



ERO External Evaluation

Sacred Heart School, Dunedin

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

Sacred Heart School (Dunedin) is a small contributing (Years 1 to 6) Catholic school, located in north Dunedin. The current roll is 37 students.

The school states that its vision is to provide a respectful environment that acknowledges the uniqueness of each child while assisting them to develop their potential spiritually, academically, physically, culturally and socially. Its key values are centered on truth, respect, humanity and justice.

The current strategic goals include developing the special character, growing students' performance in literacy and numeracy, and working to achieve the aims developed through the Dunedin Catholic Schools Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning.

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

- the achievement of students in reading, writing and mathematics
- progress in religious education and other aspects of the school's special character.

The school is governed by a well-established board and led by a long-serving principal and staff. The school has close links with the church and its community.

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?

Reported learning information shows that the majority of students achieve at or above the school's expected achievement levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

More girls than boys achieve at the school's expected levels in reading and writing.

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

The school is effective in accelerating progress for students who need this.

The school can show that in 2017 and 2018 most identified students made accelerated progress in reading, writing and 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 school's curriculum is responsive to students' interests and prior understandings. It draws on parent and community knowledge, underpinned by the school's special character. Teachers engage community experts and resources to enhance the curriculum in response to students' interests.

Individual learning plans show teachers know the students and their learning aspirations well. Well-resourced support is in place for a range of additional learning needs, including the use of differentiated instruction and targeted actions for several groups of learners.

Transitions through the school are well supported at all stages. Leaders ensure that students learn in an orderly and supportive environment. Students at all levels have opportunities to learn leadership, service and advocacy skills.

Community and family collaborations with the school enrich opportunities for students' learning and wellbeing. Parents are welcomed, involved, respected and valued. There are strong links with the local schools, church and community that contribute to reciprocal, learning centered relationships.

The board and principal use a range of communication processes to inform the school community and to support learning at home. Pastoral care is extended within the school and beyond for the wellbeing of all members of the learning community.

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

Leaders need to further build organisational conditions for increased equity and excellence for all students. This includes:

- developing a coherent framework for internal evaluation, including policy and curriculum review, to identify what is working well and where improvements are needed for students' learning
- incorporating Māori perspectives across the curriculum to enable all students to know about New Zealand's bicultural heritage and for Māori students to know their language, culture and identity are valued
- further developing guidelines for planning, teaching and assessment so that good practices are sustained for the future
- using assessment information to show the impact of interventions and to report on accelerated progress.

Leaders and teachers need to establish reliable and on-going ways of knowing about student learning, and strategic direction. Formalising the processes for gathering and using parent perspectives should help ensure their views are included when deciding the school's strategic direction.

Assessment for learning strategies to strengthen students' understanding of themselves as learners could be further developed.

3 Other Matters

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to *the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

At the time of this review there were two international students attending the school.

International students and their families receive personalised support from the school for learning and pastoral care. They are connected to community resources and are welcomed as members of the school community. Students are provided with appropriate levels of learning support to foster their language skills.

4 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 Children's Act 2014.

5 ERO's Overall Judgement

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

Well placed

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

6 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- a sense of community and care that ensures children learn in a responsive and supportive environment within its special character
- its individual approach to student learning and growth that provides each child with the level of support and development that they require.

Next steps

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

- further developing systems and practices across the school so that students experience a more coherent curriculum, and to ensure the school sustains and improves its performance
- systematically gathering and using a range of data and perspectives as part of internal evaluation to better identify what is working well for students and what needs improvement.

Areas for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- update and regularly review all school policies.



Dr Lesley Patterson
Director Review and Improvement Services Southern
Southern Region
11 October 2019

About the school

Location	Dunedin
Ministry of Education profile number	3815
School type	Contributing (Years 1-6) state integrated primary
School roll	37
Gender composition	Boys 20, Girls 17
Ethnic composition	Māori: 4 NZ European/Pākehā: 20 Other ethnicities: 13
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	No
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	July 2019
Date of this report	11 October 2019
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review: May 2016 Education Review: February 2013