



ERO External Evaluation

Westlake Boys' High School, Takapuna, Auckland

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

Westlake Boys' High School, on Auckland's North Shore, caters for boys from Years 9 to 13. The roll of nearly 2400, includes eight percent Māori students and five percent with Pacific heritage. Asian students comprise 39 percent of the roll. The board has an enrolment scheme in place to manage the roll and match student numbers with the capacity of the school site.

The overarching vision is for the school to be characterised by its capacity to cultivate balanced learning for life, celebrate its communities, and demonstrate high performance. The school believes in developing individuals with dedication, honesty and respect; belonging to its communities by cherishing diversity, tradition and manners; and responding to the future through high expectations, challenge and innovation.

The board's strategic priorities are to improve the wellbeing of students and staff. Strategic action planning includes targets for increasing and maintaining high levels of student achievement in Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) and National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA). There are also strategic targets related to student engagement and character development. In addition, the school has specific targets for Māori and Pacific student achievement and success as Māori or Pacific, and for increasing bicultural understandings and environments, in the school's multicultural setting.

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

- achievement in NCEA and CIE qualifications
- Māori and Pacific student engagement and achievement
- student participation and success in wider school life, including cultural and sporting activities
- student engagement and wellbeing trends and patterns
- emerging barriers to students' learning and achievement, with proposed solutions.

The school has committed to moving from a dual pathway (CIE and NCEA) qualification system for senior students, to NCEA only by 2020. As part of an ongoing curriculum review, the school has initiated a 'character education' programme. Staff have participated in relevant and useful professional development and learning (PLD). Schoolwide PLD is aligned with school and curriculum priorities, including teaching as inquiry, bicultural understandings and character education.

Since 2014, two new associate principals and two assistant principals have been appointed. The number of teaching staff has increased, partly due to the board's additional resourcing of staffing to support teaching and learning.

The school is part of the Pupuke (Westlake) Community of Learning | 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?

Students are achieving excellent outcomes in all senior school qualifications. Longitudinal tracking shows that high levels of achievement have been sustained over time and that students' achievement is accelerated as they progress through school.

Students continue to achieve high levels of success in CIE, NCEA and in Scholarship examinations. Achievement information indicates almost all learners in the CIE pathway obtain the qualification. National Certificates of Achievement (NCEA) results show almost all students achieve NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3. These positive results have been sustained over the past three years, and there has been an increase in excellence endorsements across all NCEA levels.

Retention rates and success levels for Māori and Pacific students are very high. Most Māori students achieve very well in NCEA Levels 1 to 3 and University Entrance (UE). Most Pacific students achieve very well in NCEA Levels 1 to 3. The school continues to prioritise increasing the equity of outcomes for all students.

Achievement and pastoral information is used well to identify Year 9 entrants' learning needs and support their transition into the school. Leaders and teachers use data from the school's entrance test and midyear and end-of-year exams to gather information about Year 9 and 10 students' progress and achievement. This data shows that after two years almost all junior students reach the levels required to successfully access NCEA Level 1.

Students' level of participation and success in a wide range of sporting and cultural activities is very high and contributes to their development in the broad achievement areas valued by the school.

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

The school successfully supports students to achieve equitable outcomes. It is accelerating learning for those Māori, Pacific and other students who need this, so that they are increasingly successful in national qualifications.

While there is some disparity in achievement for Māori and Pacific students in Years 9 to 10, the school is using effective strategies to accelerate their learning. As a result, most make sufficient progress to achieve well in senior school qualifications.

Learning support for students with additional needs is very well coordinated. There is effective communication and sharing of knowledge between parents, specialists, classroom teachers and Deans of House. Students are actively involved in the identification and implementation of individualised strategies to support their learning. Students with additional learning needs make accelerated progress, achieve well in NCEA, and participate widely across all aspects of school life.

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?

Trustees, leaders and staff are committed to the provision of high quality education for all students.

The school is well governed by trustees who have experience, capability and specialist expertise that supports strong governance. They work strategically and collaboratively. Trustees are prepared to make, or support school leaders to make, decisions that are well aligned with the school's vision, values and strategic priorities.

The board and senior leaders form a strong partnership in stewarding the school. The board receives and robustly scrutinises good quality information provided by school leaders. Board strategic resourcing is well directed at improving student achievement and wellbeing.

School leaders ensure that learning takes place in a supportive and orderly environment that is conducive to student wellbeing, character building and academic excellence. They use a wide range of good quality evidence. This supports strategic decision making that is considered and purposeful, with managed risk, to drive change that improves outcomes for students.

Leaders identify and develop internal and external expertise to support school development and increase opportunities for students to experience success. This includes providing opportunities for middle leaders and teachers to build expertise in leadership and specific curriculum areas.

The school has high expectations for student achievement across the breadth and depth of *The New Zealand Curriculum* and senior school qualifications. Ongoing curriculum review and strategic changes to programmes, structures and teaching approaches, are helping to increase equity in students' learning experiences.

Curriculum development is responsive and forward thinking, and continually progresses initiatives that increase engagement, pathways and opportunities for students. Very good use is made of data and internal evaluation to inform curriculum developments that promote equity and excellence in outcomes for students.

Students are actively engaged in learning. They participate in caring and collaborative learning environments where positive and respectful relationships are evident. Comprehensive, well-coordinated pastoral care systems are focused on supporting students' learning and wellbeing.

Teachers have high expectations of students and encourage them as capable and competent learners. High quality teaching practices are evident across the school. Teachers are developing and refining assessment practices that effectively scaffold students' learning and develop their independent learning capabilities.

The school is continually building ways to engage effectively with diverse groups within the community. Highly engaged parents and whānau participate in discussions about learning and school activities. Māori whānau, staff and students are increasingly empowered as valued partners in learning and in the school's future direction. Parents and families of other cultures are actively engaged, with the support of staff who are their home language speakers.

Educational connections and collaboration with the wider educational community are mutually beneficial. Collaboration with the well-established Pupuke Kāhui Ako is impacting positively on outcomes for students. School leaders and teachers are contributors to local and national educational practice and policy forums.

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

As part of the continual building of parents' and whānau engagement and the strengthening of community partnerships, it would be useful for the school to continue extending the range of ways for stakeholders to have input into curriculum and structure reviews. This development could sit alongside developing ways to enhance student input into curriculum development and reviews of teaching and learning to further promote students' agency and ownership of their education.

School and curriculum review and development is guided by the inquiry and internal evaluation of trustees, leaders and staff. High quality examples of these practices clearly lead to effectively prioritising development steps. It would be useful to use this internal expertise to continue building schoolwide capability and capacity in inquiry and internal evaluation that focuses on improving outcomes for students.

3 Other Matters

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 review there were 192 international students attending the school.

International students are provided with high levels of pastoral care. They are supported effectively to achieve educational success. Students' progress and achievement is monitored well and their course selections are personalised. They are involved in a range of co-curricular opportunities, leadership roles, and participate in the wider life of the school. Very effective systems are in place to monitor compliance with the Code.

The school is continuing to respond positively to recommendations from an external evaluation carried out since the last ERO review. Further developments are intended in co-curricular opportunities, and as a result of schoolwide reviews in curriculum design.

4 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.

5 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Westlake Boys' High School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Strong

6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- stewardship, with experienced, capable governors and leaders working together in an effective partnership
- responsive, forward-thinking curriculum review and implementation of change
- effective teaching and learning practices
- connections with parents, whānau and the wider education community.

Next steps

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

- continuing to build schoolwide capability in inquiry, and internal evaluation that focuses on improving outcomes for students
- continuing to develop student agency in learning and partnerships with parents and whānau, through extending their contributions to curriculum evaluation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Tanner'.

Steve Tanner
Director Review and Improvement Services Northern
Northern Region
30 May 2019

About the school

Location	Takapuna, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	37
School type	Secondary (Year 9 – 13)
School roll	2375
Gender composition	Boys 100%
Ethnic composition	Māori 8% NZ European/Pākehā 45% Asian 39% Pacific 5% other ethnic groups 3%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	March 2019
Date of this report	30 May 2019
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review June 2014 Education Review May 2011 Education Review October 2007