

Marist School (Mt Albert) Education Review

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1 Context

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

Marist School (Mt Albert) is a Catholic Integrated school catering for Year 1 to 6 students. The values, beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith underpin the school charter and curriculum. The school charism has been developed “In the Spirit of Mary”. The school has close relationships with St Mary’s parish and Marist Sister Community. The school, Presbytery, Parish Centre and Marist Sisters’ Convent share neighbouring sites.

The school has experienced changes in school leadership. The school had an acting principal for three terms due to the sudden death of its previous long-serving principal. During this time the board worked successfully with a specialist advisor and appointed an experienced permanent principal. The new principal took up the position in July 2013.

The 2010 ERO report noted that a significant majority of students achieved very well and teachers were effective classroom practitioners. The focus for the school since the last review has been to maintain the day to day operations, continue the existing teaching and learning programmes, and support the well-being of students. There has been low staff turnover during this time of leadership change.

The board has led consultation with all stake holders as part of reviewing the school charter, mission statement and values. This consultation has resulted in the vision statement of Confident, Life-long Learners inspired by Mary. It defined a direction for the school called “The Marist Way” that is more clearly articulated by the leadership team and supported by parents, teachers and students. The Marist Way is underpinned by the school charism and values of excellence, integrity, respect and equity.

The board and senior leaders recognise that the school is entering a new stage of development. This stage involves balancing the traditions of the past with the advancement of innovative approaches to learning.

2 Learning

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

Students are highly engaged and motivated to learn. Student engagement in learning is supported by very respectful relationships between teachers and students. Students see themselves as capable learners and they support the learning of their peers.

School achievement information about National Standards shows that a significant majority of students, including Māori and Pacific, consistently achieve well in relation to the National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. School data indicates the achievement of students is higher than regional and national cohorts.

The school is developing effective systems for the use of student achievement information to make positive changes for learners. Recent initiatives include:

- setting more useful and measurable achievement targets for specific groups of students, including Māori, Pacific, students with special needs, and students who are achieving below the standards
- using a range of assessment tools to plan programmes that cater for students' different strengths and learning needs
- using achievement information to enquire into the effectiveness of teaching practices and identify suitable professional learning and development opportunities for teachers and senior leaders.

The development of school wide systems to effectively manage the successful implementation of the National Standards is a priority for the school. ERO and school leaders agree the next steps include developing:

- processes that support teachers to make well evidenced achievement judgements against the National Standards
- systems for anniversary reporting after one, two, and three years at school
- ways of reporting to students and their parents on the student's progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards.

Once these actions are taken, the school can have greater assurance that its National Standards achievement data are reliable.

3 Curriculum

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

Good progress is being made in developing a school curriculum that is appropriate for the future learning needs of students. Opportunities for them to have a say in selecting meaningful contexts for learning are increasing. Students engage in purposeful learning activities.

Clear rationale are evident for choices made in designing the new school curriculum. The intention is to develop a school wide curriculum that provides cohesive learning pathways for students as they move through the school.

There is a greater emphasis on the principles and key competencies of The New Zealand Curriculum that shifts the focus of teaching and learning to students knowing themselves as learners, and learning how to learn.

Planned learning experiences that reflect the bicultural heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand are given an important place in the curriculum. Considering how Pacific students' language, culture and identity could help to shape future curriculum developments is a next step. The inclusion of Pacific languages and identities in the curriculum has the potential to help Pacific students build from what is familiar and relevant in their lives, to new learning.

The values of "The Marist Way" support and encourage the inclusion of students with special learning needs. A framework of support programmes and personnel operate effectively to support these students to access the curriculum. Transitions into, through and out of the school are well managed for students with high learning needs. The board should consider how recognition of these good practices can be better captured in school documents, such as the charter, strategic and annual plans and school policies.

Teachers are capable, confident and highly skilled practitioners, who manage their classrooms effectively. They are eager to implement the updated and appropriate expectations of the new school curriculum direction. Some teachers already give students more opportunities to make decisions about their learning.

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

The school has fourteen students who identify as Māori. Māori students have positive attitudes to school and learning. They are achieving at similar levels to the school population.

Aspects of Māori culture and language are evident in the environment, learning programmes

and school practices. The school's religious education programme with its component of taha wairua provides another dimension for Māori students to achieve success as Māori. Teachers successfully integrate te reo and tikanga Māori into classroom programmes.

Senior leaders have high expectations for Māori students and are proactive in fostering positive relationships with whānau. The board is considering ways they can more effectively consult with, and report to, the school's Māori community.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The board is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

The board provides effective governance. Board decision making is strategic and has a focus on improving outcomes for all students. There is a unity of purpose through the shared school vision and The Marist Way, and good working relationships between the board and management of the school. The school's vision and its strategic and annual planning, show a good unity of purpose. This alignment is also evident in school planning, curriculum delivery and programme implementation.

The principal provides strong professional leadership and is effectively leading the school through this time of change and new direction. She recognises a need to build leadership capability and provide leadership opportunities across the school to complement and enhance school development.

Ongoing critical reflection and outcomes of self review provide clear rationale for responsive curriculum design, teaching practice, and future directions for the school.

The principal uses self review outcomes to identify appropriate professional learning and development opportunities for staff and to manage the pace of change. Students, staff and the school community are consulted as part of the review process. Consultation practices could be strengthened by considering ways to gather the voices of the school's different community groups, particularly Māori and Pacific.

The board is working towards establishing a systematic process for reviewing school policies to ensure they are responsive to current educational and political contexts.

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.

In order to address the following area of non-compliance, the school is required to:

- report to students and their parents on the student's progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards
[National Administration Guidelines 2A (a)].

Conclusion

Students benefit from good quality teaching and are responding well to a curriculum that is becoming increasingly student centred and appropriate for the 21st century learner. Opportunities are growing for parents to work with the school to support learning.

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

Dale Bailey
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Northern Region

27 June 2014

School Statistics

Location	Mt Albert, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1359	
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)	
School roll	265	
Gender composition	Girls 52% Boys 48%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	5%
	NZ European/Pākehā	69%
	Indian	9%
	Samoan	5%
	Filipino	4%
	Chinese	3%
	Tongan	3%
	other Ethnicities	2%
Review team on site	May 2014	
Date of this report	27 June 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	May 2010
	Education Review	May 2007
	Education Review	May 2004