

ERO External Evaluation

St Mary MacKillop Catholic School, Mangere, Auckland

Summary

St Mary MacKillop Catholic School caters for Year 1 to 8 students and currently has a roll of 327 children. The roll includes five percent Māori, 63 percent Samoan, 20 percent Tongan and four percent Cook Islands Māori. It also includes smaller groups of children from other ethnic backgrounds.

Since the 2014 ERO review, the school has appointed a new senior leadership team consisting of a new principal, deputy principal and assistant principal. Some trustees are experienced and long serving on the school's board. They are representative of the local and Catholic faith community, and bring capability and expertise to their stewardship role. The school has responded well to the next steps identified in ERO's 2014 report.

St Mary MacKillop Catholic School is one of seven schools in the South Auckland Catholic Schools Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako (CoL). The agreed achievement challenges for this CoL include improving achievement in writing, and strengthening culturally responsive practices.

Over the past three years there has been an upward trend in children's achievement of National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. A strong focus on children who are underachieving, and a collaborative approach to lifting achievement, are having a positive impact on overall learning progress and achievement.

How well is the school achieving equitable outcomes for all children?

The school is implementing specific strategies to respond to Māori and other children whose learning needs acceleration. The school's processes and actions are becoming increasingly effective at helping to achieve excellence and equity for all children. These processes include:

- strategic and improvement focused stewardship and effective leadership for equity and excellence
- building professional capability and collective capacity through collaboration and innovation
- a culturally responsive curriculum
- good engagement with whānau and the community.

Agreed next steps include evaluating the effectiveness of programmes, refining strategies for accelerating children's learning progress, addressing achievement disparities and increasing student agency.

Children are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

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

Equity and excellence

How effectively does this school respond to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

St Mary MacKillop Catholic School is implementing several specific strategies to respond to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

School leaders, trustees and teachers are reflective, and focused on making improvements to help promote equity and excellence. The board and school leaders have well-documented improvement plans to accelerate children's progress. Data show that the school is increasingly able to achieve shifts in achievement for students who are at risk of not achieving National Standards. Effective processes are followed to closely monitor the progress of those learners most at risk of not achieving.

The school's 2014 to 2016 achievement data show significant improvement. Just over two-thirds of children achieve the National Standards in mathematics and nearly three-quarters in reading and writing. Most Samoan children achieve the National Standard in reading. The school's next priority is to lift Tongan children's and boys' achievement, particularly in reading and writing. Progress data for 2017 show good shifts in learning, and several examples of accelerated progress, particularly in reading.

Leaders and teachers have strengthened assessment and moderation processes. These processes are ensuring greater dependability of teacher judgements about achievement in relation to the National Standards.

School conditions supporting equity and excellence

What school processes are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?

The school's processes and actions are becoming increasingly effective at helping to achieve excellence and equity for all children.

The board has strengthened partnerships with parents, whānau and the community. Trustees are leading the scrutiny of achievement information, and there is a clear line of sight from board processes to children whose learning needs acceleration. The board articulates a clear, shared vision that is focused on fostering children's cultural identities, the special Catholic character and achievement excellence.

Senior leaders are readily available for staff, students and parents to discuss matters related to the school, and teaching and learning. They are very committed to the school's vision and goals, and have high expectations for children's achievement and learning. Leaders and teachers are responsive to data, and continue to explore ways to promote children's independence and understanding of their own learning. Senior leaders have a strengths-based approach to broadening leadership opportunities for teachers and encouraging innovation. They are open to new learning and ideas, and encourage teachers to take on leadership opportunities based on their strengths and interests.

The school has a strategic focus on building teacher capability and collective capacity. Teachers engage in professional learning, particularly related to lifting children's achievement. They collaboratively and systematically inquire into the effectiveness of their practice, adapting and making decisions about how they can better support learners.

The school's curriculum is culturally responsive and now has a greater bicultural focus. Children's cultural identities and home languages are strongly promoted. Teachers provide relevant and meaningful learning contexts that build on children's prior cultural knowledge and experiences. Curriculum planning is linked to the school whakataukī. A lead teacher has supported learning for children and teachers in relation to te reo Māori and tikanga, such as pōwhiri, waiata, and himene.

Some flexible learning spaces have been established with a view to building collaborative teaching practices, and supporting students to be independent and self-managing learners. Some teachers are developing innovative approaches to teaching and learning, particularly related to personalising children's learning, and providing children with greater choice in the curriculum.

The school has a deliberate focus on strengthening responsive learning partnerships with parents and whānau. Fono with the Samoan and Tongan communities and consultation with other groups, are helping trustees and school leaders to gauge parent aspirations to inform school planning and priorities. The school uses digital technologies successfully to communicate and engage with families about children's learning.

Learning focused partnerships through initiatives such as Mutukaroa are supporting parents to have a deeper understanding of their children's learning. School leaders and trustees seek to encourage parents to be more demanding of the school, in raising a quality education for their children.

Trustees, senior leaders and teachers have a strong vision and commitment to raising student achievement. Internal evaluation is used well to support the school's new direction. Effective, school-wide systems help to identify, monitor and track student progress and achievement. In-depth analysis of data is used to set achievement targets, and identify priority students for teacher inquiries. Professional learning priorities and resourcing decisions, including learning support and interventions, are also data driven.

Sustainable development for equity and excellence

What further developments are needed in school processes to achieve equity and excellence?

The board and school leaders are committed to improving school processes to achieve greater equity and excellence. The board scrutinises achievement data and supports the lifting of student achievement. Trustees could now evaluate the effectiveness of their stewardship role in the school. Leaders could also make better use of evaluative critique to measure the impact of initiatives for improving equitable and excellent outcomes for children.

Further developments that would build on current good practices include:

- developing a documented curriculum that supports effective teaching and learning
- establishing collective understanding about measuring students' rates of progress, and refining strategies for accelerating children's learning
- exploring ways to increase the engagement of boys in literacy, particularly in writing
- formalising the school's induction programme for new and beginning teachers
- embedding innovative teaching practices that support children's independence and understanding of their own learning.

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
- 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*.

Going forward

How well placed is the school to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it?

Learners are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

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



Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern
Te Tai Raki - Northern Region

27 October 2017

About the school

Location	Mangere, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1633	
School type	Full Primary	
School roll	327	
Gender composition	Girls 51% Boys 49%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	6%
	Pākehā	1%
	Samoan	63%
	Tongan	20%
	Cook Islands Māori	4%
	Filipino	2%
	other	4%
Review team on site	August 2017	
Date of this report	27 October 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review, Education Review, Education Review,	August 2014 April 2011 August 2007