



Education Review Office
Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga

St Teresa's School (Featherston)
Featherston

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External Evaluation

ERO External Evaluation

St Teresa's School (Featherston)

1 Context

St Teresa's School is a small, integrated, Catholic school located in Featherston. It caters for students from Years 1 to 8. The roll of 98 includes 43 students who identify as Māori. Since the June 2013 ERO report a new principal and four teachers have been appointed. Board elections in 2016 have resulted in a new group of parent representatives.

The school is currently involved in a range of Ministry of Education professional development initiatives including: Accelerating Literacy Learning (ALL) and Accelerating Learning in Mathematics (ALiM).

2 Equity and excellence

The vision and valued outcomes defined by the school for all children are to develop confident life-long learners within the Catholic faith. The school's 'stay on TRACK' promotes the values of justice, love, humility and faith. Students are encouraged to 'Think', be 'Responsible' for their learning and behaviour, 'Achieve' in all areas, make 'Courageous' choices and be 'Kind' in their thoughts and actions. The values are fostered within the school and the wider community.

The school's achievement information shows that most students, including Māori, achieve at and above National Standards expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Māori students achieve at similar levels to their peers, in 2014 and 2015, in reading and writing. In mathematics, they achieve higher than their peers. Although some Māori students made progress during 2015, a significant number below the National Standards have not made sufficient progress.

The principal has identified that current assessment and moderation processes require further development to improve the validity and reliability of overall teacher judgements in relation to National Standards.

Since the last ERO evaluation the school has participated in targeted professional development in literacy, mathematics, learning and change, and moderation. In 2016 suitable targets have been developed for students at risk of not accelerating their achievement, with Māori students a priority.

3 Accelerating achievement

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

The school is responding to Māori children whose learning and achievement need acceleration. The board and teachers put a clear emphasis on deeper analysis of data to more effectively plan specific strategies to accelerate and sustain achievement gains. They recognise not all Māori students are being sufficiently accelerated, particularly in writing. The principal and teachers regularly monitor the impact of interventions on Māori students whose progress requires acceleration.

Teachers collaboratively plan and share strategies to promote better student outcomes. They are working on strengthening learning partnerships through whānau consultation.

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

The school responds well to other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration. Teachers usefully track and monitor progress.

Boys have been appropriately identified as a group that need to improve their writing achievement and progress. A focus on better teaching and assessment of this area has resulted in fewer students well below the National Standards. The principal and teachers recognise that writing continues to be a focus for improvement.

The special education needs coordinator collaborates with families, whānau, external agencies and teachers to specifically identify and address students' needs.

Teachers are trialling a range of interventions and strategies to accelerate the achievement of students of concern. A next step is to better use internal evaluation to clearly identify the most effective strategies to promote their learning.

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 curriculum and other organisational processes and practices are undergoing targeted development to promote equity and excellence for all students. The school's vision, values and priorities are clearly articulated and evident in practice.

The principal's reports to the board link to strategic priorities. Trustees are generally well-informed about student achievement and progress. Providing the board with more specific reports about interventions that successfully support students, should enable trustees to know the impact of their resourcing decisions.

A positive learning environment and sense of community is underpinned by the school's special character and Catholic charism. Respectful relationships are evident throughout the school. Students have a range of opportunities to develop leadership.

The inclusive school culture is focused on student wellbeing and learner-centred partnerships with families and whānau. Parents receive useful information about their child's progress in relation to the National Standards.

The curriculum is increasingly incorporating students' experiences, interests and preferred approaches to their learning. This is resulting in improved levels of student engagement. Continuing to develop explicit expectations for culturally responsive teaching should enhance aspects already evident in the school's curriculum.

Whānau engagement is sought and valued. The Whānau Māori Student Achievement plan is currently being improved through the use of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori curriculum units. Pōwhiri, kapa haka and mihi are a feature of school protocols for visitors.

The principal is improvement focused. Clear expectations have been introduced for teaching and learning and systems to support ongoing improvement and sustainability of practices.

Teachers are well supported to develop their leadership. Their inquiry into the impact of teaching practices on student achievement is in its early stages.

Teachers are provided with good feedback and next steps to continue to develop the quality of their teaching through appraisal. Evidence of their practice links closely to the Practising Teacher Criteria. A new appraisal system being introduced in 2016 emphasises building sustainable teaching practices. Guidance and mentoring for recently graduated teachers is comprehensive. They are well supported to contribute to staff professional learning and discussions.

The charter identifies priorities centred on accelerating student achievement, teaching and learning and the school's special character. A next step is to refine the use of success indicators so they better support evaluation of progress towards goals.

School leaders use internal evaluation to identify what is working well and areas requiring development. To further strengthen practice, school leaders should:

- build schoolwide understanding and use of effective internal evaluation
- more purposefully evaluate the impact of specific programmes and interventions on accelerating student achievement.

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 to the strengths, needs and interests of each child
- regularly evaluate how teaching is working for these children
- need to systematically act on what they know works for each child
- have a plan in place but need to build teacher capability effectively to achieve equitable outcomes for all children.

The principal is developing a diverse range of new systems and practices focused on accelerating achievement for all students. Some initiatives are in the early stages of implementation and the school does not yet have specific evidence of their impact. The board and principal recognise the need to improve evaluation against outcomes in the annual plan and reporting of the impact of specific programmes. A review of the Māori Student Achievement plan through the curriculum should contribute to better promotion of Māori students' culture, language and identity in classroom programmes.

Action: The board, principal and teachers should use the findings of this evaluation, the *Effective School Evaluation* resource, the *Internal Evaluation: Good Practice* exemplars and the *School Evaluation Indicators* to develop a Raising Achievement Plan to further develop processes and practices that respond effectively to the strengths and needs of children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated.

As part of this review ERO will continue to monitor the school's Raising Achievement plan and the progress the school makes. ERO is likely to carry out the next full 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.

7 Recommendation

St Teresa's School (Featherston) should strengthen internal evaluation and continue to develop and implement systems and practices for improving outcomes for all students.



Joyce Gebbie
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

24 August 2016

About the school

Location	Featherston	
Ministry of Education profile number	3023	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	98	
Gender composition	Male 53, Female 45	
Ethnic composition	Māori	43
	Pākehā	48
	Other ethnic groups	7
Review team on site	June 2016	
Date of this report	24 August 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2013
	Education Review	May 2010
	Supplementary Review	May 2007