



Birkdale Intermediate
Birkdale, Auckland

Confirmed

Education Review Report

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Birkdale Intermediate

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 Intermediate, on Auckland's North Shore, caters for Year 7 and 8 students. Positive and supportive relationships between staff and students contribute to a settled school tone that is focused on learning.

Parents and whānau are welcomed into the school and their contributions are valued. The board reflects the community well with a good balance of experienced and newly appointed trustees.

Indoor learning spaces and the outdoor environment inspire students to extend their learning. Information on classroom walls guides students' independent learning. Art installations encourage their interest in and appreciate of art and culture.

In 2012, ERO's report noted the school's high quality learning culture, strong governance and leadership, and the good levels of staff collaboration. These very good features continue to be evident.

The school has made good progress in the areas identified for development in the course of the 2012 ERO review. The school makes good use of self review to drive and embed initiatives. Senior leaders and teachers have further developed their teaching capability to support Māori and Pacific learners and their whānau. This has increased the school's engagement with its Māori community and other cultural groups. Well considered professional learning and development (PLD) for teachers has had a positive impact on outcomes for students.

2 Learning

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

The school uses achievement information very effectively to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

Students engage well in their learning. They hold their teachers in high regard and have a sense that teachers are interested in them as individuals. Students reflect on their learning and how they have achieved their personal goals. They confidently discuss their progress and achievement with their parents and whānau. Most students are achieving at and above the National Standards for reading, writing and mathematics.

The board of trustees supports senior leaders and teachers to raise achievement for all students. Specific and relevant targets are set by the board for groups of learners who are underachieving. Well analysed school assessment information helps the board identify where to allocate additional staffing and resources to support these students' learning requirements.

Teachers and senior leaders modify teaching and learning programmes to suit the requirements of individual students. This good practice supports students who achieve below National Standards to make accelerated progress. School reporting to parents about their children's learning, progress and achievement helps them to understand and contribute to their child's learning and next steps.

Twenty percent of the school population identifies as Māori. Most Māori students achieve at and above the National Standards and at levels similar to their non-Māori peers in the school. Appropriate achievement information is used effectively to identify and establish targets for Māori students who are not achieving at expected levels.

Pacific students identify as either Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, Cook Island Māori or Niue. Collectively, they represent thirteen percent of the school roll. While most achieve at and above National Standards, overall their achievement is slightly lower than their non-Pacific peers in the school. Trustees, senior leaders and teachers are committed to supporting Pacific students and their families to raise achievement levels. They have used The Ministry of Education's *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017* to raise the level of urgency to deliver better outcomes for Pacific learners. Professional learning and development has successfully supported teachers to further develop culturally responsive teaching practices.

Students with special learning needs benefit from the school's inclusive culture. Appropriate intervention programmes are implemented with parent/whānau involvement. These students are involved in the everyday life of the school.

3 Curriculum

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

The school provides students with a relevant and responsive curriculum. It is highly effective in promoting and supporting students' engagement in learning and their progress and achievement. Student feedback is valued and shapes what they study. The school's curriculum is well aligned to the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

The breadth of the curriculum helps students build on their strengths and interests. It also supports them to engage in new educational experiences and recognise their previously hidden talents. Students are intellectually challenged by programmes that require them to use their learnt skills and understandings in a variety of meaningful situations. They have opportunities to develop their literacy and mathematical capabilities in different learning areas.

Student engagement in learning is enhanced by skilled teachers who provide students with:

- themes that link well to their ideas, culture and identity
- opportunities to test ideas and critique opinions in a safe environment
- programmes that require them to seek resources and make connections with other people to extend their learning.

The school's promotion of bicultural approaches is evident in the curriculum. Māori are acknowledged and respected as tangata whenua. Māori kawa is observed at school assemblies and important school events. Māori students hear and see their culture through waiata and mihi. A well planned te reo programme for all students is part of the school's curriculum. Parents and whānau receive reports about how well their children use te reo Māori. Senior leaders and teachers have a

commitment to increasing their use of te reo Māori to support the school's ongoing bicultural development.

Student wellbeing is enhanced by the school's positive learning culture. This is actively promoted by trustees, staff, students and parents/whānau. Ako is evident in respectful, reciprocal interactions between staff and students, and between students. The board's commitment to providing a safe emotional environment for staff and students is apparent in practical measures such as funding a part-time counsellor.

Teachers support students as independent, self regulated learners and thinkers. A student shared with ERO their view that the school was a place where "open mindedness is appreciated, not frowned upon". These factors contribute to students experiencing and celebrating their learning success.

School leaders support teachers to reflect on and improve their practice. Teachers use a variety of sources of information, including achievement data, to respond to the diverse learning requirements of students.

Parents, families and whānau are well informed and involved in conversations about their children's learning. Their aspirations for their children's education are considered as part of curriculum reviews. In order to enhance students' leadership of their learning, the board and school leaders are considering ways to make children's own aspirations more evident in all aspects of school life.

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

The school promotes educational success for Māori, as Māori very well.

The school's kapa haka group remains very strong. Students are keen to join and participate in training sessions and school events. Competition performances outside the school are regarded as high quality by other schools and judges. This positive feedback acknowledges the commitment and success of the school and its long standing kaiako in developing systems and processes to sustain this important part of the school's life.

Whānau are actively involved in regular hui. Their views and aspirations for their tamariki are respected and influence school developments focused on improving outcomes for Māori students.

The bilingual classroom, Ngā Hua o te Purapura Pai, provides an option for Māori students to learn by using their language. Students in this classroom are provided with opportunities to extend their understandings of te ao Māori by making links between te reo and tikanga Māori. A Mahau, carved by a student's grandparent, was installed in 2013 to provide a gateway to Ngā Hua. Such cultural additions to the school are greatly valued by the Māori community.

The school's kaiako, with support from the board and senior leaders, intends to explore ways to further strengthen Māori students' understandings about their link to whenua and to each other.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Self review is used continually to improve outcomes for students. Curriculum areas are effectively evaluated and recommendations made for future practice.

The principal's capable leadership guides the school's direction. Teachers and students have varied leadership roles and opportunities across the school. All staff members are valued as professionals and appreciate the school's supportive culture.

Participation in external networks provides school leaders and teachers with a way to check and refine ideas, moderate student work and to be involved with projects led by academics and

researchers from New Zealand and overseas. Trustees seek training and are receptive to new ideas about how board operations might be refined and improved. These connections and networks support the school's ongoing improvement.

Trustees are effective in their governance roles. They are very supportive of the principal and staff. There is clear alignment between strategic planning and programme implementation. The board's evidence-based decision making sustains improvement and contributes to equitable outcomes for all students.

In order to enhance the school's focus on what is best for students, the board is considering how to formally review its governance roles and responsibilities. This inquiry into governance practice will build on the very good evaluation processes used school wide.

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 there were three international students attending the school. They are well cared for and experience high quality programmes. Programmes are well matched to students' learning needs and promote their wellbeing. International students are integrated into the school community. They participate and feature in school cultural and sporting activities.

The school's system for monitoring international students is effectively administered. Parents are informed regularly about how well their children are achieving and progressing. The board receives regular reports on the quality of care and education for international students.

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.

Conclusion

Students at Birkdale Intermediate experience high quality education. They benefit from a broad curriculum that encourages deep thinking. Effective teaching practices and learning relationships cater well for diverse students' requirements and contribute positively to student wellbeing. School governance and leadership is effective and parents' partnership in their children's learning is valued.

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.



Dale Bailey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

30 June 2015

About the School

Location	Birkdale, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1228	
School type	Intermediate (Years 7 to 8)	
School roll	402	
Number of international students	3	
Gender composition	Boys 53% Girls 47%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	20%
	NZ European/Pākehā	45%
	Tongan	6%
	Samoan	5%
	European	3%
	Filipino	3%
	African	2%
	British	2%
	Fijian	2%
	Indian	2%
	other Asian	3%
	other Pacific	1%
	other ethnicities	6%
Special Features	Māori bilingual class	
Review team on site	May 2015	
Date of this report	30 June 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2012
	Education Review	July 2010
	Education Review	December 2006