

Huntley School Private School Education Review

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Background

Introduction

The Chief Review Officer has a statutory duty to report on the performance of private schools throughout New Zealand.

Under section 35A of the Education Act 1989, private schools are required to be "efficient". The Act defines "efficient", in relation to a private school as -

- (a) Having suitable premises, staffing, equipment, and curriculum; and
- (b) Usually providing tuition for 9 or more students who have turned 5 but are under 16; and
- (c) Providing suitably for the inculcation in the minds of students of sentiments of patriotism and loyalty; and
- (d) Giving students tuition of a standard no lower than that of the tuition given to students enrolled at schools of the same class.

This report focuses on the extent to which the school meets this requirement and other statutory obligations.

This review report was prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

About the School

Location	Marton
Ministry of Education profile number	4111
School type	Independent Primary School (Years 4 - 8)
Decile rating	10
Numbers of teachers	11

School roll	151
Number of international students	2
Ethnic composition	NZ European/ Pākehā 95%, Māori 2%, Other ethnic groups 3%
Gender composition	Male 100%
Review team on site	June 2008
Date of this report	18 July 2008
Previous ERO report	Statutory Review May 2005 Statutory Review November 2001 Accountability Review July 1998 Assurance Audit June 1995 Assurance Audit September 1992

Efficient

Huntley School, an independent, Anglican preparatory school situated in Marton, caters for boys from Year 4 to Year 8. The majority of boys, including international students, are boarders. Since the May 2005 ERO report, the headmaster has continued to implement the board's strategic goals. Strengthening teaching practice, through the effective use of assessment information, continues to be a major focus in classrooms. The board, supported by the wider school community, plan for ongoing resource development to enhance students' learning, residential and recreational needs. Boys receive a traditional education, based on Huntley values, and focused on success in academic, sporting, social, spiritual, and cultural areas.

Suitable Curriculum and Tuition

The New Zealand curriculum forms the basis of learning programmes in mathematics, English and science. Clear guidelines outline expectations, planning and delivery of effective teaching and assessment practices in these subjects. 2008 student achievement information, collated from standardised tests, shows that, in mathematics and English, the majority of students achieve at or above national expectations for age.

The board recognises that aspects of art, social studies, physical education, and music have some content of the New Zealand curriculum. Although boys have access to woodwork, technology is not taught. All boys learn other languages. Strong emphasis is placed on sport and music. The majority of boys receive additional individual music tuition.

Most boys learn in well-managed and appropriately organised classrooms. Models of student work and prompts are clearly displayed. High expectations for work ethic and presentation are understood by boys and adhered to. Most students demonstrate enjoyment in learning and a desire to succeed. Parents are well informed of effort and achievement.

Models of effective teaching practice exist within the school. These include:

- good analysis of achievement data to identify next steps for learning;
- grouping students according to identified need;
- sharing learning expectations, criteria for success and constructive feedback with students;
- skilful questioning to challenge boys' thinking;
- choosing content that builds on students' prior knowledge and interests; and

- celebrating effort and success.

Where these strategies are evident, boys are motivated and highly engaged in learning.

Senior managers recognise that teachers are at varying stages of development in their use of assessment information. Ongoing support for peer observation and learning should help teachers further develop their teaching practice and continue to improve learning outcomes for students.

Students are clearly identified for extension, particularly in English and mathematics. Boys have opportunities to participate in a range of local, regional and international examinations and competitions. Common ability classroom grouping occurs in Year 7 and 8. Students requiring additional help receive weekly reading mileage, mathematics and spelling support. A trained teacher works alongside classroom teachers to provide support for identified individuals and small groups.

Well-developed pastoral care systems based on restorative justice approaches are designed to support learning and behaviour. Robust policy and procedures provide effective guidelines for boys, staff, and parents. Clear communication lines are structured to ensure all staff are aware of boys' emotional and learning needs. Recent developments strengthen the role of the form teacher as the key link for students and parents in relation to pastoral care. In addition, the headmaster and staff provide individual mentoring for students identified as needing support. The 'godfathergodson' relationship system helps new boys make the transition to school. Senior managers understand the need for a pastoral care review, based on student outcomes, as a next step for development.

Generally respectful, warm relationships between teachers and students and among students support learning. Features identified by students include the fair reward and punishment systems, the feeling that they can talk to anyone, and having adults that listen.

Suitable Staffing

The board demonstrates a commitment to employing New Zealand registered teachers, where possible. Staff teach in their respective specialist subject areas. The balance of female and male teachers provides students with appropriate role models.

The headmaster demonstrates strong commitment and professional leadership, focused on continuous school improvement, to enhance teaching practice and raise student achievement. His use of an inquiry approach in the performance management system promotes teacher reflection and encourages changes to practice.

Provision of staff professional learning and development (PLD) is a priority in strategic planning and linked to appraisal. PLD in numeracy has led to improvements in teaching practice. Other recent areas of development include information literacy and drama. In English, teachers have purposefully focused on the use of assessment exemplars to improve student learning.

Suitable Premises and Equipment

The board, supported by the Parents and Friends Association (PFA), gives priority to providing high quality facilities, resources and equipment to support learning and recreation. Improvements since the 2005 ERO report include the refurbishment of classrooms and the science laboratory, replacement of all beds and mattresses in the dormitories, the construction of a boarders' recreation room and a bike track. A classroom for students requiring learning support and an administration area are being built.

Boys enjoy a wide range of resources for academic, sporting, cultural and social activities. Classrooms are appropriately resourced in curriculum areas, particularly numeracy and literacy. The purchase of additional laptops enables students more opportunities for learning reinforcement and extension. Boys have easy access to extensive music facilities and a well-resourced library for recreational reading and study. The recently completed extension to the library provides computer stations for research.

The buildings and expansive grounds are well maintained. Property review is a strong feature of the board. The bursar, with the assistance of staff, regularly monitors hazard and safety aspects of the school. Parents and boys are provided with opportunities to contribute ideas for developments.

Patriotism and Loyalty

The national flag and anthem are part of school life. Chapel and assemblies promote Huntley values, aligned with the Christian ethos of the school. Boys study school and national history, with ANZAC Day a particular focus. Year 8 boys have a range of leadership opportunities. All students have opportunities to hear visiting speakers as role models. Students and staff take pride in traditions and promote service to others.

Statutory Obligations

Huntley School meets all of its statutory obligations. The board and management take all reasonable steps to provide a safe physical and emotional environment to promote student learning and achievement.

Other Matters

Provision for International Students

Compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students and the Provision of English Language Support

Huntley 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. This is a requirement of all schools that enrol international students in terms of the Act. Schools are also required to provide English language support for their international students. The school complies with all aspects of the Code.

The number of international students varies each year. In 2008 two international students attend Huntley School. One of these students receives English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support. All international students are fulltime boarders at the school. Each has a nominated guardian they can stay with during some weekends each term and in the school holidays. Students can choose to have weekend breaks staying with families of their friends. The teacher in charge of international students visits homestays used for longer-term holiday breaks.

Carefully considered school policies and procedures are well understood and followed. Policies appropriately outline responsibilities and roles for school personnel, international students and their families and homestay families. Thorough processes for managing complaints and any emergency are shared with families and international students. Regular reviews check that practices are consistently applied and work. Students spoken to by ERO know who to talk to when they need additional support.

International students' opinions about their time at the school are regularly sought and responded to. The designated coordinator meets frequently with students and completes formal surveys about their time at weekend/holiday homestays and their successes and challenges at school. Special information communication technologies (ICT) resources ensure students can communicate with their families in their first language. Families overseas receive termly written reports about the aspects of learning their child is focusing on, school-life highlights and next steps for development. Parents' requests for additional tuition or support for their children are effectively responded to.

A wide range of assessment tools successfully determines the specific learning needs of students. Formal class examinations are selected to match the student development level and ensure they experience success. Comprehensive initial testing completed by the ESOL

teacher is used to set long-term goals and to plan termly and weekly programmes. Ongoing assessments using Ministry of Education English Language Learning Progressions clearly identify achievement and students' progress with mastering each stage.

Students requiring ESOL learning are well catered for in class and intervention programmes. These students participate in 10 ESOL small-group lessons each week. High-quality, well-sequenced lessons help them to use text and practical activities to revise prior learning, identify future objectives and focus on a specific teaching point. The teacher skilfully introduces new language using contexts linked to the individual student's interests. Ongoing assessment shows students quickly master these concepts.

Class programmes, including small group and individualised learning opportunities are effectively adapted to suit the international student. Frequently checking that instructions are understood and adjusting tasks as required to ensure appropriateness. Humour is shared by peers and with the teacher. Genuine efforts are made to create a positive learning environment.

Provision for Students in the School Hostel

In this review ERO evaluated the extent to which the school hostel provides a safe physical and emotional environment that supports learning for students accommodated in the hostel.

From 1 March 2007 school hostels are required to be licensed by the Ministry of Education and comply with minimum standards specified in the hostel regulations.

The school hostel accommodates 104 students, 69 % of the school roll. It is owned by Huntley School Board of Trustees. It has been licensed by the Ministry of Education.

Clear policies and procedures provide effective guidelines for the management of boarding students. Licensing requirements are met. Parents receive detailed expectations for boarding life and useful information to help boys make the transition to the new environment. In the dormitories, boys understand and follow clearly established routines. Duty staff's consistency and care promote a sense of security and belonging.

Strong, caring relationships exist between adults and students. Boys are well known to all staff. Supportive peer relationships are encouraged through dormitories with mixed age groups within each squad. Contact between boys and their families is promoted and positively managed. E-mail is available daily for family contact, should boys wish to use this. A new phone system and more flexible timing for calls, introduced in 2006, has increased opportunities for communication. Students have ready access to many caring adults.

Open lines of communication contribute to effective day to day care of students. Duty teachers are also classroom teachers, ensuring links between students' well being and learning needs are identified. Duty teachers and matrons participate in schoolwide professional development activities to ensure a cohesive approach to the care of students. They meet weekly to consider student needs. The headmaster meets twice a term with matrons. Matters of concern are promptly discussed and addressed.

The health and welfare of students are well catered for. Rigorous procedures for checking, recording, monitoring and reporting health-related matters inform parents and teaching staff about matters of concern. Staff have current first aid certificates, and undertake relevant professional development in health matters as the need arises. The school doctor is on call. Regular evacuation practices familiarise students with procedures for leaving the dormitories under different conditions.

Because Huntley is primarily a boarding school, facilities are available to students outside classroom hours. Boys have ready access to classrooms, the library, sporting activities, music areas and teacher support at the end of the school day for prep and recreation. At weekends, boys have extensive opportunities to participate in structured and recreational activities, including, music, sports, games and orchard time for building huts.

Conclusion

Trustees, through the headmaster and staff, provide suitable premises, staffing, equipment, curriculum and tuition to promote excellence in academic, sporting, social, spiritual, and cultural achievement. Students at Huntley School receive a wide range of educational opportunities within a supportive learning environment.

Consequently, Huntley School is deemed efficient under section 35A of the Education Act 1989 and will continue to be part of the Education Review Office's regular cycle of review.

Graham Randell
Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

18 July 2008

Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.