



## **ERO External Evaluation**

### **Ponatahi Christian School, Carterton**

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for students. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

### **School Context**

Ponatahi Christian School in Carterton caters for students from Years 1 to 13. At the time of this review the roll was 124 students.

The overarching vision is for students to be confident, connected, actively involved lifelong learners. The school's desired outcomes are based firmly in Christian beliefs and the key values of the *New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC).

Strategic goals focus on curriculum review and development, professional learning for teachers and community consultation. New trustees were elected to the board in 2019.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to the NZC for Years 1 to 9
- National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Levels 1 to 3 for Years 11 to 13.

## Evaluation Findings

### 1 Equity and excellence – achievement of valued outcomes for students

#### 1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

The school consistently achieves excellent and equitable results for most students. Since the December 2016 ERO report, most senior students have achieved NCEA at Levels 1, 2 and 3, and gained university entrance qualifications. Most primary school aged children achieved in reading, writing and mathematics against school expectations in relation to the NZC.

Students with additional learning needs show good progress in relation to goals in their Individual Education Plans.

#### 1.2 How well is the school accelerating learning for those Māori and other students who need this?

The school has had variable impact on accelerating the progress of those students who need it. Leaders have identified this is an area that needs to be improved.

### 2 School conditions for equity and excellence – processes and practices

#### 2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Trustees and leaders have a clear vision for the development of teaching and learning that reflects the school's special character. The Christian ethos is strongly evident and provides a foundation for building ongoing relationships and support within the school community. It underpins all aspects of school life.

Students experience positive learning environments and respectful relationships. This promotes their sense of identity and belonging.

The school curriculum effectively promotes students' engagement in learning. Senior students experience flexible programmes responsive to their interests and needs and are well supported by external providers. There are opportunities for students to be extended academically, and clear school expectations for inclusion of te reo Māori throughout the school.

## 2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence, and acceleration of learning?

Leaders and teachers use an appropriate range of nationally-referenced and school-developed tools to establish baseline data in literacy and numeracy. Developing more effective systems to monitor the rate of students' progress should enhance the use of achievement information. Establishing a rigorous moderation process to ensure accuracy and dependability of teacher's judgements against curriculum expectations and developing a shared understanding of acceleration are key next steps. This should enable the school to more clearly show the progress and achievement of all students and promote acceleration for those students who need it.

Leaders and teachers are appropriately supported to grow their practice through professional learning and development opportunities. The newly-refined appraisal processes are improvement focused. It has the potential to support growing teacher capability. A refocused teacher inquiry process is likely to contribute to improved outcomes for students.

Trustees and leaders have identified the need to strengthen strategic planning. School-wide targets need to include those students at risk of underachieving.

Developing a clear framework for internal evaluation with indicators of expected outcomes for achievement should enable trustees, leaders and teachers to better evaluate the impact of programmes and initiatives and improve outcomes for all students.

### 3 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
- finance
- 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 Children's Act 2014.

## 4 ERO's Overall Judgement

On the basis of the findings of this review, ERO's overall evaluation judgement of Ponatahi Christian School's performance in achieving valued outcomes for its students is:

Developing

ERO's Framework: [Overall Findings and Judgement Tool derived from School Evaluation Indicators: Effective Practice for Improvement and Learner Success](#) is available on ERO's website.

## 5 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- a school curriculum that fosters student engagement in learning
- trustees and leaders clearly focused on promoting special character.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are in:

- enhancing achievement practices that promote equitable and excellent outcomes for all students, particularly those at risk of underachieving
- strengthening school wide strategic planning and internal evaluation that better enables trustees, leaders and teachers to evaluate the impact of programmes and initiatives and improve outcomes for students.

Actions for compliance

ERO identified non-compliance in relation to police vetting of all workers prior to having unsupervised access to children.

In order to address this, the board of trustees must:

- adhere to the provisions of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, and regulations 5-8 of the Vulnerable Children (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015.

**Areas for improved compliance practice**

To improve current practice, the board of trustees should ensure practice follows their agreed policies particularly in relation to, appointments, Education outside the Classroom and administration of medication.



Dr Lesley Patterson  
Director Review and Improvement Services Te Tai Tini  
Southern Region  
11 May 2020

## About the school

Location	Carterton	
Ministry of Education profile number	528	
School type	State Integrated (Years 1 to 13)	
School roll	124	
Gender composition	Boys 54%, Girls 46%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	82%
	Other ethnicities	18%
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes	
Provision of Māori medium education	No	
Review team on site	December 2019	
Date of this report	11 May 2020	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	December 2016
	Education Review	December 2013
	Education Review	February 2010