



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**Otago Boys' High School
Dunedin**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Otago Boys' 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?

Otago Boys' High School (OBHS) is a school for day boys and boarders from Years 9 to 13. Its students and staff are proud of the many traditions maintained over the school's long history. At the time of this review a very positive culture was evident within the school community.

Students, staff and school practices show respect for the cultures and increased ethnic diversity within the school.

The settled nature of the school contributes to the focus on education in its widest sense. Students strive to meet the high expectations that are placed on their learning, achievement and behaviour. All groups of boys ERO spoke with appreciated the personal interest and support teachers have for their learning. The boys also spoke highly of the support they receive from their older peers. Boys benefit from an effective pastoral-care network.

A new rector was appointed at the beginning of 2015. His leadership, supported by the board, senior leaders and teachers, is effectively guiding the school forward. In the past eighteen months, the school's vision and values have been revised. Of particular note is the increased emphasis that teachers and leaders are placing on using reflection as a way to improve teaching and school practices.

The school has responded positively to most of the recommendations in the 2012 ERO report, particularly in the areas of teacher development and appraisal, opportunities for Māori boys to achieve as Māori, and aspects of curriculum leadership.

2 Learning

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

The school uses learning information well to make positive changes to learners' engagement and achievement.

Roll-based achievement in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) at each year level is reported to the board. This shows that over the last three years achievement in NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3 has increased. Of note, over 90% of students sit external exams and over 50% of boys gained merit or excellence endorsements at each year level in 2015. In addition, boys in Year 13 achieved a higher number of scholarships than in previous years. The levels of achievement of Māori boys have also increased. The school has set a goal to continue to raise Māori achievement to levels similar to those of their OBHS peers.

Senior leaders have developed systems to better monitor the learning and engagement of boys at all levels of the school and to support boys who are at risk of not achieving. As a result:

- there is improved access to and sharing of learning information, particularly for boys in Years 11 to 13
- boys, their parents and teachers have up-to-date information about their individual learning, needs and abilities
- teachers and departments are better able to respond to the learning and wider needs of boys in their classes.

The school's information shows good NCEA literacy and numeracy outcomes for boys who were identified for learning support when they were in the junior school.

The board receives regular reports about boys' progress and achievement in NCEA and for Years 9 and 10 students in reading and numeracy. School leaders have recently reported a higher number of junior students with lower levels of writing. They have begun to implement strategies to strengthen teaching and learning of writing so that these boys are better prepared for NCEA-level study. Next steps for leaders and teachers are to:

- develop an understanding of what a year's progress is in the junior school
- consider ways to collate curriculum-level achievement information to show the progress of cohorts of junior students and to support reflections about what is working and what needs to be improved.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum effectively promotes and supports student learning.

The school's vision of 'Best for Boys through the right learning' emphasises the importance of creating and maintaining an environment and practices that are conducive to the learning of all boys. The school's values, orderly learning environments and an initiative for boys to complete 100% of their learning, 100% of the time and in line with their ability, are having a positive impact on learning.

School leaders, teachers and student leaders place an emphasis on all boys feeling they belong to their school and building brotherhood within and across year levels. This increased building of whanaungatanga/relationships is a result of whole-school and house events, form classes made up of boys in all year levels, and high participation in a range of outside-the-classroom activities.

Boys benefit from the increased culture of manaakitanga/caring within the school. Senior leaders place a strong emphasis on teachers building positive relationships with their students and whānau. The improved pastoral system is effectively supporting the boys' wellbeing for learning.

Improvements have been made to the way transitions into the school are managed for the benefit of students.

Learning programmes are engaging and based on boys' interests and life beyond school, and an increasing responsiveness to their cultural backgrounds. The school offers a variety of programmes to provide purposeful pathways through and beyond the senior school.

ERO agrees with the school's plan to strengthen the curriculum to ensure best practice for boys by:

- reviewing and developing teaching and learning practices, based on current research
- helping students take a more active role in leading their own learning.

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

Māori boys learn in an environment in which te reo and tikanga Māori is being valued and made increasingly visible in the life of the school.

They are becoming increasingly involved in the opportunities provided for them to learn Māori language and to demonstrate their cultural strengths and abilities. They receive expert support for learning te reo and tikanga Māori at higher levels of NCEA. Teachers are being supported to develop their confidence and cultural competency.

The rector, trustees and staff are actively promoting the school's value of biculturalism and inclusion. There is increased involvement of parents and whānau of Māori boys and local rūnaka to help guide decision making.

A next step for school leaders is to show how well the range of initiatives and practices are impacting positively on engagement and achievement.

Pasifika Success

There is a strong value on Pasifika cultures in the school. Pasifika boys are positively involved in the life of the school and engage and achieve well in their learning. They show confidence in displaying their respective cultures in and beyond the school.

A teacher with responsibility for Pasifika success has formed productive relationships with Pasifika boys, parents and the wider Pasifika communities. With support from senior leaders he helps ensure Pasifika boys engage and achieve in all aspects of school life and learning.

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. Strong school-wide planning and an increasingly high level of school and community engagement and ongoing consultation are evident. Together, these position the school well to continue to strengthen its systems, practices and processes that promote positive outcomes for all boys.

The board and new rector are leading school improvement well. Staff and students have a clarity of purpose, vision and direction for the school. This is a result of the board's and rector's:

- effective and ongoing communication and consultation with the boys, staff, parents and wider community
- strategic appointments made in senior and middle leadership
- sharper focus on learning and achievement.

Teachers have increased opportunities for collaboration and sharing practice through school-wide professional learning and other initiatives focused on improving outcomes for all students. Boys appreciate and value the wide range of extra support teachers and other staff provide for their learning and wellbeing, in and beyond the classroom.

The school is in an improved position regarding achievement, school culture, community involvement and support, and wider collaborations. Together with his senior leadership team, the rector models the school's ethos of what is best for boys, and having high aspirations and expectations for and of them.

School leaders have put in place effective systems and structures to support teachers in their role. These include:

- clear expectations for teachers to contribute to the school's achievement targets
- strengthening the school-wide professional learning culture
- effective use of performance-management practices, with a strong emphasis on reflective practice
- a comprehensive response to meeting the identified learning needs of students to be life-long learners in the 21st century
- useful annual planning with ongoing evaluation of progress
- an improved alignment of teachers' professional learning to the school's goals and vision.

Next Step

It is timely for trustees and the rector to show a more staged development for the school's curriculum redevelopment in the current planning.

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 37 international students attending the school.

Students are very well supported to participate in all aspects of school life. Their learning and English language needs are identified on arrival and appropriate individualised programmes are put in place. Additional resourcing has been used to provide enhanced in-class support for students and this has led to improved achievement levels. The school has effective systems for monitoring and responding to the learning and wellbeing needs of students. These include regular and effective communication with students, their families and wider school staff.

The next step for trustees is to ensure reports to the board regularly include how well international students are progressing in their learning, including in their English language learning and non-NCEA programmes.

Provision for students in the school hostel

Otago Boys' High School Hostel is owned by the school and accommodates 148 boys, including 20 international students. This represents 21.5% of the school roll. The hostel owner has attested that all the requirements of the Hostel Regulations are met.

Students enjoy positive relationships with each other and hostel management and staff. Junior students feel welcomed and supported by staff and senior students to adapt to hostel living. Senior students participate in leadership development to support their roles as dormitory monitors and hostel student leaders. A culture of brotherhood is actively promoted.

Hostel managers have effective systems for monitoring and responding to the safety and wellbeing needs of students. These include clear and well-understood guidelines for staff and students, and regular and effective communication with parents and caregivers.

Hostel management communicates and works constructively with school leaders and staff to support boarders' learning, achievement and participation in all aspects of school life. Hostel students benefit from well-established homework routines and access to tutorials at key times in the school calendar.

Junior boys share dormitory-style accommodation while senior students have private rooms with shared facilities. Bathroom amenities in the two junior blocks have been refurbished in recent years.

Trustees and hostel management have identified that they need to keep accurate records of the names and contact details of people authorised (by the guardian of a boarder) to collect the boarder from the hostel.

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

The school is very well led and managed. Staff and students have a clarity of purpose and direction. A strong emphasis is placed on teachers building positive relationships with their students and whānau. The school's values, initiatives and orderly learning environment are having a positive impact on learning. Student achievement in NCEA has improved. This includes increased merit and excellence endorsements and an increased number of scholarships.

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



Lesley Patterson
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern

30 August 2016

About the School

Location	Dunedin	
Ministry of Education profile number	377	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)	
School roll	721	
Number of international students	37	
Gender composition	Male 100%	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā	67%
	Māori	12%
	Asian	7%
	Pasifika	6%
	Other	8%
Special Features	School Hostel	
Review team on site	June 2016	
Date of this report	30 August 2016	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review	December 2012
	Education Review	June 2009
	Education Review	June 2005