

Darfield School Education Review

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1 Context

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

The board of trustees recently appointed a new principal. The board and principal have worked with staff and the community to establish a new direction for the school. Trustees are managing some significant property developments. These will result in the upgrading of classroom facilities which will have positive implications for students' learning in the future.

The school has close links with the Malvern Cluster of Schools. It hosts the resource teacher of learning and behaviour (RTLb) and the resource teacher of literacy (RTLit). Some school facilities are shared with the community. The school has made progress towards addressing the areas for development identified in the 2011 ERO report.

2 Learning

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

Teachers use achievement information well to support students' learning. They provide feedback to students about their learning progress that helps them to identify their next learning steps. Students who need further support in their learning are identified and appropriate assistance is provided.

Achievement against the National Standards at the end of 2013 shows most students are achieving at or above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

The improved sharing and analysis of literacy and mathematics achievement information is helping teachers and leaders to make more effective school-wide decisions about learning and teaching.

Students have opportunities to share their learning with their parents so they can be better involved in a learning partnership with their children.

Teachers have a strong focus on making sure their decisions about students' learning are accurate and consistent. They use a good range of assessment tasks to gather achievement data for literacy and mathematics. Teachers also gather information for other curriculum areas. Students are given information that helps them understand their achievement levels and what they need to do to improve their achievement levels.

Area for review and development

The principal and teachers have identified, and ERO agrees, the need to continue building team capacity to collaboratively analyse achievement information to identify progress and achievement, and to better inform school targets.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum increasingly promotes and supports students to engage and progress in their learning. Students have many opportunities to extend and enjoy their learning within and beyond the classroom.

Students are helped to develop positive learning attitudes and skills that underpin successful learning across the curriculum. Evidence is gathered to help evaluate this progress. Teachers foster respectful relationships with and among students. Many students can talk confidently about their learning and what they are focusing on. There has been an increase in the ways student successes are celebrated.

Teachers use a range of appropriate strategies to make the purpose of learning meaningful to students. They set a clear purpose for learning in class lessons. Students are well supported to learn at their appropriate levels. They are helped to set individual goals for their learning. Teachers provide feedback against these goals so students can evaluate their progress and plan next learning steps. Teachers closely monitor student progress.

There is a strong focus on literacy and mathematics within the school's curriculum that reflects the expectations of parents. Teachers are improving the ways they integrate literacy across the curriculum to support students' learning and independence. Aspects of the school's curriculum document are regularly revised and updated.

Areas for review and development

As a result of the review of the charter, the principal has identified the need to review the curriculum to appropriately reflect the school's vision and future direction for learning.

The board and ERO have agreed the next steps to improve curriculum review and development are to:

- ensure that the professional development programme fully addresses the needs of teachers so they are well prepared to implement new changes
- develop a rationale and planning for gifted and talented student.

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

Teachers have engaged in professional development using a Ministry of Education resource that helps teachers to understand learning for Māori students. The board has allocated

funding to strengthen leadership for Māori programmes across the school. Students have opportunities to be involved in cultural activities. These include kapa haka and visits to the marae. Some teachers are using te reo Māori in classroom programmes on a regular basis.

The next steps to better support Māori students and their families, are for leaders and teachers to:

- work with whānau to develop plans that will give direction for the future
- identify priorities for initiatives that will support Māori to succeed as Māori
- extend bicultural perspectives across the curriculum.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Trustees bring a good range of skills to their governance roles. Improvements to parent surveying and principal reports to the board are enabling trustees to make appropriate decisions about strategic goals, staffing and significant building developments.

The board provides parents with good opportunities to contribute their feedback about school developments and direction. The Parent Teacher Association is active and supportive of students and their learning.

The board and principal are focused on school improvement that includes the development of the school's curriculum and resources needed to better foster and support teaching in a modern learning environment. The board is in the early stages of putting in place strategies and plans aimed at strengthening and improving the school's performance.

Staff have experienced considerable change over the last year. A number of new developments have recently taken place including review of the charter and board planning.

Teachers are increasingly reflective in their practices and effectively evaluate many aspects of their work. They evaluate the success of specific strategies and programmes that are likely to raise student achievement and meet school goals.

Areas for review and development

The board and principal have identified a number of areas they need to prioritise and plan for to ensure practices effectively support the school's ongoing development. These include:

- seeking further training for trustees for governance roles and responsibilities
- managing change through the development of action plans that reflect shared understandings about outcomes
- reviewing procedures relating to personnel communication, consultation and management structures.

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?

The school provides a positive and settled environment that supports student learning and wellbeing. Substantial building redevelopments will occur in 2015. Students achieve well in literacy and mathematics. The new principal and board are successfully managing changes to many aspects of school operations including curriculum development, and the analysis and reporting of student achievement information.

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

Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern

24 June 2015

School Statistics

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| Location | Darfield | |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 3326 | |
| School type | Contributing (Years 1 to 6) | |
| School roll | 224 | |
| Gender composition | Girls 53%; Boys 47% | |
| Ethnic composition | NZ European/Pākehā | 75% |
| | Māori | 14% |
| | Other ethnicities | 11% |
| Review team on site | November 2014 | |
| Date of this report | 24 June 2015 | |
| Most recent ERO report(s) | Education Review | October 2011 |
| | Education Review | May 2008 |
| | Education Review | May 2005 |