

**EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
FRANCIS DOUGLAS MEMORIAL COLLEGE
AUGUST 2009**

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This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

1. About the School

Location	New Plymouth
Ministry of Education profile number	175
School type	Secondary (Year 7 – 15)
Decile rating [1]	8
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated entitlement	49.0
Other	1.68
Number of teachers	52
School roll	738
Number of international students	1
Gender composition	Male 100%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 83%, Māori 11%, Asian 5%, Pacific 1%
Special features	State Integrated Catholic Boys' School, Boarding Hostel
Review team on site	June, 2009
Date of this report	20 August 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, July 2005 Education Review, September 2002 Accountability Review, August 1998 Assurance Audit, August 1994 Review, October 1990

2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Francis Douglas Memorial College is an integrated Catholic boys' college situated among pleasant and well cared for grounds in New Plymouth. The roll is 738 boys in Years 7 to 13, of whom 116 are boarders and 83 are Māori. The special character of the school is reflected in the emphasis on a holistic education based on Catholic principles and the Lasallian tradition of faith, service and community. Together, leaders and staff encourage students to become caring, honest citizens.

Students perform very well academically when compared to students from other boys' schools and those of the same decile. Since the July 2005 ERO report, most students leaving school have attained a formal National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) qualification. In 2008, 73% of Year 13 students achieved university entrance, which is well above the national average for similar schools.

The principal, newly appointed at the beginning of 2009, articulates a vision for raising the levels and types of student achievement still further. He has begun inclusive staff, community and trustee consultation, and planned intensive professional development for teaching staff. Meaningful departmental reporting to the board, based on the collection and analysis of achievement data, should assist with realising this vision.

Students enjoy participating in a range of sporting, leadership and cultural opportunities within a supportive environment. High levels of care and concern for student welfare, as well as academic progress, are observable in the daily life of the College.

Students work with high levels of enthusiasm and a good deal of productive endeavour in an environment of mutual respect. They are firmly focused on learning, are well behaved and appreciative of thoughtfully selected learning contexts that connect with adolescent boys. The school is a learning community distinguished by positive and respectful relationships between students and teachers and peers.

Managers and staff, of the well-run hostel, provide a high standard of academic, physical and emotional care in a nurturing and safe environment. They allow boarding students to take responsibility for themselves within a framework of College tradition and expectation.

The experienced board of trustees and the capable senior leadership team assist the principal to provide effective and innovative leadership, support his vision for the school and his sensitivity with relationships. Trustees, leaders and staff are considering the demands of, and opportunities offered by, the new curriculum. They are integrating the curriculum with their sound platform of traditional Lasallian values to provide an education that will enable students to face future

challenges with confidence.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

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

3. The Focus of the Review

Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

Schoolwide and curriculum area achievement data is regularly reported to trustees. School performance over time and comparisons with similar types of schools are included in reporting.

NCEA results indicate that students are performing above students at decile 8 to 10 boys schools nationally. In 2009, 81% of Year 11 students gained level 1, 85% of Year 12 level 2 and 74% of Year 13 level 3. Year 13 students also achieve university entrance at a rate well above similar schools. Although students have always performed well in NCEA, the level 2 and 3 results have significantly improved in the last two years. Merit and excellence grades gained are below the levels of comparable schools. The principal and trustees have set, as a key school goal, increasing the number of NCEA achievement standard grades gained at the merit or excellence levels.

Data indicates a small number of students leave school with little or no formal attainment. The qualifications of leavers are on average similar to those of comparable schools. A variety of senior courses provides students with useful options in the senior school from which they can achieve success.

Small numbers affect the validity of data associated with Māori and Pacific achievement. Data for these groups of students are collated and senior managers consider some trends and patterns.

Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) assessments for Years 7 to 10 students indicate the distribution of student reading comprehension and mathematics levels is similar to national expectations.

Students from across all years, succeed in academic competitions. Distinctions were gained in the English, Mathematics and Science International Competitions and Assessments for Schools in 2008. Some students won sections of the most recent regional Science and Technology Fair.

Sporting and cultural success is encouraged and celebrated. Assemblies, newsletters and reports to trustees all prominently feature students' achievements across a range of areas. In 2008, individuals gained national recognition in rugby, in-line hockey, ocean swimming, football, surf lifesaving and triathlon.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Francis Douglas Memorial College was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Francis Douglas Memorial College.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus area for the review:

- the quality of teaching and its impact on learning and achievement.

ERO's findings in this area are set out below.

The Quality of Teaching and its Impact on Learning and Achievement

Background

The board appointed a new principal who commenced in January 2009. Following reflection on the NCEA achievement results, the principal and the board accepted that while they were proud of the number of students achieving at each level of NCEA, the percentage of merit and excellence endorsements of certificates needed improvement. The board asked ERO to evaluate the quality of teaching, specifically those practices across all year levels that raise, or have the potential to raise, student achievement.

Areas of good performance

- Student achievement

Senior students experience appropriate success in attaining qualifications. Most leave school having gained a formal NCEA qualification. The percentage of students achieving has improved steadily since 2005. Most notably the number of boys achieving university entrance (UE) has increased from 54% in 2005 to 73% in 2008. Such achievement contributes to students' successful transition from school to the workplace or further study.

- Relationships

Strong mutually respectful relationships between teachers and students promote learning. Clear expectations for behaviour, meaningful routines and supportive interactions assist students to focus on tasks. Students are prepared to take risks, contribute ideas and ask for help. Lessons are firmly focused on learning. Confident, relaxed students willingly participate in lessons.

- Teaching strategies

Some teaching strategies effectively motivate and stimulate students to raise levels of achievement. Strategies seen by ERO include:

- meaningful links made to prior learning and the relevance of new learning explained;
- supporting resources that clarify the task or provide examples of the process;
- student-directed learning that follows their interests or ideas;
- a change of pace and variety of activity within lessons;
- opportunity for practical, hands-on activities;
- focused oral feedback that provides direction for students next steps in learning; and
- opportunities for students to participate in self or peer assessment.

These practices inspire, challenge and support students to engage in learning and raise achievement.

- Learning contexts

Teachers thoughtfully select contexts for learning that connect with adolescent boys. Programmes reflect the interests and experience of students. Reading resources, available in classrooms and the library, support students to develop literacy in contexts of interest to them. The use of humour and competition also stimulate students' contributions. Boys relate to the topics for learning.

- Shared vision

Trustees and the principal effectively articulate a vision to raise achievement. Students, families and teachers are constantly made aware of the goal to raise levels of achievement across the school, and particularly in Years 11 to 13. This well-publicised shared direction provides a basis for discussions with teachers about teaching strategies and the implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum. Student achievement is at the forefront of change.

- Guidance for change

A range of effective practices provide a foundation for school personnel to make change for improvement. These strategies include:

- able support from the new principal to trustees and teachers, to focus on improvements to teaching and learning.
- the provision of a model demonstrating how effective reflection and evaluation of evidence can lead to setting and monitoring goals.
- outlining expectations for what should be included in schemes, and feedback about developments, to support curriculum leaders to provide guidelines to teachers within departments;
- assistance for curriculum leaders from senior leaders to focus on managing their departments, through discussions that identify issues and steps for improvement;
- a regular cycle of professional development to provide a forum for teachers to gain knowledge of and discuss effective teaching strategies; and
- an expectation of trustees for meaningful departmental reporting and goal setting based on collection and analysis of student achievement information.

Students benefit from a planned focus on their achievement.

Areas for improvement

- Student involvement in learning

Students have insufficient opportunities to be involved in assessment processes and decision making about learning. Teachers, particularly in lessons for Year 7 to 10 students, do not usually share the purpose of learning, the steps students should take to achieve success or the criteria for achievement of each grade. Teachers provide minimal written feedback relating to learning outcomes. Many assessment processes are summative and do not provide

direction for future learning for students. Consequently, students focus on completing tasks and do not receive support to set goals and assess their own understanding.

- Catering for needs

Many teachers do not effectively use available student achievement information to modify teaching programmes to meet the range of needs within classrooms. Although some Year 11 to 13 classes include different levels, many lessons are aimed at a single level and do not provide sufficient support or challenge for some students. Students who prefer different teaching strategies are seldom supported. Senior leaders should prioritise the development of teachers' capability to differentiate teaching programmes, so that all students have opportunities to achieve to the best of their ability.

- Self review

The extent to which curriculum leaders and teachers reflect on, evaluate and review the impact of teaching varies. Senior leaders should consider implementing self review strategies including:

- consistent use of assessment data to identify trends and patterns of achievement for individuals and groups of students;
- subsequent use of such analysed information to set relevant goals for improvement;
- identification and implementation of teaching strategies and programmes that support improvement; and
- robust appraisal of teaching practice leading to improvements in teacher effectiveness through targeted professional development.

Students should benefit from teachers' planning for maximising student potential, based on decisions that focus on evidence of student achievement.

4. Areas of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of Francis Douglas Memorial College ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

The Achievement of Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of Māori students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement.

Background

All students in Years 7 and 8 continue to learn te reo me ngā tikanga Māori in a learning module. Te reo Māori continues as a language option for Years 9 and 10. Although small numbers affect the validity of assessment data, Māori students' achievement remains slightly below that of non-Māori peers.

Area for further improvement

- Strategic planning
No plans or initiatives are evident that specifically focus on raising Māori student achievement. As part of planning for the vision to further raise achievement schoolwide, it would be useful to include a Māori perspective to identify actions to support these students. As part of this development, senior leaders and teachers should engage in professional development that contributes to improving their understanding of Māori cultural as unique and that reflects the priorities of *Ka Hikitia-Managing for Success- The Māori Education Strategy*.

The Achievement of Pacific Students: Progress

In this review ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of its Pacific students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement. Eight Pacific students are enrolled at Francis Douglas Memorial College. The achievement of senior students is monitored individually.

Area for improvement

- No specific practices are implemented to raise the achievement or increase the engagement of Pacific students. Senior managers and trustees should review their provision for Pacific students to ensure they make maximum

progress with their learning.

Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010

Progress to date

In preparing for teaching the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010 the school has:

- recognised the limitations of previous attempts at preparation, and committed itself to a wholehearted programme of curriculum design throughout 2009;
- developed clear and student-centred statements of vision and values that build upon existing practice to guide further development; and
- centred its curriculum design process on the Lasallian tradition.

Next steps

The school has decided that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months are:

- designing a curriculum that incorporates the key competencies defined by the New Zealand Curriculum;
- committing itself to the development of an integrated and holistic curriculum through close liaison between heads of departments;
- increasing student awareness of, and responsibility for, their own academic progress; and
- adopting a professional development model that will facilitate the translation of these priorities into action.

Thinking about the Future

ERO is currently discussing with secondary schools how they are thinking about the future and what it might mean for their students.

The school reports that it has thought about the future and what it might mean for their students in the following ways:

- The College is promoting itself in response to a roll decline, for day students, caused by economic constraints upon sectors of the College community and an apparent drop in the number of boys who are eligible to make a case to

identify as Catholic.

- They have identified the need to use both information technologies and distance learning more in preparing students for a future in which change is a constant.
- They are considering offering students a timetable based on conceptual levels rather than on traditional year groups in order to create a culture of excellence sustained by development as self-monitoring and lifelong learners.

Provision for International Students

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

Francis Douglas Memorial 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. 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 that relate to a student living with a designated caregiver. The school currently has one international student enrolled. Arrangements for his care and education needs are adequate. However, should the school decide to enrol further international students a review of procedures would be advisable.

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.

School hostels are required to be licensed by the Ministry of Education and comply with minimum standards specified in the hostel regulations.

La Salle House Ltd is owned by the Trust Board of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in New Zealand. The hostel provides weekly boarding for 116 students, in Years 9 to 13, boarding in the five houses. This represents 18% of the college roll. The principal is the chief executive officer of the hostel. A capable and professional dean of boarding is in charge of all the houses, each of which is controlled by a fulltime adult supervisor. A matron assists with the health and welfare of students. The hostel and college are on the same grounds in close proximity to each other. The buildings complement each other. Hostel students are integral to the life of the college.

Areas of good performance

- Physical environment provisions

Boarders are appropriately housed. Separate dormitory and adequate common room areas are provided for each year group. All spaces are clean and tidy. In their common rooms, students have access to resources that vary in quality. Plans are in place for the upgrade of the accommodation for two of the year groups. Students' food and hygiene requirements are well catered for.

Student safety is well monitored through ongoing, suitable health and safety checks. Close monitoring of students access to designated areas of the hostel, where only certain year groups are allowed, contributes to student safety. Regular fire drills and evacuation practices occur. Clear expectations for cell phone and internet use guide students in their appropriate use. Effective communication between hostel staff and health services ensure students access appropriate services. Management and staff carefully consider students' wellbeing.

- Student learning and recreation

The dean of boarding makes effective links between the school and hostel to support learning. Weekly hostel staff meetings focus on students' health, welfare, safety and learning needs. Staff supervise students during quiet, focused periods of learning and offer extra tutoring where possible. Junior students access library resources. Senior students study independently and can request library and computer time. Students value regular, well-managed study times.

Full-time hostel supervisors actively support student involvement in a wide range of sporting, academic, spiritual and cultural activities. They enable students to follow individual and group interests on and off site. Senior boarders organise a range of appropriate leisure activities for juniors. Students enjoy access to a variety of learning and recreational resources.

- Emotional environment

Students live in a caring, family-like atmosphere. They demonstrate positive relationships with each other and with staff. Clear guidelines and expectations for students and staff support the positive tone. Formal structures enable students to have a voice in hostel life. Student opinion is expressed through weekly year-group meetings, residents' committee meetings and the head and deputy head boys' attendance at hostel staff meetings. A 2008 survey of students in Years 9 and 10 contributes to planning. Students and staff identify some changes as a result of

consultation. Staff show clear concern and understanding for students' welfare and developing needs.

- Home and hostel partnerships

Parents are well informed about hostel values, expectations and opportunities. A useful handbook for parents helps the transition of new boys into the hostel. Parents receive regular formal and informal communications about their sons. Staff communicate promptly with parents on any matters of concern. Student successes are celebrated through the newsletter. Strong hostel and home partnerships underpin the ongoing care of boarders.

- Hostel management

The dean of boarding manages the hostel competently and thoughtfully. Clear guidelines support staff in their duties. A revised appraisal process, introduced in 2009, links staff goals to professional development. The principal, in his role as chief executive officer, has instigated an ongoing review of policies and procedures. A parent satisfaction survey is underway. Directors receive comprehensive termly reports from the dean of boarding to assist their planning. Hostel managers focus strongly on improving outcomes for students.

Area for improvement

- Strategic planning

The hostel has a detailed operations manual. However, the development of a strategic plan and annual plan, identified as an area for improvement in the 2005 ERO report, has not occurred. Hostel directors have identified a board member to lead such a development. Student and parent consultation already underway should contribute usefully to future planning and review processes. Regular review against goals should ensure the service provided by the hostel continues to meet the needs of its boarders.

5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Francis Douglas Memorial College completed an ERO *Board Assurance Statement* and *Self-Audit Checklist*. 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; and
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment);
- physical safety of students;
- teacher registration;
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions; and
- attendance.

Compliance

During the course of the review ERO identified no areas of non-compliance.

In order to improve current practice, the board of trustees should review safety in technology rooms.

6. Recommendations

ERO recommends that:

- 6.1 trustees, the principal and teachers use student achievement information to plan, implement and review teaching programmes to continue to raise levels of student achievement.

7. Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

ERO will carry out the next review in three years.

Dr Graham Stoop
Chief Review Officer

20 August 2009

20 August 2009

To the Parents and Community of Francis Douglas Memorial College

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Francis Douglas Memorial College**.

Francis Douglas Memorial College is an integrated Catholic boys' college situated among pleasant and well cared for grounds in New Plymouth. The roll is 738 boys in Years 7 to 13, of whom 116 are boarders and 83 are Māori. The special character of the school is reflected in the emphasis on a holistic education based on Catholic principles and the Lasallian tradition of faith, service and community. Together, leaders and staff encourage students to become caring, honest citizens.

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Future Action

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

Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve educational achievement in schools; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on three review strands.

- **School Specific Priorities** – the quality of education and the impact of school policies and practices on student achievement.
- **Areas of National Interest** – information about how Government policies are working in schools.
- **Compliance with Legal Requirements** – assurance that this school has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

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Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a school is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this school.

[\[1\]](#) Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.