

Avondale College Education Review

- 1 Background and Context
- 2 Review and Development
- 3 Sustainable performance and self review
- School Statistics

1 Background and Context

What is the background and context for this school's review?

Avondale College is a very large and culturally diverse secondary school in central Auckland. It caters for students from Years 9 to 13. The college has served its local community for many years and also provides for a large number of students from beyond the Avondale area. It offers dual qualification pathways for senior students. The majority elect to study for the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA), with smaller numbers (around 20 percent) opting for the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE).

During the review of the college in August 2012 ERO affirmed a number of school features, including positive student achievement in NCEA, high success rates in CIE, the broad curriculum offered and the strengthening quality of self-review in school departments. The report also identified a number of areas where school-wide systems and practices could be improved.

Over the past two years the college has worked independently of ERO to address these areas for improvement. During this time there have been changes of personnel on the board and executive leadership team. Both now comprise a mix of longer-serving and newer members.

This 2014 report provides an overview of progress made by the school based on ERO's visit to verify and evaluate developments in performance.

2 Review and Development

How effectively is the school addressing its priorities for review and development?

Priorities identified for review and development

Agreed review and development areas for this review focused on:

- the quality of school leadership and governance
- the quality of teaching, learning, curriculum pathways and student wellbeing, including success for Māori and other priority learners
- the quality of self review for sustaining existing good practice and for supporting ongoing school improvement
- the quality of work done to address compliance actions and recommendations for improving practice in the 2013 ERO report
- other areas the school has prioritised for development or areas identified by ERO during the review, as relevant.

Progress

School leadership and governance

The quality of school leadership and governance have continued to progress well over the past two years. The principal provides strong and inspirational leadership. The current and former board chairpersons provide sound leadership for the board, and the principal, school trustees and wider executive (senior leadership) team work together closely. They demonstrate a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. Their leadership practices are guided by well considered strategic thinking and consideration of data.

Executive and board members demonstrate their strong commitment to providing a school culture that promotes student wellbeing, serves priority learners well, and caters for and extends opportunities for all students. This commitment is demonstrated in the work done on school culture and to enrich learning opportunities for students.

Areas for review and development identified in the 2013 ERO report have been well integrated into wider strategic planning and executive action plans. Trustees include relevant review and development priorities in board work plans. These plans show a strengthening of the board's review and monitoring functions, and good planning for governance and senior leadership professional development.

The pressures of 2012, associated with balancing school operations and simultaneously managing a significant rebuilding programme, are no longer evident. Students enjoy very attractive and high quality learning facilities.

Teaching, learning and curriculum pathways

Student progress and achievement remains a central focus for the school. The school's executive team has worked well with curriculum directors and heads of department. This work has often included guidance and input from external advisors and specialists. As a result, very good progress has been made in this area.

Responding to the needs of priority learners to increase students' achievement and future educational and career opportunities has been a strong focus for the school. There is a deliberate, strategic approach to promoting success for Māori students, and for Pacific students. Priority learners with special learning needs are also well catered for. These students benefit from differentiated programmes which are well matched to their needs. This is giving students a sense of enjoyment and achievement.

Teachers' work on curriculum pathways has resulted in more opportunities for students to pursue academic and vocational goals and aspirations. This has included extending opportunities for highly able students and those with specific talents and interests. The school's innovation programme offers valuable opportunities for students to gain internationally recognised Information Communications (ICT) certification, while also contributing to their CIE and NCEA studies. In 2015 leaders have planned an initial step towards extending this programme to all Year 9 and 10 students. The programme aims to increase students' capacity for life-long learning through the emphasis placed on interpersonal and critical thinking skills and working creatively to solve real life challenges.

Leaders place a strong priority on the analysis and use of student achievement information, and on ensuring that this information is well used to inform planning for teaching and learning. Achievement information at senior school levels (Years 11 to 13) is of high quality and shows that student achievement in NCEA and CIE has continued to increase over the past two years. The college's overall results for NCEA levels 1, 2 and 3 compare well with, or exceed local, regional and national averages. Overall student success in University Entrance (UE) continues to trend upwards and exceeds local, regional and national success rates. CIE data continues to show high levels of student success. The college has also celebrated a large number of scholarship successes in a range of subject areas.

NCEA and UE data shows good gains in Māori student achievement since 2011. Overall retention and achievement for Māori students continues to exceed national averages and

accelerated achievement is especially evident in the 2012 results. The board and leadership team acknowledge the need to continuing working to further lift Māori success rates, particularly for boys.

Pacific students are also experiencing increasing levels of success in NCEA and UE qualifications. A steadily reducing gap between whole-school data and Pacific student data is evident. The progress of Pacific students continues to be closely monitored and, as for Māori, good academic counselling and support provisions are available.

The use of student achievement information by teachers to guide programme planning is becoming well established across the school. Classrooms are settled, productive work environments. Effective teaching practices for the school have been identified. Expectations for high quality teaching are well documented.

Teaching programmes are student focused and increasingly responsive to student learning needs. Relationships between teachers and students and among students are positive and affirming. Teachers provide senior students with regular information about their progress towards achieving external qualifications. They also give students guidance on how to further improve their learning. Monitoring the achievement of students in Years 9 and 10 has continued to develop. Departments now report in standardised ways to students and parents, providing them with a clearer indication of student progress and achievement across the curriculum.

An emphasis on school culture and student wellbeing has been key part of work to further improve student outcomes. This has complemented developments in teaching and learning. School values have been revised, are well known by students, and encourage honesty, endeavour, atawhai (kindness), respect and tenacity.

A wide range of internal and external support services are available for students. Leaders and teachers place a strong focus on connecting with families, particularly to support students who are at risk of not achieving. Surveys are used well to gather information about student satisfaction across many aspects of their schooling, including engagement in learning, wellbeing and teaching and curriculum dimensions. Data from the surveys indicate a generally good level of student affirmation for the college and provide good direction for future improvements.

Key next steps

The school has identified several areas where further improvements are planned. These areas relate to:

- promoting positive student behaviours to support student learning
- extending teachers' use of student voice in teaching and learning programmes
- increasing Māori student progress and achievement through participation in the Ministry of Education's Building on Success initiative
- strengthening homeroom teachers' role in academic counselling
- plans for increasing the use of ICT as a learning tool in Years 9 and 10
- providing senior students with on-line access to their own progress and achievement information.

ERO agrees that planned developments listed above should be beneficial to students. It also recommends work to strengthen teacher knowledge of Ministry of Education resources such as Tātaiako - Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners, to further promote success for Māori students as Māori.

The executive team could also consider whether sufficient emphasis is being placed on student feedback to teachers as part of school strategies for promoting ongoing improvements to teaching practice.

The use of teacher surveys may also provide an additional source of information about how the executive team and board could further support teacher wellbeing and workload management.

3 Sustainable performance and self review

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

The school is well placed to sustain and continue to improve and review its performance. The board and executive team have made very good progress with all the review and development areas identified by ERO's 2013 review.

Strategic planning is well developed. It is improvement focused and put into practice through clearly documented board work plans and executive action plans. There is clear delegation of responsibilities and reporting expectations within the executive team and at departmental levels. The distribution of workload supports sustainable leadership practices. Changes in board leadership and membership have been accompanied by useful induction and professional development programmes. This is promoting sustainable and effective school governance.

Self review practices at board and executive levels have been considerably strengthened. Purposeful, systematic, and evidence-based self review is now embedded at all levels of the school. The board reports that more specific reviews and better evaluation of review findings now underpin the school's ongoing programme of review. Reports to the board from school leaders enable trustees to make well informed decisions about school performance and future priorities.

The board and school leaders have fully addressed the compliance actions in ERO's 2013 report relating to the review of provision for international students and the appraisal of the executive team. In addition, the wider review of the performance management system has resulted in a more streamlined and cohesive approach being introduced for the 2014 school year.

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

Avondale College provides a high standard of education. It offers students a broad, well designed curriculum that is responsive to their diverse needs and aspirations. Students achieve well and take pride in their school. High quality self review underpins the board's strategic decision making and planning.

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

Dale Bailey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern
Northern Region

21 January 2015

School Statistics

Location	Avondale, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	78	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	2484	
Number of international students	140	
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 21% Māori 12% Samoan 15% Indian 11% Chinese 7% South East Asian 5% African 4% Tongan 4% Cook Island Māori 3% Niue 3% Fijian 2% Middle Eastern 2% other Asian 6% other 5%	
Review team on site	October 2014	
Date of this report	21 January 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	February 2013
	Education Review	June 2009
	Education Review	June 2006