

**New Plymouth Girls' High School  
New Plymouth**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## New Plymouth Girls' High School

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?**

New Plymouth Girls' High School provides education for girls in Years 9 to 13 from the wider Taranaki area. Since ERO's August 2010 review, the roll has grown to 1277. This includes an increase in Māori students to 22% of the roll. Pacific student numbers remain steady at 2%.

Key features of the school's curriculum are an extensive range of academic, sporting, cultural and leadership opportunities. Provisions include the Scotlands Hostel, Waimarie and Awhina Centres for students with additional learning requirements, and the Wai Ora Wellness Centre. There is steady growth in courses to support a wider range of career pathways.

The areas of good performance identified in ERO's August 2010 report continue to be positive features of the school. Significant property redevelopments are about to commence.

### 2 Learning

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

The school uses student achievement information well to support ongoing improvements in NCEA results. Further development in the use of whole-school information about Year 9 and 10 students' progress and achievement is a key next step.

Senior students experience high levels of success in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs), with significant gains in the numbers achieving merit and excellence endorsements. Subject endorsement levels are improving over time. High numbers of students attain the NCEA Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements. Success in New Zealand Scholarship examinations is strong. In 2012, 45 scholarships, including seven outstanding results, were gained.

Students achieve NCEAs at higher rates overall than those in similar schools nationally. University Entrance rates have improved over time. Effective schoolwide monitoring of senior students' progress contributes to improved results. Increased numbers of students stay at school, and leave with at least NCEA Level 2.

Māori students' success in the NCEAs, University Entrance and retention to Year 13 improved significantly between 2012 and 2013. The school is well placed to continue to improve Māori students' success in endorsements in NCEA subjects and qualifications. Equity of achievement for Māori students with others in the school is yet to be achieved.

Pacific students generally achieve well in the senior school, and their progress and achievement in NCEAs has improved over time. Their progress is reported to trustees and considered by department heads in relation to the schoolwide goals of sustaining and improving NCEA results.

Students from across all year levels undertake multilevel programmes that enable them to be challenged and extended in their learning. This contributes to success in Scholarship exams and university papers across the breadth of curriculum areas. Students are increasingly able to undertake career-based education and work experiences that contribute to their NCEA results.

Goal setting for all students is well embedded and helps students to focus their learning and consider career pathways. Teachers work in partnership with students to set meaningful goals and provide career information and guidance. Parents' participation is encouraged at twice-yearly conferences. Students' personal reflections on successful learning form part of reports to parents.

Students with additional learning requirements are well tracked and monitored through their individual education plan goals and other forms of assessment. These students are supported and actively encouraged to participate in all school and community activities and events.

Achievement information is appropriately used in Years 9 and 10 to decide class placement, and to help students to set learning goals. Year 8 student entry information and data is used by teachers to inform classroom teaching strategies. However, information about the progress of Year 9 and 10 students in literacy and mathematics is not yet fully considered, analysed for whole-school trends and patterns, and reported to the board.

School leaders have identified, and ERO agrees, that determining the impact of Year 9 and 10 programmes on student achievement and progress in literacy, mathematics and other areas is an important next step. This information should assist trustees to set improvement targets for Years 9 and 10, and to evaluate the effectiveness of junior programmes in accelerating the progress of priority learners.

### **3 Curriculum**

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

The school's curriculum provides a wide range of educational opportunities. High expectations for students to achieve and progress contribute to a calm and focused environment. Students are purposefully engaged and motivated learners.

A sustained schoolwide focus on Building Positive Relationships (BPR) contributes to consistently warm and positive relationships between students and staff. Students appreciate the extra help they get from teachers and staff.

The careers education plan guides ongoing development to extend the range of pathways for senior students. This includes developing individual qualification plans. Trades Academy, Gateway and STAR programmes continue to encourage students to undertake workplace-based education and taster courses.

Study at levels that best suit individual needs is a positive feature of the curriculum. This includes students working at higher levels to extend and challenge them. Provision for students with additional learning requirements is a priority in the Waimarie and Awhina centres. Learning programmes are personalised and family participation is valued.

Student wellbeing is well supported by health services at Wai Ora, with access to some services funded by the school. Pastoral care staff effectively monitor student wellbeing. Students appreciate ready access to school-funded wellness services and other external agency expertise and care.

Teachers participate in well-planned and managed professional learning and development. They are beginning to formally inquire into the effectiveness of their teaching practices in improving student learning. A consistent schoolwide approach to mentoring staff and students is becoming embedded. Teachers are beginning to see the benefits of improved data use and research, and of sharing their inquiries with each other.

School leaders and staff are developing practices to better respond to students' language, culture and identity, particularly for Māori and Pacific learners. The Tumanako student mentoring programme provides additional teacher help and guidance for a large group of Māori and Pacific students.

Pacific students' heritages are known by teachers and pastoral care is provided by a teacher. The school's Pacific performance group participates annually in a Pasifika Fusion Festival. More work is planned to enable students to experience a culturally responsive school curriculum and teaching strategies.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are increasingly being well integrated into learning programmes. Some teachers use ICT effectively to strengthen student engagement and ownership of learning. The board and school leaders are considering equitable student access to electronic devices in classroom programmes.

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

The school provides a range of initiatives to support Māori students to experience more success as Māori. A small number of students are part of a joint kapa haka group with the local boys' high school. Leadership opportunities are developed through the Tuhonohono tutor group and Tumanako mentoring programme.

The work of the Honohono Committee acknowledges and extends student contributions. The Committee involves student, staff and some external experts in guiding school protocols and celebrations such as pōwhiri, hui and Year 13 students' poroporoaki. Whānau attendance and participation at regular hui each term has grown significantly. Parent views were recently sought to determine progress with strengthening learning partnerships.

The school has considered and responded to the Ministry of Education's *Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017* by developing an annual strategic plans focused on supporting Māori success. This includes closer monitoring of senior students' progress, student mentoring and an expectation that teachers will be more culturally responsive in their teaching.

Over 80 students and many teachers are involved in individual and group mentoring as part of the Tumanako programme. Māori learners value the ongoing help and encouragement with their learning goals. They report increased levels of motivation and success. Formal evaluation of the programme is planned for term 4, 2014.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

The school is well placed to sustain and continue to improve its performance.

Since the previous ERO report, progress is evident in learning-focused relationships and purposeful student goal setting. School leaders undertake valuable self review in key areas, such as ICT use and teaching as inquiry. This practice supports improved implementation. The principal plays a key role in ensuring departments and teachers perform well.

Strong, student-centred professional leadership from the leadership team is a sustained feature of the school. Carefully considered strategies grow teachers' professional knowledge and practices. Provisionally registered teachers are very well supported. Performance management processes increase teachers' critical reflection.

Governance practices are sound. The board has experienced trustees and a range of complementary expertise. It is well informed about senior student achievement and school developments, but now needs to receive better information about junior students' progress and achievement.

ERO identifies, and trustees and school leaders agree, it is time to deepen the focus on improving student outcomes in the strategic plan. This should lead to clearer links between school achievement targets and department goals, assist teachers to develop more useful appraisal goals, and support formal inquiry into teaching practices.

The board understands the importance of consulting with the school's community to ensure that the school's strategic decision-making responds to community aspirations and wishes. Strengthening approaches to obtaining parents' views and reporting trustees' response to this information, are important next steps. This should include specific provision for Māori whānau and Pacific input into the school's strategic direction.

### **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. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

At the time of this review 24 international students attend the school.

Students who enrol can choose to stay in the school hostel or with host families. Homestay placements and student orientation to the school are well managed by the international pastoral team. English language assessment practices are thorough. Individual progress and wellbeing is regularly monitored and reported to agents and families. Students are encouraged to participate fully in the wide range of school and community activities.

## **Provision for students in the school hostel**

The school hostel, Scotlands, accommodates 140 students or 11% of the school roll. This includes eight international students. The hostel is owned and operated by New Plymouth Girls' High School Board of Trustees. The hostel owner has attested that all the requirements of the Hostel Regulations are met.

The strengths identified in ERO's 2010 report have been sustained and improved in key areas. Stability in staffing provides continuity of high expectations for students and staff. A strong focus on trusting relationships between adults and students contributes to an inclusive and home-like environment.

Hostel routines are responsive to individual needs and preferences. Leadership roles and a range of activities and competitions are enjoyed by students. The board should continue to use self review to sustain high quality hostel provisions.

## **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

Wide educational opportunities include programmes that challenge and extend learners. Students' wellbeing is well supported. Many students gain high success in national qualifications. Closer consideration of progress and achievement in junior programmes is needed. The school benefits from effective leadership and sound governance. Community consultation should inform the board's strategic direction and decision making.

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



Joyce Gebbie  
National Manager Review Services  
Central Region

20 October 2014

## About the School

Location	New Plymouth	
Ministry of Education profile number	172	
School type	State Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	1277	
Number of international students	24	
Gender composition	Female 100%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	22%
	NZ European/Pākehā	61%
	Pacific	2%
	Other ethnic groups	15%
Special Features	Waimarie Special Needs Unit Awhina Learning Support Centre Wai Ora Wellness Centre Scotlands Hostel	
Review team on site	August 2014	
Date of this report	20 October 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	August 2010
	Education Review	June 2007
	Education Review	October 2003