

EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, TIMARU**OCTOBER 2009*****Disclaimer***

Individual ERO school and early childhood centre reports are public information and may be copied or sent electronically. However, the Education Review Office can guarantee only the authenticity of original documents which have been obtained in hard copy directly from either the local ERO office or ERO Corporate Office in Wellington. Please consult your telephone book, or see the ERO web page, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>, for ERO office addresses.

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

1. About the School

Location	Timaru
Ministry of Education profile number	3533
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)
Decile rating ^[1]	7
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated entitlement	9.5 12
Number of teachers	
School roll	203
Gender composition	Boys 51% Girls 49%
Ethnic composition	NZ/European/Pākehā 90%, Māori 5%, Pacific 2%, Other 3%
Review team on site	August/September 2009
Date of this report	14 October 2009
Previous ERO reports	Education Reviews, September 2006 Education Review, September 2003 Accountability Review, June 2000 Assurance Audit, October 1995 Review Report, September 1992

2. The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

St Joseph's School Timaru is an integrated Catholic school catering for students from Years 1 to 8. At the time of the review in August 2009, the roll was 203 students, 5% of whom identify as Māori. Since the last review in 2006, a new principal has been appointed.

The school's special character is clearly evident in all aspects of programmes and practices. Students are welcoming and respectful and display a strong sense of belonging. Positive, affirming relationships among peers and teachers reflect the values of the school. There is a collegial atmosphere amongst staff.

The teachers use a wide range of assessment tools to effectively monitor and improve student achievement. Achievement information for reading, writing and numeracy in Years 1 to 8 shows that most students achieve at or above national expectations. Teachers know their students well. They closely monitor students' progress. Students who are not achieving at expected levels are provided with appropriate learning support programmes.

Students appear as confident, capable and independent learners. They are aware of what they are learning, how well they are achieving and their next learning steps. Senior students can choose from a wide range of leadership roles such as being a member of the student council, a house leader and a peer mediator. Students told ERO that they value the many learning and sporting opportunities they receive at school.

ERO observed high quality teaching across the school. Teachers and students work together to set goals, share learning intentions and develop success criteria. Teachers use a range of effective strategies to promote students' learning. They provide students with regular opportunities to self and peer assess their work. Teachers effectively plan programmes that are relevant to the students' lives.

The board, principal and teachers demonstrate their commitment towards ongoing, school-wide improvement by developing a school curriculum that meets the interests, abilities and learning needs of all students. There are clear guidelines to support the school's vision and how learning and teaching will happen. The principal and senior leaders have a collaborative approach to managing change within the school. They accept it is now time to evaluate the impact and sustainability of initiatives that are leading to school-wide change.

The board takes all reasonable steps to provide a safe learning environment that supports the school's efforts to provide the best possible outcomes for students. The main challenge for the board is how best to manage the limited amount of space. The board is discussing building developments with the Catholic Education Office.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

3. The Focus of the Review

Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

The principal and senior teachers have worked with the trustees to set achievement targets in literacy and numeracy. The principal and teachers monitor student achievement targets closely. Mid-year progress checks can allow the targets to be revised upwards. The board receives regular reports on progress towards meeting the targets and how groups of students are achieving in comparison to national norms and school expectations. The board also receives reports about levels of student achievement in each curriculum area over a three-year cycle.

Achievement information is collected using a range of standardised assessment tools in numeracy, reading and writing. The information from the beginning of the year indicates that most students in Years 1 to 8 are achieving at or above the school's expectations.

Reports at the end of the year show that the percentages of students achieving below the school's expectations in numeracy, reading and writing have been significantly reduced.

The board has also received reports on student achievement in technology and religious education. Results indicate that most students are achieving at or above the school's expectations.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of St Joseph's School, Timaru was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at St Joseph's School, Timaru.

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus areas for the review:

- the quality of learning and teaching

ERO's findings in this area are set out below.

The Quality of Learning and Teaching

Background

The school's main focus since the last review in 2006 has been to increase its readiness to implement the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010. The principal and teachers have reviewed current programmes in some curriculum areas. As a result they have developed a framework for how the key competencies are to be incorporated into learning and teaching programmes. The board has set an

achievement target relating to how well students are using the key competencies to acquire the necessary literacy and numeracy skills.

The board asked ERO to evaluate how well teachers were incorporating the key competencies into teaching programmes. ERO in discussion with the board agreed to broaden the focus to include the overall quality of learning and teaching.

Areas of good performance

- *Relationships.* Students learn and play in a safe and nurturing environment. ERO observed positive and respectful relationships among staff, between teachers and students, and amongst students. These relationships are purposely sustained through a range of strategies such as peer mediation, circle time and 'no blame' conferences.
- *Confident, capable, independent learners.* Students are confident, capable and independent learners. Students confidently express their views and opinions. They enthusiastically participate in their learning. Students are aware of what they are learning, how they are achieving and their next steps. They have a range of leadership opportunities, for example, student council, house leaders, assembly leadership, peer mediation and as school monitors. Teachers actively encourage students to try new things and take risks in their learning. They readily respond to the high achievement expectations teachers have for them. Teachers support students in all areas of their development. Teachers are exploring further ways to extend students' ownership of their learning through goal setting and three-way conferencing.
- *Integration and implementation of special character.* The school's special character is clearly evident in all aspects of daily programmes and practices. The programmes for religious instruction are well developed. They are well supported by unit plans, learning objectives and success criteria. Students' progress is regularly monitored and units of learning regularly evaluated. The school's special character is effectively integrated into topics and the key competencies.
- *Teaching practice.* Students' learning is supported by high quality teaching. Teachers know the students well. They use a range of strategies that include modelling, effective questioning and allowing students choice about how they want to learn. They work with students to set goals, share learning intentions, co-construct success criteria and assess against these. Students are provided with many opportunities to self and peer assess their work. Programmes are relevant to the students' lives. Teachers are highly reflective about their practice. As a result, they actively engage in ongoing professional dialogue with a focus on improving students' learning.
- *Learning environment.* Students participate in enjoyable and interesting activities in stimulating learning environments. They have opportunities to revisit prior learning and goals. Their work is valued and attractively displayed. The environments support student learning through visual prompts. Learning progress is evident over the year in the work displayed in the classrooms. Teachers make good use of a range of resources. Exemplars are displayed to help students develop the expected skills.
- *Curriculum design.* The principal and teachers are continuing to develop and refine the curriculum to reflect the community's goals for learning and teaching.

There is a strong focus on the integration and implementation of key competencies to support students' skill development in literacy, numeracy and religious education.

- *Leadership.* The principal has worked alongside senior leaders to establish a collaborative approach to managing ongoing change within the school. For example, they have developed guidelines for goal setting for both students and teachers, learning and teaching programmes, and action plans for implementing strategies from professional learning into daily programmes. The principal and senior leaders acknowledge that the next step is to consolidate and refine systems recently implemented to ensure changes are sustainable.
- *Strategic direction.* The board, principal and teachers demonstrate a strong commitment towards ongoing, school-wide improvement. The board has consulted widely on a range of aspects of school operations. The board and teachers have developed student achievement targets cooperatively. Teachers have purposefully used professional learning in Assessment to Learn (AToL), numeracy and information and communication technologies (ICT) to further support students in their learning.
- *Use of achievement information.* The teachers use a wide range of assessment tools to effectively monitor and improve student achievement. These tools include nationally referenced and school-based assessments. Students are guided by teachers to use assessment information to plan their next steps. Teachers use the assessment information to identify students who require extra support or extension. They plan programmes to meet the needs of these students and monitor their progress in meeting the targets. Achievement information is collated at a school-wide level, analysed and reported to the board. Teachers make good use of assessment information to review and evaluate the impact of learning programmes at classroom and syndicate level.

Areas for improvement

- *Support programmes.* The school needs to continue to develop aspects of the learning support programmes. There are good systems for in-class support for targeted students. A teacher recently appointed as Special Needs coordinator is responsible for overall management and monitoring of support programmes, including for gifted and talented students. The principal identifies that the next steps are to monitor and evaluate programmes to ensure appropriate allocation of resources and develop a clearer definition of gifted and talented. Better procedures for how gifted and talented students are identified are also likely to guide the implementation of programmes for these students.
[Recommendation 6.1]
- *Availability of information and communication technologies.* Students would benefit from more opportunities for using ICT in their learning. Although reviewers observed students using a range of ICT in classrooms, teachers told ERO that the school's current ICT capabilities were not keeping pace with the new learning and teaching approaches in the school. They also told ERO that the school's computer infrastructure did not always work effectively which at times has limited students' use of the technologies available. [Recommendation 6.2]

- *Review.* The school has good systems for reviewing policy and procedures. They have some effective formal and informal processes for review, for example, surveys and evaluations. The principal and senior leaders acknowledge that they now need to widen the scope of review to include further curriculum areas, such as integrated studies and bicultural practices. Since the last review in 2006, the school has implemented some new initiatives to improve learning and teaching. The principal and senior leaders accept it is now time to evaluate the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of these initiatives. This is likely to support staff as they embed, consolidate and extend new learning and teaching practices. [*Recommendation 6.3*]

4. Areas of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of St Joseph's School, Timaru ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

Success for Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the extent to which the school was familiar with the *Māori Education Strategy – Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success* and progress made since the last review in promoting success at school for Māori students.

The school reports it has taken *Ka Hikitia* into account when revising planning documents for this year.

Areas of progress

Māori heritage and identity are acknowledged and celebrated in the school. Related activities include te reo Māori as a second language for senior students, building Māori perspectives into study topics and using te reo and waiata in the school's special character programmes.

The principal and teachers have high expectations for the success of Māori students at the school. The principal has consulted with individual Māori families about the school's targets, how they would like to be consulted and expectations and aspirations they have for their children's learning. The board has formulated a useful policy that outlines how the school will support the achievement of these students. Achievement information indicates the Māori students are achieving at levels similar to those of their peers. The principal monitors the achievement of Māori students and school-wide reporting on student achievement includes a separate analysis for Māori students. Those students identified with particular learning needs receive the appropriate support and extension programmes.

The next step is for the school to continue to develop and implement the Māori achievement plan.

Preparing to Give Effect to the New Zealand Curriculum

Schools are currently working towards implementing *The New Zealand Curriculum* by February 2010. During this review ERO investigated the progress St Joseph's School, Timaru is making towards giving full effect to the curriculum as part of its planning, organisation and teaching practice.

ERO found that school leaders and teachers at St Joseph's School, Timaru are making good progress towards giving effect to *The New Zealand Curriculum* in their planning, organisation and teaching.

Including Students with High Needs

During this review ERO investigated the extent to which the board and school leaders of St Joseph's School, Timaru provide an inclusive education for students with high needs. This included collecting evidence about the school's policies, processes and practices to support the enrolment and induction of students with high needs and to support their participation and achievement at school. The information collected during this review will contribute to information that will be reported in a national education evaluation report.

Prior to a review, a board of trustees and principal attest in the Board Assurance Statement that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal requirements including those detailed in Ministry of Education circulars and other documents.

The board of St Joseph's School, Timaru was asked to attest to whether it had *'ensured that teachers of students with disabilities, and other contact staff, have a sound understanding of the learning needs of students with disabilities and, where necessary, have put in place support systems centred on each individual with disabilities.'* The board was also asked to attest that *'policies and procedures that relate to students who have special education needs are implemented without discrimination'*.

ERO's findings confirm these attestations.

5. Board Assurance on Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of St Joseph's School, Timaru completed an ERO *Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist*. 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; and
- asset management.

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

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

Compliance

ERO's investigations did not identify any areas of concern.

6. Recommendations

ERO and the board of trustees have developed the following recommendations. That:

- 6.1 the principal and teachers develop and extend aspects of the learning support programmes;
- 6.2 the board and principal explore ways to extend students' opportunities to use ICT in learning and teaching programmes; and
- 6.3 the principal and senior leaders extend the scope of review to evaluate the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of school-wide initiatives.

7. Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Dr Graham Stoop
Chief Review Officer

14 October 2009

14 October 2009

To the Parents and Community of St Joseph's School, Timaru

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **St Joseph's School, Timaru**.

St Joseph's School Timaru is an integrated Catholic school catering for students from Years 1 to 8. At the time of the review in August 2009, the roll was 203 students, 5% of whom identify as Māori. Since the last review in 2006, a new principal has been appointed.

The school's special character is clearly evident in all aspects of programmes and practices. Students are welcoming and respectful and display a strong sense of belonging. Positive, affirming relationships among peers and teachers reflect the values of the school. There is a collegial atmosphere amongst staff.

The teachers use a wide range of assessment tools to effectively monitor and improve student achievement. Achievement information for reading, writing and numeracy in Years 1 to 8 shows that most students achieve at or above national expectations. Teachers know their students well. They closely monitor students' progress. Students who are not achieving at expected levels are provided with appropriate learning support programmes.

Students appear as confident, capable and independent learners. They are aware of what they are learning, how well they are achieving and their next learning steps. Senior students can choose from a wide range of leadership roles such as being a member of the student council, a house leader and a peer mediator. Students told ERO that they value the many learning and sporting opportunities they receive at school.

ERO observed high quality teaching across the school. Teachers and students work together to set goals, share learning intentions and develop success criteria. Teachers use a range of effective strategies to promote students' learning. They provide students with regular opportunities to self and peer assess their work. Teachers effectively plan programmes that are relevant to the students' lives.

The board, principal and teachers demonstrate their commitment towards ongoing, school-wide improvement by developing a school curriculum that meets the interests, abilities and learning needs of all students. There are clear guidelines to support the school's vision and how learning and teaching will happen. The principal and senior leaders have a collaborative approach to managing change within the school. They accept it is now time to evaluate the impact and sustainability of initiatives that are leading to school-wide change.

The board takes all reasonable steps to provide a safe learning environment that supports the school's efforts to provide the best possible outcomes for students. The main challenge for the board is how best to manage the limited amount of space. The board is discussing building developments with the Catholic Education Office.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, www.ero.govt.nz.

Dr Graham Stoop
Chief Review Officer

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS

About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve educational achievement in schools; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on three review strands.

- **School Specific Priorities** – the quality of education and the impact of school policies and practices on student achievement.
- **Areas of National Interest** – information about how Government policies are working in schools.
- **Compliance with Legal Requirements** – assurance that this school has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

Review Recommendations

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a school is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this school.

[\[1\]](#) Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.