

Belmont Intermediate Education Review

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About the School

Location	Belmont, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1225	
School type	Intermediate (Years 7 to 8)	
Decile [1]	10	
School roll	568	
Number of international students	13	
Gender composition	Boys 57% Girls 43%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 61% Māori 6% British/Irish 15% Korean 3% African 2% Australian 2% Indian 1% other European 4% other Asian 2% other Pacific 2% other South East Asian 1% other 1%	
Special Features	Learning Support Centre for students with high learning needs	

Review team on site	May 2012	
Date of this report	3 September 2012	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2008
	Education Review	May 2004
	Education Review	October 2000

The Purpose of an ERO Report

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.

[1]

School deciles range from 1 to 10. Decile 1 schools draw their students from low socio-economic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides.

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1 Context

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

Belmont Intermediate is located between Takapuna and Devonport on Auckland's North Shore. The school continues to provide good educational programmes for students in Years 7 to 8 who come from diverse backgrounds. School leaders have responded well to the findings of the school's 2008 ERO review.

The school tone is settled and positive. Students are articulate, confident learners. They interact with a large range of teachers through home room programmes, specialist subjects, support classes and co-curricular activities. Pastoral care systems have been reviewed and strengthened with the addition of counselling services since the previous ERO review. Students are proud of their school and appreciate the positive relationships they have with their peers. Students' successes are acknowledged and celebrated.

The school has developed a relationship with the Awataha Marae to promote bicultural understandings. School leaders have developed a Treaty of Waitangi policy which can now be used as a useful self review tool.

Professional development is used to develop a collaborative working environment and learning community. Teachers share expertise and have frequent learning conversations about their students. School leaders work closely with local schools, including the adjacent secondary school to help students make successful transitions into and from the school.

2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Students make good progress and achieve very well in reading. They also achieve well in mathematics. Achievement information is well analysed and shows that the majority of students achieve at or above National Standards in these learning areas. Team leaders are well placed to evaluate and accelerate student progress in mathematics.

To further improve levels of student achievement school leaders and teachers have identified writing as a key area. School data has been used to develop two relevant targets to assist students who are yet to achieve the National Standard in writing. The school is also working towards evaluating how well students are learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Māori students generally achieve well. School leaders track the progress of Māori students at each year level over time. The data they collect shows that some Māori students achieve very well and others who are not yet achieving as well as their peers. Māori students benefit from individual monitoring and are supported through a range of programmes. Their overall achievement in writing is an area for improvement, as it is for many other students. A specific target has been set to accelerate their learning in this area. The on-going review of Māori student progress and achievement should allow the school to continually improve its effectiveness.

Pacific students and students with individual and high learning needs are well supported. School leaders should now set more specific achievement targets for accelerating the progress of particular groups of learners. Reporting to the board of trustees on the success of interventions to improve student learning would also be useful for informing self review and board decision making.

Students are engaged in learning. However, school leaders recognise the need for greater student ownership of learning to further improve engagement levels. Achieving success in this area will require that teachers:

- give students more opportunities to make decisions about their learning
- more regularly share information about progress and achievement with each student.

3 Curriculum

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

The school offers a broad learning programme aligned to The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC). Students experience a range of specialist subjects that they enjoy alongside homeroom classes that focus on literacy, mathematics and inquiry learning. Teachers are working towards integrating skills across the curriculum.

The school is continuing to refine and review its inquiry learning model, introduced initially in 2008. The inquiry learning approach should help students to develop as independent thinkers and leaders of their own learning.

Good quality teaching enables students to successfully access the curriculum. Teachers have well resourced learning environments and have plans to further use e-learning technologies to support learning. Through internal and external review, school leaders and ERO agree that the following next steps could benefit learners:

- offering more opportunities for students to pursue areas of particular interest within home room classes to better meet their learning needs and promote independent learning
- expanding learning about te ao Māori and Pacific contexts in the curriculum
- using resources such as Tātaiako, the Ministry of Education cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners, to reflect on effective teaching practice
- using the principles of The New Zealand Curriculum and input from students to review the effectiveness of the curriculum and the extent to which it supports the school's vision of a Belmont learner.

Senior leaders should also continue to support teachers to share their understandings about what makes for effective teaching practice across the curriculum.

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

Six percent of students at Belmont Intermediate identify as Māori.

Māori students enjoy opportunities such as kapa haka and the recently established te reo Māori option. While they enjoy te reo, more differentiated instruction based on the prior knowledge and expertise of students is recommended. Other students may also be interested in, and benefit from, access to te reo Māori programmes. Reviewing school documentation from a Māori perspective should help ensure bicultural dimensions are evident and valued within the school.

School leaders have made significant progress in developing school kawa and tikanga. Marae visits, school powhiri and waiata are now part of school life alongside celebrations of Māori student success and cultural events. Plans to promote further success as Māori include those that aim to:

- develop more leadership opportunities for Māori students
- improve consultation and develop partnerships with whānau
- use student and whānau contributions to inform future school strategic plans

increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of the language, culture and heritage of Māori learners.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is capable of sustaining and improving its performance. Over the past four years, the school has managed a number of significant changes. These include:

- inducting several new trustees, including a new chairperson, to the board of trustees
- appointing new team leaders, managing staff changes and implementing a new performance management approach
- developing a new curriculum design, a teaching as inquiry model, and refining student support programmes
- implementing the National Standards and increasing the use of the online learning opportunities
- reviewing student achievement, curriculum and data management systems.

School leaders have identified the need to consolidate these new initiatives and to develop processes to help ensure that changes made are effective and sustainable. Board members and school leaders could also refine self review to make it more evaluative and to extend the use of student, parent and whānau input to inform school improvement.

The senior leadership team is well led. Team members have complementary skills and work collaboratively with the board of trustees. Board members bring a range of expertise and skills to their roles. They have developed a thoughtful strategic plan, which they are planning to use to review school progress.

The board is well informed about Māori student achievement and about student achievement overall. Developing more frequent consultation processes, especially with whānau, could also assist the board in finding more trustees who represent the diverse backgrounds of learners in the school.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. At the time of this review there were 11 international students attending the school.

The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international students

is thorough. School leaders should report to the board of trustees on how well international students achieve during their time at the school.

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
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

The board, through the principal, has used a variety of ways to engage with individual Māori families to inform them about the policies, plans and targets for Māori student achievement at Belmont Intermediate. Feedback has been sought from families to inform the plans and targets. An on-going challenge for the board is to find ways to ensure that consultation with its Māori community is regular and effective for both parties.

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should receive regular reports on student attendance and on health and safety delegations.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Makere Smith

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