

ERO External Evaluation

St Mary's School, Dunedin

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 Mary's School is a Year 1 to 6 urban Catholic school. It has a roll of 32 students. A quarter of the school identify as Māori. The roll has increased since the 2017 ERO review.

The school's vision is 'Together we aspire to become confident, creative, life-long learners who follow Christ'. Its values are respect, love, honesty and helping. To support the school's vision and values, the current strategic aims include:

- implement a new approach to teach religious education
- implement a programme for assessment and reporting to parents
- develop a digital technology curriculum plan.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- progress in relation to the school targets for reading, writing and mathematics.

Since ERO's 2017 report there have been several changes in staff and leadership. The current principal and teachers started in 2019. A newly elected board is supported by an experienced trustee elected as the chair in 2019.

St Mary's School is an active member of the Dunedin Catholic Schools Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning.

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?

The school is moving positively towards equity and excellence for all its students.

In 2017 and 2018 most students achieved at or above the school's expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2019 progress information indicates that almost all students have made sufficient progress throughout the year.

The school is developing its curriculum to fully support areas valued by its community. At this stage it has not had the opportunity to know of the achievement in these areas.

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

The school is very effectively accelerating the learning of those students identified as at risk of not achieving at expected levels.

In 2018 and 2019 the majority of students met their individual targets to ensure accelerated progress.

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?

The teachers and school community have a well-established shared understanding and commitment to the students achieving well, within the school's special character. Students benefit from the caring relationships they have with their teachers and with each other. They know what is expected of them as learners and learn in settled classrooms. Teachers use a variety of effective strategies to engage all students in purposeful learning. The board provides generous resourcing for teacher aide time and additional teaching hours. These actions and conditions ensure students have ample learning opportunities for them to achieve and progress well.

The principal and teachers work collaboratively to maximise students' learning. They have established learning progressions for mathematics and literacy. Student learning information is closely scrutinised to monitor the progress of all students. Teachers are involved in relevant professional learning and inquiries, including working productively within their Kāhui Ako. They regularly share ideas, research and good practice to better meet the needs of their students. As a result, the teaching and learning programmes are responsive to the needs of the students.

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

For the school community to have a greater understanding of how well students are progressing in the areas that are valued by the school, teachers, the principal and trustees (in consultation with their community) now need to:

- define the school's priorities for learning and development
- use these priorities to develop the school's local curriculum and the criteria that will indicate success
- use the success criteria to evaluate what is going well and what needs further development
- use the findings from evaluation to inform strategic planning, monitoring and reporting.

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 Children's Act 2014.

4 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of St Mary's School School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Well placed

ERO's Framework: [Overall Findings and Judgement Tool derived from School Evaluation Indicators: Effective Practice for Improvement and Learner Success](#) is available on ERO's website.

5 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- caring respectful relationships across the school
- attaining and maintaining good levels of achievement and progress in core learning areas
- its collaborative and improvement focused staff.

5.1 Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school's priorities for further development are in:

- establishing its local curriculum so that students achieve the priorities defined by the school's community for learning and development
- evaluating teaching programmes to understand how well these priorities are being achieved and what else could support students' achievement.

5.2 Area for improved compliance practice

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should:

- ensure the school's expectations for managing the risks associated with activities beyond the school are consistently followed.



Dr Lesley Patterson
Director Review and Improvement Services Southern
Southern Region
6 December 2019

About the school

Location	Dunedin
Ministry of Education profile number	3830
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)
School roll	32
Gender composition	Male 17 Female 15
Ethnic composition	Māori: 8 NZ European/Pākehā: 17 Filipino: 5 Other: 2
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	No
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	October 2019
Date of this report	6 December 2019
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review: February 2017 Education Review: August 2013 Education Review: February 2010