

# St Dominic's Catholic College (Henderson) Education Review

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## About the School

Location	Henderson, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	47	
School type	State Integrated Catholic Girls Secondary (Years 7 to 15)	
School roll	830	
Number of international students	42	
Gender composition	Girls 100%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	12%
	NZ European/Pākehā	37%
	South East Asian	11%
	Samoan	8%
	Indian	6%
	Tongan	5%
	African	5%
	Fijian	3%
	Chinese	2%
	other Pacific	4%
	other Asian	3%
	other European	3%
	other	1%
Review team on site	March 2014	

Date of this report	26 May 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2009
	Education Review	September 2006
	Education Review	September 2002

## 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?

St Dominic's Catholic College is a culturally diverse state-integrated school catering for girls from Years 7 to 13. The school's values are based on the Gospel values of the Catholic Dominican tradition. They are well embedded in school life and create a sense of unity, connectedness and belonging.

Staff and students are proud of their school. Students have many opportunities to participate in a wide range of academic, cultural, arts and sporting activities. They experience a variety of leadership opportunities across the school.

The many areas of good performance outlined in the 2009 ERO report have been sustained. School systems effectively promote student learning and wellbeing. The college's continued focus on academic achievement continues and students achieve well in external qualifications.

Purposeful self review underpins school improvements. Teacher professional learning and development is well aligned to the school's vision and strategic plan. The senior leadership and pastoral care roles continue to be strengths of the school. Strategic staff appointments are helping to sustain and enhance school improvements.

Ongoing school development is aimed at achieving high standards in all aspects of school operations. Major property developments, such as the administration block and the school chapel, have been completed.

## 2 Learning

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

Students continue to achieve well. The warm, mutually respectful relationships that characterise the school promote high levels of student engagement in learning. Teachers know their students well.

School leaders and teachers have sustained and enhanced their use of student achievement information. The commitment to high expectations for progress and achievement are demonstrated through the:

- monitoring, mentoring and academic counselling that enable students to progress and achieve success
- deliberate use of student achievement data to identify and provide for more able students and students requiring learning support
- well analysed student achievement data that informs teaching and learning programmes and interventions.

Achievement information in relation to the National Standards shows that students, including Māori and Pacific students, achieve well in reading. Students at risk of not achieving at or above National Standards are identified and well supported. Teachers are strengthening teacher judgements in relation to National Standards through targeted professional development.

The achievement in literacy and mathematics of Years 9 and 10 students is closely monitored using standardised tests. The school uses the data to set targets to lift the achievement of students overall, and for Māori and Pacific students.

National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results show positive trends over time. School information on student participation in NCEA over the past four years, and particularly in 2013, shows that:

- merit and excellence endorsements are improving, especially at NCEA Level 3 and for Māori students
- Māori student achievement at NCEA Level 2 is above that of non-Maori and exceeds national expectations
- eighty-seven percent of school leavers achieve NCEA Level 2.

Pacific students achieve well at NCEA Level 1. They are achieving above national levels in NCEA Level 2, with an increasing number of students achieving merit and excellence endorsements. However, Pacific students still continue to achieve below expectations at NCEA Levels 1 and 3. Senior leaders acknowledge that Pacific student achievement across the school remains an area of focus. School leaders and teachers continue to prioritise strategies that support Pacific learners to make accelerated progress and enjoy success.

A school-wide culture of self review is contributing to the effective use of student achievement information. Trustees and school leaders could now consider setting more explicit annual targets for specific groups of students who need to experience improved success. School leaders acknowledge that teachers could more consistently share progress and achievement information with students, to increase ownership of their learning.

### 3 Curriculum

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

St Dominic's Catholic College's curriculum is effective in the promotion and support of student learning. Students benefit from the school's academically-focused curriculum that is underpinned by the school's Catholic values.

The high quality pastoral care systems effectively support students' well-being. Students are also well supported as they transition into and through the school, and beyond school. Senior leaders and staff have high expectations for all students to experience success and achieve. Students requiring additional support are well catered for through effective learning programmes, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Classrooms are settled and purposeful learning environments. Teachers establish positive and affirming relationships with students. Staff are collegial and deliberately seek ways to ensure that their teaching is relevant and improves outcomes for students. Teachers in many departments provide learning contexts that are culturally responsive to Māori and Pacific students.

Heads of department provide strong curriculum leadership, and promote collaborative approaches within and across curriculum areas. They make well informed decisions about programme development using well analysed student achievement information and departmental review findings.

For further curriculum development, school leaders agree that they could continue to:

- review and develop the school's curriculum design and implementation to further promote independent, self-managing learners
- strengthen career services.

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

St Dominic's Catholic College effectively promotes educational success for Māori, as Māori. Twelve percent of students identify as Māori.

Prominent in the factors promoting Māori student success is the growing recognition of tikanga Māori at important school occasions and the significant roles Māori students have in leading karanga, waiata and haka. There is an increasing profile of, and support for, kapa haka. Attractive Māori artworks depicting local Māori history are prominently displayed to celebrate and promote New Zealand's bicultural heritage.

Māori students express positive attitudes to school and learning and are well represented in school leadership roles. Te reo Māori is offered in Years 7 to 10, with increasing numbers of students studying te reo Māori at Year 9. Currently students in Year 10 study te reo Māori through distance elearning.

Strategies for further engaging the Māori community is an area identified by the board and senior leaders for improving outcomes for students. School leaders and ERO agree that the development of a school-wide education plan for Māori success would provide a more coordinated and strategic approach to promote success for Māori students. This plan should specify achievement targets and reflect whānau aspirations for success for Māori as Māori. Senior leaders could consider appointing a senior manager to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the plan.

## 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. The wellbeing of all students, and especially Māori and Pacific students, underpins decision-making in this school. School leaders and trustees work collaboratively to continue to improve outcomes for the girls and young women at St Dominic's Catholic College.

The principal's capable leadership, together with well-analysed information about student achievement and school operations, enables trustees to make informed decisions. The senior leadership team models professional integrity. Leaders use self review effectively to improve school performance and inform decision-making.

Effective self review enables school leaders to respond to the needs of students and parents, and make ongoing improvements. Senior leaders and ERO agree that increasing student voice could be a useful next step to inform self review.

Professional learning for teachers is focused on enhancing students' learning and achievement. Comprehensive appraisal of teachers promotes effective teaching and learning practices. Teachers are encouraged to inquire into their own teaching practice, and make use of student achievement information to target the progress of each student. The role of middle leaders to lead learning across the school is being strengthened.

Trustees are justifiably pleased with the school's good progress and see their roles as sustaining and supporting continued improvement. The work of senior leaders and the board is well coordinated. The school's six strategic pillars provide a well aligned, coherent framework for managing and reporting school improvement. The board continues to place high priority on supporting Pacific and Māori student achievement.

### 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. ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international learners is thorough.

International students attending St Dominic's Catholic School receive very good learning opportunities, enjoy participation in co-curricular activities and are well supported by the school's high quality pastoral care systems. At the time of this review there were 42

international students from Asia attending the school. Their wellbeing, academic progress and achievements are closely monitored. Even though the numbers are small, international students achieve particularly well in NCEA Level 3.

### 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 four to five years.

Dale Bailey  
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26 May 2014