



Aorere College
Papatoetoe, Auckland

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Aorere 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?

Aorere College is a co-educational secondary school catering for students from Years 9 to 13. It is located in Papatoetoe in South Auckland. The student population is diverse and includes students from over 17 different ethnicities. Close to 60 percent are of Pacific descent, 24 percent are Māori, and 19 percent identify as Indian.

The school's vision is to work closely with the community and grow high achieving young men and woman with strength of character, confidence and qualifications for future success. Students are challenged to discover and develop their personal strengths in order to learn successfully. A culture of high expectations for achievement is balanced with a caring focus on student wellbeing.

Since the 2012 ERO review a new chairperson has been appointed to lead the board of trustees. The school's charter is based on school values and guiding principles and sets out a coherent plan for school direction.

Since his appointment at the beginning of 2015, the school's new principal has also focused on further developing coherent and systematic approaches for improving outcomes for students. A key initiative involves a school-wide approach to professional learning through insights gained from teachers' evidence-based inquiries.

The board school leaders and teachers continue to strengthen their partnerships with families and whānau and the local educational community through a range of multi-layered and culturally responsive approaches.

ERO's 2012 report identified recommendations to further improve students' educational opportunities and outcomes. These included aligning the curriculum more closely with *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC), supporting a range of Māori initiatives and developing more evaluative reporting throughout the school. This review finds that trustees and senior leaders are leading positive change in these areas.

2 Learning

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

Aorere College uses achievement information very well to make positive changes to learners' progress and achievement.

The school's achievement information is increasingly being analysed and used by senior leaders, departments and teachers at class level. Recent student achievement in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) shows a steady rate of progress, particularly at university scholarship levels and for NCEA Levels 1 and 3. There has been an increase in the percentage of Year 11 Māori and Pacific students achieving NCEA literacy and numeracy credits over the past three years. This increase indicates that strategies to support students' learning are working.

Teachers and middle and senior management leaders are increasing their knowledge of assessment practices. They monitor and analyse achievement information at Years 11, 12 and 13. This information helps teachers plan for students' learning needs and guides adjustments to course content and curriculum delivery. The evaluative content of departmental reports could now be strengthened to more specifically complement and support the school's strategic goals.

The new principal is introducing more coherent and systematic approaches to improve the achievement of all students. He has aligned school-wide expectations for professional learning, teaching as inquiry, appraisal processes and self-review practices to deepen teachers' focus on the progress and achievement of their students. Good progress is being made in meeting school-wide targets and strategic goals focused on raising achievement for Pacific and Māori students, students with special needs and the Year 11 cohort. Year 9 and 10 students are making some significant overall gains in their achievement in literacy and numeracy.

Teachers are using data more effectively through their evidenced based inquiries. They benefit from professional learning about current best practices in teaching. This professional learning is accompanied by teachers' use of extensive academic mentoring for students and ongoing tracking of their progress. Parents and whānau are more informed about their sons'/daughters' learning and progress. Student-parent-teacher academic conferencing sessions are helping parents and whānau to more fully understand their child's learning.

The school is responsive to the diversity of its students. Information about students' strengths, interests and needs is collated and informs curriculum decisions. Teachers use practices that are culturally responsive and support students to be confident in their cultures. Considering the school's student population, the introduction of the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLPs) as an assessment tool is timely. Greater use and a better understanding of these progressions should help all teachers to better identify, plan and monitor the progress of students who are new speakers of the English language.

Ongoing relationships and current initiatives with local schools are supporting the transitioning of new students to the college. This good communication and shared enterprise between schools should improve the information shared with Aorere College teachers about the learning and achievement of students new to the school.

Key competencies and values continue to be emphasised as important outcomes for students in the school's learning processes. Increasing students' capability to develop learning to learn capabilities and to reflect on their own thinking and learning processes is an ongoing area of development for

the school. School leaders also agree that specific achievement targets need to be developed for all students.

3 Curriculum

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

Aorere College's curriculum supports students learning very effectively. It is aligned closely to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) and to Pathways opportunities. The curriculum is relevant and authentic, and in keeping with NZC principles.

School leaders and department heads strategically drive the curriculum towards student-centred choices. The curriculum is being broadened in innovative ways that help students select a learning and vocational pathway to suit their strengths, interests, abilities or needs. Students have more opportunities to make informed decisions in relation to future pathways into tertiary training or employment. The school's pathway's focus promotes relevant and purposeful subject choices.

Extensive self review and community feedback has informed recent curriculum changes that have helped optimise learning time. These include timetabling adjustments and the development of a more future focused junior school curriculum.

Curriculum initiatives include reciprocal teaching aimed at increasing the literacy achievement of Year 9 and 10 students. High levels of engagement and accelerated progress are being achieved by students involved in these initiatives and by Māori students in particular.

A well considered digital learning plan is guiding improvements in developing digital competencies for both staff and students. Its key focus on raising student achievement and enabling equitable access for students to learning is continually reviewed and refined. Senior student contributions enrich the curriculum. Many students are involved in leadership roles, supporting and inspiring younger students through a wide range of opportunities.

Students with special learning needs are well supported by teachers and support staff. Students benefit from teachers' in depth knowledge about their learning requirements. Achievement and pastoral data is monitored and reported to the board of trustees. Continuing to review the outcomes of this data could help support ongoing school developments.

Positive and affirming relationships for learning underpin interactions between students and teachers. Student engagement in the curriculum is strongly underpinned by a comprehensive and inclusive pastoral care network.

The college offers an enriching range of co-curricular activities. There are many opportunities for students to experience success and build leadership capability and social competencies. The school has a variety of cultural, academic and sporting events to celebrate student participation and achievement.

To further enhance the school's curriculum, school leaders agree that they could:

- continue to seek student input into decision making about curriculum provisions and learning pathways
- further explore ways to foster student wellbeing through the curriculum to complement existing student support services and further extend opportunities for students to develop as connected and successful learners.

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

The school is very effectively promoting educational success for Māori students.

Extensive work has been done by the school since 2012 to enhance opportunities for students to achieve success as Māori. Pastoral care and academic mentoring occurs in a supportive whānau environment that reflects understandings of tikanga Māori. Senior Māori students are increasingly involved with the guidance of younger students and with other school leader roles. A whole school student health council has been established to improve student health and wellbeing. A successful Taimana group is successfully re-engaging students in their learning through strengthening their sense of identity and culture.

Whānau classes provide a place for Māori students to be Māori and achieve a sense of belonging. Whānau class students are making significant and accelerated progress in their achievement in Years 9 and 10, exceeding that of Māori students in non-whānau classes.

Middle leaders are developing their bicultural leadership skills and cultural competencies, and are re-establishing links with the Makaurau and Pukaki Marae. Their leadership is supporting teachers to continue developing their expertise with Māori culture and to increase Māori student engagement and achievement.

A strategic action plan for Māori, developed in 2015, identifies leadership, evidence-based inquiry and culturally responsive teaching practice as key themes. The ongoing implementation of this action plan is promoting some progress. Strategic targets are set for Māori students to achieve NCEA levels consistent with the whole school. Māori students at risk of underachievement are central to the plan and to each teacher's ongoing professional inquiry.

As next steps, school leaders are discussing the strengthening of bicultural practice in the school through encouraging more robust evaluation of student achievement information and initiatives for Māori student success in the Māori Education Plan.

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

The majority of students are either Samoan or Tongan with smaller numbers from other Pacific Islands, including the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Fiji.

Pacific students' learning is enhanced by the school's focus on positive connections to Pacific languages, identity and culture. Pacific parents are supporting learning partnerships initiated by the school. Pacific parent groups meet and discuss student achievement and school initiatives that promote Pacific student identity and belonging. They have opportunities to attend regular curriculum pathway and NCEA evenings, and to join in celebration assemblies.

The school's 2015 Pacific Education Plan, developed with feedback from the Pacific community, connects closely with the school's strategic goals for Pacific students. Continuing to review the outcomes of the Pacific Education Plan should help support the school's explicit focus on promoting educational success for Pacific students.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Aorere College is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. A culture of improvement permeates the school. The management of change is well paced and considered. Self review is effectively promoting coherent school development. The school charter, based on the school's values and guiding principles, sets out a coherent plan for school direction. Strategic and annual planning is strengthened by purposeful self review.

The board brings a range of skills to the governance of the school. Trustees work well with the principal and school leaders. Trustees willingly engage in board training and are developing processes to review the effectiveness of their governance roles and learn more about the school's curriculum.

The new principal provides insightful and respected leadership. He promotes distributed leadership to strengthen the development and consolidation of school initiatives. Fair and equitable systems and processes are being developed across the school. School leaders are building trust and effective participation at all levels of the school community.

Teacher capability continues to develop through effective professional learning. Through a collaborative approach, teachers are encouraged to be reflective, develop new approaches and search out best evidence to improve their practice. Leadership from professional learning groups is driving innovation and sustaining good practices.

The school's teacher appraisal system is robust and linked to expectations of effective practice. New and beginning teachers share their expertise and energy.

The school's ongoing focus on building community partnerships should further extend learning opportunities and support sustainability of the school's strategic goals.

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 one international student who had recently arrived at the time of this review: the first since 2011.

The board is developing an approach to increase their numbers of international students. It has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code. ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's recently reinstated self-review processes for international students are well documented.

There is provision for international students to receive very good levels of pastoral care and quality education, including English and first language learning and support. International students have access to all the academic and co-curricular options available to all 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.

Conclusion

Aorere College serves its local community very well. Students benefit from the value the school places on academic achievement and rich educational opportunities. Teachers are highly focused on improving student learning outcomes. Ongoing school improvement is guided by purposeful strategic planning and the collaborative leadership of the principal and board.

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



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

30 October 2015

About the School

Location	Papatoetoe, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	96	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)	
School roll	1483	
Number of international students	1	
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	24%
	Pākehā	1%
	Samoan	23%
	Indian	19%
	Tongan	14%
	Cook Island Māori	8%
	Niue	5%
	South East Asian	3%
	Tokelau	1%
	other Pacific	1%
	other Asian	1%
Review team on site	September 2015	
Date of this report	30 October 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	September 2012
	Education Review	December 2009
	Education Review	September 2006