

Patricia Avenue School Education Review

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Location: Hamilton

Ministry of Education profile number: 1891

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

The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Patricia Avenue School is a specialist service provider located in Hamilton East and caters for students with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities aged between 5 and 21 years. It operates from a base school and six satellite units, which are attached to primary, middle and secondary schools in Hamilton, Cambridge and Te Awamutu. Students participate in all curriculum learning areas with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Since the last ERO review new satellite units have been established in Te Awamutu and Cambridge. The management team has been restructured and professional learning leadership positions have been established. The school is able to show that students are experiencing success and making progress in their learning and development.

The knowledgeable and experienced principal is focused on improving learning and developmental outcomes for students. She is ably supported by a senior management team. The recent management restructure is enhancing a cohesive approach to curriculum development. The consistency of assessment, planning and teaching practice is being improved across the school. Strengthening lines of communication between management and staff to provide ongoing, open dialogue with shared outcomes is likely to contribute to the continued development of professional practice.

The holistic needs of individual students are well catered for by personalised learning programmes and learning opportunities that enable students to explore and extend their strengths and interests. High quality learning environments cater for students' learning and development through the provision of well-planned and unique learning areas that strongly support the school's aim of students reaching their potential.

ERO observed staff and students meeting the school's expectations about respect and individual dignity. Hard working teachers, learning support assistants, therapists and specialists are dedicated and committed to providing the best possible educational opportunities for students. A committed board of trustees, focused on school improvement and ongoing school development, is effectively governing the school. Parents, whānau and caregivers are well informed about their child's achievement and highly supportive of the school and its activities.

Future Action

The board of trustees has demonstrated that it is governing the school in the interest of the students and the Crown. The board, together with the principal and school leaders, continues to be highly effective in using self review procedures to further promote student learning:

engagement, progress and achievement. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four to five years.

Patricia Avenue School's Curriculum

How effectively does the curriculum of Patricia Avenue School promote student learning: engagement, progress and achievement?

School context and self review

Patricia Avenue School is a specialist service provider that caters for students with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities from Year 1 to Year 15. Students participate in all curriculum learning areas, placing an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and life skills. The school operates from a base school and six satellite units, which are attached to primary, middle and secondary schools within the Waikato.

Since the last ERO review new satellite units have been established in Cambridge and Te Awamutu. The school has reviewed and developed its curriculum and policies in line with the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) and Revised New Zealand Curriculum. In 2009 the principal used her sabbatical leave to enrich her knowledge of current practices in special education in New Zealand. The management team has been restructured and Professional Learning Leaders have been established.

Personal Learning Programmes (PLPs) are developed for each student to cater for their individual strengths and abilities. Teachers and therapists have developed individual targets for improving student achievement in literacy, numeracy, intensive interaction and therapy. A positive and reciprocal partnership has been established between the school and family/whānau. The school is able to show that students are experiencing success and making progress in their learning and development.

The board of trustees, management and staff have developed a documented, planned approach to self review that includes the systematic collation of information from multiple sources. Such an approach informs decision making related to strategic and annual planning.

Areas of strength

Leadership: The knowledgeable and experienced principal is focused on improving learning and developmental outcomes for students. She is ably supported by both associate principals. Aspects of this shared leadership include:

- the principal's knowledge of and experience in current practice;
- a shared vision for teaching and learning based on current research and best practice

models;

- · committed and dedicated associate principals;
- · strong and effective curriculum leadership;
- · specific and regular reports to the board from the principal and senior management team to inform school decision-making processes; and
- · a culture of reflective practice that is evident throughout the school.

This focused leadership is enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of new learning strategies.

Management: The recent management restructure, which includes the appointment of Professional Learning Leaders, is enhancing a cohesive approach to curriculum development through improvements to:

- · consistency of assessment, planning and teaching practice across the school;
- · focused team meetings; and
- · sharing of ideas and professional dialogue.

These changes are positively influencing support for teachers and their practice.

Programme: Students are receiving high quality learning opportunities through:

- · well-developed personal learning programmes that are consistent with the New Zealand Curriculum;
- · skilled teachers and therapists using a variety of effective teaching strategies and quality modelling techniques to reinforce learning intentions;
- · teachers and therapists using a range of appropriate assessment tools to plan personal learning programmes that stimulate and challenge students;
- · dedicated learning support assistants who effectively support individual and groups of students;
- · specialist teachers providing valuable, targeted support that ensures students are experiencing opportunities for success and are able to achieve their potential; and
- · an extensive range of extra and co-curricular activities including education outside the classroom, sporting and music experiences.

The holistic needs of individual students are well catered for by personalised learning

programmes and opportunities that enable each student to reach their potential.

Interactions: ERO observed staff and students meeting the school's expectations about respect and individual dignity. High quality interactions between students, teachers and therapists are characterised by:

- · a culture of respect and cooperation permeating all classrooms;
- · teacher support, encouragement and modelling;
- · non-verbal communication;
- · an affirming approach to positive guidance; and
- · teachers' and therapists' knowledge of students and their families.

Students are confident in their interactions with adults and other students.

Learning environment: High quality learning environments cater for student learning and development through:

- · well-planned and unique learning areas that strongly support the school's aim of students reaching their potential;
- · calm and focused learning environments with appropriate quality resources and equipment;
- · learning areas designed to allow students to work individually or in groups;
- · classrooms that are well equipped with information and communication technology (ICT) tools that are extensively used by students; and
- · the use of wall displays, visual prompts, charts and the use of interactive whiteboards to convey relevant information and guide student learning.

Students are learning in attractive, well-planned environments that support the learning and development of individual students.

Areas for development and review

Communication: There is a need to further strengthen communication opportunities between management and staff. Improving lines of communication to provide ongoing, open dialogue with shared outcomes is likely to contribute to the continued development of professional practice.

Recommendation

ERO and the board of trustees agree that the next stages of school development should focus on improving:

3.1 communication between management and staff.

Board Assurance On Legal Requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Patricia Avenue 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 legal 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.

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

Future Action

The board of trustees has demonstrated that it is governing the school in the interest of the students and the Crown. The board, together with the principal and school leaders, continues to be highly effective in using self review procedures to further promote student learning: engagement, progress and achievement. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four to five years.

Richard Thornton

National Manager Review Services

Northern Region

About The School

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|----------------------------|---|
| School type | Special Needs |
| Decile rating[1] | 5 |
| School roll | 134 |
| Gender composition | Boys 63% Girls 37% |
| Ethnic composition | New Zealand/Pākehā 52% New Zealand Māori 32% Other 5% Asian 5% Indian 4% Pacific 2% |
| Special features | Satellite classes 12 Host schools 6 |
| Review team on site | February 2010 |
| Date of this report | 23 April 2010 |
| Previous three ERO reports | Education Review report May 2007 Education Review Report June 2004 Accountability Review November 2000 Assurance Audit January 1997 Effectiveness Review April 1993 Review November 1990 |

23 April 2010

To the Parents and Community of Patricia Avenue School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Patricia Avenue School.

Community Page

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The holistic needs of individual students are well catered for by personalised learning programmes and learning opportunities that enable students to explore and extend their strengths and interests. High quality learning environments cater for students' learning and development through the provision of well-planned and unique learning areas that strongly support the school's aim of students reaching their potential.

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Future Action

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Review Coverage

This report provides an evaluation of how effectively the school's curriculum promotes student learning: engagement, progress and achievement. ERO's evaluation takes account of the school's previous reporting history and is based on;

- what is known about student achievement information, including the achievement of Māori and Pacific students;
- decisions made to improve student achievement using the information; and
- teaching strategies and programmes implemented to give effect to the school's curriculum.

ERO's review is responsive to the school's context. For example, when ERO reviews a school, it takes into account the characteristics of the community, from which it draws its students, its location, and the aspirations the community has for its young people, and relevant local factors.

ERO also builds on the school's own self-review information. That is, ERO is interested in how a school monitors the progress of its students and aspects of school life and culture, and how it uses this information.

ERO also gathers information during the review to contribute to its reports on national education evaluation topics. Comments relevant to this school are included in the report. The national reports are published on ERO's website.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, www.ero.govt.nz.

Richard Thornton

National Manager Review Services

Northern Region

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 integrates the following.

- school curriculum;
- national evaluation topics -contribute to the development of education policies and their effective implementation; and
- Board Assurance Statement, including student and staff health and safety.
- It also integrates external review with school self review by taking the most useful aspects from external and self review to build a picture of the school and its context.
- This helps ERO to answer the major evaluation question for reviews:

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote student learning: engagement, progress and achievement?

Areas for Development and Review

ERO reports include areas for development and review to support on-going improvement by identifying priorities. Often the school will have identified these matters through its own self review and already plans further development in those areas.

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

