

Confirmed
Education Review
Report
Wellington High School
October 2010

Location: Wellington

Ministry of Education profile number: 273



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Confirmed Education Review Report: Wellington High School

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Wellington High School is coeducational secondary school located in Wellington. It makes good use of its central city location to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is responsive to the aspirations and needs of its parent and student community. The curriculum is designed to promote the academic, social and emotional development of students. The school takes pride in its strong kaupapa of embracing inclusiveness and diversity, and celebrating difference.

Students benefit from a wide range of effective, stimulating and creative learning experiences. Information and communication technologies (ICT) are an integral part of learning in a variety of innovative ways across the curriculum. A school wide focus on managing self, challenges students to become self directed learners and independent thinkers. Successful behaviour management practices result in orderly learning environments with a focus on learning rather than behaviour. Relationships are respectful, positive and supportive. Students observed by ERO were highly engaged in learning.

A well coordinated pastoral care and guidance network effectively monitors student wellbeing. Students' academic and pastoral needs are addressed in their small roopu groups. They are closely monitored and individually mentored with a particular focus on support for Māori students. Learning Services staff work closely with colleagues to provide positive outcomes for students with particular learning needs. Students learn in a supportive environment where all reasonable steps are taken for their safety.

The board, staff, parents and students value a broad range of attainment. Over the past three years students have achieved high levels of participation and success in external sporting, cultural and academic activities in competition with other schools. Students achieve at levels comparable to their peers nationally in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs) but below those of schools within a similar decile band. NCEA achievement shows an ongoing improvement over the past three years. ERO, the principal and the board of trustees agree that the next priorities for school review and development are continuing to improve student achievement by developing a better understanding amongst parents and students of the link between attendance and academic attainment, and by further raising expectations for success in the NCEAs.

The principal is a reflective leader. She encourages innovation, and has an effective partnership with the board of trustees. The principal and senior leadership team provide a clear, student-focused vision and direction for the school, which is shared by the board. Trustees demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and provide considered governance. The board and senior leaders

implement a comprehensive and robust programme of self review. They are well informed about student outcomes and the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Future Action

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

2 Wellington High School's Curriculum

How effectively does the curriculum of Wellington High School promote student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?

School context and achievement

The school tikanga promotes an inclusive environment that values different cultures and respects the uniqueness of individual students. The broad and balanced curriculum is designed to provide for the academic, social and emotional development of students.

Since the April 2007 ERO report, two new deputy principals have been appointed. Other developments include the implementation of the Tukutahi classes at Years 9 and 10 and the introduction of netbooks as a learning tool for most students in Year 9. Numbers in roopu groups have been reduced to enable a focus on individual academic and pastoral mentoring.

The school has a changing profile, with 40% of the students new to the school in any given year. Many students enrol in Years 11, 12 and 13. Year level numbers increase between Years 9 and 13. A significant number of students previously dis-engaged from education enrol at this school. Only 50% of students by Year 12 started at the school in Year 9. This presents some difficulties for analysing progress over time and determining what value the school adds to student achievement.

The board, staff, parents and students value a broad range of attainment. Over the past three years students have achieved high levels of participation and success in external sporting, cultural and academic activities in competition with other schools.

At Years 9 and 10 academic student achievement is measured against national benchmarks, using a wide range of assessment tools including Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) in reading comprehension, vocabulary and mathematics, Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle) writing and the Canterbury University tool for measuring value added, MidYis. Data is collated and analysed, including data for Māori students. This information indicates that students at these year levels, including Māori students, achieve at or above national norms in reading comprehension and mathematics and make good progress over their time in the junior school.

Students continue to achieve at levels comparable to their peers nationally in the NCEAs but below those of schools within a similar decile band. Achievement at Levels 1, 2 and 3 shows an ongoing improvement over the past three years, as does the percentage of students who leave school with a Year 12 qualification or better. This pattern of improvement is also reflected in the literacy and numeracy credits attained.

Māori students show a pattern of ongoing improvement at Level 1 and achieve at levels above their peers nationally. Achievement at Levels 2 and 3 is more variable, but generally above their Māori peers. The number of Māori students achieving university entrance is significantly above that for Māori students nationally. As a group they do not achieve as well as other students at this school.

The number of Pacific students attending the school is increasing. As yet the collation and analysis of achievement information for these students is limited.

Areas of strength

- School culture
The school fosters respectful relationships in an inclusive culture. Staff model the school's tikanga and students' opinions and ideas are listened to. Students feel that diversity is welcomed and individuality valued. They are free to develop their strengths in all areas of the curriculum.
- Teaching and Learning
Students benefit from a wide range of effective, stimulating and creative learning both within and outside the classroom. Teachers use assessment information judiciously and respond to individual needs with opportunities for self-paced learning. In a growing number of classrooms students participate in the design of lessons and units of work. Learning contexts are relevant to their interests and experiences. ICT is an integral part of learning in a variety of innovative applications, including storage of student work in both written and video formats. Parents and whānau monitor their children's programmes and progress via individual digital learning sites.

The key competencies of the *New Zealand Curriculum* are consciously developed by a 'split screen' approach to planning and are well integrated into teaching and learning programmes. A school wide focus on managing self challenges students to become self directed learners. Cooperative, interactive class activities such as well structured and scaffolded group activities, discussions, research and problem solving, reinforce independent thinking.

Successful behaviour management practices result in orderly learning environments with a focus on learning not behaviour. Relationships are respectful, positive and supportive. Students observed by ERO were highly engaged in learning.

- Tukutahi
An innovative class structure in the junior school provides opportunity for teachers to work together to provide students with an integrated curriculum. Flexible timetabling enables team planning and teaching, maximising opportunities to support individual students' learning. Teachers integrate English, science, social studies and mathematics with a guided inquiry approach for a termly major study. Acquiring credits for the internal Junior Certificate in Learning supports a focus on the key competencies. All students regularly use netbooks as a teaching and learning tool. They benefit from an environment where their learning needs are well understood.

- **Learning support**
Learning Services staff work closely with colleagues to cater for students' diverse learning needs. Students with high needs are in a well managed unit and mainstreamed, as often as possible, with support. Literacy development strategies are based on collated and analysed, high quality achievement data that is used to identify strengths, weaknesses and next learning steps. Information is shared with teachers enabling them to effectively promote students' literacy development. A guided writing programme addresses students' learning needs identified by assessment. Support through additional staffing is provided in Tukutahi classes. In-class programmes include a special focus on culturally appropriate support for Māori learners. Gifted and talented students enjoy a stimulating programme that extends and broadens their learning. Individual learning needs of students are well identified and addressed.
- **Roopu**
Roopu teachers effectively support students' academic and pastoral needs at all levels of the school. Participation by all staff, including the principal and other senior managers, in the small roopu groups provides a high adult/student ratio. This enables students to be closely monitored and individually mentored with a particular focus on support for Māori students. Roopu teachers supervise the weekly reflection of individual students, on progress and learning, particularly in relation to their development of key competencies. This progress is recorded on digital learning logs. Junior students share these digital records with parents and whānau at student-led conferences.
- **Pastoral care**
A well-coordinated pastoral care and guidance network effectively monitors student wellbeing. Deans follow their year groups through from Years 9 to 13 and they know students well. Their weekly student-focused meetings include senior leaders, guidance counsellors and Learning Services staff. Students at risk of not achieving are identified and an appropriate key worker is assigned to address their specific needs. Māori students' progress as a target group is reviewed and tracked in order to promote their success and achievement. Students learn in a supportive environment where all reasonable steps are taken for their safety.
- **Provision for students at risk**
A wide range of robust processes assists staff to effectively target disengaged students. Roopu teachers are vigilant and responsive to students whose behaviour and learning are of concern. Appropriate actions are taken to support these students, and interventions are well monitored by staff. The team of specialist staff has a positive approach to solving problems, and this is underpinned by the school's inclusive philosophy.
- **Leadership**
The principal and senior leaders provide a clear, student-focused vision and strategic direction for the school. The principal has an open and reflective leadership style. She encourages innovation and has an effective partnership with the board. The senior management team is cohesive, flexible, approachable and responsive. School leadership supports teachers to develop professionally and students to learn.

- **Library**
The library is a well-resourced and dynamic learning hub for the school. A team of enthusiastic and innovative library specialists collaborates with teachers to provide an inviting environment for learning and recreation. Students are encouraged and helped to pursue their reading, guided inquiry and co-curricular interests.
- **Self review**
The board and senior leaders have a comprehensive and robust programme of self review that identifies appropriate priorities for improvement, monitors progress and evaluates effectiveness. Review processes and timelines are embedded at all levels of the school, and include student and parent surveys. Student achievement data informs ongoing curriculum review. Reflection is expected of staff and students. Evidence-based self review enables sound decision-making for changes to bring about improvement.

Areas for development and review

ERO, the principal and the board of trustees agree that the next stages for school review and development should focus on:

- promoting success for Pacific students through building on the effective strategies already provided to enhance Māori student achievement; and
- continuing to improve student achievement by developing a better understanding amongst parents and students of the link between attendance and academic attainment, and by further raising expectations for NCEA success.

3 Provision for International Students

At the time of this review 84 International students from 14 different countries were enrolled at Wellington High School. The principal and a team of four oversee high quality pastoral care and personalised education programmes, which include English as a Second Language (ESL) if required. Student wellbeing is monitored through regular homestay contact and personal interviews and attendance is closely scrutinised.

On arrival, students are teamed with a New Zealand 'buddy' as part of orientation. New students are encouraged to join in sports and cultural groups so that they quickly develop both friendships and fluency in English. After assessment, useful student information on background, length of stay and current ability in English is provided for teachers. Students appreciate the wide ranging choices offered by the school curriculum. Staff responsible for international students endeavour to accommodate individual interests.

Compliance with the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* and the Provision of English Language Support

Wellington High 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 meets the requirements of the Code.

4 Board Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Wellington High School completed an ERO *Board Assurance Statement* and *Self-Audit Checklist*. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal obligations related to:

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

During the review, ERO looked at the school's documentation, including policies, procedures and records. ERO sampled recent use of procedures and ERO also checked elements of the following five areas that have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

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

5 Future Action

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



Kathleen Atkins
National Manager Review Services
Central Region

27 October 2010

About The School

School type	Co-educational State Secondary School (Years 9 – 13)	
Decile ¹	9	
School roll	1051	
Gender composition	Male 593, Female 458	
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā, 59%, Māori 16%, Asian 8%, Other Europeans 7%, Pacific 4%, Other ethnicities 6%.	
Special features	Community Education	
Review team on site	August 2010	
Date of this report	27 October 2010	
Previous three ERO reports	Education Review	April 2007
	Education Review	May 2003
	Accountability Review	August 1998

¹ School deciles range from one to ten. Decile one schools draw their students from low socio-economic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides.