

St Michael's Catholic School (Rotorua)
Rotorua

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

St Michael's Catholic School (Rotorua)

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

St Michael's Catholic School (Rotorua) is an integrated Catholic school in the Western Heights suburb of Rotorua. It has a roll of 157 students with 71 identifying as Māori. Since the last ERO report in 2012, a new principal and board chairperson have been appointed and there have been several changes to board membership. Staffing remains stable with only one new appointment in the last three years. Staff know students very well.

The school motto is 'Striving for Excellence' and Catholic values underpin all aspects of learning and school organisation. The school has a positive culture that reflects its values of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self control. Staff have focussed on developing and promoting the school's shared vision for learning and the local response to delivering *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC). Positive progress has been made in addressing most of the aspects identified for development in the 2012 report.

Parents and community members continue to participate actively in the life of the school. They appreciate the welcoming approach of the principal, board and staff. Smooth transitions from early childhood centres support students starting school and effective communication with middle schools help prepare students for the next phase of their learning.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

The school uses achievement information effectively to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement. Information from 2013 and 2014 shows that students achieve well with a significant majority achieving at or above National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Information also shows that Māori students achieve at comparable levels to other students.

The senior leadership team uses achievement information to make decisions about identifying target students and intervention initiatives to accelerate student progress. The board of trustees uses

achievement data to make decisions about resourcing and professional development for staff. A recent example of this is the professional development teachers are receiving to enhance the teaching of mathematics. Achievement data is well used by teachers to provide differentiated teaching programmes to meet the individual learning needs of each student, and provide extension or support when required.

Students with special learning needs are well catered for through an extensive range of support programmes designed to build confidence, skills and knowledge in all subject areas.

Parents are well informed about their child's achievement in relation to National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics through written reports, interviews with teachers, and regular and ongoing informal contact.

The school has identified, and is working on, ways to further enhance the use of student achievement information by:

- developing a more robust moderating process to support teachers to make reliable judgements in relation to National Standards
- developing processes to more closely track, monitor and document progress and achievement for target students and those with high needs.

3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

The school curriculum effectively promotes and supports student learning. It is closely aligned to *The New Zealand Curriculum* and is personalised to the local context and character of the school. A feature of the school is the connected curriculum focus on Christian values and Māori cultural beliefs integrated with other subject areas.

A curriculum leader and team made up of teachers from various levels of the school meet regularly to provide guidance and ongoing support for curriculum delivery. This team also has the role of reviewing the curriculum regularly with a focus on continual improvement in teaching and learning programmes. Learning as inquiry strategies give students an opportunity to follow their interests and manage their learning. A wide variety of elective studies chosen by the students allows them to take part in, and have success in, many sporting, cultural, artistic, musical and scientific events.

Teachers demonstrate highly effective practices across the school. They work collaboratively as a team to plan and share teaching practice which provides best outcomes for students. Teachers have high expectations for learning and behaviour, show regard for students as individuals, and take collective responsibility for all students. Positive relationships are developed with students and families resulting in teachers knowing students very well and being able to provide teaching that meets their individual needs. Teachers know the learning progressions well and use these to encourage students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

The school effectively promotes educational success for Māori as Māori. Māori cultural beliefs and values are explored and integrated through Catholic aspects of the curriculum, enviroschool activities and the school environment. All students learn their pepeha and whakapapa, and participate in daily karakia and waiata. Students visit the local marae and experience protocols and aspects of tikanga Māori. They also have the opportunity to participate in kapahaka and learn from

an experienced and highly valued tutor. Parents spoken to by ERO commented about the value of the tuakana-teina concept as a feature of the school culture. The school has a strong relationship with the local iwi, Ngāti Whakaue, who actively support and fund initiatives that promote learning for all students. Iwi representatives are regularly welcomed into the school to observe students and discuss progress and achievements.

ERO and school leaders agree that the next steps for development are to:

- consider the guidance provided in '*Ka Hikitia- Accelerating Progress*' and identify for themselves any possible areas for further development
- consolidate te reo Māori and tikanga learning programmes across the school to extend students confidence and capacity as they move through the school.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance because:

- the board is committed to supporting the principal and staff and is working in the best interests of students
- the board seeks external advice when required and consults with the community to inform decision making
- the principal demonstrates strong professional leadership and vision for school development and has a collaborative approach to leading and managing the school
- the senior leadership team is knowledgeable and experienced and provides support for the principal and staff
- teachers work and plan together with professional collegiality and work actively to enhance their teaching practice
- the inclusive and welcoming school culture supports and cares for students and their families.

The next step for the board is to develop a more robust cycle of ongoing review to enable it to monitor progress towards target goals in the strategic plan. Such a cycle of review should help to ensure that the strategic plan is implemented and evaluated.

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:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial management
- asset management.

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

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

To improve current practice the board should ensure that the principal's appraisal process is implemented, completed and documented:

- be a good employer as defined in the State Sector Act 1988 and comply with the conditions contained in employment contracts applying to teaching and non teaching staff.
National Administration Guideline 3(b)

Conclusion

The school continues to deliver positive and motivating learning opportunities for all students. Governance is effective and the principal provides strong professional leadership for staff, parents and students. Teachers deliver high-quality learning programmes across the school in an inclusive and positive school culture. Students achieve well at the school.

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



Dale Bailey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

30 March 2015

About the School

Location	Rotorua	
Ministry of Education profile number	1960	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	157	
Gender composition	Boys 53% Girls 47%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā Māori Asian Pacific Indian Other European	55% 35% 3% 3% 2% 2%
Review team on site	February 2015	
Date of this report	30 March 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Education Review	May 2012 July 2009 August 2006