



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**St Bernard's College
Lower Hutt**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

St Bernard's College

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?

St Bernard's College is a state integrated Year 7 to 15 Catholic school attended by boys, mainly from Lower Hutt and Wainuiomata. At the time of this ERO review there were 639 students from a range of cultural backgrounds. Twenty-two percent of students identify as Māori and fifteen percent as Pacific. The Archbishop of the Diocese of Wellington is the proprietor.

The Catholic character and spirit of the Marist Brothers are integral parts of college life. The college's Marist Way links to the values of manaakitanga, social justice and integrity, and focuses on:

- student centred teaching and learning
- celebration of diversity
- supporting student growth to full potential in spiritual, academic, creative, physical and social development.

In 2016, significant changes link to teaching and learning. Current reviews are likely to result in further change. This has in part resulted from the appointment of a new principal, staff changes and a mostly new board since the middle of the year.

The college has a history of positive ERO reports and successful academic outcomes for most students.

2 Learning

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

In the senior school, achievement information is used effectively to make positive changes to learning. In Years 7 to 10, increased use of assessment information is assisting teachers and leaders to further improve engagement and progress.

The college's end of 2015 National Standards achievement information shows that three-quarters of Year 7 and 8 students were at or above expectation in reading, with just over 60% in writing and mathematics. Māori achievement overall was similar or better than that of the total student group.

The school has identified the need to more effectively accelerate the progress of some students, particularly in Year 8. Improving achievement of Pacific students and in writing overall is also a focus. Data for 2016 indicates significant progress for most of the students targeted in writing.

Processes supporting the dependability of National Standards achievement judgements have been strengthened. A range of appropriate assessment tools, classroom observations and well-considered moderation practices inform decision making. Continuing to build links with other schools should further support assessment.

In Years 9 and 10, achievement across all learning areas is indicated through reference to the curriculum levels students reach. To improve the quality of student outcomes, there should be increased use of data in Years 9 and 10. This should assist the college to monitor progress and determine the effectiveness of programmes and interventions. The board should also consider whether setting targets in Years 9 and/or 10 would increase the schoolwide focus on progress for those students whose learning needs to be accelerated in literacy and mathematics.

Students remain at school until Year 13 above the national rate. There are high expectations for senior students' academic success. In 2015, 88% of leavers gained at least National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2. This is above the national figure. Pacific, Māori and Pākehā leavers achieve NCEA Level 2 qualifications at similar levels. NCEA Level 3 results have improved since 2013.

Virtually all students gain the NCEA Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements. Higher proportions of students gain NCEA Level 1 and 2 than in similar schools. The percentage of students gaining NCEA Level 2 has significantly improved since 2013. NCEA targets and associated actions in 2016 appropriately seek to increase the number of merit and excellence certificate endorsements and improve results for Pacific students.

Tracking of students' progress towards NCEA Levels 1 to 3 is a strength. There is increased monitoring of those at risk of underachievement in Years 7 to 10. Schoolwide responses to tracking are supporting improved engagement and academic success. Recent strengthening of targeted support is improving outcomes for Māori and Pacific students. Current review is likely to result in more effective ongoing support in 2017 at all year levels, for each student to achieve his goals.

3 Curriculum

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

Senior academic outcomes indicate that the curriculum effectively supports learning for most students.

Since the previous ERO review, curriculum developments have included providing a more diverse choice of subjects, specific strategies to ensure success in literacy and numeracy in Year 11, and building the use of community and tertiary education links. Changes such as longer learning blocks and a commitment to mixed ability classes are also significant.

Teachers know students well and interactions are respectful. Students know the purpose of their learning. Expectations for achievement are regularly shared. The extent to which students are able to make choices about their classroom learning is variable. Teachers should be supported to build the extent to which students can influence the direction of their own learning.

Student feedback is increasingly sought as part of curriculum decision-making. Some use of Vocational Pathways informs choices students make about their learning. Teachers and leaders should extend use of this information to support students' decision making about future education and careers.

The college recognises the need for ongoing development of the curriculum and teaching practice to better support positive engagement, progress and achievement for all students. ERO agrees.

Well-resourced support is in place for learners with additional needs. Wellbeing, literacy and numeracy progress are prioritised. Careful identification of specific needs, close monitoring of progress and a flexible approach assists these students towards successful outcomes.

Pastoral systems and practice are highly responsive to students' needs. A range of wellbeing data informs decision making. Considerable emphasis is placed on providing social, emotional and targeted support for students who need assistance to better participate in their learning. A solution-focused approach successfully encourages student engagement, retention and success.

The college and its community are engaged in reciprocal, learning-centred relationships. Home-school partnership meetings allow parent voice to influence decision making. Transitions are well-considered and effectively supported. As a result of review in 2016, reporting to parents is likely to be significantly modified to improve the extent to which it engages parents in their sons' learning and achievement.

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

College leaders, trustees and whānau Māori effectively promote success for Māori students as Māori.

The college's achievement plan for Māori students provides a strong basis for strategic planning and ongoing development of a culturally responsive curriculum. Students attaining NCEA credits in Māori Performing Arts and through demonstrating their knowledge of tākarō Māori and mau rākau allows students to enjoy learning success in activities of high interest to them. Developing strategies to increase the number of students in full year te reo Māori courses should promote further success.

The above, together with existing good practice, contribute positively to Māori learners' academic progress and to celebrating their culture, language and identities. The Māori whānau rōpū are strong advocates for Māori and aspire to ensure the students regard the college as their tūrangawaewae.

Reciprocal and responsive relationships (whakawhanaungatanga) are integral to college culture. Māori students' holistic development is nurtured.

Māori, and all, learners have opportunities to participate in activities that reflect te ao Māori. At times learning takes place in authentic Māori contexts such as marae, pōwhiri, Ngā Manu Kōrero, Te Rōpū Kapa Haka and Catholic observances. This enables Māori learners to practise, demonstrate and celebrate their unique attributes and skills and provide Māori leadership within the college and wider community.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Pacific students?

The college is well placed to promote educational success for Pacific learners.

Curriculum leaders share strategies to better support Pacific learners. Samoan language and Pacific studies classes are part of the senior curriculum.

Strengthened support structures promote educational success for Pacific students. Specific staff coordinate the tracking and monitoring of students. Targets for Pacific students are individualised and support has been put in place to achieve them. Targets are regularly reviewed, and are contributing to better outcomes for Pacific students.

Staff and trustees engage purposefully with parents and aiga. Cultural events support and engage Pacific students and families. These include Polyfest, Tu Tangata and a recent trip to Samoa, in which students, parents and staff participate.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Well-considered processes and practices and a focus on internal evaluation for improvement enable the college to be well placed to sustain and enhance its performance.

The board actively represents and serves the college in its stewardship role. Trustees have range of skills and training is increasing their understanding of their responsibilities. A more focussed strategic vision and plan has been collaboratively developed. Targets in 2016 focus on priority areas and the principal reports progress to the board.

National Standards and NCEA achievement information is shared with the board. Leaders should ensure trustees regularly receive achievement information across all year levels, particularly in relation to targeted students. This should give the board more in-depth knowledge of the effectiveness of the support for lower-achieving students.

Leaders collaboratively develop and pursue the school's vision and goals for equity and excellence. They ensure an orderly and supportive environment conducive to student learning and wellbeing.

Useful guidelines support annual curriculum area review in Years 7 to 13. The quality of review is variable. Some evaluative reflection contributes to identifying next steps. There should be a greater focus on the extent of progress in Years 7 to 10 for individual students, particularly in literacy. Some reports include consideration of the impact of teaching and what is necessary to improve this. The principal is building collective capacity to carry out evaluation and inquiry for sustained improvement.

A deliberate and planned approach to whole school curriculum review is aligned with the college's strategic direction. Critical inquiry into practice, knowledge building and collaborative sense-making are fostered. This results in actions linked to improving student outcomes and achieving equity and excellence.

Teacher learning and development are valued and actively promoted. A strategic and coherent approach is building professional capability. Collaborative inquiry and challenging professional learning opportunities align with the school vision, values and goals. Access to relevant expertise supports ongoing improvement and innovation.

Appraisal of teachers is comprehensive, effectively implemented and improvement focused. Specific and appropriate self-reflection and feedback contribute to identifying next steps to improve student outcomes. Leaders should continue to work with teachers and appraisers to ensure that implementation of the process is consistently contributing to improvement.

Evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building are promoted. This includes positive engagement with external evaluation and the wider education community. To further build its effectiveness in improving outcomes for learners, the college should continue to extend collective capacity to do and use evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building.

Provision for international students

The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (the Code) was introduced on July 1st 2016. The school is aware of the need to update its policies and procedures to meet the new code requirements.

At the time of this review there was one international student attending the school.

The school is making good progress in aligning its policies and procedures to meet requirements for the 2016 Code.

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.

Conclusion

The Catholic character is integral to all aspects of college life. Students overall succeed well in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement. Support is emphasised for students who need assistance to improve their learning. Ongoing development of the curriculum and teaching practice to better support positive engagement and progress are appropriate priorities.

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



Joyce Gebbie
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

6 December 2016

About the School

Location	Lower Hutt	
Ministry of Education profile number	260	
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 15)	
School roll	639	
Number of international students	1	
Gender composition	Male 100%	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā	44%
	Māori	22%
	Pacific	15%
	Asian	14%
	Other ethnic groups	5%
Review team on site	October 2016	
Date of this report	6 December 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	January 2014
	Education Review	November 2010
	Education Review	October 2006