

ERO External Evaluation

New Plymouth Girls' High School, New Plymouth

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for students. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

School Context

New Plymouth Girls' High School caters for 1239 girls in Years 9 to 13 from the wider Taranaki area. The roll includes 22% who are Māori and 4% who are of Pacific heritage.

The school's vision is to develop educated, confident young women of outstanding character. Desired learning outcomes are linked to: Hauora (high levels of wellbeing); Ako (developing a love of learning); and Tikanga (ensuring a sense of belonging). Core values identified by the school to support the vision and outcomes are: respect (whakamana); responsibility (haepapa); and relationships (whanaungatanga).

Student learning and wellbeing are supported through Waimarie, Awhina and Wai Ora Wellness centres and Scotlands Hostel.

Board targets focus on continuing to improve: Māori and Pacific achievement in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs); and the literacy and mathematics achievement in Years 9 and 10 for those below expectations.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement within the New Zealand Qualifications Framework
- achievement in relation to school targets for NCEA and leaver qualifications
- progress and achievement in reading and mathematics in Years 9 and 10
- student safety and wellbeing.

A new principal, previously the deputy principal, was appointed for 2017 and she leads an experienced senior leadership team.

The school is part of the Central New Plymouth Kāhui Ako.

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

A schoolwide focus on all girls achieving NCEA qualifications influences decision-making at all year levels. Since the October 2014 ERO evaluation, significant progress has been made towards students achieving equitable and excellent outcomes.

In Years 9 and 10, an appropriate range of data is collected to inform teaching priorities and to identify students requiring acceleration of their progress. Curriculum areas collect assessment information that shows most students, Māori and non-Māori, progress and achieve at least at expected levels.

At each of Levels 1 to 3, NCEA overall achievement has improved since the previous ERO evaluation. In 2017, it was above national and similar to comparable girls' schools. Merit and excellence endorsements are also gained at levels above national and similar to comparable schools. Some senior students are successful in gaining New Zealand Scholarship. Most of the small number of Pacific students successfully achieve at least NCEA Level 2 before they leave school.

In 2017, Māori students achieved at similar levels to non-Māori in NCEA Levels 1 to Level 3, and less than their peers in University Entrance (UE). There has been improvement in NCEA achievement for Māori students at each NCEA Level since 2014. Disparity with non-Māori has significantly reduced. Strategies have been strengthened to increase UE and NCEA endorsement achievement for Māori. These are areas where disparity remains.

1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

School leaver data indicates the school successfully accelerates learning for many students who may be at risk of not achieving expectations as they move through the year levels. In the past three years most students finished schooling having gained at least NCEA Level 2. In 2016, 90% of leavers achieved this level, above national and similar to comparable girls' schools. The percentage of Māori leavers gaining at least NCEA Level 2 is slightly less than their peers within the school.

In Years 9 and 10 reading and mathematics, less than half of the students who are below expectation make accelerated progress. At the end of Year 10, a gap remains in overall achievement for Māori and Pacific learners when compared to other students.

In Year 11, nearly all achieve NCEA Level 1. Improved NCEA outcomes have enabled more Māori and other students at Years 11 to 13 to extend the pathways available to them both within the senior school and once they leave.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

A range of school processes and practices support academic success for students to accelerate learning and gain NCEA.

Increased use of student voice is valued as part of review to determine future direction. Comprehensive collation and analysis of schoolwide achievement and other data contributes positively to internal evaluation and supports sustainability and improvement.

Improvement-focused leadership and well-informed board practices ensure a schoolwide focus on promoting wellbeing, equity and excellence. Recent strategic re-visioning included consultation with a range of stakeholders and is informing the strategic and annual planning. Senior and middle leaders foster a positive and collaborative culture.

A focus on developing respectful, positive relationships and fostering a sense of belonging effectively supports students to be successful learners. The core values of whakamana, haepapa and whanaungatanga are actively promoted. Programmes support students to develop self-management, resilience and confidence. A recent student survey of wellbeing identified positive relationships as a strength across the school.

Students with highly complex learning needs are well supported to achieve their individual goals. They access the curriculum at their own level within an inclusive environment. Teachers work closely with parents, contributing schools, agencies and post-school destinations to ensure smooth transition.

Well-established mentoring, tracking and monitoring systems enable students who may be at risk of underachieving to gain success. Staff respond to the needs of Year 9 and 10 students who are below expectation in literacy and mathematics and ensure appropriate pathways for senior students. Priority groups are identified and strategies put in place to support their progress. Useful profiles for students with additional learning needs identify individual needs, provide suggestions for teaching and are shared with class teachers.

Collaboration enhances student wellbeing, learning opportunities and achievement. Learning relationships with parents, whānau and the wider community support student success. Parents receive informative written reports from teachers and they are active participants in student goal setting. Liaison with contributing schools assists the collection of information to identify and plan for the needs of incoming learners. Transition processes support and promote learning as students enter and move through the school.

2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

A wide-ranging curriculum and purposeful teaching responds to student interests, needs and aspirations. Providing learning opportunities that reflect the breadth of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) is a focus in Years 9 and 10. Ensuring purposeful pathways and flexibility is given priority in senior programmes. These provide a sound platform for the comprehensive curriculum review that is underway, linked to the future-focused needs of students and recently developed school strategic priorities. The review should include further development of expectations for teaching practice that align to:

- NZC principles and effective pedagogy
- *The Standards for the Teaching Profession*
- cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners
- the context of the school.

A schoolwide commitment to supporting success for Māori and Pacific students is evident. The Tumanako student mentoring programme is a key strategy, linked to annual achievement targets. The programme includes regular mentoring discussions, building of learning relationships with whānau, close tracking of progress and celebrating success. Data indicates improved engagement, progress and achievement for students involved. Teachers are building their understanding of responsiveness to Māori students' culture, language and identity. This should continue to be a focus within curriculum, appraisal and professional learning, and extend to culturally-responsive practices for Pacific students.

Teachers, leaders and trustees should make additional use of progress data for students at risk of under achieving to strengthen evaluation of the impact of programmes on acceleration. This applies particularly in Years 9 and 10. Plans in place for trustees to receive regular reports on the progress of target students should support this focus.

An improvement-focused appraisal process aligns to Education Council requirements. It gives priority to improving outcomes for students at risk of not achieving successful outcomes. Senior and middle leaders should:

- ensure consistent implementation of the appraisal process for all teachers
- continue to build teacher and middle leader understanding of effective appraisal and their role within it
- extend the evaluative use of evidence within the appraisal process to better support identifying impact on improving student outcomes.

3 Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board 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 the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- finance
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student safety and wellbeing:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

A range of processes and practices effectively promote student welfare and safety. Student feedback indicates wellbeing is well supported.

To further support and sustain a safe physical and emotional environment, and for self review, the school should ensure a comprehensive anti-bullying policy and associated procedures are in place that include:

- defining bullying
- approaches to preventing bullying and managing bullying behaviour
- systems for monitoring and ascertaining the success of these strategies, programmes, and interventions.

Provision for students in the school hostel

Scotlands Hostel accommodates 99 students, 8% of the school roll. The hostel is owned and operated by the New Plymouth Girls' High School Board of Trustees. The hostel owner has attested that all the requirements of the hostel regulations are met.

Since the previous ERO evaluation, a new leadership team has been established. A manager and assistant manager are responsible for the day-to-day management. They are supported by staff who assist with supervision and tutoring.

Staff respond appropriately to students' learning needs and wellbeing. Relationships between students and with staff are positive and supportive. Students enjoy organised access to local facilities and in-hostel theme activities.

Transition into the hostel is well managed. Parents are provided with good information about hostel operation. Ongoing communication with parents and whānau has been strengthened.

To further support provision of a safe emotional and physical environment that supports students' learning, next steps are to:

- develop long term strategic and annual planning related to operation and sustainability of the hostel
- more regularly seek student and parent voice to contribute to review and development
- implement an appraisal process for staff
- strengthen reporting to the board to include more information related to the effectiveness of hostel practices on wellbeing and achievement.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

At the time of this evaluation, there were 28 international students attending the school, including two exchange students. Twelve of these students are boarders in Scotlands Hostel and the others are in homestay accommodation.

The school effectively monitors compliance with the Code to ensure all requirements are met. Review is ongoing throughout the year. Review is based on analysis of information about students' welfare, academic progress and social integration.

International students receive appropriate support to ensure their pastoral needs are met. Orientation is well considered. They take part in school activities alongside local students. International students share aspects of their own culture with others at school.

Individual goals are set and closely monitored. Students receive appropriate levels of support with the English language.

To assure themselves of the quality of provision for international students, trustees should receive regular reports based on the results of internal review, including student achievement outcomes.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- developing and sustaining positive relationships, programmes, practices and interventions that support students to be successful learners
- supporting and monitoring students at risk of under-achievement that enables most to gain success by the time they leave school
- improvement-focused leadership that ensures promotion of wellbeing, equity and excellence schoolwide.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are in:

- further developing teaching practice to ensure the future-focused needs of students are met
- greater use of analysis of target students' progress to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and teaching, particularly in Years 9 and 10
- continuing to strengthen implementation of the appraisal process to ensure identification of next steps for teachers to increase their impact on student outcomes.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Patricia Davey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central (Acting)
Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

2 May 2018

About the school

Location	New Plymouth										
Ministry of Education profile number	172										
School type	Secondary School (Years 9 to 13)										
School roll	1239										
Gender composition	Female 100%										
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pākehā</td> <td>66%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic groups</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </table>	Māori	22%	Pākehā	66%	Asian	6%	Pacific	4%	Other ethnic groups	2%
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Provision of Māori medium education	No										
Review team on site	February 2018										
Date of this report	2 May 2018										
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review, October 2014 Education Review, August 2010 Education Review, June 2007										