

Auckland Seventh-day Adventist High School, New Zealand

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Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek, Avondale: Experiment on the Dora, Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist the Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

The Auckland Seventh-day Adventist High School is located at 119 Mountain Road, Mangere Bridge, Auckland, New Zealand. It comes under the administration of the North New Zealand Conference.

The only Seventh-day Adventist schools in the north island of New Zealand that were being conducted in 1934 were located in Hamilton and in the newly reopened one at Gisborne.¹ Not until 1940 was one opened in suburban Auckland. Nora Pratt, in 1940, was the first to teach at the Royal Oak Elementary School in Auckland. In 1942 Elma Blair was the first teacher at Remuera Elementary School, one opened after an evangelistic crusade was held in that Auckland suburb.² In the same year Elsie Wood was teaching at the Royal Oak school.³ Both Royal Oak and Remuera schools were closed in 1949 in a move to consolidate in new premises at the nearby suburb of Balmoral in 1950.⁴

Balmoral Site

The Balmoral school was located at 10a Wiremu Street, south of the Auckland CBD, and became known as the Auckland Central School. By 1953, or earlier, it offered both elementary and high school levels. The teachers of the high school levels in 1953 were Russell Blair, Walter Bidmead, and Elva Bade. There were a total of 23 students attending.⁵ The 22 students in 1954 were taught by Russell Blair, Winston Dunlop, and Elva Bade.⁶

The Auckland Central School is first mentioned in the 1958 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Deryck Kent is listed as the headmaster. At the same time Robert and Heather Dixon were caring for the elementary grades.⁷ Those who succeeded Kent as headmaster were Winston Dunlop (1962–1963)⁸ and Irwin Harvey (1964–1969).⁹ The school was rarely mentioned in the church press, one exception being when the students collected £223 during the 1956 Harvest Gathering Campaign.¹⁰

Mangere Bridge Site

In 1970 the high school levels were transferred to new premises at 119 Mountain Road, Mangere Bridge, a more southerly suburb of Auckland. It was known as the Auckland High School. John Eager served as the initial headmaster,¹¹ followed by Brian Howell,¹² Dennis Reye,¹³ Glynn Litster,¹⁴ David Harvey,¹⁵ Alan French,¹⁶ and Gavin Williams.¹⁷

In 1995 the institution's title was changed to Auckland Adventist High School¹⁸ and again in 2003 to Auckland Seventh-day Adventist High School. At that time enrollment numbers stood at 286 students, with a teaching staff of 24.¹⁹ Serving principals in these more recent times have been Jack Ryan,²⁰ Fitu Ah Young,²¹ Dennis Brownie,²² and Sally Dalzell.²³ The current principal is Gloria Teulilo.²⁴



Auckland School, New Zealand (1953)

Photo courtesy of Milton Hook. From the collection of Elma (Blair) Coombe, Cooranbong, NSW.

Some alarm was caused by the 2014 government education department report about the high school. Inspectors identified a number of important areas that needed urgent attention, including the quality of governance, self-review, and curriculum leadership. The 2017 departmental report was more encouraging because it told of improvements that had been achieved over the three-year interval. The same report noted that the ethnic composition of the school was 90 percent Pacific Islander, predominately Tongan.²⁵

Currently the total enrolment stands at 247, spread over the high school levels 9 through 13. Even though this represents a decrease from the 2003 enrollment there, remains optimism that the coeducational institution promises to provide high-grade Christian education into the future.²⁶

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NOTES

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3. “Church Schools in North New Zealand,” *Australasian Record*, April 13, 1942, 4.?
4. “Balmoral Seventh-day Adventist School,” SDA Balmoral, 2018, accessed July 19, 2019, <https://www.balmoralsda.school.nz/our-history>.?
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7. “Auckland Central School,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 206.?
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