

ERO External Evaluation

St Mary's School (Christchurch), Christchurch

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for students. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

School Context

St Mary's School, located in central Christchurch, is a Catholic state integrated school for children in Years 1 to 8. The current roll is 110 children.

The school states that its vision is: 'Strive to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, walk in his footsteps and be his voice in the community.' The vision is supported by a set of values collectively known as the 'STAR' values: Service, Teamwork, Acceptance and Respect. The following dispositions for learners are valued within the school community: effective communicators, self-managers, creative thinkers, respectful.

The 2019 targets are:

- for all students from Year 1-8 to be able to list and recall more than 5 stories from the Gospel
- to raise the achievement of year five and seven cohorts so that they align more closely with the national norms in PAT mathematics
- to lift the achievement of our Māori and Pasifika students by at least one stanine by the end of the year
- to lift achievement for Filipino, Māori, and Pasifika students by at least one stanine by the end of the year in PAT reading tests.

Staffing has remained consistent since the last review. The school community is ethnically diverse; leaders and teachers welcome children from a range of cultures including Filipino, Māori and Pacific heritage. A significant number of children (approximately 48%) are English language learners (ELL).

The complete rebuild of the school was finalised in 2016. Learning and teaching takes place in a modern learning environment (MLE) which comprises two main learning areas, one for new entrants to Year 3 and the other area for Years 4-8.

Since the last review, teachers and leaders have participated in professional learning for mathematics (Ministry of Education funded ALiM project), science (as part of the Te Mara Akoranga Katorika Kāhui Ako) and brain development (private provider).

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- religious education
- science
- reading, writing and mathematics.

The school is an active participant in the Te Mara Akoranga Katorika Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning (CoL).

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

The school is working steadily towards achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students.

The school's achievement information for 2016 and 2017 shows that:

- most students achieved at or above expectations in reading and mathematics
- most students achieved at or above expectations in writing (2016) and the majority achieved at or above expectations for writing in 2017
- there was a disparity in achievement for Māori and Pacific heritage children in reading, writing and mathematics for 2016
- the school reduced disparity in reading and mathematics achievement for Māori and Pacific heritage children in 2017
- disparity in writing achievement for boys was evident in 2017
- most students achieved at or above expectations in science.

1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

The school is effective in accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this.

The 2018 analysis of variance shows that:

- 8 of 11 targeted students accelerated their learning to reach curriculum expectations in mathematics
- 7 of 13 targeted students accelerated their learning to reach curriculum expectations for writing.

The ALiM project (2017), resulted in accelerated learning for all 12 students who were targeted for support in mathematics.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

The Catholic faith and STAR values provide a strong focal point and strength for this school as a learning community. Respectful and trusting relationships exist at all levels of the school and promote a positive teaching and learning environment. Learning partnerships with parents are a particular feature of this school. Parents are engaged in their children's learning in respectful and culturally responsive ways. Technology is used to support purposeful and timely communication about children's learning and wellbeing. Beyond the school, effective learning partnerships and connections within the Kāhui Ako provide opportunities for leaders and teachers to share ideas about practice and participate in professional learning.

The board and leaders are improvement focused. They make resourcing decisions that are strategic and designed to support equitable learning outcomes for students. They are positive and proactive in responding to the culturally diverse needs of students in the school. The board is well informed about school priorities, and involved in building a sense of community and connections for leaders, teachers, children and their families.

Teachers are empowered to find innovative ways to meet the social, cultural and academic needs of their students. Student wellbeing is at the centre of discussion and decision making. Visible classroom collaborations between teachers provide observable and positive learning models for students. Self-directed learning, mirrors the collaborative practices demonstrated by teachers and provides opportunities for students to learn from each other, to self-manage and to express opinions about their learning. In the junior area of the school, a play-based approach to learning is supporting students' language development and confidence. Tracking and monitoring systems capture information about the progress of students not yet achieving learning expectations, and record the impact of teacher responses to individual student need. Teachers are beginning to inquire into the effectiveness of their practice.

2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Recent changes in relation to the school's demographics, the shift to a modern learning environment and development of new teaching practices mean that it is timely to consider:

- how well current assessment practices are meeting the needs of students and teachers
- how well data is collated and analysed to identify student progress and the impact of programmes for all students and for groups of students, including Maori and Pacific learners
- providing professional learning about internal evaluation and the effective use of an evaluative framework
- how analysed information is used as part of an evaluation process to identify what programmes and practices are most effective in supporting learning and accelerating progress.

3 Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board 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
- finance
- 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 and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

4 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of St Mary's School performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Well placed.

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

5 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- effective partnerships for learning at all levels of the school and extending to the parent community
- improvement-focused governance and leadership
- willingness to innovate in order to respond to the social, cultural, language and academic needs of students.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are in:

- assessment for learning practices
- data management to identify progress for all students and target groups
- internal evaluation to identify which programmes and practices are most effective in supporting students.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Wynyard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alan Wynyard
Director Review and Improvement Services Southern
Southern Region
2 May 2019

About the school

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| Location | Christchurch |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 3535 |
| School type | Catholic state integrated (Years 1 to 8) |
| School roll | 110 |
| Gender composition | Girls: 54% Boys: 46% |
| Ethnic composition | Māori: 7% NZ European/Pākehā 31% Pacific 12% Other ethnicity 50% |
| Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS) | No |
| Provision of Māori medium education | No |
| Review team on site | February 2019 |
| Date of this report | 2 May 2019 |
| Most recent ERO reports | Education Review: November 2015 Education Review: September 2012 |