

# Garston School Education Review

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# 1 Context

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

Garston School is a small rural primary school providing for students in Years 1 to 8. Most students travel by bus from three neighbouring communities. There has been significant roll growth since the last ERO report in 2011.

Students benefit from the small class sizes. In 2014 the board funded an additional classroom and teacher to help raise levels of student achievement in literacy. Recent achievement results show that programmes are effectively meeting the learning needs of individuals and groups of students.

The school culture is inclusive and has a strong “family feel” evident throughout the school. Older students are role models for younger students. They show high levels of care and respect for themselves, others and the environment.

Students’ learning and development is focused on the “Garston SPIRIT” based on the school’s values.

Students know and can show the “Garston SPIRIT” in daily life of the school, these include how to be self-assured, productive, independent, respectful and innovative and to think intelligently. They take an active role in making decisions about their learning.

There are high levels of parent and community involvement in many school activities and events. Parents willingly provide time and resources to develop well-designed outdoor play areas to challenge children and foster their learning.

The board, principal and teachers have made progress on the areas for review and development in the 2011 ERO report. ERO has identified these as areas in section 3 and 4 to further strengthen.

## 2 Learning

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

The school makes effective use of achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement. Students have high expectations to learn and achieve.

Students use learning information purposefully to:

- identify their next steps and set new goals
- motivate themselves towards the next level
- have learning conversations with their teachers.

Teachers use progress and achievement information well to:

- identify and track the progress of priority students
- identify where students are at and their next steps
- identify which students need extra support
- help plan learning programmes
- report explicitly to parents about each student's progress and achievement.

The principal makes effective use of a wide range of learning information to:

- regroup students across classrooms
- identify trends and patterns
- set school-wide targets and goals
- report to the board and parents.

The trustees use learning information provided by the principal to:

- know how well students are achieving in relation to the National Standards
- provide resourcing
- determine the strategic direction of the school.

A strength of the school is the range of comprehensive records about students progress and

achievement. Teachers know their students very well and they track and monitor progress regularly.

In 2013, achievement information showed lower than expected achievement in reading and writing. The school has put in place programmes to raise students' level of achievement in these areas.

Mid-year 2014 achievement information shows most students are now achieving at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Some students have made significant progress. Students that require additional support are given many opportunities for one-on-one intensive teaching time to help them make progress.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum very effectively promotes and supports student learning. Teachers plan varied and interesting learning programmes, igniting students' curiosity.

Teaching and learning approaches are relevant to the lives of the students and the location of the school. Teachers make effective use of the local environment and expertise of local people. Students benefit from a broad range of learning experiences within and beyond the classroom.

Teachers follow comprehensive guidelines for the delivery of the curriculum. They reflect on the effectiveness of programmes and adjust them to meet the learning needs of individuals and small groups of children.

Teachers work hard to increase their levels of knowledge and skills to support new programmes and ways of learning. ERO found evidence that teachers use their new learning to support and challenge students. ERO observed good to high-quality teaching. Teachers and students are supported by a skilful and knowledgeable teacher aide.

Area for review and development

The principal and teachers need to follow the self-review guidelines to evaluate the effectiveness of all curriculum areas over time. The principal has identified information technologies as an area for further development and review.

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

The school is in the early stages of developing ways to value Māori students' identity, language and culture in school life and learning. There are two Māori students enrolled at the school. Teachers' planning shows Māori perspectives where relevant. Students experience aspects of Māori protocols and culture when they visit a marae and celebrate Matariki. The principal has identified a next step is to further develop teachers' understanding and confidence in using te reo and tikanga Māori in daily practices.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Factors supporting this statement include the following.

The board works as a team to govern the school. There are comprehensive and highly organised systems in place to guide the direction of the school. The board has a strong focus on raising student achievement. Trustees take an active role in supporting school activities and communicating them to the wider community. The annual plan is well monitored and reported on during the year to show achievement towards school-wide goals.

The school benefits from strong professional leadership. The principal:

- is highly motivated and motivational
- models the high expectations for teaching and learning
- is improvement focused.

Area for review and development

There are useful procedure and guidelines for self review. The principal acknowledges they need to be used more effectively to:

- report more fully to the board
- inform teachers about their practices.

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.

The board needs to ensure that the principal's appraisal includes the teaching component. (Source: s77C State Sector Act 1988).

### Conclusion

Garston School is an inclusive, innovative rural school. The school values of respect, striving for excellence, innovation and community responsibility guide teaching and learning. Students experience a varied and responsive curriculum that excites them and ignites their motivation and learning. Parents and the community are actively involved in the life of the school.

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

Graham Randell  
National Manager Review Services  
Southern Region

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## School Statistics

Location	Garston, Northern Southland	
Ministry of Education profile number	3953	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	31	
Gender composition	Boys: 16 Girls: 15	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	27
	Māori	2
	Asian	2
Review team on site	September 2014	
Date of this report	13 November 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	September 2011
	Education Review	April 2008
	Education Review	February 2005