

Peninsula Primary School Education Review

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

About The School

Location	Te Atatu, Waitakere City
Ministry of Education profile number	1531
School type	Contributing (Year 1-6)
Decile rating	5
Teaching staff:	19.90
Roll generated entitlement	0.90
Other	22
Number of teachers	
School roll	377
Gender composition	Girls 45%, Boys 55%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākeha 42%, Māori 27%, Samoan 8%, Tongan 4%, Niuean 3%, Cook Island 3%, other 13%
Review team on site	July 2008
Date of this report	17 September 2008
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, August 2005 Accountability Review, January 2002 Accountability Review, December 1997 Assurance Audit, November 1994

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Peninsula Primary School continues to provide a high quality education for children from the Te Atatu district. The school operates as a nurturing, child-centred learning community that genuinely welcomes parents and maintains open and consultative relationships with them. All staff, including the helpful and efficient office administrators, demonstrate a high level of commitment to providing for the diverse educational, social and emotional needs of children.

Children who attend the school are confident, articulate and enthusiastic about their schoolwork. They enjoy the positive climate for learning that prevails throughout the school and respond eagerly to their teachers' high expectations. They are caring and respectful of their peers and enjoy working collaboratively with them. Tuakana-teina relationships are clearly evident in the playground and contribute significantly to the sense of family that exists in the school. Children in the senior classes respond very well to the opportunities for leadership that the school provides for them.

Overall, levels of achievement throughout the school are consistent with national norms, with a reported trend towards achievement in the higher bands of the national Progressive Achievement Tests. The school has effective systems for monitoring children's progress and achievement and for providing support and challenge for those who have particular learning needs or abilities. Leadership team members are looking for continual improvement in teachers' practice that will enhance students' ownership of their learning.

The school's curriculum incorporates a rich variety of extra and co-curricular educational opportunities that are consistent with a holistic approach to teaching and learning. The value that the school attaches to children's work is reflected in the many displays of high quality artwork, which are an attractive feature of the school environment. Buildings and grounds are well maintained and include resources such as the heated indoor swimming pool, and the well-managed library and information centre.

Teachers are committed, collegial and hard working. They have created classroom environments that are vibrant, colourful and focused on children's learning outcomes. Children are provided with many opportunities to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning. The school's integrated curriculum is being implemented consistently throughout the school by means of a detailed and thorough planning system that is differentiated to meet the needs of children at all levels. Teachers and children are closely supported in their work by a team of trained and highly effective teacher-aides. Under the effective leadership of an experienced senior manager this well coordinated team provides high quality support for children with special learning needs.

The principal has a close knowledge of the school and its community. He provides high

quality professional leadership. His considered, reflective and consultative leadership style has earned him the respect of trustees, staff and parents. The principal is well supported by his deputies, whose complementary skills and knowledge contribute to a strong and forward-looking leadership team.

The board governs the school effectively. The experienced trustees have strong links to the community. They are well informed and bring a variety of relevant skills and backgrounds to the task of school governance. Since the 2005 review, most trustees have received training in their roles and responsibilities. Trustees share the vision of the principal and management team and are very appreciative of the work they do. The board is fortunate to have the services of a Māori representative. It would be good practice to now seek representation from among the school's Pacific communities. The report also makes other suggestions about strengthening the Māori and Pacific dimension of the school.

ERO and the board agreed that the focus area for this review would be Developing Effective Self-Review. The review also evaluated areas of national interest, including progress in improving the achievement of Māori and Pacific children and professional learning and development for staff. In addition, the review investigated the provision of a safe physical and emotional environment. This report affirms the good practice that is presently occurring in the school and recommends that staff continue to develop school wide inquiry-based learning approaches.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of children 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.

The Focus Of The Review

Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

High expectations for children are integral to the ethos of the school. This is exemplified by the Right Start initiative, which encourages children to become familiar with school routines and expectations, and provides valuable pre-school experience for those who might not otherwise have received it. It also allows teachers in the junior school to gain early insights into the strengths and needs of those about to enrol in the reception classes.

The management team and teachers make good use of assessment data to inform future planning, tailor programmes to meet individual needs and to provide information for the board. The school uses a variety of assessment tools, the majority of which are nationally normed and provide data that are valid and reliable. There is an expectation that teachers will be responsive to information gained and act promptly to either extend and challenge, or address learning needs.

On the basis of assessment information currently available in the school, staff report the following:

- over time, the majority of children demonstrate consistent improvement in literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge;
- there is a trend for more children to achieve in the higher stanines, particularly in the Progressive Achievement Tests;
- the achievement of children who have a NZ European/Pākeha heritage generally conforms to national norms in numeracy and literacy;
- Māori and Samoan children are represented more frequently in the lower stanines but also feature strongly at the higher levels;
- Tongan children, especially those who are new arrivals, need considerable support, most often through the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programme; and
- regular review of special needs programmes indicates that children who are supported by these programmes make good progress.

The school celebrates children's achievement in a number of ways, including presentations at school assemblies.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Peninsula Primary 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 achievement and self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the children at Peninsula Primary School.

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

- developing effective self-review.

ERO's findings in this area are set out below.

Developing Effective Self-Review

Background

The school has experienced changes in school leadership since the 2005 ERO report. A new principal took up his position towards the end of 2006, together with a new senior management team and changes in board membership.

In 2007 the school conducted a review of its English curriculum with a focus on writing. The board suggested that this would provide a useful focus for the current review. The board and ERO decided to extend the scope of this focus to include other aspects of school operations relating to self review.

Student progress and achievement

Self review is clearly focused on improving outcomes for students. The school-wide review of writing came directly from an analysis of student achievement information which indicated a level of underachievement in this area.

Areas of good performance

The positive impact of the following aspects of the school's professional activities on outcomes for students is attributable to the school's philosophy and practice of self review.

Use of achievement information. The school's approach to self review includes a careful consideration of achievement information. Student achievement information is gathered, analysed, reported and used to set targets and meet individual and group needs. Teachers use student achievement information to effectively guide their programme planning. Senior managers report school-wide achievement to the board to assist in its strategic planning. Self review, based on good quality achievement information, contributes effectively to raising student achievement. It also contributes to the school's forward-thinking learning culture which is focused on preparing students to become competent and lifelong learners.

Child-centred philosophy. Children feature as the focus of all aspects of the school, both inside and outside the classroom. Displays of students' work, especially art and writing, reflect current learning outcomes and celebrate students' achievement and success. A high trust model allows children open access to all areas of the school including the hall, office, staff room and library. The confidence and sense of belonging that children develop as a consequence contributes to the respectful, inclusive and secure interactions students have with their peers and with adults.

Rich opportunities. The vast range of opportunities and experiences provided for children not only promote the special talents, interests and skills of individuals but also nourish and nurture relationships amongst students. Kapa haka, house system activities, interchange options, various clubs, Trash 4 Fashion, Warrior Kids and the buddy systems are some of the opportunities that promote positive relationships within and between different classes. Combined with the strong values that exist in the school these opportunities have contributed to the creation of a tuakana-teina system that encourages natural interaction between older and younger children and contributes to the positive family atmosphere and school environment. Other opportunities such as itinerant and class based music programmes, sports, choir, art and activities designed for the gifted and talented ensure that options exist for every child in the school.

High quality learning activities. Relevant, good quality literacy and numeracy related activities are provided in all classrooms to support students' learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Activities are made easily accessible to children and provide further opportunities for students to be independent, self-managing learners. Students are able to learn with and from their peers. This further encourages the enthusiasm and motivation they have for learning and promotes positive relationships with their peers.

Self-managing learners. Children's capacity to be self-managing learners is a positive feature of the school. In some classrooms where teachers provide specific opportunities for independent learning, students are focused and eager to learn through tasks that meet their specific interests, extend their skills and cater for different learning styles. Students manage unstructured playground time responsibly and cooperatively.

Internalised values. The development of collective school values underpins the positive school tone, spirit and learning culture. Mutually respectful interactions between students and adults are evident and a calm atmosphere permeates the school. Children are proud of their school and talk positively and enthusiastically about the range of learning experiences provided for them. They accept and affirm differences and are actively inclusive and caring towards each other. The house system and other interclass activities promote unity and encourage positive school spirit.

Reflective and thoughtful leadership team. The openness and commitment of the leadership team to continued school enhancement is a major factor promoting student achievement. Their inclusive and consultative practices and child centred focus set a positive school tone and learning atmosphere. The senior leadership team continues to refine school management systems and operations. It uses self-review processes that acknowledge the views of staff and parents and help inform the next stages of school development. The self reflective and thoughtful characteristics of the leadership team are reflected in the performance management system and the encouragement given for improvement.

High expectations of staff and students. There are consistently high expectations of staff and students within a supportive and secure environment. In all aspects of the school's operations there are opportunities for staff to be involved in the decision making processes. Good monitoring of programme planning and feedback to teachers ensures consistency of curriculum delivery and effective teaching practices. The board, leadership team and staff are constantly striving for school wide and individual improvement.

Reflective and supportive staff. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to implementing the vision of the school. They identify a shared purpose and work hard to meet the needs of students. Cooperative and collegial, staff regularly reflect on teaching practices and programmes and are committed to professional learning and development. Teacher aides, who are seen as an integral part of the school learning environment, are essential in this process. The administrative staff are also a vital component of the school community. They provide invaluable support for teachers and students and a positive interface between the school and the wider community.

Book Look initiative. 'Book Look' was developed through the school's review of the English curriculum. It is a well-considered classroom based initiative that aims to improve student achievement in reading and writing. Students are supported and engaged in reading and writing programmes that are targeted to meet specific needs. There is a focus on reading in every classroom, where highly visible, good quality children's literature is a dominant feature. 'Book Look' promotes specific identification and monitoring of student achievement and aligns to other planned programmes in the school. Use of exemplars and criteria have strengthened the links between reading and writing. The use of formative practices to support student

learning is beginning to have an impact in some classrooms. Teachers ensure that differentiated opportunities are in place to cater for diverse learning needs.

Integrated curriculum. Children are engaged in their learning and motivated to succeed. Teaching programmes have been developed through a thoughtful and well considered approach to integrating the curriculum across all levels in the school. Teachers have shared input to the cross level themes and have autonomy in planning and teaching. Teaching programmes provide contextualised learning and opportunities for students to develop critical thinking. The integrated curriculum approach provides children with coherent, meaningful contexts for learning.

Programme planning. Effective programme planning is a feature in every classroom. The programme plans are carefully monitored by the senior leadership team and indicate a shared understanding of expected learning outcomes and differentiated activities.

Board review. The board has a regular, systematic and consultative approach to self review. Trustees revise the charter and set the strategic direction in consultation with the senior leadership team. The shared commitment of the trustees, senior leadership team and staff to progress and innovation supports the positive learning culture that characterises the school.

Areas for improvement

Inquiry based learning. The senior leadership team acknowledge that they are beginning their journey towards an inquiry based learning approach. Most teachers demonstrate the capacity to move in this direction and the leadership team and staff are well placed to extend and enrich opportunities for students to further develop as self managing learners. Moving further in this direction may reduce the need for some teachers to focus on behaviour management.

Formative practices. Use of learning outcomes and success criteria needs developing and extending throughout the school. Where formative practices are embedded in teaching and learning programmes, students are clearly able to articulate the purpose of learning and identify their strengths, gaps and next steps for learning. Written feedback and feedforward is not presently practised effectively in all classrooms.

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 Peninsula Primary 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: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of Māori children and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement. Twenty seven percent of the children currently enrolled at the school are Māori.

Areas of progress

Compliance with National Administration Guideline (NAG)1(v). The board now complies with the legislation relating to consultation and reporting. Information, specifically about the achievement of Māori children, is collected, analysed and reported to the community through the principal's reports to the board. Strong links with whānau are maintained through the board's Māori representative and the assistance of a consultant group of Māori parents. Trustees are well informed about the aspirations of the school's Māori parents for their children.

The charter. The board is provided with strong and useful guidelines in its charter under the heading Cultural Diversity and Māori Dimension. Most of these guidelines are being implemented and are having a very positive impact on Māori and on the school as a whole. The guideline that talks about planning needs to be strengthened and developed.

Achievement. The school is now able to report that Māori are represented in the highest stanines of literacy and numeracy test results. A range of intervention programmes continues to have a positive impact on the learning of those who are identified as underachieving.

Engagement in learning and other school activities. Māori children who were spoken to and observed during the review demonstrated high levels of engagement in learning and with the corporate life of the school. The successful kapa haka initiative, for example, continues to thrive and is in many ways the flagship of tikanga Māori in the school. Māori children interviewed during the review strongly identified with this group and expressed their pride in membership of it.

A Māori dimension in the formal curriculum. Teachers' planning makes provision for the inclusion of tikanga Māori in the integrated curriculum. Most classroom environments reflect some aspects of te reo, such as basic greetings, numbers, or days of the week. Aspects of te reo are taught during class interchange. There is a relatively strong component in the arts programme, which is especially evident in the visual art that is displayed around the school

Areas for further improvement

A strategic approach to Māori programme planning. The leadership team and syndicate leaders should plan to incorporate Māori studies systematically and sequentially throughout the school as part of the integrated curriculum. Children in the senior classes would then be covering material that is significantly more advanced than those in the junior school.

A stronger bicultural presence. In spite of the different aspects of tikanga Māori that are periodically present in the school, there is little ongoing evidence of a bicultural perspective in classrooms or in the daily, corporate life of the school. Very few class teachers make incidental use of te reo in their daily interactions with children. Recent activities to recognise Māori language week provide a good model for further growth. Senior managers acknowledge that they should seek ways for the school to reflect its stance on biculturalism in a more continuous and overt manner.

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.

Of the 377 students at the school, eighteen per cent or 83 students identify with a Pacific culture. The school monitors aspects of Pacific student achievement using national and school-based tests.

Areas of good performance

Achievement information. As for other children, school managers gather, analyse and track achievement for the main Pacific groups. This allows the board, leadership team and teachers to target and set specific achievement goals for students needing support. Student

achievement information is reported to the board and used to support strategic achievement targets.

Achievement information shows that Tongan students tend to be over represented in the lower stanines for literacy and numeracy. Strategically placed support provides students with the individualised guidance needed to ensure success and achievement.

Samoan students are well represented in the higher stanines. Evidence suggests that Pacific children make very good progress overall.

Areas for improvement

Cultural heritage and Pacific profile. Pacific children are articulate, proud and secure. They report that the school provides many opportunities for them to achieve and excel in a range of activities and class based programmes. They also report that they would welcome more opportunities to value their own cultural heritage. The school should seek ways to reflect and affirm Pacific students' heritage in class programmes and co-curricular opportunities such as cultural groups.

Staff could benefit from professional development to build capacity and confidence with Pacific based contexts for learning. The school is fortunate to have among its staff teachers who would be well placed to provide training for other staff members. To help promote relationships with Pacific parents, it would be good practice for the board to seek representation from among the school's Pacific communities

Professional Learning and Development

In this review ERO evaluated how well Peninsula Primary 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

Professional learning and development at Peninsula Primary School is characterised at all levels by careful reflection and a commitment to informed self-review. Trustees, managers and teachers have enthusiastically embraced internal professional development aimed at providing a coherent, school wide planning system and a thoughtfully integrated curriculum. The board can be confident that any funds allocated to staff professional development are well spent.

Areas of good performance

Effective decision making. The board, management and staff work collegially to identify school wide initiatives. Information about the achievement of children is used to make decisions about programmes that will provide the best inputs and learning outcomes for teachers and children. Planning for professional development is farsighted and strategic. Decisions are linked both to teacher appraisal goals and the long-term goals of the school as a whole.

Learning community culture. The school managers and teachers are a collegial team who have high expectations for strengthening teaching practice and the performance of the school overall. Regular reflection is encouraged at an individual and team level. Directions for future school development and growth are based on research. The school is well placed to move further towards a model of teaching and learning that is focussed on inquiry and the concept of self-directed learning.

Impact. The school has effective quality assurance procedures and a robust appraisal system, which are a widely accepted component of the drive towards excellence through targeted professional development. The major impact of professional development observed during the review was the consistency with which school wide procedures and methodologies are carried out at the classroom level, and the subsequent high quality outcomes for children.

Board Assurance On Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Peninsula Primary 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.

Compliance

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

Recommendations

ERO recommends that:

The school managers continue to strengthen inquiry based learning approaches, utilizing methodologies already in place and working collaboratively with staff to establish a systematic and cohesive school wide model.

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

17 September 2008

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To the Parents and Community of Peninsula Primary School

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

Community Page

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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.

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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.

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