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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

About The School

Location	Henderson, Waitakere City
Ministry of Education profile number	47
School type	State Integrated Girls Secondary (Year 7-15)
Decile rating[1]	6
Teaching staff: Roll generated entitlement Number of teachers	57.4 58
School roll	903

Number of international students	13
Gender composition	Girls 100%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 42%, Māori 9%, Samoan 11%, Filipino 8%, Indian 6%, Tongan 3%, Chinese 3%, African 2%, Asian 2%, Korean 1%, Fijian 1%, other European 4%, other Pacific 2%, other 6%
Review team on site	May 2009
Date of this report	18 June 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, September 2006 Education Review, September 2002 Accountability Review, October 1998 Effectiveness Review, July 1995 Assurance Review, August 1993

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

The board and staff of St Dominic's College maintain a clear focus on students achieving within a supportive learning environment. Students have increasing opportunities to succeed academically and culturally. They enjoy friendships with one another and benefit from the positive relationships they have with teachers. Students make good progress during their time at the college. Their overall achievement in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) has been consistently above the national average since the last review.

Previous ERO reports have commented on the commitment of both the board and senior managers to ongoing self review. School goals are informed by a close analysis of student achievement information and by the vision of students as confident learners making a positive contribution to society. The board receives comprehensive and useful information about school performance and reliable data about student achievement. Trustees are setting targets that relate to areas for improvement and are also reviewing the role of the board in school governance.

School managers identify and respond effectively to trends in student achievement. Literacy and numeracy programmes have been successfully implemented since 2005. Learning support and

programmes for gifted students are well managed. The majority of students achieve the required NCEA literacy and numeracy credits and an increasing number are achieving Endorsed Certificates in NCEA. The school is well positioned to implement the New Zealand Curriculum 2010 having recently reviewed its charter, values and vision statement.

This report evaluates the use of data in reviewing school performance and improving teaching and learning. Extensive information about student achievement is available to teachers, and school managers are increasingly using data for evaluating goals. Teachers have high expectations of students and are working towards goals that strengthen thinking skills and promote independent learning. The challenge for school managers is to further support teachers' use of achievement data in order to plan learning programmes that cater for the needs of students individually.

The school's special Dominican Catholic character underpins many of the effective strategies for managing and motivating students. The increasing use of restorative practices has reduced the need for disciplinary steps and complements the many high quality support and guidance programmes offered throughout the school. Senior students are role models and advocates through the diverse leadership roles they undertake. The board values parent involvement and recent consultation with community groups has been productive.

The school management team provides capable, forward looking and reflective leadership. The recent appointment of a new member of the management team provides an opportunity to review and possibly redistribute management responsibilities. Distributed leadership in curriculum management and performance management roles would support the school's focus on improving the overall quality of teaching and learning. ERO is confident that the principal and board will continue to make decisions based on reliable information and good practice.

Future Action

ERO is very confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.

The Focus Of The Review

Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

Student achievement data are well analysed across all year levels. A data analysis team coordinates the collation of achievement information, identifies patterns and trends in achievement and make

information available to teachers and senior managers. School managers and staff use data to set goals and targets for planning and reporting. Heads of Departments analyse the achievement of senior students in their annual reports.

A variety of useful and reliable assessment tools are used to monitor student progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy. The 2008 results indicated that the majority of students in Years 7 to 10 are achieving above national expectations. Students at these year levels make significant gains during the year and from year to year. The literacy and numeracy data provided to teachers clearly identify students' individual learning needs to assist teachers' planning

Over the last three years, results in the NCEA at Levels 1 and 2 have exceeded national averages and those of similar schools. Level 3 results have been consistently similar to national averages. Senior managers have established a Year 13 achievement focus group as part of their academic advisory committee and have appropriate targets to improve achievement at Level 3.

Achievement of the required NCEA Level 1 literacy and numeracy credits continues to be above national averages and has increased from year to year. In 2008, all Level 1 students achieved the required numeracy credits and the majority achieved Level 1 literacy. Merit endorsements at Levels 1, 2 and 3 exceed national averages. Targets have been set to increase both Merit and Excellence endorsements at the senior levels in 2009. University Entrance (UE) results for 2008 show a significant improvement exceeding national comparisons for the first time in four years.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of St Dominic's College was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and selfreview information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at St Dominic's College.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus area for the review:

- using data to review school performance and inform teaching and learning

ERO's findings are set out below.

Using data to review school performance and inform good practice in teaching and learning

Background

ERO's 2006 report included an evaluation of a literacy initiative that was the professional

development focus of a cluster of local schools. St Dominic's College has continued its involvement in the cluster and now has several years of good quality data relating to student achievement and progress.

Senior managers are increasingly using data in planning and in reporting to parents and to the board. Data is being used to set targets and to evaluate school performance. There are expectations of teachers to use data to meet the learning needs of students. Professional development in understanding and using data has been provided. The principal and board were interested in ERO's external evaluation of how well data are being used to inform their own self review.

Student progress and achievement

Analysis of student achievement is well developed. Senior members of staff, together with the specialist classroom teacher, provide expertise in data collation and interpretation. Cohort data are monitored and data on individual students are identified and tracked from year to year. Teachers are provided with detailed information to inform their teaching and learning programmes.

The college has maintained its involvement in the Achieving at Waitakere (A@W) initiative for five years. This initiative continues to reinforce the importance of using data to inform best practice. Data analysis from A@W enables the school to analyse the progress of students against that of the other nine schools in the cluster. The A@W data analysis shows that St Dominic's is the top achieving school in the cluster, with students making good progress across all levels.

The school has targets to raise the achievement of students in Year 13, particularly in University Entrance (UE) and Level 3 NCEA qualifications. From 2006 to 2008 achievement in UE increased from 54% to 66% and is now above that of similar school and national levels.

Areas of good performance

Data are well used in planning and reporting.

- The board has reviewed the school charter in consultation with staff and parents and updated its strategic plan. Goals for improving student achievement inform the board's long term planning. Detailed information about student achievement is reported to the board and is used in reviewing variance in annual goals and targets.
- Senior managers make good use of data in planning professional development and setting annual targets. The Achieving at Waitakere (A@W) initiative has been useful in supporting teachers to develop and share best practice in literacy and numeracy. Teachers have also been given support in interpreting data and are expected to use achievement data for planning programmes.

Data identify and support student learning needs

- Senior managers make good use of data to identify and cater for the needs of individuals and groups of students. Data are used to provide well coordinated programmes for a range of learning

needs, including Learning Support, Gifted and Talented (GATE) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

- In some classrooms teachers share achievement data with students in ways that help them to set goals and understand their own learning processes. While this practice is not yet fully embedded it is considered a key strategy in helping students to transition between schools and to gain confidence as independent learners.

Data support school self review

- The school's involvement in the initiative Extending High Standards Across Schools (EHSAS) supports the use of data. Known in the school as e-West, the initiative aims to increase the understanding of data in improving learning outcomes for students.
- Targets and goals recorded in the annual plan are based on student achievement data. Staff are expected to increase their responsibility for improving student achievement by including goals from the school's annual plan in their performance appraisal.
- Quality management systems incorporate the use of data. Annual curriculum reports from subject leaders include analysis of Year 11 to 13 NCEA data. The principal and deputy principal responsible for curriculum meet with each subject leader at the beginning of the year to discuss trends in data and agree on department plans.

The use of data in improving outcomes for students.

- Senior teachers are analysing the data in the junior school to identify possible correlation between literacy and numeracy results. They are interested in identifying any correlation between student engagement and achievement.
- Data are also used to review the balance of NCEA achievement standards and unit standards and the manageability for students of credits offered in the senior school. Academic mentoring is available for students who need extra encouragement and motivation to attain qualifications.
- Students are focused and on-task learners, although in classrooms where students clearly understand teacher expectations there are higher levels of engagement. Students participate in lessons, particularly when they are encouraged to use thinking skills in their learning. More teachers are reflecting on their own practice and are seeking feedback from colleagues and utilising specialist support staff.

Areas for improvement

Clarifying expectations of teaching and learning. Senior managers agree that it would be timely to more clearly document and communicate the expectations of teaching and learning practice that have been the focus of recent professional development. These expectations could be then used more systematically by heads of department to monitor the quality of teacher performance and to appraise teacher performance.

Increasing the use of formative teaching. Teachers should make greater use of available student

achievement data to differentiate classroom planning and to provide more individualised programmes for students. The use of learning intentions and success indicators should be more evident in classrooms. These could be shared with students to assist in the development of more independent and self managing learning skills. Some teachers who use these strategies are assisting students to set goals that support their individual progress and achievement.

Managing the quality of teaching and learning. Senior managers should continue to strengthen performance management systems to improve the collection of qualitative data about teaching and learning. The current procedures do not provide sufficient assurance that teachers with management responsibilities are appraised annually against all the applicable professional standards. Senior managers should consider ways to ensure that the quality of feedback teachers receive is more consistent and is aligned with their professional development needs. In order to support school goals relating to improving professional practice senior managers should review the peer appraisal model for appraising heads of department.

Areas Of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of St Dominic's College ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

Success for Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the extent to which the school was familiar with the Māori Education Strategy - Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success and progress made since the last review in promoting success at school for Māori students.

Ten percent (83students) identify as being Māori, a similar number to that reported in 2006. ERO's 2006 report commented positively on the initiatives taken by the school to support Maori students, particularly in valuing biculturalism and consulting whanau. Since that time the board reports that it has considered Ka Hikitia and made further changes to some of its practices as a result.

Areas of progress

Ongoing consultation. Trustees and senior managers are taking constructive steps to consult and engage the Māori community in their efforts to improve Māori student achievement overall. Māori students are achieving above national averages for Māori but are below that of other students at the college. Achievement information and targets are shared in consultation with Māori parents.

Planning and reporting. The board and principal considered Ka Hikitia in setting appropriate strategic and annual goals relating to Māori student achievement. Achievement information is aggregated and analysed annually. Reports to the board and to the Ministry of Education demonstrate improvements in the achievement of Māori students from year to year.

Commitment to biculturalism. The revised school charter and goals demonstrate a clear commitment to acknowledging and supporting New Zealand's bi-cultural heritage. The values of the school are visible and relate to practices such as support for kapa haka, te reo classes and the formal use of powhiri. Staff have opportunities to increase their awareness and confidence in te reo me ōna tikanga Māori

Areas for further improvement

Aspirations of students and whanau. Collective support for Māori students within the school will benefit from the involvement and goodwill of Māori staff members. Ongoing hui for Māori parents are also planned. The board should continue to incorporate the aspirations of parents and students for strengthening tikanga Māori and increasing the provision for learning te reo Māori into board planning.

The Achievement of Pacific Students: Progress

In this review ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of its Pacific students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement. Seventeen percent of students on the school roll are identified as being of Pacific descent, a decrease of 3% since 2006. Samoan students are 11%, with smaller numbers of Tongan and Cook Island Māori on the roll.

ERO's 2006 report acknowledged Pacific student achievement, cultural celebration and consultation as areas of good performance.

Areas of good performance

Planning and reporting. The board and principal are aware of the Ministry of Education's plan for Pacific students and have goals relating to the achievement of Pacific students included in the school's strategic and annual plans.

Student achievement. Achievement information for Pacific students is analysed separately and reported. Continued improvement in the achievement of Pacific students is noted, although overall

achievement remains below the school average.

Areas for improvement

Monitoring outcomes. Senior managers could extend the use of data to monitor outcomes for Pacific students. Information pertaining to attendance and retention could demonstrate the impact of school initiatives in supporting Pacific students. Data on trends and patterns could be used to further inform the board's targets and goals.

Affirming ethnicity. Pacific students report they would appreciate formal opportunities to meet and organise in ways that affirm their Pacific identities within the school.

Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010

Progress to date

In preparing for teaching the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010 school managers have:

- · shared relevant resources and information with the board and staff about the changes in the New Zealand Curriculum;
- · worked with the board to align the revised school charter with the New Zealand Curriculum;
- · provided opportunities for staff to discuss how the New Zealand Curriculum impacts on the school curriculum and on teaching and learning practice;
- · reviewed the school vision and values with input from the board, staff and community;
- · incorporated aspects of thinking skills and some key competencies through professional development; and
- · extended the second language learning programme from Year 7 and 8.

Next steps

The school has decided that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months are to:

- · review school curriculum policies and ensure that teaching guidelines (schemes) are aligned with the New Zealand Curriculum; and
- · consider a school-wide approach to the teaching of key competencies and support subject leaders to implement specific competencies in each learning area.

Thinking about the Future

ERO is currently discussing with secondary schools how they are thinking about the future and what it might mean for their students.

The school reports that it has thought about the future and what it might mean for their students in

the following ways:

- · formulating its vision, with input from the board and community, for students as confident young women who will contribute positively to society;
- · developing a values-based curriculum in keeping with the school's special character;
- · providing an extensive careers programme across all year levels of the school that informs students of possible directions and pathways;
- · resourcing relevant and specific professional development for staff to enable them develop a programme to enhance students' thinking skills;
- · involvement in the e-West initiative to facilitate the development and sharing of best practice, supporting transition between school through seamless learning; and
- · developing the home-school partnership with the growing Filipino community to consider and meet their needs.

Provision for International Students

Compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students and the Provision of English Language Support

St Dominic's College 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. This is a requirement of all schools that enrol international students in terms of the Act. Schools are also required to provide English language support for their international students

A small number of international students attend St Dominic's College. At the time of the review there were seven students from Korea, and six others from Hong Kong, Japan and the Philippines. The school also regularly hosts groups of students. The international director is employed full time to manage the department.

The school complies with all aspects of the Code.

Area of good performance

The international student department continues to provide high quality support for international students.

- A comprehensive orientation programme enables new students to quickly settle into the school, learn about the local environment and meet their home-stay families.
- Korean and Japanese students have access to first language support within the school from two staff members who also teach in the ESOL department. The Director regularly meets with these two

staff members to discuss the welfare and needs of international students. A Korean counsellor regularly visits the school to talk with students.

- Students interviewed during the review were enthusiastic and positive about the school and the comprehensive support they received from the director and the homestay coordinator. The director meets formally with the students each term but also has ongoing informal meetings and conversations with these students. An assembly is held for all the international students every fortnight.
- The homestay coordinator maintains regular contact with homestay parents to ensure that the girls' needs are well monitored. Homestay parents receive information about the girls' activities and academic progress at school.

Board Assurance On Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of St Dominic's College completed an ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. 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; and
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment);
- physical safety of students;
- teacher registration;
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions; and
- attendance.

The school has a strong anti-bullying focus. A number of good support programmes, including peer

support and peer mediation actively encourage the use of conflict resolution skills. Understanding of cyber-bullying has been strengthened and helpful information is readily available through the counsellors and deans services. Student leaders are given meaningful responsibilities and proactively involve others in organising student led committees.

Students are well managed and the tone of the school is respectful and inclusive. The introduction of restorative practices through the use of 'Dominican Dialogue' is becoming a key strategy in pastoral care and has reduced the need for other disciplinary steps. Data are used by the guidance and pastoral care team to examine patterns and trends. The overall evaluation would be useful information for the board to consider, together with data about stand-downs, attendance, retention, and student leaver destinations.

Compliance

During the course of the review ERO identified an area of non-compliance. The board of trustees must be assured that;

5.1 all teachers with management responsibilities have an annual performance appraisal that includes observations of classroom teaching, a self appraisal process and an appraisal against the relevant professional standards for unit holders;

[s77C State Sector Act 1988].

Recommendations

ERO recommends that the board and senior managers continue to promote the use of data in the delivery of learning programmes and strengthen performance management systems in order to increase the consistency of high quality teaching and learning.

Future Action

ERO is very confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.

Signed

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

18 June 2009

18 June 2009

To the Parents and Community of St Dominic's College

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on St Dominic's College.

Community Page

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Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve educational achievement in schools; and

- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on three review strands.

- School Specific Priorities - the quality of education and the impact of school policies and practices on student achievement.
- Areas of National Interest - information about how Government policies are working in schools.
- Compliance with Legal Requirements - assurance that this school has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

Review Coverage

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Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a school is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this school.

[1] Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.