

**Diocese of Dunedin
Catholic Education Office**

**External Review
Catholic Special Character Review for Development**

**REPORT ON
St Mary's Catholic School, Kaikorai**

School Type:	Year 0-6 Contributing Primary
Visit:	23-24 July 2019
Principal:	Corinne Guthrie
Reviewer:	Phil O'Connell-Cooper

School Information

Name: St Mary's Kaikorai, Dunedin

Address: 6A Cromwell St, Wakari, Dunedin
School Type: Contributing Primary (Year 1-6)

Decile: 7

Actual Roll at Time of Review: 29

Maximum Roll: 126

Ethnic Composition:

NZ European/Pakeha	44%
Maori	25%
Filipino	20%
Other	01%

Non-preference Maximum: 6 **Actual Non-preference at Review:** 8
Preference Criteria Numbers 5.1 15 5.2 1 5.3 3 5.4 2 5.5

Teaching Staff: **Roll generated:** 2.49

Actual: 2.40

Required S464 positions: 2 **Actual:** 2

Ancillary Staff: **Secretary** 1 **Teacher Aide** 1

Board of Trustees Chairperson: **Caroline Walker**

Principal: **Corinne Guthrie**

Director of Religious Studies: **Corinne Guthrie**

Parish Priest/Chaplain: **Father Fredy Permentilla**

St Mary's Kaikorai

St Mary's
Kaikorai



“Together we aspire to become confident, creative, lifelong learners who follow Christ.”

The School vision embodies what the recently appointed Principal, teachers, staff and Board are aiming for at St Mary's. They are clear about their purpose and the implicit becomes explicit. Picking up leadership and governance of a school that has been through many changes in the past few years, the Principal recognises the importance of working together to provide excellent teaching and learning in an environment that is nurturing, safe, and loving, enabling the children to not only learn about their faith, but to know, love and follow Jesus. “Learning is most effective when learners are encouraged to recognise Jesus in themselves and others and to practice the Catholic Character value/virtue of forgiveness and treat all people with dignity.” The Principal also recognises the work and dedication of a long serving teacher and DRS (now at another school) who not only held the school together through challenging times, but whose impact is seen, particularly in the children's prayerfulness, good manners, attitudes and generosity. The Parish Priest is very supportive of the school and relates well to them. He recognises that the children are very responsive, particularly at Mass, in liturgies and prayer...” they are connected to their spirituality”. He, the Board Chair, the Principal, the children themselves, comment on their behaviour – kind, polite,

caring, helpful. Children commented on what was special about their school: “Catholic teachers, kind teachers, prayer and meditation, lots of playground, free before and after school care, and we even have the Bishop living next door to our school!”

Catholic Special Character Dimensions and Focus Areas

DIMENSION 1: TE TŪTAKI KI A TE KARAITI | ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

How does the school encourage and facilitate the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals the transforming love and truth of the living God?

FOCUS AREAS:

How does the school provide ongoing Catholic spiritual formation to assist individuals to deepen their personal relationship with Christ?

The Principal leads by example, working with a completely new staff (since the beginning of 2019) and the focus of the school is already strongly on everyone developing a relationship with Jesus. It is clearly understood that the Catholic Faith in Jesus is the primary reason the school exists. Prayer is central to life at the school and meditation is practiced and valued by teachers and students alike. It is a daily practice.

***Future Development:** working together to develop a shared understanding of what Catholic spirituality is, particularly in connection with the Gospels, Charism and Values so that it becomes meaningful in today’s context. (This is related to Recommendation 1)*

Evangelisation

How does the school, through its practices and communications, facilitate an encounter with Christ and spread the Good News to both church and unchurched members of the community?

St Mary’s actively supports and is involved in the parish sacramental programme, working closely with the Parish Priest. The Principal and Parish priest are proactive in involving families in their children’s faith development. The school actively encourages family involvement in the parish through their children taking on roles such as altar serving. Families support the school Masses. Because the school is very small and like a family teachers and parents communicate frequently often on a day to day basis. Information on RE learning, the Saints, Catholic Special Character events and Parish rosters, is provided for family/whanau in the school newsletter. The language is simple and clear. Enrolment information is provided which focuses on Catholic Character. A colourful, appealing brochure is circulated at local pre-schools. This needs to be more explicit about Catholic Special Character.

Further Development: Consider adding the word ‘prayerful’ to the school brochure.

Faith-based Leadership

How does faith-based leadership effectively shape the school's vision and direction, so as to ensure a genuine and ongoing encounter with Christ?

The Principal is very strong in faith, confidently and clearly articulating this and leading and supporting others in this journey. She is working with the other full-time teacher guiding her towards taking shared leadership in Catholic Special Character (taking on the role of DRS in the future). She supports the other three staff members in their understanding of Catholic Special Character and especially in supporting and living the school's values of Honesty, Helping, Respect and Love.

DIMENSION 2: TE WHAKATUPU MĀ TE MĀTAURANGA | GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE

How does the school assist its community to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ, his teachings and the Catholic Church?

FOCUS AREAS:

Leadership

How does effective leadership enable growth in knowledge and understanding, which are necessary factors in the disciple's journey?

The Principal provides effective leadership in teaching and learning in Religious Education and in prayer and liturgical practices, collaborating with the other full-time teacher and the part-time Principal Release Teacher both in practice and in professional development.

Religious Education

How is the Religious Education programme given high status, and what evidence is there that it is soundly managed, appropriately resourced, and professionally delivered by qualified Kaiako (teachers)?

*Teaching and learning in Religious Education is a strength and is reflecting some innovative practice, led by the Principal. The learning, where possible, is related to life and is meaningful to the children. "Learning in RE is fun. I love learning about Jesus and the Eucharist. I don't like the tests. You get stressed!" (Year 5 student) The teachers take part in related Professional Development and make good use of the Religious Education Adviser and value her support. The Principal shows strong leadership in teaching and learning in Religious Education with the other teacher, who has recently returned to full-time class responsibilities, showing real willingness to learn. In the school's documentation for Religious Education it states: "Religious Education at St Mary's is about teaching and learning what the Catholic Church believes and teaches. It enables our children to know, understand and appreciate what the Catholic Church believes and teaches and how it celebrates, lives and prays. It also teaches them to respond freely to God according to their gift of faith." * In the Curriculum Document there is also an interesting and valuable perspective to be gained by teachers reflecting on specific Gospel Values/Stories, to enable them to use best practice e.g. create a supportive learning environment – Matthew 18:12-13 "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine and go to look for that sheep." That is one example from 10. This a model that would*

be valuable to share with other schools because of the potential for insightful reflections on teaching practice in a Catholic School.

Future Development:

- *Not only continuing to make good use of the Achievement Aims and Objectives from the RE Bridging Document, but also ‘breaking open’ the main focus areas e.g. Being Spiritual-Te Taha Wairua, to develop deeper knowledge and understanding of what lies at the foundation of our teaching and learning in RE. (Connected to Recommendation 2)*
- ** Consider adding to the RE statement a reference to the fact that in RE, the teacher is sharing the Good News e.g. “Jesus is our Saviour, and friend; the Holy Spirit is our guide; the Creator is loving” ((paraphrased from REBD Introduction P4)*

Catholic Curriculum

How is the Catholic worldview integrated into the daily practices of the school and into all curriculum areas?

All staff, whether teaching or not, receive support to enable them to understand the Catholic culture of the school. Teachers are supported to integrate a Catholic perspective in everyday life of the school and in different learning areas.

DIMENSION 3: TE WHAKAATU KARAITIANA | CHRISTIAN WITNESS

How does the school provide a hope-filled Christian witness which empowers its community members to integrate their faith and their life?

FOCUS AREAS:

Catholic School Community

How does the school, as an authentic Catholic community, promote and support active Catholic witness and practice in the school and in the parish community of which it is an integral part?

The Catholic concept of community is alive and well at St Mary’s. It is a place of welcome. The Parish Priest, Family members, Parishioners as well as the parents are very involved in the school. The children recognise that a special feature about their school is that they belong to a Catholic Community that started a long time ago. “We have a very, very old school and church started 100 years ago and is still a community today.” “Since we are a small community all ages interact together.”

Partnership and Collaboration

Recognising that education is a collaborative responsibility, how does the school build strong commitments to all the groups it relates to including its whanau, its parish, its founding religious congregation, its Proprietor and its Bishop? How do ākonga (students) develop an understanding of, and respect for, the cultural diversity of New Zealand?

The school has, in their Strategic Plan, a Catholic Special Character Goal to “strengthen partnership with the Parish by developing collaborative relationships to include Parental & Parish involvement in the Sacramental Programmes.”

St Mary’s recognises the cultural diversity in their school and are pursuing ways of growing in understandings which will be reflected in their practice. They are already strong on welcome and building relationships.

Future Development: *Because of the cultural diversity in the school, look at ways of learning more about Culturally Responsive Pedagogy to help staff, ākonga and family/whanau grow in understanding and respect for cultural diversity. (‘Māori achieving Success as Māori’ could be used as a model)*

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

How does the school, as an authentic Catholic community, demonstrate a strong commitment to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi, reflecting the commitment of the Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic Church to bicultural partnership?

The school is working to develop a whole school understanding of Catholic Māori wairua/spirituality and incorporates te reo Māori and karakia into daily life.

Future Development: *as above*

Pastoral Care

How does the school ensure that education occurs in a safe, nurturing environment supported by a strong pastoral care network in which each member of the community is known, respected, cared for and aware that they are loved unconditionally by God?

Children and staff are personally known, valued and respected, cared for, and provided with support as required, reflecting the teachings of Jesus “Love one another as I have loved you,”

Future Development: *For staff and Board to take up opportunities for Professional Development in Safeguarding and to incorporate into relevant policies and practices.*

Service and Outreach

Recognising that each person is called as a Christian to take care of others and to work for justice and equality, in what ways does the school explicitly base service and outreach activities in the Gospel message, and grow the practice and understanding of caring for others?

Ākonga are very willing to help in class, in the playground, in the parish and in the wider community. The school supports St Vincent de Paul, have a Young Vinnies Group, are involved in Caritas activities and also support the local Salvation Army. “One of the strengths of the school is the way the children look after each other” (Board Chair)

DIMENSION 4: TE KAITIAKITANGA ME TO WHAKAPAKARI I TE TUAKIRI KATORIKA | SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING CATHOLIC CHARACTER

How does the school, in its stewardship, and its compliance with legal obligations, safeguard and strengthen its Catholic identity?

The School's response regarding progress from the requirements and recommendations from the 2013 review:

- Since the last review in 2013, there have been a number of leadership, board and staff changes. Therefore, the current Principal and Board recognise that while some matters have been attended to, they have embarked on a new start this year and apart from compliance issues needing to be addressed, prefer to look at the school in its current state and move from there.
- Tracking and Recording progress in RE: *different tools are available now and the teachers are working with the Bridging Document and RE Advisor*
 - Set of values to be discerned that reflect the Catholic Character and used in branding, certificates, behaviour management: *This was done. Now out of date and doesn't have meaning for current staff and students. School will look at this for today's students.*
 - Investigate shared web resource to support evangelisation: *not a priority for 2019*
 - Appraisal Documents reflect the expectations of tagged positions: *done in 2019*
 - Enrolment continues to be a focus: *ongoing*
 - Enrolment files show categories and information used to plan for teaching and evangelisation: *Parish Priest and Principal inherited poorly kept files. They are working on ensuring all files correct and up to date*
 - That Human Resource Policies are reviewed and each section has a rationale that includes the influence of Catholic Social Teaching on the way we work with Staff: *in 2019, all policies are being updated, using School Docs and ensuring that all have a Catholic Character Dimension*
 - That a PD plan is developed as part of the strategic plan and that each year financial support for staff to maintain their certification as teachers of religious education is included: *2019-new Board, new Principal, new staff, new Strategic Planning*

FOCUS AREAS:

Stewardship

How does Governance and Management safeguard and strengthen Catholic Character within the areas of Organisation, Employment, Professional Development and Enrolment?

Legal Obligations

St Mary's Kaikorai is compliant with its integration agreement with regard to:

S464 positions held

Maximum Roll

Preference Students

The Principal together with the Parish Priest and Board is working to ensure that these matters are in order in the future:

Open Enrolments

Communication and consultation with the Proprietor

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT FROM THIS REVIEW

ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

- 1. Collaboratively develop a shared understanding of what Catholic spirituality is, in connection with the Gospels, Dominican Charism and School Values so that the links and connections become clear, leading to meaningful Catholic spirituality for today's students, teachers, staff and family/whanau.**

RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

- 2. Aim to further develop teaching and learning in RE that enables students to integrate their faith and life. Building on your current exploration of more effective ways to deliver Religious Education, consider ways to strengthen the pedagogies which lead towards deeper learning.**

Considerations and suggested actions which may occur over the next 2 or 3 years

- Break open' the main focus areas e.g. Being Spiritual-Te Taha Wairua, to develop deeper knowledge and understanding of what lies at the foundation of our teaching and learning in RE.
- Pursue PLD opportunities that enable teachers to deepen their understanding of the critical features required to enable deeper learning in Religious Education
- Consider the approaches used, for example, in the Caritas teaching and learning resources to identify and analyse the key elements of this approach which makes it so successful
- Having explored both Caritas and a range of teaching pedagogies, work collaboratively to develop teaching and learning experiences which will more deeply engage the students, enable their faith to grow and their social justice responses to broaden

SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING CATHOLIC CHARACTER

3. Ensure that the Attestation Document, covering Special Character Compliances, is completed annually and sent to the Catholic Education Office in May each year
4. That the Proprietor's Appointees, in collaboration with the Principal/DRS, compile an annual Report to the Bishop (Handbook for Boards of Trustees P 82ff)

Catholic Special Character Review

July 2019

Phil O'Connell-Cooper

Lead Reviewer