

Teachers have participated in ongoing professional development, focusing on literacy, numeracy and e-learning. Two staff are currently on Royal Society of New Zealand science fellowships to further their study. The knowledge and skills gained by these teachers will greatly benefit science programmes for students. The teachers will also be able to use their expertise to lead a review of science teaching in the school and to make recommendations to the board about how it can strategically support science teaching and learning in the school.

The principal and board have been innovative in reaching out to the school community, which is inclusive of children, staff, parents, whānau and groups who support the school in many ways.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the 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
- 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
- attendance.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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



Richard Thornton
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

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Education Review Report: Snells Beach Primary School

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. ERO's reports are intended to be clear, concise, constructive and evaluative. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements.

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

Findings

1 Context

What are the important features of this school's context that have an impact on student learning?

This is the first ERO report on Snells Beach Primary School, which opened in 2009. The school caters for students in Years 1 to 6 and is situated in the semi-rural community of Snells Beach, Rodney District. The well designed, eco-friendly buildings are set in a spacious landscape of native planting and sports facilities. The school is well resourced with information and communication technologies (ICT) to support students' learning.

The school's Living Values programme contributes to the positive culture of the school. Children are confident and enthusiastic learners who enjoy respectful relationships with each other and with adults. Their progress and achievement is fostered by the interest, involvement and support of the wider community. The school provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for all children and children with special learning and social needs are well catered for.

In partnership with the principal and staff, the establishment board and two boards of trustees have worked effectively to set up a new school. They have made well considered decisions in developing a school vision, managing school growth, and determining priorities for the development of the school. Trustees, the principal and staff are focused on making continuous improvements that support positive outcomes for students.

2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Children are confident, articulate and eager to learn. Respectful relationships and good quality teaching enable children to express and explore ideas with each other and their teachers. Teachers are skilled at talking to children about their work and giving them feedback on how to improve. Staff have identified that it would now be helpful to explore teaching approaches that help children to know what they have achieved and to identify the next steps in their learning.

Staff and the board have participated in training on how to implement the National Standards. The majority of students are meeting national expectations in mathematics, reading and writing. The board receives information about how well children are progressing and achieving against national expectations in literacy and mathematics and this information is broken down by year groups, gender and ethnicity. Clear information about student achievement has enabled the board to set achievement targets in relation to the National Standards to raise the achievement of identified groups of children. Reporting to the board on other curriculum areas, using an evaluative self-review approach, will give the board and school leaders valuable information to guide further resourcing of these learning areas.

School leaders and teachers use assessment data effectively to identify areas in which children need further assistance to support their learning. They monitor children's progress closely. Together with their observations of children, teachers should continue to work together on moderating data against the National Standards at class and syndicate levels. In addition, school leaders should continue to review student reports so that the information they provide parents about how well their children are achieving in relation to the National Standards is clear.

School practices are inclusive of all children. Teachers plan well to meet the learning needs of individual students, including those identified with special learning needs. The principal and staff are knowledgeable about special needs students and a variety of innovative strategies is used to meet their needs. Parents of children who receive additional assistance are well informed about, and are partners with the school in, supporting their child's progress.

A small number of children identify as being of Pacific heritage. The school has taken steps to raise Pacific student achievement. A group of children receive support in literacy and learning English as a second language. Achievement results indicate that these children are making good progress.

To further consolidate the school's initiatives for increased Pacific student achievement, the principal and board could include a target for Pacific students in the school's strategic and annual planning. The Ministry of Education's *Pasifika Education Plan* could be used as a resource in evaluating the effectiveness of school initiatives and to help identify further areas for improvement.

Twelve percent of students identify as being of Māori heritage. Māori student achievement data indicate that, whilst some Māori students are achieving at or above nationally expected levels for their age, the majority are achieving below expectations.

Many strategies are in place to accelerate the progress of Māori students and, in particular, the progress of Māori boys. A consultative relationship has been established with local iwi. Ngati Wai are conducting a research project in the school, investigating barriers to achievement. They are engaging families in this process. Ngati Manuhiri have a voice in the operation of the school and are consulted at board level.

Māori parents have opportunities to be involved at classroom and school-wide levels and report that they find staff are approachable and open. School leaders are keen to establish a school kapa haka group and to work towards further inclusion of te reo and tikanga Māori within school programmes. To consolidate school initiatives for raising Māori student achievement, the principal and board could include targets for Māori students in the school's strategic and annual plans. *Ko Hikitea*, the Ministry of Education strategy for Māori education, could be used to review the effectiveness of school initiatives to support the achievement of Māori students.

3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

Wide consultation supported the development of the school curriculum and staff have made considerable progress with its design and implementation. As a result, the school curriculum provides opportunities for children to learn in a broad variety of contexts. The curriculum is personalised to reflect the context of Snells Beach Primary School and builds on children's interests and talents. A next step for senior staff is to develop guidelines for curriculum implementation, giving teachers, particularly those who are new to the school, a framework for their classroom planning.

An inquiry learning model motivates children to investigate, develop their thinking skills, and explore different ways of processing information. Children and teachers use ICT effectively to promote their research and inquiry skills, reinforce learning, and present their work. Children appreciate the good opportunities available to them to participate in sport and the arts.

Science learning makes authentic connections to the lives of students, and includes an emphasis on environmental education. Resources in the local community are used well. School science leaders have identified that a next step in science teaching and learning is increasing students' opportunities to undertake practical investigations. This focus would support the school's inquiry approach to learning.

The school's Living Values programme and key competencies are central to classroom practice.

Appropriate emphasis is placed on children's acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills and on integrating literacy and numeracy teaching into the curriculum. A specialised programme has been adopted to develop children's skills in literacy at all year levels. Teachers should consider how this programme can best be used in classroom programmes. Planned purchases of instructional reading resources will further support literacy learning in the school.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is well governed by the board and is successfully led by the principal. It is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. In the short time since the school opened, the board and school leaders have developed effective school systems and processes that focus on improving educational outcomes for students. They have planned well for the growth of the school. Careful financial management and forward planning by the principal and successive boards of trustees have helped to ensure continuing progress in the operation of the school.

The establishment board and subsequent boards of trustees have adopted a reflective approach and have built self review into the development process. Self-review goals are documented in the school's strategic and annual planning.

The principal and deputy principal work together as a cohesive team. The principal is the leader for learning in the school and in addition coordinates special education services. Staff relationships are collegial and collaborative.