



## **ERO External Evaluation**

### **Excellere College, Kamo, Whangarei**

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**

Excellere College is a small state integrated Christian school in Kamo, Whangarei. It caters for 223 students in Years 1 - 13. Half of the students are of Pākehā descent with smaller numbers of Māori and Pacific students.

The school's vision is "Excellence in learning, Christianity in living". The vision is underpinned by the school's special character and the values of integrity, compassion and honour. Its strategic goals prioritise curriculum development, improving student learning and strengthening partnerships between the school, parents, whanau and the wider community.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- student achievement and progress in National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA)
- achievement in reading writing and mathematics (Years 1-8)
- achievement in literacy and numeracy (Years 9 and 10)
- outcomes related to wellbeing for success.

Since the 2016 ERO review, a new Middle College leader has been appointed. Schoolwide professional learning and development has focused on relationship-based learning and coaching.

The school is part of the Te Tai Raki Whangarei Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning (CoL). It is committed to working with the CoL to raise student achievement through relationship based learning.

## 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 is increasingly effective in achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students.

School achievement information for Years 1 – 8 shows consistently high achievement levels for all students in reading, writing and mathematics. The senior leadership team has identified disparity in the Year 9 and 10 cohorts, and has introduced a variety of strategies to reduce this disparity.

NCEA data shows good levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy for all groups of students. Most Year 11, 12 and 13 students are achieving well in their respective NCEA levels. These high levels of achievement have been sustained over time.

There are small numbers of Māori and Pacific students at each level. Their individual achievement is monitored closely.

The school continues to raise achievement levels for students in NCEA. Longitudinal tracking shows that the school is accelerating students' achievement over their time at school. The school has high retention rates through to Year 13.

Other valued outcomes are highly evident. Students:

- are inclusive, respectful, supportive and accepting of others
- are able to build good learning relationships with each other and their teachers
- actively serve in the community
- take leadership roles.

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

The school is effective in accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this.

Leaders and teachers have taken positive steps to implement a range of strategies designed to accelerate learning for Māori and those who need it. Individualised, responsive programmes are established to meet students' needs, respond to student pathways, and increase engagement in learning.

Learning support for students with additional learning needs, and for students with English as a second language (ESOL), is very well co-ordinated. There is effective communication between parents, teachers and outside agencies. Students are actively involved in identifying individualised strategies to support their learning. Students with additional learning needs make accelerated progress, achieve well in NCEA, and participate widely across the school.

The school implements programmes that support increased opportunities for Māori and Pacific students to be successful and achieve equitable and excellent outcomes. Staff have a strong focus on developing relationship based learning and culturally responsive practices, to encourage engagement and improve wellbeing.

## **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?**

School practices and processes that are most effective in enabling achievement, excellence and acceleration of students' progress include strong professional leadership and positive learning relationships between staff, students and whānau.

The leadership team is strategic and improvement focused. Leaders promote and build collaborative and trusting relationships across the school community. They have sound decision making processes. Leaders actively seek community and student input and are responsive to data gathered.

Leaders actively foster leadership development within the school and in the CoL. They encourage continual improvement through collaborative inquiry into teaching practice and regular internal evaluation. Strengthening internal evaluation, including more critical reflection on the outcomes of change strategies, could help the school to further increase student success.

Leaders have a strategic and coherent approach to building teachers' individual and collective professional capability. They promote shared understandings, high expectations, and a professional learning culture.

Teachers and leaders maintain respectful and affirming relationships with students. They adapt teaching and learning opportunities to suit individual students. As a result, students experience authentic learning linked to their interests and capabilities.

Pastoral care and learning support for students is focused on supporting engagement and reducing barriers to learning. This is promoting an inclusive environment where students have a strong sense of belonging, and experience success.

The board has a strong focus on equitable academic and wellbeing outcomes for all learners. Trustees are well informed about student learning and achievement and support development through targeted resourcing. They work collaboratively and are continuing to build governance capability.

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

The school has the capacity to continue to accelerate learning for learners.

Leaders plan to continue evaluating and adapting the curriculum and building teaching and learning capability. This should include a focus on providing greater opportunities for students to lead their own learning, increase their creativity, and think critically. Current developments focused on integrated learning provide a good opportunity for teachers to make greater use of student voice in curriculum design.

Leaders should continue to strengthen the school's current internal evaluation processes by measuring the impact and effectiveness of initiatives on outcomes for students. This development should include using student, staff and whānau voice and evaluating teacher practice, to lead greater improvement.

Leaders and teachers can build on strong relationship based learning approaches to further develop te ao and tikanga Māori across the school.

## 3 Other Matters

### 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 6 international students attending the school.

Excellere College has good systems to provide education and pastoral care for international students. Course selections, progress and achievement are well monitored. Students have many opportunities to participate in school activities and integrate well into the school community.

## 4 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.

## 5 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Excellere College's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

**Well placed**

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

## 6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- good stewardship that promotes strategic resourcing to support student success
- a responsive and relevant curriculum that allows for students to access meaningful pathways
- strong leadership that promotes positive connections and relationships that actively support equity and excellence for all learners
- strategic goals and professional learning that are aligned to promote relationship based learning
- comprehensive pastoral care systems that support wellbeing and respond to students' needs.

Next steps

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

- continuing to provide greater student ownership of their learning
- deepening internal evaluation to measure the impact and effectiveness of initiatives on improving student outcomes
- continuing to strengthen bicultural practices to support greater success for Māori and all students
- seeking external support to further strengthen governance capability.

### Areas for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should strengthen health and safety policies and procedures to ensure best practice is maintained at all times. This includes:

- strengthening hazard identification and mitigation
- regular practice and recording of safety drills.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Tanner'.

Steve Tanner  
Director Review and Improvement Services Northern  
Northern Region  
14 June 2019

## About the school

Location	Kamo, Whangarei
Ministry of Education profile number	429
School type	Composite (Years 1-15)
School roll	209
Gender composition	Girls 56% Boys 44%
Ethnic composition	Māori 27% NZ European/Pākehā 52% South African 10% Pacific 3% other ethnic groups 8%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	April, 2019
Date of this report	14 June 2019
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review April 2016 Education Review November 2014 Education Review December 2011