

**Birkdale Primary School  
Birkdale, Auckland**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Birkdale 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. 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. The report answers four key questions about the school.

## Findings

### 1 Context

#### **What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?**

Birkdale Primary School, located on Auckland's North Shore, is a well established multicultural school providing education for students from Years 1 to 6. Te Puāwaitanga immersion unit provides good opportunities for students to participate in full immersion Māori education. The school is hosting Kohanga Reo Ngā Pihi O Te Purapura Pai while their building is being rebuilt.

The school has undertaken a significant journey in recent years. This has included Ministry of Education assistance support to strengthen community engagement with parents and whānau. A new literacy initiative for all Years 1 to 2 students was introduced at the beginning of 2014.

A focus for the school is developing a culture of encouraging students to be curious thinkers. Students have been involved in a number of projects that support these new learning experiences. An inclusive school culture inspires students to show respect for others and for the environment. The school is the recipient of a bronze award from the Enviro Schools Project and is enthusiastically aiming for a silver award this year.

The school has responded well to recommendations in the 2011 ERO review. New trustees have been elected to the school board. They are committed to their role and have established good working relationships with school management.

The school's mission statement of 'Learning together, belonging together for a brighter future' is being realised.

### 2 Learning

#### **How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?**

Senior leaders and teachers have a good understanding of student progress and achievement. They have a commitment at all levels to ongoing improvement in student's learning. A school assessment and reporting cycle provides a clear framework to guide teacher practice. Senior leaders and teachers are implementing strategies to monitor the progress of identified groups of students. As a result, students are beginning to make accelerated progress.

A school-wide focus in literacy is strengthening students' skills and knowledge. Publicly available National Standards achievement data in reading, writing and mathematics shows that Māori students are achieving at slightly lower levels, particularly in reading, when compared with 2012 – 2013 local, regional and national data. Pacific student achievement compares more favourably with other schools locally and nationally.

A school culture of reflection and continual improvement underpins teaching and learning practices. Senior leaders and teachers are developing ways to strengthen effective teaching practice. The use of professional development is raising teacher performance and encouraging students to take ownership of their learning. A new performance appraisal system is guiding teaching practice and strengthening teacher capability. Senior leaders and teachers could now also reflect *Tātaiako - Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners*, in teachers' appraisal goals.

The school has responded positively to the specialist assistance received from the Ministry of Education following a request by the board. Senior leaders and teachers are continuing to use this learning opportunity to further strengthen teaching and learning practices and support parent partnerships across the school.

Teachers use achievement information to identify students who are underachieving or have special learning needs, and to inform their planning and teaching practices. Teacher aides work alongside students in the classroom and in withdrawal programmes. They are skilled at supporting these students to progress.

Written reports to parents are detailed and give good information about their child's learning in relation to National Standards. These reports are continuing to be refined over time.

Students are engaged in their learning and enjoy positive, respectful relationships across the school. They have opportunities for leadership roles and to work with others within and between classes. Students are beginning to articulate their learning goals and implement steps to achieve them.

ERO and school leaders discussed next steps to further enhance the use of achievement information. These included:

- analysing student achievement information more deeply to inform teaching practice
- strengthening assessment practices through refining assessment tools and moderation
- embedding effective teaching practice through greater understanding of 'Teaching as Inquiry'
- strengthening parent partnerships in order to further support student learning.

### **3 Curriculum**

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

Birkdale Primary School offers a curriculum that is effective in promoting and supporting student engagement, progress and achievement. It is embracing a 'thinking culture' that caters for students' interests, strengths and abilities. The idea that everyone is a learner is modelled by staff and reflected in the school culture.

Learning programmes provide meaningful opportunities for students to gain knowledge through real life experiences. Teachers support students to become innovative and inquiry focused. Through this students are empowered to take ownership of their learning.

A significant feature of the programme is the development of a number of gardens and a large school native bush area. Senior leaders acknowledge that this is becoming a unique feature of the school.

Literacy programmes are a focus across the curriculum. Teachers are continuing to seek ways to increase student engagement and enthusiasm for literacy. They share professional practice and take responsibility for improving student achievement. This is an area that senior leaders and ERO agree should continue.

An important aspect of the curriculum is the wellbeing of students. Senior leaders and teachers are continuing to promote the successful delivery of the 'Positive Behaviour for Learning Programme'. This is clearly visible throughout the learning environments and integrated across all school systems.

The school has a number of Pacific students from Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Cook Islands and Niue. Pacific students are progressing and achieving in literacy and mathematics. They are represented in leadership roles across the school. A Pasifika cultural group has recently been established. Senior leaders and teachers acknowledge that they need to continue building parent partnerships with Pacific families in order to enhance student learning.

### **How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?**

Trustees, senior leaders and teachers are committed to supporting and enhancing Māori students' success as Māori. Many Māori students and their whānau have strong historical and generational links with the school.

Te Puāwaitanga the Māori immersion unit attached to Birkdale Primary School was established in 1986. There are currently 44 students enrolled in the unit and students have very good Māori language skills. Their learning programmes are designed by teachers using Te Marautanga, the Māori curriculum. Junior learning programmes cater for students from Years 1 to 4 and senior learning programmes for students from Years 5 to 6. Students learn English language skills for 4 hours each week.

The unit supports students' learning in well-designed classroom environments. Good processes are in place to support classroom expectations, routines and teaching practices. The immersion classes lead the school in school ceremonies through waiata and cultural events.

A new initiative for Te Puāwaitanga has been to encourage whānau to attend goal setting evenings for their children and to share the progress of every child.

The next steps for review and development in Te Puāwaitanga are to:

- develop policy to reflect the learning vision, philosophy and entry criteria of Te Puāwaitanga
- develop Te Marautanga and related assessment procedures and expectations to reflect the vision, philosophy and learning programmes of Te Puāwaitanga
- develop an analysis of Ngā Whanaketanga achievement data to identify student progress in panui, tuhituhi and pangarau, including strengthening moderation processes
- continue to seek professional development around Ngā Whanaketanga and Marautanga development.

Māori students in mainstream classes benefit from a curriculum that supports their individual interests. Teachers are beginning to work more closely with parents and family/whānau to increase student progress and achievement. Celebrations such as Matariki are enjoyed by all students and

whānau. The school has a strong kapa haka group which is available to both Te Puāwaitanga and mainstream students.

The board and senior leaders are keen to further explore parent and student feedback to evaluate the extent to which they are meeting the aspirations Māori parents and family/whānau have for their children.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

Birkdale Primary School is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. The school is well led by a capable principal and an experienced leadership team. The principal has a clear plan for implementing the school vision and is strategically guiding the school through this. She is ably supported by the leadership team who are, together, developing distributed leadership across the school.

Sound self review processes support ongoing improvement. The school culture supports critical reflection and values the contributions of staff, students, trustees and school community. Senior leaders work collaboratively to promote positive outcomes for students.

Trustees are developing a good understanding of their governance roles. They know their community well. Trustees are improvement focused and are committed to serving their school community effectively. They are well informed through good reporting processes.

### **Provision for international students**

The 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*. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code. At the time of this review one international student was attending the school.

The school should ensure that information about the welfare, academic progress and social integration of international students is reported to the board.

### **Board assurance on legal requirements**

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the *ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists*. 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 student achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

To improve practice, the board of trustees should always ensure that it acts in a timely fashion and in accordance with the relevant employment legislation and expectations of the New Zealand Teachers Council.

**Area of non-compliance:**

Education outside the classroom: Board processes must be consistent with legislation relating to the approval of overnight trips.

*[Education Act 1989, the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and the Crimes Act 1961]*

**Conclusion**

Students at Birkdale Primary School experience an inclusive school culture that encourages students to show respect for others and the environment. Te Puāwaitanga provides good opportunities for students to participate in full immersion Māori education. Students benefit from a curriculum that is relevant and provides them with good opportunities to learn through real life experiences.

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



Dale Bailey  
National Manager Review Services  
Northern Region

16 October 2014

## About the School

Location	Birkdale, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1230	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	212	
Number of international students	1	
Gender composition	Boys 51% Girls 49%	
Ethnic composition	Maori	44%
	NZ European/Pākehā	19%
	Tongan	10%
	Filipino	9%
	Samoan	8%
	British	2%
	other Pacific	3%
	other Asian	2%
	other	3%
Special Features	Te Puāwaitanga: 3 Māori immersion classes	
Review team on site	August 2014	
Date of this report	16 October 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	October 2011
	Education Review	June 2008
	Education Review	June 2005