

ERO External Evaluation

Waitaki Girls' High School, Oamaru

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 students. 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

Waitaki Girls' High School is a state secondary girls' school for students in Years 9 to 13. The school has a roll of 402 students. Students have diverse ethnic backgrounds, with 12% identifying as Māori and 9% identifying with Pacific ethnicities. A small number of international students attend the school. Around 10% of students are accommodated in the school's adjacent boarding hostel, Waitaki House.

The school's vision is to provide an all-round education that equips and nurtures young women to achieve their potential, have the skills and abilities they need for their futures, and contribute to their communities. The school's values are respect, responsibility and resilience, with a particular focus on promoting these values in relation to diversity and environmental sustainability.

To enact the vision, trustees and leaders have identified the following strategic goals:

- use of digital technology to enhance teaching and learning
- use of effective systems to provide academic and pastoral support for all students
- collaboration with students, families and community to meet the needs of students
- improving student engagement, and developing coherent learning pathways through school and on to work and further learning.

To know about the success of these strategies and goals the board receives schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- senior student achievement in national qualifications (NCEA)
- achievement of Year 9 and 10 students against curriculum levels in some learning areas
- students' post-school destinations
- students' participation in a wide range of co-curricular activities
- indicators of student wellbeing.

Since the school's 2016 ERO review, there have been some changes in senior leadership and board membership and leadership. The school has made very good progress in addressing the areas identified for improvement in its last ERO report. These included strengthening:

- internal evaluation
- targets and planning for raising achievement and improving equity for all groups of students
- support for the success of Māori and Pacific learners
- systems for tracking student achievement and progress.

The school is a member of the Waitaki Ara Kāhui Ako |Community of Learning.

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

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

The school is very effective in achieving positive educational outcomes for students. School information shows that:

- the majority of students in Years 9 and 10 achieve at expected curriculum levels in English and mathematics
- a high proportion of students gain NCEA level 2
- most students attempting NCEA level 3, and a good majority of those attempting University Entrance, are successful
- about 40% of students gain endorsements on their NCEA qualifications at Levels 2 and 3
- nearly all students participating in industry and tertiary learning programmes achieve relevant qualifications
- a very high proportion of students are actively participating in and contributing to the school and wider community through involvement in a wide range of co-curricular activities
- nearly all students make positive transitions to work and further learning
- the majority of students report that their wellbeing is effectively supported.

The school is close to achieving equitable outcomes for all groups of students in terms of achievement of NCEA Level 2. School information shows a smaller proportion of Māori and Pacific students, than other groups, achieve at and above expectations in Years 9 and 10.

1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

The school has not yet analysed information to know if learning has been accelerated for junior students needing this. However useful systems are in the process of being developed. School information shows that senior students who are at risk of not achieving national qualifications or making a positive transition to work or further study are effectively supported to experience success.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

The curriculum responds very effectively to students' needs, interests and abilities. Leaders and teachers use students' feedback about their learning and information about students' achievement to plan appropriate programmes of learning. They are working to align course content across learning areas and year levels to strengthen students' preparation for and success in senior courses. The diverse needs and future pathways of students are well catered for by a wide range of programmes. Partnerships with employers and local secondary and tertiary education organisations provide further choice and support effective transitions to work and tertiary learning. Students have many opportunities to develop leadership skills and contribute to the school and local community through participation and leadership of a large number of interest groups and clubs.

Students needing additional help with learning and wellbeing are quickly identified and interventions put in place to support their success. Leaders and teachers have effective systems for monitoring the wellbeing and learning of all students. They are working more collaboratively to identify actions and strategies to support positive outcomes for students. This includes collaborating with students through mentoring relationships; across learning areas; with parents, families and whānau; and with community initiatives and groups. The board is providing increased resourcing for learning and wellbeing support to better meet student needs. Students with high and complex needs participate in individualised programmes that promote their confidence, independence and wellbeing.

The school's values of respect, responsibility and resilience (The Waitaki Way) are effectively promoted throughout the school and are supporting positive relationships and attitudes toward learning. Students lead planning for, and evaluation of, the school's values programme. The school collects and responds to student feedback about factors impacting on their wellbeing at school. Leaders and teachers are actively reflecting on how they implement these values in their teaching practice, including for positive behaviour management. The school has recently strengthened its commitment to environmental education in response to student demand. Teachers are increasingly incorporating this, and a focus on understanding cultural diversity, into learning programmes.

The school has intentionally strengthened opportunities for Māori students to learn about and participate in aspects of their culture and language. Leaders have worked collaboratively with local runaka to develop protocols to use in school events and to access cultural knowledge to support learning programmes. They have appointed specialist staff to provide pastoral and language learning support to students. The school is in the early stages of developing similar programmes, relationships and responses to support Pacific student success.

School leaders collaboratively develop and pursue the school's vision, goals and targets for equity and excellence. They have used internal evaluation information effectively to identify relevant goals and targets and to develop plans and strategies for improving outcomes for students. They actively promote ongoing teacher learning and development through providing the structures, resourcing training and guidelines. As a result teachers are reflecting deeply on their teaching practice and the difference it makes to student outcomes.

2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

The school needs to extend the analysis of learning information to know how well all students are progressing in their learning from Year 9 to Yr 10, particularly those targeted for acceleration. The school has introduced new practices for tracking the achievement of junior students. Leaders and teachers are using the system well to identify students who may be at risk with their learning. In addition to tracking achievement, they now need to use this information to evaluate the rate of progress students are making. This will enable teachers, leaders and trustees to better evaluate and report the effectiveness and impact of junior programmes and learning support interventions on learning and progress over time.

ERO acknowledges the school is in the early stages of developing relationships and collaborative actions to support the success of Pacific students. School leaders are committed to building the sustainability of these approaches through effective school planning, professional learning, collaboration with students, families and communities and the evaluation of outcomes. They should use internal evaluation processes to ensure sustainability of improvements.

3 Other Matters

Provision for students in the school hostel

The school hostel, Waitaki House, currently accommodates 42 students. The hostel is owned by the Waitaki Girls' High School Board of Trustees. The owner has attested that all requirements of the Hostel Regulations have been met. The principal has oversight of the hostel. She is supported by the hostel manager. ERO's investigations confirm that there are sound processes to manage students' safety and support their learning.

Positive features of the hostel include supportive relationships between the hostel and the school, regular surveying of students and valuing of their input, and good levels of pastoral care. The close proximity of the hostel to the school provides easy access to WGHS facilities. The hostel is responsive in supporting students who have extensive sporting, curriculum and performance commitments. The hostel is well managed by an experienced manager.

The hostel staff focus on the provision of a safe and supportive living and learning environment for the boarders.

Provision for international students

Waitaki Girls' High 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 there were three international students attending the school. ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's processes for reviewing compliance against the code are robust, well documented and lead to change where needed.

Students receive a welcoming and personalised orientation and induction to the school community. The international department and hostel staff collaborate to ensure international students' needs are met throughout their stay. Valued outcomes for international students include academic and language learning, social integration, and participation in all that the school has to offer. Trustees receive regular reports about the provision for international students.

4 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 Children's Act 2014.

5 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Waitaki Girls' High School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Strong

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- provision of a broad curriculum that responds very well to students' interests and needs and provides coherent pathways to work and further learning
- effective systems for monitoring all students' learning and wellbeing and supporting collaborative approaches to improving outcomes for students
- a caring, inclusive school culture providing a positive environment for learning.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are in continuing to extend the analysis of learning information and intervention outcomes for students in Years 9 and 10.

The board needs to ensure that the reviews of policies, procedures and emergency drills are being effectively implemented and reported.



Dr Lesley Patterson
Director Review and Improvement Services Southern
Southern Region
8 August 2019

About the school

Location	Oamaru										
Ministry of Education profile number	366										
School type	Secondary (Years 9-13)										
School roll	402										
Gender composition	Girls 100%										
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>New Zealand European/Pākehā</td> <td>73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnicities</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </table>	Māori	12%	New Zealand European/Pākehā	73%	Pacific	9%	Asian	5%	Other ethnicities	1%
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Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes										
Provision of Māori medium education	No										
Review team on site	June 2019										
Date of this report											
Most recent ERO reports	<table> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>May 2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>June 2013</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>November 2009</td> </tr> </table>	Education Review	May 2016	Education Review	June 2013	Education Review	November 2009				
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