

# Westmount School Private School Education Review

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On the basis of the information obtained during the review, ERO considers that Westmount School meets the criteria for registration as a private school set out in the Education Act 1989.

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# 1 Background

The Chief Review Officer has a statutory duty to report on the performance of private schools throughout New Zealand.

Section 351 of the Education Act 1989, requires the Education Review Office (ERO) to review fully registered private schools, and to report to the Ministry of Education on whether each school continues to meet the criteria for full registration.

This review report was prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

The Auckland Campus of the Westmount School is one of 15 component parts of a school established by the Westmount School National Trust to provide appropriate education for the children of the Brethren community. Under the direction of the National Trust, the educational content of teaching programmes is based on The New Zealand Curriculum.

The National Trust and local trusts govern all campuses. The National Trust sets direction and writes policies and procedures for local trusts to follow. A national principal provides overall educational leadership. Each campus has a chief executive officer, local trustees and a campus coordinator (leader of teaching and learning). Heads of department work across the campuses, as do teachers in charge of subjects. They communicate regularly, using video conferencing facilities.

The roll of the Auckland campus was 124 in July, 2008. The roll is now 145 and there are currently 14 teachers employed. A new Campus Coordinator is providing teachers with good professional leadership.

Trustees have a clear understanding of their governance role and each has a portfolio of responsibilities. The campus coordinator provides them with regular reports that outline student achievement across the school. Trustees are positive about their staff and the quality of teaching. They fully support the campus leadership team and share the team's commitment to providing high quality teaching.

## 2 Criteria for Registration

The Auckland campus of Westmount School continues to meet criteria for registration as a private school.

Since the 2008 ERO review, significant developments have been achieved on the Auckland campus. The building of a generously proportioned building to cater for the senior school, the provision of a large gymnasium/hall, specialist teaching facilities and the extension of recreational areas has created more opportunities for learning in and out of the classroom. The new sense of space, and the provision of playing areas, including the sandpit, has led to an increase in lunchtime activities and opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills.

There has recently been a change in campus leadership. The new campus coordinator is an experienced and skilled teacher. She is aware of the need for teachers to maintain a high level of professional expertise and actively promotes good practice in teaching and learning. Trustees and staff appreciate her leadership and the increased focus on developing students' leadership and independence as learners.

Students continue to achieve well. Teachers are using a broad range of appropriate assessment tools to make reliable and valid judgements on students' achievement. They are successfully implementing strategies such as three-way conferencing to report to parents in plain language, and are confident about using National Standards to report student achievement up to Year 8. Results for students from Years 3 to 8 from nationally normed tests in reading, vocabulary, listening and mathematics, indicate that most students achieve above expectations in these tests. Data are well used to identify students who need additional support or extension work.

Students in Years 11, 12 and 13 achieve above average national levels in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA). Achievement results have been showing significant improvement over time. Trustees and staff have set high expectations for increased attainment at NCEA merit and excellence levels.

Overall student achievement information is used for decision making at class and school level. Senior school teachers have been adjusting NCEA programmes and continue to promote high levels of success in external qualifications. School-wide analysis of data is used to determine patterns and trends in achievement, and to help identify the factors that contribute to student success. Trustees receive good quality reports, particularly about students' achievement in NCEA. Qualification results are analysed by national school personnel. The local campus coordinator, teachers and students use NCEA results to set goals for ongoing learning.

Extensive work is going on in curriculum areas to make teaching more interactive, and to build students' skills as self-managing learners who are well equipped to be lifelong learners. The growing emphasis on teaching as inquiry is part of a drive across the campus to ensure that teachers develop and maintain a high level of professional skill. This focus is well supported by the school's appraisal system, which has been strengthened to meet more stringent teacher registration requirements.

Attractive learning environments are a feature of the school. Students' work is well displayed in most classrooms to celebrate student achievement and to give students opportunities to revisit their learning. These opportunities to review past work help students to make considered judgements about their own levels of achievement.

Relationships between teachers and students are increasingly courteous as children move up the school and take more responsibility for their learning. Students respond positively to teachers' high expectations and the standard of work presented is frequently high. Increased information for students about how to improve their work would be a useful strategy for teachers, particularly where the challenge is catering better for very able students.

Staff value the collegiality evident in the school and believe that the school is moving in a positive direction. Teachers are all trained and qualified. There are currently three provisionally registered teachers who are receiving appropriate advice and guidance. Documentation of a staff handbook provides useful guidance about school operations. Further documentation to outline expectations of good teaching practice in curriculum areas could help to make it clear what good teaching looks like on this campus.

To ensure breadth in the senior school curriculum, the school makes good use of video conferencing so that classes can be run nationally to cater for diverse curriculum areas. Staff are working thoughtfully to provide good teaching through this medium and have identified the need to provide appropriate mentoring to support students who are undertaking distance learning.

Resources to support teaching have been increased and the students benefit from a greatly increased provision of good quality texts to promote the love of reading. The junior and senior libraries are well used and highly valued.

Trustees and staff are aware of the need to maintain a safe physical environment. Systems in place are comprehensive and thorough. A fleet of minibuses to transport students to and from school has improved student safety. Trustees should review their policy on police vetting to ensure that all adults working by themselves with children in the school are police vetted if necessary.

The increased emphasis in the school on achievement is reflected in the implementation of awards for academic attainment and community service. Trustees, parents and staff are united in their desire to build a school culture in which learning is valued and a culture of continuous improvement is evident in all aspects of school operations.

The school's managers have attested that they comply with the provision of section 35G in respect to their being fit and proper persons to manage the school.

### 3 Conclusion

On the basis of the information obtained during the review, ERO considers that Westmount School - Auckland Campus meets the criteria for registration as a private school set out in the Education Act 1989.

Richard Thornton  
National Manager Review Services  
Northern Region

12 December 2011

## About the School

Location	Mangere Bridge, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	472	
School type	Private School (Years 1 to 15)	
Decile [1]	8	
School roll	145	
Gender composition	Male 50% Female 50%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/ Pākehā	98%
	Indian	2%
Review team on site	August 2011	
Date of this report	12 December 2011	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Private School Review	November 2008
	Private School Review	August 2005
	Private School Review	August 2002

### [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.