



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

Catholic Schools Office

Kia mau ki te ako ko tou orange hoki ia

Proverbs 4:13

CATHOLIC SPECIAL CHARACTER EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

*Te Purongo Kaupapa Arotake Mo Nga Ahuatanga
Katorika*

**ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL,
PUKEKOHE**

16-18 MAY, 2017

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name:	St. Joseph's School
Address:	94 Seddon St, Pukekohe 2120 P.O. Box 1292, Pukekohe, 2340
School Type:	Full Primary for Boys and Girls Years 1-8
Principal:	Mrs Ursula Hall
Director of Religious Studies:	Mrs Noreen Meikle
Board of Trustees Chairperson:	Mr Aaron de Farias
Parish Priest:	Fr Robert Steele
Reviewers:	Colleen Gleeson Philip Mahoney
Accompanying Principal:	Mrs Carmel Platt
Current Roll:	378
Report Confirmed:	July 28, 2017

Introduction

St Joseph's School, Pukekohe welcomed and embraced the opportunity for review and development. The Board of Trustees, Principal, staff, parents, students and parish community warmly welcomed the reviewers and all shared openly their thoughts and opinions.

Situated south of Auckland in the Franklin District, the school is opposite the Parish Church of St Patrick, the presbytery, Parish hall and the residence of a small group of sisters from the Congregation of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM). Next to the school is the Parish cemetery.

Response to Areas for Development from the 2012 External Review

That the school provide more explicit links from the Mission Charism to the school's vision, Principles, values and the Mission statement and to share these with the Parent community.

- The Concept focus, in Term 1 each year, focuses on the Mission Charism and the identity of the school.
- A page on the school website has been established to explain the Charism of the Sisters of the Mission.
- The new Principal has a strong link with the Mission Sisters and her goal is to bring the Charism through every aspect of school life more fully.

That the Board of Trustees consider having a page on the school website where families can go for information, reports and a link to their wikispace.

- The Board of Trustees are named on their page of the website.
- The information page has most school documentation loaded.

For the annual self review of Special Catholic Character, the Board of Trustees may choose to look in depth at one aspect of the dimension being reviewed if it is an issue of concern.

- The Board of Trustees have continued to review a large number of areas in each dimension.
- To lessen the workload it is still suggested that the school choose one or two areas in each dimension to review each year. This will ensure the rigour of the review and make it more relevant to the school's needs.

To move the Pasifika wall display to a more visible space in the school for all to see.

- The Maori/Pasifika display has been updated with photographs of each child as well as names and it is now on display in the Information Centre.

The integrated quote featured in each Concept plan to be included in wall displays in each classroom and teachers to continually refer back to it throughout the term.

- All classrooms had the school Motto and the Mission statement clearly displayed.
- The teams should consider which statement for each term's concept will be the focus. Eg. The concept plan for Term 1, 2017 was headed with a number of options:
 - a version of the Vision statement "To be in right relationship with ourselves and others"
 - the Mission statement "Excellent education befitting our Catholic Character".
 - The enduring understanding – a quote from Colossians 3:13
 - A whakatauki – "Hold fast to your culture/ Kia mau ki to Maoritanga"

The Director of Religious Studies to observe a prayer session and a Religious Education lesson in each classroom each year.

- The Director of Religious Studies observes each teacher taking a Religious Education lesson in each classroom each year. This forms part of the teacher appraisal. She gives relevant feedback and feedforward to each teacher, verbally and in writing.

Catholic Community: Te Iwi Whanui Katorika

The extent to which the school is a Christian community where Gospel values are central, where faith is nourished, and where Christian celebration in the Catholic tradition is highly valued.

Areas of Success

St Joseph's School has a very strong Catholic spirituality. Faith underpins all that occurs at the school in the way the staff, students and parents pray together, relate to each other, welcome visitors and support each other and the wider community.

"Jesus is the unseen but ever present teacher in our classes. He is the model in our community and the inspiration of our teachers and children."

(2016 Principal's end of year report)

The school is evangelising to the students and their families, forming a link between school and Parish. The school proclaims the mission and Gospel of Jesus Christ and provides a place to encounter the living God. The school encourages all eligible children to join the Sacramental programmes delivered by the parish. One staff member was Baptised a Catholic in 2016 with the Director of Religious Studies as her God-mother. The Director of Religious Studies receives an extra management unit for organising a programme in the school for students wanting to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. This initiative has been successful in evangelising families in the 5.4 criteria of preference.

The Principal is a first-time Principal and began in the position at the end of January this year. She was previously the Deputy Principal of St Joseph's School for 13 years before taking the position of Deputy Principal at a local state school for 2 years. The Board of Trustees, Parish Priest and parents spoke highly of her commitment and loyalty to the school and were confident she was the right person to take the school forward. She is this year the recipient of the Jan Pratt Scholarship for Principals and is still considering her options for its use.

St Joseph's School has a long tradition and the school community are proud of their history. Many families have had generations through the school. Each stakeholder, spoken to by the reviewers, saw the main strengths of the school as Community and Heritage. The Mission charism is also a strength with two Sisters of the Mission living within the community and are still a presence in the school. One Sister volunteers to hear children read on a weekly basis and both Sisters come to morning tea with the staff once per month.

The Principal, Staff and Board of Trustees work to build stronger relationships with families, the Parish and the wider community. Parent participation is encouraged through an active PTFA who organise raising funds for the school and creating a sense of community. They meet eight times per year to organise fundraising events, and support for parents, students and teachers. An after school programme is run in the Parish centre mainly for the children from the school.

St Joseph's School is an authentic Catholic community which is evident in the following:

- Classroom prayer is varied and mainly student led, the children are reverent at this sacred time. Meditation is being practiced with children in some classrooms.
- Teachers ensure that the Gospel message in the Bible reading at morning prayers is understood and discussed.
- A clear vision of what a graduate from St Joseph's looks like.
- Prayer bags that go home with junior children to share prayer with their families. Rosary bags also go home through the month of October.
- Four classes are rostered to attend a weekly Mass on Friday mornings.
- School led Masses one Sunday per term as well as school led Masses for school celebrations and feast days.
- The annual Year 8 retreat and a biannual staff retreat.
- A beautiful reflection space in the school grounds.
- Staff prayers are held every Tuesday morning before school using the "Going Deeper" programme.
- The school has a strong partnership with the Southern Catholic Schools and are part of the Community of Learning with these schools.
- Partnership with the local state schools in the area, joining for sports and cultural events.
- The Principal and most other staff are members of the St Patrick's Parish community or other Parishes nearby.
- The school motto "To God our best and greatest" is visible in all classrooms and around the school buildings and grounds.

The School and Parish work closely together. The Parish Priest has morning tea with the staff each Thursday morning and then visits the classrooms rostered to attend Mass the next day to prepare readings, hymns and prayers with the teachers and children. The school supports the Sacramental Programme at the Parish. Rite 2 Reconciliation is provided for the school during Lent and Advent each year. Some of the teachers belong to the St Patrick's Parish and participate in the Parish programmes and Ministries. Parish and school personnel work closely together and share resources and facilities, they have a strong commitment to the common good. The school is seen by the parishioners as the Parish school. Currently, a teacher aide is a member of the Parish Council and a Board of Trustees attends each monthly meeting. The Principal has just resigned from the Parish Council after seven years of service. The Assistant Principal is the president of the Catholic Women's League. The Parish has an organised youth group for Y7 and 8 and secondary students mainly made up of boys and involves outdoor activities. The Parish newsletter is displayed in the school foyer.

"Having a parish school is an important part of having an active church".

(Parish survey response)

The school recently participated in the Parish Mission run by the Catholic Discipleship College who, with their chaplain, visited each classroom and later took the school through a prayer and adoration service in the school hall. They also led a staff meeting in the person of St Joseph, the school patron.

Opportunities for Development

The values of the school are *"To love, to learn, to lead and to be loyal for life"*. The school has aligned these values with the New Zealand Curriculum values and Gospel stories. They are displayed in classrooms and built into learning programmes. "Caught being Good" slips are given out by students and staff and 'Values' awards are presented at assemblies. It is suggested that the school community review the values, along with the Motto, Mission Statement, Vision Statement, the Mission Charism values and the Catholic virtues to provide cohesion, a shared understanding and long term vision for the school.

Prayer bags are being used throughout the junior school, it is suggested that they be re-established across the school as a further promotion of prayer with the families in the homes. Prayer sessions have been observed in classrooms on an irregular basis. This needs to be rostered so all classrooms have a turn. It was suggested that team leaders could be delegated to observe their teams' prayers or the Director of Religious Studies take her class with her to prayers in each room.

Pastoral Care – Manaakitanga

The extent to which the school community nurtures, supports and cares for individuals.

Areas of Success

St Joseph's School nurtures, supports and cares for all individuals within its community. As visitors to the school, the reviewers experienced warm and generous hospitality from all members of the school community. The relationships modelled by the adults in the school community are reflected in the happy relationships of the children. Some staff have been teaching at the school for many years. The support staff, spoken to by the reviewers, felt valued and thought that communication was open and transparent. They work with the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and are asked for their opinion and acknowledged for their work. The Board of Trustees, parents and the Principal acknowledged the teachers as vocational, collegial and committed teachers. At the beginning of 2017 a teacher on staff died. The staff rallied around and supported each other and the grieving family.

"It is a friendly staff who pull together in times of need and rejoice in times of celebration. We work together and we care about each other. Our community feels like a family".

(Staff questionnaire response)

St Joseph's School is very responsive with pastoral care. The Principal and staff ensure that all needs are met. The reviewers were told of many situations where genuine care and support was provided. Uniforms, stationery, food, transport, petrol vouchers, clothing, bedding and financial assistance are some of the ways families are supported. A breakfast programme is run by a volunteer and a Homework club is run by teachers and parent volunteers in the Information Centre after school, two days per week, with access to Computers for parents and students.

The school has an inclusive environment where all children are acknowledged for their special God-given talents. The school provides Reading Recovery, ESOL, Rainbow Reading, Early Words, Clickr, Talk to Learn and STEPS. The school caters for a number of ORRS funded students and students with special needs. Teacher Aides have training on the disabilities they work with.

The St Joseph's School community recognises the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the status of Maori as Tangata Whenua. There was evidence of Te Reo in some classroom displays. Prayers are said in Maori across the school. The Maori community are consulted each term and though this whanau hui they have a strong voice. A Kapa Haka group is well established, training with an outside tutor once per week and performing at school and community events. Their uniform was specially made with the Mission Sisters emblem on it. A Mass with a Maori focus is held annually in Maori Language Week. A Maori Education Plan is to be developed in 2017. On the Maori/Pasifika wall display the Maori students are identified by their iwi.

The school includes many cultures. They are working with the small number of Pasifika families to implement a Pasifika plan. The Sign of the Cross and prayers are said in different languages at Masses and in classrooms. The Pasifika Education Plan was established in 2016 through professional development and consultation with the Pasifika parents. A Pasifika Komiti meets each term. Children are proud of their cultures and enjoy sharing it with others. They are all depicted on the display map of the Pacific in the Information Centre with the flag of the country and the children's photos. They are all acknowledged through Cultural days, events and Language Weeks.

St Joseph's School provides many opportunities for the students to develop an awareness of others, of issues in and beyond their immediate community and an empathy for those who are hurt and suffering. They raise money for Caritas charities, donate food and goods for the St Vincent de Paul foodbank and have mufti days or fundraising projects for countries in crisis. The annual Mission Day is a tradition in the school. It is a student organised event to raise money for the RNDM missions around the world, particularly for the RNDM sister schools in Vietnam and India.

St Joseph's School provides leadership opportunities throughout the school. All children are given the opportunity to lead prayer and act as monitors in their own classrooms. The Year 8 students apply for roles as School Leaders, House Captains and Peer Mediators. Others serve as monitors for the hall, bell, AV, flag, Tech Angels, office, wet days, road patrol, buddy readers and sports shed. Year 8 students attend the National Young Leaders Day and get leadership training from the Principal. The children are involved in many service areas within the community such as Christmas gifts for the elderly, Tea and coffee making for parish and school events, Altar servers, Christmas Carol night, the graduation dinner service, the Anointing Mass once per month.

The happy, positive relationships and calm learning-focussed environment of the school community removes most causes of disruptive behaviour and creates in children a willingness to co-operate. A restorative justice approach is used for behaviour management. The Behaviour Management Plan is thorough and provides guidelines for every situation.

Religious Education – Te Whakaakoranga Whakapono

The extent to which the school helps to fulfil the teaching Mission of the Church.

Areas of Success

It has been 11 years since the Director of Religious Education was appointed to St Joseph's School. She is released for nine release days per term during which time she does observations of the teaching and learning of Religious Education in each classroom, giving verbal and written feedback to the teachers which forms part of their appraisal process. She gives guidance and support to teachers and maintains all Religious Education resources.

The Director of Religious Studies liaises with the Parish and with the Religious Education team. She organises all full school Masses. The Religious Education team members are rostered to provide wall displays in the school's common areas. The Director of Religious

Studies ensures that information is shared between parish and school. She writes to all 5.4 criteria preference families annually and invites them to attend classes in preparation for Baptism which she facilitates in her release time. This programme has been very successful and works in conjunction to the Parish Sacramental programme. The Director of Religious Studies is also part of the music team for Sacramental programme celebrations and school Masses.

Religious Education is planned consistently across the school in teams. The school is trialling a Concept based approach to the curriculum and have developed each Concept through the Special Catholic Character of the school. The reviewers found this to be working well across the school and, with the use of SOLO Taxonomy, teachers were planning relevant and creative lessons. Teachers commented that there has been an increase in student enthusiasm for Religious Education since the start of the Concept based approach and that students are extending themselves further than they would have in the past. Years 5 to 8 are using one-to-one devices as a tool for learning. Classrooms were vibrant and the Religious Education displays were current and relevant. Some teachers were using creative ways to respond to learning. A set of rubrics for each strand at each year level ensured consistent assessment information across the school.

St Joseph's School includes the "Myself and Others" module when planning Health, Physical Education and Inquiry topics to ensure a Catholic perspective. The teachers provide a Pubertal Change programme, for Year 7 and 8 boys and girls, using resource people in the community when required.

As well as Te Reo Maori the school also provides French, Spanish and Sign Language. The school has a "no rubbish" policy where children are encouraged to take their rubbish home. The grounds are tended by the Enrichment Team. The food grown is sent home to families or sold to staff. "Inspiration Panels" were designed and made by students for the gardens. They have many plans to enhance the outside environment in the future and have a 10 year development plan for outdoor education. St Joseph's School have a choir and Pasifika dance group and one teacher takes a ukulele group.

Professional development is provided for teachers through Cluster meetings attendance and staff meetings at the beginning of each Strand. Four teachers have Endorsed Leadership Level Certification, five have Leadership level, three teachers have Classroom level and all other teachers are working towards Classroom level. The Director of Religious Studies attends all professional development provided by the Diocese for the role. The Principal and Senior Management Team attend all Auckland Catholic Primary Principals' professional development opportunities. The Board of Trustees provides budget and opportunity for all teachers to work towards their NZQA qualifications in Religious Education. In 2017 all teachers have registered to complete RE502 "Introduction to Spirituality" through The Catholic Institute. The staff have been involved with the Catholic Discipleship College's Mission. All permanent staff are expected to complete the "Understanding Sexuality Course".

Communication from St Joseph's School and the school community is through:

- The school newsletter section 'Principal Ponderings' where the Principal shares her faith through messages from Euphrasie Barbier
- Emails,
- The weekly "Home Learning" sheet
- Team newsletters each term which outline the Religious Education programme.
- An informative and user friendly school website which includes messages from the Board of Trustees, PTA, all school notices and a very good section on the Mission Charism and history of the school.
- Parent information evenings,
- The Board of Trustees puts a message in the 'Parish Communicator' and their annual report is published in the school magazine.
- Parents are able to access their children's work through class blogs and the class Google Classroom and Seesaw.
- The whanau hui and Pasifika Executive meetings are held each term.

Opportunities for Development

The school is in a transition period of moving from traditional teaching, learning and assessment to a more modern pedagogy. Much of the learning is teacher led and dominated. The next steps for the school is to ensure that a 'teaching as inquiry' approach to Religious Education is used to differentiate teaching so that students' individual needs are catered for.

It is suggested that the Board of Trustees place a message in the school newsletter at least once per term.

Stewardship and Compliance – Tuaritanga me te Hanganga Ture

The extent to which the Board of Trustees provides systems and processes to govern and comply with the school's Integration Agreement.

Areas of Success

Some new members joined the Board of Trustees at the recent elections. They see the Special Catholic Character as being fundamental to all decision making. The Board does not see the Special Catholic Character as being solely the Proprietor Representative's responsibility, they all own it. The Board is representative of the community and have participated in training with School Trustees Association and the Catholic Education Services.

The Catholic Special Character policy reflects the commitment to upholding the Special Character of the school. The school's internal Special Catholic review process is being

discussed to ensure a relevant, rigorous and manageable process is undertaken for each review.

All documentation supplied prior to the review was well presented and reflected the Special Catholic Character of the school. Very comprehensive performance management and induction processes are in place.

Opportunities for Development

The Board of Trustees have begun to read and discuss the Bishop's document "The Catholic Education of School Age Children" (2014 Bishop's Conference) in depth and to use this document when reviewing policy and writing documents.

When reviewing the NAG 1-6 policies it is suggested that the Board of Trustees integrate language from the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching and 'The Catholic Education of School-Aged Children' throughout each policy to ensure each has a Catholic 'flavour'. The Principal was investigating other ways of presenting policies and will continue to work through this with the Board of Trustees.

A preference audit was carried out as part of this review for students in Years 1 to 4 on April 11, 2017.

	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	Non Preference	Total
Y4	30	1	7	8	3 (1 pending)	49
Y3	29	1	14	5	3	52
Y2	38	3	13	6	4 (1 pending)	64
Y1	31	2	2	5	3 (all pending)	43
Total	128	7	36	24	13	208

The Years 1 to 4 roll is 55% of the total roll of 378. For the purpose of this review we have chosen this cohort as a sample.

The maximum roll of St Joseph's School is 435, which allows 22 non preference students to comply with the legislation across the whole school. This table shows that 13 students are non preference, 5 of whom are pending enrolment into Baptismal programme, throughout approximately half of the school. 8 of these students are confirmed non preference. If the 5 students are Baptised, in the near future, the school will comply with the 5% non-preference allowance.

In this cohort, 65% of preference students are 5.1, the 43 students in the 5.2 and 5.3 criteria should be invited to join the Sacramental programmes in future. The school has a successful programme of inviting the 5.4 students to prepare for Baptism, it is suggested that this programme be extended to those families in 5.2 and 5.3 as well.

The school has 12 'tagged/S65' teachers, 1 short of the 13 they are required to have. The next permanent teacher position advertised must be advertised as a S65 position.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the school ensures that every student has a preference form which states a definite criteria at the time of enrolment, and that no non preference students are enrolled until the students pending have received Baptism and a check of students in Years 5 to 8 ensures that the school can clearly state the number of non preference students throughout the school.

Conclusion

St Joseph's School provides a happy, cohesive Catholic learning environment. It has a long history steeped in Catholic tradition. The school has committed leadership, loyal staff, a good connection with the Parish, supportive families and children who love coming to school. They provide quality teaching and learning as stated in their Mission Statement:

"Excellent education befitting out Catholic Character".

The senior children interviewed by the reviewers are living testament that the school is achieving what the community aspires to in their Vision Statement:

"To be in right relationship with God, with ourselves and others and with the environment/creation"

The school provides many opportunities for each child to have a genuine and ongoing encounter with Christ, to grow in knowledge and understanding of Christ's teaching and to live a life of Christian witness within the Catholic Church.



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