

Hanmer Springs School Education Review

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1 Context

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

Hanmer Springs School is a long-established school providing good-quality education for students in Years 1 to 8. The school is the focal point of the community.

The board, principal and staff work well together to make the school a welcoming and supportive place for students to experience success. The school's values, expressed in 'The Hanmer Way', are well known and regularly reinforced.

Outdoor activities, particularly sporting and adventure, feature regularly in school programmes.

The school's location in a tourist town contributes to a fluctuating roll. However, at the time of this ERO review, the roll was rising.

The board and school leaders have acted positively on the recommendations of the 2011 ERO report. There is now more te reo and tikanga Māori included in programmes, expectations for high-quality teaching practices have been made clearer, and appropriate targets have been set to lift student achievement in relation to the National Standards.

2 Learning

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

The board, school leaders and teachers use achievement information very well to make positive changes to learners' engagement, achievement and progress.

Student achievement and progress in reading, writing and mathematics are thoroughly analysed, reported and used.

Teachers are beginning to gather achievement information in other curriculum areas. Some comprehensive reviews have been completed for science, and health/physical education.

Teachers are increasing the accuracy of their judgements about student achievement against the National Standards using specific guidelines, and by sharing and comparing judgements.

This thoroughly analysed information shows that:

- the school is close to the National expectations of having 85% of students at or above National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- students make very good progress in Years 1 and 2
- the school's achievement is higher than for similar schools in mathematics and writing
- while Māori student achievement is lower than for non-Māori, there were some considerable gains made in writing and mathematics in 2013.

The board sets challenging targets to lift the achievement of students who have not reached the expected levels. Specific plans are developed and deliberate actions taken so that students can make the progress necessary to catch up to their peers. This includes:

- extending teachers' knowledge and use of the most effective ways to accelerate students' progress
- providing additional support within classrooms from teacher aides and additional resources or programmes
- closely monitoring students' progress and achievement and evaluating the effect of teaching practices on these.

Progress reports to the board show that these actions are leading to improved levels of achievement for most students.

Written reports to students and parents clearly show how well students are achieving in reading, writing and mathematics. Students share their achievement and progress and set goals for improvement in conferences with their teachers and parents.

Areas for review and development

Teachers could share information with students more often, not just at school-wide reporting times, to help them gain a better understanding of their achievement, progress and next steps so they can take greater responsibility for their learning.

Reporting achievement and progress to students and parents needs extending to learning areas beyond literacy and mathematics.

The board has identified the need to review how well programmes and practices are catering for students identified as gifted and talented to ensure that they continue to be suitably challenged and motivated.

3 Curriculum

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

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

A student-centred approach takes advantage of the school's location and resources to make learning relevant, for example, by extending students' knowledge of the natural environment.

The inquiry approach is well understood and linked to all curriculum areas. A bicultural perspective is regularly included. Priority is given to raising achievement in literacy and mathematics.

Students use technologies confidently in their learning and have begun to share their learning with parents/whānau through blogs and online portfolios.

Many opportunities are provided for students to develop leadership skills. Senior students benefit from additional training outside the school.

Teachers use a range of ways to gather and respond to students' views. A survey of students' wellbeing confirmed the school as a caring, supportive place in which to learn.

Well-planned professional development and ongoing curriculum reviews have led to changes to programmes and practices to reflect the latest research and educational thinking. A team approach, and the use of staff strengths, is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics.

Area for review and development

The principal and staff have identified that they need to continue to build on the use of effective practices and consolidate their considerable new learning, especially in the teaching of mathematics and literacy.

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

The board, principal and staff have made good progress in promoting educational success for Māori students as Māori. This includes:

- becoming familiar with Ministry of Education resources to extend their knowledge of the best ways to improve outcomes for Māori students

- establishing a kapa haka group to perform at school and community events
- valuing and making good use of the knowledge and expertise of Māori whānau in school programmes
- giving a greater focus to te reo and tikanga Māori in the curriculum.

Areas for review and development

The board is aware that consultation with Māori whānau could be strengthened to gain a wider coverage of their views.

All students would benefit from having the opportunity to learn te reo and tikanga Māori progressively in their time at the school.

Teachers recognise that more support is needed to increase their knowledge and confidence in using te reo Māori in the curriculum.

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 leadership of the principal contributes strongly to continual school improvement. He has high expectations for teaching practice and takes an active role as curriculum leader.

The principal encourages and supports other leaders and teachers to extend their skills and share in key tasks and decision making. Teacher appraisal is thorough.

The well-considered charter identifies the key goals and priorities for ongoing school development. A strong learner focus is evident in these goals and priorities.

The knowledgeable and enthusiastic board is taking advantage of training to improve its capability. The board is taking an active role in direction setting. Trustees have engaged an external facilitator to guide the development of a new charter.

The board, leaders and teachers see parents as important partners in students' learning. They use a variety of ways to engage parents and involve them in students' learning. Parents are kept well informed about the latest developments in teaching and learning.

Areas for review and development

The school could consider finding ways to make the positive relationships they build with parents/whānau more of a two-way process, especially for those with children receiving extra support for their learning.

As some trustees are relatively new, the board would benefit from ongoing training to strengthen trustees' understanding of self review at all levels of the school.

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, principal and staff work well together to make the school a welcoming and supportive place for students to experience success. The leadership of the principal is having a significant influence on the quality of teaching and learning. Most students achieve at very good levels in literacy and mathematics. Students with additional learning needs are well supported to catch up with their peers. Good progress has been made in promoting success for Māori students.

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

Graham Randell
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Southern Region

15 October 2014

School Statistics

Location	Hanmer Springs	
Ministry of Education profile number	3368	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	100	
Gender composition	Girls 48%; Boys 52%	
Ethnic composition	New Zealand	76%
	European/Pākehā	17%
	Māori	1%
	Asian	6%
	Other ethnicities	
Review team on site	August 2014	
Date of this report	15 October 2014	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review	October 2011
	Education Review	August 2008
	Education Review	September 2005