

**EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
PARNELL DISTRICT SCHOOL****JUNE 2008**

- 1. About the School**
 - 2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation**
 - 3. The Focus of the Review**
 - 4. Areas of National Interest**
 - 5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas**
 - 6. Recommendations**
 - 7. Future Action**
- Community Page**

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

1. 1. About the School

Location	Parnell, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	1436
School type	Full Primary (Year 1 - 8)
Decile rating ¹ [1]	10
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated	19.5
entitlement	1.33

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

Other Number of teachers	27
School roll	406
Number of international students	7
Gender composition	Boys 50%, Girls 50%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 73%, Māori 3%, Chinese 5%, Korean 5%, Pacific 4%, other Asian 6%, other 4%
Review team on site	May 2008
Date of this report	25 June 2008
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, June 2005 Education Review, April 2002 Accountability Review, August 1998 Assurance Audit, July 1995 Review, August 1992

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

Parnell District School is a Year 1 to 8 primary school located in one of the well established suburbs of Auckland City. It is in its 135th year of operation. The school receives high levels of parent and community support and has a tradition of providing a supportive and stimulating learning environment. The school has experienced significant changes since the last ERO review in 2005. A major building project has been completed and a new principal appointed. There have also been changes in board membership and senior management. These changes are having a positive impact on school development.

Students achieve well in many areas of the school's broad curriculum. In literacy and numeracy they mainly achieve above national averages. Their enthusiasm for learning is readily apparent in the visual and performing arts as well as in the ways students participate in the wide variety of rich learning experiences within and beyond the classroom. The new teaching spaces and increased resources provided by the board and parents support the expansion of specialist teaching and learning opportunities, especially for the older students.

Students have positive relationships with their teachers and with other students. They respond enthusiastically to teaching strategies that enable them to be active learners, sharing their ideas and taking responsibility for their own learning. In the past teachers have engaged in a wide variety of professional learning and development programmes that support their teaching. The introduction this year of a school-wide professional development programme will support teachers to further explore classroom teaching practices that are informed by current theories about teaching and learning.

The changes in the school's learning culture, prompted by the completion of new buildings and new school leadership, have contributed to advances in the school

curriculum and a timely revision of the school charter in line with the new New Zealand Curriculum that is due for implementation in 2010. The principal and staff have worked with the board of trustees and community to create a charter and strategic plan to guide the next stages of school development.

The professionalism of the trustees, principal and staff and their shared commitment to providing a learning environment that supports students to become competent lifelong learners, places the board in a strong position to address the areas for improvement and recommendations in this report.

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. 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.

The board of trustees receive reports through the year about various areas of student achievement. These reports include information about student achievement in mathematics and different aspects of literacy, such as reading, writing and spelling. The information is derived from reliable standardised assessment tools and indicates that students generally achieve above national averages in these areas.

The board of trustees, together with the principal and staff, use the information about student achievement to set targets and report about the achievement of those targets to the Ministry of Education annually.

Parents receive useful mid and end of year reports about their children's progress and achievement especially in English and mathematics. The reports also include informative commentaries about how well their children are learning.

In addition to academic achievement, the school considers that the wide variety of physical, cultural and social activities it provides to be an integral part of student achievement. The board has identified increased participation in sports as one of its targets for 2008.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Parnell District 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 Parnell District School.

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

- • The impact of the changes in the school's learning culture on student achievement and engagement.

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

The impact of the changes in the school's learning culture on student achievement and engagement

Background

The school has experienced several significant changes since the 2005 ERO report. They include the successful completion of a major building project that involved not only the renovation and enlargement of a block of classrooms but also the addition of new classrooms for specialist teaching of science, computing, technology education and the performing arts.

There have been changes in school leadership with a new principal taking up his position midway through 2007, as well as in the senior management team and in board membership.

These recent changes have already resulted in an expansion of extension programmes and specialist teaching, the introduction of e-learning for students, participation in a major professional development contract for teachers and a revision of the school charter and strategic direction. These changes are contributing to a forward-thinking learning culture focused on preparing students to become competent and lifelong learners.

Student progress and achievement

The opportunities for students to achieve in a wide variety of activities within and beyond the school have expanded. The increased opportunities for student participation and success in sports are especially noteworthy. Student leadership opportunities (for instance road patrol and student librarianship) have also increased through the revival of the house system, the introduction of a student council and the 'Cool Schools' programme. Students also enjoy the challenges of the school's thinking skills programmes, which continue to expand. They are enthusiastic about participating in the many school and community events. These events continue to be an important component of the broad-based curriculum the school provides.

Areas of good performance

Positive relationships. Students have positive relationships with their teachers and each other. They are keen learners who especially enjoy lessons in which they can actively participate and share their ideas. The strong supportive relationships that characterise the classrooms give students the confidence to express their ideas and talk about their learning. When given responsibility they readily work together co-operatively and independently in purposeful ways. The children respond appropriately and adapt easily to diverse learning situations.

Active learning. Students respond positively to those teaching programmes that involve them in active learning. These programmes are well planned so that there are opportunities for students to succeed at different levels even within ability-grouped

classes. Students are encouraged to share their thinking and problem-solving strategies with others. They are engaged in setting their own goals and in peer and self-assessment. They know how well they are achieving, their learning strengths and areas for further development. This active engagement in learning assists students to become competent learners equipped with the skills, attitudes and values for lifelong learning.

Enriched learning opportunities. The new teaching spaces and increased resources provided by the board and parents have added to the rich learning opportunities for the students. Teacher strengths have been utilised to deliver specialist programmes using classroom release time funding. Children have their learning extended through the specialist teaching of subjects such as te reo Māori, Mandarin, literary wisdom, English as a Second Language, science, technology and dance. The board has increased its resourcing for learning support and the development of programmes for gifted and talented students. Parents have been major contributors to the development of e-learning classrooms and in the provision of a sports co-ordinator. These developments are consistent with the board's commitment to extending student learning opportunities, especially for older students.

School-wide professional development. The learning culture of the school is being strengthened through the use of external consultants to provide school-wide professional development. Through this provision it is expected that teachers will develop school-wide teaching approaches and strategies that are aligned to recent theories about effective teaching and learning. The leading role of the principal and senior managers in this professional development increases the likelihood that these effective teaching practices will be adopted and sustained.

Charter revision and strategic planning. Following considerable consultation, the board of trustees through the principal and staff, has developed a new school charter and strategic and annual plans,. The new charter encompasses the New Zealand Curriculum that is due to be implemented in 2010. The strategic plan has a strong focus on continuous improvement of the school's curriculum and having responsive curriculum delivery. This direction-setting places the board of trustees in a sound position to continue the development of a learning culture that focuses on addressing each child's academic, cultural, social, emotional and physical needs.

Areas for improvement

Consistency of high quality teaching. In some lessons, students are not all actively engaged or challenged to achieve. Those lessons are inclined to be teacher-dominated and the students are passive rather than active learners. In these instances, teachers do not effectively cater for the diverse learning needs within their classes, identify specific learning intentions for groups of students, share or develop success criteria with students or provide sufficient constructive focused feedback to students about their learning. There is also a lack of integration of a bicultural dimension and information technology in programme plans. These gaps in teaching practice were also noted in the areas for improvement in the 2002 and 2005 ERO reports.

Evaluative reporting of student achievement overall. The tracking of student progress over longer periods of time should be extended to include Years 1 to 8, identified groups of students such as Māori, gifted and talented, and those receiving learning support. This would assist the principal and senior managers to evaluate the impact of

changes in learning culture for the board of trustees. It will also help to improve the board's self-review programme and decision-making.

Focus on student outcomes. The current annual plans focus on teacher-centred tasks rather than outcomes for students. Student achievement data will become more central to board decisions about the school's direction if the outcomes for students and their achievements are given greater emphasis in the board's annual plans and curriculum reports to the board.

Recommendation

The school-wide professional development project that the school has embarked on encourages teachers to use high quality teaching practices. However, the principal and senior managers should also adopt curriculum management systems that achieve a greater consistency in the quality of teacher programme planning, delivery, assessment and evaluation and a strengthened learner-centred culture.

4. 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 Parnell District 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. The school reports that it has twelve students whose parents have identified as Māori.

Areas of progress

Promoting Māori language and culture. The good quality Māori language and culture programme provided through specialist teaching is a valued part of the school curriculum. This programme together with the inclusion of Māori perspectives especially in the visual arts and science programmes, and the role of Māori students during school visits to Orakei marae and Pio Pio School help to validate the students' Māori heritage and identity.

Leadership and participation. Māori students have leadership roles and responsibilities in many aspects of school life, including pōwhiri and kapa haka, and as house, sports and class councillors. Their leadership and active participation in the

school's many cultural, sports and academic activities affirm their sense of belonging and achievement.

Areas for further improvement

Reporting Māori student achievement. The academic achievements of Māori students are reported to the board of trustees in separate subject reports, including reading, mathematics and library skills. The analysis of this data should be strengthened to show the trends in the overall progress and achievement of Māori students over time. The data could also be enriched by including information about Māori student achievement in specialist programmes and in other aspects of school life. This would enable the principal to provide the board with a richer evaluation about the extent to which Māori students are achieving their potential. It would also place the board in a stronger position to fulfil its obligation to report to the Māori community about the achievement of Māori students.

Tikanga Māori in learning programmes. The board, through its teacher performance appraisal system, expects all teachers to include tikanga Māori in their learning programmes. There is little evidence of the meaningful integration and promotion of te reo me ngā tikanga across the school. The board, through the principal and staff should clarify its expectations for this aspect of teacher performance. Professional development should be provided for teachers so that they are able to integrate te reo me ngā tikanga into their classroom programmes in ways that support and affirm the achievement of Māori students.

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.

The school has sixteen students who are identified as having a Pacific ethnicity. The school monitors aspects of Pacific student achievement using national and school-based tests. It is yet to identify and develop specific strategies for promoting the achievement of its Pacific students

Areas for improvement

Reporting Pacific student achievement overall. The board receives some information about the achievement of Pacific students in aspects of literacy and numeracy that shows that Pacific students are achieving at or above the level of other students in the school. It does not receive collated information showing trends in Pacific student achievement over several years. Nor does it receive an evaluation of the extent to which Pacific students are achieving their academic potential, as well as achieving in other areas of school life.

Home-school partnership. Senior managers should be more proactive in communicating with Pacific families about how the school can support the families' aspirations for their children's learning and achievement.

Professional Learning and Development

In this review ERO evaluated how well Parnell District 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

Over the past three years teachers have been involved in a wide variety of professional development activities relevant to their teaching practice. There has been a limited amount of school-wide professional development. This was largely as a result of the impact of a major school building development and changes in school leadership.

This year the school has embarked on a two year contract with an external consultant. This contract focuses on the use of assessment to inform classroom teaching programmes and teaching practice. The principal and senior managers expect that all teachers will be involved in the project and will be supported to make greater use of teaching practices based on recent theory and research about teaching and learning. They also expect that the contract will include elements of the New Zealand Curriculum due to be implemented in 2010.

Areas of good performance

School culture. The board of trustees, principal, senior managers and staff have a positive attitude towards professional learning and development. The board generously supports teachers to gain higher academic qualifications. The trustees themselves access training in order to enhance their knowledge of school governance. The principal and senior managers are spearheading this year's school-wide professional development initiatives. In addition, teachers engage in a wide variety of professional learning and development activities that support their classroom teaching. This shared commitment to learning and development helps teachers to bring a vitality and enthusiasm to their teaching and to extend students' learning opportunities.

Planning and decision-making. In the past, teachers have identified their professional learning and development needs mainly through self-reflection and the performance appraisal process. Some professional learning and development has been linked to the board's strategic direction to increase the variety of subjects taught and introduce e-learning. The recent shift to a major school-wide focus on developing teaching practice consistent with recent research is appropriate. It will encourage greater consistency in the provision of high quality teaching and learning.

Area for improvement

Development of school-wide teaching practice. The previous focus on resourcing individual professional learning and development rather than school-wide programmes, has slowed the development of school-wide teaching practices that are based on current theory and research. Even though there has been some in-school professional development and sharing, there have not yet been sufficient opportunities for teachers to collectively reflect on what high quality teaching should look like at Parnell District School.

Recommendation

The board of trustees, together with the principal and teaching staff, should ensure that professional learning and development initiatives continue to support the development of school-wide teaching practices that are informed by recent research as well as by the mission, goals and vision outlined in the school's charter.

Provision for International Students

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

Parnell District 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. The school has seven international students, all of whom are Korean. The school complies with all aspects of the Code.

Areas of good performance

Administration. Policies and procedures are in place to guide the pastoral care of international students and to help ensure that the board of trustees meets its obligation to comply with the Code.

Student welfare. The school is supportive of its international students. The teacher who currently has overall responsibility for the students has regular meetings with them. Students also receive pastoral support through the English language support programme. The school also has translators available should the students require that support.

English language support. Students receive good quality specialist teaching of English. The well designed English language support programmes encourage students to develop their oral and written English language skills. The lessons build on students' existing knowledge and focus on environments that are familiar to them. This specialist teaching together with other learning opportunities in general class and school activities support students to acquire English language skills.

Area for improvement

Cross-cultural professional development. Classroom teachers have not received any formal cross-cultural training relating to the Korean students that they have in their classes. However, they do have informal opportunities to learn about Korean culture through contact with Korean parents especially at school events such as the gala.

5. 5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Parnell District 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.

In this school, there is a positive and supportive environment that promotes student safety and well-being. Initiatives, such as the introduction of a student council and the 'Cool Schools' programme encourage students to take responsibility in creating a safe environment. The school has good quality management systems to promote a safe physical and emotional environment for students and staff. The high level of parent involvement and support for the school, together with the commitment of the trustees, principal and staff, helps to promote a safe environment that has a positive impact on student achievement.

Compliance

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

6. 6. Recommendations

ERO recommends that the board of trustees, through the principal and staff:

- 6.1 ensure that the school continues to develop greater consistency in the use of teaching practices that are informed by recent theories about effective teaching and learning; and
- 6.2 give greater emphasis to outcomes for students in the board's annual plans and curriculum reports.

7. 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.

Elizabeth Ellis
Area Manager
for Chief Review Officer

25 June 2008

25 June 2008

To the Parents and Community of Parnell District School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Parnell District 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>.

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.

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.

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.
