

ERO External Evaluation

Rongotai College, Wellington

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

Rongotai College is a secondary school for boys in years 9 to 15. It is located in the Wellington suburb of Rongotai. The steadily increasing roll is now just over 700 boys, with 20% Māori, 16% Pacific and 41% New Zealand European. Students are drawn from the local area and a wide range of contributing schools across the greater Wellington region.

On site is the Tamatoa unit that caters for students with high and complex needs.

Staff participated in Ministry of Education (MOE) funded Professional Learning and Development (PLD) focused on *Tātaiako-cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners* in 2017. The college has continued to fund and extend this into 2019. Recent PLD has supported the building of evaluation capacity.

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

- achievement and progress
- attendance
- wellbeing.

The college is a member of the Motu Kairangi Kāhui Ako | Community of 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?

Rongotai College is progressively working towards achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for students. Overall levels of achievement in NCEA at the college have been sustained since the 2016 Education review.

National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results in 2018 show that most boys achieve success in NCEA level 1 and level 2, with the large majority gaining NCEA level 3. Almost all boys gain literacy and numeracy qualifications at Level 1, and nearly all in year 13 finish at the school having gained at least level 2 or above.

There is some disparity for Māori and Pacific students who overall achieve less well than their New Zealand European peers, and this is particularly evident at level 1. The school has had mixed success in addressing this disparity.

Students with high and complex needs are progressing well in relation to their individual learning goals.

Retention at the school for boys beyond the age of 17 is high.

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

The school is successful in increasing the rates of progress for many students identified as at-risk of underachieving, including those Māori and Pacific students who need it.

Standardised assessments for year 9 and 10 cohorts show that levels of achievement in reading and mathematics have improved over time. Rates of progress are increased for a range of students, including those identified as at risk of underachievement.

Māori and Pacific students identified as at risk of not succeeding in year 11 benefit from additional tracking and focussed support. As a result, most experience increased rates of learning leading to attainment of NCEA level 1.

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?

Positive and respectful relationships are evident across the school. School values underpin all aspects of school life and are clearly enacted across the curriculum. The values and concept of 'brotherhood' are well understood by the students and staff and promote a sense of inclusion, connection and belonging. Teachers continue to promote and strengthen their 'positive behaviour for learning' (PB4L) strategies.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful, with good levels of engagement. Learning is focussed, structured and well-paced. Students understand the purpose of their learning. Teachers demonstrate high expectations for teaching and learning.

Teachers are modifying course content and their practice to better meet the individual strengths and needs of students in their class. In some areas of the curriculum, student choice and agency is increasingly visible. Students benefit from teachers including greater emphasis on integrating real life and meaningful contexts for learning in to the curriculum.

The college has increased the range of curriculum pathways and subject choice, through and beyond the school, to prepare students for employment and further education or training. Curriculum design is responsive to student's interests and needs.

An extensive range of co-curricular and community activities extend the learning opportunities for all students. Leadership is fostered and promoted. Student voice is increasingly valued and gathered. The newly introduced student council provides a forum for boys to inform schoolwide and strategic decision making.

Pastoral systems are well considered and respond effectively to the needs of students. Wellbeing is valued, promoted and is a strategic priority for improvement. Wraparound support processes are in place when required. Guidance and mentoring supports students academically with decisions and choices.

Students with additional and high needs are well catered for and make good progress in a specialised unit on campus. Leaders have developed good relationships with external agencies who are effectively used when required. Students benefit from strong partnerships with parents that support their progress. Well considered transition processes prepare students well for their next phase of development.

Leaders value and have strengthened the established partnerships with its community. A range of strategies have successfully built effective relationships with whānau Māori and Pacific families that benefit and promote student learning, engagement and wellbeing.

Suitable opportunities for whole school professional development and learning that are aligned to school strategic priorities have supported teachers to extend their understanding of effective practice. The school wide focus on building teacher competency has increased staff awareness of how best to respond to students' culture, language and identity. They show commitment to building their cultural competencies, particularly knowledge of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori, and their capability to improve outcomes and success for Māori students.

Trustees have good systems and processes that support effective governance. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and make well informed and considered choices about resourcing and planning.

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

School leaders have identified and EROs evaluation confirms the need to continue to build evaluation for improvement capacity across the school. Further strengthening the reflective culture should include:

- establishing a shared understanding of best evaluation practice
- the systematic use of evidence and learning information to show the impact of practice, resourcing and decisions on improving outcomes
- strengthening targeting for improvement to include rates of progress for specific groups.

An appropriate framework and system for performance management has been developed and implemented that provides opportunities for teachers to inquire into their effectiveness. The implementation of appraisal and performance management processes requires strengthening to be more rigorous. Leaders need to deepen the shared understanding of what is effective appraisal and use this to increase consistency and quality in how teachers are supported to improve their practice.

School leaders have identified the need to review and strengthen the curriculum. They should further develop established guidelines for excellence in teaching at Rongotai College and use this to continue to strengthen practices that improve rates of progress and successful outcomes for all learners. In addition, continuing to build teachers response to students' culture, language and identity should better meet the needs of the diverse range of students.

Teachers and leaders need to closely examine the rates of progress for different groups, particularly those most at risk of not achieving, to sharpen the picture of where acceleration is occurring and for who, when and why.

3 Other Matters

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. The school has attested that it complies with and meets all aspects of the code.

At the time of this review there are 12 international students. Both long-term and short-stay students are drawn largely from Asia.

Processes for transition and orientation into the school are well considered. Systems for identifying and responding to individual learning and language needs are effective. Courses provided respond to the aspirations and interests of students and their families.

Students pastoral and wellbeing needs are catered for. Students are actively involved in the life of the school, participating in a range of sporting, cultural and social activities. They are encouraged to contribute to the wider 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 Children's Act 2014.

5 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Rongotai 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:

- sustained levels of good achievement that promote equity and excellence
- positive relationships and good conditions that promote learning and engagement
- a range of curriculum pathways and choices, and an extensive range of co-curricular activities that support successful outcomes
- well considered pastoral systems that promote wellbeing.

Next steps

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

- strengthening evidence based internal evaluation to better determine the impact of curriculum on improving outcomes
- continuing to build excellence in teacher competencies and capabilities to respond to students culture and identity
- fully implement appraisal and performance management practices to better support teachers to further strengthen classroom practice.



Dr Lesley Patterson
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Southern Region
4 September 2019

About the school

Location	Wellington	
Ministry of Education profile number	277	
School type	Secondary years 9-15	
School roll	707	
Gender composition	100% Male	
Ethnic composition	Māori	20%
	NZ European/Pākehā	41%
	Pacific	16%
	Asian	15%
	MELAA	3%
	Other ethnic groups	5%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes	
Provision of Māori medium education	No	
Review team on site	May 2019	
Date of this report	4 September 2019	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2016
	Education Review	May 2013