

# Kaikorai Valley College Education Review

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## Disclaimer

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

## The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Kaikorai Valley College is a co-educational school in Dunedin city providing education for students from Years 7 to 13. The school caters for a diverse student population, including a large number of international students. A centre for students with special needs is integral to the school. The spacious attractive grounds and new gymnasium provide multiple opportunities for extending learning and physical activity. The board ensures a high level of safety for students.

Since the 2006 ERO review the school has increased opportunities for students to manage their own learning and improved the quality of achievement information reported to the board.

Areas of strength include:

- creating a wide range of learning pathways to meet students' needs, abilities and interests, including learning outside the classroom and work-based courses;
- building on the positive school culture for staff and students, including fostering the school's values (PRIDE) and a focus on academic success;
- providing for and including diverse groups of students in the life of the school, particularly special needs and international students;
- developing respectful relationships with and between students and staff by getting to know and caring for them as individuals;
- increasing ways for students to learn through managing their own learning and improving literacy levels;
- improving ways for students to experience success through increased participation in school events; and
- initiatives to improve attendance and retain students to senior school level.

The board and ERO agreed that the school's next steps for continued development are to:

- extend effective teaching and learning practices across the school;
- review how well cultural perspectives are included across the school; and
- broaden monitoring of students at risk of not achieving.

In August 2009 the Ministry of Education appointed a Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) to exercise the functions, powers and duties of the board to manage financial operations. The LSM has worked effectively with the board and staff to make substantial progress in

addressing the issues that required the intervention. The board and LSM have agreed on a timeline for ongoing support that would result in meeting the aims of the intervention near the end of 2010.

### Future Action

The board of trustees has demonstrated that it is governing the school in the interest of the students and the Crown. The board, together with the principal and school leaders, continues to focus on improving student learning: engagement, progress and achievement. ERO is likely to carry out the next review within three years.

## Kaikorai Valley College's Curriculum

How effectively does the curriculum of Kaikorai Valley College promote student learning: engagement, progress and achievement?

### School context and self review

An ongoing challenge for the board is to maintain curriculum choices for students while managing a falling roll. ERO agreed to evaluate the extent of learning pathways for students offered by the school. Teachers have been involved in a range of initiatives to improve learning opportunities for students. These initiatives include classroom management, raising literacy levels for Years 9 and 10 students, collaborating with other local schools to raise achievement, using information and communication technologies (ICT) in classrooms, student mentoring, thinking and learning skills, and reviewing the school curriculum to align with the revised New Zealand Curriculum.

### Student achievement

Students achieve well in NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) at Years 11 and 12.

For 2008 ERO compared overall levels of achievement with students in similar schools. Year 11 and Year 12 students achieved better in NCEA Level 1 and 2, with 93% of Year 11 students gaining the literacy and numeracy requirement; Year 13 students generally achieved less well; the proportion of students gaining merit and excellence endorsements at all three levels of NCEA was less; Māori students achieved significantly better at all levels of NCEA than their Māori peers; and Pacific students achieved better than their Pacific peers at Levels 1 and 2.

The school's analysis of 2009 NCEA results showed 78%, 76% and 52% of students gained Levels 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Small numbers of students gained merit or excellence endorsements. Māori students' achievement of NCEA at all three levels was below that of students overall at the school. The school should consider comparing its results to those of students at schools of similar decile and type.

A significant number of students enter the school with low levels of literacy achievement. Teachers have increased their focus on raising literacy levels overall to meet the national expectations. In 2009 most junior students, including Māori students, made significant progress in reading by moving two or more sub levels over the year. The school has identified the need to maintain the focus on raising students' reading levels and extend this to writing.

### Areas of strength

Learning pathways. Course design is innovative, flexible and informed by achievement information to meet the range of students' interests and abilities.

- Curriculum and senior leaders use achievement information to provide multiple learning pathways and classes for students as required, such as Year 11 work skills and enterprise classes, a sports academy and Years 9 and 10 extension classes.
- Creative timetabling provides wider opportunities for learning and achieving, for example double periods and whole year level junior physical education classes.
- Close links with employers and providers strengthen vocational pathways for students working toward early employment, such as GATEWAY and hospitality programmes.
- Mixed-year and mixed-level classes are created for some subject classes with small numbers of students, for example the Year 10 to 13 te reo Māori class.

Relevant curriculum. Teaching programmes focus on the need to engage students and improve student achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

- Classroom programme planning is made relevant for the interests and needs of adolescents and young adults.
- Departments create some innovative programme design, such as the recently planned Year 9 cross-curricular science unit and technology programmes incorporating education for enterprise.
- Learning programmes are well linked to the New Zealand Curriculum and qualifications.

School culture. Students feel safe at school and are provided with a range of opportunities to succeed.

- Teachers find enjoyable ways for students to participate and interact and relate with one another, for example the recent and highly successful '1000km Run'.
- Students are actively encouraged to participate in sports and included in school events and productions.
- School leaders are building a culture of achievement and making this visible, such as recognising achievement and success at school assemblies.

Literacy learning. The well planned implementation of a project to increase literacy learning opportunities has had a positive impact for teachers and students.

- ERO observed that Years 7 to 10 teachers effectively implement literacy learning strategies in the daily lessons.

- The school's analysis and review shows significant gains in overall reading achievement for junior students.
- A next step is to sustain and develop these strategies across the school.

Support for learning. Students with low levels of achievement are identified and their learning needs are well provided for.

- Resources are effectively applied so individual classes at Years 9 and 10 cater for lower achieving students. Classes also exist at these year levels for higher achieving students.
- Students with special needs receive effective provisions within a centrally located room, and benefit from a range of mainstreaming initiatives with other classes and students.
- Students with significantly high literacy learning needs receive targeted support. In 2009 Years 9 and 10 students, including Māori students, made significant overall gains in reading achievement.
- A next step is to monitor and maintain an overview of the progress and achievement of other 'at risk' students, particularly for Years 7 and 8 students.

Support for international students. The school provides effective pastoral and learning support for international students.

- The students are happily and successfully involved in a wide range of school activities.
- Provisions for students are well managed. For example, their learning and pastoral care undergoes regular review and improvement.
- Teachers responsible for the pastoral and learning needs of international students are highly collaborative and well informed.

Aspects of effective teaching. ERO observed examples of good teaching and learning in a range of classrooms across the school. A next step is to review and extend these good practices, such as:

- well paced lessons that follow good routines, with a positive, productive and enjoyable focus on learning not behaviour;
- teachers using assessment to inform planning and teaching, and linking past and new learning so that students experience progression in learning;
- students knowing what to learn and how to achieve, that is, they have an understanding of the learning intention for the lesson and criteria for success, and receive regular feedback about their progress with these;
- students experiencing a range of learning activities and cooperative learning

approaches that promote their engagement; and

- students being highly involved in their learning through skilful questioning, the setting of learning goals, and self and peer assessment.

Culture of reflection and change. Teachers are improving the quality of how teaching and learning are evaluated. A next step is to review and extend best practices observed across the school.

- Teachers regularly share best practice with each other, for example in staff meetings, through regular updates of professional literature, and providing useful feedback to each other as 'critical friends'.
- Students' engagement and progress is being closely monitored, for example, through daily evaluations of lessons and individual student learning, and by collecting and responding to students' opinions about units of work.
- Students regularly monitor and reflect on their own learning and achievement, for example through learning logs and NCEA credit updates.

## Areas for development and review

Increasing students' involvement in learning. Teachers need to continue to develop opportunities for students to lead and manage their own learning.

- Students could be provided more opportunities for self-directed study, topic choice, self and peer assessment against known criteria, and involvement in engaging learning activities.
- While senior students are aware of their NCEA achievement some students in Years 7 to 10 classes did not appear to have a good understanding of their progress and achievement.
- A number of learning goals needed to be more specific about the next steps for learning.

Students learning at their point of challenge. This is managed well in many classes across the school. Where this is not happening improvements could be made so that:

- students are more challenged by the level and pace of learning;
- students have regular opportunities to ask and answer questions that extend their thinking; and
- teachers notice and follow up on spontaneous opportunities for learning so that students' interests and individual pathways for learning are recognised and supported.

Aspects of review. The board now receives more detailed and informative reports from senior managers, heads of department and project leaders. These include reviews of progress made against specific and school-wide goals, and information about student achievement. Some reports and reviews could be further improved by:

- showing how best practices in teaching and learning within the school are being identified, shared and implemented to improve learning and achievement for students across the school, including Māori and Pacific students; and
- reviewing how well Māori and Pacific cultural perspectives are integrated in learning programmes across the school and in the school culture and environment.

## Recommendations

ERO and the board of trustees agree that the next stages of school development should focus on improving the areas for development and review and next steps identified in this report.

## Board Assurance On Legal Requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Kaikorai Valley 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 legal 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.

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

## Limited Statutory Manager Intervention

### Background

In August 2009 the Ministry of Education appointed a Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) to exercise the functions, powers and duties of the board to manage financial operations. The ministry expected that the LSM intervention would achieve the following outcomes:

- review the current financial status of the board and implement measures to meet ministry requirements;
- return the financial situation of the board to a sustainable position;
- review financial policies and procedures, document changes and implement practices that ensure that the board receives accurate, relevant and timely information; and
- guide and support the board to ensure that new and improved systems are consolidated into board management practice.

### Findings

The LSM has worked effectively with the board and staff to make substantial progress in addressing the issues that required the intervention. The LSM, Ministry of Education financial adviser, board and principal have worked as a team and agree on progress to date and what still needs to be achieved.

The LSM has completed a thorough review of the school's financial position. He has affirmed a 2008 board decision to reduce staffing costs and initiated procedures and practices that now enable the trustees to make well-informed decisions when setting and monitoring budgets. This has resulted in a much improved financial position and implementation of improved accounting processes that should support the board in sustaining this position. Trustees now have a much better understanding of the school's finances at any point in time.

The board and LSM have discussed and agreed a timeline for ongoing support that would result in meeting the aims of the intervention near the end of 2010. Over this period the LSM will guide and support the board in completing the following work:

- completing the processing of end-of-year accounts for 2009;
- establishing a finance subcommittee of the board and embedding monthly reporting practices;
- ensuring that effective school-based accounting procedures are established, understood

and followed; and

- helping in the preparation of the 2011 budget

ERO agrees that this is an appropriate timeline for continued support.

## Future Action

The board of trustees has demonstrated that it is governing the school in the interest of the students and the Crown. The board, together with the principal and school leaders, continues to focus on improving student learning: engagement, progress and achievement. ERO is likely to carry out the next review within three years.

Graham Randell

National Manager Review Services

Southern Region

## About The School

School type	Secondary (Year 7 - 15)
Decile rating[1]	5
School roll	690
Number of international students	48
Gender composition	Girls 51% Boys 49%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 80% Māori 11% Pacific 5% Other 4%
Special features	Special Needs Unit Itinerant Teachers: Music
Review team on site	March 2010
Date of this report	15 June 2010
Previous three ERO reports	Education Reviews September 2006 September 2003 Accountability Review May 1995

## Community Page

15 June 2010

To the Parents and Community of Kaikorai Valley College

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

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### Review Coverage

This report provides an evaluation of how effectively the school's curriculum promotes student learning: engagement, progress and achievement. ERO's evaluation takes account of the school's previous reporting history and is based on;

- what is known about student achievement information, including the achievement of Māori and Pacific students;
- decisions made to improve student achievement using the information; and
- teaching strategies and programmes implemented to give effect to the school's curriculum.

ERO's review is responsive to the school's context. For example, when ERO reviews a school, it takes into account the characteristics of the community, from which it draws its students, its location, and the aspirations the community has for its young people, and relevant local factors.

ERO also builds on the school's own self-review information. That is, ERO is interested in how a school monitors the progress of its students and aspects of school life and culture, and how it uses this information.

ERO also gathers information during the review to contribute to its reports on national education evaluation topics. Comments relevant to this school are included in the report. The national reports are published on ERO's website.

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

Graham Randell

National Manager Review Services

Southern Region

## 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 integrates the following.

- school curriculum;
- national evaluation topics -contribute to the development of education policies and their effective implementation; and
- Board Assurance Statement, including student and staff health and safety.

- It also integrates external review with school self review by taking the most useful aspects from external and self review to build a picture of the school and its context.
- This helps ERO to answer the major evaluation question for reviews:

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote student learning: engagement, progress and achievement?

### Areas for Development and Review

ERO reports include areas for development and review to support ongoing improvement by identifying priorities. Often the school will have identified these matters through its own self review and already plans further development in those areas.

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