

ERO External Evaluation

St Mary's School (Milton), Milton

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

St Mary's School (Milton) is a Years 1-6 special character, state integrated school in Milton. It has a current roll of 79 students, a quarter of whom are Māori. The school provides education designed to support students to be confident, life-long learners able to make a positive contribution to the community as global citizens. Teaching and learning are based on Catholic values and principles. Students are encouraged to be confident in their culture, language and identity. The school's key aims, goals and targets for improvement in student outcomes are based on leaders' and teachers' knowledge of the needs of the whole child.

The school's current targets include lifting students' achievement in literacy and mathematics, and ensuring students needing extra support make appropriate gains in learning and development.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board school-wide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- achievement in all learning areas in relation to the levels of the New Zealand Curriculum
- progress and achievement in relation to the school's targets in literacy and mathematics
- other valued outcomes as defined by the school's special character and values.

The teaching of science, as a context for literacy learning, is the current school-wide professional development focus.

St Mary's School (Milton) is part of the Tokomairiro Kāhui Ako | Community of Learning (CoL).

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 is making very good progress toward achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all students.

School information from 2015 to 2017 shows that most students demonstrate and use the school's values in their daily lives. Almost all students achieve at or above the school's curriculum expectations in reading and most achieve at or above in mathematics and writing. Most Māori students achieve at or above in all three key curriculum areas. The proportion of boys achieving at or above in writing has increased over time.

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

The school very effectively supports students who need to lift the level of progress in their learning. Over the last three years the majority of any Māori and other students needing to accelerate learning, did so in reading, writing and mathematics. The support programmes the school provides have been highly effective in reducing the number of students achieving below the school's expectations.

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?

Students benefit from a rich curriculum, with an emphasis on real-life learning. The curriculum is very responsive to the needs, interests and abilities of students and aligns closely with the school's vision and goals. Māori culture is highly valued and Māori perspectives are an integral part of learning. Leaders and teachers are focused on supporting the development of bicultural practices as part of the school culture. Students are well supported to engage in an increasingly digitalised world and in a balanced way that ensures their wellbeing. Religious education is an integral part of learning and Catholic values are embedded across all aspects of learning and teaching.

The school leaders and trustees are highly committed to ensuring the school's vision is realised and equity and excellence are strived for. This is evident in the:

- cohesive and very useful school-wide systems
- high expectations leaders and trustees have of teachers and students
- relationships with the school community that are based on trust, integrity and openness
- clear alignment between the school's goals, leading to positive outcomes for students.

The school is relentless in its focus on continuous improvement. Leaders and teachers seek appropriate expertise to better meet the needs of students. They enthusiastically apply new knowledge to problems and adjust their approach in pursuit of effective solutions. Teachers communicate in a range of ways to increase collaboration, in order to spread effective teaching practices. Ongoing improvements in teaching practice are further supported and sustained through access to clear guidelines for teaching, the use of evidence-based inquiry, a robust appraisal system and teachers' participation in purposeful professional development. Teaching and learning programmes are supported by capable teacher aides.

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

To further support equity and excellence, the leaders and teachers need to sustain and build on existing good practices. This includes continuing to:

- strengthen and align the practices that promote student ownership of their learning
- explore ways to extend the partnership between the school and parents around students' learning progress.

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 Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

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

- its responsiveness to student needs in order to promote learning and wellbeing
- achieving outcomes for students that are equitable, and across a broad curriculum
- collaboration and cooperation among the teaching staff to achieve and maintain good quality teaching and learning
- the way in which inquiry, internal evaluation and knowledge building are benefitting learners.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, priorities for further development are to further strengthen and explore:

- student ownership of their learning
- home-school educational partnerships.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

ERO is likely to carry out the next external evaluation in four-to-five years.



Alan Wynyard
Director Review & Improvement Services Southern

9 October 2018

About the school

Location	Milton
Ministry of Education profile number	3831
School type	Contributing (Years 1-6)
School roll	79
Gender composition	Boys: 40 Girls: 39
Ethnic composition	Maori: 18 Pākehā: 50 Other ethnicities: 11
Students with Ongoing Resourcing Funding (ORS)	Yes
Provision of Māori medium education	No
Review team on site	August 2018
Date of this report	9 October 2018
Most recent ERO reports	Education Review: August 2015 Education Review: April 2012 Education Review: May 2009