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

## About The School

Location	Gracefield, Hutt City
Ministry of Education profile number	2848
School type	Contributing Primary (Years 1 - 6)
Decile rating[1]	4
Teaching staff:	12.85
Roll generated entitlement	0.20
Other	14
Number of teachers	
School roll	210
Gender composition	Boys 58%

	Girls 42%
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā 57% Māori 27% Pacific 7% Indian 5% Other European 2% Other ethnic groups 2%
Review team on site	August 2009
Date of this report	3 November 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review November 2006 Education Review April 2004 Accountability Review June 2000 Assurance Audit August 1996 Effectiveness Review May 1994 Review September 1992

## The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Gracefield School is a suburban primary school in the Eastern Hutt area that caters for students in years 1 to 6. At the time of this review in August 2009, the school has a roll of 210 students, 27% of whom identify as Māori and 7% as Pacific. The school has a positive reporting history with ERO.

The senior management team collaboratively fosters a reflective staff culture and promotes high expectations for behaviour and learning. Senior managers have responded positively and reflectively to the 2006 ERO review with a continued development focus on the use of assessment information to guide teaching and learning. As a result of reflection and internal review, senior managers were aware of some areas for improvement identified in this 2009 ERO review.

As a team, teachers have developed a comprehensive framework for giving effect to The New Zealand Curriculum. In consultation with trustees and students, they have developed the school's 'Steps for Success' that incorporate the values of respect, risk taking, communication, adaptability, conscientiousness and thinking. Students are able to clearly articulate these values and their influence on the positive school culture. Regular learning activities with buddy classes also provide opportunities to foster the school's family atmosphere.

Many examples of high quality teaching include: maintaining high expectations for learning and behaviour; consistently addressing identified needs; skilfully questioning to challenge students' thinking; providing time and strategies for reflection on learning; and celebrating progress as well as

achievement. Over the past three years there has been a continued emphasis on the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) as a tool for learning and presenting. Teachers and students have continued to develop computer expertise and many aspects of ICT are well used across the curriculum. Students appreciate their settled and interesting learning environments and are purposefully engaged in their lessons.

Nationally-referenced assessments provide comparisons of student achievement with year-level expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. These demonstrate that many students in years 3 to 6 are achieving at or above year-level expectations in reading and some are achieving well in writing and mathematics. Those with identified learning needs receive targeted support to accelerate their progress.

The Board of Trustees is committed to providing an attractive, well-maintained environment for staff and students and to fostering student achievement. The recently developed entrance to the school depicts local Māori history and effectively reflects the school's bicultural heritage in an aesthetically pleasing design that incorporates contributions from students and the work of a Māori artist. The board has consulted its community about a range of curriculum and operational matters. Buildings and grounds are well presented and maintained. ERO and the board have agreed on a recommendation to strengthen self-review processes.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

## The Focus Of The Review

### Student Achievement Overall

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

The assistant principal monitors and collects school-wide assessment information in reading, writing, mathematics and numeracy.

Results from Supplementary Tests of Achievement in Reading (STAR) show that many students in years 3 to 6 achieve at or above year-level expectations in reading and some are achieving well in writing. There is no overall analysis of student achievement in reading or writing for students in years 1 and 2.

Numeracy and mathematics achievement is reported in the school-specific priorities section of this

report. The school does not gather or analyse student achievement information in other curriculum areas.

## School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Gracefield 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 student achievement and selfreview information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Gracefield School.

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

- the quality of numeracy programmes.

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

## The Quality of Numeracy Programmes

### Background

Previous reviews have focused on the quality of literacy programmes and resulted in a positive reporting history with ERO. At the time of this 2009 ERO review, teachers are engaging in the first year of professional development in numeracy, and so the board asked for an evaluation of progress to date. ERO agreed to this focus.

During the review, ERO observed numeracy lessons in all classrooms, read relevant documents and talked with teachers, students and trustees.

### Student progress and achievement

School-wide numeracy data collected early in 2009 in all domains showed that a higher proportion of students in years 2, 4, and 6 than in other year levels were achieving below national expectations. Results of mathematics Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs) in years 4 to 6 reflect the numeracy results. Analyses of term 3 assessments indicate that 76% of students in years 1 to 6 are now achieving at or above end-of-year expectations in the addition and subtraction domain.

### Areas of good performance

The board is committed to supporting the principal and staff in providing a safe and welcoming learning environment. The charter and strategic plan give priority to improving student achievement in numeracy and include a planned cycle of review for policies and curriculum areas. The annual

target for improving numeracy focuses on an identified group of underachievers. Teacher and teacher-aide time is provided to assist students with learning needs. The board receives schoolwide student achievement information in numeracy and mathematics.

Trustees, senior managers and teachers engage in comprehensive reviews of staff, parent and student perceptions about the school's climate, programmes and operations. Recent consultations have been about reporting to parents and student safety. Results from the latter survey have been analysed and reported to the community. The principal has reported the analysis of behaviour incidents to the board with recommendations for continuous improvement.

Teachers appreciate the support of a positive and professional staff culture. They articulate shared understandings about effective formative assessment and numeracy teaching in line with previous and current professional development focuses. Formal and informal peer observations of teaching practices provide opportunities to model and share strategies. Staff appraisal includes goals and observations related to recent professional development. Teachers' reflections on numeracy contract expectations have identified personal development areas. Senior managers monitor teachers' planning and assessment.

As a team, teachers have developed a comprehensive framework for giving effect to The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). This has been done in consultation with staff, trustees and students and includes the school's 'Steps for Success' that incorporate the values of respect, risk taking, communication, adaptability, conscientiousness and thinking. Students have significant ownership of these values and understand that embedding them in the class and playground culture has further enhanced the school's family atmosphere. The NZC framework provides a sound basis for further development of learning area implementation plans.

Effective formative assessment practices are evident in numeracy lessons. Students set specific evidence-based goals with indicators and strategies for success. They are encouraged to monitor their progress. Parents are involved in goal setting and monitoring at well structured and focused student-led, three-way conferences. Students know their personal levels of achievement and understand their next steps for learning. Senior managers are beginning to track progress and achievement for cohorts of students in years 3 to 6 to demonstrate progress through the year and through the school.

Many examples of high quality teaching include:

- · modelling and promoting positive interactions;
- · maintaining high expectations for learning and behaviour;
- · reinforcing the school-wide 'Steps for Success';
- · consistently addressing identified learning needs;
- · sharing learning intentions in a variety of ways;

- organising lessons and resources well;
- targeting independent tasks, including computer activities, to learning intentions;
- demonstrating concepts and strategies with hands-on materials;
- skilful questioning to engage students in learning and challenge their thinking;
- depicting numeracy concepts and achievement goals in meaningful wall displays;
- providing time and effective strategies for reflection on learning; and
- celebrating progress as well as achievement.

Classes are settled and students actively engage in their learning. They use numeracy language well and can readily discuss their learning.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) uses nationally-referenced assessments to identify students requiring learning assistance or extension. She organises and provides a range of interventions and programmes targeted to accelerate learning progress and achievement. All teachers focus on meeting individual needs in classroom programmes and providing inclusive learning environments. The SENCO reports progress in reading and spelling to the board. Students are making steady progress in these areas.

### Areas for improvement

The board has yet to develop a framework for streamlined self review. This should include an annual schedule for receiving student achievement information to demonstrate progress through the year in literacy and numeracy for all year levels, including reports on junior literacy achievement. The review framework should include a process for curriculum review.

Annual target action plans do not include sufficiently specific identification of learning needs, teaching strategies and expectations for interim monitoring. Reports to the board on the progress of targeted students should demonstrate progress towards national year-level expectations and include documented analysis with recommendations for future action.

In order to support the assurance of continued high quality teaching in the school there is a need to document expectations for curriculum leadership, and procedures to guide the selection, review and sustainability of professional development. Teachers have identified that mathematics and assessment procedural documents need further strengthening to reflect current effective processes and practices.

Some of the effective teaching practices identified as areas of good performance are not evident in all classes. The availability of hands-on materials for independent tasks is not consistently evident, neither is lesson time maximised for learning and reflection in some classes. Linking numeracy to planning for other mathematics strands is not yet explicit. Programme evaluations should be based on identified achievement strengths and weaknesses and include related plans to adapt or improve

teaching practices. Strengthening the rigour of constructive feedback on teacher performance is likely to assist in improving practices.

The special needs register requires strengthening to provide a basis for reviewing the effectiveness of all targeted programmes. Reporting to the board should also include progress and achievement in writing, numeracy and other specified areas. Extension programmes require further development.

## 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 Gracefield 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.

### Success for Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the extent to which the school was familiar with the Māori Education Strategy - Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success and progress made since the 2006 review in promoting success at school for Māori students.

The school reports it has not yet discussed the document but expects to do so in the near future.

### Areas of progress

Teachers continue to provide Māori students with learning opportunities that foster engagement and understanding of progress and achievement. These practices are recorded in section 3 of this report. A school-wide programme for teaching te reo Māori has been developed.

Senior managers engage whānau in consultation about their preferences for education. Māori parents are beginning to receive student achievement information in reading, writing and numeracy. This shows that Māori students are slightly below national average expectations in reading and writing tests. In numeracy, a few students are achieving above expectations for their year levels, many students are at year-level expectations and some students are causing concern or are at risk. The SENCO organises targeted programmes for those who need support with their learning.

The recently developed entrance to the school depicts local Māori history and effectively reflects the school's bicultural heritage in an aesthetically pleasing design that incorporates contributions from students and the work of a Māori artist.

### Areas for further improvement

The achievement of Māori student groups has not been monitored or tracked over time. The board is yet to set specific targets to improve the achievement levels of identified groups of Māori students who are causing concern or are at risk of underachieving.

There is a need to continue to develop the use of te reo Māori in classroom programmes.

### Recommendation

ERO recommends that the achievement of Māori students is tracked over time and that the board sets specific targets for raising the achievement of Māori students who are underachieving.

### The Achievement of Pacific Students: Progress

In this review ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the 2006 review in improving the achievement of its Pacific students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement.

### Areas of good performance

The school is a culturally inclusive environment for Pacific students. Areas of good performance reported in section 3 apply to all Pacific students.

The board has recently co-opted a Pacific parent to represent Pacific perspectives in decision making processes.

### Areas for improvement

The school is yet to effectively analyse achievement information to demonstrate trends and patterns of achievement for its Pacific students.

As yet there is no specific of formal liaison between the school and Pacific parents

### Recommendation

ERO recommends that the school monitors the progress and achievement of Pacific students more specifically and seeks ways of liaising with Pacific parents as a group in order to improve outcomes for students.

### Preparing to Give Effect to The New Zealand Curriculum

Schools are currently working towards implementing The New Zealand Curriculum by February

2010. During this review ERO investigated the progress Gracefield School is making towards giving full effect to the curriculum as part of its planning, organisation and teaching practice.

ERO found that school leaders and teachers at Gracefield School are making good progress towards giving effect to The New Zealand Curriculum in their planning, organisation and teaching.

### Including Students with High Needs

During this review ERO investigated the extent to which the board and school leaders of Gracefield School provide an inclusive education for students with high needs. This included collecting evidence about the school's policies, processes and practices to support the enrolment and induction of students with high needs and to support their participation and achievement at school. The information collected during this review will contribute to information that will be reported in a national education evaluation report.

Prior to a review, a board of trustees and principal attest in the Board Assurance Statement that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal requirements including those detailed in Ministry of Education circulars and other documents.

The board of Gracefield School was asked to attest to whether it had 'ensured that teachers of students with disabilities, and other contact staff, have a sound understanding of the learning needs of students with disabilities and, where necessary, have put in place support systems centred on each individual with disabilities.' The board was also asked to attest that 'policies and procedures that relate to students who have special education needs are implemented without discrimination'.

ERO's findings confirm these attestations.

## Board Assurance On Compliance Areas

### Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Gracefield 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 non-compliance.

In order to improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- develop a governance manual to provide for the smooth and effective succession of trustees and boards;
- receive reports about the analysis of attendance trends and patterns;
- institute processes for reviewing how well school procedures are followed, e.g. programmes for gifted and talented students;
- develop procedures for when the public is excluded at board meetings and for recording and keeping in-committee minutes; and
- ensure that there is a staff handbook that provides sufficient guidance for teacher induction and expectations for the advice and guidance of provisionally registered teachers.

## Recommendations

ERO and the board of trustees have developed the following recommendations, that:

6.1 The board and senior managers will participate in professional development to assist in the documentation of a governance manual and self-review framework that will address the areas for improvement identified in this review and ensure sound practices and continuous improvement are sustained.

6.2 Senior managers and staff, with the continuing assistance of an adviser, will develop a mathematics implementation plan that will be a model for similar development in other learning areas.

6.3 Senior managers and staff will ensure that guidelines for professional development and staff appraisal are strengthened to address the areas for improvement identified in this review.

## Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Dr Graham Stoop

Chief Review Officer

3 November 2009

3 November 2009

To the Parents and Community of Gracefield School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Gracefield 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, [www.ero.govt.nz](http://www.ero.govt.nz).

Dr Graham Stoop

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.

## Review Coverage

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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.

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

