



**Education Review Office**  
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

**St Mary's School (Dunedin)**  
**Dunedin**

**Education Review Office**

**External Evaluation**

# ERO External Evaluation

## St Mary's School (Dunedin)

### 1 Context

Children learn in two multilevel classrooms in this small, Catholic, integrated primary school. The school is well resourced and good use is made of the attractive and extensive grounds as an additional environment for learning. In recent years teachers have participated in professional development programmes focused on the teaching of mathematics and writing.

The school's roll has declined slightly in the last three years. The board of trustees and school community are working constructively with early childhood providers, other schools and the Catholic diocese to proactively manage future changes in the roll.

### 2 Equity and excellence

The school's vision states that children and teachers will 'strive' together to become 'confident, creative, lifelong learners who follow Christ'. It aims to achieve this through developing and demonstrating the school's values of: valuing uniqueness, co-operation and respect, and celebrating independent thinkers who make decisions about their learning.

The school's achievement information shows that over the last three years most children have achieved at or above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of children achieving at or above the National Standards in reading and mathematics has been consistently greater than 85% over this period. Achievement in writing has improved over the last three years and was at a similar level as reading and mathematics in 2015. The school uses a wide range of assessment tools and practices to support teachers' judgements about children's achievement. The next step is to ensure there are regular opportunities, both internally and with other schools, to review their shared understandings about assessing and making judgements about children's achievement.

The school has made good progress with addressing most of the areas identified for improvement in ERO's 2013 report.

### 3 Accelerating achievement

#### **How effectively does this school respond to children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?**

This school responds effectively to children whose learning and achievement need acceleration. Children whose learning is at risk benefit from individualised teaching and learning programmes.

Teachers use assessment information well to clearly identify children's learning abilities and needs. Teachers closely monitor the children's progress and make changes to these programmes as necessary to ensure they continue to achieve success.

In addition to focused classroom teaching, children needing to make accelerated progress receive targeted specialist one-to-one teaching. These specialist interventions have been effective in helping children lift their achievement in reading and mathematics.

Children are actively involved in setting specific learning goals and know what steps they need to take to achieve them. Teachers communicate clearly with parents about their children's progress and achievement and share ideas about how they can support learning at home. Teachers work closely with families and external agencies to achieve positive learning, behaviour and wellbeing outcomes for all children.

To build on these practices for accelerating children's progress leaders need to:

- ensure all students who are achieving below or well below the National Standards are included in school achievement targets
- ensure reporting of student achievement information to the board includes an analysis of the rates of progress children have made.

#### **4 School conditions**

##### **How effectively do the school's curriculum and other organisational processes and practices develop and enact the school's vision, values, goals and targets for equity and excellence?**

The school's vision and values are well supported by the school's curriculum and most organisational processes and practices, including strategic and annual plans.

The curriculum is well designed, with useful guidelines that are well aligned to the school's vision and values. It reflects and responds to children's interests, whānau aspirations and makes effective use of the local community. Aspects of te reo and tikanga Māori are integrated throughout daily practices and learning programmes.

The school's Catholic values, including strong pastoral care and respect for children and their families are strongly evident in daily programmes and interactions. Parents are welcome and are involved in contributing to decisions about what is important at this school.

Children of all ages enjoy opportunities for leadership and make valued contributions to the life of the school. They learn alongside each other in mixed and flexible groupings where expectations for learning are very clear. Children increasingly know about their progress and achievement and what they need to do to improve.

Teachers and leaders work well together and are focused on continual improvement. They demonstrate this through:

- participation in planned professional learning that is aligned to the school's goals for raising achievement
- learning about and implementing effective teaching practice that supports children to become lifelong learners
- increasing use of digital technology to enhance children's engagement with learning and development of digital literacy skills
- ongoing reflection on the effectiveness of their teaching.

The board, principal and teachers regularly evaluate how well aspects of the school are performing and use this to identify areas for improvement. These evaluations include input from parents and children. A next step is to ensure that they are consistently evaluative to ensure teaching and learning are impacting positively on student progress and achievement.

Principal and teacher appraisal is an area for improvement. Trustees and the principal need to review the appraisal policy and procedures to ensure that the appraisal system is rigorous, robust and meets the requirements of the Education Council and the interim professional standards.

## 5 Going forward

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

Leaders and teachers:

- know the children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated
- respond effectively to the strengths, needs and interests of each child
- regularly evaluate how well teaching is working for these children
- act on what they know works well for each child
- build teacher capability effectively to achieve equitable outcomes for all children
- are well placed to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children.

This school has many useful practices to accelerate the learning of children whose achievement is at risk. Strengthening school achievement targets and improving the analysis of the rate of progress children are making will assist trustees, the principal and teachers to more effectively evaluate what impact these practices are having on outcomes for children.

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

## 6 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 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
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance
- compliance with the provisions of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- strengthen risk-management plans for excursions away from school

- develop and strengthen the appraisal system for the principal and teachers
- refine the complaints policy and procedures and ensure that these are used effectively when dealing with all complaints, and that records are accurate and full
- seek support from NZSTA for ongoing development of policies and procedures to ensure they meet current legislative requirements.

## 7 Recommendation

ERO recommends that the school acts on the next steps as described in the body of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Lesley Patterson  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern (Te Waipounamu)

8 February 2017

## About the school

Location	Dunedin	
Ministry of Education profile number	3830	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	23	
Gender composition	Female: 14 Male: 9	
Ethnic composition	Māori Pākehā Pacific South East Asian Other ethnicities	2 14 3 2 2
Review team on site	November 2016	
Date of this report	8 February 2017	
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review Education Review Education Review	August 2013 February 2010 March 2007