



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Waikato Diocesan School for Girls
Hamilton**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Waikato Diocesan School for Girls

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?

Waikato Diocesan School for Girls is a state integrated school located in Hamilton, catering for day and boarding students in Years 9 to 13. The school was founded in 1928 and maintains its special Anglican character and strong boarding heritage.

The current roll of 679 includes 60 students who are Māori and 29 international students. The school's vision is to 'prepare confident, resourceful and resilient young women to make a positive difference in their world'. The school promotes the values of courage, empathy, integrity, tolerance, respect and diligence, underpinned by the Christian faith.

Since the last ERO review in 2011, the principal has continued in her position. There has been a reorganisation of the senior leadership team with the appointment of two new assistant principals and the redistribution of leadership roles and responsibilities. Trustees include both elected parent and proprietor's representatives. The board chairperson is an experienced trustee who is new to the role since 2011, and there have been minor changes to board membership.

Teachers and leaders have been involved in a wide range of externally and internally facilitated professional learning. The current school-wide focus is a Ministry of Education programme provided by *Te Toi Tupu* focused on learning with digital technology which is supporting the implementation of the 'bring your own device' (BYOD) initiative.

The school has responded very well to the areas for development identified in the previous ERO report and has a very positive ERO reporting history.

2 Learning

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

The school makes highly effective use of student achievement information to inform decision making that improves outcomes for students.

Information about student achievement, based on results from National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) shows that all students, including Māori, achieve well above national averages at Levels 1, 2 and 3. The information also shows that senior students experience considerable success in university entrance and scholarship examinations. Data is gathered by the school for students in Years 9 and 10, using standardised tests in aspects of literacy and mathematics. This data shows that students enter the school achieving very well in literacy and mathematics and continue to achieve at these levels as they move through the school.

Trustees make very good use of the considerable data they receive to make decisions about school resourcing, strategic priorities and school direction. They also make very good use of achievement information to set targets that focus on improving very high levels of achievement. They have well-developed processes for the evaluation of school effectiveness, which enables them to focus on continual improvement.

School leaders systematically gather and use a range of high quality achievement data which they use to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching practice and student learning. This data enables them to make evidence-based decisions about resourcing, curriculum development and teacher professional learning needs. Heads of department prepare detailed reports that include substantial well-analysed information about student achievement, which is well used to ensure learning programmes are responsive to students' learning needs.

Highly effective use of data is also made to identify students whose learning requires additional support or extension. Specific interventions are provided for these students and their progress is closely monitored. This approach to the use of achievement data enables the programme to continually be adjusted to meet individual learning needs. Teachers are systematically gathering quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform inquiries into their professional practice, which are focused on improving outcomes for students.

Since the previous ERO review, teachers have made considerable progress in the way they use data to inform their teaching. The school has recognised, and has processes in place, to further improve the way teachers use achievement information to differentiate programme planning and student learning.

Students are increasingly able to access information through the student/parent portal. This digital access is strengthening the home school partnership and enabling students to track their own learning progress. This contributes to students' and parents' understanding about student learning pathways in order to make well-informed decisions at critical transition points.

3 Curriculum

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

The school curriculum is highly effective in promoting and supporting student learning. The curriculum is broad, flexible and responsive to individual student learning pathways and preferences.

Aspects of the school curriculum that contribute to high quality outcomes for students include:

- a well-designed and well-understood pedagogy based on shared understandings about effective teaching practice at Waikato Diocesan School for Girls
- a clearly defined and well-implemented approach to 'blended e-learning', which maximises the benefits of digital technology and effective traditional teaching strategies
- the provision of opportunities to engage in authentic learning, be actively involved in the community through acts of service and making a positive difference to their world, in keeping with the school's vision
- planned opportunities for students to take part and excel in an extensive range of sporting, cultural, and academic pursuits at local, national and international levels
- a wide range of opportunities for students to experience education outside the classroom, and to develop leadership skills.

Significant progress has been made in the development of an integrated junior programme that reflects coverage of all learning areas and key competences of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). The school has prioritised the ongoing development of this curriculum and is currently exploring how this integrated approach can be implemented in the senior part of the school.

ERO observed teachers using a wide range of highly effective strategies, high levels of student engagement and responsive and respectful learner-focused relationships. The use of well-developed formative assessment strategies, including specific, timely feedback to students about their learning, is empowering and builds students' self efficacy.

Teachers and school leaders have successfully established a shared understanding of key school priorities and implemented changes to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Teachers are committed to ongoing professional learning and development, utilising both internal and external expertise. They demonstrate a highly reflective approach to improving their practice and building their collective capacity to improve outcomes for students.

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

The school effectively promotes educational success for Māori, as Māori through high expectations for Māori achievement and engagement and close partnerships with whānau. Achievement information shows that Māori students are achieving at levels that are comparable to their peers and well above national averages. In order to further promote success and achievement for Māori students, senior leaders and teachers have developed a strategic plan to guide the promotion of Māori language, identity and culture across the school.

Aspects of the school that contribute to success and achievement for Māori as Māori are:

- a pastoral care team specifically focused on Māori student wellbeing and achievement
- the 'Mana Wahine' initiative, which is focused on valuing Māori culture throughout the school and promoting leadership for Māori students

- ongoing opportunities for parents and whānau to meet, connect and build relationships with teachers and one another
- the opportunity for students to learn about their whakapapa, iwi affiliations and history
- the involvement of leaders and teachers in school-wide professional learning about culturally competent practice, including correct pronunciation and appreciation of te reo and tikanga Māori
- opportunities for Māori students to take part in kapa haka, experience marae protocol and show leadership in aspects of tikanga Māori.

Teachers and senior leaders meet with whānau to share achievement information and set targets to further improve outcomes for Māori students. There are successful Māori role models in student leadership roles and within the staff leadership team. Māori whānau feel their daughters' sense of cultural identity is strengthened and validated as a result of initiatives to promote success and engagement of Māori students and whānau.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. A key factor contributing to school sustainability is the high quality leadership provided by the principal and her leadership team in setting school direction for teaching and learning. Senior leaders have established clear alignment of the school's vision, values and goals and have a coherent and well-managed approach to building leadership capacity across the school. In addition, they have successfully established a culture of high expectations, review, reflection and ongoing improvement.

Other aspects of the school that contribute to the school's ability to sustain and improve its performance are:

- the provision of highly effective governance and strategic direction for the school by the board
- heads of department and other middle managers who provide high quality leadership and support for teachers
- a pastoral care team that provides comprehensive support for student health and wellbeing
- robust processes for teacher appraisal, incorporating Tātaiako and encouraging reflective practice to build teachers' collective capacity to improve outcomes for students
- a range of highly effective communication strategies to create home school partnerships focused on student engagement, learning and wellbeing
- the gathering and use of multiple voices, including parent and student perspectives, to contribute to decisions about ongoing school improvement.

School sustainability is underpinned by highly effective internal evaluation at all levels of school operations.

Provision for international students

Waikato Diocesan School for Girls 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 attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code. ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international learners is thorough and effectively informs ongoing improvement.

At the time of this ERO review there were 29 international fee-paying students enrolled in the school. Provision for these students is well managed by the Dean of International Students and there is a strong focus on ensuring their well-being and sense of belonging in the school.

International students have access to high quality learning opportunities. They are well integrated into the life of the school and participate in a range of co-curricular activities. Their learning, well-being and academic progress are closely monitored.

Provision for students in the school hostel

The school hostel, Bishop's Hall, accommodates 149 students, 22 percent of the school's roll. It is owned by the Waikato Board of Diocesan Schools. The hostel owner has attested that all requirements of the Hostel Regulations are met.

The policies and procedures for guiding the operation of the hostel are clear, well documented and are subject to ongoing review. This includes regular opportunity for feedback from students and parents.

The hostel provides a warm and caring environment for students and strongly supports their learning and wellbeing.

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

Waikato Diocesan School for Girls continues to provide high quality education. Students achieve very well in NCEA, university entrance and scholarship qualifications. Highly effective systems are provided to support the girls' academic and pastoral care. Close relationships with all parents and Māori whānau support a strong partnership in student learning, engagement and success.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynda Pura-Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

Lynda Pura-Watson
Deputy Chief Review Officer

9 August 2016

About the School

Location	Hamilton	
Ministry of Education profile number	140	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)	
School roll	679	
Number of international students	29	
Gender composition	Girls 100%	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā	77%
	Māori	9%
	Chinese	3%
	Indian	3%
	Other Asian	4%
	Other European	4%
Special Features	Host for Itinerant Teachers of Music Scheme	
Review team on site	June 2016	
Date of this report	9 August 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	January 2012
	Education Review	January 2009
	Education Review	January 2005