

**Marist Catholic School**  
**Herne Bay, Auckland**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review**  
**Report**

# Education Review Report: Marist Catholic School

The purpose of ERO's reports is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. ERO's reports are intended to be clear, concise, constructive and evaluative. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements.

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer. The report answers four key questions about the school.

## Findings

### 1 Context

**What are the important features of this school's context that have an impact on student learning?**

Marist Catholic School is a state integrated Catholic school that caters for students from new entrants through to Year 6. The proprietor, relevant authorities and the school community agreed that from 2011 the school would no longer provide for students in Years 7 and 8. This process has been appropriately managed and is likely to enable the school to accommodate anticipated roll growth.

Since ERO's last review in 2008 the ethnic composition of the school has changed considerably. The school reports that the Pacific roll has decreased from 52% to 34%, and the New Zealand European/Pākehā roll has increased from 37% to 53%. These figures indicate significant recent demographic changes in the school's community.

The school has identified four values that derive from the Marist charism, which underpins the life of the school. These are known as RICH values which refer to respect, integrity, courage and humility. The school's special character is integrated into school life and modelled by leaders and teachers.

The senior leadership team includes members who are new to their roles in 2011. They are led effectively by the principal and are enthusiastic and committed to their leadership roles. Staff report that they are very well supported by school leaders.

In 2008 ERO recommended that members of the board of trustees develop a shared understanding of their governance role and their relationship with management. This remains a significant priority for the school to address.

## **2 Learning**

### **How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?**

Students are making good progress. Most students are achieving at or above National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. School leaders and teachers use a wide range of assessment tools and approaches to enable them to make reliable judgements about student achievement. This information is very well used by school leaders and teachers to understand each child's strengths and to make decisions about programmes and support for students individually and across the school.

Since 2008 teachers have focused on communicating with students about their achievement levels and next steps for learning. They provide students with very good quality feedback that helps them to develop a sense of independence in progressing their learning. The level of students' engagement in learning is impressive.

All students make positive progress over time. Intensive, purposeful support is provided for children whose achievement is not at expected levels. Close monitoring and relevant support results in improved progress for these students. Teachers cater for the different ability levels within each class to ensure that all children are progressing appropriately in their learning.

The lived Marist values create a school tone that enables teachers and students to focus on learning. Decisions made by the leadership team focus on ensuring a positive school climate, promoting student engagement and continuing to raise achievement levels.

The school continues to foster a strong partnership with parents in learning. Parents receive very good quality information about their children's achievement and are encouraged to actively contribute to their child's learning and progress through goal setting and conferencing. They have many opportunities to be involved in the wider life of the school.

A next step for school leaders is to continue to develop ways to report achievement and self-review information so that implications for decisions are clear. This should better enable the board of trustees to respond and plan strategically.

### **How well are Māori students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?**

Currently, 11 students in the school identify as Māori. The Māori values of whanaungatanga, arohatanga and manaakitanga are highlighted in the school charter. These values, combined with the bicultural elements of the religious education curriculum and the increasing delivery of te reo Māori, show that Māori culture is valued in the school.

Parents/whānau are well involved in and informed about their children's learning. Māori students achieve as well as, or better than their peers, are highly engaged in learning, and are progressing well.

### 3 Curriculum

#### How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

Marist Catholic School's curriculum supports student learning well. The curriculum is underpinned by the school's special character and a focus on holistic learning.

The school curriculum has been comprehensively reviewed so that it aligns with the requirements of *The New Zealand Curriculum* while retaining the school's emphases on reading, writing, mathematics, the visual arts and religious education. Students also have opportunities to learn te reo Māori and Spanish. Participation in sporting and cultural activities provides further opportunities for students to develop skills, to achieve in a range of areas, and to enjoy school.

Teachers have high expectations and encourage students to strive and persist with their learning. The knowledge, skills and values associated with life-long learning, known as key competencies, are very well embedded in school practices. The curriculum is designed to result in students who are confident, caring, enthusiastic, inquiring, well-rounded and focused learners.

The school curriculum is increasingly focused on student input and is responsive to students' interests. This focus helps to ensure that learning experiences are highly meaningful to students. There are very good examples of students taking ownership of learning, initiating projects and demonstrating leadership. Inquiry learning is continuing to evolve well.

High quality teaching is evident in the school. Teachers foster supportive, inclusive relationships. They use strategies that engage and motivate students to focus and to think critically and creatively. The stimulating learning environments, and teachers' effective planning and resourcing, support students' active engagement in learning. All students, including Pacific and Māori students, benefit from these effective approaches to teaching and learning.

Senior leaders, well led by the principal, are competent and efficient curriculum managers. They continue to reflect on the integration of the curriculum for purposeful learning, and monitor coverage of learning areas. Senior leaders generate ongoing discussion about practice amongst staff, and provide them with very good levels of modelling and support. The board generously funds relevant professional learning and development for all staff.

The senior leadership team agrees that the next steps in promoting student learning are to:

- revisit the principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum*, and consider implications these may have for Marist School's curriculum;
- expand the planned review of information and communication technologies (ICT) to gauge how well ICT is used to support student learning; and
- support capable students to experience increased challenges in self-directed learning.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

ERO believes that the school will be well placed to further improve its performance once matters related to the governance of the school have been resolved.

Senior leaders follow a clear cycle of review. They continue to reflect on practice and systems and work collaboratively to make improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The principal has been highly responsive to requirements to implement *The New Zealand Curriculum* and National Standards. The board of trustees provides appropriate resourcing for improvements and is increasingly focused on the use of student achievement information to guide its decision making. The new data management system should help school leaders to manage and present data in ways that are useful to trustees.

### Area for Review and Development

ERO's 2008 report recommended that the board of trustees develop a shared understanding of the board's governance role and the relationship of the board with management. While there are recent indications of positive progress, this matter is not yet fully resolved.

The proactive and committed board chair has accessed, with trustees' agreement, external support to improve board operations. From February 2011 the board is receiving tailored support to address ongoing governance matters. This guidance is likely to assist the board to:

- understand its obligations as a good employer and act accordingly;
- develop a code of ethics and operate according to those principles;
- develop a policy and procedural framework that will provide better guidance for the separation of governance and operational matters; and
- understand the different roles of management and governance and act accordingly.

Improvements in these areas should assist the principal and board to develop a more productive, collaborative working relationship, and enable them to focus strategically on the future development of the school.

The current board and principal are keen to strengthen relationships and to further engage the community in the school. Trustees recognise that a concerted effort is needed by all board members to generate a culture shift, resolve matters, and improve practice within the board.

### Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. At the time of this review there was one international student attending the school. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

ERO's investigations confirmed that the school's self-review process for international students is thorough.

## Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed an ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- financial management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

In order to improve practice the board of trustees should ensure that:

- the school community is consulted about the full content and implementation of health education in the school; and
- procedures for managing EOTC (Education Outside the Classroom) are robust and reflect recent Ministry of Education guidelines.

## When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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



Richard Thornton  
National Manager Review Services  
Northern Region

11 May 2011

## About the School

Location	Herne Bay, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1360	
School type	Integrated Contributing Primary (Years 1 to 6)	
Decile <sup>1</sup>	7	
School roll	162	
Number of international students	1	
Gender composition	Girls 55% Boys 45%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā Māori Samoan Tongan Asian Other European Cook Island Fijian	48% 7% 20% 12% 6% 5% 1% 1%
Review team on site	March 2011	
Date of this report	11 May 2011	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review Education Review Discretionary Review	May 2008 December 2004 March 2001

<sup>1</sup> School deciles range from 1 to 10. Decile 1 schools draw their students from low socio-economic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrate schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides