

1 December 2008

To the Parents and Community of Birkdale North School

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

Birkdale North School is located in North Shore City, an urban area that has become increasingly multicultural. The school has growing numbers of Pacific Island, Māori and Filipino students and a growing mix of other ethnic groups. Since the last ERO review the previous long-serving principal and board chair have resigned. The new principal and board chair took up their positions early this year.

Birkdale North School fosters a sense of belonging amongst the diverse multicultural mix of the student population. Staff and students are loyal, and demonstrate pride and enjoyment in being a valued part of the school. The board and staff emphasise the provision of a safe, inclusive and attractive environment. A family atmosphere prevails throughout the school.

Students are friendly, happy and responsive to the opportunities they are provided with. Students are supportive, considerate of each other and take on responsibility with enthusiasm. Achievement information indicates that students' reading levels are improving as a result of changing teaching strategies to raise literacy and numeracy levels throughout the school.

Many of the teachers and administration staff are long-serving staff members. They have a good knowledge of their students and school community. Staff have responded well to changes that have taken place this year, particularly in school-wide professional learning and student-centred integrated planning. Teachers are building a greater awareness of a reflective school culture and are developing their understanding of teaching practice that promotes independent student learning.

The new principal has brought about positive change through collaborative teamwork. She is providing strong professional leadership and support for staff, trustees and students. The principal is committed to and involved in school-wide professional learning focused on raising student achievement and revising the curriculum. She is working with the board and external advisors to address financial concerns that have arisen due to previous overstaffing.

The new board chair fosters trusting relationships and cooperative decision-making. This contributes to a strong sense of ownership and a clear school direction that is shared amongst the board and staff. Board training during 2008 has improved trustees' confidence in their governance role and enhanced their strategic planning. Trustees have developed specific responsibilities, surveyed the community with a

view to strengthening consultation, and have incorporated new directions for school development in the revised charter.

ERO was asked to evaluate the impact of change management on student achievement. ERO finds that the current board and principal have responded positively to the recommendations of the 2005 ERO report and have focused on a shared approach to raising student achievement. The strategic focus of the board, combined with good leadership and relevant professional learning is proving highly motivating for staff. Long-term planning indicates a focus on building teachers' competence to provide a student-centred curriculum and related teaching and learning strategies.

ERO recommends that the board continue its programme of review and development, especially in the areas of policy review and community consultation; and the principal and staff continue to pursue school-wide professional learning to promote effective teaching and student-directed learning.

Future Action

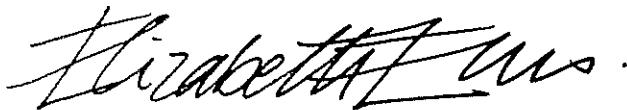
ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

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