

25 August 2009

## **To the Parents and Community of Raroa Normal Intermediate School**

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Raroa Normal Intermediate School**.

Raroa Normal Intermediate, in the Wellington suburb of Johnsonville, caters for students in years 7 and 8. At the time of this review in June 2009 it had a roll of 565, of whom 73% were New Zealand European / Pakeha.

Since the 2006 ERO review the Board of Trustees has appointed a new principal and deputy principal. The school leads a cluster of schools taking part in a Ministry of Education Enhancing High Standards Across Schools (EHSAS) contract. This focuses on students using higher order thinking skills to support their learning. ERO and the board agreed that the focus of this review would be on the impact of this initiative on teaching and learning.

While on site, ERO observed sound to high quality teaching. Teachers use a variety of effective strategies that support thinking-based learning. Students are provided with a wide range of learning opportunities and many chances to develop sound leadership skills and use these within a wider enrichment programme. Most of those spoken with by ERO were able to talk about the tools and strategies to promote deeper understandings. Overall, students are developing a good understanding of thinking based learning.

Positive and respectful relationships between teachers and students are a feature of the school. Students are actively engaged in discussions about their learning. Class tone is settled and they enjoy a wide variety of tasks and activities. Teachers have high expectations for learning and are effectively developing students' thinking skills.

Trustees have a clear understanding of the school's vision and direction to develop students' thinking. They actively support the implementation of the EHSAS contract with staffing, professional development and general resourcing. The senior leadership team takes a key role in the development of the thinking-based learning culture and are committed to this vision.

Well-considered documents outline the school's aspirational intentions and curriculum framework. The school now needs to review and refine its plans to ensure the consolidation and sustainability of the improvements to date, in the use of thinking skills. This includes the ongoing provision of professional development and making long-term decisions regarding the type of assessment tools that will be consistently used.

The board has sound policy and guideline statements to support ongoing self review. There are some examples of good quality review statements, particularly as they relate to the EHSAS contract. It is now timely for the board to further strengthen these processes to include judgments about the effectiveness of programme delivery and recommendations to provide more depth to learning area reviews.

The school has gathered data in reading, writing, mathematics and the development of student knowledge and use of thinking skills. All these show that, generally, students are achieving at high levels when compared to nationally-referenced assessment information.

The physical environment is well maintained and attractively presented, with large amounts of student art work displayed on buildings. There is a sense of pride and students report they feel safe. An attitude of trust and respect pervades the school.

### **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 carry out the next review in three years.

### **Review Coverage**

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of the 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>

*Signed*  
Dr Graham Stoop  
Chief Review Officer

## 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.

### Review Coverage

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### 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.