

St Patrick's Catholic School (Taupo) Education Review

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About the School

Location	Taupō	
Ministry of Education profile number	1750	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	223	
Gender composition	Boys 58% Girls 42%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	63%
	Asian	14%
	Māori	14%
	Other	7%
	Pacific	2%
Review team on site	February 2014	
Date of this report	28 April 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2011
	Education Review	May 2008
	Education Review	January 2005

The Purpose of an ERO Report

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. 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.

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1 Context

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

St Patrick's Catholic School is located in Taupō and caters for students in Years 1 to 8. Students are drawn from the local Taupō area and surrounding districts. At the time of this ERO review, the roll was 223, of whom 14 percent identify as Māori. A similar percentage of students are from the Philippines.

The school's special Catholic character continues to underpin all aspects of school culture and practice. Students benefit from the emphasis placed on building self esteem and confidence, and providing service to others. A collegial approach, which includes staff, students and parents, ensures school values are well understood and effectively implemented.

The school has responded positively to areas for improvement in the 2011 ERO review. Relevant professional development has been undertaken in writing and numeracy. School leaders have also reviewed leadership structures and there have been three new appointments to the senior leadership team. Since the 2011 ERO review several new members have been elected to the board of trustees and there is a new chairperson.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

Leaders at the school make effective use of achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement. The school's achievement data indicates that a significant majority of students, including Māori, are achieving at and above the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Many students participating in support programmes are making accelerated progress in their learning.

Assessment information is used to develop annual goals to further raise students' achievement levels. The board of trustees is well informed about school-wide achievement and trustees use the information to inform and prioritise resourcing decisions.

Teachers use a range of assessment tools to gather information about achievement and progress and make good use of this information to inform planning for groups and individual students. They actively inquire into, and reflect on, their practices for accelerating the achievement of students achieving below National Standards. Teachers are successfully using evidence from research and shared practice to implement innovative strategies to further improve outcomes for these students. It would be beneficial for the school to review the suitability and range of assessment tools used to make overall teacher judgements about student progress and achievement.

Students benefit from a range of effective learning strategies that support the school's aim for them to develop as confident, connected, creative contributors. Teachers share expectations for learning, enabling students to understand what they need to do to be successful. Students' understanding could be further developed by supporting their input into setting and assessing goals, and identifying next steps for learning.

3 Curriculum

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

The school curriculum effectively promotes and supports student learning. There is a particular focus on literacy, numeracy and religious education. The school has made an effort to include knowledge and guardianship of the local environment in the curriculum. Information and communication technologies (ICT) are increasingly used as a tool for learning, and a recent initiative has been for Years 7 and 8 students to have their own ICT tools for learning. Students have access to a good range of extra-curricular activities including sport, culture, music, and education outside the classroom.

Teachers have high expectations for students' learning and behaviour. ERO observed some high-quality practices that included:

- using learning contexts relevant to students, and building on prior learning
- providing students with time to reflect and discuss their ideas with their learning buddies
- supporting students to develop inquiry and research skills
- modelling and encouraging positive interactions and communication, underpinned by the school's virtues programme.

A feature of the curriculum is the emphasis placed on developing students' knowledge of God and a greater understanding of the Catholic faith. Students and families participate in many activities and events that reflect the school's special character.

The school operates a safe and inclusive culture, where diversity is valued. A particular feature of the school is the respectful, trusting and caring relationships among students, teachers, school leaders and families. These relationships create a positive, calm climate for learning, promoting students' sense of belonging and wellbeing. ERO observed high levels of student engagement. Senior students take responsibility for younger students through individual and class buddy systems, as well as in the playground. There is a strong sense of caring and family in the school.

Parents spoken to by ERO appreciate the open communication and responsiveness of school leaders and staff. Regular parent education meetings about numeracy and literacy provide an opportunity for families to be well informed. Twice-yearly written reports and student-led conferences enable students, parents and teachers to share their aspirations and develop goals for student learning. The school also involves its community through a pre-school music group and a structured transition to school programme.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

There are a variety of activities and practices that support Māori to experience success as Māori. The school includes waiata, karakia and kapa haka in its curriculum, and all students participated in a recent marae visit. Staff have undertaken professional development through local Tūwharetoa iwi initiatives, and the aspirations of Māori families are sought through an annual hui and informal face-to-face discussions. Tuakana-teina relationships are strongly promoted through the school's buddy and leadership systems.

School leaders and ERO agree there is a need to strengthen bicultural practices by:

- increasing the visibility of te reo and tikanga Māori within the school
- defining and planning for success for Māori, as Māori, in consultation with the Māori community.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance because:

- trustees are committed to effectively governing the school
- comprehensive school policies and procedures provide clear expectations and guidelines about school practices
- self review is used to monitor and improve school practices focused on improving outcomes for students
- the principal continues to provide strong professional leadership and is well supported by an experienced and knowledgeable leadership team
- there is a collegial team approach to teaching and learning, with a commitment to ongoing improvement
- families are very supportive of the school and an active Parent, Teacher and Friend Association (PTFA) provides valuable pastoral care and fundraising.

Areas for review and development

The school and ERO agree that the next steps for ongoing development are to:

- promote teaching and learning practices school-wide that strengthen student ownership of their learning
- ensure assessment tools used to make overall teacher judgements about achievement provide relevant, valuable data for teachers and students, to effectively inform learning and teaching.

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:

- 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 student achievement:

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

The school has consulted with the community regarding student safety and sexuality programmes. They must now adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum, at least once in every two years, after consultation with the school community.

[Education Act 1989, s 60 B]

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

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28 April 2014