

**EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:  
FRANCIS DOUGLAS MEMORIAL COLLEGE  
SEPTEMBER 2002**

- [1. About the School](#)
  - [2. The Education Review Office \(ERO\) Evaluation](#)
  - [3. School Specific Priorities](#)
  - [4. Government Priorities](#)
  - [5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas](#)
  - [6. Recommendations](#)
  - [7. General Information about Reviews](#)
- [Community Page](#)

**Disclaimer**

*Individual ERO school and early childhood centre reports are public information and may be copied or sent electronically. However, the Education Review Office can guarantee only the authenticity of original documents which have been obtained in hard copy directly from either the local ERO office or ERO Corporate Office in Wellington. Please consult your telephone book, or see the ERO web page, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>, for ERO office addresses.*

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	Integrated Catholic, Years 7 - 13		
Decile rating <a href="#">[1]</a>	7		
Teaching staff:			
Roll generated entitlement	45.62		
Number of teachers	52		
School roll	758		
Gender composition	Male	100%	
Ethnic composition	Pākehā	88%	
	Māori	8%	
	Pacific	2%	
	Asian	2%	
Special features	Boarding hostels		
Review team on site	June 2002		
Date of this report	6 September 2002		
Previous Office reports	Accountability Review	August 1998	
	Assurance Audit	August 1994	
	Review	October 1990	

## ***School Statement***

Every school is offered the opportunity to provide its own statement about performance and the quality of education provided. This is attached to the signed copy of the confirmed report sent to the board of trustees.

Francis Douglas Memorial College has provided a school statement and a copy is available from the school.

[Return to Top](#)

## **2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation**

Francis Douglas Memorial College is a Catholic boys' school with a roll of 758 students, of whom 136 are boarders. Students attend the school from Years 7 to 13 and are mainly from the Taranaki district. All staff in the school and hostel are expected to contribute to the atmosphere of a Christian community. This contribution is part of the special character of the college, whose mission statement states that the school exists to educate students for life.

The college operates within the Lasallian tradition of education and the aim is one of brotherhood and to support, affirm and build character. School philosophy focuses on developing positive relationships and reinforcing appropriate attitudes. Good student behaviour is expected and interventions are implemented at an early stage.

Substantial development has taken place since the last ERO report. Classrooms are comfortable, spacious and provide good learning environments. Good models of stimulating classroom displays are evident in some areas of the college. The building of a new technology block in the near future will add to the teaching facilities, enabling the college to better implement the technology curriculum.

The college's boarding hostels are an integral part of school life. Five boarding houses are furnished and maintained to a high standard. They are comfortable and very well run by a knowledgeable management team. Students are positive about boarding. They feel supported and enjoy hostel life.

Affirmative, respectful interactions between students and staff assist the learning process. Clear behaviour expectations are set in most classrooms and students are generally focused and on task. Students are confident to question and be involved in discussions, which helps to promote learning. Teachers use questioning prompts to support student learning. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable about the subjects they teach.

A guidance network of deans promotes a safe and secure environment for students. Vertical form time provides an

avenue for guidance and advice to be given.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a strength in the curriculum. Substantial resources have been purchased, networking for all classrooms is taking place, and sound research facilities exist in the library. Good examples of student use of ICT as a learning tool were observed, and staff training needs are recognised and supported. Planning for a 'learning needs' approach for covering ICT skills in all areas of the curriculum needs to be developed.

Some department schemes of work need further development, and translation into effective units of work incorporating achievement objectives. Good models of planning were seen in English, ICT and visual art.

Assessment practices in Year 7 - 10 provide useful information to parents on aspects of student attainment. Further development of schoolwide policies and procedures, incorporating best practice and the assessment of achievement objectives, should give greater clarification on what students know and the skills they have mastered.

A wide range of programmes is in place to positively support students and cater for learning needs. Particularly noteworthy are the careers' programmes, co-curricular activities, and enrichment and leadership courses. A comprehensive programme, to further develop literacy skills across all curriculum areas, should be developed. This should assist in addressing the college's concerns about the entry-level literacy skills of a number of students.

The experienced and professional principal has worked hard to develop the school as its roll has increased. The principal and senior management team have complementary strengths. They have clear job descriptions and areas of expertise, and share the common vision for the school.

School policies and procedures provide effective guidelines for staff and students. Strategic planning is comprehensive and at a high level of thoroughness on school development matters.

Although the school has sound documentation for department self review, departments should, through an action plan, set measurable targets for student achievement outcomes that can be monitored and reported to the board. Appraisal systems are also well documented. However, all staff must be appraised annually, especially against the professional standards for teaching staff.

A strength of the college is the good relationship that has been built between the trustees, staff and parents. Parents are involved in school life and support the wide range of sporting and cultural activities offered.

ERO is confident that the board and senior management team have the capacity to address the recommendations

contained in this report. Francis Douglas Memorial College will continue to be part of the Office's regular cycle of review.

[Return to Top](#)

### **3. School Specific Priorities**

#### ***The Focus of the Review***

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 issues 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 areas for the review:

- meeting the individual learning needs of students;
- reporting and assessment for Years 7 - 10; and
- the quality of the college's performance appraisal system.

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

#### ***Meeting the Individual Learning Needs of Students***

##### **Background**

The board stated that this area is a very important one for the college and noted that significant progress has been made in areas of careers, and alternative programmes for those students not selecting an academic course. Parents are very interested in the performance of their own children and trustees wish to be assured of the success of the college's

programmes and of possible areas for improvement.

### **Areas of good performance**

- Well-coordinated and comprehensive programmes are in place to assist students in gaining work experience and work-based qualifications. Individualised programmes are developed to meet students' needs and progress is carefully monitored. As a consequence only 4.5% of students left school without any qualifications in 2001, compared to the Taranaki average of 22.3% (Ministry of Education statistics).
- Year 10 students are actively encouraged to begin developing careers goals and staff are proactive in providing students with ongoing career information.
- Extensive co-curricular opportunities are made available to students. High levels of participation, particularly in the sporting field, in delivering speeches and debating, are noteworthy. Such opportunities aid development and provide students with a sense of achievement.
- Students with special needs are provided with individualised programmes and teacher aide assistance. This support ensures they are able to make progress within the classroom.
- Short enrichment courses are offered for more able students in Years 7 to 10 in a range of areas such as computing, science, drama and writing. These courses extend students' learning opportunities and provide new challenges.
- Considerable effort has gone into closely monitoring student performance in the senior school. Parents are kept well informed when there are concerns and programmes are adjusted where necessary to better meet individual needs. This monitoring process is leading to greater student success, particularly in Year 13.
- The development of leadership skills from Year 9 onwards has been a major school focus. Students are actively encouraged to attend school-based, national and international leadership courses. Such courses provide valuable opportunities for the enhancement of leadership skills.
- A range of alternative courses is available to senior students selecting a less academic programme. More appropriately targeted courses enable students to have their learning needs more effectively met.
- A combination of school expectations, positive student attitudes and sound classroom management practices, in most classrooms, ensure students are on task during lessons and misbehaviour is minimal. Within this learning environment teachers are able to concentrate on meeting individual learning needs.

- Ability groupings, and smaller classes for those experiencing literacy and numeracy difficulties at Years 9 and 10, have assisted teachers to better target programmes to meet students' learning needs.
- A well-resourced library and a library skills programme assist student learning.
- Careful tracking and monitoring of Māori students' progress enable staff to better support these students, especially in the senior school.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Teaching strategies: the utilisation of a greater range of teaching strategies should further enhance student learning.
- Literacy skill development: the development of literacy skills across all curriculum areas should assist in addressing the college's concerns about the entry-level literacy skills of a number of students. A well-constructed and carefully targeted reading programme could also assist those students identified as experiencing reading difficulties.

#### **Recommendations**

The board and ERO agree that management:

- develops a comprehensive programme for enhancing students' literacy skills across the curriculum.

#### ***Reporting and Assessment for Years 7 - 10***

##### **Background**

The 1998 Education Review Office report noted that assessment practices limited the degree to which the college was able to demonstrate student achievement. Currently, the board receives some information about student progress, particularly external examination results, and is confident that parents know about the progress their sons are making. However, detailed information on the achievement of junior students is less clear. The impending requirements for strategic planning and reporting mean that trustees need to be confident that targets for student achievement are being set and met at all levels in the college.

##### **Areas of good performance**

- All departments carry out regular assessment to monitor student progress and report to parents. Most departments use a range of assessment practices, including common testing, formal examinations and project based tasks. There are common units of work, and regular assessment of completed units. Such practices assist the development of consistency and comparability of information regarding student achievement.
- In the intermediate department, (Years 7 and 8), a clearly written assessment policy provides a common framework for homeroom teachers. A wide range of assessment strategies is incorporated as an integral part of the teaching programme. Effective use of unit planning and evaluation sheets ensures coverage of specific achievement objectives and links with appropriate assessment tasks.
- In most Year 7 classes, regular use of student diaries helps to make certain homework and student progress are monitored and parents are aware of learning programmes. Teacher annotation in diaries gives valuable feedback to students and parents on areas for improvement.
- Diagnostic tests and other assessment tools are used to identify students' attainment levels and place them in broad ability-level groups. Analysis of results identifies specific students' needs and leads to the modification of teaching programmes. This good practice is particularly evident in Year 7 and 8 programmes.
- Written reports for parents consist of one interim report in Term 1 and two formal reports later in the year. These reports use a similar, computer-generated template, providing information on achievement levels, subject-related skills and a written comment on progress and areas for improvement. Although the quality of these comments is variable, they generally provide useful information for students and parents. End-of-year reports also contain mid-year information which assists in tracking student progress.
- In some classes, for example mathematics, regular use of formative testing of prior knowledge, often self-marked, encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Good examples of planning and tracking sheets in some subjects, for example in English and visual arts, ensure that assessment is linked to achievement objectives and learning outcomes.
- In most classrooms, effective use of teacher questioning provides students with feedback on how well they understand the subject and how to improve.

#### **Areas for improvement**



- Planning and assessment: in many subjects, more comprehensive planning and linking of topics to the achievement objectives at the appropriate levels in the curriculum statements, should allow for more effective assessment.
- Assessment strategy: a clearly articulated, schoolwide assessment strategy at Years 9 and 10, incorporating the good practices and procedures being developed for senior classes, should ensure greater comparability between departments and more consistent practice within departments. Such an assessment strategy could also ensure that all teachers have a range of assessment information to determine more precisely what students know and what skills they have mastered.
- Student goal setting: constructive practices of student goal setting and self evaluation, evident in some curriculum areas, could be extended to further promote learning.
- Written reports: the college has identified, as a goal for 2002, that the reporting template used schoolwide needs to change to reflect the achievement standards approach to assessment.
- Technology curriculum requirements: to ensure comprehensive coverage in delivering the national technology curriculum, the department needs to develop schemes and assessment procedures that incorporate all areas of this essential learning area.

### **Recommendations**

The board and ERO agree that management:

- develops an assessment policy and procedures for Years 7 - 10, incorporating current best practice; and
- reviews and monitors departmental planning procedures to promote effective assessment of specific achievement objectives.

### ***Quality of the College's Performance Appraisal System***

#### **Background**

The 1998 Education Review Office Report stated that the college needed to ensure that a policy for the appraisal of teachers was in place. Management and the board have developed this area, but wish to verify that the system is adequate and robust.

### **Areas of good performance**

- A very good department review format is in place for 2002. This format includes aims, achievement of past aims, analysis of senior examination results and how departments could be improved. This format assists heads of department to develop an ongoing process.
- A more detailed 'Curriculum Implementation' document is also used. This document has a checklist for the Head of Department (HOD), and detailed questions to stimulate thinking about ongoing success with courses. Both of these review processes provide discussion material for the appraisal meeting.
- Department meetings, and regular HOD reports to the board, assist HODs to prepare for their appraisals and to appraise their own staff.
- Staff appraisal processes are set out in a clear policy statement covering rationale, procedures and teacher appraisal criteria. A time line for implementation outlines the requirements.
- The policy statement is supplemented by a comprehensive booklet, which brings steps in the appraisal process together, so that all staff have clear knowledge of the process.
- A good feature of the process is the use of student appraisals of teachers. These may lead to changes in teaching practice and programmes.
- A professional development sub-committee operates to implement policy in this area. A well-organised system targets staff professional development.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Department reviews: the targets for achievement listed under department aims need to be further defined and developed. Such development should lead to better appraisal of staff in terms of how well their students achieved.
- Review process: management could consider a cyclic review process, involving senior staff and outside advisers. This process would add rigour to the department reviews.
- Appraisal systems: all staff should be appraised each year and offered professional development opportunities as may be deemed appropriate. Teaching staff must be appraised against professional standards annually. A structure to allow this to happen needs to be developed.

- Professional development: the sub-committee needs to explore ways to more directly link individual staff performance appraisal outcomes to directed professional development.

### **Recommendations**

The board and ERO agree that management:

- ensures that each department sets measurable targets for student achievement outcomes that can be monitored and reported to the board; and
- appraises all staff annually, ensuring teachers are appraised against professional standards for teaching staff.

[Return to Top](#)

## **4. Government Priorities**

### ***Overview***

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to the Government. This information will be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement.

ERO collected information about Francis Douglas Memorial College. These findings are included in this report to ensure that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

### ***Current Government Priorities***

ERO is currently collecting information for reports to the Government on:

- improving educational outcomes for Māori students;
- improving educational outcomes for Pacific students; and
- school hostels.

### ***Improving Educational Outcomes for Māori Students***

Francis Douglas Memorial College management has collected separate Māori achievement information. Although there is evidence that Māori students are achieving well against the national Māori population for School Certificate, these students are under represented in the top grades. The collected data also revealed a literacy weakness. Attendance is not an area of concern for Māori students and is carefully monitored by deans.

Thorough consultation has taken place with Māori parents. This consultation has resulted in an impressive strategic plan to raise Māori student achievement. This plan states the vision and goals, recognises factors that influence achievement, details development of achievement programmes for 2001/2002 and outlines a draft three-year plan.

Policies have been written for community consultation, improving student achievement and bicultural relationships. A committee, made up of staff and trustees, is addressing the action plan.

A progress report in May 2001, based on interviews by the teacher-in-charge of Māori of all Year 7 and most Year 9 Māori students, indicated that students are very positive about their experience at the college.

The action plan for 2002 makes provision for:

- the updating of bilingual signs and a section of the staff handbooks;
- further consultation with the community;
- refreshing staff on language and protocol use and reviewing professional development;
- actioning appropriate learning programmes; and
- developing Māori leaders/mentors, ascertaining kaumatua to the college and rejuvenating the whānau support group.

A teacher has been given a management unit to develop the strategic plan and is setting up a system of monitoring Māori student progress, asking all deans to interview students after school reports have been completed, and discussing with teachers how achievement levels can be raised.

Although some areas of the plan have been actioned, it is yet to be fully implemented. Substantial progress has been made in fulfilling the requirements of National Education Guideline 1(v).

### ***Improving Educational Outcomes for Pacific Students***

Only 2% of the roll is Pacific students. No separate programme has been implemented for Pacific students but initiatives have been taken to address the individual learning needs of these students. Special *English as a Second Language* assistance has been provided in several instances.

### ***School Hostels***

The college has five boarding hostels, which house in total 136 boarders out of a total roll of 758. These houses are placed alongside teaching blocks and form an integral part of the college.

The principal is responsible for the boarding houses and a full time Dean of resident students supports him. The dean is responsible for other hostel staff, including a matron, an assistant dean and three house supervisors, two of whom are trained teachers. Staff have clear job descriptions and receive ongoing training as part of the school staff. Comprehensive procedures and management systems help to promote the safety and care of students.

The hostels have been extensively developed. Two are new and all blocks are maintained to a very high standard. The mainly single rooms provide good study facilities and lounges are well resourced and comfortable. Each age group of students is in a separate house and good security is maintained. College facilities are also available to the students and an appropriate recreation programme is in place.

Although the senior students do not take direct responsibility for juniors, numerous school leadership opportunities are available to them. Staff guidance is available for Years 9 - 10 and health matters are delegated to a staff member who is a trained nurse. Excellent laundry and dining facilities are in place for all students.

Most students return home on the weekend, providing a good balance for students between home and school. Parents are welcome to communicate with their sons or take them out during the week. Management encourages full family involvement.

Hostel students are very positive about boarding life. They believe that there is a strong rapport between staff and students, and that students relate well to each other. They feel supported and enjoy hostel life.

Although seniors could be given more responsibility for guiding junior students, the school has carefully considered the best system for managing the houses. The hostel is operating effectively and efficiently and, as a result, ERO has identified no areas for improvement.

[Return to Top](#)

## 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 this document 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:

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

These items were checked because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement.

ERO's investigations did not reveal any areas for concern.

[Return to Top](#)

## 6. Recommendations

The board and ERO agree that management:

- 6.1 develop a comprehensive programme for enhancing students' literacy skills across the curriculum.
- 6.2 develop an assessment policy and procedures for Years 7 - 10, incorporating current best practice.
- 6.3 review and monitors departmental planning procedures to ensure effective assessment of specific achievement objectives.
- 6.4 ensure that each department sets measurable targets for student achievement outcomes that can be monitored and reported to the board; and
- 6.5 appraise all staff annually, ensuring teachers are appraised against professional standards for teaching staff.

### ***Future Action***

The Education Review Office is confident that the board and senior management team have the capacity to address the recommendations contained in this report. Francis Douglas Memorial College will continue to be part of the Office's regular cycle of review.

[Return to Top](#)

## **7. 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 this 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.
- **Government Priorities** – 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.

### ***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.

### ***Review Recommendations***

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that this 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.

Signed

Diana Anderson  
Area Manager  
**for Chief Review Officer**

6 September 2002



---

6 September 2002

## **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 a Catholic boys' school with a roll of 758 students, of whom 136 are boarders. Students attend the school from Years 7 to 13 and are mainly from the Taranaki district. All staff in the school and hostel are expected to contribute to the atmosphere of a Christian community. This contribution is part of the special character of the college, whose mission statement states that the school exists to educate students for life.

The college operates within the Lasallian tradition of education and the aim is one of brotherhood and to support, affirm and build character. School philosophy focuses on developing positive relationships and reinforcing appropriate attitudes. Good student behaviour is expected and interventions are implemented at an early stage.

Substantial development has taken place since the last ERO report. Classrooms are comfortable, spacious and provide good learning environments. Good models of stimulating classroom displays are evident in some areas of the college. The building of a new technology block in the near future will add to the teaching facilities, enabling the college to better implement the technology curriculum.

The college's boarding hostels are an integral part of school life. Five boarding houses are furnished and maintained to a high standard. They are comfortable and very well run by a knowledgeable management team. Students are positive about boarding. They feel supported and enjoy hostel life.

Affirmative, respectful interactions between students and staff assist the learning process. Clear behaviour expectations are set in most classrooms and students are generally focused and on task. Students are confident to question and be involved in discussions, which helps to promote learning. Teachers use questioning prompts to support student

learning. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable about the subjects they teach.

A guidance network of deans promotes a safe and secure environment for students. Vertical form time provides an avenue for guidance and advice to be given.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a strength in the curriculum. Substantial resources have been purchased, networking for all classrooms is taking place, and sound research facilities exist in the library. Good examples of student use of ICT as a learning tool were observed, and staff training needs are recognised and supported. Planning for a 'learning needs' approach for covering ICT skills in all areas of the curriculum needs to be developed.

Some department schemes of work need further development, and translation into effective units of work incorporating achievement objectives. Good models of planning were seen in English, ICT and visual art.

Assessment practices in Year 7 - 10 provide useful information to parents on aspects of student attainment. Further development of schoolwide policies and procedures, incorporating best practice and the assessment of achievement objectives, should give greater clarification on what students know and the skills they have mastered.

A wide range of programmes is in place to positively support students and cater for learning needs. Particularly noteworthy are the careers' programmes, co-curricular activities, and enrichment and leadership courses. A comprehensive programme, to further develop literacy skills across all curriculum areas, should be developed. This should assist in addressing the college's concerns about the entry-level literacy skills of a number of students.

The experienced and professional principal has worked hard to develop the school as its roll has increased. The principal and senior management team have complementary strengths. They have clear job descriptions and areas of expertise, and share the common vision for the school.

School policies and procedures provide effective guidelines for staff and students. Strategic planning is comprehensive and at a high level of thoroughness on school development matters.

Although the school has sound documentation for department self review, departments should, through an action plan, set measurable targets for student achievement outcomes that can be monitored and reported to the board. Appraisal systems are also well documented. However, all staff must be appraised annually, especially against the professional standards for teaching staff.

A strength of the college is the good relationship that has been built between the trustees, staff and parents. Parents are involved in school life and support the wide range of sporting and cultural activities offered.

ERO is confident that the board and senior management team have the capacity to address the recommendations contained in this report. Francis Douglas Memorial College will continue to be part of the Office's regular cycle of review.

## **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.

Signed

Diana Anderson  
Area Manager  
**for Chief Review Officer**

[Return to Top](#)

---

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