

**PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS KURA HOURUA READINESS REPORT: confirmed June 2015****Middle School West Auckland**

Glendene, Auckland

MoE profile number 713

**BACKGROUND**

The Ministry of Education commissioned the Education Review Office (ERO) to help determine the readiness of Middle School West Auckland to operate effectively as a school in 2015.

Middle School West Auckland is one of four Partnership Schools Kura Hourua (PSKH) established in New Zealand during the second round of this initiative. These schools are a new type of school within the existing network designed to bring together the education, business and community sectors to provide new opportunities for students to achieve educational success.

ERO recognises that these schools have been given flexibility about how they operate and use funding to deliver school-specific targets. Clearly specified targets for student achievement, student engagement, enrolment of priority learners and financial reporting are specified in each PSKH's contract with the Crown.

**Terms of reference**

The MOE asked ERO to:

- focus on the systems and procedures necessary for Middle School West Auckland (MSWA) to open smoothly in 2015
- identify what is in place and its suitability, what is planned, any gaps and whether the plan is achievable
- identify (as near as possible) priority areas to be addressed
- recognise that many procedures and systems will be in the process of being developed and look for evidence that the school is aware of the need and has a planned timeframe to develop them
- seek evidence that the national priorities and all applicable guidelines provided by the Ministry, have been considered.

**METHODOLOGY**

ERO met with the sponsors, school management team, the governance facilitator, local MoE advisors and school staff over time to determine the school's readiness to open. The process to evaluate the readiness of this school has been tailored to the particular circumstances and progress of the individual school.

Interim progress was reported to MoE in December 2014.

Visits to the school sites in 2015 have focused on the development of the teaching and learning model and observations of the programme in action, including discussions with students. Evidence was gathered to verify that timely and appropriate steps have been taken to prepare the school to operate effectively. The matters detailed in the appendix to this report, the readiness profile, have been discussed with school management and the sponsors.

## **FINDINGS**

Middle School West Auckland provides education for students in Years 7 to 10. The school is sponsored by The Villa Education Trust. A business manager, academic advisor and principal provide leadership for the school. They have made good progress in the time available to set up and operate a new school.

The vision and direction for the school is articulated and reflected in documentation. It is based on the established direction of the Villa Trust Schools. The aim is to provide a sound foundation for students as they progress from primary school to senior secondary, and to keep this age group well engaged in meaningful learning. Previous experience in establishing and operating schools that provide alternative options for parents provides a strong base for the successful development of Middle School West Auckland.

There are currently 135 students. Māori (60%) and Pacific (32%) students make up most of the roll. A staff member who is experienced in supporting students and their whānau provides good liaison with both the school and wider communities. This has proved beneficial in promoting the school and in working with students to settle into their new school. The roll is expected to increase during the year.

A significant number of students who have previously been disengaged from schooling have enrolled at MSWA. School leaders are actively seeking ways to monitor their progress at school and to provide appropriate support when necessary. School leaders together with the community liaison person are establishing good relationships with external agencies such as CYFs, police and other services to support students who are at risk of poor outcomes.

Middle School West Auckland is organised into 3 units of 60 students each. The school is currently operating two units at the Church Unlimited site and a further unit at the site shared with Ngā Kākano o te Kaihanga Kura in Henderson. The kura has reduced its class range to Years 1 to 6 and some older students who had previously attended the kura have enrolled at MSWA. Ongoing work will be needed to support these learners and their whānau in the changed environment.

The largest part of MSWA is located in Glendene, in property leased from the Church Unlimited adjacent to a shopping centre carpark. Some modifications to the building have been made to meet operating requirements and to provide the learning spaces that support the school's model of learning. The school has exclusive use of most parts of the facility, although some areas are used by the church at weekends. The school is able to access the church's large auditorium and commercial kitchen. School leaders are well aware of the challenge of managing potential hazards.

Efficient processes for managing the school have been established. The business manager is experienced and capable and provides effective support for implementing the vision articulated by the academic advisor and the Villa Trust.

The Trust has replicated many aspects of operations at their established schools in this new PSKH. This includes many operational policies and procedures, the curriculum documentation and units of work, and assessment and reporting processes. Documentation has been reviewed by the school leaders to better meet the needs of the specific MSWA context.

Working across three schools is enabling useful induction and professional development for staff. The academic leaders of each villa meet regularly across MSWA and South Auckland Middle School (SAMS) and Mt Hobson Middle School for ongoing professional development. This good practice is enabling the development of worthwhile professional development in assessment practices, including moderation of assessment practices between schools.

The principal is an experienced secondary school leader. He began at the school after it had been operating for five weeks, replacing the initial appointment. Thoughtful induction and ongoing support from school leaders have enabled him to make a successful transition into a different model of teaching and learning.

Appropriately qualified staff have been appointed. The principal and business leader both report that teachers appointed have proven to be a good fit for the school. All classroom teachers are registered teachers. There are two beginning teachers who are provisionally registered and one teacher who is employed as a Limited Authority to Teach (LAT) while her overseas teaching qualifications are being verified by NZQA. Sports coaches who provide much of the afternoon programme at the other Villa Trust schools are also working at Middle School West Auckland.

The curriculum is derived from a model that the sponsor has successfully used previously in different settings. It uses project-based learning designed to provide broad coverage of the essential learning areas of the *New Zealand Curriculum*. Students are expected to manage their time and to increasingly personalise how they engage with the topics. Teachers are aware of the need to support students who may not be familiar with studying independently, as they adapt to this way of learning.

Students learn in classes of up to 15 students. Classes are settled and purposeful. Students report that the small class sizes mean that they get plenty of individual help from their teachers, and they are responding positively to teachers' high expectations. The principal reports significant improvements for some students in engaging in learning, particularly in areas such as attendance.

### **Priority areas to be addressed**

School leaders have made considerable progress in a short space of time. They are aware that areas for ongoing development include:

- providing support for students who are at high risk of poor outcomes.
- providing leadership and support to teachers and leaders of units across the two sites
- catering adequately for students during class breaks, including provision for wet days, and managing the safety of students

- managing the possible risk associated with a school site that is adjacent to a shopping area and shares a venue with an organisation accessed by the wider community
- working with Ngā Kākano staff to build mutual understanding of relative roles and responsibilities.

Where there is need for further development, we are confident in the school's capacity to address these matters.

**Appendix: Readiness Profile**
**Middle School West Auckland**

<b>Matters to address</b>		<b>comment if applicable</b>
The vision and direction for the school is developed and reflected in documentation for the school.	✓	Prospectus and website clearly articulate the vision and direction of the school. The focus on academic and personal achievement and school values is evident in all aspects of the school.
Planning and practices show responsiveness to the needs of Maori students, Pasifika students, and students with special education needs.	In process	Students in the unit at Ngā Kākano have weekly lessons in te reo Māori. Students who are confident with the independent learning model are able to interpret the projects to include aspects of their culture.  A significant number of students have previously been disengaged from schooling. School leaders are very aware of the needs of these students and actively seeking ways to engage them effectively.
Processes for planning and reporting, and self review are being developed.	✓	The school is well placed to meet ongoing MoE reporting requirements.  Some self review has already been undertaken. Further use of student voice to inform self review is planned.
Processes are to ensure students settle effectively into the new school have been developed and are being implemented.	✓	A staff member who is experienced in supporting students and their whānau provides good liaison with both the school and wider communities. School leaders have good awareness of the possible impact of disengaged students on school culture. Community meeting held to explain separation of MWSA and Ngā Kākano, and new ways of operating.
Systems for assessing, analysing and reporting on student achievement are being developed.	✓	Replicated from SAMS – good professional development in place to help with Year 9 &10 assessment, and building useful baseline data.
A set of key policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and students, and there is a programme in		Replicated from SAMS and personalised to MWSA site.

place to develop others that may be needed.	✓	Advice sought from OSH experts in regard to physical safety.
There is an efficient management structure with suitable governance interface, appropriate structures and delegations.	✓	Replicated from SAMS – good networking support from principal at SAMS. Efficient and effective management structures in place.
School leaders are developing shared beliefs about desired teaching and learning approaches amongst school leadership and staff	✓	Induction programme designed to develop a shared understanding of the school vision and learning model. The academic advisor provides ongoing professional development and challenge.  Ongoing work is in place to ensure that there is shared understanding of preferred pedagogy across the Villa network of schools.
A school curriculum and programmes are being developed to reflect the needs of students and sufficient planning is in place to guide learning as the school opens.	✓	Replicated from SAMS. Good professional support from principal and staff at SAMS.  Economy of scale possible in developing curriculum and resources, and using specialist staff.
The school is staffed appropriately to provide the desired programme and staff induction is planned	✓	The school is appropriately staffed with registered teachers who bring specialist skills and experience in the expectations of secondary schools. One teacher from Argentina has a LAT while her teaching qualifications are being verified by NZQA.  Induction for staff in this model is ongoing.
Performance management systems for staff are being developed	✓	Replicated from SAMS – good networking support from principal at SAMS
A disputes procedure has been developed	✓	Replicated from SAMS.

Effective systems are in place to monitor student engagement, including a student management system.	✓	Good systems to know about and monitor attendance are in place. Very high rates of student attendance evident.
An enrolment scheme and enrolment procedures are in place, (noting that the school has a maximum roll as referred to in Schedule 3 of the Contract), and they must adhere to the “open for all” enrolment policy whilst targeting priority learners.	✓	Meeting targets re enrolling priority learners.  Current roll 135 after starting with 114. On track to reach target roll of 160.  High percentage of Māori, Pacific and students at high risk of disengagement from education.
Policies and procedures for managing school finances and a draft budget for 2015 are in place	✓	Efficient and effective systems evident. Replicated from SAMS
Staff and students have access to appropriate furniture and equipment, teaching materials, library, resources, ICT.	✓	Students benefit from good access to ICT to support learning. The property at Glendene has some limitations in terms of meeting spaces and staffroom facilities.
There is a plan for the operation and maintenance of the school premises.	✓	School operates across two venues which presents additional challenges for management and for building shared school culture.