



**Faith City School
Whanganui**

Confirmed

Education Review Report

Education Review Report

Faith City School

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. The report answers four key questions about the school.

Findings

1 Context

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

Faith City School, formerly known as Faith Academy, is a state integrated primary school in Whanganui. The roll comprises 148 students in Years 1 to 8. Thirty percent identify as Māori and 11% as Pacific.

The school's special character is based on the motto 'To learn, grow and serve the Lord'. Closely aligned with this philosophy is a set of values and principles that guide expectations, routines and relationships schoolwide. Faith City School is a Health Promoting School.

Leaders and the board of trustees have responded well to the November 2012 ERO report. Areas identified for further development have been addressed successfully and a strong focus on ongoing improvement is evident.

2 Learning

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

Leaders, teachers and trustees use achievement information effectively to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement.

An appropriate range of reliable assessment data is gathered. This informs teachers' overall judgements about students' levels of achievement in relation to the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. To be assured of the accuracy of these judgements, teachers have conducted a robust review of moderation processes. In addition to internal checking, they confer with other schools in a local cluster, bringing samples of student work to discuss and reach agreement about quality.

Students who are at risk of not achieving at expected levels are clearly identified. Appropriate schoolwide targets are set to accelerate the progress of groups and individuals. The current priorities for learning support involve strategies to improve senior mathematics and junior literacy.

Leaders and teachers use achievement information to find strengths and weaknesses in each student's learning. Specific strategies are then planned and implemented to support, extend and enhance progress. Achievement is closely monitored over time, and the impact of strategies to enhance learning is evaluated.

Leaders provide well-analysed achievement information to the board. Trends and patterns are clearly reported for discussion, and decisions about funding initiatives to promote student learning are evidence-based. Information reported to the board shows that targeted strategies successfully accelerate the progress of identified learners.

The junior school focus on literacy is successfully promoted through phonics teaching and the Jump Start programme. This early intervention initiative was developed by the school in response to its goal to accelerate the progress of five year-olds at risk of poor learning outcomes. A systematic, carefully targeted approach is evident, resulting in significant improvement to the achievement levels of these learners.

Engaging parents and whānau as partners in students' learning is a strategic priority. Progress and achievement are regularly and clearly reported to parents and whānau. Three-way conferences between students, teachers and parents further strengthen links between home and school. Next steps for learning are discussed and ideas shared about how parents can support their child's progress.

The percentage of students meeting National Standards has increased since the previous ERO review and exceeds national rates. Māori students generally achieve at similar levels to their peers in the school. Weaker areas are known about and responded to appropriately.

There are some small disparities in the achievement of Pacific students, and these are consistently identified and addressed.

3 Curriculum

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

Recently reviewed values, principles and key competencies align well with the school's special character and *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

Leaders are continuing to review the curriculum. They recognise that aspects of teaching and learning programmes are yet to be fully developed and implemented. These relate to increased integration of learning areas, more effective use of digital technologies and greater use of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori. Leaders have identified the need to improve in these areas and the school's strategic and annual plans include actions to further develop them.

Leaders provide useful guiding documents for literacy and mathematics and articulate clear expectations for teaching and learning. ERO's observations saw these guidelines well enacted in classrooms. Opportunities for student-led learning are increasing.

A strong focus on students' wellbeing is evident schoolwide. Positive student learning and behaviour are affirmed through an award system that is aligned to key competencies. The climate for learning reflects shared understanding of what is expected and valued. Relationships between teachers and students and among students are warm, respectful and cooperative.

A heightened awareness and celebration of cultural diversity are evident. The board has engaged an external facilitator to build teachers' and students' knowledge of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori. This programme is in its second year of implementation and its impact is increasingly demonstrated in classroom routines and practices.

Teachers work together effectively as a team. This collegial approach is underpinned by their shared commitment to ongoing improvement in student outcomes and their openness to positive change. They inquire systematically into the effectiveness of teaching strategies used to raise student achievement and are well supported to improve their practice.

New entrants and their parents and whānau receive sound guidance and support before and after they start school. Similar processes take place when students leave for secondary education.

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

Māori students experience an environment in which their culture, language and local history are highly valued and respected.

The school has successfully introduced initiatives to increase Māori students' engagement and success as Māori. Staff acknowledge that they have just begun to fulfil this long-term aspiration, and express their commitment to further building their own capability and cultural competencies.

All students and teachers learn and regularly practice waiata, mihimihi, karakia and haka. The whole school participates in pōwhiri. These cultural activities help Māori students and their whānau to develop a sense of belonging and pride in their identity. They have opportunities to lead and share their knowledge.

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.

The key factors that underpin this positive position are its:

- firmly embedded systems and processes that support the effective enactment of its special character and values
- well-informed board members who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to student learning and wellbeing
- experienced leaders who provide a climate in which initiative is encouraged, strengths recognised and support freely sought and given
- robust appraisal processes that successfully support teachers' professional growth and development
- carefully considered, strategic approach to building and fostering strong partnerships with parents and whānau.

Leaders and trustees recognise that the next step for continued improvement in student achievement is to:

- plan and implement internal evaluation of initiatives and programmes, to determine the extent to which they meet identified measures of success.

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.

Conclusion

Teaching and learning are firmly based on the school's special Christian character, and align well with *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Leaders and trustees are improvement-focused, and have sound systems for planning and reviewing operations and programmes. Students achieve well in relation to National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

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



Joyce Gebbie
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

26 November 2015

About the School

Location	Whanganui	
Ministry of Education profile number	422	
School type	Integrated Full Primary (Years 1-8)	
School roll	148	
Gender composition	Girls 54%, Boys 46%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	30%
	Pākehā	49%
	Pacific	11%
	Asian	5%
	Other ethnic groups	5%
Review team on site	October 2015	
Date of this report	26 November 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2012
	Education Review	October 2009
	Supplementary Review	February 2007