

# Berkley Normal Middle School Education Review

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# 1 Context

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

Berkley Normal Middle School is located in Hillcrest, Hamilton. It is a restricted composite school that caters for students in Years 7 to 9. As a normal school, part of Berkley's special nature is that it works closely with the education programmes of the Waikato University School of Education. At the time of this review there were 723 students enrolled, 108 of whom identify as Māori. There are 42 students in the Year 9 group. These Year 9 students enjoy opportunities to build strong relationships with their home room teacher, consolidate their learning, and further develop leadership and self-management skills.

Since the previous ERO review in 2010 the long standing principal retired and in March 2014 a new principal was appointed. As a result of issues arising since this appointment, the board of trustees accepted the principal's resignation in August 2014. At the 2013 board elections three new trustees were elected. An experienced board chairperson continues in her role.

The school has become an accredited provider of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme as a means of delivering aspects of The New Zealand Curriculum. School leaders and all teachers have participated in professional learning to support them to deliver this curriculum. They have continued with professional learning focused on writing using an external facilitator.

The school has a positive ERO reporting history. Good progress has been made with the priorities identified in the 2010 ERO report relating to strengthening leadership, consultation with the community, and increasing the Māori dimension in the school.

Positive and respectful relationships amongst students and teachers contribute to a safe and inclusive environment for learning. The school is well maintained and presented. A particular feature of the school is the high-quality resources and extensive specialist facilities that enhance learning.

## 2 Learning

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

The school continues to make good use of student achievement information to promote student engagement, progress and achievement.

Senior leaders have developed robust systems that guide the collection and analysis of student achievement information particularly in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. They use this information to identify students that require extra support and extension. School leaders effectively monitor the progress and achievement of individuals and groups of students over time at the school. They make good use of achievement data to identify opportunities for teachers' professional learning and development. ERO and school leaders agree that there is a need to continue to develop processes to support teachers to make more reliable judgements in relation to the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

The deputy principal provides the board of trustees with regular and useful school-wide student achievement information. This information is well used by the board to inform strategic planning, resourcing decisions and set appropriate charter goals.

Teachers make good use of assessment information to identify and closely monitor the achievement of students who are achieving below the National Standards. They regularly reflect with colleagues on the effectiveness of their teaching practice to raise achievement of these target students.

National Standards achievement information for Years 7 and 8 students at the end of 2013 indicates that reading and mathematics results were similar to national comparisons. School leaders are continuing to implement professional learning for teachers to address lower levels of achievement in writing. Achievement information for Year 9 students indicated that at the start of 2014 the range of achievement was slightly below national comparisons in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's achievement information from 2012 to 2013 shows that most students made expected progress in those areas.

Parents are able to be well informed about their children's achievement and progress, through two comprehensive written reports each year, and recently introduced student-led conferences.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school curriculum is well designed and continues to effectively support students' learning through a wide range of learning opportunities. The curriculum is enhanced through embedded and robust self-review practices. Classrooms are attractively presented and displays reflect current learning.

Students are confident and enthusiastic about sharing their learning. They have many opportunities to:

- explore their ideas and extend their learning in real-life contexts
- spend quality time to further their knowledge in specialist and technology classes
- develop their leadership skills and celebrate success with their peers and families
- understand and demonstrate the school values of 'Care, Share and Dare'
- experience success through trips, camps, sporting and cultural events.

There are well-planned and implemented transition processes that contribute to student wellbeing as they enter the school and as they move on to secondary school.

The Enhanced Learning Centre continues to provide a high quality and well-resourced facility catering for English Language Learners and students with diverse needs. The facility is overseen by a skilled and well-qualified special education needs coordinator (SENCO).

ERO observed models of good teaching practice that reflect the high expectations shared by school leaders and teachers. These practices include:

- students engaged in the learning process by sharing their own knowledge, developing a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning and reflecting on this when setting personal learning goals
- collaborative learning and discussion amongst students
- timely and specific feedback from teachers to students about their learning
- planned learning programmes that respond to the individual needs of students.

Senior leaders and ERO agree that an important next step is to link learning goals in reading, writing and mathematics with specific learning pathways to further empower individual students to achieve their goals.

Teachers are a collegial and professional team. They have worked collaboratively with school leaders and established an agreed philosophy of teaching founded on current theory and best practice. A comprehensive appraisal process provides teachers with regular and specific feedback and many opportunities to reflect on their teaching. Many teachers are dedicated to giving generous time to run extra programmes that constructively involve students in their interest areas during out-of-class times.

There are many opportunities for whānau and parents to contribute to, and share in the life of the school. The parent partnership would be enhanced by school leaders and trustees further including parents in appropriate self-review processes and as collaborative partners in their child's learning.

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

Since the previous ERO report in 2010 the school has taken a planned approach to improving the educational success of Māori students, as Māori. There are clear targets related to increasing teacher and student knowledge of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori. These targets are supported by a skilled kaiako developing and implementing high-quality programmes for all teachers and students. The school now welcomes special guests and visitors with whole-school pōwhiri and regularly share waiata and karakia. Māori students take leadership roles and celebrate excellence through Kapa Haka. Māori language, culture and identity are valued and visible in the school. The school has consulted with whānau through surveys and hui. They continue to develop a better understanding of their aspirations and views.

Through this consultation process, Māori whānau have identified the need to build on and sustain this progress by:

- further increasing teacher knowledge and confidence in the use of te reo Maori
- including local history and places of significance to Māori as an integral part of the school's curriculum.

In order to continue to sustain and accelerate success for Māori as Māori, current initiatives would be further enhanced by implementing Ministry of Education guidelines found in Ka Hikitia and Tataiako publications.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Trustees bring a wide range of skills and expertise to their governance roles. The deputy and assistant principals, supported by senior teachers have maintained a focus on school improvement through continuing to raise the quality of teaching practice across the school. There is clear strategic direction for ongoing school development. Comprehensive and well-understood systems and processes are in place to guide school operations. Teachers work collaboratively to provide the best outcomes for students.

Self-review practices are well established and lead to ongoing school development and improvement. The deputy principal and assistant principal are an experienced and professional team who provide effective leadership for learning.

During this ERO review, information was provided to the review team by a number of staff who expressed serious concerns relating to the principal's leadership and behaviour. They considered that these concerns affected the well-being of a significant number of staff. These concerns were brought to the attention of the board and addressed.

### Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students 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 was one international student attending the school. The school hosts exchange students from time to time. A knowledgeable Dean of International Students effectively monitors the pastoral and educational needs of 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.

### Conclusion

Berkley Normal Middle School provides the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme. An experienced leadership team provides effective leadership for learning. The well-designed curriculum effectively promotes student engagement, progress and achievement through a wide range of learning opportunities. Māori language, culture and identity are valued and visible in the school.

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

Dale Bailey  
National Manager Review Services  
Northern Region

10 October 2014

## School Statistics

Location	Hamilton	
Ministry of Education profile number	1695	
School type	Restricted Composite (Years 7 to 9)	
School roll	723	
Number of international students	1	
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	61%
	Māori	15%
	Chinese	4%
	Pacific	4%
	Indian	2%
	Other European	6%
	Other Asian	5%
	Other	3%
Review team on site	August 2014	
Date of this report	10 October 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	May 2010
	Special Review	June 2007
	Education Review	November 2005