

Kristin 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	Albany, North Shore City
Ministry of Education profile number	29
School type	Composite (Year 1-15)
Decile rating	10
Numbers of teachers	160

School roll	1624
Number of international students	45
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 59%, Māori 1%, British/Irish 8%, Chinese 8%, Korean 6%, other European 5%, Australian 2%, South African 2%, Dutch 1%, Indian 1%, Middle Eastern 1%, South East Asian 1%, other ethnicities 5%
Gender composition	Girls 51%, Boys 49%
Review team on site	August 2007
Date of this report	20 September 2007
Previous ERO report	Private School Review, October 2004 Accountability Review, September 2001 Accountability Review, June 1998 Statutory Report Private School, October 1993

Efficient

Kristin School continues to provide its students with education and extra-curricular opportunities that are of a very high standard. The school is a dynamic learning environment that places a strong focus on continuous improvement. Teachers work together in a professional and collegial environment in which teaching practice is continually evaluated and refined and ideas are openly discussed. Professional development is highly valued and strongly promotes reflective teaching practice and the building of a common theoretical base to underpin teaching and learning.

Students are justifiably proud of their school and their academic, cultural and sporting achievements. Kristin's core values of respect and aspirations for excellence, innovation and passion for learning are evident in class programmes and in students' relationships with their peers and with adults. Students are supported to become confident, independent, self-directed learners. They are motivated in their work and enjoy engaging in purposeful learning contexts and activities.

Since the 2004 ERO review, Kristin has seen a significant increase in the ethnic diversity of its student population, which reflects a similar demographic growth in most North Shore schools. Students and staff display an empathetic appreciation of students who come from other countries and hold special occasions to celebrate cultural diversity.

Kristin has three schools operating as separate entities within the one campus: the Junior School (Years K-6), the Middle School (Years 7-10) and the Senior School (Years 11-13). Each school has a defined site within the one campus. The new Library and Information Centre has been strategically situated as the central point for the three schools. Senior and junior libraries are housed on the same floor of this building allowing students of different ages to interact and helping to foster a social environment akin to an extended family.

Kristin School continues to be efficient, as defined within Section 35A of the Education Act 1989.

Suitable curriculum and standard of tuition

The standard of tuition is high. Students experience positive and well managed classrooms at all levels of the school. They work purposefully and are respectful to and appreciative of teachers and their peers. Students in all three schools are focused, confident learners. Student-centred approaches to teaching and learning encourage students to be highly motivated and to take responsibility for their own progress and achievement.

Staff and management highly value student perspectives and input. Students have many opportunities to be included in decision-making and in the evaluation of school programmes and processes. Their perspectives and opinions are invited through regular surveys in relation to curriculum teaching and learning programmes. Students' preferences are also sought in the design of facilities being developed and the provision of food in the cafeteria. Student councils and prefects provide other effective and useful forums for students to express their views and to develop worthwhile leadership skills.

Kristin has developed a continuous curriculum from Year 1-13, enabling a seamless transition for students between the three schools. Teachers have a shared understanding of and commitment to the school direction and expectations for teaching and learning. They participate in ongoing professional development within their respective schools and also with staff from the whole school. The three schools follow a team approach to the evaluation of teaching and learning. Teachers reflect on their own class programmes and then collectively evaluate units and programmes within broader year level groups. The principals consider this information as part of their annual curriculum review processes. This collective reflection results in collaborative decision-making focused on programme improvement for students.

The school provides a dual curriculum and qualification pathway in the senior school. The Diploma Programme of the International Baccalaureate (IB) is offered alongside the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). The IB programme is also implemented in the other two schools through the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in the junior school and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in the middle school.

The IB provides an international qualifications pathway that particularly benefits students involved in exchanges with other countries and international students who come to the school to enhance their English language skills. These programmes help students to gain greater awareness and understanding of global perspectives on life today and in the future. IB provides a broad curriculum to Year 13 enabling students to follow subject options simultaneously in the arts and sciences. The syllabus requires students to learn Chinese from Years 1-6 and a further language from Years 7-13. Students state that they appreciate the benefits of learning another language. Teachers participate in international and national conferences for professional development in IB teaching and learning. These opportunities also enable staff to network with other professionals working with the IB system.

Students are encouraged and supported to take increasing responsibility for their learning. IB programmes are inquiry-based and students follow their own lines of inquiry within a broad class theme. Students' individual differences, interests and abilities are catered for effectively

through this process. Consequently, students are highly self-motivated as they direct their studies and develop confidence and self-efficacy as competent learners.

Students follow programmes designed to give them increasing competence in information literacy and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Junior school students are introduced to a range of ICT tools and skills, middle school students practise these skills and senior students apply them in their studies. Students enjoy working within an integrated ICT learning environment. They often make use of the computer facilities in their recreational time and study periods for the completion of curriculum tasks and personal study.

The New Zealand curriculum is highly valued and is integrated into IB programmes in all three schools. NCEA is offered to students in the senior school and also to high achieving students in Year 10. The principals place a high priority on the provision of a wide range of national curriculum courses to cater for students' preferences. During the past two years, teachers have participated in professional development provided by the Ministry of Education. The Junior School is involved in the Numeracy Project and the Middle School is working with another school in an ICT contract. Some teachers keep informed about current debate on curriculum development through their involvement in subject associations.

Suitable staffing

In 2006, the senior school principal was appointed as Executive Principal of the whole school. This transition was facilitated by the strong working relationship of the out-going principal and her successor and staff affirmation of the new appointment. The new principal has ensured that the school's core values and strategic direction have continued to be at the forefront of school life. Together with the principals of the three schools, he manages the school very ably using a distributive leadership approach. The three schools are managed and operated independently, but the principals have a sound understanding of issues, developments and achievements in the whole school. The principals strategise together in collaborative decision-making for the whole school.

The principals give well considered attention to staff recruitment and retention. Teachers work within a climate of high expectations, including a commitment to Kristin, to their respective individual schools, and to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. They aim for excellence in student achievement. Management and staff maintain strong inter-personal relationships to foster effective learning partnerships. Teachers' expertise and experience is drawn upon to provide students with a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.

The school follows a dual approach to teachers' performance management. Teachers are appraised against the professional teaching standards and they evaluate their own

performance and set goals accordingly. Alongside this system runs a developmental process called the Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC). Teachers focus on developing aspects of their practice and receive peer support from trained facilitators. As an integral part of the CIC process, students are surveyed about these teaching aspects and their teachers reflect on this feedback. Staff benefit from ongoing professional development, drawing upon current research focused on helping students to become more competent, independent learners.

The middle and senior schools are currently in an early transition phase of change from a departmental to a faculty system. The rationale for the change is to enable the heads of faculties to focus more on teacher development and relationships to ensure the continuing development of high quality teaching and learning. Curriculum managers will have responsibility for curriculum and programme development. These changes should provide further leadership opportunities for teachers.

Suitable premises and equipment

Kristin School provides extensive premises of a very high standard and the grounds and buildings are attractively maintained. Since the last ERO review trust board members have focused much effort and financial commitment on the continuing development of the school's buildings and grounds. Developments include the construction of the new Library and Information Centre, which also houses the senior school administration area and a senior student common room and study area. Junior and senior school science and technology centres have been built and the junior administration area has been refurbished. New playing fields have been formed, a new playground for junior school students and a landscaped recreational area with movable seating for middle school students have been developed. There has also been extensive landscaping and tree planting around the whole school. At the time of this review a new building was under construction to accommodate the new humanities and commerce faculties and the ICT Services Centre.

Kristin's performing arts facilities and the new Library and Information Centre (LIC) are outstanding features of the school. The auditorium and new Dove theatre are impressive facilities and are used as part of the curriculum programmes and for performances.

The LIC incorporates two libraries to cater for the junior school and the senior schools. The senior schools' library includes an ICT area, quiet room and study corrals. Students use these facilities during their break times and study periods and in teaching and learning programmes. The librarians maintain an extensive range of literature, non-fiction and periodicals. Students access these for recreational and academic reading and are invited to offer suggestions for further reading materials to ensure that their interests and study needs are being met.

Sporting amenities include extensive playing fields, a gymnasium for the junior school, and a

second gymnasium for the senior schools. These facilities promote a wide range of physical activities for students to participate in during class programmes and recreational time.

Classrooms are attractive, inviting environments, particularly in the junior school. Staff and students have thoughtfully and consultatively developed interesting social spaces for students. Storage systems have been installed in the senior schools for students to store books and belongings to enhance mobility around the campus. Access ways have been widened to provide ease of movement between the buildings.

There is extensive provision of ICT throughout the school. Recent developments have strengthened communication networks between the individual schools, students, staff and parents. All Year 7-10 students lease a laptop from the school so that they can use the same software to practise computer skills. Senior students are able to use the school's laptops or their own in curriculum programmes and personal study. The junior school has recently opened an ICT and technology room for classes and groups of students. Laptops are available for teachers to supplement the computers in their own classrooms.

Statutory Obligations

Kristin School meets all of its statutory obligations including the inculcation of patriotism and loyalty through the professional delivery of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of the New Zealand Curriculum.

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

Kristin 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.

Kristin School currently has 45 international students enrolled throughout the three schools. Several strategies, including a helpful orientation booklet, are used to introduce students to school life, their accommodation and New Zealand.

The inclusive social environment of each of the three schools benefits international students, who report that they enjoy the opportunity of attending this school and that they have established friendships with their peers. Students appreciate and enjoy the wide range of sports and extra curricular opportunities offered to them.

Students report positively on their accommodation situations. Residential carers are provided with relevant information so that they have a clear understanding of their obligations to the home stay coordinator and to the school as signatory to the Code.

The director of international services, home stay coordinator and Korean facilitator keep in regular contact with international students both formally and informally. The school has recently developed a new computerised school-wide system for student management. The use of this system should help to strengthen liaison between the director, deans and counsellors in the school's pastoral care services. It is important that the director is able to monitor any welfare concerns of international students.

Thorough initial assessment determines students' academic strengths and needs. Most teachers differentiate their planning to cater for students who have English as a second language. English language support is offered in withdrawal sessions and is also offered within classroom programmes to enable students to learn alongside their peers. The

principals and director could now review the timing of English support programmes so that students do not have to choose between sessions to assist them in their English acquisition and opportunities for socialisation during their recreation times.

Conclusion

Kristin School continues to be efficient, as defined within Section 35A of the Education Act 1989. Kristin continues to provide high standards of care and education for students.

Kristin School will be reviewed again as part of the regular cycle of ERO reviews.

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

20 September 2007

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