

# Michael Park School Education Review

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## About the School

Location	Ellerslie, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	424	
School type	Composite (Year 1 - 15)	
Decile [ 1]	9	
School roll	380	
Number of international students	1	
Gender composition	Boys 52% Girls 48%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European 61% Māori 13% British 3% Chinese 2% Japanese 2% African 1% Indian 1% Middle Eastern 1% Samoan 1% Other ethnicities 5%	
Review team on site	April 2012	
Date of this report	6 June 2012	

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Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2008
	Education Review	September 2005
	Education Review	April 2003

## The Purpose of an ERO Report

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements.

[1]

School deciles range from 1 to 10. Decile 1 schools draw their students from low socio-economic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides.

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## 1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Michael Park School is a state integrated Steiner school that caters for students from Years 1 to 13. The beliefs and values of the Steiner Waldorf philosophy underpin the school's curriculum and day to day operations.

The 2009 ERO report noted that good quality teaching and effective professional leadership and governance contributed to the positive learning culture evident in the school. The report also noted that students made good progress during their time at school. These positive features have been sustained and strengthened.

The Ministry of Education and The Federation of Rudolf Steiner Schools in New Zealand (FRSSNZ) have recently come to an agreement about the implementation of National Standards by Rudolf Steiner Schools that recognises their special character. In 2011 Michael Park School worked closely with the Ministry to find appropriate ways forward. Learning steps have been developed that ensure National Standards indicators are included in the order children experience them in the Michael Park Steiner curriculum.

The school offers a mix of senior programmes to provide students with a Steiner based education and the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications that lead to university entrance. Senior students (Year 12 and 13) undertake NCEA qualification courses and also complete some elements of the FRSSNZ Steiner Federation certificate course content.

Students travel from a wide geographical area to attend the school. A growing number of students are predicted to enter the lower school in coming years. The board is strategic in managing this potential roll growth.

## 2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Students at all levels of the school continue to achieve well.

Student achievement in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) continues to show improvement. The number of students gaining a Level 2 NCEA qualification is comparable to other schools of similar decile. In 2011 there was a significant improvement in the number of Year 13 students achieving University Entrance. The FRSSNZ qualification Steiner School Certificate level 3 has recently been approved on the NZQA framework and by the Universities Academic Committee as a university entrance qualification. The Michael Park board and staff are carefully considering the future qualification programme to be offered at senior secondary levels.

The progress and achievement of students in Years 9 to 11 is monitored by senior leaders and teachers. Information gathered is used to plan teaching programmes and support student learning. Students in Year 11 complete the Steiner School Certificate level 1.

The school is also gathering baseline achievement information for students in Years 2 to 8 based on learning steps aligned to National Standards. Early indicators show most students are achieving at or above expected levels.

The analysis of school-wide achievement information by senior leaders is detailed, and findings are well used to support student learning and set school priorities. Teachers use this information to identify students who are underachieving or have special learning needs, and to inform their planning and teaching approaches. Students are experiencing an increasingly differentiated learning programme that is specific to their areas of strength and need. Further refinement of school achievement targets in the senior school could provide more meaningful information on how the school is adding value to students' achievement.

Students are well engaged in learning. Engagement is supported by settled learning environments and positive teacher and student relationships. Teachers have high expectations for student learning and citizenship and, as a result, students display a strong sense of belonging and social responsibility to the school community.

Māori student engagement is high. They speak confidently about their learning and enjoy the opportunities they have to succeed as Māori. Information collected by the school shows that Māori students are represented in leadership roles in the school and generally achieve at least as well as non- Māori.

### 3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

The school's curriculum effectively promotes and supports student learning.

The curriculum embraces and embeds the Steiner/Waldorf vision for a confident, connected and actively involved learner. Classroom programmes reflect the school's Steiner/Waldorf education philosophy and there is a commitment to provide a continuity of a broad Steiner/Waldorf based curriculum through main lesson programmes at all levels of the school.

The values, principles and key competencies that are part of The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) have helped enrich classroom learning programmes for all. The way the school's curriculum focuses on notions of problem solving within authentic contexts and developing the student as a critical thinker is highly evident. The school responds to student and whānau aspirations by exploring innovative approaches to offering an increasing range of options at senior levels. Students are well prepared for learning beyond school.

Māori perspectives, culture and language are embedded in the school curriculum. Parents of Māori children report their children benefit from the curriculum emphasis on wairua tapu (the whole being). Te reo and tikanga Māori is particularly well implemented. The school maintains te reo Māori programmes through to senior secondary level and provides opportunities for students to achieve qualifications in this area through NCEA. Senior managers are working with the board and whānau to explore ways to strengthen provision for Years 1 – 6.

Teachers are enthusiastic, receptive to new ideas and provide good quality teaching programmes. Teachers share professional practice and display a sense of collegial responsibility for raising student achievement. School systems support teachers to be reflective practitioners. The principal continues to seek ways to use the strengths of teachers with strong pedagogical practices to support the quality of teaching across the school.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

The board provides effective governance. There is a unity of purpose and good working relationships between the board, the Rudolf Steiner School Trust (RSST), and the management of the school. All share a commitment towards excellence in (Steiner) education and for the best outcomes for students, including success for Māori students as Māori. Board decision making is strategic, and aimed at ensuring sustainability of improvements.

There is strong professional and pedagogical leadership in the school. The principal is instrumental in building leadership capacity and influence across the school. The leadership team has grown since the 2009 ERO review. This growth is strategically directed at achieving school goals and improving the achievement of students.

Self review is well used at all levels to sustain and improve the school's performance. There is a high level of professional dialogue between teachers. Input is sought from students, staff and the school community as part of the review process. Outcomes of self review provide clear rationale for curriculum design, teaching practice, and future directions for the school.

### Provision for international students

The 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. At the time of this review there was one international student attending the school.

The School has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code. ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international students is thorough.

International Students are very well supported to strengthen reading, writing and speaking in English. High levels of pastoral care are provided by several staff members and other students to help international students adjust to life within the New Zealand Steiner Waldorf School system. International students come to the school from Steiner Waldorf Schools in Germany and elsewhere.

### Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists. 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
- asset management.

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

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

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.

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Northern Region (Acting)

6 June 2012