

St Mary's School (Milton) Education Review

- 1 Context
- 2 Learning
- 3 Curriculum
- 4 Sustainable Performance

About the School

Location	Milton
Ministry of Education profile number	3831
School type	Contributing (Years 1 to 6)
Decile [1]	4
School roll	75
Gender composition	Boys 39 Girls 36
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 51 Māori 22 Other 2
Review team on site	February 2012
Date of this report	12 April 2012
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review May 2009 Education Review February 2006 Education Review October 2002

The Purpose of an ERO Report

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.

[1]

School deciles range from 1 to 10. Decile 1 schools draw their students from low socio-economic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides.

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1 Context

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

St Mary's School in Milton educates students from the Catholic community and other students from the local area. Learning programmes include aspects of the school's history and traditions. The special character is reflected in the support students receive to understand and demonstrate the school's values. Involvement in church activities helps students to learn more about their faith and develop links with the parish community.

Students learn in a well-maintained environment. Interior spaces are used flexibly to support students in small and large group work. Staffing is organised to provide smaller classes for junior students. Attractive outdoor facilities, including an adventure playground, encourage students to be physically active and to interact well with each other.

Students have ongoing opportunities to learn outside the classroom through purposeful excursions and participation in a variety of community and sporting events. The school is well supported by its parent community.

2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Most students are achieving well. The school's 2011 information shows that 93% of students were reading at or above the National Standards. All students are very well supported to make progress, especially in literacy and numeracy. Students make very good gains in their first year at school, particularly in literacy. Almost all students are well engaged in their learning.

Areas of strength

Learning environment. Students learn in a positive and productive learning environment. They feel safe and well supported in their learning. Students treat each other with respect. Staff members encourage this. Relationships between the teachers and students, and among students, strongly align with the school's values. Teachers work well together and share ideas to support their teaching practice. Students are taught how to manage their learning and behaviour.

Individual students' learning. The principal and the staff show the belief that all students can achieve. Students benefit from many opportunities for one-to-one instruction. Comprehensive individual education plans are implemented for some students to help their learning and development. Classroom programmes are well planned and flexible to meet students' varying needs.

Learning-support programmes. Identified students receive targeted assistance through effective learning-support programmes. The principal focuses on identifying and supporting students in need of additional help. The principal, teachers and the teacher aide work well together to raise the achievement and improve the progress of these students.

Area for review and development

Reporting student achievement and progress information. The wide range of student achievement information that is available could be further analysed and evaluated. This could help trustees and the community to have a clearer picture of the effectiveness of learning and teaching programmes.

How well does the school promote Māori student success and success as Māori?

The school is taking many positive steps to promote Māori student learning in a way that respects the wishes of their parents/whānau. Māori students make up 28 % of the roll.

Findings

The school's 2011 information shows that most Māori students achieved at or above the National Standards in reading and mathematics. Over half of Māori students achieved at or above the National Standards for writing.

The board, principal and staff make good use of information gained from consultation with their Māori community when setting achievement targets for students. The school can show positive progress for Māori students, including those receiving additional support to meet expectations. Parents who have attended consultation meetings have received comprehensive information about strategies used to enhance their children's learning. They have expressed satisfaction with the school's methods for promoting students' learning.

It is now timely for the school to explore and define how it can support Māori students to realise their unique potential and succeed in their lives specifically as Māori. The board and principal should seek to involve as many parents/whānau as possible in this process.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum has been well designed to set the direction for students' learning.

Areas of strength

Curriculum development. Clear links are evident between the school's goals, the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and the strategies designed to implement these. Learning programmes, particularly in literacy and mathematics, have appropriate sequences and progressions across class and year levels. The school's priorities are well reflected in curriculum planning and classroom programmes. Teachers have clear guidelines for implementing the NZC. There are explicit expectations for students' achievement in relation to the National Standards.

Quality of teaching. Students benefit from some high quality teaching practices. Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies to engage students in their learning. Some key competencies are particularly evident in the teachers' expectations of students and in the way students respond. Many students receive regular and constructive verbal and written information to guide their next learning steps.

Professional support. The board supports staff well to extend their professional knowledge. The principal provides a rigorous appraisal of teachers' performance that encourages ongoing professional growth. Teachers model good practice for other staff and willingly share resources and ideas.

Bicultural development. There has been an increased focus on students learning te reo and tikanga Māori. Students enjoy hearing and learning te reo Māori. A Māori tutor supports teachers and students with programme planning and delivery. Bicultural perspectives in programme planning and delivery continue to be strengthened. Students are benefitting from a greater number of opportunities to learn about New Zealand's bicultural heritage both in and outside the classroom. Some of these activities involve close liaison with the local Māori community.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain its performance.

Findings

The school's self-review process has been well used for curriculum reviews. The charter focuses on improving student achievement through its targets. The principal leads by example and mentors other staff and is an enthusiastic advocate for students.

Area for review and development

Extending self review. The school's self-review processes could be developed to:

- make them more evaluative
- include the views of a greater range of stakeholders, including students.

Teachers could also review student goal setting and written reporting to parents.

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

- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

ERO found that some attendance registers were not complete and in some cases it was not clear whether or not a student was absent. It was not clear that any person may report suspected abuse directly to the appropriate authority in the school's documentation.

Actions

- A. Ensure that attendance registers meet Ministry of Education requirements for accuracy. The board should refer to Ministry of Education Circular 1997/24.
- B. The board must ensure that in the policy and procedures for dealing with suspected abuse any person may report the matter to a social worker or a member of the police. [s15-16 Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989]

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

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Southern Region

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