and
- teaching strategies and programmes implemented to give effect to the school's curriculum.

ERO also gathers information during the review to contribute to its national reports. The national reports are published on ERO's website.

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

Graham Randell
National Manager Review Services
Southern 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 integrates the following:

- school curriculum;
- national evaluation topics – contribute to the development of education policies and their effective implementation; and
- the Board Assurance Statement, including student and staff health and safety.

ERO's review is responsive to the school's context. When ERO reviews a school, it takes into account the characteristics of the community from which it draws its students, its aspirations for its young people, and other relevant local factors.

ERO also builds on the school's own self-review information. ERO is interested in how a school monitors the progress of its students and aspects of school life and culture, and how it uses this information to improve student learning.

This helps ERO to answer the major evaluation question for reviews:

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?

Areas for Development and Review

ERO reports include areas for development and review to support on-going improvement by identifying priorities. Often the school will have identified these matters through its own self

review and already plans further development in those areas.