



**EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
RANGIORA HIGH SCHOOL**

JUNE 2009

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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

1. About the School

Location	Rangiora
Ministry of Education profile number	312
School type	Secondary (Year 9-13)
Decile rating ^[1]	8
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated entitlement	92.4
Other	7.59
Number of teachers	106
School roll	1714
Number of international students	34
Gender composition	Girls 52%; Boys 48%
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā 88%; Māori 8%; Asian 2%; Other 2%
Special features	North Canterbury Sport & Recreation Centre Maungatere Alternative Education Centre School Farm Rangiora High School Nursery School
Review team on site	February 2009
Date of this report	12 June 2009
Previous ERO reports	Supplementary Review, December 2005 Education Review, November 2004 Accountability Review, February 2001 Effectiveness Review, August 1996 Assurance Audit, March 1993

2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Rangiora High School is a large semi-rural coeducational state school in North Canterbury with over 1700 students that has strong links with its local community. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in school activities. They are increasingly being welcomed into the school and involved in their children's learning. Students and teachers take part in community events. The local council seeks students' views on various projects. A group of Māori parents meets with students and teachers on a monthly basis and organises shared activities. In addressing the challenges of continued roll growth the board of trustees has successfully progressed a major multimillion dollar development plan over the past four years. This has included significant upgrading of the technology and science facilities administration/student services area.

The board's focus since the 2005 review has been on improving the culture of the school. The introduction of the house system has had a significant impact on the behaviour of students in class and outside the classroom. Students are now more settled and ready to learn. Teachers and students value the way the house system gives them a sense of belonging within a smaller group. New students settle in quickly. They know to whom they can go if they need help. Older students provide support for younger students. Students have a sense of identity and pride in their school.

The board is now focusing more on curriculum and student achievement. The school is well placed for the implementation of the revised New Zealand Curriculum in 2010. It is a lead school for other schools in the area. Teachers have been invited to other schools to share their thinking about the new curriculum and their resources.

This focus on curriculum development has yet to have a major impact on student achievement. There has been some improvement over the past five years in student achievement in gaining qualifications at Level 1 NCEA. Fewer students are leaving with little or no formal attainment. Overall student achievement in the senior school is still below the achievement of students in similar schools.

The principal and senior leadership team provide strong leadership and direction for the school. Heads of department regularly review the performance of their subject departments and their areas of responsibility. Twice each year, the trustees provide good quality feedback and recommendations for heads of department in making further improvements. These are then developed into action plans for the following period. This process focuses teachers on improvement. All staff need to ensure that they are setting specific measurable targets that relate to improving the achievement of students.

The board and principal have a shared vision for the future of the school. This vision was developed through wide consultation and has been shared within the school. The board and senior leadership team have set high standards by establishing non-negotiable teacher expectations for student attendance, behaviour, performance and uniform. Senior managers are monitoring the impact of these expectations as they are aware that there is variability in the way these expectations are met in classrooms. ERO confirmed this view.

The quality of buildings and the outside environment range from excellent to poor. The rapid roll growth that the school has experienced over the past few years has contributed to the board's comprehensive construction and refurbishment programme. ERO did not find any issues of major concern regarding students' physical and emotional safety.

The board provides strong governance. Trustees have a clear vision for the future of the school. There have been significant improvements in school culture and student behaviour. Trustees, the principal and senior managers are focused on student achievement and continuous improvement. Raising achievement standards is a priority for them. They have introduced several initiatives to support this but it is too soon to gauge the impact these developments are having on raising student achievement.

Future Action

ERO intends to carry out another review in 24 months to evaluate the extent to which improvements begun have been sustained and those planned have been implemented.

3. The Focus of the Review

Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

The board has a focus on a range of outcomes for students with the goal of ensuring student achievement is at or above national norms. The focus is on achievement of students in social, cultural, academic and sporting areas. Students achieve national status in a range of sporting activities. The board believes that its range of initiatives have had a significant positive impact over the past four years on overall student engagement and achievement.

Over the last five years, from 2004 to 2008, there has been a general improvement in the achievement of students in Level 1 NCEA. The school is still below levels for similar schools in the achievement of literacy and numeracy credits at Year 11 and qualifications at all levels.

The percentage of students gaining the Level 1 NCEA qualification over four years is above the national expectation of 70%. The number of students leaving with little or no attainment has dropped significantly from 20% to 5% in 2007.

Student achievement information in physical education health and social sciences departments shows that students are performing at or slightly above national expectations.

The achievement of students in English, mathematics and science has been a concern to senior managers. As a result of this concern a range of school-wide initiatives have been put in place. These are beginning to have an impact in mathematics and science and in some aspects of English. It is too soon to see the full impact on student achievement.

Heads of Departments need to use academic achievement information for years 9 and 10 students to compare their progress against national expectations. For example, using the information from assessment tools such as asTTle, P.AT or National Curriculum levels.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Rangiora High School was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Rangiora High School.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus areas for the review:

- the impact of the school's initiatives to improve student engagement in learning and achievement.

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

The Impact of the School's Initiatives

Background

The board has put in place a number of initiatives to improve student engagement and achievement. The house structure and new management structure have provided greater opportunities for leadership for staff and students. A focus on best practice in classrooms is aimed at achieving consistent approaches across the school in managing classroom routines and behaviour. The principal has developed a system of self review.

Areas of good performance

- *Strategic direction.* The board has a clear vision for the future of the school. This vision was developed through a process of wide consultation and has been shared within the school. The board and senior leadership team have common goals. The senior leadership team has been reorganised to reflect the priorities in the board's goals, particularly on the emphasis that is given to the pastoral care for students. Key teachers in the school's leadership and pastoral care teams are freely accessible to the students.
- *Leadership and governance.* The board and senior leadership team provide strong positive governance, leadership and direction for the school. The board takes an active role in the oversight of the curriculum. Board members each have responsibility for some curriculum areas. They receive reports twice a year and demand a high level of accountability. The board and senior leadership team have set high standards and expectations through non-negotiable expectations that teachers are required to have for students. Trustees are focused on raising student achievement. They have good processes in place to oversee all aspects of the school's operations.
- *School culture.* The school actively promotes a culture of respect for others. The school's six-house structure provides the students and staff with a sense of identity, belonging and pride, and a sense of friendly competitiveness among houses. Students and teachers told ERO they value the house system highly. They have someone they know well to go to for support. New teachers and other staff are able to get to know a group of students well within the small house teams. There are non-negotiable expectations for students such as expectations for attendance, behaviour and uniform. In recent years, there have been lower rates of staff turnover and improved behaviour of students.
- *Leadership opportunities.* The board and principal encourage teachers and students to make the most of a range of leadership opportunities. The four deputy principals each have a significant area of responsibility. They take the role of acting principal on a rotational basis. The house system enables more teachers and students to take on leadership roles. Students contribute to the leadership within the school in their roles on the principal's advisory group and as house leaders, and in the peer support they give to juniors.
- *Support for learning.* Students are well supported in their learning. The head of department for learning support coordinates work with teachers to provide targeted programmes to meet particular students' needs in the classroom. Teacher-aides work with teachers to plan the most effective support for identified students. Class teachers meet regularly to discuss strategies and develop action plans best suited to particular students in each junior class. Teachers work across departments to support students' literacy and numeracy needs. The Te Awhina programme also supports students in promoting literacy and numeracy achievement. The school offers a variety of approaches to support students in their learning. For example, it provides a gifted and talented education class and integrated classes. Students with similar abilities are often grouped.

- *School community partnerships.* The school has developed a range of strategies for engaging with parents and the wider community. Parents receive phone calls from form teachers at the beginning of the year. They are invited to evening meetings at the school to celebrate the successes of students and hear about what and how their children are learning. The school has formed a strong network with local primary schools to promote effective teaching and learning. It maintains close links with the North Canterbury community college that is located adjacent to the high school. The school participates in many joint community projects. Students are involved in consultation on community projects.
- *Transitions.* The school creates smooth and effective transitions from primary to Year 9 and from a student's senior year to the world beyond school. Useful collaboration with the local primary schools provides teachers with information about students before they begin at the school. Teachers combine this information from primary school with early test data in Year 9 to develop learning strategies to meet students' needs. Teachers plan an orientation programme and peer support for the students coming from more than 22 primary schools. Year 9 students told ERO they felt welcomed and easily settled into school. In the senior school, students are targeted and supported. This process has resulted in an increasing proportion of students leaving school with an appropriate minimum NCEA qualification.
- *Self review.* The board and senior leaders participate in an extensive programme of self review. Department reviews are modelled on useful examples of external evaluation. Self review is occurring at all levels of learning, with action plans and twice-yearly reports on rates of completion for these plans. These reviews are based on consultation. The review process is transparent for all who are involved. The staff appraisal process includes peer assessment, appraiser assessment and student surveys. Aspects of the principal's appraisal are published and available to staff. The principal carries out detailed curriculum reviews. The next step is for the leadership team to evaluate the effectiveness of specific plans in lifting student achievement against specific measurable targets agreed to by the board.

Areas for improvement

- *Student achievement.* Student achievement overall is below that of schools nationally and well below that of comparable schools. The achievement of Māori students is well below other students at the school. The impact of the school's initiatives to raise student achievement is not yet evident. School entry data further confirms that students, as a whole, are underachieving. The school's data show that few departments add value when comparing Year 9 student achievement with their NCEA Year 11 results. School leaders are raising the profile of student achievement by celebrating students' academic success through the presentation of medals and certificates. The school has identified that modifying teaching and learning and enhancing students' engagement in learning should raise levels of student achievement. ERO agrees with the board and the school's managers that this is a matter of urgency. *[Recommendation 6.1]*
- *Use of student achievement information.* Better use could be made of student achievement data to raise student achievement. By analysing trends and patterns for groups of students; for example, specific age groups, boys and Māori students, teachers and the board would be better able to track progress over time. Managers and teachers are using data to identify the learning needs for individuals and some groups. The board could extend the specific targets in its strategic plan to include more achievement targets for students in Years 9 and 10 and for each NCEA level in the senior school in addition to its present Level 1 literacy and numeracy targets. This process would also act as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning and help in planning future programmes. *[Recommendation 6.2]*

- *Assessment.* Teachers at Years 9 and 10 are making limited use of assessment that is nationally accepted and that recognises achievement across all curriculum levels. Teachers need to provide students with more accurate information about their placement on the appropriate curriculum levels for each subject. This information should include indications of students' next steps for improvement. Parents can then be clearly informed about the achievement of their son or daughter and their progress over time. Greater use of nationally recognised assessments would also assist the board to monitor the progress of students before their first NCEA results, which are three years after students enter the school. *[Recommendation 6.2]*
- *Extending best practice.* There are examples of effective teaching practice throughout the school. The challenge for the school is to build on and extend the best teaching practice to improve the learning environment for all students. ERO observed good levels of engagement in social studies, physical education and health, and in integrated classes. In these learning areas, the school's analysis of school-wide student progress shows improvement over time. In some classes, ERO observed some teaching that provided little opportunity for learning. In these classes teaching time was not well used. There was a lack of pace and variety in the lesson and too much reliance on teacher-directed learning. Teachers have had professional development and readings on best practice. They now need to observe and share the good examples occurring in some classrooms. This practice will support the school's strategic focus on raising student achievement. *[Recommendation 6.3]*
- *Management of school assessment systems.* Heads of departments need to improve the quality of their processes for the assessment and moderation of students' work. The NZQA external moderator's report of 2008 identified many areas in the school where assessment design, assessment decisions and teachers' responses to previous external reports needed to improve. Students are not sufficiently well informed about how well they are tracking in achieving their learning goals. Senior managers are exploring ways to link this identified need to the appraisal process for teachers. *[Recommendation 6.2]*
- *Use of information and communication technologies (ICT).* Teachers could make better use of ICT to support and extend students' learning. The school does not make use of an intranet service. It has not extended the use of computers in classrooms throughout the school. ERO observed some effective examples of the use of ICT by teachers. Increased use of ICT could be a useful tool for implementing the thinking competency focus as planned by the school in the revised New Zealand Curriculum. The school has identified the need to develop and extend ICT capability for the benefit of learning and teaching. The board has allocated significant additional funding for the purchase of school-wide resources. It plans to introduce a school intranet in term two in 2009. *[Recommendation 6.3]*

4. Areas of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of Rangiora High School ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

The Achievement of Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of Māori students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement.

Eight percent of the students at Rangiora High School identify as Māori.

Areas of progress

- *Support for Māori students.* The school has taken steps to support Māori student achievement. A whānau class operates at Years 10, 11 and 12. The aim of these classes is to keep students engaged with education, provide mentoring and build good relationships. The school has committed resources so that staffing is available to provide learning and pastoral support for Māori students.
- *Community consultation.* There are good opportunities for communication between the local Māori community and the school. Following consultation with the community, a tautoko group was formed. It meets regularly. Teachers have contact with local runanga, and students participate in community activities and council advisory groups. These opportunities promote ongoing dialogue about teaching, learning and achievement.

Areas for further improvement

- *Student engagement.* Some indicators show that Māori students are less likely than other students to be engaged in learning. The attendance of Māori students is lower than other groups and their rate of stand-downs and suspensions is higher. The school has a target to reduce the rate of suspensions for Māori students, and this is tracking down. It needs to monitor the progress being made to improve the engagement levels of Māori students.
- *Analysis of achievement.* There is insufficient data collected to enable the achievement of Māori students as a group to be analysed. Little specific data is collected about Māori student achievement. The performance and progress of Māori students are not clearly identified, tracked or reported. Senior managers and heads of departments should ensure that data about Māori student achievement is collected, collated and analysed in order to improve student learning and achievement.

Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) in 2010

Progress to date

In preparing for teaching the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010 the school has:

- surveyed staff, students and parents extensively about aspects of the revised NZC;
- completed a curriculum review;
- revised the school's vision for its students;
- integrated the school's values within the six house system;
- initiated and run whole-staff professional learning sessions that focus on pedagogy, key competencies and curriculum planning;
- used national and international research findings and external presenters for staff development of NZC;
- identified thinking as the key competency the school will focus on in improving learning strategies;
- provided heads of departments with a check list of expected outcomes for curriculum planning for implementing the revised NZC;
- been nominated for, and led the Canterbury Westland Schools' cluster for the revised NZC;
- presented and shared Rangiora High School NZC developments and resources with some other schools; and
- been a pilot school for the University of Canterbury Education Plus revised NZC planning and development.

Next steps

The school has indicated that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months are to:

- facilitate more staff development that focuses on pedagogy and curriculum planning;
- extend teachers' focus on a thinking classroom;
- participate in a local initiative with contributing schools;
- support all learning areas in preparing for the implementation of the revised NZC;
- reflect the revised NZC in curriculum planning within learning areas; and
- audit all learning areas to ensure their readiness for NZC implementation by 2010.

Thinking about the Future

ERO is currently discussing with secondary schools how they are thinking about the future and what it might mean for their students.

The school reports that, after thinking about the future and what it might mean for students, it has had many meetings and discussions about its rapidly expanding roll. The board is currently undertaking a review of the operation of the school's enrolment scheme.

The board and school leaders have considered the impact of this growth on the school's buildings, other resources and the curriculum. The principal has participated in a Ministry of Education reference group to consult with other stakeholders on roll growth in the Rangiora area.

The school has established a future strategy group to plan for future developments.

Its recently established education trust provides substantial funding for some staff and student development.

The school's future thinking has also included the development of the school's intranet and other e-learning opportunities.

Provision for International Students

Compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students and the Provision of English Language Support

Rangiora High 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. This is a requirement of all schools that enrol international students in terms of the Act. Schools are also required to provide English language support for their international students. There were 38 international students at the time of this review.

The school complies with all aspects of the Code.

Area of good performance

- *Aligning policy with practice.* The 2005 ERO report identified that the policies and procedures developed during 2004 did not always guide department practice. In October 2007 and again in 2008, the director reviewed how well the department was meeting the requirements of the code. She reported a number of improvements. Students now receive good quality information and care. The homestay coordinator provides a thorough oversight of safe and suitable homestay situations for students, and also provides extra support for students during school time. Students have access to the director and the homestay coordinator at any time if they have a concern. The new ESOL teacher has established good relationships and programmes for students and is revising the courses offered. Students told ERO that they had settled in well to school and were happy in their homestay families. The principal and director annually travel internationally to conduct parent interviews and meet with parents.

Area for improvement

- *Opportunities for students.* Staff responsible for international students should seek ways to improve opportunities for students to engage with other New Zealand students and their teachers. Students spoken with by ERO identified that, at times, the size of the school made it difficult for them to access individual help from teachers. Some students found it difficult to develop friendships with New Zealand students. Others said that they would like to be more involved in extra curricular activities after school. A next step for the staff involved with international students is to consider ways to foster the greater involvement of these students in the life of the school and in activities with other New Zealand students.

Adult and Community Education (ACE Meeting Quality

Assurance Arrangements

Rangiora High School is funded to provide ACE programmes and must meet the requirements of the *ACE Quality Assurance Arrangements for Providers of Adult and Community Education*.

The school has attested that it meets all these requirements.

5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Rangiora High School completed an ERO *Board Assurance Statement* and *Self-Audit Checklist*. 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; and
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment);
- physical safety of students;
- teacher registration;
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions; and
- attendance.

The school has comprehensive procedures and guidelines for dealing with the physical and emotional safety of students. The policy for safety needs to include a statement allowing for direct reporting of suspected abuse.

The attendance levels of students are considerably lower than national expectations. At the time of the review, the board did not receive regular reports on attendance levels. Given that students' achievement levels are dependent on their being in class and engaged in learning, a focus on improving levels of attendance at school would assist the board in meeting its goals.

Compliance action

During the course of the review, ERO identified one area of non-compliance. In order to address this matter, the board of trustees must:

- 5.1 modify the policy on sexual and physical abuse to make it clear that any person may report suspected cases of child abuse directly to the police or a social worker.
[s15-16, Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989]

Compliance recommendation

In order to improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- 5.2 monitor trends and patterns in student attendance and put in place initiatives to improve current levels of attendance.

6. Recommendations

ERO and the board of trustees have developed the following recommendations.

- 6.1 Senior leaders and staff should significantly increase levels of students' presence at school, their engagement in learning and their achievement.
- 6.2 Senior leaders and teachers should improve assessment practices and the use of assessment information to track student progress more closely and to show improvements in the achievement of students from Year 9 through to Year 13.
- 6.3 The teachers should extend the best teaching practices to all classes so that all students have the opportunity to reach their potential.

7. Future Action

ERO intends to carry out another review in 24 months to evaluate the extent to which improvements begun have been sustained and those planned have been implemented.

Isabell Sinclair Irwin
Area Manager
for Chief Review Officer

12 June 2009

To the Parents and Community of Rangiora High School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Rangiora High School**.

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Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of 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>.

Isabell Sinclair Irwin
Area Manager
for 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.

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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.

^[1] Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.