



30 January 2009

To the Parents and Community of Otatara School

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

Otatara School is a semi-rural school that caters for the education of students from Years 1 to 6. Since the 2006 ERO review a new principal has been appointed. She has been in the position for two terms. Under her leadership, the management team and teachers have put in place several new initiatives to enhance teaching and learning. These include student goal setting, self assessment of key competencies and an effective programme for introducing five-year-old students to school. Parents are actively involved in the school in many ways. They help with literacy and numeracy support programmes, sports and classroom support. ERO observed respectful and caring relationships between students and adults. Students said they felt safe in the school.

The board and management team have made little progress in addressing one recommendation from the 2006 ERO report. There are no guidelines for identifying and providing for gifted and talented students. Teachers need to make further progress in using assessment information to improve learning for students.

Students are involved and interested in their learning. Teachers give students many meaningful learning experiences. Students understand what they are learning about. They set goals to improve aspects of their learning. The school has introduced student-led conferences with teachers and parents to foster further support for students in their learning.

Most students are achieving well in reading and mathematics. School-wide student achievement information in writing shows that 80% of students now meet national expectations. The school has made writing the target for 2008 to improve teaching and learning in this area. Over the past three years there has been little other school-wide achievement information reported. The board does not know how well students are achieving across all learning areas.

Students benefit from good to high quality teaching practice. Most are taught at their level of ability. This helps foster student engagement and achievement. Teachers link the learning to meaningful activities and regularly assess and track students' progress in literacy. Students confidently and capably use a range of technologies to support their learning. The school has identified the need to develop a shared understanding about its inquiry-learning approach.