

Mt Albert Grammar School Education Review

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About the School

Location	Mt Albert, Auckland		
Ministry of Education profile number	69		
School type	Secondary (Years 9 to 13)		
School roll	2625		
Number of international students	95		
Gender composition	Boys 59%, Girls 41%		
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	46%	
	Māori	14%	
	Asian	14%	
	Samoan	8%	
	Tongan	5%	
	Cook Islands Māori	3%	
	Niue	2%	
	other European	3%	
	others	5%	
Special Features	Te Puna o Wairaka, ASB school farm, school hostel		
Review team on site	August 2013		
Date of this report	14 November 2013		

Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	December 2010
	Education Review	June 2007
	Education Review	September 2003

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?

Mt Albert Grammar School is a large, co-educational secondary school catering for students from Year 9 to Year 13. It is situated in the inner western suburb of Mt Albert, Auckland city. Founded in 1922, the school has a traditional academic and sporting legacy that is still evident in the school's curriculum.

The school roll continues to grow and this is a current challenge for the board of trustees which has a well developed property plan. The school community is diverse. Eighteen percent of the school's roll is Pacific students and 14 percent are Māori. Ninety-five international students currently attend the school.

The well resourced school environment offers students positive learning opportunities. The most recent building additions to the school campus are an extensively refurbished Arts facility and a second gymnasium.

School House, the boarding hostel for boys, is on the school grounds and caters for approximately 100 boarders. Adjacent to the school is the ASB School Farm providing authentic learning experiences for agricultural and horticultural science.

The support of community, business and alumni partnerships with the school continues to benefit school development.

The continuity of the board of trustees, principal, senior leadership team and staff maintains the school's commitment to self review and improvement.

The high expectations for student achievement and for high quality educational opportunities noted in previous ERO reports continue to be evident.

2 Learning

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

Mt Albert Grammar School makes very good use of achievement information to make positive changes to students' engagement in learning, progress and achievement. Student learning competencies, as well as achievement, are continually being improved through robust self review. Reliable data is analysed, evaluated and used by senior leaders, faculty heads and class teachers. This is resulting in deliberate changes to course structures and programme planning, and is promoting flexible assessment opportunities for students. The board sets effective and detailed charter targets that prioritise students who are under-achieving.

Student achievement in the National Certificates of Education (NCEA) is higher than national averages and is considerably higher than the averages for other similar schools. Students also achieve well above national levels for NCEA merit and excellence endorsements. Scholarship results in 2012 were outstanding. Students gained 92 scholarships across a range of subjects, placing the school fifth in New Zealand for scholarship success.

Māori students are progressing and achieving well. Ministry of Education data shows accelerating progress for these students, particularly at NCEA Level 2. While the achievement of Pacific students is below that of other students in the school at NCEA Level 1 and Level 3, results are still above the national averages for this student group. School leaders have identified and implemented strategies to reduce these gaps in Pacific achievement, and accelerated progress is evident. Two strategic appointments have been made to position Pacific teachers in mentoring and academic coaching roles to sustain these increased levels of success.

Achievement information for Year 9 and 10 students indicates that students continue to make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Literacy has been a long-term priority in school planning. A

credit-based Junior Diploma has been introduced to give junior programmes more purpose and increase motivation levels for Year 9 and 10 students.

ERO and school leaders agree that the school should continue to:

- develop more consistent school-wide expectations for teaching practices that increase student capability to self manage their own learning progress
- develop teachers' cultural competencies to help promote Māori and Pacific learning success in mainstream classes, using Tātaiako, the Ministry of Education resource.

3 Curriculum

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

Mt Albert Grammar School's curriculum supports and enables students to learn effectively. It is aligned to The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) in its aims, vision and values. Senior leaders and faculty heads are strategically driving the development of the school's curriculum. Students are responding positively to a greater emphasis being placed on including their voice in learning and curriculum delivery.

Curriculum planning and self review within faculties and departments is effective and thorough. Teachers in many teaching areas use a variety of teaching approaches and strategies to engage students in learning. The school curriculum is relevant and authentic, in keeping with NZC principles. A well researched e-learning vision and plan is currently being implemented.

Good provision is made to resource and support learners with special educational needs. This includes the provision of effective programmes for ESOL students to study the English language.

The school has a well managed professional learning programme. Teachers are encouraged to be reflective and search out best evidence to improve their practice.

Pastoral care systems are of high quality and deans are regarded as significant adults for students in terms of both personal and academic support. The form teacher role is expanding in order to track and monitor student progress throughout the year. A restorative ethos is becoming more evident in the management of student concerns and behaviours.

An extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities and activities is offered to students. These include high performance sport and a strong focus on visual and performing arts.

In ERO's discussions with school leaders, areas for future curriculum development were considered. These included:

- broadening the range of curriculum pathways to cater for different learner outcomes, interests, strengths and abilities
- reviewing the Mt Albert Grammar graduate student profile to enable a broader curriculum vision.

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

Mt Albert Grammar School demonstrates educational success for Māori through Te Puna O Wairaka, a whānau-based group of approximately 60 students, who stand confidently in their language, culture and identity. This group's success has developed markedly since ERO's 2010 review and greater parent and teacher involvement in the whānau is evident. Mentors for Māori students in Years 11 and 12 assist students in their pathway choices.

A deputy principal has responsibility to lead strategic thinking around success for Māori. The school has commissioned an external review to investigate the needs of Māori students who are in mainstream classes.

Māori students benefit from the opportunity to study te reo Māori from Years 9 to Year 13, and recently Te Rangatira Māori has been introduced into the school curriculum. Māori students from Year 9 onwards can begin NCEA qualifications in te reo.

Many Māori students are engaged in the wide sporting and cultural opportunities offered by the school.

The school has identified that positive strategies in the Te Puna o Wairaka model could be similarly used for other Māori students throughout the school.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

The school management's self review processes are robust and well embedded at all levels. This is bringing positive change to the school's performance. Evaluative reporting considers the effectiveness and quality of school self review as well as recommendations for improvement.

The board is well informed by the principal about progress made in relation to charter goals. The board is working well with its community. Māori and Pacific trustees have key roles in strategic thinking to influence improved outcomes for targeted groups of learners.

The teacher appraisal system is sound and linked to expectations around best practice. New and beginning teachers are encouraged to share their expertise and energy.

The capability of the board to make ongoing improvements for good student outcomes could now be enhanced through:

- involving the school's community in the design of the school's curriculum, particularly in relation to the focus on future learning pathways
- aligning policy review with curriculum development
- continuing to develop restorative process at all levels of student pastoral and behaviour management systems.

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. At the time of this review there were 95 international students attending the school.

The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self review processes for international students are thorough.

Mt Albert Grammar School provides international students with high quality pastoral care. They integrate well into the school's education programme and are involved in all aspects of school life. The school provides good quality English language support for its international

students.

Provision for students in the school hostel

The school hostel, School House, accommodates 101 students (4% of school roll). The hostel is owned and operated by Mt Albert Grammar School.

ERO's findings confirm that:

- the hostel director and hostel staff regularly review and improve the hostel's systems and operations
- hostel management is efficient and effective in providing a supportive living and learning environment for boys attending the school
- the culture and climate of the hostel reflects the school's positive values.

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

National Manager Review Services

Northern Region

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