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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 -

- Having suitable premises, staffing, equipment, and curriculum; and
- Usually providing tuition for 9 or more students who have turned 5 but are under 16; and
- Providing suitably for the inculcation in the minds of students of sentiments of patriotism and loyalty; and
- Giving students tuition of a standard no lower than that of the tuition given to students enrolled at enrolled at secondary 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	Auckland City
Ministry of Education profile number	1605
School type	Private School - Secondary (Year 9-15)
Numbers of teachers	36
School roll	501
Number of international students	45
Ethnic composition	New Zealand European/Pākehā 57%, Māori 1%, Korean 18%, Chinese 12%, Indian 4%, other European 4%, Taiwanese 3%, other Asian 1%
Gender composition	Boys 53%, Girls 47%
Review team on site	February 2008
Date of this report	5 June 2008
Previous ERO reports	Private School Review, March 2005 Private School Review, January 2002 Private School Review, November 1998 Private School Review, October 1995

Efficient

ACG Senior College in central Auckland is a private school owned and managed by the Academic Colleges Group (ACG). The college provides a specialist pre-university education for secondary students in Years 11-13. Students have opportunities to gain

academic qualifications through Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, and in some University of Auckland papers.

Academic excellence and achievement are highly valued. The outstanding achievements of individual students in the Cambridge examinations and NCEA Scholarships examinations are celebrated. School publications, such as the regular newsletter and yearbook, acknowledge the achievements of students in academic programmes and in other school activities.

The CIE teaching programmes have become well established. Student numbers in the humanities, including geography, history, history of art and music, have grown considerably. Psychology and thinking skills are valued CIE programmes. Community service, and modules such as health education and computer skills, are popular with Year 11 students. These developments reflect a broadening of the school's curriculum since the 2005 ERO report.

Students are free to choose from a variety of co-curricular activities and avail themselves of leadership opportunities. The active student social awareness and responsibility committee supports a variety of local and international causes each year. Students can form focus groups to initiate new activities and to improve the school environment. School productions receive high acclaim. The college has supported the growth of student interest in sports and personal fitness through the appointment of a sports coordinator.

All students are encouraged to strive to reach their potential. The individuality of each student is celebrated. Affirming interpersonal relationships between students and their teachers help to produce a learning environment in which success is sought after and valued. Since the 2005 ERO report, a careers counsellor has been trained and appointed to assist students to clarify their goals and to help them to transfer to tertiary studies, especially in overseas universities.

Levels of student engagement in learning are high. The extended school day and longer class periods enable and support sustained learning. Staff insistence on student attendance and punctuality helps to maximise learning time. These factors, together with focused teaching and relatively small class sizes, promote student learning and high academic achievement.

Experienced, qualified and dedicated teachers provide learning environments that support and challenge students to achieve well. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject areas and are enthusiastic in sharing their knowledge with the students. Lessons are well prepared, focused and purposeful. The courteous and reciprocal relationships that characterise the classrooms result in stimulating academic conversations that both teachers and students enjoy.

An emphasis on professional growth and development supports teachers to continue to extend their teaching strategies. Recently, the principal and senior managers have given particular emphasis to

the teaching of thinking skills and the use of assessment for learning. The system of regular teacher appraisal developed by ACG also encourages teachers to reflect on their own performance and extend their professional practice.

The teaching and learning programmes are well resourced with equipment that enhances and promotes positive learning outcomes. Staff and students have ready access to computers. Increasingly, information technologies are being used to enhance teaching and learning. The college library and faculty libraries are valued resources, as is equipment used in specialist areas, such as design, photography, painting and music.

Effective management of the premises has ensured that the building continues to be attractive, safe and functional. Comfortable furniture, regular repainting, and displays of student artworks in the communal areas, encourage students to respect and appreciate their learning environment. ERO's previous concern about ventilation and air conditioning has been addressed. On-going maintenance and high quality ACG policies and procedures support the provision of a safe and secure environment for students and staff.

Statutory Obligations

ACG Senior College meets its statutory obligations, including providing suitably for the inculcation of sentiments of patriotism and loyalty in the minds of students. Teachers incorporate New Zealand contexts into the learning programmes, especially in the humanities and arts subjects. Students are encouraged to develop a sense of community service and citizenship. The college aims to inform and inspire students to appreciate New Zealand and to respect its laws.

The school provides tuition of a standard no lower than that of the tuition given to students enrolled at secondary schools of the same class.

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

ACG Senior 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 college complies with all aspects of the Code.

ACG Senior College caters primarily for students in Years 11-13 of their schooling. Most international students attending ACG Senior College have been previously enrolled in other New Zealand schools. International students comprise less than ten percent of the school roll. At present, 45 international students are enrolled at the college.

The Director of International Students has overall responsibility for the international students. The college orientation programme and information booklets, regular meetings with their tutors and social functions help students to become integrated into the college and the New Zealand way of life.

The international students are encouraged to live in approved homestay accommodation. The monitoring of this accommodation is regular and thorough. The college is able to offer a limited number of places in supervised hostel accommodation at Princeton House, which is licensed by the Ministry of Education. No ACG Senior College students were accommodated in the hostel at the time of this ERO review.

International students appreciate the opportunity that college provides for them to gain entry to universities through the Cambridge International Examinations qualifications. Most students enter the college with sufficient English language skills to participate in courses that will enable them to meet the literacy requirements for tertiary study at a New Zealand university.

ACG Senior College has well developed, detailed policies and procedures that promote high quality pastoral care of international students. Parents are able to access information about their own children through a comprehensive, well maintained database. Parent evenings and newsletters, including those translated into the Korean language, help parents to be informed about their children's welfare.

Conclusion

ACG Senior College continues to operate efficiently in terms of the Education Act, 1989, s35A and s35B.

Elizabeth Ellis

Area Manager

for Chief Review Officer

5 June 2008