



ERO External Evaluation

St Joseph's School (Otahuhu), Auckland

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 Joseph's School (Otahuhu) caters for girls in Years 1 to 8 and for boys in Years 1 to 6. The school has strong intergenerational connections and significant links with local parishes and the Otahuhu community. Many trustees and staff members have long associations with the school and most children complete all of their primary education at St Joseph's. The school values its history, heritage, and reputation in the area.

The school is culturally diverse. Many children and families in the multicultural community speak more than one language.

The whakataukī, "Kotahi whānau, Kotahi Ao, One Family – One World", and the school motto "learn to love, love to learn", align with the school's Catholic Mercy values of respect, compassion and service.

The school's charter and strategic plan identifies goals to promote children's learning and the school's vision for learners. Detailed actions to reach achievement targets are also included.

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

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- achievement in relation to school targets
- additional learning support
- learning opportunities within the broader curriculum
- attendance information
- the school's special character programmes.

Since the 2015 ERO evaluation, the school has:

- appointed a new assistant principal
- extended the provision of digital devices and e-learning opportunities for children and teachers
- strengthened the school's bicultural commitment and learning programmes
- enhanced its recognition of Māori and Pacific languages, and cultural identities throughout the school.

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?

St Joseph's School (Otahuhu) is achieving equitable and excellent outcomes very effectively for children.

The school has effective strategic planning and well researched acceleration initiatives that are effectively reducing identified disparities. Leaders and teachers have successfully increased parity for boys in literacy achievement.

Children achieve very well in relation to other valued outcomes. They:

- experience and demonstrate relationships built on respect, compassion and service
- collaborate with, learn from and support the learning and wellbeing of others
- demonstrate and live the St Joseph's values enthusiastically in everyday school life.

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

The school responds very well to all children whose learning and achievement need accelerating. Māori children are achieving very well in literacy and numeracy.

Over the past three years the school has successfully accelerated the progress of many children. Achievement information over the last four years indicates that most children achieve at expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. School data for children who are achieving below expectation in literacy and mathematics show positive shifts in achievement for most children, and accelerated progress for many. The following key features of the school have supported this progress:

- the richness and diversity of the school community are highly valued and children's languages and cultural identities are recognised and celebrated
- well embedded school-wide programmes that place an emphasis on developing children's vocabulary, oral language and mathematical problem solving skills.

The early identification of children who are at risk of not achieving in literacy and mathematics is a key strength of the school. Leaders and teachers have detailed knowledge of children's learning strengths and needs and place a high priority on responding to children who need to make accelerated progress.

Numerous learning initiatives within classes and additional learning support programmes are in place to accelerate the progress of children not yet at expected levels in literacy and numeracy.

Robust processes are in place to monitor learner progress. Leaders and teachers collate and analyse a range of achievement information to track and monitor children's progress and to inform teaching programmes. Leaders maintain a rigorous 'line of sight' across the progress and achievement of all learners.

Leaders, teachers and teacher aides respond effectively to children with additional learning needs within an inclusive environment. Children are supported well to experience success. Inclusive classroom programmes and the provision of additional specialist teaching programmes contribute positively to children's learning and wellbeing.

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?

School leadership is highly effective. Leaders collaboratively promote, model and celebrate the school's vision, values and priorities for equity and excellence.

Leaders have high expectations. They promote a caring supportive learning environment that is conducive to children's success as learners and are focused on what is best for children. Leaders ensure there is effective planning and assessment of the curriculum and teaching. They build high levels of relational trust with staff, parents, whānau and the community.

The principal is an effective leader of teaching and learning. Professional learning and development programmes and curriculum refinements are well considered and evidence based. Recent and significant professional learning programmes in oral language and writing have impacted positively on teachers' practice and children's learning.

The school's curriculum provides children with relevant and authentic learning experiences. The school values are well integrated in learning programmes. Curriculum leaders actively source positive role models to further develop children's self-belief, confidence and wellbeing.

Children are highly engaged with their learning. They participate successfully in music and co-curricular learning activities. Children establish and maintain respectful collaborative learning relationships with teachers and their peers. Leaders are now planning to further develop learning capabilities so children can set goals, reflect on their thinking and learning processes and monitor their own progress.

The board of trustees and leaders use purposeful internal evaluation for decision making. They are committed to resourcing the school well to enhance children's learning outcomes. Junior classes benefit from extra staffing to support reading, writing and mathematics programmes. Additional teaching hours are also supporting the implementation of acceleration strategies to help improve achievement.

Parent partnerships are actively promoted. The belief that "It takes a village to raise a child" promotes school practices that welcome and involve parents as respected and valued learning centred partners. Parents greatly value the Reading Together programme, curriculum evenings and celebrating their children's learning success. Learning resources to enable parents to support learning at home are shared through the school's website.

Thoughtful, caring and inclusive transition practices are a feature of St Joseph's School. Transitions from early learning centres, through the school and on to secondary schools are based on individual need.

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

School leaders see value in further supporting teachers' leadership development. They could now formalise systems that build on teachers' professional development programmes, research and inquiry work.

The development of a graduate profile that measures and records the school's valued outcomes is a useful next consideration. School leaders could use this profile to track and evaluate the impact of initiatives and how well the school is achieving its valued outcomes.

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 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- leadership that collaboratively enacts the school's vision and values for equity and excellence
- well established and effective community networks and partnerships that foster success for learners
- nurturing, collaborative and engaging learning environments that foster self-efficacy and service
- purposeful curriculum design and enactment to ensure children learn and succeed.

Next steps

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

- build teachers' leadership capacity to further enhance learning outcomes for children
- extend the school's focus on children talking about their learning and 'student agency'.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

ERO is likely to carry out the next external evaluation in four-to-five years.



Violet Tu'uga Stevenson
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Te Tai Raki - Northern Region

4 October 2018

About the school

Location	Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	1496
School type	State Integrated Full Primary Years 1 - 8
School roll	294
Gender composition	Girls 59% Boys 41%
Ethnic composition	Māori 3% Pākehā 4% Samoan 50% Tongan 32% other Pacific 4% other Ethnic Groups 7%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	No
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	August 2018
Date of this report	4 October 2018
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review July 2015 Education Review February 2011 Education Review October 2007