

Hamilton Boys' High School
Hamilton

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Hamilton Boys' High School

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements.

Findings

1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Hamilton Boys High School is a large, urban secondary school for boys in Years 9 to 13. The roll has continued to increase since the last ERO review in 2009 and is now 2256. Nineteen percent of students are Māori, 11 percent are Asian and 5 percent are Pacific. There are 48 international fee paying students and 151 students in two hostel facilities. There is an enrolment scheme in place. Students come from a wide area, mostly from outside the school's catchment area.

Leadership of the school is unchanged since the last ERO review. There is a new board of trustees, including a new chairperson. Board members bring a range of appropriate experience and expertise to their roles. Significant property developments include the construction of a large, modern gymnasium, the refurbishment of a number of classrooms and extension of the hostel.

A notable feature of the school is the culture of care and high expectations for learning and success that are promoted and modelled by the headmaster and other school leaders. The school's vision, that aims to inspire values such as service, respect and commitment is visually represented in the school's crest and is evident in many aspects of the school's operation. Effective, high-quality and ongoing self review is strongly evident in the school.

The school has a very positive ERO reporting history. The last ERO report contained areas for review and development about the leadership of learning, the use of assessment information to improve achievement, and engagement with Māori parents and community. The school has responded positively to this report and each of these areas has been a focus for school improvement and staff professional development. Leadership of learning is now more focussed, there is more effective use of student achievement information, and there has been significant progress in promoting success at all levels for Māori students.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

The school is using achievement information very effectively to support student learning and engagement. This has been a major priority for school-wide development, is a current objective for teacher improvement, and is reflected in teachers' performance appraisals. The introduction of a new student management system is allowing for a more effective and efficient sharing of information among staff.

Achievement information is used very effectively to support the following practices:

- provision of information to teachers about students in their classes together with guidelines as to how this information should be used to inform teaching and learning
- twice yearly meetings of core subject teachers in Years 9 and 10 classes to share information about student achievement and progress
- the identification of students who require extension and those who need further support in their learning
- provision of tracking sheets which allow individual students to monitor their own progress in senior school assessments
- annual, evidence-based review and target setting by curriculum departments.

Academic dean positions have been established to assist in monitoring and supporting students who may be at risk of under achieving. Student achievement information, especially in Years 11 to 13, is regularly reported to the board and is used well to inform strategic planning and resourcing decisions.

Information about the achievement of Māori and Pacific students in Years 11 to 13 is used to determine annual achievement targets for these students that are reported at school-wide and subject department levels. The school is able to show that the achievement of Māori and Pacific students in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) has improved each year since the last ERO report. The progress of students with special learning needs is monitored and well supported by the Learning Support Department and through the work of teacher aides. The school recognises the need to continue to establish and monitor targets for priority learners from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Results of assessments carried out on school entry are used to place students in class in Year 9. Parents of students in Years 9 and 10 receive written reports twice yearly about their students' marks and grades in tests and examinations.

An important next step for the school to consider is the development of ways to more effectively monitor and report the progress of students in Years 9 and 10 in relation to national expectations. This should assist teachers to:

- use assessment information more effectively to identify and respond to the specific learning needs of students
- monitor and evaluate the accelerated progress of priority learners
- share assessment information with students and parents to encourage a partnership in identifying next learning steps.

Data from senior school qualifications indicates that students, including Māori and Pacific, are achieving very well in relation to national expectations and when compared to students in similar schools. Achievement levels have continued to improve over time. The school is proud of the increasing number of New Zealand Scholarships students have gained since 2011. Public Achievement Information (PAI) data shows that over the past four years the school has met the Ministry of Education target of 85% of students leaving school with a Level 2 NCEA qualification or equivalent. This data also shows that levels of retention and attendance are consistently high and rates of suspension and exclusion are very low.

3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

The school has a broadly based curriculum that effectively promotes and supports student learning.

The curriculum has a strongly academic focus with an increasing range of practical and applied knowledge courses. Students have access to a very wide range of options and learning pathways that are designed particularly for boys. Accelerated and differentiated programmes offer flexibility to meet individual student learning needs and interests. Students are well supported through a range of strategies to make appropriate decisions about their learning and career pathways.

A feature of the school is the high level of participation by students in an extensive range of co-curricular experiences. High-quality sports programmes have led to notable success in a variety of sporting codes at regional and national level.

In keeping with the vision and values of the school, leadership and service are promoted as integral aspects of the curriculum. A wide range of opportunities is provided for students to serve others, and develop leadership skills through positions such as prefects and house leaders as well as within tutor groups, sports teams, cultural groups and clubs. The school has recently increased the number of opportunities available for Māori and Pacific students to mentor and support other students.

As a result of professional development in the leadership of learning, the roles of heads of faculty and teachers with curriculum responsibility have been enhanced. Clearly documented guidelines for programme delivery have been established in each learning area. Recently developed best teaching-practice action plans provide useful expectations for classroom practice. There is clear alignment between the overall school strategic direction, department goals and priorities, professional learning and development and teacher appraisal.

Classrooms are characterised by respectful and affirming relationships amongst teachers and students and are settled, productive environments for learning. Teachers are positive and enthusiastic about their roles. They know their students well and actively support them in academic and co-curricular activities. ERO observed examples of effective teaching practice including the establishment of the purpose for learning, acknowledging prior learning, the use of strategies to engage boys, checking understanding and providing feedback.

ERO and the school agree that teachers should continue to deepen their understanding of, and work towards implementing, best practice in their respective curriculum areas. This could include the use of teaching strategies to further empower students to be more actively involved in their own learning.

School leaders recognise that there is a need to continue to develop information and communications technologies (ICT) to ensure they are readily accessible learning tools for all students. This should include the provision of resources as well as the development of staff capability.

The holistic wellbeing of students, promotion of positive relationships and provision of a safe, inclusive environment are important priorities for all staff. High expectations for the care of students are clearly articulated by the headmaster and are evident in the school's vision and values and in the commitment of staff. These expectations are reflected in the comprehensive, multi-layered pastoral care network that continues to be a strength of the school. This network provides both learning and pastoral support for students. A significant feature is the range of opportunities for older students to support and mentor younger students.

Ongoing self review to evaluate the effectiveness of pastoral care could be strengthened by considering alternative ways to obtain student voice.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

Improving the success and achievement of Māori students has been a priority for the school since the last ERO report. School leaders have been involved in the He Kākano professional learning project and demonstrate high levels of goodwill and commitment to fostering the engagement and success of Māori students across the school. Student surveys on a range of pastoral care matters and perspectives of the place of Māori within the school have been used to develop a set of targets to improve the place and status of Māori students. Department and individual teacher performance management documents now include goals related to Māori student engagement and success.

Key positions, including a dean for Māori students and a whānau liaison teacher, have been established. The two Māori tutor groups are focal points in helping to establish a sense of identity and belonging for Māori students.

Other important developments that promote the identity of Māori students include:

- a Māori and Pacific awards evening
- an evening for the parents of Year 8 Māori students to support their transition into the school
- the introduction of Māori performing arts into the curriculum in the senior school.

Parents spoken to by ERO indicated that opportunities for their boys to experience success as Māori, have improved.

ERO and the school agree that useful next steps that will further strengthen success for Māori are to continue:

- professional development for staff on implementing Māori preferred ways of teaching and learning and increasing their understanding of Māori perspectives
- to increase the amount of Māori content and context included in curriculum areas and the visibility of Māori cultural identity in the school.

How effectively does the school promote success for Pacific Students?

Since the last ERO review the school has made considerable progress in providing support for the learning, wellbeing and identities of Pacific students. The development of a Pacific Education Plan has led to the establishment of a Pacific tutor group, the appointment of a dean and tutor teacher for Pacific students, a Māori and Pacific awards evening, an induction evening for Year 8 Pacific parents and opportunities for involvement in Pacific performing arts.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

A key factor in the continued progress of the school is the highly effective leadership provided by the headmaster in articulating and promoting the vision, values and direction for the school. She is ably supported by an experienced and highly competent executive team, heads of faculty and a large number of other staff with curriculum and pastoral responsibilities.

The board of trustees governs the school in the best interests of students and staff. The policies, systems and procedures that guide their work are of high quality and ensure that school accountabilities are met. There are a number of effective systems for ongoing self review informed by evidence including information about student achievement and engagement.

Teachers consistently demonstrate good practice and effectively promote positive educational outcomes for students. All staff work very well together as a collegial team. They are proud of the school, and there is a strong sense of common purpose.

Students are actively engaged in their learning, and are achieving well. They enthusiastically participate and experience success in the extensive range of opportunities that are available to them. Students respond well to the culture of care, respect and high expectations.

The school benefits from high levels of community contribution and engagement. There are many opportunities for parents and the wider community to be involved in school activities, particularly sport. The school has a range of systems for communicating with parents in relation to their sons' wellbeing and learning.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code. ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international learners is thorough.

International students receive very good learning opportunities, enjoy participation in co-curricular activities, and are well supported by the school's high-quality pastoral care systems. At the time of this review there were 48 international fee-paying students attending the school. Their well-being, academic progress and achievements are closely monitored.

The Director of International students and ERO agreed that it would be useful for the board to receive information about the students' academic progress in the regular reports they receive. In addition, surveying students anonymously would give assurance that their pastoral and educational needs are being met.

Provision for students in the school hostel

The school hostels accommodate 151 students, which represents 7% of the school roll. It is owned by the Hamilton Boys High School Board of Trustees and operates 7 days a week. The hostel owner has attested that all the requirements of the Hostel Regulations are met. While there have been some changes, there has been a good level of continuity in staffing since the last ERO review. The hostels are being efficiently and effectively managed and have the support of the school community and parents. There are many hostel features which promote positive relationships and high levels of student welfare and safety. These include:

- well-documented and transparent policies and procedures for both students, and parents with clear definitions of expected behaviours, an emphasis on consideration and respect, and a non tolerance of negative behaviours
- detailed and effective communication processes between hostel and school staff, board of trustees, boarders and their families
- high levels of pastoral care and academic support for boarders
- quality nutritious meals for students
- excellent facilities for daily supervised preparatory periods
- access to school recreational facilities out of school hours such as the school pool, gym, library and grounds
- very positive relationships among the hostel director, hostel staff, families and school stakeholders
- opportunities for Year 12 and 13 boarders to undertake leadership and mentoring roles with younger hostel students.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees 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:

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

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

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.

Dale Bailey

Dale Bailey

National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

13 June 2014

About the School

Location	Hamilton	
Ministry of Education profile number	131	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)	
School roll	2256	
Number of international students	48	
Gender composition	Boys 100%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	61%
	Māori	19%
	Asian	11%
	Pacific	5%
	Other	4%
Special Features	School Hostel	
Review team on site	April 2014	
Date of this report	13 June 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2009
	Education Review	November 2006
	Education Review	September 2003