

## ERO External Evaluation

### Whanganui Girls' College, Whanganui

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 those students who need it. 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

Whanganui Girls' College is a secondary school in Whanganui. At the time of the ERO review there are 368 students and 30% identify as Māori. Thirty eight students board in the nearby Ad Astra hostel. Roll growth is evident since 2016.

ASTRA values of 'Achieve, Safe, Tipuranga, Respect and Awhi' underpin the schools motto and vision and are embedded in all aspects of school life. The school celebrates and rewards students who meet these expectations on a weekly basis.

Current strategic priorities related to student achievement and outcomes include: achievement for all; and individual learning potential being recognised and valued. Charter goals for 2018 relate to: improving student engagement and relationships; improving student achievement; and enhancing student and staff wellbeing.

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

- achievement in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA), University Entrance (UE) and Scholarship examinations
- end-of-year achievement and progress against expected levels in all curriculum areas
- reading and mathematics achievement at Years 9 and 10
- progress and achievement in junior science thinking skills
- attendance, engagement and wellbeing.

Since the May 2015 ERO report, a new board chair and some new trustees have been elected, with a new assistant principal and four new heads of department appointed.

Staff have been involved in several schoolwide professional learning and development (PLD) programmes since the previous report. These include: culturally responsive practices, Te Kākahu and He Kahukura; positive behaviour for learning (PB4L); learning with digital technologies; restorative practices; and appraisal processes.

## **Evaluation Findings**

### **1 Equity and excellence – valued outcomes for students**

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

The school has made good progress in improving levels of equity and excellence in outcomes for some groups of learners, particularly at senior levels.

Achievement rates have fluctuated since the previous ERO report. Recent improvements however, have led to nearly all students gaining NCEA Level 1 and most gaining Level 2 and Level 3 in 2017.

Nearly all Māori students gained NCEA Level 1 and Level 2 and achieved at similar levels or above their peers in 2017. However disparity occurs at Level 3 and for UE for Māori learners. Small numbers of Pacific students achieve well with all achieving success at Levels 1 to 3 in 2017.

Rates of endorsements have increased significantly at Level 2 in 2017. Continuing to increase endorsement rates, particularly at NCEA Levels 1 and 3, and the number of Māori school leavers with Level 2, remains an ongoing priority.

#### **1.2 How effectively does this school respond to those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration?**

The school has made good progress in its response to some groups of learners whose learning needs acceleration. There has been a considerable increase in rates of achievement of Māori and other learners, especially at Levels 1 and 2 NCEA since 2016.

Leaders identify target groups whose learning needs improving at all levels using a variety of indicators. The school has data to monitor achievement and progress of individuals, but is yet to have a clear picture of rates of acceleration for Māori and others who need it at Years 9 and 10.

## **2 School conditions for equity and excellence**

#### **2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?**

Students participate and learn in a collaborative and inclusive learning community where respect and empathy are highly evident. Pastoral care, student wellbeing, mentoring, restorative practices and the ASTRA programme continue to support students to be successful and promote positive relationships and behaviours.

A coherent schoolwide approach to regularly monitoring and sharing information about the learning and progress of individual students promotes engagement and participation. An academic dean and recently appointed literacy specialist support the building of assessment capability across the school.

Improved and flexible curriculum provision, together with increased opportunities and learning programmes, enable most students to be successful. Modular programmes and new courses in the senior school increase choice and improve retention of students in learning. Strengthening of vocational pathways, transition and life skills programmes prepare students for independence, self-management and ongoing success beyond school. The use of external specialists support career and pathways planning especially in senior levels.

Learners with additional learning needs are identified and their progress is monitored and reported on an individual basis. Some of these students gain qualifications.

A schoolwide focus on building the capability and responsiveness of teachers to increasingly diverse student needs effectively promotes professional growth and learning. Through development of the *Effective Teacher Profile* as part of the Te Kākahu initiative and a range of PLD programmes, teachers share schoolwide expectations for effective teaching practices and the importance of relational practices.

The school has continued to strengthen learning partnerships through a wide range of strategies and experiences. An increased focus on extending relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi promotes Māori students' language, culture and identity. Student voice is increasingly and widely used to inform decisions and improvements. Students participate in a range of community-based activities, leadership positions and opportunities that extend their learning.

## **2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence?**

Leaders and teachers should strengthen strategic planning and alignment of systems and processes to focus on equity and excellence in student outcomes, especially for Māori learners.

Continuing to strengthen the well-designed appraisal framework should further support and reinforce individuals to meet their professional needs and aspirations. This includes extending schoolwide understanding and consistency in implementation of appraisal components and summary statements, including explicit links to outcomes for learners.

Continuing to develop the use of inquiry and evaluation to measure the impact of programmes and strategies for ongoing improvement in outcomes for students is a next step. ERO's evaluation affirms recent initiatives for deeper analysis and use of achievement information at Years 9 and 10, to better understand the achievement and progress of groups of learners.

## **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.

### **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, 15 international students attend the school, including four exchange students.

Robust systems and processes appropriately guide provision for international students. Programmes of learning are appropriately designed to meet the aspirations of individuals and their families. Achievement is regularly monitored and reported. Students receive good quality pastoral care with a clear focus on promoting their wellbeing and positive inclusion. The school makes positive changes in response to its self-review findings to further strengthen the provision for International students.

### **Provision for students in the school hostel**

The school hostel, Ad Astra Hostel, presently accommodates 38 students, 10 % of the school roll. It is owned and licensed by the Ministry of Education, governed by the Whanganui Girls' College Board of Trustees and managed by private contractors. The hostel managers have attested that the requirements of the Hostel Regulations are met.

Hostel managers and staff provide a caring, nurturing and homelike environment. A well-planned programme responds to students' interests and supports their transitions into the hostel. Pastoral care is well coordinated between the hostel and the school, with student wellbeing a key priority. A range of effective strategies supports ongoing communication between students, families, and hostel staff. Leadership opportunities for senior students are provided and supported.

ERO recommends that the board of trustees establish processes to receive regular in-depth reports from the hostel about its processes and operation to monitor student wellbeing, health and safety.

## **4 Going forward**

### **Key strengths of the school**

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

- learning partnerships across the school and community that promote engagement and inclusion
- academic and pastoral care systems that respond to the individual student, their learning and wellbeing needs and recognition of success
- the range of learning pathways and learning programmes that are responsive to the needs of diverse groups of students.

### **Next steps**

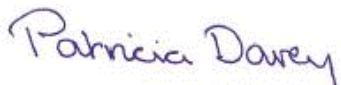
For sustained improvement and future learner success, development priorities are in:

- use of achievement information at Years 9 and 10 to better understand and respond to the learning needs for acceleration of groups of these learners
- strengthening of teacher inquiry and the appraisal processes to support teacher growth
- a shared understanding and use of internal evaluation processes and practices.

ERO will provide an internal evaluation workshop for trustees and senior leaders.

### **ERO's next external evaluation process and timing**

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



Patricia Davey  
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Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

13 June 2018

## About the school

Location	Whanganui		
Ministry of Education profile number	188		
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)		
School roll	368		
International Students	15		
Gender composition	Female 100%		
Ethnic composition	Māori	30%	
	Pākehā	60%	
	Pacific	3%	
	Asian	3%	
	Other ethnic groups	4%	
Review team on site	March 2018		
Date of this report	13 June 2018		
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	May 2015	
	Education Review	December 2011	
	Education Review	June 2007	