

ERO External Evaluation

Ashburton College, Ashburton, Mid Canterbury

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for students. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

School Context

Ashburton College is a co-educational school in Mid Canterbury catering for students in Years 9 to 13. The school roll is 1117, including 29 international students.

The school's vision is to provide a learning environment built on three Pillars of Excellence: incorporating Exceptional Learning, Exemplary Citizenship and Exciting Opportunities. The school places an emphasis on students Achieving Quality, Showing Pride in themselves and their community, and Having Respect for everyone and everything.

The board's strategic goals are:

- to improve the physical environment, including rebuilds for roll growth and building upgrades
- future-focused curriculum development
- developing staff capacity for teaching and learning in the future-focused curriculum and environment
- improving achievement for Māori and Pacific students
- providing for a growing Filipino student community.

Leaders and teachers report to the board school-wide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement within National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) qualifications
- progress and achievement in literacy and mathematics in Years 9 and 10
- progress towards student achievement goals in the annual plan through the principal's reports
- student involvement and success in cultural and sporting activities.

Since ERO's 2015 review, there have been changes in school leadership. The current principal started his tenure at the beginning of 2017. There have also been personnel changes to the middle leadership team.

The board of trustees has new leadership. Trustees have undertaken considerable professional development, and have addressed the governance areas identified in ERO's 2015 report. They continue to build governance capability.

The school's curriculum has recently been refocused into two major school developments. These developments are Culturally Responsive and Relational Pedagogy (CR&RP) and the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) called the AshColl Way.

The College is part of the Hakatere Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL), comprising twelve schools and eleven early learning centres. The CoL has a shared commitment to culturally responsive and relational pedagogy.

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

The school's achievement information shows that the school has made progress towards equitable and excellent outcomes for its students over the past three years.

Year 9 students have their literacy, mathematical knowledge and science skills tested on entry. School data show a trend of improvement in achievement by the time these students finish Year 10, with some indication of accelerated progress for some students over the two years. This data needs to be analysed more deeply to show accelerated progress, including for those Māori and Pacific students who need this.

NCEA roll-based data show that students at this school achieve well above National and similar schools' averages at Levels 1 and 2. Achievement rates are similar to these comparisons at Level 3. There is a significant improvement in Māori student achievement at Levels 2 and 3 NCEA for 2017, together with an increase in the percentage of Māori students leaving school with a Level 3 qualification. However, there continues to be disparity between the achievement of Māori and other groups of students. This disparity is also evident for Pacific students.

NCEA data for 2017 show improvement in boys' achievement, particularly at Levels 1 and 3. Disparity in boys' achievement remains evident across the school.

Achievement levels at University Entrance have fluctuated over the past 3 years. However, the school states that a significant proportion of students access and achieve success in vocational pathways at Years 12 and 13. Students on vocational pathways leave school to enter into employment and/or trades as an alternative to achieving Level 3 or University Entrance qualifications. It would be useful to ensure that this information is reflected in the school's senior student achievement reporting.

1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

The school is effectively accelerating the achievement of those students who need this.

Leaders and teachers have good examples of accelerating student progress in Years 9-13. They are collating relevant data that enables them to accurately identify students whose progress needs acceleration. This data is currently used by teachers to identify strategies to improve outcomes for students.

At the time of this review, the information is not being used as effectively as it could be to measure accelerated progress of these priority students, or to evaluate the impact or effectiveness of interventions and initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for students. The school now needs to further develop systems to know how well it is addressing in-school disparity in student outcomes.

The school attributes the recent positive shifts in achievement levels for boys in Year 11 to the better tracking, monitoring and support at an individual level introduced in 2017.

Leaders and teachers are proactive in accessing pathway courses for senior students through external providers. Strong partnerships with local businesses in the community are providing students with meaningful employment when they leave school.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

The school is moving in a positive direction, focused on improving outcomes for students. The board and school leaders are building relational trust and a collaborative staff working environment.

The board has a well-considered, strategic approach to moving the school into a more sustainable position for school improvement. Student learning, wellbeing, achievement and progress are the board's core priorities. They strategically encourage and resource interventions and initiatives directed at improving student outcomes. The board is actively developing its bicultural capability and understanding.

School leaders are building a school community that works together to create a positive environment. This environment promotes student wellbeing, and leaders are working towards providing a curriculum that gives all students equitable opportunities to learn and succeed. New initiatives such as CR&RP and the AshColl Way are key drivers of the future-focused curriculum developments.

Leadership structures provide opportunities for shared communication and collaboration between pastoral and curriculum leaders. Leadership builds the capability of teachers and students to be leaders who promote and support the improvement of teaching and learning. Leadership development is encouraged both within the school and through the CoL.

The school builds strong, educationally-focused relationships with educational and community institutions to increase opportunities for student learning and success. These connections, and sound pastoral systems and practices, enable flexible pathways for individual student success.

Teachers are working collaboratively and engage in professional learning that increases their knowledge and skills to provide a more responsive curriculum. A variety of forums are building teachers' cultural competence and capability in teaching, assessment and responding to students' needs.

2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Trustees, leaders and teachers need to continue to build an environment where bicultural values underpin school, curriculum, and teaching and learning developments. Such an environment would better affirm Māori students' culture, language and identity. It would also develop greater

understanding of valued outcomes for Māori learners, and promote all learners' development as citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand.

A whole-school approach to help build a shared, systematic understanding of data collation, analysis and use, with a focus on accelerated student progress, would help to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes for students.

Accelerated student progress should be reported more frequently to the board. This would enable evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of interventions and initiatives, and outcomes for groups and cohorts of students, including students with additional learning needs, and gifted and talented students.

3 Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board 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 the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- finance
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student safety and wellbeing:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (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 29 international students attending the school, mainly from Japan. International students continue to benefit from good quality education and care at Ashburton College. The international student department has made good use of internal and external evaluation to develop a clear direction for students' programmes, and the school. The department has begun to report on students' academic achievement and involvement in the curriculum and cultural activities. Work is being done to formalise documentation around student wellbeing, including students' integration into the school and community.

Actions for compliance

ERO identified non-compliance in relation to governance, planning and the delivery of the health curriculum.

In order to address this, the board of trustees must:

1. adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum after consultation with the school community.

[s60B Education Act 1989]

Area for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should conduct regular surveys to provide useful information about student wellbeing.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- strategic leadership by trustees and school leaders focused on equitable and excellent outcomes for students
- staff working collaboratively to build their capability in providing a responsive curriculum
- educationally-focused relationships with the local community that support vocational and academic success for students.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are in:

- continuing to develop and embed bicultural understanding and appreciation across all school practices and initiatives to reflect bicultural Aotearoa New Zealand
- strengthening the analysis of learner information to more effectively monitor and report student acceleration over time.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

ERO is likely to carry out the next external evaluation in three years.



Alan Wynyard
Director Review & Improvement Services Southern

29 October 2018

About the school

Location	Ashburton, Mid Canterbury
Ministry of Education profile number	351
School type	Secondary, Years 9 to 13
School roll	1117
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%
Ethnic composition	Māori 14% Pākehā 58% Filipino 9% Samoan 4% Cook Island Māori 3% Pacific Islands 3% Other ethnicities 9%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	September 2018
Date of this report	29 October 2018
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review July 2015 Education Review August 2013 Education Review January 2011