

**South Auckland Middle School**

**Manurewa, Auckland**

**PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS KURA HOURUA READINESS REPORT**

**Confirmed report to MOE June 2014**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Ministry of Education commissioned the Education Review Office (ERO) to help determine the readiness of South Auckland Middle School to operate effectively as a school in 2014.

South Auckland Middle School is the one of the first five Partnership Schools Kura Hourua (PSKH) in New Zealand. These schools are a new type of school within the existing network designed to bring together the education, business and community sectors to provide new opportunities for students to achieve educational success. These schools have been given flexibility about how they operate and use funding to deliver school-specific targets.

A contract between the PSKH and the Ministry of Education serves as the central expression of the sponsor's accountabilities to the Crown, and the Crown's commitment to resourcing the school. Clearly specified targets for student achievement, student engagement, enrolment of priority learners and financial reporting are in place. The contracts were signed in September 2013.

### **Terms of reference**

The MOE asked ERO to:

- focus on the systems and procedures necessary for South Auckland Middle School to open smoothly in 2014
- identify what is in place and its suitability, what is planned, any gaps and whether the plan is achievable
- identify (as near as possible) priority areas to be addressed
- recognise that many procedures and systems will be in the process of being developed and look for evidence that the school is aware of the need and has a planned timeframe to develop them
- seek evidence that the national priorities and all applicable guidelines provided by the Ministry, have been considered.

## **METHODOLOGY**

ERO met with the sponsors, school management team, the governance facilitator, local MoE staff and school staff to determine the context and preparation of this school. The process to evaluate the readiness of this school has been tailored to the particular circumstances and progress of the individual school.

An interim written report was prepared for the Ministry of Education in December to comment on progress up to that time to supplement verbal reports.

Visits to the school in 2014 have focused on the development of the teaching and learning model and observations of the programme in action, including discussions with students. Evidence was gathered to verify that timely and appropriate steps have been taken to prepare the school to operate effectively. The matters detailed in the appendix to this report, the readiness profile, relating to school governance and management have been discussed with school management and the sponsors.

## FINDINGS

South Auckland Middle School provides education for 110 students from Years 7 to 10 in South Auckland. The school is sponsored by The Villa Education Trust. A business manager, academic advisor and principal provide leadership for the school. They have made good progress in the time available to set up and operate a new school.

South Auckland Middle School is located in central Manurewa. The school facility is leased from the Elim Christian Centre. The property is attractive and spacious and provides opportunities for students to enjoy the kind of natural environment that forms a central part of the sponsors' vision for this school. Minor modifications to the building have been made to meet operating requirements and to provide the flexible learning spaces that support the school's model of learning.

Māori and Pacific students make up most of the roll. An ongoing challenge for the school is to consider ways to be responsive to whānau and the community. The appointment of a staff member to liaise with the community demonstrates the sponsors' awareness of the importance of this matter. Ongoing meetings with parents are planned to engage families in supporting their children to achieve academic success. Encouraging teachers to make good use of the cultural capital that students bring with them is another important step.

The sponsors' vision is that the school plays a significant part in preparing students for full and effective participation in their future academic and social lives. There is a clear commitment to programmes that provide academic challenge and teachers' expectations are high. The academic programme is complemented by a substantial sports programme using external expertise and taking advantage of local facilities. Ongoing discussion of the school's philosophy among school leaders and staff will help to build a shared understanding of how these outcomes can be best achieved in this context. It would also be useful to consider how the Christian values documented in the school vision will be explicit in the school programme.

Efficient and effective processes for managing school have been established. The business manager is experienced and capable and provides effective support for implementing the vision articulated by the academic advisor. It would be helpful now to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Trust in respect to governance of the school.

The curriculum is derived from a model that the sponsor has successfully used previously in another school. It uses project-based learning and incorporates a number of tasks that are designed to provide broad coverage of the essential learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum. Students are expected to manage their time and to increasingly personalise how they engage with the topic.

The principal and teachers were appointed on the basis of their subject content knowledge and their suitability to deliver this model of learning. They have participated in an induction programme that was designed to build their knowledge and understanding of the school's expectations and curriculum. It will also be important for teachers to develop a clear understanding of how to monitor the impact of their teaching practice. Building a shared understanding of standardised assessment tools and the data they offer teachers to monitor progress reliably is an important next step for determining student progress and achievement.

Students talk positively about the size of both the school and their classes. They are enjoying the independent nature of the project learning and the challenge and opportunity for individual growth and extension. They are able to seek additional support easily, including the provision of pastoral

care. Students also report that the access to information and communication technologies (ICT) is supporting them well in their independent learning.

Appropriately qualified staff have been appointed from a good number of applicants. All classroom teachers are registered. There is one beginning teacher who is provisionally registered. Other staff, including sports coaches, have relevant qualifications and have been police vetted. School leaders are aware of the need to develop a performance management system that is sufficiently robust to enable registered teachers to maintain their registration status.

### **Priority areas to be addressed**

School leaders have worked hard to achieve a considerable amount. Areas for further development include:

- developing self review across all area of the school's operation
- continuing to improve assessment policy and procedures so that there can be reliable reporting against National Standards for students in Years7 and 8
- continuing to develop robust ways of determining baseline student achievement data
- continuing to develop a policy framework to support the work of the school.

Where there is need for further development, we are confident in the school's capacity to address these matters.

**Appendix one: Readiness Profile**
**South Auckland Middle School**

<b>Matters to address</b>		<b>comment if applicable</b>
The vision and direction for the school is developed and reflected in documentation for the school.	✓	Prospectus and website clearly articulate the vision and direction of the school. The focus on academic and personal achievement and school values is evident in all aspects of the school.
Planning and practices show responsiveness to the needs of Maori students, Pasifika students, and students with special education needs.	In process	The challenge is how to make best use of the cultural capital of Māori and Pacific students to enhance the focus on academic achievement. Ongoing networks with external agencies and experts to build the capacity to support all students especially those with special learning needs. Whānau support groups are now underway.
Processes for planning and reporting, and self-review are being developed.	✓	The school is well placed to meet most ongoing MoE reporting requirements. Formalising processes for reporting to the Trust Board and developing more ongoing self review of school operations will be a useful next step.
Processes are to ensure students settle effectively into the new school have been developed and are being implemented.	✓	Students are well settled into the new school. They are forming friendships, and responding positively to teachers' expectations, and the project-based curriculum. Parents meetings have been well attended and informative.
Systems for assessing, analysing and reporting on student achievement are being developed.	In process	Under development. Some standardised testing (PATS) has been introduced, but the school needs now to develop teacher capacity to implement, analyse and interpret student achievement information. Policy and procedures need to reflect requirement to report achievement in relation to National Standards for students in Years 7 and 8.
A set of key policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and students, and there is a programme in place to develop others that may be needed.	✓	A base of core policies has been developed that now need to be consolidated and rationalized. Ongoing review and development will help to ensure policies are more robust and comprehensive, clearly aligned with contractual undertakings and kept up to date with MoE guidelines.

There is an efficient management structure with suitable governance interface, appropriate structures and delegations.	✓	Appropriate structures and roles are in place to manage the school. The next step is to clarify the governance role and responsibilities of the Villa Trust.
School leaders are developing shared beliefs about desired teaching and learning approaches amongst school leadership and staff	✓	Teachers have developed a shared understanding of the school vision and learning model. Ongoing professional development will help build teachers' shared understanding of appropriate pedagogy for SAMS students.
A school curriculum and programmes are being developed to reflect the needs of students and sufficient planning is in place to guide learning as the school opens.	✓	Curriculum framework is in place and teachers are able to contribute to project outlines. Curriculum coverage is evident in project-based learning.
The school is staffed appropriately to provide the desired programme and staff induction is planned	✓	The school is appropriately staffed with registered teachers who bring specialist skills and experience in the expectations of secondary schools.
Performance management systems for staff are being developed	In process	Being developed – policy in place.
A disputes procedure has been developed	In process	The disputes procedure stipulated in schedule 8 of the contract needs to be aligned with the school's complaints policy and be made available to students and their families. This document is in the process of development.
Effective systems are in place to monitor student engagement, including a student management system.	✓	Know about attendance, very high rates of student attendance evident.
An enrolment scheme and enrolment procedures are in place, (noting that the school has a maximum roll as referred to in Schedule 3 of the Contract), and they must adhere to the "open for all" enrolment policy whilst targeting priority learners.	✓	Meeting targets re priority learners. There is a waiting list for students

Policies and procedures for managing school finances and a draft budget for 2014 are in place	✓	Efficient and effective systems evident. Draft budget reflects prudent provision for curriculum resources.
Staff and students have access to appropriate furniture and equipment, teaching materials, library, resources, ICT.	✓	Classrooms are well equipped. Students benefit from good access to ICT to support learning. Specialist science and art rooms are available. The planned next step is developing a school library to reflect the sponsors' desire to foster a love of reading. Good use of National Library evident.
There is a plan for the operation and maintenance of the school premises.	✓	In place. The attractive leased property provides ample access to the outdoors and flexible learning spaces.