



**EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:  
TAMAHERE MODEL COUNTRY SCHOOL**

APRIL 2009

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**This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.**

## 1. About the School

Location	Tamahere, Hamilton	
Ministry of Education profile number	1976	
School type	Contributing Primary (Year 1 to 6)	
Decile rating <sup>[1]</sup>	10	
Teaching staff:		
Roll generated entitlement	17.00	
Other	18	
Number of teachers		
School roll	356	
Gender composition	Girls 51% Boys 49%	
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā 80% New Zealand Māori 6% Other Ethnic Groups 14%	
Special features	Model Country School, associated with the	

	School of Education University of Waikato
Review team on site	February 2009
Date of this report	08 April 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, February 2006 Supplementary Review, February 2004 Education Review, November 2002 Discretionary Review, February 1999 Accountability Review, June 1998 Effectiveness Review, March 1994

## 2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Tamahere Model Country School is located near Hamilton and provides education for students in Years 1 to 6. A special feature of the school is its status as a model school with close links to the University of Waikato School of Education. The strong presence of student teachers in the school throughout the year continues to add to the richness of the school's culture for learning. There are currently 356 students enrolled at the school.

Since the last ERO review in 2006, there have been significant changes amongst personnel employed at the school. The deputy principal and several teachers are new to the school in the last two years and there is a newly formed senior leadership team that includes leaders from the junior, middle and senior syndicates.

There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy teaching and learning in the school. Students are making very good progress in reading and mathematics, and a significant proportion, including Māori students, are exceeding national expectations. The school measures the achievement of its students using standardised and norm referenced tests so that comparisons can be made with national expectations.

The principal is knowledgeable about educational matters and is providing strong professional leadership for the school community. Since her appointment to the school she has successfully led school-wide development in curriculum and assessment management across the school. She is ably supported by the highly committed senior leadership team of experienced teachers. Together they provide inclusive, collaborative leadership that is contributing to high levels of ownership and understanding amongst staff to the shared vision for teaching and learning.

Teachers are conscientious and hard working. Under the leadership of the principal and senior leadership team, they model and promote the school's recently agreed vision of '*nurturing our future – growing together*' with a '*can do*' attitude. They use a range of effective teaching practices that challenge and engage students and contribute to their success as learners. Teachers develop respectful relationships with students and provide the necessary support and extension to enable them to achieve their potential.

Students interact positively and confidently with adults and their peers. They are able to practice and develop skills for successful social interaction in a caring school environment. There are many opportunities, especially for senior students, to take responsibility and assume leadership roles. In addition, the many and varied extra-curricular activities that occur within the school community assist students to pursue interests and strengths in sporting and cultural events and activities, and in the arts.

A strong school community partnership is evident. There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education, and school life in general. Activities and events such as school camps, musical productions and interschool sports are well supported by parents. The school's Parent Teacher Association is an active group that continues to raise local funds to support school development initiatives, such as the new computer suite.

The board continues to provide effective governance for the school. A team of new and experienced trustees bring a range of relevant skills and expertise to their respective roles. They demonstrate high levels of commitment to the provision of appropriate and wide-ranging educational opportunities for

all students. This is evidenced through budgetary provision for additional learning support for some students, and the priorities identified within the school's strategic plan. Trustees are committed to good employer principles and strong and effective working relationships with the principal and staff are evident.

### ***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.

## **3. The Focus of the Review**

### ***Student Achievement Overall***

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

The school has made significant progress in developing school-wide systems and practices in assessment. There is an assessment overview that documents what achievement information is to be gathered, and the timeframes for reporting. The school gathers student achievement information in all aspects of literacy and mathematics, using externally referenced assessment tools. Effective summative use is made of this data to determine student achievement levels of attainment and progress. The school is now well placed to use historical data for tracking cohorts as they move through the school.

The school's achievement information for reading and mathematics indicates that students are making good progress and that a significant proportion, including Māori students, are exceeding national expectations.

### ***School Specific Priorities***

Before the review, the board of Tamahere Model Country School was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Tamahere Model Country School.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus area for the review:

- teaching and learning in writing.

ERO's findings in this area are set out below.

### ***Teaching and Learning in Writing***

#### **Background**

Writing has been a school-wide focus for learning and teaching during 2007/2008. Teachers' professional judgement indicated some variance between achievement levels in reading and writing, with writing being lower. As a result, writing has been a school-wide achievement target for the last two years and there is a strategic goal relating specifically to this aspect of literacy. Teachers have been involved in a school-wide programme of professional development, designed to assist them to strengthen their practice in this area and achievement data is being collated and analysed across the school. This focus area evaluates the school-wide systems and practices supporting teaching and

learning, and in particular the impact of these on writing programmes and student achievement in this area.

### **Student progress and achievement**

Teachers use national exemplars and samples of student writing to make decisions about achievement and progress for individuals and year groups, in accordance with national curriculum levels. In 2007/2008, teachers moderated examples of student writing as part of the assessment and professional learning programme. Assessment information for personal recount writing indicates progress overall and that most students are achieving at appropriate levels of the national curriculum, with some above. By Year 5 and 6 a significant proportion of students are achieving above.

### **Areas of good performance**

**Professional leadership:** The principal and senior leadership team are providing clear direction for literacy development in the school. Under the professional leadership of the principal, a literacy leadership team has been established. Teachers with a special interest and expertise in literacy learning are encouraged to contribute to the work of this team, which includes representatives from each syndicate. The principal sees the role of the literacy team continuing in 2009 so that the development that has occurred to date can be sustained. Strong professional leadership is assisting the board and staff to achieve the school's strategic goals for literacy development, over time.

**Leadership structure:** The structure of the newly established team is contributing to a cohesive approach to literacy development across the school. The roles and responsibilities of team members are clear and well understood and there are strong lines of communication within the team, and with teachers in all three syndicates. Leaders make provision for teachers to be involved in decision-making about literacy practices, especially in writing. This inclusive leadership structure and collaborative style is leading to high levels of ownership and commitment to the shared vision for teaching and learning in writing.

**Professional learning:** A strong culture for professional learning is developing under the skilful and knowledgeable leadership of the principal. Together with the leadership team she is providing relevant and ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers about writing and pedagogical practice that will support the implementation of the revised NZ curriculum. Professional development is well planned, closely aligned with the school's strategic direction and uses internal expertise as well as external providers. The sharing and observation of teaching strategies in writing between professional friends is a key initiative. As part of the professional learning process teachers are engaging in ongoing reflective dialogue about their teaching practice. This professional learning approach is increasing teacher capability and contributing to higher levels of student achievement in writing.

**Expectations:** Expectations for teachers about teaching and learning in writing are agreed and clearly documented. The recently developed implementation plan for English has the potential to guide and support teachers in planning and assessment for writing. Clear expectations that are owned by staff, coupled with cooperative team planning, are likely to strengthen consistency of practice and cohesiveness of writing programmes between classrooms and syndicates.

**Appraisal process:** The school is implementing a strong appraisal process for teachers. There is a well-documented cycle for the process that includes establishing development objectives, classroom observations and specific feedback about teaching practice in writing. In 2008, the principal, deputy principal and assistant principal each observed in all classrooms, this providing them with a comprehensive overview of teaching practice. Strong and effective appraisal practice is likely to promote consistently high levels of teacher performance, especially in writing.

**Teaching practice:** Teachers are using a range of effective strategies to teach writing. Good use is made of classroom assessment information to identify the individual strengths and abilities of students. ERO observed teachers using strategies to engage students in higher order thinking such as effective questioning and graphic organisers. All teachers model writing and most are making increasing use of formative assessment practice, including the sharing of learning intentions and

exemplars so that students develop a sense of what is expected of them. These teaching practices are leading to higher levels of student engagement, and contributing to their success as writers.

**Literacy learning environments:** The school provides a challenging and well-resourced environment for literacy teaching and learning. Classrooms are print rich and there are many visual prompts to guide and support student learning. Students' writing is displayed with pride and their achievements are celebrated. The newly introduced interactive whiteboards in senior rooms are providing an added dimension to engage learners in writing. Students are developing as confident and enthusiastic writers in a supportive and purposeful learning environment.

### **Areas for improvement**

**Interpretation and use of achievement information:** Significant progress has been made in using school-wide achievement information summatively, to show student levels of attainment and progress. Further interpretation of existing data by senior leaders and teachers can now occur, and is likely to strengthen decision making about teaching and learning. In addition, deeper interpretation should assist management and the board to identify relevant and appropriate school-wide achievement targets, leading to improved learning outcomes for students.

**Student-led learning:** The school now needs to place priority on supporting and encouraging students to become self-directed learners. While teachers are using some strategies, such as goal setting and frameworks for writing, they now need to involve students more in the assessment process. Involving students through strategies such as sharing of descriptive feedback and assessment information is likely to empower them so that they understand how they can improve their learning.

**Reporting to parents:** Senior leaders and teachers need to give further consideration to the student achievement information that is reported to parents about their children. It is important that parents receive specific information about how their children are achieving and progressing against national curriculum levels, norms and expectations.

## **4. Areas of National Interest**

### **Overview**

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of Tamahere Model Country School ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

### ***The Achievement of Māori Students: Progress***

In this review, ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of Māori students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement. There are currently 20 Māori students enrolled at the school.

### **Areas of progress**

**Achievement:** The school continues to collate and analyse achievement information about its Māori students. In reading, writing and mathematics, these students are achieving at comparable levels overall, to their non-Māori peers, in accordance with national norms and curriculum levels.

**Māori dimension:** The board and principal acknowledge and promote Māori cultural values and protocols when opportunities arise. With support from Māori mentors and tutors, waiāta and mihi are

modelled and practised by students and adults. The pōwhiri to welcome ERO to the school demonstrated the commitment of the board chairperson, principal and senior students to the recognition of New Zealand's dual cultural heritage.

### ***The Teaching of Reading and Writing in Years 1 and 2***

As part of this review ERO looked at how well teachers assess, plan and teach reading and writing to students in Years 1 and 2, and how well the school promotes high levels of student achievement in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.

Refer also to the section on School Specific Priority (pp. 3-6).

#### **Areas of good performance**

**Teaching practice:** Skilful teachers of Year 1 and 2 students integrate all aspects of literacy into daily programmes. Guided reading is a strength, teachers' planning is specific, and they use deliberate acts of teaching such as shared reading, book orientation and modelling concepts about print. Students are grouped according to ability and there are many opportunities for them to develop and practice their reading on familiar and fluency level texts. They are independent and self-managing learners.

**Expectations for achievement:** Expectations for achievement in reading by the end of Year 1 and 2 are documented in the English curriculum plan. Students with abilities and/or needs are identified and additional assistance or extension is provided. Teachers have comprehensive classroom monitoring and assessment information, which indicates that the majority of students are achieving at and above the school's expected levels by the end of Year 1 and 2.

**Home school partnership:** Teachers of Year 1 and 2 students provide many opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's early literacy development. Parents are welcomed into the classrooms, and the reception classroom provides a strong entry programme that assists students and parents to make this transition to school. They are able to work alongside their child and support them to gain a love of reading and confidence with early reading strategies. Parents and teachers in these classrooms have ongoing dialogue about the progress and achievement of their children. This strong partnership is likely to support students to become confident and competent readers.

### ***Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010***

#### **Progress to date**

In preparing for teaching the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010 the school has integrated the key competencies of the revised New Zealand Curriculum in the school's realigned vision. As the first part of implementing the revised New Zealand Curriculum the school has developed an English implementation plan throughout the school and is initiating their own school curriculum design related to values, learning areas and curriculum principles.

#### **Next steps**

The school has agreed that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months are the development of a school wide numeracy plan and review of curriculum areas other than literacy and numeracy. They will also decide on how curriculum areas can be covered in a substantial and meaningful way.

## **5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas**

### **Overview**

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Tamahere Model Country School completed an ERO *Board Assurance Statement* and *Self-Audit Checklist*. 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; and
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment);
- physical safety of students;
- teacher registration;
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions; and
- attendance.

### **Compliance**

ERO's investigations did not identify any areas of concern.

## **6. Recommendations**

ERO and the board of trustees have developed the following recommendations:

- 6.1 that the board and management continue to provide professional learning and development opportunities for all teaching staff about current pedagogy and assessment practices, with a view to embedding and sustaining development; and
- 6.2 that senior leaders and teachers review systems and practices for reporting to parents, including the specificity of assessment information to be shared so that parents are fully informed.

## **7. 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.

Tom Struthers  
Acting Area Manager  
**for Chief Review Officer**

8 April 2009

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8 April 2009

## To the Parents and Community of Tamahere Model Country School

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

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### ***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>.

Tom Struthers  
Acting Area Manager  
**for Chief Review Officer**

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## ***GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS***

### ***About ERO***

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

### ***About ERO Reviews***

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve educational achievement in schools; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

### ***Review Focus***

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on three review strands.

- **School Specific Priorities** – the quality of education and the impact of school policies and practices on student achievement.
- **Areas of National Interest** – information about how Government policies are working in schools.
- **Compliance with Legal Requirements** – assurance that this school has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

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different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

### ***Review Recommendations***

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a school is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this school.

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[\[1\]](#) Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.