



**Education Review Office**  
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Oamaru Intermediate**  
**Oamaru**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Oamaru Intermediate

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

## Findings

### 1 Context

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

This is the only intermediate school for Years 7 and 8 students in Oamaru and the surrounding area. Students come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. In particular, there is a growing number of Māori, Pacific and English language learners (ELL). Many initiatives are in place to support these students.

The school has a strong culture of care. This includes a range of pastoral support. Staff and school leaders make students and parents feel welcome and valued. A strong commitment to all students having equitable access to learning and other opportunities is evident.

The school has a technology unit that is used by other Years 7 and 8 students from nearby schools. It also has a Learning Support Unit (LSU) that is used by students with medium and high needs. These students spend most of their time in ordinary classes.

In the last three years, four classrooms have been redesigned to create flexible-learning areas. A large garden area, with a hen house, has been developed and is especially used by LSU students. A significant investment in ICT has been made. The school has been part of a Ministry of Education (MOE) initiative to increase students' interest and engagement in learning. It is also part of a MOE project to improve Pacific student achievement.

Since the 2013 ERO evaluation, there have been many staff changes, including a new deputy principal. Most trustees are beginning their second three-year term on the school's board. The school is part of a newly formed cluster of primary and secondary schools. These schools are working together on shared interests and concerns.

The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations in the 2013 ERO report.

### 2 Learning

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

School leaders and teachers make very good use of achievement and other information in order to best support their students.

Many students arrive at the school with poor literacy and mathematics knowledge and skills. Trends over the last three years show that over half of the students achieve at or above the National Standards in reading. Achievement in writing and mathematics is lower, especially for Pacific students and boys.

ERO found that school staff and trustees are working with determination to lift students' achievement and build positive attitudes towards learning. Leaders have set targets in literacy and mathematics. They report to the board on progress towards meeting these, as well as progress towards the National Standards.

Teachers know their students very well as learners and as individuals. They use a range of information to make well-informed judgements about students' progress and achievement and to target their teaching to best meet students' needs. They talk frequently with students about their learning. As a result, ERO found that most students could talk confidently about their progress, achievement and their next learning steps.

Parents are also well informed about their child's learning. Reports are written in plain language and clearly show students' progress and achievement. Teachers frequently contact parents to share successes and to talk about how parents could support their child at home.

Teachers and school leaders have effective systems for identifying and monitoring students who are struggling with their learning. These students are very well supported by classroom teachers and skilful teacher aides. Some also benefit from additional intensive small-group teaching.

The wording of school targets to lift achievement could be improved. These could better emphasize the need for students to make accelerated progress in order to catch up.

Aspects and frequency of reports to the board about student progress and achievement could be improved. Some reports need to better show the amount of progress made by different groups. Some need to ensure that all important groups (such as gender, ethnic and year groups) are included. Fuller and more frequent information will help trustees and leaders when making resourcing decisions.

### **3 Curriculum**

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

The school's curriculum effectively engages and supports students in their learning.

Students spoke enthusiastically to ERO about the wide range of learning experiences. They enjoyed the variety offered through modules, technology classes, cultural and sporting activities. They also felt that their teachers cared about them as people and for their learning. They believed that their work in core subjects was set at the right level of challenge.

Classrooms are settled and well managed. ERO observed respectful interactions between teachers and students, and between students. Students frequently help each other with their learning. They know and can talk about the school's stated values and desired attitudes and behaviours. Their views about learning and school in general are listened to and acted on.

Robust systems and guidelines to ensure consistency in planning, teaching and assessment are in place across the school. These systems and guidelines have provided important support for new teachers and lessened the impact of staff change on students.

Students with medium and high needs are very well supported. Staff work closely with parents, external experts and trained teacher aides to develop individualised learning plans. Students' progress and support programmes are well monitored and managed.

School leaders and teachers have worked hard to inform and involve parents in their children's learning. This includes regular evening workshops about aspects of literacy or mathematics learning.

There is increasing inclusion of Māori perspectives and language in students' learning. Students and teachers use a range of technologies in innovative ways. Technology is also used well as a communication tool between teachers, students and parents.

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

School leaders and teachers are committed to improving the achievement of Māori students and valuing their cultural roots.

Māori students achieve at similar levels to their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. As with other groups, they spoke enthusiastically to ERO about their teachers and their school. They enjoyed the cultural and sporting opportunities.

A Cultural Responsiveness team is in place. This team has developed and begun to implement a detailed action plan. Initiatives include finding ways to better value students' culture, language and identity and ways to excite students about their learning and lift their achievement.

The school regularly consults with Māori parents about what it could do better. The outcomes of these meetings are reported to the board. Parents' views are valued and acted on.

Teachers have benefited from professional learning (PL) about core Māori concepts, including those related to learning. Core values, such as manaakitanga (care) and concepts, such as tuakana-teina relationships (confident helping less confident learners), are very evident through the school.

### **How effectively does the school promote educational success for Pacific?**

Teachers and leaders are committed to providing the best for Pacific learners. This is evident in their involvement in the MOE Talanoa project and the work of the Cultural Responsiveness team. Pacific students were also very positive about their teachers, learning, and the range of cultural, sporting and leadership opportunities.

The comments in the Māori section above about the work of the Cultural Responsiveness team, consultation and work with parents is also true for Pacific.

Many Pacific students are ELL. These students benefit from small-group instruction from a capable and trained teacher aide. Overall, Pacific student achievement is low, especially in writing and mathematics. Staff and leaders see raising this achievement as an urgent priority.

## 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. Ongoing review and improvement are very evident.

The school is capably led and managed. School leaders value and use the strengths of different teachers and encourage other staff to take on leadership roles. Staff feel well supported by their leaders and work well as a team.

Senior leaders have proven practices in place to build teachers' capability. They have adapted and improved the appraisal system, so that there is greater focus on ongoing improvement. Teachers have 'critical' partners who they share ideas and resources with, observe and give each other feedback. Teachers also carry out inquiries into aspects of their teaching. These initiatives and professional learning are focused on raising student achievement in literacy and mathematics.

The school is governed by a committed and competent board of trustees. Trustees seek ongoing training and are very focused on what is best for students. With the school leaders, they have identified appropriate priorities for long-term development. Initiatives (such as teachers' inquiries and appraisal goals) align well with these priorities.

Trustees receive regular reports about different curriculum areas, programmes and initiatives. They and school leaders regularly review school policies, and seek and respond to staff and parents' views about the school and what could be done better.

The school has identified, and ERO agrees, that its key next step is to continue its focus on lifting student achievement in literacy and mathematics. Other next steps include:

- adapting the three-year strategic plan so that it more clearly aligns with the school's stated priorities
- ensuring that the principal's reports to the board and board minutes have sufficient detail, including regular updates about progress in implementing the annual plan
- ensuring reports to the board are more evaluative and include clear next steps/actions
- better monitoring of the impact of actions taken.

## 5 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**

The school has a respectful and caring culture. Students from different cultures and backgrounds are valued. Students learn in settled and well-managed classrooms. They enjoy a broad curriculum. The school is addressing with urgency the low achievement of some students. The school is capably managed and governed.

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



Lesley Patterson  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern

27 July 2016

## About the School

Location	Oamaru	
Ministry of Education profile number	3784	
School type	Intermediate (Years 7 to 8)	
School roll	280	
Gender composition	Girls: 49% Boys: 51%	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā Māori Pacific Asian Other	64% 18% 12% 3% 3%
Special Features	Technology and Learning Support Units	
Review team on site	June 2016	
Date of this report	27 July 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	August 2012 June 2009 April 2006