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**Northcote College**  
**Northcote, Auckland**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report:**  
**Arotake Paerewa**

*Kumēa te paetawhiti kia tata*  
*Whakamaua te paerewa kia tīna*  
*Tukuna te paehiranga kia topa!*

# Education Review Report: Arotake Paerewa Northcote College

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements.

## Findings

### 1 Context

#### What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Northcote College is a well established co-educational high school on Auckland's North Shore. The school serves its diverse community very well. An emphasis on knowing each student and responding to them individually underpins the school's educational philosophy.

ERO's 2009 report acknowledged the school's positive culture, underpinned by well organised pastoral care that supports student learning and achievement. School leaders have continued to build on these strengths and are currently embedding a reflective inquiry approach to improving school performance. Student voice is respected and is a significant component of school self review.

Student diversity is embraced and celebrated. Māori staff and students are affirmed and positive about their successes. Another significant feature of the school is the effective and inclusive services provided for students with high learning needs. The school attracts a high number of international students who benefit from the welcoming and supportive learning environment.

The school's vision and values are clearly evident and reflect those of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). The senior management team and the board of trustees make well informed and responsible decisions based on evidence and educational research. These decisions enhance the learning outcomes of all students.

### 2 Learning

#### How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Students engage well in learning. They enjoy collaborative, interactive teaching approaches where they can share ideas and experiences. Students benefit from the mixed-ability learning environment. Teachers plan lessons that are interesting and relevant and are increasingly making use of achievement information to ensure that learning programmes meet students' different learning needs. Teachers could give greater consideration to building on students' prior understanding of learning to support their transition to Year 9.

Classrooms are settled and well managed environments that reflect purposeful learning. Teachers make good use of digital technologies to engage learners. Systems for sharing achievement information with students, in ways that support their learning progress, are increasing. A continued focus on teachers using evidence to inquire into the effectiveness of their practice will further enhance outcomes for students.

Students make good progress and achieve well overall. Information about the achievement of Year 9 and 10 students is being well used. An identified group of students entering the school in Year 9 are achieving below expected curriculum levels. The school has set meaningful targets to accelerate the achievement of these students and is able to track their progress individually using a new student profiling system. This high quality target setting reflects the purposeful planning of curriculum leaders.

School leaders monitor student achievement in the National Certificates of Education Achievement (NCEA) closely. In most aspects student achievement compares very favourably with that of similar schools. Since 2009, pass rates in NCEA Level 1 and Level 2 have increased by 13% and 7% respectively. Level 1 literacy and NCEA endorsements at Levels 1 and 2 have also increased significantly since 2009, and the high pass rate in Level 1 numeracy has been further extended.

Student achievement goals are set in relation to trends and patterns reported to the board and priority learner groups are monitored closely. The majority of Māori and Pacific students leave school with Level 2 qualifications. Students with special needs achieve success in programmes that are designed to meet their learning needs. School leaders agree that targets to achieve better outcomes for all Pacific students could be implemented more strategically.

The number of students leaving the college with national qualifications is increasing. This positive trend has occurred at the same time that student retention has risen. The school has endeavoured to provide meaningful pathways for all students to maintain their engagement and retention in learning. The school has achieved the Ministry of Education's target of 85% achievement at Level 2 NCEA.

### **3 Curriculum**

#### **How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?**

Students speak highly of the school's curriculum. They appreciate the enthusiasm teachers have for their subjects and the high quality teaching that encourages their success. Students gain Scholarship passes in a range of different subjects across the curriculum. School wide professional development is focused on the use of achievement information and teacher inquiry. Curriculum managers are leading these improvements through shared models of good teaching and learning practices.

The school offers a modern 21st century curriculum. Contexts for learning draw on relevant concepts such as social responsibility, bicultural perspectives, environmental issues, sustainability and critical thinking. Students are confident and articulate. They enjoy learning challenges, and extend their interests through foreign languages, computer technologies, visual and performing arts and media studies. Te reo Māori is an increasingly popular choice, with additional teaching time needed this year to meet student demand.

Curriculum pathways and careers services are being extensively reviewed. As student retention levels in the senior school have increased, the curriculum has become more diverse. New

programmes, including foundation courses and a wider selection of courses based on the realigned achievement standards have been introduced. The majority of subjects are NCEA-based with some vocational qualifications, such as those connecting to carpentry, hospitality, tourism and childcare industries, available through Industry Training Organisations.

The curriculum is well resourced. Trustees are supportive of new directions in education and make well considered decisions. Students and staff are benefitting from additional computer and information technology resourcing. The board has recently formalised staffing for students with special learning needs who seek specialist and mainstream education through the school's well managed Learning Support Centre. This support reflects the ethical and social principles that guide the board's decisions.

Senior leaders agree that continuing to build the capability of middle managers to analyse and interpret achievement information and report on department planning, would enhance whole-school curriculum development.

#### **How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?**

*Ka Hikitia*, the Ministry of Education's Māori success strategy, has been well used by school leaders to enhance outcomes for Māori. The board has used the opportunity to review its Treaty of Waitangi policy and evaluate progress against school-wide goals for Māori success. The school's Māori staff are valued and the high quality learning and pastoral support they provide is helping Māori students to experience success as Māori.

Māori students are confident in their culture and identify. Those who select the option of the whānau-based form class and those in mainstream form classes both express a collective sense of whānaungatanga. Māori whānau and iwi have responded positively to opportunities to meet and to consider ways to further support students' learning.

School-wide staff development and the school's revised performance management systems incorporate criteria that should continue to support teachers' awareness of biculturalism and cultural responsiveness.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

#### **How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?**

The school is very capable of sustaining and continuing to improve its performance. Board leadership is effective and trustees are well aware of their roles and responsibilities. Governance and management systems are underpinned by a clear strategic direction, shared values and a commitment to meeting the needs of all students. These factors are enabling the school to provide:

- an inclusive environment that supports diversity
- a responsive, professional learning culture
- a high level of reflection and systematic self review.

The school management team is ably led by an experienced and capable principal. The team works collaboratively and has high expectations of staff performance. School leaders value educational research and seek models of purposeful whole-school professional learning and development. The

recently established professional learning groups are based on staff sharing practices that improve teaching and learning.

Planning and reporting systems are well aligned. Strategic goals are embedded in the management plan and evaluated in an ongoing manner throughout the year. Well selected targets are designed to improve outcomes for groups of students who are not achieving their potential. It is important that targets are shared with all staff and embedded into action plans at all levels.

School improvement is based on critical self-reflection and relevant external review. Staff appraisal systems have been reviewed to support school improvement and in response to the new registered teacher criteria. ERO supports school leaders' plans to explore the best use of target setting in improving outcomes for students.

### **Provision for international students**

Northcote 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*. At the time of this review there were 128 international students attending the school. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code. ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international students is thorough.

The school responds to the interests and needs of international students. Services for international students are well integrated with English language teaching programmes. Well documented systems are efficiently managed by experienced coordinators and support staff, and good procedures are in place to integrate international students into school life.

International students value the programmes of tikanga and te reo Māori that enable them to learn more about biculturalism and Māori culture. They also speak highly of the opportunities to join sport teams, music and drama groups and to be included in the wider life of the school.

The international student director and the home-stay coordinator provide regular information about the engagement and achievement of international students to the board of trustees.

### **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
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

**When is ERO likely to review the school again?**

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



Makere Smith  
National Manager Review Services  
Northern Region (Acting)

26 November 2012

## About the School

Location	Northcote, Auckland																			
Ministry of Education profile number	32																			
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)																			
School roll	1209																			
Number of international students	128																			
Gender composition	Boys 55% Girls 45%																			
Ethnic composition	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>NZ European/Pākehā</td> <td>53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chinese</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Indian</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>African</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Middle East</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>other</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </table>		NZ European/Pākehā	53%	Māori	17%	Asian	10%	Pacific	9%	Chinese	5%	Indian	2%	African	2%	Middle East	1%	other	1%
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Special Features	Learning Support Centre for students with high learning needs, including 17 students with additional funding through the Ongoing Renewable Resource Scheme																			
Review team on site	August 2012																			
Date of this report	26 November 2012																			
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>September 2009</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>June 2006</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>July 2002</td> </tr> </table>		Education Review	September 2009	Education Review	June 2006	Education Review	July 2002												
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