

## ERO External Evaluation

### Columba College, Dunedin

#### Summary

Columba College is a state-integrated school for boys and girls from Years 1 to 6, and girls only from Years 7 to 13. The school offers boarding for Years 8 and above. The roll at the time of the review is 600. There are 128 children in Years 1 to 6, 91 in Years 7 and 8 and 381 in Years 9 to 13. A small number of students identify as being Māori. The school has 37 international students.

Since the last review the school has a new principal, a new board of trustees chair and several new trustees. Significant progress has been made in all areas identified in the previous ERO report and, in particular, in building relational trust and strengthening the appraisal system.

#### How well is the school achieving equitable outcomes for all children?

The school is effectively achieving equitable outcomes for students. School leaders and teachers have high expectations and are strongly focussed on all students reaching their potential. The school's values and culture contribute to positive relationships and high levels of engagement. Students consistently achieve very highly in the National Standards (NS) and NCEA.

Student and staff wellbeing is prioritised and supported by systems and resourcing.

The school is undergoing considerable well-managed change as it seeks to further improve outcomes for students through greater robustness and consistency of school-wide understandings and practices. Key future focus areas include building teacher capacity, creating cohesive systems and strengthening internal evaluation.

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

#### Equity and excellence

##### How effectively does this school respond to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

The school is responding very effectively to Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration. Māori students are achieving well and make similar rates of progress in their learning against the NS.

Accelerated progress is evident for most students, across the curriculum and in all year levels, within the junior school. Reported achievement information in the middle school shows a trend of

improvement and progress for most students. There are very high levels of achievement, including endorsements, at all levels of NCEA.

A range of assessment tools are used to inform teachers' judgements about student achievement across the school.

Learning support programmes for a small number of identified groups of students are well planned, and effectively support their learning and other needs.

## **School conditions supporting equity and excellence**

### **What school processes are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?**

Columba College has very effective processes to support equity and excellence. The school has a history of high achievement, and trustees, leaders and teachers have clearly-stated expectations that all students will achieve well. The board of trustees is committed to resourcing the school to achieve positive outcomes for all students.

The school's vision and values are embedded and evidenced in behaviour and practices that contribute to the positive school culture. They provide a clear framework for decision making.

The new principal, with the support of the board, is making significant changes. These include the early stages of the development of a school-wide vision for teaching and learning and the introduction of consistent understandings and practices to support both the academic and the wellbeing needs of students. The pastoral care network has been strengthened, roles and responsibilities clarified and systems are in place to monitor and respond appropriately to students' wellbeing.

At all levels of the school, teachers have a good understanding of their students and respond to their learning needs. There are effective systems and resourcing in place to support learners who require extra assistance and to extend and challenge those who have particular abilities and talents. Students have many opportunities to develop self-management and leadership skills.

The curriculum effectively reflects the New Zealand Curriculum and is increasingly responsive to student needs and abilities. At all levels, a wide range of community resources and expertise is accessed in order to broaden opportunities for learning. Individualised and vocational courses in the senior school provide a broader range of programmes to meet student needs. Students are well supported to make decisions about subjects and pathways.

The school has formed a useful partnership with a neighbouring school. Senior students, in particular, benefit from the increased range of subjects and programmes that can be offered as result of this relationship.

Since the last review there is improvement in the provision for all students to learn, hear and use te reo and tikanga Māori. Bicultural understandings and responsiveness vary across the school.

The school seeks and values feedback from students, staff and whānau. This information is used effectively to inform decisions.

Teachers are supported to pursue areas of specific professional interest. They benefit from comprehensive professional development that is linked to key school focus areas and collaborative practices. An improved appraisal system is building teachers' reflective capabilities.

## **Sustainable development for equity and excellence**

### **What further developments are needed in school processes to achieve equity and excellence?**

The board and leaders, through their comprehensive strategic plan, are focussed on improving outcomes for all learners. In order to build and sustain consistent, coherent learner-centred practices and understandings, leaders need to:

- develop greater internal evaluation capacity to better understand the effectiveness of initiatives, programmes and practices
- review and develop school-wide leadership structures and capacity
- continue to embed bicultural understandings and practices.

### **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
- 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 Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

### **Provision for students in the school hostel**

The school boarding house, comprising two buildings, provides accommodation for a maximum of 110 students from Year 8. This is 18% of the school roll. Boarders include girls from a wide geographical area and some international students.

The boarding house is a welcoming place for boarders. Positive relationships are maintained between students and boarding staff and these are supported by clear routines and expectations for all. Well-documented and thorough systems have been established to monitor and respond to the safety and wellbeing needs of boarders.

Boarding staff communicate and work constructively with school leaders and staff to support boarders' learning and participation in all aspects of school life. Boarders benefit from well-established study routines and access to appropriate resources when needed.

Parents and caregivers are kept well informed and there are systems in place for the views of boarders and their families to be considered.

### **Provision for international students**

The school is a signatory to the *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (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 37 international students attending the school, and no exchange students.

International students benefit from comprehensive and well-documented pastoral care. Their learning needs are monitored and, where necessary, extra support is provided. They consistently achieve very highly. International students are well integrated into the school culture and community and take advantage of the range of opportunities offered.

### **Going forward**

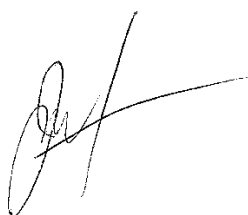
#### **How well placed is the school to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it?**

Learners are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

Agreed next steps are to further develop and embed a school-wide vision regarding:

- the valued outcomes for all students
- the expectations for teaching and learning.

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



Jane Lee  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern (Acting)  
Te Waipounamu - Southern Region

16 November 2017

## About the school

Location	Dunedin
Ministry of Education profile number	386
School type	Composite: 1-13 Co-ed: 1-6 Girls: 7 – 13 State Integrated
School roll	600
Gender composition	Female: 559 Male: 41
Ethnic composition	Māori: 11% Pākehā: 74% Other: 15%
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	September 2017
Date of this report	16 November 2017
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review: July 2014 Education Review: December 2007