Halwell Residential College
Halwell, Christchurch

Confirmed

Education Review Report
Education Review Report
Halswell Residential 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.

Findings

1 Context

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

Halswell Residential College provides education and care for students with intellectual difficulties, social, emotional and/or behavioural needs that cannot be adequately met in their home communities. Government decisions relating to special education resulted in a significant decrease in the roll in 2013. This required major restructuring affecting funding and a reduction in teaching and residential staff.

The school is now part of the intensive wraparound service (IWS). The maximum roll determined by the Ministry of Education (MOE) is 32 students.

At the time of the ERO review, there were 18 students attending. Ten of these students were from the upper North Island. The principal has held the position for approximately two and a half years. There have been recent changes in management roles, and in the way that student learning needs are addressed in the day school and residential programmes.

The school is governed by a minister appointed board of trustees that also governs Westbridge Residential School in Auckland. This board took up its governance role at the start of 2014. Historically, Halswell Residential College has been a school for boys. Although the school is not designated co-educational, a small number of girls has been enrolled in 2014 with Ministry of Education approval. The board has decided to request a change to co-educational status.

The college has made significant progress in addressing the areas for further development outlined in the September 2008 ERO report. These include:

- increased use of direct teaching strategies that help individual students with their learning
- self review that is more clearly focused on ongoing improvements that promote positive outcomes for students
- effective use of achievement information to plan programmes that meets students’ holistic needs.
The school engages effectively with students' families and the local community. These positive interactions strongly support student learning and wellbeing. However, the quality of provisions for students is at some risk because of a number of unresolved issues that are outside the school's control.

2 Learning

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

Students are motivated in their learning and gently guided by their teachers and support staff. Teachers effectively use information about each student's learning to promote their engagement and progress. Individualised learning programmes take good account of students' interests and needs. Well-structured individual education plans (IEPs) are highly informative for staff, students, parents and whānau.

Most students have considerable delays in their achievement. Progress in literacy, numeracy and social behaviours targeted for learning, is closely monitored. Teachers provide highly focused teaching in these areas. Students' learning needs are well addressed in both the school and residential settings. Consistent behaviour management practices increase students' capability to adapt their behaviour.

Students have good opportunities to work towards a certificate level qualification through the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) supported learning units. Students can also access National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 1 programmes through Te Kura (The Correspondence School). These programmes provide meaningful experiences that help them to return to their local school or to further education or employment contexts.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum provides a useful model that promotes effective and consistent teaching practices to meet the special needs of students.

The curriculum reflects the college community's aspirations for students. Teachers have high expectations for students' learning and behaviour. The curriculum outlines effective teaching strategies and positive learning environments that will promote this.

Teachers plan a range of opportunities for students to learn and experience success through their interests and abilities. This includes participation in sport, music, science-related activities, art and community events. Curriculum guidelines cover both the school and residential programmes as well as education beyond the classroom. It encourages teachers to adapt programmes to better meet students' needs. Strong emphasis is given to enabling students to develop the key competencies outlined in the New Zealand Curriculum.

Students are positive about the programmes they are involved in and appreciate opportunities to participate in sports, music and cultural activities. Teachers and students are well supported in their use of technologies by a specialist provider.
Area for review and development

The curriculum provides useful guidelines for planning and teaching that will effectively support outcomes for students. The board has agreed to develop the vision and values in conjunction with the MOE and the IWS. The managers and teachers will then need to extend the curriculum so that it includes the school's vision and values. These will give greater prominence to the meaningful ways that students' social development and the school's culture are promoted.

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

Māori students are well able to achieve success as Māori. They experience positive and caring relationships with all staff. The college supports Māori staff in providing a range of cultural experiences for students. These include karakia, haka, pōwhiri, whaikōrero (speech) waiata, marae protocols and ngā mahi toi (art). Students have good opportunities to learn te reo and tikanga Māori (the Māori language and culture) in a strongly-supportive whānau environment.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Pacific students?

Pacific students also experience positive relationships with all staff and members of the Pacific community. The college has a Pacific caucus which supports students, their parents and families.

Students have good opportunities to participate in church, social events and community special events. A strong relationship exists between the college and the local Pacific community.

Māori and Pacific culture, language and identity are valued by staff. This positive recognition builds students' self esteem. Students are highly engaged in their learning and are making progress towards achieving their IEP goals.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Shared leadership is evident at the college. Staff strengths are effectively used to meet the school’s goals for teaching and learning. Internal systems ensure good levels of communication exist across the school so that students’ circumstances and needs are known and well understood by all staff. The school has positive working relationships with IWS staff throughout the country. Staff professional learning and development needs are well met by the board.

Teachers and residential staff consistently use reflective practice as an essential part of their focus on continuous improvement. The school’s well-planned self review gives appropriate emphasis to aspects of the programmes and procedures that particularly affect on outcomes for students.

Although some trustees are relatively new to the board, they collectively bring considerable experience and expertise to their governance role. They work collaboratively with the college management to help staff in meeting the needs of students.

Areas for review and development

The board and senior managers provide good support for staff in meeting the needs of students. The board has made provision for immediate education specialist support for teachers. The next step is for the board to consider ways to maintain and finance this level of specialist support.
While staff are strongly committed to meeting student needs, there is ongoing uncertainty about funding and the school’s future viability. The school has a projected substantial budget deficit which means it would not be able to sustain its operations beyond 2014.

Provision for students in the school hostel

In this review, ERO evaluated the extent to which the school villas (hostels) provide a safe physical and emotional environment that promotes learning for students accommodated there. The villas are licensed by the Ministry of Education and are required to comply with minimum standards as specified in the hostel regulations. The board attested in a Hostel Assurance Statement that it meets these requirements. The villas are able to take up to 90 students, but at present only 18 students are accommodated.

The villas are well managed. The management structure promotes good communication and systems between the villas. Useful guidelines lead to cohesive practices that meet college requirements for the education and wellbeing of students. Low numbers in the villas and positive relationships between staff and students create a family-like environment.

Staff are nurturing and supportive and maintain consistent expectations that students are familiar with and adhere to. Roster systems allow staff to be present in the villas at all times. Specific supervision during night-time hours strongly supports the safety and security of all students.

The 24/7 education programme allows staff to organise a variety of planned and informal learning experiences. These opportunities build students’ competencies in managing themselves and developing independence in preparation for moving back to their home communities. Staff share notes about student wellbeing through the school’s database. This approach effectively enables all staff to support students with any particular areas of concern.

The senior manager reports regularly to the board via the principal.

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.
Recommendations to other agencies

ERO recommends the Ministry of Education continue to work with the school in relation to IWS, funding and co-educational options to better enable the school to address the issues outlined in this report.

Conclusion

Students benefit from useful and effective teaching and positive relationships with staff. The curriculum is adapted to meet students' complex special needs. The minister appointed board is strongly focused on supporting staff in meeting students' needs. The board and staff are awaiting Ministry of Education decisions for matters at present having some affect on staff morale.

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

Graham Randell
National Manager Review Services
Southern Region

12 August 2014
About the School

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<tr>
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<td>School type</td>
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