Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

Geraldine High School
Geraldine

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report
Geraldine High School

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?

Geraldine High School is coeducational and provides education for students from Years 7 to 13. Students attend from the township and the wider South Canterbury area. Teachers make good use of the school's location to provide students with many varied outdoor education experiences. Sixty five percent of students travel to and from school by bus. The school works closely with local community groups to successfully support students' wellbeing and extend their learning. The school is part of a local Community of Learning within a group of primary schools and early childhood centres.

Since the previous ERO review in 2013, a new principal and deputy principal have been appointed. The restructured senior leadership team is working effectively to continue to teaching and learning. The board also has responsibility for Carew Peel Forest School and continues to have stable trustee participation.

The redevelopment of the Learning Support Centre is providing expanded opportunities for inclusive education.

The July 2013 ERO report identified a number of areas for improvement. Progress has been made with the targeted use of achievement data and with improved communication with staff. This report identifies that the school still needs to develop a framework for internal evaluation processes.

2   Learning

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

The school is continuing to strengthen the effective use of student achievement information to help make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

Students achieve well overall, with data indicating positive improvements over the last three years in NCEA results and in National Standards.

Achievement information against the National Standards in 2015 shows that most students in Years 7 and 8 are at or above the standard, with achievement being highest in reading. The school's National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results show:

- very good literacy and numeracy achievement has been sustained over recent years
- high achievement in Level 1
- improving overall trends across all three NCEA Levels.

The senior leaders have implemented initiatives to better monitor and support student progress. School-wide goal setting processes, including effective three-way conferencing with students, parents and teachers, are strengthening learning partnerships.

Students benefit from a culture of manaakitanga/caring within the school. The pastoral leadership and systems are a distinct strength of the school. Pastoral support and processes are valued, embedded and reviewed to support and promote students realising their potential. The school's key operations are underpinned by an ethos of care for students' sense of belonging, engagement and wellbeing.

Areas for review and development.

In order to further raise student achievement, leaders and teachers should rigorously evaluate the impact of their teaching.

Senior leaders have identified, and ERO agrees, that greater provision must be made to improve assessment guidelines, expectations, tracking and moderation at Years 9 and 10.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum responds well to students' needs and interests. Underpinned by a strong focus on the school's values, the curriculum offers a broad range of programmes and opportunities that promote relevant learning pathways for all learners.

A distinctive feature of the curriculum is the strong use made of the local environment to extend learning, engagement and employment pathways. The wide range of courses offered includes a Primary Industries Academy, extensive education outside the classroom including a senior outdoor education course, hospitality, and a Year 10 challenge. The school continues to initiate further links with the community and tertiary institutions to increase curriculum opportunities available to students.

Community links are further strengthened through the value placed on service. Students are well supported, working with local groups to become positive and contributing members of the community.

Learning for Years 7 and 8 students is enhanced through the opportunities they have for specialist subject teaching. These students value the relationships with senior students that they develop through mentoring, the vertical form structure and wider school activities. In Years 7 and 8, a range of innovative practices are being explored to increase achievement and engagement. These include:

- more flexible timetabling to allow needs-based grouping
- inquiry approaches to learning

- increased student ownership of their learning
- additional learning assistants.

Literacy, numeracy and physical education are prioritised in the junior years. Additionally, students are able to enjoy choices within arts, technology and languages in Years 9 and 10.

Students in the senior school have a broad choice of subjects and pathways and are well supported to achieve literacy and numeracy at NCEA level. Strategies to support learners, including those whose learning is at risk and those requiring extension in the senior school, include:

- needs-based classes and a supported learning programme
- mentors from both within the school and outside
- additional academic support
- programmes tailored to individual needs and aspirations
- use of outside providers and agencies
- a team approach by the academic, pastoral and careers deans to support all learners
- accessing a range of external opportunities.

Digital technology is increasingly being used by some staff as a tool for learning, and the parent portal is strengthening the role of parents as partners in their child's learning and decision making.

The expanded dean network provides ongoing mentoring of students' achievement, progress and future planning. As part of its pastoral network, the school employs a social worker.

Students are able to develop leadership skills through a range of opportunities and there is increasing evidence of student voice in decision making across the school.

An on-site, purpose-built learning support centre provides a wide range of learning opportunities for inclusive education and for these students to enjoy full participation in school life.

Next Steps

To continue to strengthen the curriculum and related areas the school needs to:

- develop a coherent, overarching curriculum document that identifies the unique features of the school, reflects the vision and values and provides clarity around expectations for high quality teaching across learning across learning areas
- develop a systematic approach to internal review of the curriculum in order to ensure its ongoing responsiveness relevance and effectiveness
- continue to explore and embed ways to use digital technology as a tool for improving teaching and learning
- consolidate current appraisal practices into a cohesive, robust and reflective system which includes teaching as inquiry across all teaching areas

Leaders must also ensure that robust procedures are in place for systematic annual planning and evaluation in the learning support centre. This should include:

- clear goals for improvement that also include priorities for continuing to strengthen communication and accountability
- identified timeframes for reporting progress against goals and priorities to the board

- planning for continuing to build staff capability and effectiveness in the work of the learning centre
- ensuring that parents have regular opportunities to provide feedback about the quality of learning support provisions.

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

The school is beginning to make better progress in promoting educational success for Māori, as Māori. This includes:

- development of a strategic plan
- appointment of a teacher of te reo Māori
- increasing visibility of te ao Māori within the school
- providing opportunities for whānau to meet and discuss important ideas and issues.

Areas for review and development

In order to make further progress in this area, leaders need to continue to strengthen and embed current approaches, evaluate outcomes and report to the board the progress being made towards set goals.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

The school has a highly committed board of trustees with a shared vision of positive outcomes for all students. Priority is being given to what matters most for students' learning in its long-term and annual planning. There is a range of experience and skills among the trustees and a commitment to ongoing training. The operations of the board are directed by a comprehensive set of guidelines. The board utilises appropriate outside expertise where necessary.

The principal has built relational trust across the school. There is a strong sense of purpose and collaboration within the senior leadership team and senior leaders are supported to develop their professional capability and leadership. Leaders in turn actively support the professional learning and development of staff.

Leaders and staff are focused on establishing and embedding systems and practices that enable positive outcomes for all students. These include:

- the trialling of a new appraisal system
- targeted resourcing, based on data, to meet student needs
- improved induction and mentoring systems for staff
- a focus on maximising staff strengths and interests
- increased opportunities for staff to build professional capacity and leadership.

The school has a very positive reciprocal relationship with the community. Leaders and trustees consult widely to ensure that the school authentically represents the aspirations, values and interests of its community.

The board and senior management are strongly focused on continuing to maintain and build positive relationships within and outside of the school.

The board, senior management and staff have identified a need to establish consistent internal evaluation practices in order to support and sustain their goal of improving outcomes for all students.

The next steps for the board and leaders are to:

- develop a robust framework for internal evaluation in order to promote evidence based decision making and direction setting
- continue to focus on building leadership capacity, including providing more strategic opportunities for middle leadership capability building.

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 all aspects of the Code.

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

International students are well supported pastorally and academically at Geraldine High School and feel included in both the school and the community. The school has comprehensive internal review systems for ensuring their wellbeing and that their experience is a positive one. These include ongoing documented monitoring of academic progress and homestay suitability.

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.

Click here to enter text.

Conclusion

Geraldine High School highly values positive relationships, shared understandings and a purposeful environment that promotes achievement. Students are well supported by a comprehensive pastoral care system and a committed board, leadership team and staff. The school is an integral part of its local community and makes very good use of the wider natural environment to extend learning opportunities. Leaders and teachers are focussed on improving outcomes and providing meaningful pathways for students. Achievement information shows a trend of continued improvement in NCEA over the past three years.

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Dr Lesley Patterson
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern/Te Waipounamu

27 January 2017

About the School

Location	Geraldine
Ministry of Education profile number	352
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 13)
School roll	530
Number of international students	3
Gender composition	Boys 51%; Girls 49%
Ethnic composition	Pākehā 74% Māori 12% Pacific 2% Asian 4% Other Ethnicities 3% Other European 5%
Review team on site	October 2016
Date of this report	27 January 2017
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review July 2013 Education Review July 2009 Education Review October 2005