

**Sacred Heart Cathedral School
Wellington**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

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Sacred Heart Cathedral School

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. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

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

Sacred Heart Cathedral School is Catholic and state integrated. Year 1 to 8 students attend the school from across Wellington. They learn in newly modernised classrooms, close to inner city Wellington, alongside the Sacred Heart Cathedral. This multicultural school is increasingly diverse, with 5% Māori, 19% Pacific and 31% Asian.

The school's special character and vision are embedded within the curriculum through the values and virtues programmes.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

Teachers collect a useful range of student achievement data in reading, writing and mathematics. This is used to determine students' learning needs and identify those at risk of not achieving in relation to National Standards. Clear guiding documents and assessment moderation processes for making overall teacher judgements help support credibility of achievement data.

The board sets targets to improve the number of students achieving at or above in relation to National Standards. The percentage of students achieving well in reading and mathematics is approaching the Ministry of Education's goal of 85%. Māori learners are achieving well. Raising achievement in writing remains a priority for the school, as does the achievement of Pacific students.

A range of initiatives and strategies is in place to support targeted groups of students. As a result, some students progressed at a faster yearly rate than expected over the course of 2014 and 2015. The board receives a summary report at the end of each year about the numbers of students who accelerated their progress. A next step is to consider evaluating more fully what has been successful for accelerating the progress of these students and transferring this practice schoolwide.

Individual achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is well tracked from year to year. This should assist school leaders to create annual benchmarks for students whose achievement needs accelerating over their time at school.

Comprehensive planning for students with high and special educational needs is complemented by careful monitoring of their progress over time.

3 Curriculum

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

A well-established culture of care and support is linked to the school's special character and virtues programme. Students learn in cooperative and settled classrooms where their wellbeing and sense of belonging are prioritised.

A review of mathematics and English programmes has led to shared expectations and clear guidelines for teaching. This review has been a vehicle for collaborative learning and understanding of students' achievement from Years 1 to 8. The development has used external expertise with strong links to research-based evidence for effective practice.

A considered approach has been taken to developing a school-based model of inquiry learning. This initiative promotes more student-led learning and encourages staff to innovate, take risks and explore new ways of teaching. Teachers are developing their skills to integrate digital technology into learning programmes. There is an increasing awareness of the need to support students' skill development for successful inquiry.

Pacific and Filipino students have opportunities to show leadership and share aspects of their languages and cultures within the curriculum. Considering ways to have the curriculum more reflective of the diverse range of language and cultural experiences that students bring to their learning, is an important next step.

Transition into school and on to further education is a well-considered and thorough process.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

A positive school culture, focused on care, support and relationship promotes student and whānau engagement. Whānau aspirations, shared in consultation forums, are responded to in the board's strategic intentions.

A recently reviewed school action plan and a priority learner document clearly outlines intended schoolwide and classroom activities to support Māori learners' success. There is an expectation that teachers will adapt programmes to include:

- aspects of Māori culture
- authentic and relevant contexts for learning
- opportunities for collaborative learning and tuakana teina approaches
- the use of te reo Māori and resources to affirm language, identity and culture.

Māori learners experience a curriculum which sometimes features these aspects of practice.

Some internal professional development is supporting schoolwide use of te reo Māori in liturgy, and providing opportunities for Māori students to show leadership.

The next step is to evaluate and identify the extent to which good practice within the school is building teacher capability in a purposeful and systematic way.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

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

The board is increasingly representative of the school community. Trustees bring a range of skills and expertise to their roles, accessing regular training and using external providers as appropriate. They have a clear focus on growing staff capability through resourcing professional development. They are purposefully increasing their visibility in the school community and strengthening partnerships with their Māori and Pacific communities.

Leaders model and communicate clear and consistent expectations that support teaching and learning. They promote collaboration and partnership to enhance learning opportunities, student achievement and wellbeing. There is a focus on increasing teachers' leadership skills.

Staff are developing their ability to inquire into the effectiveness of their teaching practice for students. In 2014, teachers began a schoolwide inquiry into spelling programmes. They met regularly to discuss strategies, challenge ideas and beliefs, learn together and examine student achievement data for positive shifts. Teachers benefit from collaborative inquiry and knowledge-building activities. This provides a good platform for individual inquiries.

A next step for school leaders is to consider systems and structures to scaffold and monitor teachers' reflective practice. The process should be improved by closer alignment to schoolwide targets. More robust appraisal practices that include constructive feedback about teaching practice should further support raising teacher capability.

The school has developed a useful process for systematic self review. This usually involves collecting a range of evidence from different sources and results in recommendations for development. The next step is to use an evaluative framework that asks questions leading to the investigation of effectiveness and a clearer focus on student outcomes rather than actions taken.

The board and principal actively seek the perspectives and aspirations of parents, families and whānau and students. They use this feedback to help set strategic direction and to decide goals and priorities. Trustees provide information to the community about consultation outcomes and how the board is responding to the ideas shared.

Parents receive a good range of information about school events, student achievement and progress. They are actively involved in special character events and curriculum programmes. The school uses helpful strategies to support parents to help their children's learning at home.

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
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

Conclusion

Students achieve well, within a special character culture of care and support. Student achievement is well tracked and monitored. The board has a clear focus on building staff capability to respond to learners at risk of not achieving well and strengthening learning partnerships with their increasingly diverse community.

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.



Joyce Gebbie
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

2 February 2016

About the School

Location	Wellington	
Ministry of Education profile number	2985	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	228	
Gender composition	Female 51%, Male 49%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	5%
	Pākehā	43%
	Pacific	19%
	Asian	31%
	Other ethnic groups	2%
Review team on site	November 2015	
Date of this report	2 February 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	October 2012
	Education Review	August 2009
	Education Review	June 2006