

## ERO External Evaluation

### Nelson College For Girls, Nelson

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

Nelson College For Girls is situated in central Nelson. It has provided education for girls from Year 9 to 13 for over 130 years. The roll of 1018 includes 14 % Māori students. Students attend from across the Nelson area, with many also from the West Coast. There are 42 international students who are a mixture of short, medium and long-term stay.

The school's vision is 'to educate, empower and nurture each student so they can confidently succeed in their world.' This is underpinned by PRIDE values: Positivity, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Empathy.

The school states that its areas for strategic improvement are to:

- understand our students as individuals to create meaningful relationships that enable success
- have a culture of inspiration, innovation and excellence in our staff
- grow the skills and attributes of our students to empower them to succeed in their world
- strengthen partnerships with our whānau and community to enhance students' success.

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

- National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)
- standardised test data for Years 9 and 10
- achievement for groups of students included in the school's annual targets.

Teachers have participated in the Ministry of Education funded professional development programme 'Positive Behaviour for Learning' (PB4L).

The school hostel, Clarice Johnstone House, is an integral part of the school campus. It offers accommodation for up to 150 students, from New Zealand and overseas. The hostel, Nelson College For Girls Preparatory School and a young parent school all share governance with the college.

The college staffing has been generally stable over time. Since the 2016 review, two new assistant principals have been appointed to the senior leadership team.

Nelson College For Girls is a member of the Nelson City 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?

The college has been effective in achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for most students. High levels of achievement have been sustained since the 2016 ERO review, with most students successful in gaining NCEA, and the majority achieving the University Entrance qualification (UE).

Nearly all students finish school having achieved Level 2 or above, and almost all girls achieve Level 1 Literacy and Numeracy qualifications by the end of Year 12. In 2018, however, there were slightly lower results at Level 1 and for UE. The college's 2019 targets reflect that increasing the number of girls achieving UE is a priority.

There is a persistent difference between the overall achievement levels in NCEA of New Zealand European students and Māori students. The school is aware of this and is acting to improve outcomes for Māori learners.

Over time, data indicates that there is an increasing proportion of girls who enter the college achieving below curriculum expectations for literacy and mathematics. Sustained levels of achievement in NCEA suggest that the school is increasing the achievement of these students as they move through the school.

The retention of girls beyond the age of 17 is high.

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

Leaders identify that the school's effectiveness in accelerating the progress of priority learners is an area that requires strengthening.

Standardised testing information gathered in Years 9 and 10 shows that the school successfully accelerates progress in literacy and numeracy for a some of the students, including Māori, who need this.

## **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?**

Positive and respectful relationships are clearly evident across the school. In calm and settled classrooms, ERO observed high engagement in learning activities. Leaders effectively ensure an orderly and supportive environment that is conducive to student learning. Girls have access to a wide range of educational and leadership opportunities both within and outside the school.

A sense of belonging and connection are successfully promoted. The established values have been refreshed in consultation with the community, and along with the traditions and desired outcomes, underpin teaching practice. Processes that enable a smooth transition into the school at Year 9 have been strengthened through collaboration with other schools in the Kāhui Ako.

Students with additional needs are well catered for through programmes, interventions and specific resourcing.

There is a strong focus on promoting student wellbeing. Pastoral systems and processes are well considered, responsive and effective in supporting students to be successful learners. A recently introduced coaching and mentoring system (Ārahi) is building positive relationships between students, teachers and families to foster learning success.

Teachers and leaders have strengthened the use of assessment tools to build a clearer picture of student achievement. They have better access to learning information that shows student progress over time. Improved tracking and monitoring of different groups of students, including those identified as at risk of underachieving, has led to teachers and leaders knowing more about who is achieving and who is not.

School leaders value and increasingly make effective use of key stakeholder voice to inform well-considered responses. Families are suitably engaged in actively supporting and facilitating valuable school activities.

Staff have opportunities to participate in meaningful and relevant professional learning that reflects the school's strategic priorities for improvement. An appropriate appraisal system is in place that has the potential to support teachers to grow and develop their capabilities. A clear and well considered programme is in place to support the induction and mentoring of new teachers to the school.

A measured approach to review and reflection is evident across the school. It is improvement focussed. The school's review process includes suitable research, is well considered and aligns with best practice pedagogy. There are examples of reviews leading to changes and refinements of school systems and processes.

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

The school's curriculum requires modernising and needs to increase its response to students' needs. Future curriculum review should focus on:

- strengthening the response to students' culture, language, and identity
- developing a localised curriculum, reflecting the community's history, culture and context
- accelerating progress for priority learners
- continuing to develop shared expectations for teaching and learning practices that deliver new pedagogical developments that are effective in supporting student achievement
- being future focused, innovative and creative.

Leaders and teachers need to strengthen their shared understanding of evidence-based evaluation, inquiry and knowledge building. Measuring the impact of initiatives and teaching practices on improving outcomes for all learners, in particular priority learners, will assist the college to establish how well it delivers its valued outcomes and strategic goals. This should also support the newly-established leadership team to increase the pace of change, particularly for curriculum development.

While some teachers are engaging in the appraisal process well, there is the need for a more consistent and rigorous approach to strengthen its effectiveness in promoting improved practice across the school.

The school should strengthen partnerships with the community to enhance student learning. Exploring new strategies to engage different groups of parents, particularly whānau Māori, in school decision making is important for full whānau engagement.

The newly-elected board of trustees need to further develop their understanding of governance roles and responsibilities.

## 3 Other Matters

### Provision for students in the school hostel

The school hostel is an integral part of the school and can accommodate up to 151 students. At the time of this review, it catered for 100 girls, drawn from all areas of Aotearoa New Zealand, although predominately from the West Coast of the South Island. 25% of girls in the hostel are international students.

Trustees have attested that all the requirements of the Hostel Regulations are met. The principal and the hostel manager are responsible for its day-to-day operation on behalf of the board of trustees.

The hostel provides suitable accommodation for full-time and weekly boarders from Years 9 to 13 in two buildings integrated into the main school campus. Hostel practices effectively complement and support pastoral care and learning within the school. Good provision is made for girls to study independently and supervised.

The hostel staff provide pastoral care in an environment that successfully promotes student wellbeing. Students have opportunities to participate in a range of school-based activities and sports.

The next steps for improvement are:

- developing self review and evaluation that determines what is effective and what needs to be improved
- formalising and increasing the frequency of reporting to the principal and to trustees
- strengthening routines and raising expectations for the day-to-day running of the hostel.

#### Provision for international students

The college 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. It has attested that it complies with and meets all aspects of the code. At the time of this review there were 42 international students drawn largely from Asia, Europe and Latin America.

Processes for orientation to the school are well considered. Care is taken to provide courses that reflect the needs and interests of students and their families. Students' pastoral and wellbeing needs are well supported. Students who set goals for academic achievement in NCEA qualifications are nearly all successful.

Students are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school and participate in a range of sporting, cultural and social activities both in the school and the wider community.

Students have good opportunities to share and celebrate their cultures with other students.

The next step is to strengthen internal evaluation processes to support the college to continue to improve its provision.

## 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 Children's Act 2014.

## 5 ERO's Overall Judgement

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

Well placed

ERO's Framework: [Overall Findings and Judgement Tool derived from School Evaluation Indicators: Effective Practice for Improvement and Learner Success](#) 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:

- sustained, high levels of achievement
- strong, respectful relationships and a positive environment conducive to learning
- effective pastoral systems and a strong focus on promoting wellbeing
- good systems and processes to support teachers to improve their practice.

### Next steps

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

- implementing a more strategic approach to the planned curriculum review to be more responsive to all students needs
- strengthening understanding of internal evaluation to measure the impact of initiatives and teaching practices for improving student outcomes
- building partnerships with all groups of parents that promote learning and support school decision making.



Dr Lesley Patterson  
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Southern Region  
13 March 2020

## About the school

Location	Nelson	
Ministry of Education profile number	295	
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 15)	
School roll	1018	
Gender composition	100% Female	
Ethnic composition	Māori	14%
	NZ European/Pākehā	74%
	Pacific	2%
	Other Ethnicities	10%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes	
Provision of Māori medium education	No	
Review team on site	October 2019	
Date of this report	24 January 2020	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	May 2016
	Education Review	November 2012