

5 November 2008

To the Parents and Community of Tawa School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Tawa School**.

Tawa School is situated close to the Tawa shopping centre north of Wellington and has a long-standing history in the area, with the original school being established in 1855. It caters for students from years 1 to 8 and offers a Montessori class for six to twelve year olds. Since the 2005 ERO review, the school has experienced roll growth and significant staff changes, including the appointment of a new principal in the fourth term, 2007.

The principal has carefully considered areas for future development. He has taken positive steps to implement some timely changes that aim to continually enhance outcomes for students and empower them as learners. ERO's findings support this direction. The Board of Trustees, with leadership from the principal, is reviewing the school's future direction in consultation with community groups. To date, some rich information has been gathered to inform the new strategic plan.

Emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy teaching and learning. Professional development has been targeted to these areas of the curriculum over recent years. The board requested that ERO evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics, with a focus on numeracy. This report also considers the progress made to improve the achievement of Māori and Pacific students, together with the school's readiness to implement *The New Zealand Curriculum* in 2010. Aspects of compliance related to health and safety were investigated and no areas of concern are identified.

The school offers students a variety of educational opportunities. These include a range of language learning such as te reo Māori, French and Japanese, as well as planned off-site technology programmes for students in years 7 and 8 from 2009. The promotion of kapa haka is also a feature. There has been specific focus given to the arts over the past years, as well as some development in the use of information and communication technologies, particularly for one class of students. As part of the revisioning process and introduction of *The New Zealand Curriculum*, the particular needs, interests and circumstances arising from the changing nature of the students and community are being considered in designing the school's curriculum.

At the end of 2007, the school's analysed achievement information in numeracy showed that most students were achieving within the average band when compared to national norms. Sixty-seven percent were in the average to above ranges in reading, with the majority achieving or exceeding the school's benchmark expectations in writing. In the light of staffing changes over the past two years, it is now time to promote shared understandings about effective teaching and learning to develop a consistent school-wide approach, especially in mathematics.

ERO observed a range of effective numeracy teaching strategies being used in classrooms, with examples of high quality practice evident. Through positive leadership in the school, and support from an external adviser, documentation is being established to guide a progression of learning over eight years of schooling. While the school has useful data to show students' progress and achievement through the numeracy stages, no information is gathered to indicate achievement against nationally-referenced comparisons in the other strands of mathematics.

Trustees and the principal responded positively to this external evaluation. They worked in partnership with ERO to develop recommendations for ongoing improvement. These include: promoting evidence-based self review; providing further professional learning and development for teachers; and strengthening quality assurance systems to support the embedding of effective practices.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the Board of Trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO is likely to review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

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, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

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for Chief Review Officer