

Otumoetai College Education Review Report

10/06/2009

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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

About The School

Location	Tauranga
Ministry of Education profile number	120
School type	Secondary School (Year 9 to 13)
Decile rating[1]	8
Teaching staff:	107.2
Roll generated entitlement	9.28
Other	129
Number of teachers	
School roll	1870

Number of international students	81
Gender composition	Girls 51% Boys 49%
Ethnic composition	NZ Pākehā/European 85% NZ Māori 14% Other 1%
Special features	3 Alternative Education Centres Teen Parent Unit Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour
Review team on site	March/April 2009
Date of this report	10 June 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review June 2006 Education Review December 2002 Assurance Audit June 1997 Effectiveness Review June 1994 Review November 1991

The Education Review Office (ero) Evaluation

Otumoetai College is a large coeducational secondary school catering for students in Years 9 to 13 located in Tauranga. The current roll is 1950. A majority of students are Pākehā/European. Fourteen percent of students identify as Māori.

Since the last review there has been ongoing development of school buildings and facilities to enhance student learning opportunities and working environments for staff.

Many students continue to achieve high levels of success in a wide range of academic, sporting and cultural activities at local, regional and national level.

National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) data for Levels 1, 2 and 3 in 2007 and 2008 shows that students in Years 11 to 13 are achieving well in comparison with students in other schools both on a national basis and in relation to students in other schools of a similar decile. Progressive

Achievement Test (PAT) data for students in Years 9 and 10 in literacy and mathematics indicates that most students are achieving at nationally expected levels. Māori students are achieving at levels slightly below those of other students.

The most significant positive features of the school identified in this review are;

- a culture of continuous improvement;
- well informed, highly effective professional and educational leadership by the principal and four deputy principals;
- the provision of a rich and extensive range of academic, sporting and cultural learning opportunities for students;
- comprehensive, holistic support for student learning and wellbeing; and
- teachers who are strongly committed to assisting students to achieve success and who are willing to reflect on their practice and consider new approaches to teaching and learning.

An important area for ongoing development is that of further strengthening consistency in the use of teaching strategies to effectively engage students with learning and involve them in the learning process.

The principal continues to set high expectations for the development of the school. He is strongly focused on supporting staff and students, is highly visible and well respected within the school community.

Trustees bring a range of complementary skills and expertise to their roles. They set clear strategic direction for ongoing school development and are committed to providing a safe physical and emotional environment for students.

Future Action

ERO is very confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

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

The Focus Of The Review

Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

Students at Otumoetai College continue to achieve well in relation to national expectations at all levels.

Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) data gathered for students in Years 9 and 10 in aspects of literacy and mathematics in 2008 and at the beginning of 2009 shows that overall levels of achievement were consistent with national averages. Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning (asTTle) results for students entering the school in 2009 indicate that levels of attainment in reading are slightly below national expectations. Both PAT and asTTle data show that Māori students are achieving at levels slightly below those of other students in these areas.

In Years 11 to 13 NCEA and Ministry of Education (MOE) benchmark and school smart data indicates that:

- the proportion of students gaining a NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3 qualification in 2007 and 2008 was above that of students on a national basis and comparable with that of students in other schools of a similar decile;
- in 2008 the proportion of students obtaining NCEA Level 1 literacy and numeracy requirements was above national averages and comparable with that of students in other schools of a similar decile;
- the proportion of Māori students obtaining national qualifications in 2008 was below that of other students in the school but above national comparisons for Māori students at NCEA Levels 1 and 3 and just below at NCEA Level 2 in 2008;
- in 2007 and 2008 retention of students to Year 13 was slightly below that of other schools of a similar decile. Retention for all students has improved between 2006 and 2008; and
- in 2007 the proportion of students leaving school with little or no formal qualifications was less than that in other schools on a national basis and comparable to that in other schools of the same decile. Although the proportion of Māori students leaving school without qualifications is greater than that for other students, there has been considerable improvement in this area over the past three years.

The school is proud of the success of students in the scholarship examination. In 2007 and 2008, 23 and 27 students respectively obtained scholarships.

Significant numbers of individuals and groups of students continue to achieve success in a wide range of academic, sporting and cultural activities at local, regional and national level.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Otumoetai College was invited to consider its priorities for review

using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and selfreview information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Otumoetai College.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus area for the review:

- learning pathways to meet the needs of students.

ERO's findings in this area are set out below.

Learning Pathways to Meet the Needs of Students

Background

The vision of Otumoetai College is that students will become responsible and independent learners for life. To support this vision the school aims to provide appropriate learning pathways for all students. This report will evaluate the effectiveness of school-wide systems, networks and practices in providing opportunities that assist all students to achieve success and to raise achievement.

Student progress and achievement

The information provided in the section about student achievement overall also applies in this area.

The school is developing procedures to more accurately monitor the progress of groups and cohorts of students as they move through the school by making comparisons between levels of achievement indicated by standardised testing in Years 9 and 10 and success in obtaining national qualifications in Years 11 to 13. PAT data indicates some progress in aspects of literacy and mathematics for students in Years 9 and 10. MOE benchmark data indicates that there have been improvements in the retention of students to the senior school and in the proportion of students leaving school with qualifications over the past three years.

Areas of good performance

Governance and strategic direction: The board provides clear direction for meeting the needs of all students through strategic and annual goals. These goals are well known and understood by staff and are aligned to teachers' performance management, professional development and planning at curriculum department level. Trustees use student achievement information and effective ongoing self-review procedures to inform decision making about the school's strategic direction. They work cooperatively with the principal and senior leadership team to realise the school's vision of supporting students to become responsible independent learners for life.

Professional leadership: The principal and senior leadership team provide highly effective professional and educational leadership. They bring complementary skills and expertise as well as a

considerable depth of understanding and experience about teaching, learning and school management to their roles. They have a clear focus on improving outcomes for students and have high expectations for students' academic, sporting and cultural excellence. They are supportive of and accessible to staff, students and parents. Effective leadership is contributing to a strong sense of common purpose ensuring that all students have opportunities to achieve success.

Culture of improvement: The senior leadership team has a key role in encouraging a culture of continuous improvement throughout the school that is reflective of current research and good practice in education. This is particularly evident in the well-considered and reflective approach to the implementation of the revised New Zealand Curriculum. In addition, formal and informal self-review practices that incorporate the views of students, underpin many aspects of operations at school-wide and departmental level. Effective self review and a climate of improvement assists the school to be responsive to the changing needs and interests of students.

Curriculum design: Students have access to an extensive range of structured and well-organised learning pathways. Well-informed decision making by senior and middle managers ensures that the curriculum and timetable structure is firmly based on the needs, abilities and interests of students. In Years 11 to 13 flexible use is made of NCEA achievement and unit standards and a range of national certificate courses to prepare students for future learning and employment. In Years 9 and 10 a range of differentiated programmes is provided for students with identified learning needs and abilities. A carefully considered curriculum design is assisting students to maximise opportunities for success.

Co-curricular opportunities: Student participation and achievement in co-curricular activities is a notable feature of the school. Students are actively encouraged to take part in a rich and extensive range of sporting and cultural activities as well as education outside the classroom experiences. In addition there are considerable opportunities for students to develop leadership and mentoring skills, to take responsibility and demonstrate initiative. A key factor in the success of these activities is the commitment, involvement and enthusiasm of staff, parents and the wider school community. Students are able to develop skills and experience success across a broad range of endeavours.

Professional learning: School leaders demonstrate a commitment to providing relevant professional learning and development for teachers. The professional learning group, which is made up of committed and interested teachers led by a deputy principal, has developed a model for regular professional learning based on the needs of students and related staff needs. This model involves all teachers and makes use of external advice as well as expertise from within the school. The professional development programme reflects the school's priorities about promoting formative teaching practice, implementing the revised New Zealand Curriculum, raising Māori student achievement and promoting whole school wellbeing. Well-organised professional development is encouraging reflection and dialogue among teachers and is helping to strengthen their capability to engage students with learning.

Teacher commitment: Teachers are strongly committed to supporting students to achieve success. They are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their curriculum areas and are willing to try new approaches and strategies in teaching and learning to engage students. In many classrooms ERO

observed teachers successfully engaging students with learning. Teachers maintain positive relationships with students and readily provide extra support and mentoring to assist them in their learning. Teacher commitment and support contributes to a positive climate for learning.

Learning support: The school continues to provide a comprehensive range of programmes to support students with particular learning needs. Systems and procedures for identifying students requiring additional support and extension are clear and well documented. Specialist learning support is available to students in areas such as the advanced learning programme, special needs, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and the learning centre. These programmes reinforce the school's commitment to meeting the needs of, and providing opportunities, for all students.

Student wellbeing: The school has an inclusive approach to supporting the holistic wellbeing of students. Systems and practices to support students are well co-ordinated and enable them to have access to an extensive range of health and pastoral care support networks. The senior leadership and pastoral care teams implement a restorative approach to student management and are committed to ensuring positive outcomes for students. In addition, there is a focus on encouraging students to support each other through such programmes as peer support and mediation. A proactive approach to pastoral care is assisting the development of a school climate in which students feel valued, safe and encouraged to achieve.

Careers and transition: Students receive comprehensive support and guidance in their transition to employment and further learning. A well-structured careers programme assists students to reflect on, and make informed decisions about, their future learning pathways. Opportunities are provided for work experience through vocational and transition programmes. Strong links are maintained with tertiary providers and the local business community. Students are being well equipped to make informed decisions about their future learning and employment pathways.

Area for improvement

Improving classroom practice: To support the school's focus on improving teaching and learning there is a need to further improve consistency of practice in teachers' use of strategies aimed at strengthening student involvement in, and ownership, of the learning process. Such strategies could include:

- · use of assessment information to inform needs based planning;
- · development of co-operative learning practices;
- · use of more effective questioning to engage and promote learning;
- · promotion of higher order thinking skills; and
- · assisting students to understand what they need to do to succeed, particularly at Years 9 and 10.

In implementing these strategies teachers should make use of the many examples of good practice that are already evident in the school. More consistent use of these strategies is likely to assist in

supporting students to become independent, life-long learners.

Areas Of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of Otumoetai College ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

The Achievement of Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of Māori students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement.

Areas of progress

Raising student achievement: There is a much greater focus on raising the achievement of Māori students than was evident at the time of the last review. This is reflected in the schools' strategic goals and in the allocation of specific responsibilities for Māori student achievement to a deputy principal. A greater emphasis has been placed on the development of a positive partnership with Māori. Significant developments since the last review include strengthening te reo Māori programmes, the introduction of Māori performing arts and kapa haka. There is evidence of improving outcomes for Māori students including greater retention at senior levels and an increase in the proportion of Māori students gaining national qualifications.

School-wide initiatives: An extensive range of initiatives has been implemented to enhance the achievement of Māori students. These initiatives have focused on professional development for staff to strengthen relationships with, and improve outcomes for, Māori students. There has also been a considerable focus on support for students through strategies such as the establishment of the Poutama class, mentoring for Māori students and the Māori achievement awards evening. These strategies should assist in improving Māori student engagement with learning.

Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010

Progress to date

Significant progress has been made in preparing for teaching the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010.

The school has aligned its vision with the revised curriculum and is incorporating the key competencies into department documentation and planning. The principles of the curriculum are being addressed through ongoing professional development and in strategic planning.

Next steps

The school has decided that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months, as outlined in the strategic plan, are to give further consideration to the curriculum principles and implications in learning areas.

Thinking about the Future

ERO is currently discussing with secondary schools how they are thinking about the future and what it might mean for their students.

The school reports that it has thought about the future and what it might mean for their students in the following ways:

- developing partnership with business and tertiary providers to extend the range of learning opportunities for students;
- further development of information and communications technologies (ICT) to support student learning; and
- consulting with key stakeholders and students about diverse learning needs.

Provision for International Students

Compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students and the Provision of English Language Support

Otumoetai College 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. This is a requirement of all schools that enrol international students in terms of the Act. Schools are also required to provide English language support for their international students.

In addition, Otumoetai College has a number of exchange students whose welfare and education are also covered by the Code. The college has developed an agreement that all exchange agents sign to ensure that they understand the college's responsibility to all international students as the signatories to the Code.

The college complies with all aspects of the Code.

Areas of good performance

Quality systems: The director of international students has developed high quality, student centred systems covering all aspects of the care and education of international students at the college. These systems are clearly documented and are well known to the team involved with international students. They are regularly updated, well implemented and enable the college to fully meet the requirements of the Code. The director meets regularly with the principal to ensure that he remains well informed about the work of the department and the welfare of the students.

Teamwork: A committed team of management personnel, teachers and teacher assistants work effectively together in the international students' department to meet the education and pastoral needs of all international students. These personnel are knowledgeable and approachable, know the students well and support each other. Parents of international students and the board of trustees can be assured that the pastoral and language needs of international students are carefully considered and effectively met.

Documentation: There is high quality documentation, covering all aspects of the pastoral care of international students. These documents include:

- a handbook for all home stay families with sensible guidance for the day-to-day needs of international students and full contact details with the college and a 24 hour emergency contact number;
- a handbook for all international students with useful information on personal issues, living in New Zealand, school processes about what to do and who to contact if there are any problems or concerns;
- up-to-date information on all international students, (visas, health insurance, contact numbers and school reports); and
- full records of visits to students and their home stay families.

All documentation is relevant and up to date giving a clear indication of the high standard of pastoral care provided for international students.

Home stay arrangements: The school chooses home stay families very carefully and makes every effort to place students in an environment in which they will fit in and feel comfortable. Students speak highly of the care and support they receive from their home stay parents and there is evidence of many building long-term friendships with their carers. The coordinator is meticulous in carrying out the required visits and parents welcome the support offered by the college.

English language support

The school has a well organised ESOL department which caters for all students who needs English

language support. International students form the majority of students receiving this support.

Areas of good performance

Planned programme: The English support programme is planned carefully and well documented in the international students ESOL scheme. This comprehensive guide covers all aspects of the English support programme including assessment, course content and course requirements. It covers all levels of English competence and the course offered is designed to enable specific language needs identified in the assessment process to be met. Students' language support needs are well catered for.

Staffing: Both ESOL teachers are highly qualified and experienced. They attend meetings of the local cluster of ESOL teachers and are members of the New Zealand ESOL teachers' association. There are also three teacher assistants who support students in their mainstream classes. The English support programme is well planned and well staffed to help students to improve their English speaking, writing and comprehension.

Assessment and reporting: Most international students have their level of English assessed prior to arrival at the school. On arrival they do an initial writing test and an oral listening and comprehension test. Ongoing diagnostic testing is undertaken. All students receive a school report three times a year and in addition there are report evenings which caregivers attend with their students. Students are well informed about their progress in English.

Area for improvement

Levels of Tuition: The programme needs to be tailored to enable all levels of English proficiency to be specifically targeted.

Adult and Community Education (ACE): Meeting Quality Assurance Arrangements

Otumoetai College is funded to provide ACE programmes and must meet the requirements of the ACE Quality Assurance Arrangements for Providers of Adult and Community Education.

The school has attested that it meets all these requirements.

Board Assurance On Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Otumoetai College 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; and
- · 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; and
- · attendance.

Compliance

ERO's investigations did not identify any areas of concern.

Recommendation

ERO recommends that:

6.1 the senior leadership team and middle managers continue to promote and monitor the effectiveness of teachers' use of strategies to engage students with learning to ensure consistency across the school.

Future Action

ERO is very confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

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

Kathleen Atkins

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

10 June 2009

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To the Parents and Community of Otumoetai College

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Otumoetai College.

Community Page

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Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

Kathleen Atkins

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- · improve educational achievement in schools; and
- · provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on three review strands.

- · School Specific Priorities - the quality of education and the impact of school policies and practices on student achievement.
- · Areas of National Interest - information about how Government policies are working in schools.
- · Compliance with Legal Requirements - assurance that this school has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

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Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a school is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this school.

[1] Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.