

Balfour School Education Review

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1 Background and Context

What is the background and context for this school's review?

The 2012 ERO report identified several areas for review and development. These areas related to school-wide assessment practices, curriculum management and how well placed the school was able to sustain or improve its performance. ERO found:

- variability in the quality of assessment across the school
- there needed to be better systems and guidelines for assessment
- curriculum policies and procedures to support teaching and learning needed to be updated
- self-review practices needed to be strengthened.

ERO has provided ongoing evaluation over the course of two years as the school has worked to improve its overall performance.

2 Review and Development

How effectively is the school addressing its priorities for review and development?

Priorities identified for review and development

The school has made significant progress in addressing the areas for review and development in the 2012 ERO report.

Progress

Assessment practices. The principal and teachers have developed useful guidelines to ensure that achievement information is well used. The guidelines include expectations for recording, tracking and monitoring the progress of students in relation to the National Standards.

The principal and teachers analyse achievement information to identify next steps for teaching and students' learning. Teachers are now well placed to involve students more in their learning. Students are encouraged to set learning goals and follow their own interests through the 'Learning Pathways' programme.

The principal provides the board with detailed reports about student achievement in relation to the National Standards. These reports show the progress that students have made and useful next steps for how the board and teachers can further support students' learning.

School achievement information for 2014 shows students achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to the National Standards.

Curriculum. The principal and teachers have developed the school's curriculum in line with the New Zealand Curriculum. The trustees and principal have updated teaching and learning policies to ensure that they reflect legal requirements and best practice. The school has developed a three year plan to systematically review these policies and procedures.

The principal and teachers have reviewed and revised the English, mathematics, the arts and social sciences curriculum statements. These statements provide detailed guidelines for teachers and are helping to ensure consistency of practice. The school plans to revise other curriculum statements following the useful model already in place. The principles, key competencies and values are evident in all programmes and are now included in planning.

Key next steps

The principal has identified, and ERO agrees, that the key next steps for the school are to:

- extend teachers' appraisal goals to better reflect the school priorities and targets for raising student achievement
- continue to review and develop the school's curriculum statements.

3 Sustainable performance and self review

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

The school is well placed to sustain and continue to improve and review its performance. The trustees, principal and teachers have undertaken relevant professional development to help them understand their roles and responsibilities more fully.

The board has a useful strategic plan which clearly identifies the school's priorities for the future. The annual plan supports the achievement of these priorities. School initiatives, activities and regular practices now align well with the annual plan and targets to lift achievement. The board discusses aspects of its charter and strategic plan at each meeting with evaluative progress reports as the basis of these discussions.

There has been significant improvement in the way the board and principal review the effectiveness of the school's planning and practices. There are well-designed guidelines and templates to support self review. Self review is an integral part of school practices that lead to ongoing improvement.

The appraisal process now includes Registered Teacher Criteria and the Professional Standards.

The board is receiving achievement reports in learning areas other than mathematics and literacy. These reports include appropriate recommendations to guide trustees and teachers in what needs to be done.

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

The board and principal have made significant progress in addressing the areas for development in the 2012 ERO report. The school is now well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Students achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Students continue to enjoy interesting and varied learning experiences.

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

Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer-Southern

3 March 2015

School Statistics

Location	Northern Southland	
Ministry of Education profile number	3932	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	75	
Gender composition	Boys: 45 Girls: 35	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	64
	Māori	3
	Other	8
Review team on site	December 2014	
Date of this report	3 March 2015	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review	October 2011
	Education Review	June 2009
	Education Review	March 2006