

Buller High School Education Review

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About the School

Location	Westport	
Ministry of Education profile number	301	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	372	
Gender composition	Boy 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	78%
	Māori	16%
	Cook Island	1%
	Asian	2%
	Other Ethnicities	3%
Review team on site	June 2013	
Date of this report	20 August 2013	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review	December 2009
	Supplementary Review	December 2007
	Supplementary Review	December 2005

The Purpose of an ERO Report

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.

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1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Students are very well supported in a caring, well organised and inclusive learning environment. Staff members know students and their families well.

Students and staff are guided by the school's clearly articulated vision and values. Clear expectations for learning and behaviour help to foster respectful relationships at all levels of the school.

The school's increasingly positive reputation within the community is reflected in its strong partnerships and communication with parents, employers, local businesses and other educational organisations. These partnerships enable students to have access to a wider range of learning opportunities.

Since the December 2009 ERO review, there have been a number of leadership and staff changes. In 2011 the board appointed the school's deputy principal as principal. The school leaders have developed and strengthened the curriculum, changed leadership practices and are improving the analysis and use of student achievement data.

2 Learning

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

School leaders and teachers make effective use of a range of data to monitor student progress and achievement. School leaders are setting challenging achievement targets. Teachers closely monitor students' attendance and engagement in class.

Student achievement in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) has been steadily improving overall. Students are performing above the national average in the attainment of the NCEA Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirement. The students are kept well informed of their progress in attaining NCEA and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) credits. In 2012, Māori students achieved above the level of their Buller High School peers and Māori students nationally.

The school regularly acknowledges and celebrates student success in academic, cultural and sporting activities.

Areas for review and development

The senior managers have identified, and ERO confirms, that more use could be made of student achievement information to meet the needs of some groups of students. This includes students at risk of not achieving and those with particular gifts and talents.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum effectively promotes and supports student learning.

Well understood values, continually reinforced by staff and student leaders, are embedded in the school's curriculum. The way teachers group students in houses provides extra support and incentive for students to learn and behave. Students ERO spoke to said they enjoy the healthy competition between houses.

Teachers seek and listen to student ideas and opinions about their learning. Teachers participate and take leading roles in a professional development programme that is clearly linked to the school's strategic goal of raising student achievement.

Senior leaders and teachers have strengthened the transition process for students from contributing primary schools. This enables these students to directly experience aspects of secondary school life and learning before entering Year 9.

Students have a variety of opportunities to take on leadership roles. This includes student council, prefects, house leaders, sports and performing arts.

Area for review and development

The senior leaders have identified, and ERO confirms that students' learning and engagement could be further enhanced by teachers:

- developing a shared understanding of what high quality teaching is
- promoting these practices across the school
- strengthening the use of information and communication technologies as a tool for student learning.

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

The school is highly effective in promoting success for Māori students. The achievement and retention of Māori students is continuing to improve. Students who spoke to ERO said they are proud to be Māori at this school. Factors that contribute to Māori student success include:

- strong Māori leaders and effective role models
- building strong links with parents and whānau

- many opportunities for Māori students to succeed as Māori within and beyond the school
- opportunities for students to study te reo Māori and achieve NCEA qualifications
- opportunities for students to participate in a range of bicultural activities such as, powhiri, kapa haka and mau rākau.

The increase in biculturalism is a source of pride for all students and staff. Māori student leadership and achievement is recognised and celebrated. Teachers are taking advantage of professional development opportunities to increase their knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. The board, senior leaders and staff members have a strong strategic focus on improving outcomes for students.

The principal is clear in his expectations of staff members. He effectively uses their strengths and encourages and supports them to take leadership roles.

Trustees and senior leaders have effective systems to support teaching and learning and the operation of the board. A culture of review is evident at all levels of the school.

There is good alignment between the school's strategic plan through the annual plan, teachers' appraisal and the professional development programme to other aspects of the school's operations. Trustees and senior leaders regularly consult with the community to guide and confirm the school's strategic direction.

Area for review and development

School-wide planning and review would benefit from a greater focus on measurable outcomes. This would enable teachers and leaders to better evaluate how successful they have been in achieving their goals.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Student (the Code), established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. No international students were enrolled at the time of the ERO review.

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.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Graham Randell
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Southern Region

20 August 2013