



**Education Review Office**  
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Whangarei Boys' High School**  
**Whangarei**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Whangarei Boys' High School

This review is designed to support schools that were experiencing difficulties at the time of the last review. ERO provides ongoing evaluation over the course of one-to-two years as the school works to improve its overall performance and build its self-review capability.

This report answers key questions about the school's background and the context for the review. The report also provides an evaluation of how effectively the school is addressing areas identified for review and development and the quality of its practices and systems for sustaining performance and ongoing improvement.

## Findings

### 1 Background and Context

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

Whangarei Boys' High School is the only secondary boys' school north of Auckland. The roll has increased over the past two years, and has a majority of Pākehā and Māori students. The school provides students with boarding facilities at Carruth House on the school site.

The 2015 ERO report identified concerns about several aspects of the school's performance. These included the quality of leadership, the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching practice and the continuing disparity between Māori and non-Māori achievement. For this reason ERO decided to continue to monitor the school's progress through a longitudinal evaluation process over two years.

In 2015 the long-serving principal retired at the end of the first term. The new principal began her tenure in July 2015. Staffing changes have enabled the appointment of teachers who are well qualified and bring fresh perspectives to the professional learning culture of the school.

Since January 2015, ERO and the school have collected evidence to evaluate progress made in addressing ERO's identified concerns. This report summarises ERO's findings.

### 2 Review and Development

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

#### Priorities identified for review and development

In August 2015, the new principal and the board agreed on five broad improvement priorities to address during ERO's two year longitudinal evaluation of the school. These priorities were based on areas for improvement identified in ERO's 2015 report:

- strengthening leadership, curriculum design, teaching practice
- accelerating Māori student progress
- developing the school culture and learning environment
- strengthening self review (internal evaluation)
- progressing school property development.

## Progress

The previous and current boards, together with the new principal and senior leaders, have made good progress in relation to all the improvement priorities identified in the 2015 ERO report.

Developing an inclusive and positive school culture has been a key part of the work to improve students' wellbeing and educational outcomes. There has been a significant culture shift resulting in higher relational trust among students, teachers and leaders.

School values have been developed in consultation with whānau. These include Whakawhanaungatanga and Manaakitanga (respectful relationships); Tika and Pono (honesty and integrity); Maia and Aroha (courage and compassion); and Mahi tahi (work hard together). These values are increasingly guiding relationships between students, teachers and leaders across the school.

Significant changes in the school's leadership and teaching culture have contributed to greater student wellbeing and motivation to engage and achieve. There is now a more open, transparent leadership and teaching culture. This is enabling greater critical reflection on the effectiveness of practices. It includes an increased focus on learners and in particular, those groups who have not been well served in the past.

Good progress is being made in developing the quality of teaching practice and the curriculum. There has been a significant shift in teachers' pedagogical practice and thinking. This progress is guided by cyclic evaluation that includes the perspectives of teachers, faculties and students.

A greater restorative ethos is developing across the school. Senior leaders show a deep understanding of the inter-relationship between student wellbeing and student achievement and success. The board has funded expanded social services, a second counsellor and second dean for each year level. There is now a decreasing trend in the numbers of students being stood down, suspended or excluded from the school.

Students now have more leadership opportunities. They appreciate the way their views and opinions can be shared and influence school practices. Of particular note is the programme, introduced in 2016, where senior boys mentor Year 9 boys. This tuakana/teina approach helps the younger students to transition more positively to their secondary education.

Over the past three years, there have been deliberate, strategic approaches to promoting academic success for Māori students. Māori achievement has been trending positively in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA), in particular at Level 3. Data show increasing parity between Māori and non-Māori achievement in NCEA.

Te ao Māori is becoming more evident in curriculum learning areas. This year a full year's programme has been provided for Year 9 students who wish to extend their learning in te reo Māori. A Māori Arts course is now offered to senior students. This is the third year that the school has been working with the professional learning initiative Kia Eke Panuku. Senior leaders have plans for all teachers to have completed their training by the end of this year.

At the beginning of each year, staff spend a day at one of the local marae where they learn more about the local community and its history. This learning helps staff to make connections with students and their whānau.

Good efforts are being made to provide a more responsive curriculum and align systems with students' learning needs and aspirations. These efforts include cross-curricular collaboration and strategising to support students' choices, in particular in the Year 9 and 10 curriculum. This is also providing students with greater connectedness in their learning.

Good progress has been made in the school's tracking and monitoring of student progress, and in leaders' and teachers' use of achievement data. Senior leaders are considering ways to develop common approaches to assessing, analysing, tracking and accelerating progress in Years 9 to 10.

The board is continuing to work with the Ministry of Education on a project to provide buildings and environments that are more conducive to collaborative teaching and learning. In the interim, the board is managing the maintenance of the school's aging buildings.

### **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 now well placed to sustain and build on effective practices and to continue improving outcomes for students. The board, principal, leaders and teachers have successfully worked together to promote relevant, cultural and systemic change. There is now a strong focus on strengthening capability in leadership and teaching, and providing students with relevant learning and pathways to their future career aspirations.

The board is well led. The chairperson's continuing role has been beneficial over the past two years as he has a strong awareness of the school's development journey. The school is guided by a meaningful charter, which includes strategic and annual planning that is improvement and student focused. The previous and current boards demonstrate a strong commitment to the school, student wellbeing and academic success.

The principal is providing effective professional leadership. She is strategically prioritising improvements and managing the pace of change well. Together with the senior leadership team she has redefined what leadership looks like across the school. Senior leaders have complementary skills and demonstrate enthusiasm and optimism in being part of the change process in the school.

Senior leaders model collaboration to promote greater shared understandings and more collective decision-making among staff. They provide time and encouragement for staff to share best practice and to focus on enhancing teaching through targeted professional learning. This is resulting in a more cohesive staff culture and optimism about the school's future direction. Leaders and staff are developing a school that is student-centred. They are focused on developing 'young men' from a holistic perspective through the curriculum, teaching practices and support of wellbeing for learning.

Internal evaluation is developing well and is now more evident at board, leadership, faculty and teaching levels. Good links are being made between faculty evaluation and teachers' inquiries into the impact of teaching practice on student learning. Staff development systems and inquiry cycles are now more aligned, and are based on improving student outcomes through targeted actions. Senior leaders plan to ensure that the quality of faculty reporting to the board is more consistently evaluative.

Encouraging greater community involvement with the school continues to be one of the board's strategic goals. Over recent years there has been greater collaboration with Kotuku ki te Rangi, a representative group of Māori whānau. The current board is considering further ways of working together with this group to support ngā tane Māori to succeed both academically and culturally.

The board and senior leaders plan to continue progressing the development priorities noted in this report. In particular, the principal has identified the key areas of:

- continuing to raise student achievement, and further increase parity for Māori
- further developing teacher capability in relational and cultural pedagogy
- continuing to develop a curriculum that is responsive to students' interests, aspirations and pathways
- ensuring that the new buildings provide learning environments that are conducive to collaborative teaching and learning.

### **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.

## **4 Recommendations**

### **Recommendations, including any to other agencies for ongoing or additional support.**

ERO recommends that the school continues to develop good practices in inquiry and evidence-based evaluation to guide curriculum developments that support students as confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners.

### **Conclusion**

The principal, senior leaders, teachers and trustees have worked together to significantly improve practices that promote student engagement and successful learning. They are developing a school that is student-centred, and focused on developing young men from a holistic perspective through the curriculum and support of wellbeing for learning.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Randell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Graham Randell  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

3 May 2017

## About the School

Location	Whangarei	
Ministry of Education profile number	15	
School type	Secondary (Years 11 to 13)	
School roll	1186	
Number of international students	14	
Gender composition	Boys 100%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	37%
	Pākehā	53%
	Asian	4%
	Pacific	3%
	other	3%
Special Features	Student boarding hostel, Carruth House	
Review team on site	March 2017	
Date of this report	3 May 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	January 2015
	Education Review	September 2011
	Education Review	August 2008