



**Wanganui High School  
Whanganui**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Wanganui 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?**

Wanganui High School is a large co-educational school catering for students in Years 9 to 13. At the time of this ERO review the roll was 1494 students, just over a quarter of whom identified as Māori. Also attending were an additional 71 fee-paying international students. Other students from Asia and Europe are hosted for shorter periods during the year.

The school offers a broad curriculum that includes learning opportunities outside the classroom, outdoor education pursuits and performing arts. Academic, cultural and sporting successes are formally recognised and celebrated. Awards reinforce school expectations for students to strive and achieve.

Specific education provisions include the offsite Alternative Education facility and the Te Atawhai special needs unit. There is also a Confucius classroom for learning Mandarin. The school is accredited to teach the Cambridge examination course in mathematics.

Since the September 2011 ERO report, there have been changes of trustees and senior leaders, including a new principal, and periods when staff have acted in that leadership role.

Whole-school development has included promoting the values of Learning, Integrity, Fellowship and Excellence (LIFE), using technology in teaching and learning, and upgrades of classrooms and sports facilities. Staff have been involved in the Ministry of Education initiatives Positive Behaviour for Learning, He Kākano and Te Kākahu to raise levels of attendance, engagement and achievement across the school.

The community receives information about student learning and activities. Members are able to have a say through surveys and consultations.

## 2 Learning

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

Analysing data more deeply, evaluating and inquiring into findings are professional activities needing development.

Data gathered across the year levels is used to:

- place students in classes and courses appropriate to assessed abilities and social relationships
- identify students requiring additional support for learning and wellbeing
- modify and adapt programmes or course content
- monitor and report the achievement of individuals to parents, and year groups to the board and community
- note attendance, behaviour and achievement patterns, and connections between these data
- set goals to raise performance where it is below expectations.

Collectively, student performance in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs) is good. Since 2010, NCEA results have been consistently above national rates and those of similar schools for all ethnic and year groups. From this data the school has identified a pattern of lower-than-peer achievement for Māori and male students. This has been an ongoing challenge. Some success is evident in the improved percentage of Māori students leaving with NCEA Levels 2 and 3. Overall success in University Entrance has declined since 2012.

Some tools and information gathered could be better used. Nationally referenced test data in Years 9 and 10 needs to be investigated to gain insights into specific learning needs, for communicating these to faculties and informing programme planning. Senior data should also be explored further to gain understanding about curriculum and teaching effectiveness, and what actions should be taken next. The student survey, administered in Term 2 for mid-year feedback on programmes and teaching, could be used differently to provide opportunity for more immediate response.

Targets to raise achievement are broad aims and do not focus on those falling below overall expectations. These students should be identified in faculty plans to generate consistent response across teachers.

In 2015, school actions include developing practices that encourage students to take more responsibility for their learning and achievement of goals. Introducing individual learning plans is likely to promote awareness as self-monitoring learners and strengthen reasons to access tracking data. Regular written feedback and next steps from teachers, in relation to the agreed success criteria, should be consistent for all year groups.

## 3 Curriculum

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

The curriculum is effective in that most students achieve academic qualifications to National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 3 and some excel in their chosen fields of interest. Most students are on task, motivated to learn and keen to be successful. For a small proportion, the curriculum is less effective in fostering engagement and success in the NQF. Investigation has led to some changes. Reasons need to be further investigated.

Students are offered a broad range of programmes and activities. Options have been extended at Year 9 to improve opportunities for trying new learning and guiding future choices. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is implemented from Year 10 as a strategy for student engagement. In Years 12 and 13 large numbers of students achieve qualifications in a wide range of workplace-based courses and programmes.

Students with high needs are well catered for in the special needs facility. Their programmes are guided by individual education plans developed in consultation with specialist agencies, parents and whānau. Some students are mainstreamed for adapted activities. Transition from school is a planned and well-managed process.

Students needing additional learning support are assisted by teacher aides within classrooms. Expectations for accelerated learning should be clearly defined to guide monitoring their progress. A register for managing equitable provision for the range of needs should be formalised. The overall impact of interventions, programmes and investment of resources needs to be regularly evaluated and reported.

Good quality inquiry processes emerging from some faculties and individual teachers are focusing on effectiveness for student learning and engagement. Findings are leading to practices likely to be positive for Māori and all learners. These processes and findings that improve outcomes for learners should continue to be promoted and modelled schoolwide.

It is some years since the curriculum was comprehensively reviewed in relation to current education practice and community aspirations. A schoolwide approach to curriculum design is needed. This should be guided by *The New Zealand Curriculum* and a shared understanding of effective teaching. Design should incorporate vocational pathways and career planning from Year 9. This review is likely to assist the school in moving towards Bring-Your-Own-Device for teaching and learning.

Inconsistencies are evident in aspects of operation across the school. The performance management system, including the appraisal process, should be used more consistently to:

- give assurance that expectations for practising certificate issue and renewal are met
- provide evaluative feedback to teachers and leaders
- identify opportunities for building capability.

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

Many Māori students achieve well in NCEAs and are successful in other curriculum areas. They are productively engaged in school life and well prepared for their transition beyond school. Since 2010, the margin between Māori leavers with NCEA Levels 2 and 3 and their Pākehā peers has narrowed.

Māori students are disproportionately represented in data for lower attendance, disciplinary matters, lower retention and achievement. While the charter is clear about actions required to enact commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and raise Māori student success, there has been no coordinated approach to implementing and monitoring these and knowing the extent of impact. Initiatives to address engagement issues need to be evaluated so that effective practices are supported, extended and sustained.

Changes of leadership have affected continuity of guardianship of Māori department provision. School personnel are working to develop partnerships with Māori students, teachers, parents, whānau and local iwi, for a climate of understanding and cooperation. First steps have been taken. The board has co-opted two Māori trustees and the Whānau Roopu is supporting students and teachers.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

Performance in the National Qualifications Framework has been maintained at a good level. To be in a better position to sustain and improve performance for promoting equity and excellence in valued outcomes, leaders need to:

- communicate the vision for high performance and improvement clearly
- clarify roles and responsibilities
- monitor performance for accountability and effectiveness
- provide targeted support for building capability
- promote a coherent approach to operation which incorporates habitual, evidence-based evaluation and inquiry.

Board planning and stewardship is appropriately focused on doing what is best for students. Commitments and tasks listed in the charter and associated plans identify what is needed for improvement. Clarification of expectations for success and what counts as evidence will assist with meaningful self review and planning for the next annual cycle.

### **Provision for international students**

Wanganui High 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 there were 71 international students attending the school. They come from a range of countries including China, Germany, Japan, Hong Kong, Italy, Thailand and Vietnam. The length of stay varies according to the purpose of the visits.

There are well-established systems for inducting international students and supporting them during their stay. The director of international students, the dean and a specialist teacher of English as a second language (ESOL) work together to address and monitor students' needs. The international complex provides a base for students to mingle and access assistance.

The home-stay coordinator maintains sound links between the homes and school. She monitors and reports on student wellbeing. Staff with responsibility for international students liaise well with heads of faculties and management. They build positive and productive relationships with students.

The next steps are for the department to conduct a rigorous review of school provision related to International students and report annually to the board.

## **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.

## **Recommendation**

ERO recommends that the board provides additional support for the principal, senior leaders and trustees in order to bring about the following improvements:

- leading a coherent approach for effective operation
- building evaluation capacity for improvement.

Since the on-site phase of the review, the board has contracted an external consultant to work with trustees and leaders on planning for moving forward. First steps have been taken to target the key areas identified in this report as needing urgent development. The board must give high priority to completing the plan.

ERO expects the board to report progress against the termly milestones and toward planned outcomes. The board will provide evidence of progress and of evaluation for informing next steps.

## Conclusion

Wanganui High School has a large roll which includes many international students. Performance in the NCEAs has been sustained above national and similar-school rates. Students enjoy a range of other successes. Well-coordinated internal evaluation would generate better information to target improvement opportunities, including success for some disengaged students.

ERO intends to carry out another review within three years of the date of the on-site phase of the review.



Joyce Gebbie  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

3 May 2016

## About the School

Location	Whanganui	
Ministry of Education profile number	189	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)	
School roll	1494	
Number of international students	71	
Gender composition	Male 53%, Female 47%	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā Māori Other ethnic groups	65% 27% 8%
Special Features	Alternative Education; Te Atawhai Special Needs Facility	
Review team on site	August 2015	
Date of this report	3 May 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	September 2011 October 2008 October 2005