

**St Joseph's School (Dannevirke)**  
**Dannevirke**

**Education Review Office**

**External Evaluation**

# ERO External Evaluation

## St Joseph's School (Dannevirke)

### 1 Context

St Joseph's School (Dannevirke) provides an integrated Catholic education for students in Years 1 to 8. Of the 94 students enrolled, 42 are Māori and 2 are Pacific.

Since the April 2013 ERO report, the school has experienced two changes of principal. The recently appointed principal was acting in the role during term 4 2015. Most staff are long-serving members of the school and parish community. By mid-2016 the school expects to gain a teacher through roll growth.

### 2 Equity and excellence

The vision and valued outcomes defined by the school for all children are that they develop spiritually, personally and academically. Children will build self-esteem and positive relationships with others around them. The charter gives emphasis to equity, quality and excellence in educational outcomes for each student.

The school's achievement information shows that overall, Māori student performance in writing has improved since 2012. However, over the same period, it has trended down in reading and mathematics. While the achievement picture for all students is similar, the 2015 data shows there are proportionally more Māori students performing below National Standards expectations in each area than Pākehā peers. The board has yet to consider how well they are addressing this disparity.

Data also shows a downward trend for boys in the three areas. Leaders and teachers are in the second year of professional learning in using data to know how effectively teaching practice is accelerating progress. The principal has approached the Ministry of Education to provide a Student Achievement Function (SAF) practitioner to support school development. St Joseph's is part of a recently formed Community of Learning (CoL) in Dannevirke.

### 3 Accelerating achievement

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

The school uses assessment information to identify Māori students whose learning and achievement need support. In writing, individual needs are being identified. New strategies are trialled as part of the schoolwide professional learning and development focus on inquiring into teaching practices. A key next step is to more clearly identify each student's learning needs in reading and mathematics, to support evaluation of how effectively teaching strategies contribute to improved learning in these areas. Individual student progress needs to be tracked long-term to know the gains made as students transition through the year levels.

The school should clarify its definition of accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is likely to assist with monitoring progress and evaluation of what is working best for students.

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

The Special Education Needs Coordinator is revising systems to manage provision for students with additional needs. Individual education plans are developed. The expertise and assistance of external agencies are sought to assist teachers with meeting individual needs. Reporting student outcomes, as a result of school-funded programmes and from external agency assistance, should assist trustees to make decisions about resourcing initiatives for having a positive impact.

Pacific student learning is individually monitored and tracked to assess achievement and progress.

In 2016, the school has set an annual goal for all students to make progress toward literacy and mathematics outcomes. Targets have been set in response to what is evident from the 2015 end-of-year data. These need to focus specifically on the numbers of students in the identified groups, whose achievement is below or well below National Standards expectations, and on the extent of progress expected to raise achievement. This should assist the principal to report progress in relation to annual targets and to better evaluate the impact of teaching strategies.

Developing systems that align to teachers' professional learning and appraisal to more clearly focus on their individual students' learning needs and interests is a next step to accelerate their progress.

## **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 priorities for equity and excellence?**

High expectations and positive interactions between children and staff continue to be features of the school. The special character values and key competencies are evident in practice and relationships. These contribute to an environment supportive of student wellbeing for learning.

Learners experience a wide range of opportunities. Some aspects of modern learning practices are beginning in classrooms through the use of digital devices.

Parents and whānau are actively involved in the school through attendance at consultation, arts and cultural evenings. Parents receive regular, informative reports about their child's progress in relation to the National Standards.

New families are warmly welcomed and inducted into the school through pōwhiri and parish events. Entry to school from early childhood services is responsive to individual, family and whānau needs. The positive relationships maintained with early childhood services and secondary schools, including the local high school, assist students to transition smoothly along their educational pathways.

Māori students take on key roles that celebrate their language, culture and identity, for example, leading in kapa haka and pōwhiri. Increased leadership roles better enable students' views to be raised and responded to.

A whānau group continues to operate in the school through the support of the Director of Religious Studies and a core group of whānau. They hosted and organised the recent local Catholic schools' kapa haka. Increased use of social media facilitates information sharing with whānau. Growing whānau involvement is likely to assist with strengthening learning partnerships and their strategic role in the school's future direction and decision-making.

A limited amount of schoolwide teacher professional learning and development has occurred since 2013. A literacy focus, between 2013 and 2014, supported assessment of writing and moderation with teachers of other schools. Teachers are open to learning by visiting other schools and building on new initiatives, such as the Community of Learning.

The principal and deputy principal are working with an external facilitator to improve the system for teacher appraisal. Processes will strengthen links between individual teacher needs, feedback, inquiry into practice and self-reflection against the Practising Teacher Criteria. Setting individual goals related to planned learning outcomes, and gathering relevant evidence of effectiveness, should improve the impact of the appraisal process.

The board is appropriately focused on rebuilding its governance practices. In 2015, trustees participated in governance training. They are making policy review a priority and have recently revised how this is done. Completing the review of the health and safety policy and procedures is a key priority to ensure a robust governance framework underpins school operations. Succession planning and developing sustainable practices is a current focus for the upcoming board elections.

The board is aware of the importance of setting suitable student achievement targets and receiving reports about the impact of school initiatives on lifting learning. Specific targets should be supported by focused action plans with measures of success.

Leaders and teachers are reflective and focused on positive student outcomes. Teachers are becoming more thoughtful about strategies that contribute to accelerated progress. They work collaboratively to support positive student outcomes.

The school curriculum is insufficiently developed to guide cohesive teaching and learning opportunities or to evaluate its effectiveness for learners. Some recent curriculum review and reflection in relation to literacy, mathematics and culturally responsive teaching, has occurred. Further development is needed. The document should incorporate recent research on effective teaching practices, reflect the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum* and the central role of the learner. Strengthening guidance for robust formative assessment practices, moderation and overall teacher judgements should be part of school development.

Developing an internal evaluation framework should assist staff and the board to better monitor and evaluate the impact of the curriculum and specific initiatives.

After a period of change, the school is faced with some key next steps for improvement. These include:

- building cohesive governance practices
- developing the school curriculum to guide effective teaching and assessment practice
- strengthening culturally responsive practices
- strengthening involvement of whānau in learning partnerships and school decision-making
- establishing an internal evaluation framework to support improvement.

## 5 Going forward

### How well placed is the school to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children?

Leaders and teachers:

- have begun to build their knowledge of the children whose learning and achievement need to be accelerated
- have not yet adequately established necessary conditions to effectively accelerate learning and achievement
- are not well placed to achieve and sustain equitable and excellent outcomes for all children.

ERO intends to carry out a process of ongoing evaluation to support development over the course of one-to-two 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.

The board identified a number of area in its board assurance statement that require attention to better meet legislative requirements.

The board should:

- adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum, at least once every two years, after consultation with the school community.  
*[Section 60B Education Act 1989]*

To improve current practice, trustees and the principal should improve the governance policy framework by:

- ensuring that policy and procedure review is timely and robust to ensure health and safety practices are in place, including hazard identification and management processes
- developing policy and procedures to meet the requirements of the *Vulnerable Children's Act 2014*, including police vetting processes and personnel policies
- developing a policy or procedure for search and retention
- ensuring that the Analysis of Variance for 2015 is completed to meet school annual planning and reporting requirements
- ensuring the school curriculum clearly provides careers education in Years 7 and 8.

## 7 Recommendations

ERO has identified a number of areas for development and has discussed with the board and principal the following areas:

- develop a robust governance policy framework and processes for regular review
- strengthen student achievement targets and supporting action, including clear schoolwide processes for monitoring and reporting how well school initiatives accelerate the progress of students at risk of poor educational outcomes
- review and develop a cohesive schoolwide curriculum, reflecting the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum*, guidelines for effective teaching, culturally responsive practices and increase students' ownership of learning
- continue to develop formative assessment practices, moderation and overall teacher judgements to better identify individual learning needs
- strengthen positive relationships with whānau Māori to support learning partnerships and strategic input into curriculum development and the future direction of the school
- complete the redevelopment of teacher appraisal to support improved teaching
- develop an internal evaluation framework to underpin school improvement.



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Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

30 May 2016

## About the school

Location	Dannevirke	
Ministry of Education profile number	2676	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	94	
Gender composition	Male 53, Female 41	
Ethnic composition	Māori	41
	Pākehā	50
	Pacific	2
	Other ethnic groups	1
Review team on site	March 2016	
Date of this report	30 May 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	April 2013
	Education Review	February 2010
	Education Review	February 2007