

# Parnell School Education Review

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# 1 Context

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

Parnell School, which originally opened in 1873, has been on its current site for 81 years. Major property redevelopments have incorporated the style and character of the original buildings.

This community school caters for students in Years 1 to 8 from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Small numbers of students identify as Māori and Pacific. There has been a significant increase in the number of students who are bilingual and new learners of English. Positive interactions and inclusive relationships between students and teachers continue to be a feature of the school.

Since ERO's 2012 review, an assistant principal has been appointed to replace a long-serving senior leader. The restructured senior leadership team now has clearly devolved responsibilities. The new board chairperson is well supported by continuing and newly elected trustees.

Over the past three years, the school has engaged in a variety of professional learning opportunities, focused mainly on the teaching of writing. The board has a strong commitment to developing information and communication technologies (ICT) and BYOD (bring your own device) to help student learning.

The school has responded positively to ERO's 2008 and 2012 recommendations regarding the alignment of the school's curriculum with The New Zealand Curriculum, and the understanding and implementation of National Standards.

ERO's 2012 report identified that improvements should be made in school leadership and personnel management. Considerable external support has been provided, particularly for the principal. However, this support has not resulted in sufficient or sustainable improvement to the management of the school.

## 2 Learning

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

The school is improving its use of achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

Students are well engaged in learning. Good progress is being made to grow students' responsibility for their learning through goal setting, regular reflection and co-constructive approaches. Most students achieve at or above National Standards. Analysed school data trends show that girls are achieving better than boys, with a significant difference in writing. Māori students achieve at similar rates to their peers.

Over the past three years, there has been little change in the percentage of students achieving National Standards. While a considerable focus was placed on teacher professional development in writing during 2012 and 2013 there was a slight decline in student achievement in this area in 2014. The school attributes this to the increasing numbers of bilingual speakers and new learners of English. Ongoing reporting to the board about the progress and achievement of this group could provide valuable information about teaching approaches and resourcing decisions that are most effective in supporting improved learning outcomes for new learners of the English language.

Teachers and team leaders work well together. They maintain good processes for moderating assessments within and across syndicates. More effective implementation and monitoring of these processes would increase teachers' confidence in the validity of school assessment data as students transition through the syndicates.

In response to a thorough and consultative process, reports to parents now have good information about their child's progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards. The new report format includes student and teacher voice, and is focused on agreed teaching and learning goals for each student.

The board receives informative reports about student progress and achievement twice each year. Analysed data are accompanied by useful narrative and are used to set annual achievement targets. Charter targets for 2015 have been refined specifically to improve outcomes for students at risk of low achievement. More frequent reporting about the progress of target students could promote more responsive teaching, and better inform the board's decision making.

Next steps include senior leaders:

- developing and monitoring consistent teacher understanding and use of achievement data to inform teaching and learning for each student
- rigorously monitoring and reporting progress towards achieving charter targets, and evaluating the effectiveness of these targets in improving student outcomes, as identified in ERO's 2012 report
- providing evidence-based and evaluative reports to inform the board of the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of initiatives and professional learning.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum is very effective in promoting and supporting student learning. Classrooms are busy and purposeful learning environments with positive teacher-student interactions. Students quickly settle into learning.

Significant work has been done to develop and document the Parnell School curriculum, which aligns well with The New Zealand Curriculum. A strong process of consultation with teachers and support from external expertise has contributed to shared knowledge of this document. Senior leaders are developing a responsive curriculum model focused on student collaboration, problem solving and 21st century learning in the context of Parnell School. The new curriculum document provides teachers with clear guidance to promote consistency of teaching and learning through the school.

Students apply their learning and knowledge skills in literacy and mathematics throughout the curriculum. Embedded in the curriculum is the importance of social responsibility and contribution to the community to grow as informed and responsible citizens. Students benefit from community projects and working alongside external organisations. They also experience programmes in the arts, social sciences, sports, science and outdoor education. The Year 7 and 8 programme includes an onsite technology programme. Class programmes support and challenge students as learners.

Students have many leadership opportunities within the school. Students enjoy the use of BYOD, introduced in Years 7 and 8 in 2014, and extended to include Years 5 and 6 in 2015. An external facilitator is providing in-class coaching for teachers and students in the use of digital tools to enhance learning opportunities.

The teaching of Mandarin for students in Years 4 to 8 has been a special feature of the curriculum for many years. It is now timely for students to have similar opportunities to increase their knowledge of te reo Māori me ngā tikanga. Such an approach would reflect the school's charter statement of commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Effective programmes are provided for children who have specific learning needs. Teacher aides work well alongside teachers to support their learning. With the increase in the number children for who English is not their first language, there has been an additional focus on teaching strategies to support their language acquisition. Senior leaders have developed good relationships with early childhood services and this collaboration is helping children to adjust smoothly into school.

Senior leaders should strengthen curriculum leadership to ensure effective planning, coordination and evaluation of the school's curriculum and teaching practice. This could include:

- developing a shared sense of rationale for, and commitment to, appropriate professional learning and curriculum expectations and initiatives
- extending the syndicates' collaborative approach to teaching and learning to a cohesive, schoolwide expectation for teaching and learning
- ensuring that the careers programme, as noted on the school website, continues to be an integral part of the Years 7 and 8 curriculum.

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

Over the past three years, the school has improved its promotion of educational success for Māori, as Māori.

The school has shared Māori student achievement with the community at a hui earlier this year. They have identified a specific focus on Māori students who are at risk of not achieving National Standards.

School leaders continue to value their long standing relationship with the local Orakei marae. Biennial visits to the marae, preparation for visits to the marae and lessons by the kaumatua from the marae are part of the school's curriculum. The school uses pōwhiri, led by Māori students, in celebrations and in formal events. Some teachers are including te reo Māori in their daily programmes.

The school has identified appropriate next steps that include:

- developing a shared understanding of what educational success for Māori, as Māori, means at Parnell School
- raising expectations for teachers to support and sustain initiatives to promote te ao Māori
- ensuring that the school curriculum clearly demonstrates an ongoing appreciation of, and practice towards, biculturalism and the school's local history.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

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

ERO's 2012 report expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the school's leadership and personnel management. This ERO review finds that these concerns continue and that the school is not well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

Positive aspects of school performance over the past three years include:

- curriculum leadership opportunities for teachers across the learning areas
- restructuring the senior leadership team with more clearly identified roles and responsibilities
- further development and refinement of performance management processes
- examples of ongoing self review, and expectations for self review to inform decision making.

Trustees are strongly committed to school improvement and they have a range of experience and expertise. The board and senior managers have responded to information gained from community surveys and continue to look at ways to improve their communication with parents and the community. They have established several forums for parents to meet with each other and school staff.

Individually, senior leaders bring a variety of skills to their role. While there has been some improvement in school leadership, the effectiveness of the senior leadership team remains an area of substantial concern. Senior leaders need to communicate and model clear and consistent professional expectations to support teaching and learning.

Impediments to school progress are:

- concerns about the perceived role of the principal as the school's educational leader
- a lack of cohesion and unity in the senior leadership team
- a lack of clarity about the school's vision, expectations and rationale for new initiatives and professional learning
- insufficiently robust monitoring and reporting systems that have resulted in inconsistent practice across the school
- insufficient time to embed professional learning and to build a whole-school approach to improving outcomes for students

- insufficient evaluation, monitoring and reporting expectations to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and their impact on student learning
- inadequate alignment between school systems, practices and the strategic plan.

ERO suggests that the board appoint an independent person to carry out a staff survey and/or investigate the concerns that have been identified through this Education Review.

Trustees agree that appropriate board professional training and self review could help to guide improvement in the effectiveness of their governance role.

### Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

At the time of this review there were 9 international students attending the school. The majority of these students are from Saudi Arabia. The school has recently had short stay students from a sister school in China.

International students are well included in learning and school activities. The multicultural nature of the school roll enables these students to settle in confidently. Students are very well supported by the English language and pastoral support teacher. They make good progress during their time at the school.

Self review is well used to improve the quality of care and education for international students. Leaders agree that reports to the board could be strengthened by including information about international student academic progress. They could also more formally evaluate the quality of inclass support for international students.

### 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.

To comply with current legislation, the board must:

- be assured of student safety in the grounds and during their play times, particularly in relation to the stone wall close to the road  
[National Administration Guidelines 5]
- ensure that all employees, including non-teaching staff, are appraised annually  
[s77C State Sector Act 1988 (NZ Gazette No 180: Dec 1996)].

To improve current practice, the board should ensure:

- consistent use of in-committee procedures to discuss aspects of personnel, and that these minutes are kept in an accessible but secure place
- use of timely and well-structured systems and reporting to assure the board that all teachers have current registration status, and that all non-teaching staff have current police vetting status
- better alignment between school policies and practice.

### Recommendations to other agencies

ERO recommends, and the board agrees, that there is urgency in addressing the leadership and management issues identified in this and the 2012 ERO report. The board has approached the Ministry of Education for appropriate guidance in response to ERO's recommendation.

### Conclusion

Parnell School is strongly inclusive of its ethnically diverse community. Classrooms are

purposeful learning environments with positive teacher-student interactions. The curriculum provides a variety of learning opportunities for students, including those with specific needs and abilities, and emphasises students' social responsibilities. However, ERO has concerns about the quality of the school's senior leadership and personnel management.

ERO intends to carry out another review over the course of one-to-two years.

Graham Randell  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern (Acting)

31 July 2015

## School Statistics

Location	Parnell, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1436	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	456	
Number of international students	9	
Gender composition	Girls 50%	
	Boys 50%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	51%
	Māori	3%
	Chinese	13%
	Indian	4%
	South East Asian	3%
	British	2%
	Japanese	2%
	Korean	2%
	Middle Eastern	2%
	Pacific	2%
	African	1%
	Dutch	1%
	Filipino	1%
	Latin American	1%
	Vietnamese	1%
	other Asian	3%
	other European	2%
	other	6%
Review team on site	June 2015	
Date of this report	31 July 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	March 2012

Education Review  
Education Review

June 2008  
June 2005