

**St Paul's College (Ponsonby)
Auckland**

Confirmed

**Education Review Report:
Arotake Paerewa**

*Kumēa te paetawhiti kia tata
Whakamaua te paerewa kia tīna
Tukuna te paehiranga kia topa!*

Education Review Report: Arotake Paerewa St Paul's College (Ponsonby)

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.

Findings

1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

St Paul's College is an integrated Year 7 to 15 Catholic school for boys located in Ponsonby, Auckland. The school was established in 1903 and its special character is founded on the five Marist pillars envisaged by St Marcellin Champagnat of the Roman Catholic Church. This special character is expressed through the school values of faith, perseverance, passion, courage and brotherhood that are known and articulated well by students.

The school is of a small size, but its roll has steadily increased since the 2010 ERO review. The roll is predominantly Pacific and an increasing number of students are enrolling from schools in the local area. Significant property development has occurred, with improvements to the school's entrance and the construction of a well designed new block for middle school students (Years 7 to 10).

The college's recent ERO reporting history has shown continued improvement. Since the 2010 ERO review, turnover in staffing, including school leaders, has settled. Newly appointed staff have assisted in developing an improved and positive school culture with an increased focus on learning. Staff and parents proudly acknowledge and celebrate students' increasing academic, cultural and sporting achievement. Teachers have continued with professional development in literacy to support students' learning across all curriculum areas.

St Paul's College values its increasing links with parents to support students' learning at home and their awareness of career pathways. The college continues to strengthen local community links with significant student involvement in sports programmes and participation in community-based workplace learning programmes.

The current board of trustees comprises several new members, including a new chairperson, proprietors' representatives and an increased number of Pacific representatives. Trustees are highly supportive of the school's special character and strategic goals for improving students' success.

ERO affirms the direction and ongoing development of St Paul's College and recommends school leaders access support to provide further impetus to progress and consolidate key strategic goals.

2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Students are engaged in their learning. Classrooms are settled environments where students are nurtured and encouraged in their learning by teachers. Students value the positive and respectful relationships they have with their teachers. The school's data indicate that attendance levels have improved significantly since the previous ERO review.

According to school data, most students in Year 7 and 8 are making progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There is targeted intervention to raise the achievement of students who are achieving well below National Standards. Teachers should continue to develop processes for assessing achievement against the National Standards for all Year 7 and 8 students, including those who receive learner support. Teachers should ensure assessment practices promote:

- valid, responsive and regular overall teacher judgements about student progress and achievement
- plain language reporting to parents about their son's progress and achievement.

School data indicate that students in Years 9 and 10 are achieving in literacy and numeracy.

Teachers are tracking and monitoring senior student achievement well. NCEA data indicate good achievement at Levels 1, 2 and 3 that compare favourably with national averages and schools of a similar decile. Teachers should further develop students' understanding and use of achievement criteria to enhance their learning.

Teacher professional development in the use of effective teaching strategies is beginning to impact positively and become embedded within the school. Teachers could now consider other strategies to improve students' achievement in literacy. These could include students:

- frequently practising writing in meaningful contexts
- actively using achievement criteria to monitor their own achievement and to develop learning goals
- discussing annotated writing exemplars
- being further supported with vocabulary development.

School leaders and teachers should also document the school's expectations for effective teaching and learning to promote the consistent use of these effective practices across the school. More consistent use of specific, measurable and responsive achievement targets to determine student progress should also be considered.

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

Māori student achievement reflects that of the general school population. School leaders should now consider strengthening the school's commitment to promoting success for Māori in the school's charter, including strategic and annual plans. Teachers should review their programmes against the principles of *Ka Hikitia*, the Ministry of Education's strategy to promote success for Māori as Māori. This would help to ensure strategies to promote success for Māori are integrated throughout the curriculum and more fully enacted within the school's special character.

3 Curriculum

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

The curriculum in the middle school places emphasis on literacy, numeracy, and inquiry learning within an integrated studies approach. School leaders have recently restructured this curriculum to strengthen its coherence across Years 7 to 10. Since the 2010 ERO review, the curriculum has also been extended to include languages and careers education in Years 7 and 8. Teaching and learning programmes are also designed to help develop students' competencies in thinking, managing self, relating to others, participating and contributing. The establishment of new middle school facilities indicates the board's strong commitment to promoting student success. Trustees should continue to improve resources and the learning environment to support the effective implementation of the middle school curriculum.

The curriculum in the senior school has also been extended with the introduction of engineering and retail courses and a Services Academy. The curriculum has an increasing focus on authentic learning with a significant number of senior students achieving well through Gateway, the Tertiary Education Commission's programme for structured workplace learning.

Some teachers offer programmes that target students' engagement and achievement well. They give due consideration to curriculum content and use effective teaching and learning strategies such as:

- cooperative, interactive and practical learning activities
- authentic local learning contexts with high relevance and appeal to boys' interests
- questioning skills that promote thinking and provide frequent opportunities for students to articulate their ideas and opinions
- effectively integrating learning areas including writing
- promoting students' use of information communication technologies.

Teachers should continue to develop a challenging and engaging curriculum. This could include the regular review of the school's curriculum against key components of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC), such as the NZC principles, including those relating to coherence, and the NZC values and key competencies. Reviewing the curriculum in terms of inclusion of local and Pacific contexts could also be beneficial.

Curriculum developments have also been accompanied by significant improvements in pastoral care provisions. Students' wellbeing is monitored and well promoted through ready access to good quality emotional and physical health services. Senior students have increased leadership opportunities for supporting and enhancing the wellbeing of others. School leaders should continue to develop further leadership opportunities for middle school students.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain ongoing improvement. The school's special character is well promoted well and an increasingly positive tone is evident within the school. Supportive and affirming relationships throughout the school provide a good foundation for sustaining and improving students' learning.

There is improved community engagement as an outcome of strategic initiatives to link parents' meetings with consultation opportunities and careers education. It would now be useful for school leaders to record the outcomes of consultation with parents.

School leaders model high expectations for student achievement. They should continue to target achievement rates in NCEA Level 1 and university entrance to further improve outcomes for students.

Elected trustees and proprietors' representatives are highly committed to the school bring a range of skills and professional expertise to their governance role. Distinguishing between policy and procedure would help the board with work relating to the review and rationalisation of school policies.

There is a considered approach to strategic planning and future priorities are clearly outlined. The continued development of a self-review cycle of review by strengthening links to action plans and evaluating outcomes is recommended. More evaluative reporting and analysis of achievement data for all students, and for identified groups of students, would provide a more complete picture of progress and achievement, assist board and staff decision making, and further strengthen strategic planning.

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. No international students were enrolled at the time of the ERO review.

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
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

Recommendations to other agencies

ERO recommends that the Secretary for Education considers what support should be given to the board of trustees to assist it to meet its legal obligations in relation to the National Standards and school charter requirements.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. a. Smith'.

Makere Smith
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region (Acting)

3 September 2012

About the School

Location	Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	51	
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 15)	
Decile ¹	3	
School roll	239	
Number of international students	0	
Gender composition	Boys 100%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā Māori Samoan Tongan Cook Island Māori other Pacific Asian other	3% 9% 38% 31% 6% 3% 6% 4%
Special Features	Services Academy	
Review team on site	June 2012	
Date of this report	3 September 2012	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	January 2010 November 2008 September 2005

¹ School deciles range from 1 to 10. Decile 1 schools draw their students from low socio-economic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides.