

ERO External Evaluation

St Dominic's Catholic College, (Henderson), 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

St Dominic's Catholic College (Henderson) caters for young women in Years 7 - 13. Of the 880 students currently enrolled at the school, eight percent are Māori and 24 percent have Pacific heritages. The roll also includes smaller groups from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds.

The school is guided by the Catholic Dominican Charism, the cornerstone for learning at St Dominic's and basis for student wellbeing. The school's key values (Veritas in Action) are "respecting God, respecting myself, respecting others and respecting the environment". These values underpin the school's mission to "create confident, resilient and connected young women who contribute positively to society".

Since the 2014 ERO review the school has appointed a new principal and has expanded the senior leadership team.

The board's strategic goals focus on:

- strengthening the Catholic and Dominican character of the school
- raising the engagement and achievement of all students
- building relationships within the community
- further developing a culturally responsive learning environment.

The school sets high targets for achievement in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) for Māori and Pacific students. Goals for all students are set in relation to NCEA merit and excellence endorsements. Goals also target achievement in literacy and numeracy for Years 7 - 10 students.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement within the New Zealand Qualifications Framework
- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics for Years 7 - 10
- student engagement with the special character of the school
- progress in relation to the school's strategic goals

- wellbeing for success.

The school is part of the Waitakere Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL). It is committed to working with the CoL to raise achievement in the Waitakere area through a culturally responsive curriculum and teaching practices.

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 effective in achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for students. High levels of retention through to the senior school support students' success in learning.

NCEA data show that high levels of achievement in numeracy and literacy have been sustained over time. Most students gain NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3. Achievement in University Entrance (UE) has remained high. The numbers of excellence endorsements in NCEA Levels 1 and 2 have increased steadily over the last four years.

The school is successfully achieving parity for Māori students. The school acknowledges some disparity for Pacific students across year groups.

Students in Years 7 - 10 achieve well in literacy and numeracy. Longitudinal tracking shows the school is accelerating students' progress and increasing equity for most students over their time at the school. The strong focus on raising achievement in writing is increasing parity for Pacific students in writing.

Other valued outcomes are highly evident in the ways that students:

- are inclusive, respectful, supportive and accepting of others
- build sound learning relationships with each other and their teachers
- take leadership roles and opportunities
- value connections to their faith and community
- follow meaningful pathways for the future and increasingly access tertiary level courses.

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

The school responds effectively to those students whose learning needs acceleration.

Disparity for Pacific students is being systematically addressed with targeted strategies to improve learning outcomes. Strategies include student leadership initiatives, academic coaching, culturally responsive practices and targeted careers support.

School information shows that most students whose learning needs acceleration make good progress or accelerated progress over a four-year period in the junior school and go on to achieve NCEA qualifications at Level 2 or above.

Key aspects of acceleration strategies include:

- early identification
- specific targeted learning support
- monitoring student progress within and across years
- academic coaching.

Learning support for students with additional needs is well coordinated. There is effective liaison between classroom teachers, deans and specialist agencies. The school's learning culture helps all students participate in a breadth of learning experiences.

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 board of trustees and leaders have a focus on and commitment to student wellbeing and equitable outcomes for all learners.

Students benefit from a well-established, faith focused, highly inclusive school culture. Respectful and affirming relationships between teachers and students are highly evident. Leadership initiatives enable students to develop a strong sense of self and ownership in the school that reflect the school's special character. This culture values hauora and provides a solid foundation for motivating learners to participate, contribute and progress.

Leaders' strategic and coherent approaches build teachers' individual capability and increase the school's collective professional capacity. Leaders and teachers promote shared understandings, high expectations, and a professional learning culture. Leaders foster relational trust and collaboration at every level of the school community. They actively seek community and student input and respond appropriately to suggestions for improvement. They develop and pursue the school's vision, goals and targets to accelerate students' progress and promote their wellbeing. Their professional leadership supports a well-considered process of change management.

Leaders actively foster leadership development within the school and across the CoL. Continual improvement is evident through collaborative inquiry into teaching practice and regular internal evaluation. Evaluation informs professional development and targeted initiatives that support opportunities for increasing engagement and improving achievement for learners.

Teachers and leaders have a strong commitment to, and a good understanding of, culturally responsive teaching and learning practices. Ongoing targeted professional learning is well aligned with the strategic direction, of the school and the CoL.

Students learn through a broad curriculum that is inclusive and increasingly responsive to their individual strengths and interests. All learning pathways are equally valued. Senior students are very well supported to follow their personalised pathways and achieve quality credits. Students in Years 7 to 13 participate in increasingly authentic, relevant learning experiences. They are supported to develop ownership of their learning. The school's shared value of respect and strong focus on engagement are helping build students' sense of identity and confidence as learners.

Effective pastoral care and learning support systems and processes help to nurture students' wellbeing, increase their engagement and reduce barriers to learning. A broad network of deans, counsellors, support staff and teachers provides comprehensive support for students.

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

Leaders, teachers and trustees recognise the positive impact that integrated te reo and tikanga Māori has on Māori students' success. They are committed to improving the extent to which te ao Māori is woven throughout the curriculum and school environment

Leaders agree that a next step is the further development of a longitudinal, schoolwide tracking system for junior students. This could assist in identifying the specific acceleration strategies that are effective in supporting ongoing student success.

3 Other Matters

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 51 international students attending the school.

There are high levels of pastoral care for international students. They are very well supported to achieve educational success. Students' course selections are personalised and their progress and achievement are closely monitored. They are involved in a range of co-curricular activities and leadership roles, and participate in the wider life of the school. Systems for monitoring compliance with the Code are very effective.

4 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 Children's Act 2014.

5 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of St Dominic's Catholic College's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Strong

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- a culture of high expectations, positive relationships and shared values
- a responsive curriculum that allows for students to access meaningful career pathways
- strong leadership, which promotes positive connections and relationships that actively support equity and excellence for all learners
- well aligned strategic goals and professional learning that promote relationship based practices
- comprehensive pastoral care systems that support wellbeing and respond to students' needs.

7 Next steps

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

- providing further opportunities for students to develop knowledge and understanding about the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand
- embedding systems to identify and utilise effective acceleration initiatives.



Steve Tanner
Director Review and Improvement Services Northern
Northern Region
9 August 2019

About the school

Location	Auckland														
Ministry of Education profile number	47														
School type	Secondary (Years 7 – 13)														
School roll	880														
Gender composition	Girls 100%														
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NZ European/Pākehā</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Samoan</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Pacific</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Filipino</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>other ethnic groups</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> </table>	Māori	8%	NZ European/Pākehā	27%	Asian	20%	Samoan	11%	Other Pacific	13%	Filipino	10%	other ethnic groups	11%
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Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	No														
Provision of Māori medium education	No														
Review team on site	June 2019														
Date of this report	9 August 2019														
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>May 2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>June 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>September 2006</td> </tr> </table>	Education Review	May 2014	Education Review	June 2009	Education Review	September 2006								
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