



**Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth)  
New Plymouth**

**Confirmed**

**Education Review Report**

# Education Review Report

## Sacred Heart Girls' College (New Plymouth)

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?**

Sacred Heart Girls' College is an integrated Catholic secondary school in New Plymouth. It caters for 676 students from Years 7 to 13, including 14% Māori.

The Roman Catholic special character and learnings from the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions underpins all aspects of the college. In 2015, the school had a successful Catholic character review and has developed a Catholic Character Strategic Plan to ensure that the special character of the college continues to be nourished.

The Manawa mission, a refreshed approach of the college's vision and values to support schoolwide improvement, is a collaborative statement that weaves the gospel values and the Manawa Tapu mission expectations as integral parts of the schooling experience.

A new principal was appointed in 2015. The senior leadership team has a collaborative and strategic approach to guiding schoolwide improvement.

Good progress has been made by the school in the areas identified from ERO's December 2013 evaluation.

### 2 Learning

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

The school responds positively to students' needs.

Since the previous ERO review, the college has sustained consistently high levels of National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) success. Almost all senior students, including Māori, leave school with Level 2 NCEA or above. Merit and excellence endorsements at Levels 1 and 2 exceed national results.

Many students in Years 7 and 8 achieve at or above expectations in relation to National Standards. The results have remained relatively stable since 2013 for reading and writing, with a slight improvement in mathematics. A range of initiatives to support students in literacy and numeracy results in accelerated progress for some learners in Years 7 to 10. School leaders recognise that strengthening understanding of, and processes for, making and reporting achievement judgments in relation to National Standards is required. This should include developing clear guidelines for decision-making that promote consistency between teachers in the school.

A planned, systematic approach to gathering achievement data from Years 7 to 10 has been implemented. Data is shared with classroom teachers to inform learning and teaching. The collation and analysis of this information guides the identification of students whose learning needs to be accelerated. Further development in the analysis and use of school information about Years 7 to 10 students' progress and achievement, including tracking individual students' progress over time, is a key next step. This should help to more effectively evaluate the impact of initiatives and practices on learners most at risk.

Leaders and teachers are reviewing data and reflecting on programmes to inform them about student's engagement and participation in learning. Processes are in place that encourage teachers to engage in deliberate, systematic inquiry about how initiatives and practices are impacting on outcomes for learners.

Parents and whānau receive useful information about how well students are achieving. A high level of parent attendance at learning conferences during the year promotes discussion about academic progress.

### **3 Curriculum**

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

The school curriculum goals demonstrate clear intent to advance the aspirations of the community, that, in a culturally responsive way, the school will nurture Catholic character, hauora, strengthen teaching and learning and openly engage with community.

A wide range of initiatives and deliberate actions foster the wellbeing of students and staff. Students are confident and happy. High expectations are well-known by all learners. The college has enhanced the learning environment through the active promotion of a calming approach to routines and programmes.

The Goals Encourage Mana Success (GEMS) programmes prioritise the building of strong relationships over time with the student and their whānau. These promote a sense of connection and community and the holistic development of individual students. Through the recent review of the programme, the school identified the need to continue to strengthen teacher practice to better support students to achieve ongoing success.

Individualised programmes provide support for students with high learning needs and those at risk of not achieving. The school liaises closely with agencies, whānau, teachers and teacher aides to establish learning and pastoral care responses appropriate to each learner.

The school has focused on developing a holistic approach to providing meaningful learning pathways through the school and beyond. A planned approach to increasing the awareness of, and involvement in, a number of vocational opportunities for learners is evident. The school is continuing to develop and strengthen systems to better inform students about future career pathways.

Evaluating the successful strategies for groups of identified learners should assist the development of effective teaching practice guidelines. This would further support the implementation and embedding of the desired changes to the school's curriculum.

A wide range of student feedback is gathered. Strengthening the response to this would better inform appropriate changes in learning for students as they progress through Years 7 to 13.

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

Trustees and school leaders effectively promote success for Māori students as Māori. A solid foundation of good practice contributes positively to Māori learners' academic progress and to acknowledging their unique culture, language and identities.

The school has committed to raising staff cultural capacity through weekly 'whakakaha'. This is supporting teachers to build their confidence and capability. They demonstrate a genuine intent to meaningfully include te ao Māori within the school's curriculum.

## **4 Sustainable Performance**

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

Sacred Heart Girl's College is well placed to sustain its performance and continue to build on student success. A strong platform for guiding school improvements is evident. The senior leadership team has a collaborative, growth-focused approach to improvement and change.

Leaders are reflecting on school operation, use of data to inform change and are exploring responsive approaches to teaching and learning. It is timely to review current systems and processes for their purpose and effectiveness in demonstrating progress towards schoolwide goals and responsibilities. Developing indicators to support the evaluation of actions on individual learners' progress and achievement is a next step.

Respectful interactions are an integral part of the school culture. Throughout the school there has been a focus on enacting a more culturally responsive approach to teaching that is explicit and authentic. There has been a strong emphasis on building a learning culture for all in the school community.

The school has reviewed and revised their performance management system for 2016. The appraisal process should, with rigorous implementation, support ongoing growth and development in teaching practice.

The board is community focused. Trustees are culturally diverse and bring a range of expertise to their roles. Information received by the trustees informs and facilitates resourcing decisions.

To improve equitable outcomes for individuals and groups of learners, leaders and trustees should:

- develop more explicit targets with expected outcomes, and regularly report against these measurable checkpoints throughout the year
- track and monitor the progress of learners to inform resourcing and to evaluate the impact of effective practice and plans to improve student achievement.

### **Provision for international students**

The College is a signatory to the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with and meets all aspects of the Code. The college is making good progress in aligning its policies and procedures to meet the requirements for the new 2016 Code.

At the time of this review there were five international students attending the college.

International students receive good quality pastoral care and support. Promotion of wellbeing is a strong focus. Students are encouraged to participate in a range of school activities and opportunities in the wider community. Processes for orientation to the school provide students and their families with good information. Systems for identifying and responding to individual strengths and interests are in place. English language learners receive suitable support to build their capability.

Continuing to embed and strengthen newly established systems and processes will further support the college to build capability in providing positive outcomes for international students

### **Provision for students in the school hostel**

The college hostel, Elizabeth House, accommodates 84 students, most of whom are drawn from the Taranaki area. It is owned by The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions and its operation is overseen by the leaseholder, The Mission College New Plymouth Trust Board. Trustees have attested that all the requirements of the Hostel Regulations are met.

Experienced hostel staff provide pastoral care in an environment that promotes student wellbeing and upholds the special character of the college. Students enjoy the family-like environment where routines and expectations are well understood.

Improvements to hostel provision identified by ERO are to:

- strengthen the educational partnership between the school and the hostel, by enabling the school principal to be more actively involved in hostel operations
- develop a systematic process for effective internal review (as identified in the previous ERO review), including seeking and responding to feedback from students and their families
- develop a strategic direction that is shared by the school and proprietors
- implement and monitor the staff appraisal process
- update policies and procedures to ensure they are compliant and reflect current practice.

## 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 improve practice, better communication between the college and the hostel should be developed to assist the Board of Trustees to be assured of the continuity of learning and care. Since the onsite phase of the review the school has sought a change to the constitution of the Hostel Management Board to enable this to occur.

## Conclusion

Sacred Heart Girl's College is well placed to sustain its performance and continue to build on student success. Most senior students achieve well in NCEA. The college engages well with their wider learning community. A strong platform is being developed, to guide school improvement and foster positive outcomes for learners.

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



Joyce Gebbie  
Deputy Chief Review Officer Central

30 November 2016

## About the School

Location	New Plymouth	
Ministry of Education profile number	174	
School type	Secondary (Years 7 to 13)	
School roll	676	
Number of international students	5	
Gender composition	Female 100%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	14%
	Pākehā	74%
	Other ethnic groups	12%
Special Features	Attached boarding hostel	
Review team on site	September 2016	
Date of this report	30 November 2016	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	December 2013
	Education Review	October 2010
	Education Review	November 2005