



**Education Review Office**  
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Seven Oaks School  
Christchurch**

**Unconfirmed**

**Private School  
Review Report**

# Private School Review Report: Seven Oaks School

## 1 Background

The Chief Review Officer has a statutory duty to report on the performance of private schools throughout New Zealand.

ERO reviews of private schools are significantly different in process and more limited in scope and reporting than those for state and state-integrated schools, focusing as they do on the *Criteria for Registration* set out in section 35C of the Education Act.

Section 35I of the Education Act 1989 requires the Education Review Office (ERO) to review private schools and to report to the Ministry of Education on whether each school continues to meet the criteria for registration. The schools are privately owned and the legislative requirements are significantly different to those for state and state-integrated schools. Private schools are not required to follow the National Education Goals or National Administration Guidelines.

What does apply in place of the legislation imposed upon state schools by the Education Act is the contract between the persons paying for the tuition of the child at the school – the parents – and the school authority. Those are matters between the parent and the school's governing body. More information about ERO reviews of private schools can be found on ERO's website [www.ero.govt.nz/Reviews-Process](http://www.ero.govt.nz/Reviews-Process).

The criteria for registration are that the school –

- a) has premises that are suitable, as described in section 35D; and
- b) usually provides tuition for 9 or more students who are of or over the age of 5 years but are under the age of 16 years; and
- c) has staffing that is suitable to the age range and level of its students, the curriculum taught at the school, and the size of the school; and
- d) has equipment that is suitable for the curriculum being delivered or to be delivered at the school; and
- e) has a curriculum for teaching, learning, and assessment and makes details of the curriculum and its programme for delivery available for parents; and
- f) has suitable tuition standards, as described in section 35F; and
- g) has managers who are fit and proper persons (as described in section 35G) to be managers of a private school.

Seven Oaks School is a fully registered, private school providing education for children in Years 1 to 8. The school is part of the Holistic Education Trust which was established in 2006 and opened for students in 2009. It is governed by the trust and supported by a school board and parent circle. The curriculum has a focus on developing students' creativity, self-awareness, social skills and connection with nature.

Since the 2014 ERO review, the school has experienced a number of changes including a move to the purpose built site in Halswell, in July 2017. There have been several changes in principals and staffing. A new principal was appointed towards the end of 2018. The position of deputy principal responsible for curriculum development has also been established. The school offers an externally provided programme for children with additional learning needs. Since moving to the new site in 2017 the roll has increased.

## 2 Criteria for Registration

Trustees and educators work collaboratively and show a strong culture of care, actively promoting the well-being of children. Teachers know students and their families well. A low student to teacher ratio enables greater individual attention. Teachers make appropriate adjustments to planning to meet and extend children's learning based on their individual interests and strengths.

Suitable tuition and staffing is provided. Where any non-registered person is delivering a curriculum programme, the principal has attested that appropriate supervision is in place. Trustees ensure educators are provided with considerable and relevant professional learning and development. Leaders and teachers have continued to develop their knowledge and understanding of the school's curriculum. This work is strengthening a shared understanding of the school's philosophy and valued outcomes for learners. The appraisal policy and processes should be further developed and fully implemented to comply with Teaching Council expectations.

The school has a planned approach to extending buildings and landscaping the newly developed site. Purpose-built classrooms and large outdoor areas provide considerable opportunities for children to extend their learning and explore their natural environment. Children and the wider school community are actively engaged in decision-making and are taking practical steps to further enhance the grounds to better reflect the school philosophy.

The school's holistic curriculum is well aligned to its philosophy. Teachers actively assist children to develop as self-motivated and peaceful individuals who feel empowered to make a difference in the world. There is a strong focus on children's well-being, sense of self and global citizenship, with an emphasis on building character and emotional intelligence. The school community is supported to understand the school's valued outcomes for children.

Children's views and opinions are strongly valued. Personalised programs provide children with considerable choice about their learning. They are effectively taught how to reflect on their emotional well-being, progress and achievements and to set personal goals.

Children are well supported to understand their own learning and to share their knowledge and understanding with others. They have many opportunities for real-life learning experiences and to build positive relationships with others. This is assisting teachers and students to manage some challenging student behaviours. The school has identified, and ERO agrees that greater inclusion of a bicultural emphasis would further enhance curriculum provision.

Learning areas such as literacy and numeracy are woven into delivery of play-based and thematic programmes. Achievement information shows that children who have been at the school for some time achieve highly in these subjects. Children's learning is effectively communicated with parents.

ERO has identified a need for school trustees to ensure policies and procedures are reviewed in a systematic manner so they are assured documents and practices are up-to-date and meet all legislative requirements, including the Vulnerable Children’s Act and the child abuse policy.

### **3 Other Obligations**

The school’s managers have attested that they comply with the provisions of section 35G in respect to their being fit and proper persons to manage the school.

### **4 Conclusion**

On the basis of the information obtained during the review, ERO considers that Seven Oaks School meets the criteria for registration as a private school set out in the Education Act 1989.

Alan Wynyard  
Director Review and Improvement Services Southern  
Southern Region

## About the School

Location	Christchurch	
Ministry of Education profile number	610	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	43	
Gender composition	Girls: 25 Boys: 18	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā Māori Other ethnicities	32 5 6
Review team on site	February 2019	
Date of this report		
Most recent ERO report(s)	Private School Review Private School Review	January 2014 January 2010