



School Report – Waitaki Boys’ High School 365

About the school

Waitaki Boys’ High School is a secondary school in Ōamaru for boys in Years 9 to 13. The school has a boarding house that currently accommodates over 30 boys - predominantly from the Otago region. The school operates an adjacent farm. The school’s values are *Respect, Resilience* and *Motivation* reflecting its mission statement: *Inspiring Young Men of Outstanding Character*.

Provision for students within the boarding house is outlined in a separate ERO report.

About the review

Every New Zealand state and state integrated school is reviewed by ERO at least every four years to assess strengths and areas for improvement. The ERO team visits the school, gathers information by talking to students, parents, staff, and school board members, observing teaching in classrooms, and reviewing school information documents such as assessment data and school planning.

What do we review and report?

ERO reviews and reports on outcomes for students, school conditions that underpin success, and steps for school improvement. This report includes a snapshot, and overview and a full report and our School Reports focus on the following areas:

- **Achievement** and progress including reading, writing and mathematics
- **Engagement** and belonging
- **Equity**
- **Attendance**
- **Leadership** and school improvement
- **The curriculum and quality of teaching**
- **Assessment**
- Provision for students with **additional needs**
- **Governance** and the school board
- **Health and safety**

What do our judgements mean?

Excelling	Excelling means this school demonstrates consistently strong performance. This is the highest judgement.
Doing well	This means the school demonstrates mostly strong and consistent practice. Key conditions for success are in place and there is a focus on improvement.
Working towards	There are gaps in performance; aspects of improvement are evident but there is variability.
Improvement required	There are significant and sustained gaps in school performance and urgent improvement is required.

Waitaki Boys' High School: Snapshot

ERO makes judgements on 14 areas. The Snapshot below shows how many of ERO's judgements for this school are Excelling, Doing well, Working towards or Improvement required. The judgements are based on the ERO School Improvement Framework and evidence gathered by ERO during the evaluation.

Judgement	Number of areas													
Excelling														
Doing well														
Working towards														
Improvement required														
Student health and safety	Meets expectation. Waitaki Boys' High School is taking reasonable steps to ensure student health and safety.													

Waitaki Boys' High School: Overview

The Overview below shows for each of the 14 areas ERO's judgements on whether this school is *Excelling, Doing well, Working towards or Improvement required* and why. This provides more information about the judgements in the Snapshot.

Student achievement	Doing well	Overall achievement is generally strong. Over time, a large majority of students experience success and achieve well in national qualifications.
Student progress	Doing well	Over a third of students enter the school not yet working at expected curriculum levels. Many students make significant and accelerated progress in their learning at the school.
Foundational literacy	Doing well	A small majority of students achieve at curriculum level in reading and writing by the end of Year 10. A large majority of students achieve the literacy requirements for NCEA.
Foundational numeracy	Doing well	A small majority of students achieve at curriculum level in mathematics. Most students achieve the numeracy requirements for NCEA.
Attendance	Improvement required	Less than half of students attend school regularly. Improving attendance is an improvement priority.
Engagement and belonging	Working towards	The school promotes inclusion and wellbeing effectively for many students, but the school has very high rates of suspension and exclusion.
Equity	Working towards	Achievement across student groups is not yet consistent. Progress is being made towards lifting overall outcomes.
Leadership	Doing well	Leaders have good practices in place to drive improvement and raise student outcomes.
Teaching	Doing well	Teaching is good quality and consistent. Assessment and planning are used well to support all students' engagement and progress.

Curriculum	Doing well	Curriculum planning is increasingly informed by assessment and student needs, with growing consistency across the school.
Assessment	Doing well	Assessment information is used to plan effectively and respond to student needs.
Provision for students with additional needs	Doing well	Systems to identify and support students with additional learning needs are well established and consistently applied.
School improvement	Doing well	School planning and conditions to support ongoing improvement to the quality of education for students are well established.
Governance and the school board	Working towards	Governance practices are developing but are not yet consistently applied across school operations.

How do we report percentages?

Less than a third	Less than half	Small majority	Large majority	Most	Almost all
0 to 33%	34 to 49%	50 to 64%	65 to 79%	80 to 90%	Over 90%

Further information about this school and report can be found on the last page.

Waitaki Boys' High School: Full Report

Tēnā koutou e mau manawa rahi ki te kaupapa e aro ake nei, ko te tamaiti te pūtake o te kaupapa. Mā wai rā e kawē, mā tātau katoa. We acknowledge the collective effort, responsibility, and commitment by all to ensure that the child remains at the heart of the matter.

Outcomes for students

Achievement

Overall achievement is generally strong. A large majority of students achieve NCEA Levels 2 and 3. A large majority of student who leave the school do so with NCEA Level 2.

Less than half of students achieved University Entrance in 2025; this is an increase in the number of students achieving UE than previous years. Overall, outcomes are stronger for some groups than others, with ongoing disparity for Māori and Pacific learners.

Progress

Students make meaningful progress from varied starting points. Over a third of students enter Year 9 below expected curriculum levels in reading, mathematics and writing, and many show improvement during Years 9 and 10. Students make good progress in writing with many students making significant progress from their starting points.

Leaders use progress information to identify learners and plan support. More consistent tracking and mentoring are needed to support equitable progress for all groups.

Achievement in reading, writing and mathematics and literacy and numeracy

A small majority of students achieve at curriculum level in reading by the end of Year 10. Reading achievement is improving over time while writing achievement remains lower. A large majority of Year 11 students achieved NCEA literacy requirements in 2025, an improvement from 2024.

In mathematics, a small majority of students achieve at curriculum level by the end of Year 10. Most Year 11 students achieved NCEA numeracy requirements in 2025. Literacy demands in numeracy assessments impact some students' ability to show mathematical understanding. Strengthening progress in numeracy remains an important next step.

Attendance

Attendance outcomes require urgent improvement. Regular attendance is significantly below the Government target, with only around half of students attending regularly, and patterns of absence not yet reducing over time.

Systems such as the Attendance Management Plan and stepped response processes are in place, with clear expectations for monitoring, reporting, and responding to student absence. However, the impact of these systems is not yet evident in improved attendance outcomes.

Engagement and belonging

Many students report a strong sense of belonging and positive relationships within the school. The school has a range of positive practices that support engagement and belonging. Whānau teachers know students well, monitor attendance and progress, and maintain communication with families when concerns arise.

Student feedback is gathered through a variety of mechanisms, and there is an increasing focus on affirming identity, language and culture. These approaches contribute positively to many students' sense of connection to the school.

However, the high number of stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions demonstrate that these engagement practices are not yet meeting the needs of all learners. The impact of the present school-wide engagement practices needs to be evaluated and refined to ensure that all students experience a strong sense of belonging and are actively engaged in learning.

Equity

Achievement and attendance outcomes are not yet equitable for all groups. Māori and Pacific learners do not yet achieve as well or as consistently as other learners in NCEA or University Entrance.

The school is increasingly using attendance, achievement, and wellbeing information to identify learners at risk and respond through pastoral and support systems. However, the present application of these strategies is having only varying impact. Strengthening the use of disaggregated data, particularly by ethnicity, will support a clearer understanding of which learners are most affected and enable more targeted, culturally responsive approaches to improve equity in engagement, participation, and outcomes.

School conditions for success

Leadership

Leadership is purposeful and increasingly evidence-informed, with a clear focus on improving learner outcomes, including attendance, engagement and achievement. Leaders work collaboratively with staff and the board to identify priorities and use a range of data, including attendance, wellbeing and achievement information, to guide decision-making and target support for students at risk.

Leaders are strengthening the evaluation of initiatives to identify clear evidence of what is making the greatest difference for learners. Building greater coherence across leadership practices, particularly in relation to culturally responsive approaches and engagement strategies, will be important to achieve equitable outcomes and ensure all students are consistently engaged and supported to succeed.

Teaching

Teaching is generally of good quality and becoming more consistent, with teachers increasingly establishing orderly, collaborative learning environments and using clearer routines, learning intentions, and feedback to support student learning. Teachers use a range of assessment, attendance, and progress information to identify students at risk and to inform adjustments to programmes and next steps.

Professional learning is strengthening teaching practice, including literacy, numeracy, restorative approaches, and assessment consistency.

Curriculum

The school provides a broad and increasingly responsive curriculum that offers students a wide range of meaningful learning and pathway opportunities aligned to their interests, strengths and future aspirations. Learners access diverse academic, vocational and co-curricular options, with deliberate efforts to extend pathways through flexible course design and engagement with external providers where needed.

Curriculum design is increasingly informed by assessment information and learner needs, and there is growing coherence across learning areas, particularly in strengthening literacy and numeracy foundations. Leaders and teachers are working towards a more localised curriculum that reflects context and provides rich learning opportunities, supported by appropriate resourcing and targeted interventions for students requiring additional support.

The school is developing school-wide alignment of progressions, assessment expectations, and integration of te reo Māori, te ao Māori, and mātauranga Māori to enhance pathways for all learners.

Assessment

Assessment information is increasingly used to understand achievement, track progress and identify next learning steps. Teachers are extending the range of assessment and reporting information to monitor learners. Students at risk are identified through assessment, attendance and effort information, with targeted response plans in place.

Professional learning is supporting moderation and consistency. The next step is to strengthen shared understanding of progression, progress markers and assessment practices across curriculum levels.

Provision for students with additional needs

Students with additional needs are supported through coordinated school, specialist and individualised support. Learner needs are identified early, and support is planned and reviewed using a range of school, whānau and specialist information.

Students have individual education plans developed with students, whānau, external agencies and staff. Support is reviewed through observations, tracking books, pastoral notes and regular meetings. Further work is planned to make reporting on progress for students with high needs more regularly to ensure high-quality provision.

Governance

The Board provides support for school improvement. It understands statutory obligations, and receives reports on achievement, attendance, health and safety, curriculum and departmental progress.

The board clear review procedures and assurance processes to guide oversight. It works with leaders through strategic and annual planning and receives information about improvement priorities. Board self-review, whānau and Māori partnership, and systematic community voice are not yet sufficiently embedded to inform decision making.

Next steps for improvement

All schools look to continue to improve, even those that are excelling. The table below sets out ERO's recommended next steps.

Improvement priority	Action within three months	Every six months / annually	Expected outcomes
Urgently improve regular attendance.	School leaders review and refine strategies to improve regular attendance.	Evaluate the impact of attendance strategies and adjust as needed.	Regular attendance improves.

Improvement priority	Action within three months	Action within six months	Every six months / annually	Expected outcomes
Improve students' rate of progress in literacy and numeracy.	School leaders review and refine strategies to improve literacy and numeracy.	School leaders establish a framework for literacy and numeracy development across the school.	School leaders evaluate the impact of the literacy and numeracy strategies.	Literacy and numeracy rates improve.
Improve tracking and student mentoring of students' academic progress.	School leaders review and refine strategies for tracking and mentoring students' academic progress.	Ensure all school leaders have the capability to lead staff in tracking and mentoring students' academic progress.	School leaders evaluate the impact of the tracking and mentoring on students' academic progress.	Students' academic progress improves.
Strengthen teachers' capability in mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori to strengthen culturally responsive teaching schoolwide.	Develop a framework of teaching capabilities in mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori for culturally responsive teaching.	Implement the framework across the school.	School leaders evaluate the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching on student engagement, including attendance.	Increased culturally responsive teaching improves student engagement.

Regulatory and legislative requirements

This section of the report reviews the school's policies, procedures, documentation, and checks that it meets all regulations, maintains a safe environment, and supports students' wellbeing.

During this review the Board has attested to meeting regulatory and legislative requirements in the following areas:

Board administration	Yes
Curriculum	Yes
Attendance	Yes
Management of health, safety and welfare	Yes
Personnel management	Yes

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 established under section 534 of the Education and Training Act 2020. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code and has completed an annual self-review of its implementation of the Code.

At the time of this review there was one international student attending the school, and no exchange students.

Thorough processes and practices support students to settle into the school. International students live in the school hostel, and they are well supported to be actively involved in the wider life of the school and have a range of experiences within the community.

Students' wellbeing and pastoral needs are very closely monitored. Regular communication between international student staff, international students and wider school staff ensures that identified needs are quickly addressed.

The international staff report to school leadership regularly. Reporting to the board is a necessary next step so the board can be assured that students' wellbeing and learning needs are being responded to appropriately.

School Improvement

ERO has confidence that Waitaki Boys' High School can bring about the improvements outlined in the report. Since the last ERO report in March 2023 the school has made positive progress in strengthening school culture and teacher practice for improved student engagement, progress and achievement, and in progressing the foundational school conditions that support more consistent and equitable student success.

The next public report on ERO's website will be within four years.

Me mahi tahi tonu tātau, kia whai oranga a tātau tamariki
Let's continue to work together for the greater good of all children



Sharon Kelly
Director of Schools

26 August 2026

Further information about the school

Type of school	Secondary school Single-sex
Year levels	Years 9 to 13
School roll	431
Student population	Māori 14%, NZ European/Pākehā 74%; Pacific 15%; Asian 7%; Other ethnic groups 2%.
Equity Index (EQI)	This school's EQI is 477 which places it in the above average range. This means a large majority students at this school face more socioeconomic barriers to achievement than average.
Immersion & Bilingual Education	Waitaki Boys' High School does not offer the provision of te reo Māori in Māori medium settings.
Last ERO report	Profile Report March 2023

School information

Education Counts provides further information about the school's student population, student engagement and student achievement, school enrolments and school zones educationcounts.govt.nz/home.

What does EQI mean?

The Equity Index (EQI) is a number assigned to each school, ranging from 344 to 569. It estimates the extent to which students face socio-economic barriers to education and achievement. The Higher EQI the more barriers students in the school face.

EQI is **NOT** a measure of school quality or performance. It's about funding and support needs for the school.