

ERO External Evaluation

St Mary's School (Ellerslie), Ellerslie, Auckland

Summary

St Mary's School (Ellerslie) is a state integrated Catholic school with a roll of 330 children from Years 1 to 6. This includes nine percent who identify as Māori, eight percent Tongan, four percent Samoan and nine percent Filipino.

Following the retirement of a long serving principal at the end of 2016, the board appointed the deputy principal as the new principal. Since the 2013 ERO evaluation there have been a significant number of new teachers to the school. The board is made up of experienced and new trustees. A new board chair was elected in 2016.

The principal has identified that some recommendations from ERO's 2013 evaluation need further attention. She is providing strong professional leadership to make improvements in these areas.

How well is the school achieving equitable outcomes for all children?

St Mary's School (Ellerslie) is increasingly effective in achieving equitable outcomes for all children.

The school responds well to children whose learning and achievement need acceleration. Effective school processes to achieve equity are evident across the school. The principal's leadership builds a positive school culture focused on inquiring into what is best for children's learning. This is having a positive impact on student motivation and engagement in learning.

Overall, children are achieving very well in relation to National Standards. Close to 90 percent of children who leave the school at Year 6 achieve the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's achievement information shows that these rates have remained consistent over the last 3 years. Mathematics achievement has steadily improved between 2015 and 2016. However, school achievement information shows that there is still a disparity in literacy achievement for Māori and Pacific children.

The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

Agreed next steps are to continue to explore ways to promote educational learning partnerships with parents and the wider community and build student agency across the school.

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

Equity and excellence

How effectively does this school respond to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

The school is becoming increasingly effective in responding to Māori and other children whose learning and achievement need acceleration.

Overall Māori and Pacific children achieve well. However, school achievement information in 2016 shows that there is a disparity in literacy achievement for Māori and Pacific children. Teachers and school leaders have responded well to this information and are using a variety of well-considered strategies, aligned to the school's charter goals, to eliminate this disparity.

Leaders and teachers carefully consider what is best for children. A range of interventions and targeted programmes is provided to ensure that appropriate support is well matched to children whose learning needs accelerating.

Recent external professional development in mathematics and literacy has resulted in the establishment of some teachers using effective frameworks for improving learning outcomes for children. The leadership team will use these successful models in other learning areas to ensure equity for all children.

School achievement reports to the board of trustees at mid year and end of the year have been strengthened this year. The principal now needs to report more often on the accelerated progress of priority and targeted groups of students.

The principal is developing and formalising more robust assessment and moderation processes school-wide. This will increase the validity and reliability of overall teacher judgements.

School conditions supporting equity and excellence

What school processes are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?

Improved school-wide systems and effective internal evaluation processes are helping to achieve greater equity and excellence for children. The new principal has introduced a number of initiatives that are likely to continue to strengthen learning and teaching. School leaders are focused on building collective teacher and leadership capability and capacity across the school.

Children benefit from a broad integrated curriculum that provides a framework for teachers to guide children's learning. School-wide themes use meaningful contexts that foster children's engagement in learning and help them to achieve individual and school goals.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and connection to their school and the community. Parents appreciate the welcoming culture and opportunities to be involved in classroom activities. This increased parent engagement has strengthened the role of parents in their children's learning at school.

The school charter aligns with school achievement goals. These are reviewed regularly at all levels to monitor progress. Teachers, parents and trustees value the shift to a more collaborative culture.

School-wide systems to ensure consistency in teacher practice that supports and builds collaboration across the school have recently been introduced. Professional leadership, development and

documentation is guiding teachers in their practice. Professional learning groups are focused on improving learning outcomes for all children.

The school's special character embodies the values of the Sisters of our Lady of the Mission. These values are: love of God, integrity, compassion, commitment, respect, self-control, curiosity and diversity. They are evident in all aspects of school life and are reflected in the way the school community relates to others.

Sustainable development for equity and excellence

What further developments are needed in school processes to achieve equity and excellence?

School processes to achieve equity are increasingly evident. The school is well placed to continue to make ongoing improvements that impact positively on all students' learning. Through the school's internal evaluation processes leaders have identified areas for further development. ERO agrees the next steps for the school include:

- developing a school-wide language of learning
- building a shared responsibility for evaluation at all levels of the school
- prioritising the further development of the school curriculum to build learner agency
- continuing to build a culture of high expectations so that effective teaching and opportunities to learn reflect the school's values
- the board accessing external advice to further support them in their governance role.

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
- 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*.

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should access external support to improve the board's quality assurance as outlined in the board assurance statements.

Going forward

How well placed is the school to accelerate the achievement of all children who need it?

Children are achieving well. The school demonstrates strong progress toward achieving equity in educational outcomes, supported by effective, sustainable processes and practices.

Agreed next steps are to:

- continue to explore ways to promote educational learning partnerships with parents and the wider community
- build student agency across the school.

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

Recommendations

ERO recommends that the school seek further support from the New Zealand School Trustees Association to support the board of trustees with their governance role.



Violet Tu'uga Stevenson
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern (Acting)

18 August 2017

About the school

Location	Ellerslie, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1504	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	330	
Gender composition	Girls 56% Boys 44%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	9%
	Pākehā	57%
	Filipino	9%
	Tongan	8%
	Indian	4%
	Samoan	4%
	Chinese	3%
	other	6%
Provision of Māori medium education	No	
Review team on site	May 2017	
Date of this report	18 August 2017	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	November 2013
	Education Review	February 2010
	Education Review	February 2007