



## **ERO External Evaluation**

### **Gisborne Girls' High School, Gisborne**

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for students. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

### **School Context**

Gisborne Girls' High School is located in central Gisborne. It is predominantly single sex and caters for girls in Years 9 to 15. The roll of 791 students includes 60% Māori, 3% Pacific and 30% New Zealand European.

A small number of boys are enrolled as part of the Tairāwhiti Services Academy. Some senior classes are shared with the neighbouring Gisborne Boys' High School in order to extend subject options and curriculum choices.

The community has articulated its vision for the school as 'Success for All' and the aspirations and desired outcomes for student success are expressed through the 'Hinetu' graduate profile.

Strategic goals for the school focus on improving: a culturally responsive, personalised and future focussed curriculum; relationships for teaching and learning; innovative leadership; and provision of a safe and stimulating learning environment.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- attainment of National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA)
- achievement and progress in literacy and numeracy in Years 9 and 10
- attainment of the school-developed Junior Certificate of Educational Achievement in Years 9 and 10
- wellbeing
- engagement and attendance.

The school takes responsibility for the governance of Turanganui-A-Kiwa Activity Centre and is the lead school for the Gisborne/East Coast Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour cluster.

Teachers and leaders have participated in centrally funded professional learning focused on being more responsive to students' culture, language and identity, implementing restorative practices, building evaluative capability, teaching practice that matches individual student learning needs, and improving outcomes in reading.

The school is a member of the Taha Hinengaro (Gisborne) Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning.

## **Evaluation Findings**

### **1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students**

#### **1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?**

Students have generally achieved consistent levels of success in gaining NCEA Levels 2 and 3 since the 2016 Education Review. There was a slight drop in results at Level 1 in 2018.

In 2018 most students gained NCEA Level 2, the large majority achieved Levels 1 and 3, and less than half achieved the University Entrance qualification. By the time students finish their schooling, the large majority have gained Level 2 or above.

Many Māori students, who are the largest group in the school, achieve well. However, they achieve less well when compared to New Zealand European/Pākehā students across all areas of performance. In NCEA the disparity is reducing at Levels 2 and 3 but has widened and is significant at Level 1.

School leaders have recognised and acknowledged the disparity in outcomes for Māori students in achievement, engagement and attendance, and have established targets for improvement.

#### **1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?**

The school is building its effectiveness in accelerating progress for those who need it. Students who need to improve their rate of progress are clearly identified by leaders and teachers, and a range of interventions and strategies is put in place to respond to their needs.

The school reports that the majority of students who join in Year 9 are assessed as not meeting curriculum expectations in literacy and numeracy. The proportion of Māori students who are not meeting expectations on entry is greater than that of their peers, and has increased over recent years. The school has been more effective in increasing the proportion of these students to make accelerated progress in literacy, and supporting them to be successful in achieving NCEA Level 1 in Year 11.

### **2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices**

#### **2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?**

Students experience an inclusive curriculum that offers a broad range of opportunities, choices and pathways that respond to their interests, needs and strengths. Participation in co-curricular sporting, arts and cultural activities is actively promoted.

The school has recently developed a well-considered plan to enact the school vision and desired outcomes for successful learners at Gisborne Girls' High School. It provides a useful framework that has the potential to guide all aspects of school operations, curriculum and teaching and learning. The leadership team sets a clear strategic direction for the school and have established cohesive systems and processes that closely align to schoolwide targets and goals, and reflect the shared vision and values. Leaders and teachers are strongly committed to improving outcomes for all learners, especially those at risk of underachievement.

Students with high and additional needs are well catered for through tailored and responsive provision. Pastoral care systems and practices provide good support for students' wellbeing and care. Staff work collaboratively with families and a range of agencies to promote a positive learning environment.

Relationships across the school are positive and respectful. Leaders and teachers work deliberately to promote a sense of connection and belonging. They respond well to students' ongoing needs and provide personalised support to improve their wellbeing and learning.

Teachers are aware of the need to strengthen their response to Māori learners individually and as a group. There is an extended range of opportunities to be involved in cultural activities which promote te reo and tikanga Māori. These are well supported by families and the community. Increased provision is occurring through the newly-introduced bilingual programme that has been developed in response to whānau and students' aspirations.

A well-structured appraisal framework is in place that supports leaders and teachers to grow and develop their capabilities. Staff have had good opportunities to participate in purposeful and relevant professional learning that reflects the school's strategic priorities for improvement. There is an appropriate inquiry process for them to reflect on their effectiveness to share, enhance and strengthen aspects of practice.

Leaders have strengthened processes for gathering and sharing learning information. They use an appropriate range of assessment tools and now have a more systematic approach to tracking and monitoring student achievement and wellbeing information. Teachers are building their use of this data to respond more effectually to individual student needs.

## **2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?**

Leaders recognise that the recently-introduced 'learning framework' that integrates the vision and desired outcomes for students, requires further development. Articulating clear and detailed indicators of what best practice and success look like to guide teacher and leader practice, is a key next step. This should assist the school to strengthen:

- teaching practices that improve learning and engagement, particularly for at risk learners
- culturally responsive practices
- the localised curriculum and provision of relevant and meaningful pathways for students through and beyond the school.

Senior leaders recognise the need to strengthen the capability and collective capacity to do and use evaluation inquiry, and knowledge building to promote improvement and innovation. Their ongoing work to develop this should include:

- reframing targets at strategic and faculty level to focus on improving rates of progress for priority learners
- better use of achievement information to show accelerated progress, particularly for those whose learning is most at risk
- stronger analysis of evidence and evaluation to show the impact of strategies and interventions on improving student outcomes.

The school has developed good relationships and communicates well with families. The next step is to continue to strengthen partnerships that promote learning with parents, whānau, iwi and community.

The areas for further development should support the school to increase the pace of change to further reduce the disparity in achievement, wellbeing, engagement and retention, especially for Māori students.

### **3 Other Matters**

#### **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 and meets all aspects of the code.

At the time of this review there are 5 international students. Both long term and short stay students are drawn largely from Europe.

Processes for transition and orientation to the school are well considered. Systems for identifying and responding to individual learning needs are effective. Care is taken to provide courses that respond to the aspirations and interests of students and their families.

Student's pastoral and wellbeing needs are catered for. Students are actively involved in the life of the school, participating in a range of sporting, cultural and social activities. They are encouraged to contribute to the wider community. They share and celebrate their cultures with other students formally through planned events and informally through interactions with their peers.

#### **4 Board Assurance on Legal Requirements**

Before the review, the board 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 the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- finance
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student safety and wellbeing:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

## 5 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Gisborne Girls' High School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Well placed

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

## 6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- an inclusive curriculum that offers a broad range of opportunities, choices and pathways that respond to students' interests, needs and strengths
- valuing and promoting students' own language, culture and identity
- positive and respectful relationships across the school
- pastoral care systems and practices that promote students' wellbeing
- an unrelenting focus on promoting success for all learners, particularly Māori students.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are in:

- establishing a shared understanding of best practice and what success looks like to guide teachers and leaders to continue to improve outcomes for students
- strengthening the capability and collective capacity to use evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building to promote improvement and innovation
- further reducing the disparity in achievement, wellbeing, engagement and retention, especially for Māori students.



Phillip Cowie  
Director Review and Improvement Services Central  
Central Region  
24 July 2019

## About the school

Location	Gisborne	
Ministry of Education profile number	210	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	791	
Gender composition	Female 99%, Male 1%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	60%
	NZ European/Pakeha	30%
	Pacific	3%
	Other ethnic groups	7%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes	
Provision of Māori medium education	Yes	
Review team on site	May 2019	
Date of this report	24 July 2019	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	May 2016
	Education Review	August 2014