



**Westlake Girls' High School
Takapuna, Auckland**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Westlake 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?

Westlake Girls' High School, situated on Auckland's North Shore, is a large, multicultural, secondary school catering for girls from Year 9 to 13. Six percent of the school roll identify as Māori and most have northern iwi affiliations.

Through its vision the school aspires to be a leading educator of young women. It has a culture and legacy of high expectations for academic achievement balanced with a caring focus on student wellbeing. Students report a strong sense of belonging and pride in their school and they appreciate the school's inclusive and supportive culture.

Since the 2012 ERO review, the board of trustees has a new chairperson and several new board members. The school charter, based on the school's values and guiding principles, sets out a coherent plan for school direction. Strategic and annual planning is strengthened by purposeful self review.

Since her appointment four years ago, the principal has prioritised well-implemented change. Processes for improvement have been fair and equitable. School leaders make good use of community consultation.

Over recent years a number of major initiatives have been implemented. One is the school's vertical house system with horizontal form classes. A further example is the newly devised group, the Learning Enhancement Team, which works to eliminate any barriers to students' learning in an individualised way.

ERO's 2012 report identified recommendations to further improve students' educational opportunities and outcomes. These included aligning the curriculum more closely with future-focused approaches, supporting Māori initiatives within the school and refining charter targets to strengthen the progress of groups of students experiencing learning issues. This review finds that trustees and senior leaders have responded positively to these recommendations.

2 Learning

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

Westlake Girls' High School uses achievement information well to make positive changes to learners' progress and achievement. The school is already exceeding the 2017 government targets of 85% of students achieving the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) at Level 2. Achievement in NCEA is very high for most groups across the senior school.

Senior and middle leaders monitor, analyse and evaluate achievement information effectively at Years 11, 12 and 13. This alerts teachers to respond to students' learning needs throughout the year. Teachers make positive adjustments to course content and curriculum delivery to achieve successful NCEA outcomes. Students with special learning needs are well supported by teachers who have a depth of knowledge about each student's requirements.

Māori students benefitted from an achievement-based intervention during 2013 to 2014. Monitoring and adjustment processes resulted in very positive shifts in Māori student NCEA achievement. This group now achieves at the same high levels as the rest of the senior school. Currently there is a similar intervention for Pacific students to lift their performance at NCEA level to equal that of other students. Overall, Māori and Pacific student achievement sits well above the national NCEA percentages for the rest of the country.

Scholarship results are on an upward trend and the school is now ranked eighth in New Zealand for Scholarship success. The school is focusing on extending programmes at junior level which may lead to wider success in future scholarship qualifications.

ERO and school leaders agree that an increased range of achievement information, as well as standardised assessment tools, would help Years 9 and 10 teachers to know their learners better. This knowledge would allow teachers to track student progress against curriculum levels more successfully and personalise planning for specific groups within classes. Useful information about Year 8 students is becoming more available for teachers as relationships with the local cluster schools develop.

To facilitate and enhance student learning further, ERO and school leaders discussed the value of:

- teachers at junior levels becoming more familiar with assessment practices that involve regularly sharing information and next learning steps with students
- students receiving more support to self direct and self manage their learning
- charter targets focused on accelerating the progress of specific groups of junior level students.

3 Curriculum

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

The Westlake Girls' High School's curriculum promotes student engagement and learning very effectively. It is aligned to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC), and NZC values and key competencies are prioritised in each department's curriculum plans.

Positive and affirming relationships for learning are evident between teachers and students. Teachers have a strong commitment to meeting student aspirations and responding to their set goals. As a result, many senior students take up successful tertiary study and enter a variety of pathways in life, when they leave school.

Teachers are increasingly focused on engaging students in programmes that encourage creative learning as well as success in qualifications. Often these contextualised approaches reflect students' interests and strengths. A well-considered e-learning vision is being implemented in stages to develop digital competencies for both staff and students. This vision uses the akonga principle of both adults and young people learning together. Integrated approaches to programmes across learning areas and creative thinking classes are other innovations in the junior curriculum.

The school offers an enriching range of co-curricular activities. There are many opportunities for students to experience success and build their leadership capability and social competencies. A variety of sporting, cultural and academic events celebrate student success and achievement.

To further enhance the school's curriculum, school leaders could further:

- include student voice and student co-construction of learning programmes
- develop inquiry-based learning approaches to promote students' thinking skills required for success in NCEA scholarship and endorsements
- include students' cultural backgrounds, particularly Māori and Pacific contexts, in learning programmes
- support student wellbeing through the curriculum as well as through student services.

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

The school is promoting educational success for Māori students effectively. Success in NCEA Level 1 and 2 continues to be at a high level.

Pastoral care occurs in a supportive whānau environment that reflects understandings of tikanga Māori. Senior Māori students are increasingly involved with the guidance of younger students and other school leadership roles.

Māori students receive mentoring from staff making up the Māori Mentoring Team in addition to the support provided from form teachers and through the house system. A mentoring programme is also available for senior Māori students, facilitated by Auckland University, to develop leadership qualities applicable for selected pathways in the tertiary sector.

Te reo Māori is available for Year 9 to 13 students to study in full options. A Māori Committee promotes such events such as Te Wiki o te reo Māori. Students perform in kapa haka and are tutored regularly with students from Westlake Boys' High School. They are involved competitively in local and regional events.

The board and school leaders continue to investigate ways to consult and engage with Māori whānau to strengthen family participation and partnership in their daughters' learning. The board's commitment to Māori student success is strategically signalled in charter targets as well as a Māori Education Plan. The school's property plan includes designs for a whare wananga to provide a future focal point for the school's bicultural development.

ERO and school leaders discussed how bicultural practices could be further developed by:

- including measurable outcomes for Māori success in senior leaders' goal setting
- increasing leaders' and teachers' reflection on the quality of their own culturally responsive practices
- more robust evaluation of the school's Māori Education Plan.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Westlake Girls' High School is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. A culture of continuous improvement permeates the school. The management of change is well paced and considered. Effective self review has guided relevant and significant school developments.

The board brings a range of skills to the governance of the school. Trustees work well with the principal and school leaders using democratic approaches. They willingly engage in pertinent board training, and are developing processes to review the effectiveness of their governance roles.

The principal provides experienced, insightful and respected leadership. She promotes distributed leadership to strengthen the development and consolidation of school initiatives.

Teacher capability is continuing to be developed through carefully selected professional learning and good quality teacher appraisal processes. Groups of teachers are working collaboratively to find innovative approaches to motivate and challenge student learning.

Students have many leadership opportunities available where they can express their views of how the school can improve and influence young women's lives.

The board could consider further developing governance by:

- establishing and promoting a bicultural vision for the school's unique context
- exploring ways to be assured of student wellbeing within the school's culture of high expectations for academic success.

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 *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 processes are thorough.

At the time of this report there were 180 international students attending the school. They receive very good levels of pastoral care and high quality education, including English and first language learning and support. Students participate in a variety of school activities including music, drama, sports and cultural events. They are well integrated into school life and enjoy their involvement in cultural experiences.

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

Westlake Girls' High School is a high performing school in regard to its academic achievement and its focus on the positive development of young women. The school offers many enriching educational opportunities and experiences. The principal's recent focus on the development of 21st century learning is being successfully implemented.

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.



Dale Bailey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

29 May 2015

About the School

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| Location | Takapuna, Auckland | |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 38 | |
| School type | Secondary (Years 9 to 13) | |
| School roll | 2029 | |
| Number of international students | 180 | |
| Gender composition | Girls 100% | |
| Ethnic composition | Māori | 6% |
| | NZ European/Pākehā | 43% |
| | Chinese | 16% |
| | Korean | 11% |
| | Filipino | 5% |
| | Indian | 4% |
| | British | 3% |
| | Middle Eastern | 2% |
| | Samoan | 2% |
| | Tongan | 1% |
| | other European | 3% |
| | other | 4% |
| Review team on site | March 2015 | |
| Date of this report | 29 May 2015 | |
| Most recent ERO report(s) | Education Review | August 2012 |
| | Education Review | August 2009 |
| | Education Review | June 2006 |