

## ERO External Evaluation

### St Mary's School (Wanganui), Whanganui

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 is an integrated Catholic school in Whanganui that caters for students from Years 1 to 8. The roll of 259 students includes 25% Māori and 5% of Pacific heritage.

The mission encompasses Catholic beliefs and practice. The school seeks to nurture each child so they grow and develop, spirituality, intellectually and physically, into caring and responsible members of the school community.

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

- achievement and progress in reading, writing, and mathematics in relation to curriculum expectation
- attendance.

There have been changes to personnel and trustees, including the appointment of a new principal in 2016. Significant roll growth has occurred since the August 2014, ERO report.

#### 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 responds well in achieving equity and excellence for many students.

At the end of 2017, most students achieved curriculum expectations in reading with the majority achieving well in writing and mathematics. Māori children achieved slightly lower than Pākehā students in reading and writing with similar results in mathematics. Since 2015, achievement outcomes have been similar in reading and lower in writing and mathematics. The school enrolls a small number of Pacific students and their achievement is suitably tracked and monitored. To date, boys have achieved slightly higher than girls in mathematics and lower in writing.

Midyear 2018 data, shows the school is on track to achieve similar overall achievement in reading and slightly elevated outcomes in writing and mathematics when compared to 2017.

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

Leaders are further developing processes and practice to strengthen the response to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

Approximately half of those Māori students who were below expected levels at the end of 2017 have made expected progress with some accelerating their achievement.

## **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?**

Senior and curriculum leaders provide clear direction focused on sustaining the school's valued outcomes and promoting ongoing improvement of systems and practice. There is clear alignment of resourcing to support improvement goals and meet the needs of students.

Students identified with additional and complex needs receive appropriate intervention to strengthen their outcomes. Assessment information is suitably used to identify learner needs. A designated special needs co-ordinator works in partnership with the principal to monitor, track and advocate for learners in addressing the barriers to their learning, engagement and achievement. The involvement of students in additional programmes of learning shows these impact positively on their achievement. Parents are well informed and promote learning at home.

The curriculum appropriately fosters the values and vision reflective of the school's Catholic character. The learning environment is well managed to support student participation in a wide range of experiences. Practices suitably value and include te ao Māori across the curriculum.

Inclusive environments support positive student involvement at school and in class. Individuals are encouraged to work collaboratively and support their peers. Senior student leadership is fostered, effectively contributing to the development of school culture. Restorative practices are underpinned with the values of inclusion, courtesy, integrity and courage. Positive and affirming relationships between staff, students, their peers and the wider community fosters an open and welcoming environment.

Trustees set clear strategic and annual goals linked to relevant priorities. They work well with staff and the wider community to review and affirm their direction. An effective working relationship between the board and school leaders supports a shared focus on promoting positive outcomes for learners, parents and the school community. Well-considered processes support the continuity of governance through deliberate succession planning. The board is kept well informed through detailed principal reporting ensuring their resourcing is targeted to meet the needs of students.

Leaders undertake a systematic, structured approach to curriculum evaluation. Professional learning and development is matched to the needs of teachers with clear alignment to curriculum enhancement and promoting positive outcomes for students.

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

School leaders have identified further development of the school's curriculum is needed, including the ongoing focus on strengthening student outcomes and teacher practice in delivery of mathematics. The development of a shared teaching philosophy to promote consistency of practice across the school is an agreed next step. ERO's external evaluation affirms these priorities.

The newly revised teacher inquiry and appraisal framework requires further development to ensure the process continues to develop and embed with substantial teacher reflection on practice. This should contribute to strengthening the consistency of teaching and improve evaluation practice.

Trustees and leaders should revise current target setting at board level to more clearly identify those students requiring their achievement accelerated. This should provide better alignment to syndicate targets and the actions being undertaken by teachers. Coherent targeting should also maximise the effect of current school processes and ensure that deeper analysis provides the basis to understand the impact of actions that accelerate or limit student achievement.

## **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.

### **Areas for improved compliance practice**

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- undertake regular review and development of policies and procedures
- review and revise practices associated with, and documentation of, in-committee business.

## 4 Going forward

### Key strengths of the school

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

- collaborative stewardship and leadership that facilitates ongoing improvements to systems, processes and practice for improved student outcomes
- the enacted curriculum provision that promotes student access to a wide range of experiences and promoting engagement in learning
- responses that are effective in meeting the needs of learners identified with complex and additional learning needs
- inclusive environments that foster the positive involvement of students at school.

### Next steps

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

- further development of a shared teaching and learning philosophy to inform classroom practice
- revising current target setting to more closely identify those students requiring their achievement accelerated
- continuing to implement appraisal and inquiry frameworks with the development of substantial teacher reflection to monitor and build teaching practice.

### ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

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



Alan Wynyard  
Director Review and Improvement Services  
Te Tai Pokapū - Central Region

20 November 2018

## About the school

Location	Whanganui										
Ministry of Education profile number	2454										
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)										
School roll	259										
Gender composition	Female 51%, Male 49%										
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td><td>25%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pākehā</td><td>63%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td><td>5%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td><td>4%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other</td><td>3%</td></tr> </table>	Māori	25%	Pākehā	63%	Pacific	5%	Asian	4%	Other	3%
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Pākehā	63%										
Pacific	5%										
Asian	4%										
Other	3%										
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	No										
Provision of Māori medium education	No										
Review team on site	September 2018										
Date of this report	20 November 2018										
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table> <tr> <td>Education Review</td><td>August 2014</td></tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td><td>August 2011</td></tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td><td>September 2008</td></tr> </table>	Education Review	August 2014	Education Review	August 2011	Education Review	September 2008				
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