

**Wellington High School  
Wellington**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Wellington 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. The report answers four key questions about the school.

## Findings

### 1 Context

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

Wellington High School is a large co-educational secondary school situated in central Wellington. Students come from across the city at all stages of their education. Many enter at Year 10 or above. The school continues to promote inclusiveness and celebrates the diversity of its student population.

Since the October 2010 ERO report, there have been significant changes of key personnel. A new principal and two new deputy principals were appointed in 2012. Most trustees and the chairperson are relatively new to the board. Work focused on improving attendance has led to increased rates over the past two years.

Leaders and staff are involved in several Ministry of Education development programmes. These include the *He Kākano* and *Building on Success* initiatives to improve practices and outcomes for Māori learners. Restorative practices and youth resilience are supported further, using external expertise and resources. The school has recently joined a student mentoring programme to promote achievement and success for Pacific learners.

As an outcome of initiatives and reviews, a schoolwide beliefs and values framework called WERO (the Challenge) has been developed. The philosophy and its four key values of 'whānau, excellence, respect and ora' are used as guiding principles for the charter, strategic priorities, leadership, teaching, learning and relationships.

### 2 Learning

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

The school is continuing to develop its use of information to improve student engagement and achievement.

Teachers and leaders seek and use information to promote students' wellbeing and support their transitions into school at Year 9 and other year levels. Teachers and those in pastoral and mentoring roles meet regularly to discuss ways to respond to individual needs. They know students well.

Data from the National Certificates of Education Achievement (NCEA) is well analysed to measure achievement and performance against expectations and goals and report to trustees annually. The school should use roll-based information to report a sharper picture of student success.

Information is shared effectively with parents and students to support improved attendance, engagement and achievement. Needs are identified and students targeted for mentoring to improve progress and achievement, especially at Year 11.

Communications and partnerships between teachers, parents and students are enhanced through:

- learning conferences
- student goal-setting and self-assessment of learning skills
- access to assessment information online.

Overall, engagement and achievement are improving steadily across the senior school. An increasing proportion of students is retained to age 17. Since 2012, the percentage of school leavers gaining Level 2 in National Certificates of Education Achievement (NCEA) has improved and is similar to national rates.

NCEA performance is similar to the national rates at Level 1 but below the national and similar school reference groups for Levels 2 and 3. Pacific student achievement is similar to that for senior students overall. The achievement of Māori needs to be raised across the school, particularly for students who perform below year-level expectations.

In response to NCEA results, faculties have set goals, and some have set targets, to increase rates of endorsement with merit or excellence. Trustees and leaders have made continuing to improve Māori achievement a priority.

Years 9 and 10 student achievement is assessed in reading and mathematics using nationally referenced assessments. Better use should be made of assessment tools to:

- identify and plan for learning needs
- identify and target students whose progress needs to be accelerated
- monitor and respond to progress
- evaluate the effectiveness of specific programmes, interventions or teaching strategies.

The school caters for students with additional learning needs through a wide range of pathway options and programmes. Progress information collected should be systematically used to evaluate and report the impact of special programmes and determine where change is needed. Improved monitoring, reporting and evaluation of students' progress and achievement should be given high priority to support inclusive practices. A recent internal review of provision in this area resulted in recommendations to address the above.

Some teachers are beginning to inquire purposefully into priority learners' needs to help accelerate their progress. Faculties need to use wellbeing and achievement information, available for learners requiring support, to establish a consistent approach to improving outcomes.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum provides a broad range of opportunities for students to experience success. Leaders and teachers design programmes and vocational pathways to cater for students' interests, strengths and needs. Digital technologies are used widely to support teaching and learning across the school.

The *Tukutahi* programme at Years 9 and 10 promotes students' engagement and ownership of learning. This is enhanced through integrated inquiry-based studies across core subjects.

Relationships between students and with teachers are respectful and conducive to learning. Students appreciate being treated as individuals; that their views and ideas are valued and responded to.

Leaders have identified the need to strengthen curriculum review and development for improving responsiveness to student diversity. A next step is to develop an overarching curriculum statement with clear expectations for teaching, learning and achievement across all areas, levels and groups.

The school has refined how it supports wellbeing. This includes:

- extending Rōpū group time for teachers to mentor students
- enhancing provision for counselling and pastoral services
- using restorative practices to strengthen relationships and behaviours for learning
- managing transition programmes and in-class support effectively, especially at Year 9 level.

The approach to building capability to achieve school goals is well planned. Teachers' professional learning and development is aligned with annual priorities. Curriculum leaders and teachers are supported to inquire into and improve their programmes and practice.

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

Leaders and trustees work effectively with mana whenua and Te Whānau a Taraika to celebrate students' culture, language and identity and promote educational success for Māori as Māori. Partnership with Te Whānau a Taraika has been formalised in an agreed terms of reference and the way forward planned.

Programmes in performing arts, te reo Māori, cultural activities and school events provide increased opportunities for students to celebrate te ao Māori. The Whakanuia end-of-year ceremony supports whānau involvement.

Students spoken with indicate they and their peers are known and respected as Māori. They value and appreciate the commitment and support of the wider school community. ERO affirms the school's initiatives to develop expectations and strategies for culturally responsive teaching practices for Māori learners.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school has the capacity to sustain and improve its performance. Trustees bring a wide range of relevant experiences and expertise to their roles. Senior leaders have complementary skills, are future-focused and drive improvement. They are thoughtful in their use of external support for initiatives to improve learners' outcomes.

Board planning identifies goals, strategies and actions for improvement. Areas where further development is needed to enhance the quality of information to be used in planning include:

- setting specific targets in relation to priorities for student progress and achievement, particularly for Years 9 and 10 and in response to the analysis of roll-based NCEA information
- monitoring progress toward expected outcomes and evaluating effectiveness using well defined measures of success
- continuing to build the capacity of curriculum leaders to engage in evidence-based reflection
- enriching guidelines and expectations for teacher performance management and appraisal, through using competencies documented in *Tātaiako; Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners*, and explicit links between appraisal goals and student progress and achievement targets.

### 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.

At the time of this review there were 57 international students attending the school, including three exchange students.

ERO's investigations confirm the school has appropriate processes for provision and monitoring of these students' education, English language learning, community experiences, wellbeing and care.

Leaders should improve self-review processes to provide the board with better information about the quality and effectiveness of provision for these 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.

During the review ERO found that the school had not consulted with the community regarding its health curriculum within the past two years.

The board of trustees must:

- at least once every two years and after consultation with the school community, adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum.  
*[s60B Education Act 1989]*

## Conclusion

Student diversity is celebrated and catered for through a wide range of vocational options and learning programmes. The values of whānau, excellence, respect and ora are upheld. Wellbeing is deliberately fostered and supported within an inclusive culture. The focus of planning for improvement needs more definition so that progress toward and achievement of goals can be more effectively monitored and evaluated.

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



Joyce Gebbie  
National Manager Review Services  
Central Region

5 November 2014

## About the School

Location	Wellington	
Ministry of Education profile number	273	
School type	Co-educational Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	978	
Number of international students	57	
Gender composition	Male 54%, Female 46%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	16%
	NZ European/Pākehā	71%
	Pacific	3%
	Asian	7%
	Other ethnic groups	3%
Review team on site	September 2014	
Date of this report	5 November 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	October 2010
	Education Review	April 2007
	Education Review	May 2003