

**Vanguard Military School**

**Albany, 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 Vanguard Military School to operate effectively as a school in 2014.

Vanguard Military 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 Vanguard Military 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

Vanguard Military School opened in January 2014 to cater for students in Years 11 and 12. This provision will extend to Year 13 students in 2015. The sponsor, governance facilitator, chief executive and professional leader have worked hard to build a model of schooling that will support students who have not previously been successful in education, to become productive, responsible citizens of New Zealand. The school is well placed to function effectively.

The school has a clearly articulated vision that is specific in its intention to provide academic excellence and positive outcomes for all students. Leaders and teachers share a clear commitment to high expectations for and of all students. Students describe a strong sense of unity and purpose across the school. Perseverance and resilience are highly valued.

The 104 students are divided in 8 sections. The favourable teacher to student ratio enables small class sizes and good opportunities for student to receive individual attention. The school has enrolled 54% Māori and Pacific students, 10% students with special learning needs, and a high proportion of students from low socio-economic circumstances. These enrolments are consistent with the targets in the school's contract with the Ministry of Education. A sound student induction process helps students, and their parents where applicable, to decide if they want to enrol and remain at this school.

Students travel to Vanguard Military School from a very wide geographical area north, south, east and west of Auckland. They state that the school's curriculum, pathway options and teachers are having a very positive impact on their attitudes to learning, and their success as learners. Students demonstrate a clear responsibility and respect for each others', and their own, learning. Very high attendance rates show that students are committed to being at school to learn.

School culture is based on a military model where students are supported to be responsible for themselves and others, and develop self discipline and self management. Military drills and attitudes are central to the approach to learning, focusing on "a healthy mind and a healthy body". Leaders understand that this model would not be viable for all students in other schools. They intend this model to meet the needs of a target set of students for whom this approach is suitable.

The school curriculum and teaching and learning practices clearly reflect the school's vision and philosophy. The curriculum is strongly focused on providing a sound foundation for learning pathways and building positive attitudes to being a successful learner. Academic, vocational and military pathways are inter-linked to enable student success in a variety of areas, including NCEA Level 1, 2, and in some cases, Level 3 qualifications in 2014. These courses will be extended to Level 3 in 2015.

The school has developed its own assessment tools to identify students' learning needs. The data from these assessments are used as baseline data to help inform learning programmes. Teachers are adapting programmes and courses in response to this information. They could also further investigate how to gain and use data from students' previous schools.

Teachers should also clearly define each subject area's responsibility to improve literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. As the curriculum continues to develop, leaders should consider ways to further prepare students as digital citizens within and beyond school.

School leaders are committed to support students to achieve meaningful credits through NCEA assessment that will be of benefit in future studies or career pathways. Part of the school's philosophy is to establish a culture of success. As a result, students have already been successful in gaining NCEA credits, laying a strong foundation for further achievement. Student achievement in NCEA is closely monitored to identify appropriate support required towards qualifications. The school keeps parents informed about their children's progress and achievement. Leaders continue to look for ways to include families in supporting their children to succeed.

The school has successfully achieved Consent to Assess from NZQA in a very short space of time. As a result the school now has a framework of policies and procedures to ensure that assessment processes are robust. While the framework is tailored specifically for this school, it is consistent with best practice in assessment policy.

The school operates out of spacious and refurbished premises in Albany. It is appropriately resourced for this stage of its development. Appropriate financial management systems have been established. These systems, through regular and detailed reporting, clearly account for expenditure of Crown funding.

The chief executive and the professional leader have worked together to appoint teachers who are likely to be able to work successfully within the school's model of learning. Most teachers are registered teachers. The three non-registered teachers have been appointed for their specific experience and expertise in their field. Appropriate systems for performance appraisal, maintaining teacher registration and police vetting are in place.

The chief executive has used his previous knowledge and experience in establishing the school's vision. He and the professional leader work well together to develop an environment where students are supported to be successful. Good work is being done to establish strong links with local business and the community to provide appropriate career pathways for students. Students commented on the way leaders and teachers model team work, and how this impacts on their approach to learning.

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

Areas for development to build on existing good progress are:

- further development of the school curriculum
- gathering appropriate, valid and robust baseline data through standardised assessment tools to inform teaching and learning
- ongoing consideration of ways to integrate ICT into the curriculum
- establishing a systematic approach to self review across all school operations and practices
- ensuring that all policies and procedures relate to applicable Ministry of Education guidelines, and that this information remains current with any changes in legislation.

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

**Appendix one: Readiness Profile**
**VANGUARD MILITARY SCHOOL**

<b>Matters to address</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Comment if applicable</b>
The vision and direction for the school is developed and reflected in documentation for the school.	✓	Very well articulated, underpins all thinking
Planning and practices show responsiveness to the needs of Maori students, Pasifika students, and students with special education needs.	✓	Inclusive practice is evident. School leaders are committed to ensuring all students are confident and supported to achieve. Leaders show commitment to promoting te reo and tikanga Māori.
Processes for planning and reporting, and self-review are being developed.	✓	Good progress is being made with self review. Leaders and teachers are building their capacity in self review. The next steps are to establish clear expectations for self review, document these, and ensure this approach is systematic across all school operations.
Processes are to ensure students settle effectively into the new school have been developed and are being implemented.	✓	Very effective induction and settling in systems and practices are evident.
Systems for assessing, analysing and reporting on student achievement are being developed.	✓	Students are already gaining NCEA credits. The chief executive closely monitors each student's assessment results to help ensure that appropriate support is provided as early as possible. The next steps are to gather appropriate, valid and robust baseline data and to use these data diagnostically to inform teaching and learning.
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.	✓	Good framework of key policies and procedures. The next steps are to ensure that all policies and procedures relate to applicable MoE guidelines and remain current with any changes in legislation. This is particularly important in relation to stand downs and search and seizure.

There is an efficient management structure with suitable governance interface, appropriate structures and delegations.	✓	The school is well organised with clear roles and responsibilities for leaders and staff.
School leaders are developing shared beliefs about desired teaching and learning approaches amongst school leadership and staff	✓	There is a shared approach to teaching and learning suitable to context of school. The next steps are to continue to develop teaching and learning in response to valid baseline assessment data, and to ensure flexibility in response to student needs and abilities.
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.	✓	Planning is suited to purpose and context. The next steps are to be explicit about the expectations of curriculum delivery.
The school is staffed appropriately to provide the desired programme and staff induction is planned	✓	The school is appropriately staffed. Ongoing professional development is focused on providing education for the students in this context.
Performance management systems for staff are being developed	✓	Performance management systems are being developed. These systems include teaching observations, registered teacher criteria in rubric form for self assessment, and peer and student assessment. All teachers' registrations are current and police vetting is up to date.
A disputes procedure has been developed	In process	The next step is to ensure that the disputes and complaints process meets the requirements stipulated in schedule 8 of the contract and includes information for parents.
Effective systems are in place to monitor student engagement, including a student management system.	✓	KAMAR is being used. Teachers are receiving appropriate professional development to develop their understanding of the system. Leaders continue to explore and adapt KAMAR's systems to suit the needs of the school.



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.	✓	School enrolment focuses on priority students.
Policies and procedures for managing school finances and a draft budget for 2014 are in place	✓	Clear financial systems and regular reporting to the advisory board are in place.
Staff and students have access to appropriate furniture and equipment, teaching materials, library, resources, ICT.	✓	The school is well resourced appropriate to its stage of development.
There is a plan for the operation and maintenance of the school premises.	✓	Good systems are in place and well managed by a property manager.