



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**James Cook High School
Manurewa, Auckland**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

James Cook High School

This review is designed to support schools that were experiencing difficulties at the time of the last review. ERO provides ongoing evaluation over the course of one-to-two years as the school works to improve its overall performance and build its self-review capability.

This report answers key questions about the school's background and the context for the review. The report also provides an evaluation of how effectively the school is addressing areas identified for review and development and the quality of its practices and systems for sustaining performance and ongoing improvement.

Findings

1 Background and Context

What is the background and context for this school's review?

James Cook High School caters for students in Years 9 to 13. The current roll of 1373 students includes just over 40 percent who identify as Māori and 45 percent who are from Pacific heritage. Samoan, Tongan and Cook Island Māori students make up the largest Pacific nation groups.

The school provides bilingual and immersion education in Puutake Te Wāhanga Māori and bilingual Samoan language education for students in O Le Tupu'aga. The school also provides and/or hosts a number of other educational provisions, including the Taonga Teen Parent Unit, Rosehill and BLENNZ Special Schools and Alternative Education. The school is a member of Te Korowai Kakahu O Manurewa Kāhui Ako.

In June 2019, ERO identified progress in student outcomes, school culture, strategies to improve the effectiveness of teaching, leadership and stewardship. Key next steps focused on continuing to improve student wellbeing and achievement outcomes. Stewardship practices for some areas of health and safety continued to require improvement alongside reporting to the board.

The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) appointed a Limited Statutory Manager (LSM) in 2017 who completed this work in Term 4, 2020. A specialist help role appointed by the Ministry in February 2020 to assist the board with curriculum reporting concluded in April 2021.

Since 2019, the school has appointed two new deputy principals, an acting associate principal and a large number of new staff. The board includes more parent representatives and has retained two experienced trustees and elected a new board chairperson.

The school has worked in partnership with ERO to support school progress and improvement. Regular ERO progress evaluations involved the school leadership team, the board of trustees, the Ministry, LSM and specialist help, heads of learning areas, teachers, staff and students.

2 Review and Development

How effectively is the school addressing its priorities for review and development?

The school has improved its capacity to effectively address areas for review and development. The ongoing main priority is to continue to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum to achieve more equitable and excellent student outcomes.

Priorities identified for review and development

ERO identified four terms of reference to evaluate the progress and performance of the school in relation to supporting and improving student outcomes. These are:

- the provision of a positive and safe school culture and student wellbeing services
- learner outcomes: attendance, learning opportunities, achievement
- teaching effectiveness
- leadership trustee effectiveness.

Progress

Positive and safe school culture and student wellbeing services

The school has made significant progress in developing a positive and supportive learning environment. Students take more pride in their school. There is a clearer schoolwide focus on supporting student engagement in learning through recent changes to organisational structures.

Significant improvement in student engagement is evident. The development of the school MANA values and the *JC Code* reflects students, staff and some whānau input. These developments have provided greater clarity for students about their role as a member of the school community.

Students confidently articulate MANA values. A strengths-based approach for growing students' citizenship and leadership should continue to sustain a positive learning environment. Few students are involved in stand downs and suspensions.

The school successfully applied for Urgent Response Funding (URF) to enhance students' engagement in education through COVID-19. Other targeted initiatives have been undertaken to increase students' home connectivity and access to distance learning. The school increasingly seeks new opportunities to extend the range of provisions for students in the local community.

Student wellbeing services are in the early stages of redevelopment as part of recent organisational change. This review should include a focus on the sufficiency of services and school capacity to respond to students' changing requirements. Reporting to the board will enable trustees to consider whether additional resources are required for this key area of school operations.

Learner outcomes

Significant gains to increase student attendance have occurred, particularly since the 2020 COVID-19 school closures. Sustaining attendance levels remains an ongoing school priority and is supported by annual improvement targets and additional resources. The 90 percent national attendance goal remains a focus.

Curriculum leaders improved their annual reporting to the board on student outcomes. This has continued to develop. There is recognition of the need to continue to strengthen teaching and classroom practices from scrutinising curriculum data. This reporting process is an important aspect of inquiry and evaluation for ongoing improvements by faculty leaders and teachers in charge of curriculum areas.

Trustees continue to strengthen their scrutiny of student outcomes. They now insist on data and information to inform their stewardship role. Reports from Puutake, O Le Tupu'aga, the Taonga Teen Parent Unit, service and health academies and vocational pathways reports are in place. These reports indicate progress towards meeting student outcomes and help to inform the board's decision making.

The board, in its role as an alternative education fundholder, has requested a report to assist trustees to evaluate the effectiveness of alternative education provisions for students. This should assist them to gauge the impact for students and help in their oversight across all their areas of responsibility.

National Certificates of Education Achievement and Vocational Pathways

Significant progress in lifting students' success in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) qualifications has occurred between 2018 and 2020. This is particularly evident in NCEA Levels 2, 3 and University Entrance.

Achievement at NCEA Level 1 also showed steady gains since 2018. Continuing to improve NCEA results is an ongoing focus. The school is part of the NCEA pilot for upcoming changes to literacy and numeracy requirements and the impact these changes will have for Years 9 and 10 programmes of learning.

School data show higher NCEA qualification rates for students enrolled in Puutake and O Le Tupu'aga. Pacific students made significant improvement in their qualification attainment. Continuing to improve within school equity outcomes for Māori in English medium and other Pacific students remains a key focus, so that these students achieve as well as their peers in bilingual provisions.

Since 2017, the percentage of students leaving school with at least NCEA Level 2 has improved from 56.7 percent to 62 percent in 2020. More students leave school better able to access a future pathway including further training and tertiary education. This is significant improvement. The school continues to work on tracking students' destinations post school in order to better gauge the longer-term impact from improved NCEA results and school leavers' data.

Years 9 and 10 Progress and Achievement

The school collates assessment information for Years 9 and 10 students in reading and mathematics. Teachers are revisiting their analysis of assessment tools for teaching and learning (asTTle) data to identify strengths and next steps in their teaching programmes. This will be of critical importance with the NCEA changes underway.

Teachers continue to explore and trial targeted literacy strategies to better respond to the large number of students who require this support. Setting an annual improvement target for Years 9 and 10 literacy and mathematics with a supporting detailed schoolwide action plan, remains a critical next step for the board.

The 2020 Junior Diploma programme for Years 9 and 10 is becoming embedded. Students are encouraged to develop skills and key competencies to self-manage their learning and experience school recognition for being a successful learner. Higher schoolwide expectations for students' work completion and academic success continues to grow.

Teaching effectiveness

The school developed a coherent schoolwide response to COVID-19 challenges by targeting key NCEA student groups for additional support and careful monitoring. There is a shared understanding of the need to provide additional student support services to assist students to stay purposefully engaged in education.

Responsive curriculum developments include strengthened foundational learning time and timetabling change. The Kāhui Ako teaching focus on writing is providing opportunities for teachers to better understand the writing process and to assist students' transition to high school. Using shared writing practices schoolwide is a key piece of work for the school.

Staff continue to participate in regular schoolwide and individual professional learning. A recent focus on literacy includes reading strategies and now includes the Kāhui Ako writing focus. This work is necessary to improve teaching and to assist Years 9 and 10 teachers to evaluate how well they are planning relevant, targeted and differentiated teaching programmes.

Revisiting culturally responsive and relational practice is also timely to refresh previous school approaches and expectations. The use of relevant and high interest Māori and Pacific learning contexts is becoming visible in lessons and remains an area for continuing improvement. There are plans to further improve students' access to all facets of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC), including supporting the use of digital technologies to enhance learning.

The recent appointment of a large number of new teachers has brought new skills and expertise. Beginning teachers report being well supported by a helpful programme of induction and mentoring as they work towards obtaining a Teaching Council Tūturu | full practising certificate.

A policy for implementing the professional growth cycle is in place pending the development of supporting processes. Putting in place clear school processes based on the Teaching Council guidelines for improving teaching and learning is a priority during 2021.

The school has been well supported by the Ministry with targeted resources. This includes assisting students' homes to access online learning and Urgent Response Funding (URF) to support student engagement in learning, wellbeing and success. These proactive approaches assist students to experience more equitable access to successful learning.

Leadership and trustee effectiveness

Students benefited from clear and decisive school leadership through proactive responses and provisions for COVID-19. School leaders are using a more collaborative leadership approach with a greater sense of shared purpose. Ensuring senior leaders work collectively and cohesively is essential to consolidate and sustain improvement.

Significant progress is evident in data management to inform leadership and the school's responsive leadership practices as levers for ongoing school improvements. This includes stringent monitoring of a large group of NCEA target students to help ensure they can attain qualifications and access future pathways.

The targeted use of external expertise continues to build organisational capacity to improve teaching and student outcomes. Growing curriculum leadership is continuing through targeted professional learning and opportunities for heads of faculties to share strategies, collaborate and innovate. More teachers are taking up leadership roles, including in the Kāhui Ako.

Student leadership opportunities continue to improve, with plans to extend in-school Years 9 to 13 curriculum provisions. Student input and preferences continue to be gathered and used to guide the development and implementation of school initiatives.

School stewardship practices have improved significantly with a stronger focus on student outcomes and meeting statutory requirements. The composition of the board has strengthened by including parent representation while retaining experienced trustees. Careful use of external expertise supports the ongoing development of board practices.

Clear board processes are in place for regular policy review, and financial and property management. Health and safety practices continue to strengthen through ongoing review and analysis. There are clear systems for ensuring teachers are certificated and for safety checks for non-teaching staff.

Trustees have increased their scrutiny of data and asking for better information to ensure they have information fit for the stewardship role. Time is taken to carefully consider issues and additional evidence sought before making key decisions.

3 Sustainable performance and self review

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

The school has improved its capacity to sustain and improve its performance for students and the school community. The school is better placed to review its own performance.

Recent changes in the school leadership team, the board and staff have increased the school's ability to develop and implement new school systems and processes.

School leaders, trustees and teachers are continuing to improve equity and excellence in student outcomes as they complete the internal reviews of student support services, alternative education provision and sufficiency of learning support provisions for Years 9 and 10.

Extending culturally responsive and relational teaching practices remains a priority for school leaders, trustees, heads of faculty, teachers and staff. Continuing to further develop the restorative school environment remains a priority by school leaders.

The board is increasingly strategic in how it operates to continue to improve student outcomes. There is a more deliberate focus on improving equity for Māori, Pacific, students with additional learning requirements and other groups of priority learners.

Trustees are becoming more confident in the use of evidence to question the impact of school provisions on student outcomes. Considerable progress has occurred in strengthening the school's processes for reviewing policies, procedures and practices to guide school operations.

Key next steps

School leaders, trustees and ERO agree that continuing to strengthen professional leadership, including curriculum leadership, is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Refining strategic planning to prioritise these improvement areas is essential to help manage the focus of change initiatives and self-monitor the outcome and impacts.

Completing the redevelopment of the school curriculum design remains a key priority for improving outcomes for:

- Māori students in the English medium including access to learning in ways that affirm their language, culture and identity, and strengthen links with Puutake
- Māori students in the Puutake **bilingual and immersion** pathway, with broader access, supports and opportunities to subjects and pathways in the senior school
- Pacific students and students enrolled in O Le Tupu'aga Samoan **bilingual** pathway
- Years 9 and 10 students with additional learning requirements, including broadening the scope of the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) role.

School leaders and the board are continuing to build sustainable school practices including data analysis, evaluation and reporting to support ongoing improvement. This includes:

- setting and monitoring an annual improvement target for Years 9 and 10 students in literacy and mathematics to lift students' progress and achievement
- extending the good progress made in curriculum reporting to include regular reports on:
 - student support service provisions and their impact and sufficiency
 - Years 9 and 10 progress and achievement in literacy and mathematics and effective teaching strategies and practices
 - alternative education provision impacts and improvements
- continuing to improve the quality of NCEA qualifications and vocational pathway success
- continuing to scrutinise valued student outcomes, including the effectiveness of the curriculum for individuals and groups of students in curriculum areas.

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
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the *Children's Act 2014*.

In order to improve current practice, the board and ERO agree that the following areas require further development:

- ensuring all school policies and procedures are centrally located for ease of access
- undertaking the planned survey of student and staff wellbeing on a regular basis
- continuing to seek solutions to address health and safety matters to minimise risks
- ensuring there are sufficient staff first aid holders across the school property, including all areas with health and safety requirements such as sciences and technologies.

4 Recommendations

Recommendations, including any to other agencies for ongoing or additional support.

ERO recommends that the Ministry continue to support ongoing school priorities, including:

- access to professional learning and development for staff to enhance valued outcomes for Māori students in English medium and Puutake, Pacific students, including O Le Tupu'aga and other key groups
- allocating an in-school Learning Support Coordinator (LSC), when these are next available, given the significant number of students that would benefit from this additional assistance.

Conclusion

James Cook High School has made significant improvement in its overall performance.

The leadership team are using data and evidence to make changes to continue to improve outcomes for learners. Accelerated progress for students at risk of not achieving continues to improve.

The board is well informed about NCEA student achievement and other key areas. The board is now able to make informed resourcing decisions and monitor school progress.

In response to the school, ERO will help school leaders and provide additional and specific evaluation expertise to respond to the breadth of student provisions and future roll growth.

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement is that James Cook High School has made very good progress to now transition into ERO's Evaluation for Improvement | Te Ara Huarau approach.



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About the school

[The Education Counts website provides further information about the school's student population, student engagement and student achievement.](#)