

Wellington Activity Centre Education Review

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About the School

Location	Kaiwharawhara, Wellington	
Ministry of Education profile number	6128	
School type	Activity Centre attached to a state secondary school (Years 9 to 11)	
School roll	19	
Gender composition	Female 10 Male 9	
Ethnic composition	Māori	9
	NZ European/Pākehā	5
	Samoan	3
	Other ethnic groups	2
Review team on site	November 2012	
Date of this report	17 December 2012	
Most recent ERO reports	Special Review	December 2008
	Special Review	June 2005
	Accountability Review	March 2001

The Purpose of an ERO Report

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.

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1 Context

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

The Wellington Activity Centre provides education for up to twenty students in Years 9 to 11 who need personalised support to re-engage them in learning.

Students remain on the rolls of schools that refer them to the centre. They receive academic, social and personal guidance and mentoring until they, their parents and teachers judge that they are sufficiently well equipped to return to mainstream schooling or move on to further education and training. Currently, half the students are Māori.

The centre operates as an attached unit of Rongotai College which, as current host school, has overall responsibility for governance. The centre director works closely with a management group comprising the current, immediate past and next host school principals.

Centre staff foster close links with parents and whānau, community groups and external agencies. The director annually seeks substantial funding from a range of sources to supplement the Ministry of Education grant. These additional grants enable the centre to employ extra staff who help to provide high quality learning resources and opportunities and promote positive outcomes for students.

The environment is attractive and well maintained, with appropriate, good quality facilities for teaching and learning.

2 Learning

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

Centre staff effectively manage the transition of students into the centre. Clearly documented procedures guide referral processes and subsequent planning and decision-making. Before students arrive from enrolling schools, the centre is well informed about their achievement, attendance, and individual needs. This information is used to design learning programmes that are personalised for each student.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) provide a sound basis for setting goals, monitoring progress and facilitating smooth transitions. They are regularly reviewed through a collaborative process that involves the students, their parents and whānau, their liaison tutor and key people from the enrolling school. The next step for continued development of IEPs is to specify actions that each of these people will undertake to help achieve the targets.

Students are well supported to become motivated and independent learners. They know what is expected of them in terms of attitude, work habits and behaviour and they take increasing responsibility for their own progress and achievement.

Most students experience considerable all-round success. Literacy and numeracy development is given priority, and assessment data analysed by staff shows that learning in these key areas is significantly accelerated over time. Students gain confidence in their own ability, and changed attitudes contribute to improved achievement overall.

In 2011, four out of seven students completed National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 1. All but one student gained credits, with an average of 61. These students also achieved the required literacy and numeracy credits.

Academic progress and achievement are well balanced with growth and development in other areas, such as socialisation and personal management. A well established reward system gives students a powerful incentive for meeting expectations and goals. Successes and achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways.

Students who spoke with ERO said that their attitude to learning and behaviour had changed while at the centre. They expressed confidence in their future pathways. Of the 26 students who were at the centre at some stage during 2011, all but one successfully re-engaged in learning and had long-term education goals.

Parents and whānau are well informed and involved in students' learning.

3 Curriculum

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

The environment is calm, cooperative and conducive to a sustained focus on learning.

The centre's curriculum is well balanced. Students work at their own pace on individualised academic learning programmes from Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (The Correspondence School) in the mornings. They benefit from good levels of support from teachers, tutors and mentors. Centre staff liaise closely with Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu to ensure that programmes are flexible, appropriate and relevant for students. Teachers encourage students to become active, self-motivated learners who set challenging goals for themselves.

The afternoon programme comprises a wide variety of well organised learning activities that contribute to students' physical and personal wellbeing and development. This aspect of the curriculum is aligned with The New Zealand Curriculum and explicitly incorporates key competencies. Career education and guidance are seen as vital elements of the curriculum that help students to identify their individual strengths and interests, explore their options and make informed choices about their next steps.

Students have easy access to information and communication technologies and make good use of online learning. They are encouraged to develop a love of books and the library has a good range of stimulating and engaging reading materials.

Staff demonstrate a caring and enthusiastic approach in their interactions with students. They are committed to maintaining and modelling positive, supportive relationships. Students enjoy coming to the centre. They travel independently each day and attendance rates are high. The centre provides an environment that successfully supports students' re-engagement in learning.

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

Māori students benefit from the positive, inclusive learning environment. They experience significant personal growth and success, and consequently re-engage with education and move on to follow their chosen pathways.

Te reo me ngā tikanga Māori are well integrated into the daily life of the centre. Two youth workers, who are Māori, use te reo Māori regularly and effectively foster respect and cultural responsiveness. They place high value on increasing teacher and student knowledge and awareness of te ao Māori. Their dedication to promoting the wellbeing of all students is strongly evident.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The centre is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

Factors that provide a strong foundation for continued success are:

- a strong philosophical values base
- a strongly collaborative team approach
- clear and well understood structures and systems
- effective governance and management, well aligned with the Ministry of Education's Toolkit
- good communication at all levels
- active partnerships with a range of community groups and agencies
- highly reflective and collegial leadership
- well established self-review processes.

In order to further strengthen the usefulness of self review, ERO recommends a more evaluative approach, particularly when determining the effectiveness of particular strategies and interventions.

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.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Joyce Gebbie
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17 December 2012