

St Albans Catholic School (Christchurch)
Christchurch

Education Review Office

External Evaluation

ERO External Evaluation

St Albans Catholic School (Christchurch)

1 Context

St Albans Catholic School has retained stable school leadership, board membership and teaching staff since the 2012 ERO review. A new board chairperson has recently been elected.

The school has strong links with parents, the recently combined parish and other local schools. Students and families come from an increasing range of cultural backgrounds. Students learn in small, mixed-aged classes.

The principal and teachers have undertaken significant professional development. This has often occurred in conjunction with other local schools.

The school has a positive ERO reporting history.

2 Equity and excellence

The vision and valued outcomes defined by the school for all children are students excelling, living their faith and celebrating learning and life.

The school's valued outcomes include learner qualities of respectful learners, effective communicators, creative thinkers, high achievers, and team players.

The school promotes student virtues of compassion, humility, social justice, service and forgiveness.

The school's 2015 achievement information shows that Māori students achieve at similar levels to their peers in reading, writing and maths.

Student achievement against National Standards is consistent with government targets with over 85% of students achieving at and above National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is highest in reading. Students are enjoying success in a variety of other areas of the curriculum, including cultural and environmental activities.

Since the last ERO evaluation the school has focused on improving learning outcomes for children through targeting professional development and support on written language, e-learning, religious education including Māori spirituality, mathematics, and cultural responsiveness. It has also improved reporting to parents.

3 Accelerating achievement

How effectively does this school respond to children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

The board, principal and teachers are very responsive to children whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

The principal and teachers know individual students and their families very well and actively respond to their interests, strengths and needs.

They use effective systems to identify and track the achievement and progress of individual students.

The principal and teachers use this information to provide suitable support and plan a range of additional appropriate learning opportunities.

Particular features of this support include the:

- strong sense of partnership they develop with parents that fosters ongoing collaborative decision making and shared approaches to supporting children's learning
- holistic and inclusive approaches to promoting success for all students including those with high and very high needs
- growing use of a range of assessments to help identify strengths and needs and focus teaching
- effective use of outside agencies and advice.

There is increasing evidence of students making accelerated progress in aspects of their learning.

The next steps to further help accelerate student achievement include:

- making targets for raising student achievement more specific, improving some aspects of associated plans, and making sure there are regular reports to the board around progress towards these targets
- extending reporting to the board to include more information about the impact of such interventions as learning support.

4 School conditions

How effectively do the school's curriculum and other organisational processes and practices develop and enact the school's vision, values, goals and priorities for equity and excellence?

The curriculum and other organisational processes successfully support and enact the school's vision and values.

Students learn in an environment which clearly promotes their sense of belonging and wellbeing and helps them to focus consistently on their learning. A strong sense of community exists within the school.

The curriculum successfully reflects the emphasis the school places on learner qualities and virtues. Students are provided with a suitable range of learning opportunities. This includes a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy, religious education and education outside the classroom.

Teachers continue to extend the range of strategies they use to respond to students' strengths, interests and needs, including the increasing use of digital technologies. They place appropriate emphasis on effectively engaging students and making learning enjoyable.

There is an increasing commitment to ensuring Māori perspectives are an integrated part of the school's curriculum and celebrations, and supporting Māori students to experience success. Teachers are increasing their awareness of Māori concepts and values that support effective teaching. The board is undertaking a useful in-depth review to support culturally responsive practices across the school.

The principal's strong, collaborative leadership promotes teamwork, the effective use of staff strengths and a positive school culture.

Staff capacity continues to increase through a range of suitable ongoing professional development and regular interactions with other educators. This reflects the principal's commitment to, and awareness of, the need for the school to keep up to date with the best of modern teaching practices.

The board performs its governance role well. It demonstrates a strong commitment to the school's special character, fostering positive relationships within the school community and being responsive to students' learning needs.

The board, principal and teachers have a well-established ongoing programme of internal evaluation that provides them with some useful information to inform their decisions.

Next Steps

ERO, the principal and board agree that:

- students would benefit from a greater focus on promoting their independence, being clearer about their next learning steps and having more opportunities to influence decisions
- the school should further consider how best to respond to the growing cultural diversity of students and the school's community.
- improvements and refinements to the quality of strategic planning and internal evaluation would help to further promote ongoing school improvement.

5 Going forward

How well placed is the school to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children?

Leaders and teachers:

- know the children who need their learning and achievement need to be accelerated
- respond effectively to the strengths, needs and interests of each child
- regularly evaluate how well teaching is working for these children
- act on what they know works well for each child
- build teacher capability effectively to achieve equitable outcomes for all children
- are well placed to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children.

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

6 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 the following:

- Board administration.
- Curriculum.
- Management of health, safety and welfare.
- Personnel management.
- Asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student safety and wellbeing:

- Emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment).
- Physical safety of students.
- Teacher registration.
- Processes for appointing staff.
- Stand down, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions.
- Attendance.
- Compliance with the provisions of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.



Chris Rowe
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern (Acting)

26 April 2016

About the school

Location	Christchurch	
Ministry of Education profile number	3517	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	95	
Gender composition	Boys 48; Girls 47	
Ethnic composition	Māori	8
	Pākehā	64
	British/Irish	6
	Filipino	6
	Other European	5
	Other Ethnicities	5
Review team on site	March 2016	
Date of this report	26 April 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	December 2012
	Education Review	September 2008
	Education Review	October 2005