



**Cobden School**  
**Greymouth**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Cobden School

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?**

The key feature of the school is the positive, respectful and inclusive culture. The school's values (3Cs) and vision are integral to all aspects of the school's beliefs and practices. New students and visitors are warmly welcomed to the school.

Students and their families are provided with strong pastoral care. Students' wellbeing is given high priority and well supported by a range of external agencies. Teachers and senior leaders use a number of successful ways to engage with parents and whānau.

The school roll changes significantly throughout the year with families moving into, and out of the area. Senior leaders and teachers work closely with these families and students to build trusting relationships and open communication.

The school is well resourced, including a heated swimming pool and community library. Many of the school's facilities are used by local groups. Students have opportunities to participate in the afterschool music programme provided at the school.

### 2 Learning

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

The school fosters a positive learning culture. The board, senior leaders and teachers make very good use of student achievement information to inform decision making and support student learning and engagement.

Students who have been at the school for extended periods of time make very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the large number of transient students enrolling with significant learning needs, impact on the school's overall achievement rates.

Teachers know students and their families well. Students most at risk of not achieving are closely monitored and provided with carefully considered learning programmes. Teachers and students are

well supported by experienced and competent teacher aides, who are actively involved in all aspects of the school.

Students' transitions into and beyond the school are well supported, particularly for those students with specific learning needs.

Students know about their strengths and next learning steps. They are encouraged to take responsibility for, and make decisions about their own learning. Teachers, parents and students regularly set and review learning goals based on individual needs.

Senior students know about their achievement in relation to National Standards. Parents also receive useful information about how well their child is progressing and achieving. However, teachers should ensure that they include all aspects of achievement in mathematics in students' reports.

Senior students have meaningful leadership opportunities. They work well with others and are encouraged to support younger students. Teachers foster a culture of ako (everyone is a learner).

Senior leaders have identified, and ERO agrees, that the next step is to develop a 'graduate profile'. This will enable teachers to continue to build and extend consistency of student ownership of their learning across the school.

### **3 Curriculum**

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

The school's curriculum is highly effective in promoting a positive learning environment. Students and their families' views are well considered in the school's curriculum.

Students are provided with many interesting learning opportunities to broaden their knowledge of the wider community. Teachers plan meaningful learning experiences that focus on the local history and environment. They provide differentiated programmes to meet individual and group needs.

Senior leaders have high expectations for quality teaching and learning. They provide teachers with thorough and useful guidelines to support their teaching programmes.

Students learn in attractive, calm environments. They have access to a wide range of resources to support their learning. Technologies are integrated naturally throughout learning programmes.

Teachers participate in a wide variety of regular and targeted professional learning and development. This is having a positive impact on extending teaching practices, leading to greater consistency across the school.

Senior leaders have agreed that their next steps are:

- using the current planning framework to develop a process for reviewing all learning areas of the curriculum over time
- regularly reporting the outcomes of learning and achievement from curriculum reviews to the board, as part of the school's self-review cycle.

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

Māori students achieve at similar rates to their peers. Students with identified needs are closely monitored.

The senior leaders have introduced a number of initiatives to engage and consult with Māori whānau. They make good use of expertise within the local community.

Staff expertise is acknowledged and their skills and interests are well utilised. All students have opportunities to learn about Māori language and culture and to be involved in the school's successful Kapa Haka.

Senior leaders and teachers are continuing to extend their knowledge and confidence in using te reo Māori.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

The experienced senior leadership team work well together and provide strong leadership across the school. They have high expectations for students and staff and promote a positive learning environment.

Senior leaders encourage teachers to use their personal strengths and make use of the many opportunities to take leadership roles.

The teachers' in-depth appraisal process is thorough and focused on improving teaching practices and outcomes for students. Teachers set meaningful goals, regularly reflect on their teaching and best practice research. They are provided with useful feedback from senior leaders.

The board is highly supportive of the school and works well with the principal. Trustees are focused on the best ways to support teachers to raise student achievement. They use their individual expertise and skills appropriately.

The board and senior leaders have a robust process for self-review. They regularly seek the views of the school community and staff. Self-review leads to useful and practical outcomes and improvements.

The principal keeps the board well informed and provides regular assurances that legal requirements are being met.

The senior leaders and board have identified, and ERO agrees, that the school's charter and strategic direction need to be further refined. This includes:

- developing closer links between the annual and strategic plan
- ensuring strategic goals are progressive from year to year
- making student achievement targets more specific.

The board could benefit from additional training to help strengthen some governance 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.

## Conclusion

Students, their families and school staff share respectful and inclusive relationships. Students' learning and wellbeing is given high priority through communication with families and support agencies.

Students are well supported to know about and take responsibility for their learning. Leaders now need to continue to review aspects of the curriculum and school's annual planning.

The school is well led and managed.

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



Graham Randell  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern

29 May 2015

## About the School

Location	Greymouth	
Ministry of Education profile number	3322	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	153	
Gender composition	Boys 54% Girls 46%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā Māori Pacific Asian	75% 19% 5% 1%
Special Features	Lead School for RTLB Cluster	
Review team on site	March 2014	
Date of this report	29 May 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Supplementary Review Education Review	December 2011 September 2008 October 2007