

ERO External Evaluation

Alfriston College, Manurewa, Auckland

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

Alfriston College is a co-educational school catering for students from Years 9 to 13. Thirty-eight percent of learners are Māori and twenty-five percent have Pacific heritages.

The school's mission statement is to provide differentiated and personalised learning programmes to ensure all students have good opportunities to pursue their talents and interests and reach their potential. Key values the school encourages are whakapapa (connection), aahuatanga (character), tuu maaia (confidence) and maatau (competence). These values form the cornerstones of the Alfriston College tikanga and the basis for student wellbeing.

The board's strategic goals are to:

- provide students with learning opportunities that are connected, authentic and relevant to improve engagement and achievement
- develop personalised learning pathway plans that ensure each student has a sense of belonging and learns and succeeds.

Leaders and teachers report to the board school-wide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement within the New Zealand Qualifications Authority framework
- progress and achievement in literacy and mathematics in Years 9 and 10
- student engagement and wellbeing for success.

Since the 2015 ERO report the school has introduced several significant initiatives to increase student progress and achievement. There has been continuity in school leadership and governance.

The College is part of the Alfriston Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL), comprising eight schools. The overall goal of the CoL is to have 85 percent of school leavers achieving a National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 or higher qualification that will support them in their preferred pathway.

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 working well towards achieving equitable outcomes and raising achievement levels for all students.

Data over the last three years show an increase in achievement levels for students in NCEA across Levels 1, 2, and 3. Overall, achievement levels are now comparable to other schools of a similar type. The number of merit and excellence endorsements has continued to rise.

Data show significant improvements for boys across the three levels of NCEA, for Māori learners at Level 2 and Pacific learners at Level 3. These positive shifts contribute to increased parity for the different groups of students.

Achievement levels at University Entrance remain relatively static. However, the last two years show an increase in the number of students accessing and achieving success in alternative pathways at Years 12 and 13.

Year 9 and 10 students have their literacy and mathematical knowledge and skills tested on entry. Recent school data show the mathematics achievement of Year 10 students as a group, especially Māori and Pacific students, has significantly improved.

School information shows noteworthy improvements in student engagement over the last three years. Attendance levels are high, retention levels are increasing, and data show low rates of stand-downs and suspensions.

Students have a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to the school. They are respectful and build good learning relationships with each other and their teachers. A holistic approach to their wellbeing sits at the heart of the school's curriculum. This sets positive conditions for learning and achievement.

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

The school is becoming increasingly effective at responding to those students whose learning needs acceleration.

The school attributes the recent positive shifts in achievement levels for Māori, Pasifika and boys to the introduction in 2017 of whānau advisory and amokura mentoring approaches. Strong features of these initiatives are close tracking and monitoring of students at the individual level, alongside regular academic counselling and awahi.

Personalising learning and the use of 'assessment packages' at NCEA level is likely to help students to achieve relevant course qualifications. This, together with the growing flexibility to deliver trimester and semester as well as full year courses to students, means the school can be more responsive, especially to those students at risk of not achieving.

Leaders and teachers are proactive in accessing pathway courses for senior students through external providers. A science programme sponsored by the District Health Board provides

opportunities for Māori students to experience success in many of the science subjects. The school works with other external providers to design relevant programmes for students. School information shows that students are staying longer at school and higher numbers of them are moving to successful career training and meaningful employment.

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 school has a compelling vision that challenges students to be active participants in and contributors to, the learning process. The vision positions everyone as both a leader and a learner able to have influence in the school and in the wider community. There is collective ownership of the vision and for this reason it is well embedded as a way of being for everyone in the school.

Leadership in the school is strong and effective in strengthening conditions for equity and excellence. Recent changes to the leadership structure have enabled the school to become more responsive to students' needs and to build academic rigour. The new leadership structure places greater value and responsibility on the contribution of middle leaders. Middle leaders include Whānau Leaders, New Zealand Curriculum Leaders and Year 9 and 10 Team Leaders. All have clear roles to play and are supported by senior leaders to work towards achieving the best outcomes for all. Broadening leadership opportunities for students is helping to nurture a spirit of leadership throughout the school.

The school's curriculum is increasingly engaging, raising achievement, and improving outcomes for students. The tikanga of ako is embedded as the foundation of the school's curriculum. "Getting to know the learner" and "getting the learner to know themselves", are key drivers in several school curriculum initiatives. A range of recent innovative curriculum approaches and practices to improve outcomes for students include:

- a Year 9 and 10 whānau-based, authentic curriculum
- Year 9 to 13 Personalised Learning Pathway Plans (PLPP)
- Year 11 and 12 'Project Lines, and Passion courses'
- a Year 12 and 13 independent learning centre.

The school has very good systems to develop teachers' professional capability and collective capacity for delivering the curriculum. Teachers are well supported in a professional climate where senior leaders have increased the momentum for change to lift student achievement. Staff are engaged explicitly in the school's 'Learning as a Challenge model' through performance management systems and individualised professional learning and development opportunities. This is helping to increase their capability to be agile leaders of learning and to respond well to students' diverse requirements.

Internal evaluation is used very well for knowledge building, improvement and innovation. The outcomes of reviews provide clear rationales for improvement in curriculum design and teaching practice. This is helping to shape the school's future direction. The board and senior leaders also seek and use current research and thinking to work towards what is best for individual learners.

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

Senior leaders are refining the school's quality assurance systems and processes to support greater consistency in curriculum implementation. The newly developed sets of agreed expectations will help strengthen the rigour and regularity of monitoring and reporting. This will help ensure expectations are being met.

In order to raise achievement levels, school leaders have introduced more meaningful and useful ways to analyse and report progress and achievement information in the senior school. Deepening the analysis of Year 9 and 10 achievement data is likely to provide teachers with better information for decisions about learning pathways for all students, especially for those whose progress needs to be accelerated.

Ensuring every student, through their PLPP, is challenged, has access to, and progresses and achieves at the appropriate level of the New Zealand Curriculum is an ongoing priority for the school. New Zealand Curriculum Level 6 and 7 learning outcomes should be prioritised across the three disciplines in the senior project lines. Strengthening differentiated teaching approaches in Year 9 and 10 could support this development.

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*.

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 there were 12 international students attending the school.

ERO's investigations confirm that the school's internal evaluation process for international students is thorough. International students benefit from the positive and inclusive relationships strongly evident throughout the school. Their learning and socialisation needs are well considered and they make good progress overall, particularly in NCEA. International students participate in a broad curriculum and have the opportunity to join in all school activities.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- its vision for learning that supports students to direct their own learning
- effective leadership at different levels of the school that is responsive, and actively supports equity and excellence
- systems and strategies that develop confident professional teachers in a collaborative learning community
- internal evaluation practices that support improvement and innovation.

Next steps

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

- refine quality assurance systems to support greater consistency of high quality practices
- expand the use of achievement information in ways that better inform decisions about students' learning pathways
- continue to develop learning pathways that ensure cognitive challenge and deep learning for students from Years 9 to 13.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Julie Foley
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Te Tai Raki - Northern Region

22 August 2018

About the school

Location	Manurewa, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	6929
School type	Secondary (Years 9 – 15)
School roll	1170
Gender composition	Boys 51% Girls 49%
Ethnic composition	Māori 38% Pākehā 10% Samoan 13% Tongan 5% Indian 10% other Asian 12% other Pacific 7% other 5%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	June 2018
Date of this report	22 August 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review June 2015 Education Review July 2012 Education Review May 2009