

ERO External Evaluation

Upper Hutt College, Upper Hutt

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

Upper Hutt College caters for students in Years 9 to 13. At the time of this ERO review, there are 996 students on the roll, 25% of whom are Māori and 6% of Pacific heritage.

The college vision is to engage and empower every learner to realise their full potential, underpinned by the school values of: Community-Te Hāpori, Learning-Ako, Pride – Hūmārie, Participation -Te Mahi Ngātahi and Excellence - Kairangi.

The current school goals and targets prioritise: continued improvement in national qualifications results overall, including for Māori and Pacific learners; raised achievement in Years 9 and 10; and increased levels of excellence and student wellbeing.

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

- achievement in New Zealand qualifications
- end-of-year results and progress against expectations in all curriculum areas
- reading and mathematics achievement in Years 9 and 10
- engagement and wellbeing.

Since the August 2015 ERO report, there have been significant changes in governance, leadership and management. The majority of trustees are new to their roles. Appointments include assistant principals and heads of departments.

Teachers have been involved in professional learning and development (PLD) about appraisal, teacher inquiry and Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L).

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 has made progress in improving outcomes for some groups of learners, particularly at senior levels.

Achievement overall has improved since 2015 with most students gaining National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs) Levels 1 and 2.

In 2017, most students gained NCEA Level 2 and the majority gained Level 3. Fewer than half gained University Entrance. Most Māori students gained NCEA Levels 1 and 2, achieving above their peers within the college. Pacific students' achievement has improved steadily overall, with most gaining NCEA Levels 1 and 2 and the majority achieving Level 3.

Percentages of Pacific students leaving with Level 2 are steadily improving while corresponding percentages for other learners have fluctuated or declined since 2015.

Rates on NCEA endorsements are declining overall. Disparity of achievement for boys is evident and has become more pronounced at NCEA Level 1 since 2015.

Priorities are to continue to improve students' success in literacy and numeracy schoolwide, NCEA Level 3, University Entrance and endorsements of NCEAs at all Levels.

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

The school does not have a clear picture of the overall rates of acceleration of learning for students who are achieving below curriculum expectations, particularly in Years 9 and 10.

Examples are evident of small groups of students whose literacy and numeracy learning is accelerated through recently targeted actions in some Year 9 and 10 classes. Improved school systems and processes for monitoring and supporting students at risk have contributed to the acceleration of targeted Māori learners and other groups at senior levels.

Students with additional learning needs are identified and their progress is monitored and reported on an individual basis. Significant numbers of these students have their learning accelerated in targeted literacy and numeracy programmes. School data over the past three years shows some have gained NCEA Level 2 qualifications.

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?

Collaborative strategies and initiatives have strengthened school and community relationships to promote improved outcomes for groups of learners. A planned, schoolwide approach to improving outcomes for Māori and Pacific students has increased opportunities for their success and participation in leadership roles. This has involved consultation and positive contributions from iwi, whānau and students. Learning partnerships between students, their parents, whānau and the school have been extended. There are improved approaches for timely reporting of student information and communications between the school and home.

Ongoing curriculum review and development is resulting in opportunities for students to participate in a wider range of learning pathways. Flexible and customised programmes, with links to the local community and environment, support those with diverse interests to experience success. A range of strategies, and resources including digital technologies, engage, challenge and extend learners. Student-led initiatives, groups and committees, and participation in PB4L, promote shared values, positive relationships, connections and an inclusive culture to increase engagement and opportunities to learn.

Learners are well supported to manage and sustain their learning and wellbeing through responsive pastoral care programmes, information sharing and interventions. Teachers collect and share useful information to respond to students' learning needs, interests, aspirations and careers plans and closely monitor their progress and achievement.

Leaders appropriately prioritise further development of teacher capability and schoolwide capacity to improve student outcomes. PLD supports teachers to work collaboratively to improve their knowledge and practice. The appraisal process has been strengthened and is improvement focused. Teaching innovations and responsiveness are enhanced through some well-designed and implemented teacher inquiries that explore new strategies and the impacts of these on improving student outcomes.

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

Further developing a shared schoolwide understanding and use of internal evaluation to better identify and address areas of student under achievement is a key next step. This should strengthen decision making and actions by trustees, leaders and teachers to accelerate progress and extend achievement for those groups who need it.

Leaders should review and improve schoolwide assessment practices for identifying and responding to those students whose learning needs accelerating, especially in Years 9 and 10. Strengthened teacher understanding and use of standardized assessment tools and data interpretation at these levels is needed. This should support more targeted teaching and enable leaders and trustees to clearly measure acceleration of learning.

Trustees have recently focused on improved implementation of the board's responsibilities, including review of school policies and associated training for their roles. They should continue to build their governance capacity, especially in scrutinising data and determining the impacts of programmes and target setting, so that they can better evaluate the school's effectiveness in improving student achievement for equity and excellence.

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.

Areas for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- develop procedures to support ongoing self review and evaluation at board level
- ensure that the principal's appraisal is fully completed annually
- clarify and share schoolwide procedures and expectations around physical restraint
- strengthen reporting on personnel processes to the board.

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, 13 international students attend the school.

ERO's investigations confirm that the school's self-review process for monitoring the quality of provision for international students are appropriate. Staff use well-developed systems and processes to guide decision making about these students' education.

Orientation to support international students integrate into the school is effective. Staff use student information to match programmes to their learning aspirations and English language needs. A range of cultural and sporting opportunities extend their learning. Close tracking and monitoring of pastoral care and achievement enables staff to support student success in relation to valued outcomes.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- promoting learning partnerships across the school community
- culturally responsive opportunities that contribute to Māori and Pacific success
- teacher inquiry and collaborative knowledge building that inform improved practices
- systems and processes that are proactive and responsive to students' learning, wellbeing and pastoral needs.

Next steps

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

- trustees' use of data and target setting to identify students who need to accelerate or extend their learning and inform their development planning decisions
- use of assessment tools and student achievement information to better inform decisions about teaching and measure the impact of programmes, especially in literacy and numeracy
- 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.



Alan Wynyard
Director Review & Improvement Services Central
Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

23 August 2018

About the school

Location	Upper Hutt										
Ministry of Education profile number	250										
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)										
School roll	996										
Gender composition	Male 52%, Female 48%										
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pākehā</td> <td>62%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic groups</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </table>	Māori	25%	Pākehā	62%	Pacific	6%	Asian	5%	Other ethnic groups	2%
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Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes										
Provision of Māori medium education	No										
Review team on site	June 2018										
Date of this report	23 August 2018										
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>August 2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>December 2011</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>November 2008</td> </tr> </table>	Education Review	August 2015	Education Review	December 2011	Education Review	November 2008				
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