

King's High School
Dunedin

Confirmed

Education Review
Report

Education Review Report: King's High School

The purpose of ERO's reports is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. ERO's reports are intended to be clear, concise, constructive and evaluative. 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.

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

What are the important features of this school's context that have an impact on student learning?

King's High School is a boys' school serving students from Dunedin and the surrounding area. A new rector (principal) has been appointed since the last ERO review. He leads an efficient and effective team of senior managers. As a result, the culture of the school strongly reflects the vision and principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. The rector sets and models high expectations of himself, staff and students.

Important in the context of the school is the emphasis on programmes and strategies that educational research indicates are likely to be particularly successful for boys. The school's vision and values are clearly expressed. Expectations for learning, behaviour and standards are very clearly stated and rigorously implemented. The recent roll growth, especially in the junior school, has allowed the school to expand the range of courses for junior students.

Most classroom teachers make good use of a range of techniques and a variety of activities to make learning as interesting as possible for the students. Teachers' professional development is focused on strategies to engage boys in learning. Sport and cultural participation rates are high for both staff and students. The good relationships built in these areas flow through to the settled, well-managed classrooms. Competition is used as an effective motivator within classrooms and between classes at the same year level.

The expectation that students can achieve better is borne out by the improved NCEA (National Certificates of Educational Achievement) results at the end of 2010, especially for Level 1 and 2 and for Māori students. National test results in literacy and mathematics at Years 9 and 10 are also better than students of a similar age. Student achievement is promoted at every opportunity and successes are suitably celebrated.

2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Student engagement. The generally high level of student engagement in learning is a strength of the school. Teachers have very clear expectations for students' learning and behaviour, resulting in high levels of student on-task behaviour in classrooms. Teachers deliberately use strategies that are most likely to improve boys' learning. Practice is well monitored by student engagement surveys and student input into the annual review of each teacher's performance.

Student progress and achievement. Teachers have good strategies for monitoring student progress. Junior literacy and mathematics programmes use asTTle and other testing to show good overall levels of student progress in these areas. NCEA results are especially good at Level 1 and 2 and there has been an increase in merit and excellence endorsements and in individual Level 3 scholarships. NCEA Level 1 literacy and numeracy achievement is comparable to similar schools. Students know that there is a strong focus on their progress and achievement.

Support programmes. A rigorous process for monitoring the learning and engagement of individual students helps ensure that students who are at risk of not achieving are quickly identified and supported. There are multiple systems in place to support learning, including action plans for specific purposes, internal referrals and communication with parents. The structure and hierarchy of responses and action plans is responsive to the diversity of student needs. Particular examples include strategies to support Māori and Pacific Island students, tutorial and homework classes, and class liaison meetings to share information about specific students with their teachers.

International students. The school's international students are well supported in terms of their pastoral care and academic progress. The students are well integrated into school activities and students ERO spoke to indicated that they enjoy their time at the school.

How well are Māori students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Value for Māori culture. Students have many opportunities to develop comfort and confidence in Te Ao Māori. They all learn, practise and proudly perform the school haka to support each other and school events. Students have access to effective language and cultural learning lessons in a dedicated Māori classroom. The school's value for Māori culture is reinforced through the reo Māori programme for all Year 9 students. Senior leaders create innovative ways to meet the emerging strengths and needs of Māori students, for example, developing a whakairo (Māori carving) class.

Māori student achievement. Māori students generally achieve well at school. Their overall level of achievement is comparable to non-Māori students in the school. An increase in the NCEA Level 1 pass rate for Māori students was specifically targeted in 2010 and resulted in a shift from well below the national average for Māori, to well above. Results for that year in NCEA Level 2 were similarly high. The school has developed a useful resource to further raise Māori achievement and engagement, with a focus on developing teacher capability.

Student support. The teacher and Dean of Māori work collaboratively to provide a range of effective support for Māori students. The school's comprehensive strategic and development planning and review processes are effectively supported by a Māori advisory group. A variety of opportunities is created for parent and whānau whānui input to the school's planning, for example regular whānau meetings, surveys, and parent-teacher interview evenings.

Reporting. Some school-wide data gathered to show how well students are progressing, achieving and engaging in learning does not show outcomes for Māori students. School leaders with responsibility for overseeing the school's development plans, goals and targets for Māori students would benefit from receiving a wider range of well-analysed student outcome information.

3 Curriculum

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

Curriculum design. The school's curriculum has been effectively designed to meet the needs, abilities and interests of boys. The curriculum:

- is widely defined with the school's values being actively promoted and evident throughout the school;
- is modified through the effective use of review information;
- has a strong literacy and mathematics focus with new courses or increased time allowances being allocated where priorities have been identified;
- is providing useful vocational pathways for students through, for example, work exploration, Gateway and technology options; and
- has recently included an elite sports academy for some students in Years 9 and 10.

Teaching and learning (pedagogy). There is a strong focus on developing teaching and learning programmes to cater for students' abilities and interests. This has been implemented through ongoing whole-staff professional development and useful planning formats. Students are placed in flexible ability groups in Years 9 and 10 and for English and mathematics in Year 11. Teaching practice is generally good to very good with teachers using humour, competitions and a variety of activities to help engage boys in their learning.

Performance-management system. The rector and senior leaders have reviewed and improved the quality of the teacher performance-management system. The system is highly structured with explicit expectations and a development focus. There is clear alignment between the school's current priorities and teachers' personal development goals. Student learning surveys are a feature of every teacher's appraisal. This information informs future teacher professional learning and is having a very positive impact on what is happening in classrooms for students.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain and further improve its performance. The school's vision, values and culture are well understood by the school community and provide the foundation for student engagement and learning. There are effective self-review practices that identify strengths and areas for further development. Strong school-community links and regular surveys help keep managers and trustees well informed about how the school is operating.

The reports trustees receive from heads of department include analysis of student achievement and information about the operation of the department. These reports could be strengthened by a greater level of reflection on what the data means and what subsequent actions are indicated. A review cycle including external experts might be a useful way to independently evaluate the quality and effectiveness of each department over time.

Trustees are experienced and generally well-informed about student achievement. They empower the staff to fulfil their responsibilities and expect high levels of accountability in return.

Senior leadership roles are clearly defined and complementary. The rector is an effective change manager. He is highly visible throughout the school and models the high standards he expects of teachers and students. The school is efficiently managed on a day-to-day basis. Organisational structures and routines are tightly defined and well implemented.

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 section 238F of the Education Act 1989. At the time of this review there were 24 international students attending the school.
- The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.
- ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international students is thorough.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school 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
- 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
- attendance.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Graham Randell

Graham Randell
National Manager Review Services
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27 May 2011

About the School

Location	Dunedin	
Ministry of Education profile number	383	
School type	Secondary (Year 9-13)	
Decile	6	
School roll	737	
Number of international students	24	
Gender composition	Male 97%; Female 3% (adults)	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	72%
	Māori	12%
	Pacific	5%
	Asian	5%
	Other	6%
Special features	Special needs unit	
Review team on site	March 2011	
Date of this report	27 May 2011	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review	December 2007
	Supplementary Review	June 2005
	Education Review	February 2004