



**Western Springs College  
Western Springs, Auckland**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Western Springs 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?**

Western Springs College is a co-educational secondary school catering for students from Year 9 to 13. It is located on the western side of Auckland's inner city suburbs. The school is well supported by its community and many families in the neighbourhood choose to enrol their children there. Since 2007 the college has had an enrolment zone for the mainstream school because of demand for places.

The school's vision is to offer young people an inclusive educational experience that celebrates and values human diversity. Students are challenged to discover and develop their unique personal strengths in order to learn successfully. A culture of high expectations for academic achievement is balanced with a caring focus on student wellbeing.

The school's mission statement affirms all students as being inherently capable and competent. Very high levels of achievement in the *National Certificates of Educational Achievement* (NCEA) confirm the educational strength behind this mission.

The college has a long established Māori medium unit, Ngā Puna O Waiorea. Currently over two hundred students are enrolled in its programme from Year 9 to 13. Enrolment is through application and selection, and students travel to this rumaki from all over Auckland. Māori academic achievement continues to be outstanding under this Treaty of Waitangi inspired partnership.

The board of trustees, school leaders and whānau have established a co-governance policy and model with the aim of equitably resourcing, growing and sustaining Ngā Puna O Waiorea. At the time of this report, discussions were being held with the Ministry of Education regarding the rumaki's future governance.

Since the 2010 ERO review, the board of trustees has several new members, including three Māori trustees. A new chairperson has been elected. The board works well with the principal and school leaders. Strategic and annual planning are informed through purposeful self review that is strengthened with multiple points of view, including those of students, parents, whānau and the community.

The board is currently coordinating decisions for rebuilding the school. An innovative teaching and learning environment is envisaged to complement the school's vision and its highly successful approaches to twenty-first century learning.

ERO's 2010 report identified Western Springs College as a high performing school. The report recommended further improving educational opportunities and outcomes for students, strengthening aspects of leadership and consolidating best practice in teaching and learning. Trustees and senior leaders have responded positively to these recommendations and have continued to develop further, 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?**

Western Springs College is using achievement information very well to make positive changes to learners' progress and achievement. The school is already exceeding the 2017 government targets of 85% of students achieving NCEA Level 2.

High achievement in NCEA is evident across all subjects. In 2014, 91% of students achieved NCEA Level 1, 92% for Level 2, 93% for Level 3 and 88% of students gained University Entrance. Results have been consistent at these levels over recent years.

Western Springs College leads the country in excellence endorsements for NCEA. This is mainly attributable to the high order thinking skills that are a planned part of many learning programmes throughout the eight learning areas of the *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). University literacy is highly valued by the school and timetabling structures support students' success in this qualification. Māori and Pacific students enjoy the same levels of academic success as others in the school.

Student achievement in Years 9 and 10 is regularly tracked and monitored using a variety of standardised assessment tools. A school-wide focus on 'know the learner' begins with good quality Year 8 transition information from contributing schools. Teachers hold regular, structured learning conversations with Year 9 students who set themselves ambitious yet manageable learning goals. These records are regularly updated and teachers increasingly use this information to guide students towards meaningful and purposeful action.

The school's Learning Centre is available to any student who wants access to additional individual tutoring. Teachers can refer students for assistance and students can also refer themselves. This centre makes a major contribution to the educational success of students. A recent initiative is the appointment of an Accelerated Learning Director. The director focuses on student pathways through the year levels in order to optimise students' time for Scholarship study and NCEA endorsement success in Years 12 and 13.

ERO discussed with school leaders possible timetabling structures which would allow for the expansion and extension of students' learning opportunities. This flexibility will be particularly relevant when the school is rebuilt and modern learning environments present more scope for different modes of learning.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The Western Springs College curriculum is closely aligned to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). It promotes student engagement and learning very effectively. It is highly responsive to student needs, strengths and interests. Teachers explore their curriculum areas deeply to make learning meaningful and relevant for students.

The NZC principles, values and key competencies are explored thoroughly in departmental and teacher planning. The *akonga* principle where both adults and young people learn together is evident throughout the school. Using student voice is a major and essential aspect of the college's approach to engaging and connecting learners to their chosen pathway.

Positive and affirming relationships underpin the high quality learning interactions evident between students and teachers. Teachers effectively encourage students' creative and critical thinking using inquiry-based learning approaches. Teachers' specialist subject knowledge is acknowledged and affirmed by students and parents.

The school is highly inclusive in its practices. The guidance team work hard to engage students and support them with the challenges they face in today's world. They provide extensive support through interventions and programmes that help students to manage challenges themselves where possible. Students with special learning needs are well supported by teachers and support staff. Students benefit from staff members' in depth of professional knowledge about individual student learning capabilities.

The college offers an enriching range of co-curricular activities. There are many opportunities for students to experience success and build leadership capability and social competencies. The school has a variety of cultural, academic and sporting events to celebrate student achievement.

ERO and school leaders discussed the value of conducting a self review focusing on how well Māori perspectives are being included consistently across the eight learning areas of the curriculum.

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

Māori students comprise 27% of the school roll. 217 of the school's 359 Māori students are enrolled in the rumaki, Ngā Puna O Waiorea, and the rest attend the mainstream school and live in the school's locality. Student board trustees are elected for both the rumaki and the mainstream school.

Ngā Puna O Waiorea is a thriving Māori medium unit that is realising the goal of 'Māori achieving educational success as Māori'. The unit has eleven kaiako involved in its programmes. NCEA outcomes for rumaki students exceed national targets for Māori learners. Rumaki students also achieve Māori language proficiency, and demonstrate cultural strengths and a strong sense of Māori identity.

The whānau, teaching and administrative staff of the rumaki volunteer much of their personal time to achieve successful outcomes for students. This includes gaining first place in kapa haka for the fourth consecutive year at the annual Polynesian Festival held in Auckland.

The rumaki has a twenty-five year history of successful educational partnership. In 2013 a co-governance policy was formalised by the board of trustees. At the time of this report, discussions

were being held with the Ministry of Education regarding the future of this governance arrangement.

Mainstream Māori students are mentored through additional teacher support and academic counselling. They have opportunities to become involved in Māori assemblies, hangi, mainstream kapa haka and Matariki celebrations. They are increasingly able to gain benefit from the rumaki wananga classes and to expand their knowledge of the Māori world. Mainstream Māori students achieve at high levels in NCEA qualifications and in University Entrance examinations.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

Western Springs College is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. A culture of continuous improvement is evident at all levels of the school. The management of change in the school is well considered and carefully paced. Effective, thorough and purposeful self review promotes coherent school-wide processes and systems.

The board of trustees is capable and committed to the long-term interests of the school. Trustees bring varied professional backgrounds to their governance roles. A major component of board work is currently directed towards activities associated with planning the school's rebuild.

The school's long-serving principal provides experienced and insightful leadership. School leaders and teachers are a highly effective group of professionals. They continue to be actively focused on the provision of an innovative curriculum. Middle managers provide substantial evaluative reporting for senior leaders and the board of trustees about curriculum developments and the delivery of programmes.

Teacher capability is very high. Teachers are very responsive to students' needs and requirements for learning. They work collaboratively to stimulate and challenge their students. Carefully tailored professional learning initiatives and high quality teacher appraisal systems contribute to teachers' ongoing development.

Students have many opportunities to express their views about how the school can improve and influence young peoples' lives in positive ways. Further confidential surveys of students may help the board to be better assured of student wellbeing within the school's culture of high expectations.

### **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 107 international students attending the school.

The school provides very good quality pastoral care and support for international students. The operation and promotion of the school's international programme is effectively managed. Students are well integrated into the school. Teachers provide relevant and useful learning programmes, including those for building English language proficiency for speakers of other languages. Reflective self review has helped to bring about positive changes to recruitment systems, enrolment procedures, orientation programmes and learning provisions for international students.

Compliance with the Code, information about student achievement and other educational outcomes for international students are regularly reported to the board.

### **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**

Western Springs College provides high quality education for its community. A responsive and innovative curriculum provides rich opportunities for students' learning and qualifications success. Students flourish in this environment. They are articulate, confident and well equipped to transition into tertiary study and the adult world.

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



Dale Bailey  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

19 June 2015

## About the School

|                                      |   |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|------------------|------|--------------------|------|------------------|------|-------------|----|---------|----|--------|----|--------|----|------|----|-------------|----|--------|----|
| Location                             | Western Springs, Auckland   |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 48  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| School type                          | Secondary (Years 9 to 13)   |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| School roll                          | 1293  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Number of international students     | 107   |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Gender composition                   | Boys 56%<br>Girls 44%   |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Ethnic composition                   | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>27%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NZ European/Pākehā</td> <td>55%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Samoan</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cook Island</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chinese</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Indian</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tongan</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Niue</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>other Asian</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>others</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> </table> |  | Māori            | 27%  | NZ European/Pākehā | 55%  | Samoan           | 3%   | Cook Island | 2% | Chinese | 2% | Indian | 2% | Tongan | 1% | Niue | 1% | other Asian | 2% | others | 5% |
| Māori                                | 27%   |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| NZ European/Pākehā                   | 55%   |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Samoan                               | 3%  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Cook Island                          | 2%  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Chinese                              | 2%  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Indian                               | 2%  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Tongan                               | 1%  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Niue                                 | 1%  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| other Asian                          | 2%  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| others                               | 5%  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Special Features                     | Rumaki (Māori Immersion)<br>Auckland Secondary School Centre - alternative education<br>The Auckland Performing Arts Centre (TAPAC)<br>Community Education Programme  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Review team on site                  | May 2015  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Date of this report                  | 19 June 2015  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Most recent ERO report(s)            | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>2010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>2007</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>2004</td> </tr> </table>  |  | Education Review | 2010 | Education Review   | 2007 | Education Review | 2004 |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Education Review                     | 2010  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Education Review                     | 2007  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |
| Education Review                     | 2004  |  |                  |      |                    |      |                  |      |             |    |         |    |        |    |        |    |      |    |             |    |        |    |