

Kelston Girls' College Education Review

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About the School

Location	New Lynn, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	84	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	597	
Number of international students	4	
Gender composition	Girls 100%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	16%
	NZ European/Pākehā	4%
	Samoaan	30%
	Tongan	11%
	Fijian	6%
	Middle Eastern	6%
	Indian	5%
	African	3%
	South East Asian	3%
	Cook Island Māori	2%
	Niue	4%
	other Pacific	8%
	other	2%
Special Features	Onsite Kelston Deaf Education Centre	
	Hauora Centre	

Review team on site	February 2014	
Date of this report	16 May 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	January 2011
	Education Review	December 2007
	Education Review	October 2004

The Purpose of an ERO Report

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.

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1 Context

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

Kelston Girls' College places high priority on success for all learners and provides for girls and young women in Years 9 to 14 from a culturally diverse community. Many of the girls are from low income households. The school continues to provide for refugee students. Sixty-one percent of the school identify as Pacific, and sixteen percent are of Māori heritage.

As noted in previous ERO reports, the college provides a highly supportive and inclusive environment where girls have a strong sense of pride and belonging. The slogan "She's worth it" underpins all operations and systems in the school.

Te Kotahitanga, the project that has identified strategies to improve and enhance learning outcomes particularly for Māori students, has been a feature in the school for many years. In 2013, the college re-emphasised this approach, introduced Malaga (the Pacific strategy) and Starpath (a project led by Auckland University focused on raising educational outcomes for priority learners). The college has continued to diversify girls' learning pathways and to provide academic counselling for all learners. The new Careers Academy increases options for future learning and employment. The school has a long-standing, close association with students from the Kelston Deaf Education Centre.

ERO's 2010 report affirmed the school's priorities of further developing the leadership skills of senior and middle managers, and consolidating best practice in teaching and learning. The school has included these areas in their commitment to ongoing improvement.

The board and staff value and reflect community diversity. They continue to be active in the local school cluster, and encourage community involvement through networking and school activities.

2 Learning

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

The board, senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers are highly effective in their use of student achievement information. The college strongly supports the progress and achievement of all its students. It places high emphasis on the success of Māori and Pacific students. Te Kotahitanga and Malaga have provided solid foundations and impetus for student success.

Students are well engaged in their learning and the wider school community. The effective transition practices that help to settle students into the school on arrival set a sound basis for student learning. Ongoing monitoring of student wellbeing contributes to students' ongoing success. Students show confidence and pride in their language, culture and identity, and are motivated to achieve success.

School leaders and staff are working hard to achieve the government's goal that by 2017, 85% of students leaving school will have gained NCEA Level 2 or higher qualifications. They are well on track to do so. Achievement trends over the past three years, and particularly in 2013, show:

- ongoing improvement in NCEA at Levels 1 to 3, and in University Entrance
- significant improvement in literacy and numeracy from Year 9 to Year 10 enabling students, particularly Māori and Pacific, to reach national averages
- very good progress and achievement, particularly for Pacific students, in NCEA at Levels 1 and 3
- success for refugee students and those in the Careers Academy
- good evidence of progress towards meeting the school's strategic objectives and government goals.

Māori student achievement rates show improvement over time, and gains made by Māori students often exceed those made by their peers. Senior leaders acknowledge that improving Māori student achievement in NCEA mathematics remains an area of focus. School leaders and teachers continue to prioritise strategies that support Māori learners to make accelerated progress and be successful. School reports show that these strategies are also effective in supporting all other students to succeed.

The commitment of the board and staff to high expectations for progress and achievement is demonstrated through:

- appropriate and challenging strategic goals and annual targets that are well aligned with government expectations
- deliberate inquiry into student achievement data to meet the individual needs of every student
- school-wide emphasis on literacy and numeracy achievement in Years 9 and 10 as a foundation for success
- well analysed student achievement data that informs teaching and learning programmes, interventions and strategic planning
- the comprehensive and holistic approach to monitoring, mentoring, academic counselling and additional support that enables student success
- partnerships in learning, developed through consultation and collaboration between faculties, teachers, students and their families/whānau/aiga.

ERO affirms senior leaders' continued commitment to building on teachers' knowledge, analysis and use of student achievement data in all aspects of teaching and learning. Good work is being done on improving the quality and consistency of assessment at Years 9 and 10 across faculties and learning areas. This work should help teachers and leaders to further develop strategies to support student learning.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum is reviewed in an ongoing way to help ensure it is effective in promoting and supporting student learning. Student wellbeing is at the heart of all decisions, systems and teaching and learning. The board's vision is to empower young women and provide them with choices and pathways that support their success within and beyond school. The board, leaders and teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to achieving this vision through the student-centred curriculum.

The challenge of declining enrolments has encouraged the school to think creatively about the curriculum, learning opportunities for their students and the wider community. Collaboration between learning areas provides good support for cross-curricular approaches and strategies.

The school's strong commitment to students' personal learning pathways is reflected in programmes of learning across curriculum areas. These pathways enable students to plan their learning at school and prepare for their future education, training and employment. The Careers Academy is an innovative response to students' needs, interests and aspirations. The board has provided specific resourcing for programmes to develop the leadership potential of students with exceptional ability.

Over the past three years, teachers have built a culture of reflection in their practice, influenced by Te Kotahitanga. Teachers consciously seek ways to ensure their teaching is relevant and improves outcomes for students. The recently reviewed appraisal system provides numerous opportunities to include the student voice, as well as observations and sharing of effective teaching practice. This system is providing leaders and teachers with good information to achieve high quality teaching and learning practices.

The school is investigating how e-learning approaches could influence new ways of learning and supplement existing teaching practices. Future-focused issues that have an influence on girls' pathways are used as a rich source of learning opportunity. Leaders have arranged appropriate professional development in integrating digital technologies as a teaching and learning tool for 2014.

The Hauora Centre is a purpose-built well being centre at the heart of the school. It provides comprehensive services that include doctors, counsellors, physiotherapists, youth workers, and a nurse, and facilitate access to a range of community agencies. The centre connects closely with the school and supports curriculum learning in health education and student-led health-promotion initiatives.

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

Kelston Girls' College continues to promote educational success for Māori, as Māori. Māori students make up sixteen percent of the school population. Māori students are highly engaged in learning, and are proud to be Māori. The school's commitment to Māori student success is evident in the way Māori language, culture and identity are valued by all.

The principles of Te Kotahitanga are clearly evident in the school. The board demonstrates its commitment to improving outcomes for Māori students by the inclusion of the Māori academic dean on the senior leadership team. Te reo and tikanga Māori are evident in learning programmes across the curriculum.

Auhia, the vertical whānau class, continues to be a place where Māori students explore what success and being Māori means to them. The annual Auhia prize-giving enables Māori students and their whānau to celebrate their achievement.

The voice of whānau is valued in school-wide planning and decision making. The board and school leaders continue to investigate effective ways to consult and collaborate with Māori parents and whānau to strengthen their participation and partnership in their daughters' learning.

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

Kelston Girls' College continues its commitment to helping ensure that Pacific students achieve educational success. Pacific students constitute sixty-one percent of the school population, with Samoan students making up the majority. Pacific students' cultural heritage is valued and celebrated.

The Malaga Pasifika team, established late in 2012, remains focused on success for all young Pacific women in the school. Malaga Pasifika and Te Kotahitanga work collaboratively towards positive outcomes for students. The Pacific academic dean is on the senior leadership team.

Teachers use strategies to motivate and support students to achieve future success. A culture of high expectations of and for Pacific students' success underpins all interactions. Pacific students, through mentoring programmes and role modelling, develop clear educational pathways, a sense of purpose, and are motivated to achieve.

The school has close links with parents, families and communities. 'Parent empowerment' evenings are opportunities for parents, caregivers and the community to ask questions, raise concerns and make suggestions about their daughters' learning.

Professional development, informed by research and student voice, is helping the board, leaders and teachers to understand and remain focused on raising Pacific student achievement. They work together to raise young women's academic and all-round excellence.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance. Effective self review is evident in systems, practices, and teaching and learning. The board's strategic goals are clearly reflected in practice at all levels of the school.

The wellbeing of all students, and especially Māori and Pacific students, underpins decision making in this school. The board maintains a clear strategic approach to student wellbeing with specific strategic goals and objectives that focus on the environment, restorative practices and student attendance. This strategic approach provides a strong foundation for students to access meaningful learning and take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

Trustees and school leaders use self review effectively to sustain a continuous cycle of development that will improve student learning. They evaluate the impact of programmes and initiatives using the school's comprehensive achievement information to make strategic decisions designed to improve outcomes for students. The board continues to place a high priority on supporting Māori student achievement.

The experienced principal and her supportive leadership team work collaboratively to foster the relationship-focused school culture. They mentor and support middle leaders of learning and teachers and actively work to grow leadership at all levels of the school. Effective quality assurance processes help to provide senior leaders and trustees with good information to guide decision making. Through the principal, the school takes an active leadership role in local and educational communities.

The board is very capable and reflects the diverse Kelston community. Trustees value the school's strong and mutually beneficial relationships with the school community. They take every opportunity to engage with the community through networking and school activities.

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 four international students were attending the school. The school also hosts school groups for short stays as part of an ongoing relationship with schools in Japan.

The school provides a high standard of pastoral care for the international students and gives

them regular opportunities to talk about their goals and experiences. The students are well supported in classrooms by bilingual teacher aides and an effective student buddy system. They are making good progress towards achieving their goals. The students appreciate the friendly culture and enjoy being involved in school activities. The international Dean, principal and board use considered processes to monitor the quality of provision for international students and to ensure compliance with the 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.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Dale Bailey
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Northern Region

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