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25 February 2011

To the Parents and Community of Balclutha Primary School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Balclutha Primary School.

Balclutha Primary School is a Years 1 to 8 primary school in Balclutha. At the time of the review in November 2010 it had a roll of 213 students, 22% of whom identify as Māori or Pacific. The school roll also includes students with high and varying needs. In 2010, the school had major refurbishments, including renovating many of the classrooms and facilities to enable high-needs students to participate in school and class activities.

Students learn and play in a safe environment. Relationships throughout the school are caring and positive. Teachers purposefully teach the school's values and these are highly evident in practice throughout the school.

Students benefit from a range of learning experiences and leadership opportunities. They also have opportunities to play and be involved in many sporting and cultural activities. Students' academic, social, sporting and leadership successes are recognised and acknowledged.

Trustees, managers and teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to raising student achievement levels. Teachers support each other in their teaching practices and they plan many units of study collaboratively. Teachers use their knowledge of students to create positive learning environments.

Students benefit from good to very good teaching practices. Teachers are focused on students making progress in their learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. They use information well to target individual student's learning needs. Trained teacher aides and external services also support students in their learning.

Reports to the board show good achievement levels across the school. Most students are achieving at or above national expectations in literacy and numeracy. In 2009 and 2010 the school had set targets to lift the achievement levels in reading for all students. Reports show that students have made good progress in both these years. Māori students were achieving as well as their non-Māori peers.

The principal actively encourages teachers to take up leadership roles within the school. In some cases they are supported with relevant professional learning. The school hosts several services that support students and teachers throughout South Otago.

Parents have many opportunities to find out about and discuss their children's learning. Parent meetings are held to share school and curriculum information. An active parent-teacher association supports the school.

This report recommends the board and managers extend the school's curriculum development and review, including the bicultural presence in the school.

Future Action

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

Review Coverage

This report provides an evaluation of how effectively the school's curriculum promotes student learning - engagement, progress and achievement. ERO's evaluation takes account of the school's previous reporting history and is based on:

- what is known about student achievement information, including the achievement of Māori and Pacific students;
- decisions made to improve student achievement using assessment and self-review information; and
- teaching strategies and programmes implemented to give effect to the school's curriculum.

ERO also gathers information during the review to contribute to its national reports. The national reports are published on ERO's website.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, www.ero.govt.nz.

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