

St Francis School (Thames) Education Review

- 1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation
- 2 St Francis School Thames's Curriculum
- 3 Agreed priority
- 4 Future Action
- About The School
- Community Page

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1 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Confirmed Education Review Report: St Francis School Thames

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

St Francis Catholic School caters for 107 students in Years 1 to 8, 18 of whom identify as Māori. It is located in attractive grounds in the town of Thames. The special Catholic character is highly visible throughout the school and positive relationships prevail with the wider church and town community.

Achievement information shows that in reading, writing and mathematics, students, including Māori students, are achieving above nationally expected levels.

Teachers and students enjoy positive relationships with one another. Students demonstrate high levels of cooperation and responsibility in classrooms and in the playground. They enjoy their learning and appreciate the work that teachers do to support them. In classrooms observed by ERO, students were fully engaged and participating in their learning. There are high expectations for student conduct and effective systems are in place to positively manage student behaviour. Classroom environments are inclusive, attractive and well resourced. Students participate in a range of interesting opportunities that include sporting, cultural and outdoor education activities.

Teachers plan learning programmes that cater for individual students' levels and needs. They use a range of effective teaching strategies to motivate and engage students. Parents are actively included in the life of the school. They have access to detailed information about their child's achievement and next steps in their learning.

The skilful and experienced principal is well supported by a knowledgeable deputy principal. They continue to provide staff, students and families with stable and visionary leadership and foster a climate of respect and trust. The board of trustees is focused on school safety, development and positive outcomes for students. The school is well placed to implement the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Good use is made of self review processes to assist decision-making about ongoing development and review.

Next steps identified by ERO and the school include further integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into the school curriculum and fully implementing Ka Hikitia (The New Zealand Māori Education Strategy).

Future Action

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.

2 St Francis School Thames's Curriculum

How effectively does the curriculum of St Francis School Thames promote student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?

The St Francis School curriculum is effectively promoting student learning, engagement, progress and achievement. Teachers use an appropriate range of assessment tools and strategies to gather information about student achievement and progress. This data shows that in reading, writing and mathematics students are achieving above national expectations. The data also shows that Māori students are achieving as well as non-Māori.

School context and self review

The special Catholic character is highly evident throughout the life of the school and its curriculum. The school enjoys a strong and supportive relationship with the parish and wider Catholic community. Recent professional development and collaborative discussion about the implementation of National Standards have provided useful opportunities for teachers to work alongside colleagues from other local schools to strengthen teaching effectiveness. The school makes good use of effective self-review processes in order to make decisions about ongoing development and improvement.

Areas of strength

Teaching and learning: Students are being provided with high-quality opportunities to be successful with their learning. These include:

- clear and high expectations for student learning and behaviour;
- well-resourced and presented classrooms that promote student learning and celebrate student achievement;
- good use of achievement information and a wide range of effective teaching strategies; and
- many opportunities for students and teachers to reflect on their learning together.

Leading and managing: The skilful and experienced principal continues to provide staff, students and families with stable and visionary leadership. She maintains a focus amongst teachers on professional learning, guides the board of trustees with extensive support and keeps families well informed about school development and direction.

Governance: Effective governance is evident in:

- the clear, shared and highly visible school vision and values;

- an approach to strategic planning that clearly documents school direction and development;
- trustees' sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities; and
- decision making that is based on carefully analysed student achievement information and relevant consultation with the community.

Areas for development and review

Information and communication technologies (ICT): The school has identified and ERO agrees that a next step for school development is the further integration of ICT in teaching and learning. Consideration should be given to making more effective use of existing ICT infrastructure to enhance student skills, research and inquiry.

Embedding professional knowledge: While recent professional development has impacted positively on teaching practice, teachers should now consider placing greater emphasis on acknowledging and including students' individual strengths and cultures. This is likely to support students to have increased ownership of the teaching and learning process. This is consistent with and includes the implementation of the full intent of Ka Hikitia (The New Zealand Māori Education Strategy).

3 Agreed priority

ERO and the board of trustees agree that the next stages of school development should focus on: continuing to embed the professional knowledge gained through recent professional development.

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of St Francis School Thames 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 legal obligations related to:

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

During the review, ERO looked at the school's documentation, including policies, procedures and records. ERO sampled recent use of procedures and ERO also checked elements of the following five areas that 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; and
- attendance.

4 Future Action

ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years.

Richard Thornton
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

21 December 2010

About The School

Location	Thames
Ministry of Education profile number	1945
School type	Full Primary
Decile [1]	7
School roll	107
Gender composition	Girls 57% Boys 43%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 66% Māori 17% Other European 8% Chinese 3% South-East Asian 2% Other 4%
Review team on site	November 2010
Date of this review	21 December 2010
Previous three ERO reports	Education Review June 2008 Education Review May 2005 Education Review May 2002

[\[1\]](#) School deciles range from one to ten. Decile one schools draw their students from low socioeconomic 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 integrated 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.

Community Page

21 December 2010

To the Parents and Community of St Francis School Thames

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on St Francis School Thames.

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Achievement information shows that in reading, writing and mathematics, students, including Māori students, are achieving above nationally expected levels.

Teachers and students enjoy positive relationships with one another. Students demonstrate high levels of cooperation and responsibility in classrooms and in the playground. They enjoy their learning and appreciate the work that teachers do to support them. In classrooms observed by ERO, students were fully engaged and participating in their learning. There are high expectations for student conduct and effective systems are in place to positively manage student behaviour. Classroom environments are inclusive, attractive and well resourced. Students participate in a range of interesting opportunities that include sporting, cultural and outdoor education activities.

Teachers plan learning programmes that cater for individual students' levels and needs. They use a range of effective teaching strategies to motivate and engage students. Parents are actively included in the life of the school. They have access to detailed information about their child's achievement and next steps in their learning.

The skilful and experienced principal is well supported by a knowledgeable deputy principal. They continue to provide staff, students and families with stable and visionary leadership and foster a climate of respect and trust. The board of trustees is focused on school safety, development and positive outcomes for students. The school is well placed to implement the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Good use is made of self review processes to assist decision-making about ongoing development and review.

Next steps identified by ERO and the school include further integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into the school curriculum and fully implementing Ka Hikitia

(The New Zealand Māori Education Strategy).

Future Action

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Review Coverage

This report provides an evaluation of how effectively the school's curriculum promotes student learning - engagement, progress and achievement. ERO's evaluation takes account of the school's previous reporting history and is based on:

- what is known about student achievement information, including the achievement of Māori and Pacific students;
- decisions made to improve student achievement using assessment and selfreview information; and
- teaching strategies and programmes implemented to give effect to the school's curriculum.

ERO also gathers information during the review to contribute to its national reports. The national reports are published on ERO's website.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, www.ero.govt.nz.

Richard Thornton
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

General Information about Reviews

About ERO

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

About ERO Reviews

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve educational achievement in schools; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

Review Focus

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting integrates the following:

- school curriculum;
- national evaluation topics – contribute to the development of education policies and their effective implementation; and
- the Board Assurance Statement, including student and staff health and safety.

ERO's review is responsive to the school's context. When ERO reviews a school, it takes into account the characteristics of the community from which it draws its students, its aspirations for its young people, and other relevant local factors.

ERO also builds on the school's own self-review information. ERO is interested in how a school monitors the progress of its students and aspects of school life and culture, and how it uses this information to improve student learning.

This helps ERO to answer the major evaluation question for reviews:

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?

Areas for Development and Review

ERO reports include areas for development and review to support on-going improvement by identifying priorities. Often the school will have identified these matters through its own self review and already plans further development in those areas.