



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Northcote College
Northcote, Auckland

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

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. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

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

Northcote College is a well established Auckland secondary school with strong links to its local community. The student roll reflects the cultural diversity of the community and includes 16 percent who identify as Māori and 10 percent who have Pacific heritage. The school is a member of the newly founded Northcote Community of Learning (CoL).

Through its vision of 'Successful Learning for All' the school aspires to provide young people with an educational experience where they are challenged and supported to develop the skills and knowledge to become lifelong learners. A culture of high expectations for academic achievement is balanced with an inclusive focus on student wellbeing and equity. Māori students from all year levels have the opportunity to be part of Te Whānau o te Kākanu, which provides a Māori pathway in an environment that embraces te reo me ngā tikanga Māori.

The school has a history of positive ERO reports that have commended the robust self-review processes underpinning the board's vision of the school as a community of learners. In 2012, ERO identified Northcote College as a high performing school. A responsive professional learning culture and high quality, collaborative leadership of teaching and learning were noted. Opportunities for students with special learning needs were an important feature of the college that impacted positively on student outcomes. These significant features of the school have been sustained.

In 2012, ERO made recommendations to further improve educational outcomes for students. These included giving greater consideration to students' prior learning to support transitions into Year 9, and continuing the focus on teachers' use of evidence to inquire into ways of more effectively enhancing outcomes for students. Adopting a more strategic approach to the setting of targets and achievement goals was also an agreed next step. Trustees and senior leaders have responded positively to these recommendations and have continued to develop high quality and innovative educational practices.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

The school makes very effective use of achievement information to make positive changes for learners, particularly in Years 11 to 13 and increasingly from the time students enter the school in Year 9. Students are actively engaged in their learning and are motivated to achieve success across a wide variety of school activities, including kapa haka, sport, arts, cultural and student leadership opportunities.

School achievement information shows that most students are successful at all levels of the New Zealand Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA). In the last four years the pass rates for Levels 1, 2 and 3 of NCEA have all improved by 10 percent or more. The school is already exceeding the 2017 government target of 85 percent of leavers achieving NCEA Level 2.

The achievement of Māori and Pacific students and of boys, while still lower than overall results, show consistent improvement over time. The proportion of Māori and Pacific students remaining at school up to and beyond 17 years of age continues to improve, enabling more students to achieve meaningful qualifications. Improving Māori, Pacific and boys' achievement is a continuing priority for school leaders and teachers. Concentrating on strategies that support Māori and Pacific learners to make accelerated progress in their learning is also a focus for the Northcote Community of Learning.

Achievement information is used effectively to identify students who require learning support. Learning assistance is timely and well coordinated. Personalised programmes assist students to make progress towards their learning goals. Regular monitoring and review provides students and their families with ongoing information about their progress and achievement. The cohesion and responsiveness of learning support services reflects the commitment of the board, leadership team and teachers to supporting all students to be successful, engaged learners.

School leaders continue to make positive changes to learning outcomes for students who are not achieving to expectations, especially in the senior school. Leaders agree that it is timely to adopt a similar strategic emphasis on progress and achievement at Years 9 and 10, using approaches that are proving effective at senior school level. Developing greater consistency in assessing against curriculum levels will enable teachers and leaders to more readily identify and report accelerated progress, as well as final results.

Senior leaders and trustees make good use of well analysed achievement information to set achievement targets and school goals, and to make strategic decisions. Charter targets are focused on raising the achievement of all students and accelerating the progress of those students not meeting curriculum level or NCEA expectations. Trustees make resourcing decisions based on the evaluation of programmes designed to improve outcomes for students.

3 Curriculum

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

Northcote College's responsive curriculum is very well aligned with *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). The broad and differentiated curriculum provides a wide range of courses relevant to students' personal interests and learning pathways, providing opportunities to continually experience success, and transition smoothly to tertiary courses and the workforce. Digital technologies and e-learning strategies support and encourage students to manage and lead their

learning. The school's commitment to relationship-based teaching underpins and enhances learning programmes.

The learning culture throughout the school is focused and purposeful. The board and school leaders use teachers' expertise to promote innovative approaches and strategies. The impact of new programmes and initiatives on student wellbeing and learning success is closely monitored and evaluated in a systematic way.

High quality teaching practice is informed by an in-depth knowledge of students and the use of effective strategies that recognise, respond to, and enhance student engagement in learning. Sustained improvement in teaching and learning programmes is promoted through a deliberate process of professional inquiry involving all teachers.

The school is well placed to continue fostering, and maintaining the impetus for, innovative and responsive curriculum design. Course designs and pathways ensure that students, particularly Māori and Pacific, have equity of access to quality learning programmes in many curriculum areas. Senior leaders agree that next steps to enhance the curriculum include considering ways to develop specific pathways for junior students who are not succeeding in the current curriculum.

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

The school promotes and celebrates Māori students' educational success. Trustees, school leaders and key staff are committed to improving outcomes for Māori students. This is apparent in the school's annual goals and priorities. The input of whānau Māori is valued in school-wide planning and decision-making.

Te Whānau o te Kākano provides a focus for Māori language, culture and identity. Students in te Whānau participate in te reo Māori programmes and kapa haka, and are mentored and supported in their learning choices as they move through the school. School leaders agree that encouraging all Māori learners to take further advantage of the opportunities available, is a priority.

Trustees and school leaders agree that the next steps in further promoting success for Māori students as Māori are to:

- evaluate the extent to which the curriculum reflects te ao Māori, to ensure that Māori language and cultural identity are recognised and promoted through all learning areas and pathways
- incorporate cultural competencies into the school's appraisal processes
- continue to build on positive relationships with whānau Māori, to grow partnerships in learning and support the development of plans to continue improving Māori students' achievement.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Northcote College is very well placed to sustain and continue to improve its performance.

School leadership is highly effective. The experienced principal and capable leadership team work strategically and collaboratively to foster strong relationships in the school and its community. Senior leaders mentor and support teachers, growing leadership at all levels of the school. School leaders are active and influential in local, regional and national educational community networks.

Senior leaders use the school's robust performance management system to promote ongoing teacher improvement and accountability for student progress and achievement. Systematic and well structured professional learning programmes promote effective, culturally responsive teaching practices.

There is a shared commitment to ongoing improvement across the school. Trustees ensure that students are at the centre of the school's strategic thinking and planning. Board members have high expectations in their stewardship role. They focus closely on progressing charter goals and key strategies in order to achieve the school's vision.

School leaders and trustees agree that development points for ongoing growth are:

- more regular and timely reporting of the progress of groups of students at risk of not succeeding
- continuing to take an active role in the development of the Northcote CoL with contributing schools and local early childhood services to provide seamless learning pathways for students.

An inclusive, student-centred culture and positive respectful relationships support the board, school leaders and staff to continue the school's growth as a dynamic learning community.

Provision for international students

The *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (the Code) was introduced on July 1st 2016. The school is aware of the need to update its policies and procedures to meet the new code requirements by December 1st 2016.

At the time of this review there were 110 international students attending the school.

The school is making good progress in aligning its policies and procedures to meet requirements for the 2016 Code.

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.

Conclusion

Students at Northcote College benefit from a well designed, responsive curriculum that promotes high levels of achievement and engagement. School goals drive improvement for all learners. Strong governance and leadership, effective teaching, and partnerships with parents and the community enhance learning outcomes for students.

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



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

30 November 2016

About the School

Location	Northcote, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	32	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	974	
Number of international students	110	
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	16%
	Pākehā	53%
	Tongan	6%
	Chinese	4%
	South East Asian	4%
	Indian	2%
	Samoan	2%
	other Asian	5%
	other European	4%
	other Pacific	2%
	other	2%
Review team on site	September 2016	
Date of this report	30 November 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2012
	Education Review	September 2009
	Education Review	June 2006