

ERO External Evaluation

St Joseph's School (Upper Hutt), Upper Hutt

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for students. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

School Context

St Joseph's School, located in Upper Hutt, provides education for students in Years 1 to 8. At the time of this review, the roll was 430 of whom 19% identify as Māori and 15% of Pacific heritages. A significant proportion of students are English language learners, and come from a range of cultures.

The overarching vision is for students to have 'faith in the future, love of learning and love of life'. This is underpinned by the DRIVE values of: determination, respect, creativity, love and excellence which are apparent in the actions around the school.

The school charter, prioritises providing equitable opportunities for all students to successfully access the curriculum. Annual targets focus on raising achievement levels in boys writing.

Leaders regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- attendance.

Professional development in 2018 was focused on raising achievement in writing through the 'Accelerating Literacy Learning' initiative (A.L.L). This continues to be a focus for 2019.

There have been significant staff changes in 2018 including the appointment of the principal. Long standing and more recently elected members make up the board of trustees.

The school is a member of the Upper Hutt Cluster of schools.

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

The school achievement data for 2018 shows most students achieved at or above the school's expectations in reading. A large majority achieve in writing and mathematics.

By the end of Year 8 most students achieve well in reading and writing and the majority in mathematics.

The school has yet to achieve equity for Māori children compared to Pākehā in reading, writing and mathematics. Addressing significant disparity for boys in writing and some disparity in reading is an urgent priority.

Pacific children's achievement is comparable to their peers in writing. Further work is required for these students to experience equitable outcomes in reading and mathematics.

Most Asian students consistently achieve well in these subjects.

1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

The school's reported data for 2018, analysed by ERO, shows that a few students accelerated their learning in reading and mathematics. Just under half of children participating in the A.L.L initiative accelerated their progress in writing.

Learners with additional needs, including English language learners, are identified and supported to progress their learning through appropriate programmes.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Trustees, leaders and teachers are deliberately establishing and strengthening systems, practices and processes to improve equitable and excellent outcomes for all children.

The leadership team is purposefully fostering a positive culture for staff and students and establishing a supportive learning environment aligned to meeting the school's vision. Respectful, positive relationships and an inclusive and caring community of learning are evident.

An individualised approach to promoting students' wellbeing and learning is highly evident across all levels of the school. External expertise supports this provision. Authentic opportunities are available for older students to develop leadership capability.

Revised assessment practices support teachers to gather and collate a suitable range of assessment information to inform teaching and learning. Useful systems for identifying, measuring and reporting progress and outcomes for these learners are being embedded. There is a strong focus on promoting consistent teaching practice across the school to enhance the response to student needs.

The principal has a highly collaborative, strongly improvement-focused leadership approach. This collaborative approach and professional learning promotes leadership development and improved teacher capability. Teachers are challenged to continually improve their practice through the recently updated appraisal and inquiry process.

2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Trustees, leaders and teachers should continue to embed systems, processes and practices, in consultation with whānau, to better inform decision making and strategic direction to improve equitable and excellent outcomes for all children.

Improving the use of student achievement information data through ongoing analysis, monitoring and timely reporting of progress and acceleration is required. This should assist trustees, leaders and staff to more clearly know the impact of teaching programmes and interventions on learner outcomes, particularly those at risk of underachieving.

Leaders have identified and ERO's evaluation agrees that a key next step is to review the curriculum to better meet the needs of students and reflect the aspirations of the community. Continuing to develop expectations for effective teaching practice across all learning areas should better promote positive student outcomes. In consultation with community, ongoing development should include:

- valued outcomes for Māori learners, as determined by whānau Māori
- an effective response to Pacific families' aspirations for their children
- identification of expectations for effective culturally responsive practices across all learning areas
- clear articulation of a localised curriculum, that provides guidance and expectations for teaching and learning.

In addition, ERO and leaders agree that play-based practices in the junior school require ongoing development, to better support children to challenge themselves as capable learners.

A comprehensive range of reviews has supported trustees, leaders and teachers to determine schoolwide priorities and inform decision making for ongoing improvement. This has led to well-considered changes to systems, processes and practices. A key next step is to develop a shared understanding of effective inquiry and internal evaluation. This should enable leaders to measure which initiatives and practices have had the most significant impact on raising achievement, and use these findings to inform strategic direction and decision making.

3 Other Matters

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the *Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016* (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

At the time of this review there were three international students attending the school.

International students are integrated into the school community. They achieve and progress well. There is relevant learning support through English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Student's social and pastoral needs are appropriately monitored and responded to.

4 Board Assurance on Legal Requirements

Before the review, the board 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
- finance
- 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 and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

5 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Developing

[ERO's Framework: Overall School Performance is available on ERO's website.](#)

Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- leadership that promotes improvements in school performance and achievement
- relational trust fostering engagement of staff to contribute to schoolwide success
- systems and processes that focus on responding to individual learning and wellbeing needs.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are in:

- strengthening analysis of achievement information, by trustees, leaders and teachers, to systematically address in-school disparities, particularly for boys
- a school curriculum that provides expectations for effective teaching practice and better responds to students' identity culture and language, and the local context
- building a shared understanding of internal evaluation practices, to better understand the impact of programmes and initiatives on acceleration and achievement for learners at risk of not achieving.



Alan Wynyard
Director Review and Improvement Services Southern
Southern Region
6 May 2019

About the school

Location	Upper Hutt												
Ministry of Education profile number	3011												
School type	Full Primary (Year 1-8)												
School roll	430												
Gender composition	Boys 58%, Girls 42%												
Ethnic composition	<table> <tr> <td>Māori</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NZ European/Pākehā</td> <td>34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pacific</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MELAA</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic groups</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </table>	Māori	19%	NZ European/Pākehā	34%	Pacific	15%	Asian	23%	MELAA	7%	Other ethnic groups	2%
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Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes												
Provision of Māori medium education	No												
Review team on site	March 2019												
Date of this report	6 May 2019												
Most recent ERO report(s)	<table> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>March 2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education Review</td> <td>February 2016</td> </tr> </table>	Education Review	March 2018	Education Review	February 2016								
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