



**CATHOLIC
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Āhuatanga Katorika Kaupapa Arotake Te Pūrongo Arotake O Waho

Catholic Special Character External Review Report

St Joseph's School Dannevirke

Review Conducted: 5th – 7th July 2021

Confirmed Report: 21st September 2021



School Details

Name of School: St Joseph's School

Address: 6-16 McPhee Street, Dannevirke

School type: Co-educational full primary Year 1 – Year 8

Actual roll: 149

Maximum roll: 160

Non-preference maximum: 5% (8)

Actual non-preference number: 9 (permission from Manager of Catholic Schools)

Roll based staffing entitlement: 7.3

Required number of Special Character CI 47 positions: 4

Filled number of Special Character CI 47 positions: 4

Principal: Megan Seatter

Director of Religious Studies: Helen Collier

Chairperson, Board of Trustees: Glen Higginson

Parish Priest: Fr Vince Onesi

The Catholic special character review of St Joseph's School Dannevirke was conducted by the Palmerston North Catholic Education Office (PNCEO) review team:

Pauline Balm
Review and Development Advisor

Candice Adams
Catholic Education Advisor



Ngā Whāinga O Te Arotake-Aims of External Review

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference wishes the external review to show how effective the school is in handing on the faith and forming a new generation of Catholics; this includes evaluating the efficacy of Religious Education and how the whole school community engages in authentic Catholic Christian witness and evangelisation. This is the evangelising mission of the Church, in which the school participates.

The external review process is based upon the *Āhuatanga Katorika Kaupapa Arotake Me Te Ahu Whakamua: Catholic Special Character Review for Development* document (draft, 2018).

In the review, schools are asked to consider and demonstrate the ways in which they have provided for their students:

- Te tūtaki ki a Te Karaiti - an encounter with Christ,
- Te whakatupu mā - te mātauranga-growth in knowledge,
- Te whakaatu Karaitiana - Christian witness.

And how the school is:

Te kaitiakitanga me to whakapakari i to tuakiri Katrorika - safeguarding and strengthening Catholic Character.

The review is designed to look at the work the school has done, in its internal evaluation and development, to grow Catholic Character. It affirms what the school has done and the opportunities for further development the school has discerned. It challenges the school to be more transformational. Reviewers encourage and commend good practice, and work with the school to analyse opportunities to further strengthen and develop the Catholic culture.



Introduction

St Joseph's School Dannevirke is an integrated Catholic primary school for students in Year 1 to 8. The school's cultural make up is currently: -

52% New Zealand European

42% New Zealand Māori

6% Asian or Pasifica.

St Joseph's School is affiliated to the local Parish of St Joseph's, and is part of the Tararua Parishes group, belonging to the Diocese of Palmerston North.

On 29 January 1910 four sisters of Our Lady of the Missions arrived in Dannevirke and St Joseph's School was opened a few days later.

The school's Charism is drawn from its founders the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions, whose foundress was Adèle-Euphrasie Barbier, known in religious life as Marie du Coeur de Jésus, who was born on 4th January 1829, in Caen, France, and a devotion to St Joseph.

The school embraces this Charism by providing opportunities for a strong spiritual foundation and values formation. Students are encouraged to strive for personal excellence, learn respect for others, have a heart for the world, respect for creation and the environment and a strong awareness of mission with a global consciousness.

St Joseph's School motto is AMDG, Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam, For the Honour and the Glory of God.

Both school and community live and teach the values of Jesus Christ through the general school programme, Religious Education and observances. The school aims to provide students with knowledge, skills and values through a Catholic lens, to be successful citizens in the 21st century, with strong Catholic character and acknowledging the dignity of all of God's creation.

St Joseph's School believes in the '*nurturing of spirits and encouraging excellence*' in all curriculum areas, and a strong partnership/relationship with parish, whānau, local community, and tangata whenua, which consists of Rangitāne and Ngāti Kahungungu.



Progress with Key Recommendations from the 2017 Catholic Special Character Review for Development Report

Due to the unprecedented events in 2020 resulting from Covid -19 the Palmerston North Catholic Education Office postponed all scheduled, external Catholic Special Character Reviews. In lieu of a 3-day review, the Review and Development Advisor, accompanied by the Catholic Education Advisor, visited St Joseph's School Dannevirke to complete a compliance audit. This audit report is included as an appendix to this report. The compliance report responds to the key recommendations from St Joseph's School Dannevirke 2017 Catholic special character Review Report along with an up-to-date roll audit of the school's preference and non-preference students.



Dimension1: TE TŪTAKI KI A TE KARAITI – ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

How effectively does the school encourage and facilitate the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals the transforming love and truth of the living God?

At the heart of St Joseph's School Dannevirke are its Gospel values of community, dignity, faith and justice. It is evident that everything is grounded in these from the intentional way students learn about them, how they form the basis of the Mission Leader's Programme to the explicit way they frame the key competencies. Students shared how these values enrich this school community and as one parent stated, form what has become the 'St Joe's way.' As a result, this is a community described by tamariki as inclusive of others and one which accepts people for who they are, "because God made them." This was echoed by a staff member who shared how St Joseph's School philosophy was, "come as you are, that's how we want you."

Prayer forms part of the natural rhythm of school life and supports this community to know Christ is at the centre. Staff model being a pray-er to both colleagues and tamariki. This is important because for some young people this may be the only time prayer is modelled. Prayer unites this faith community. In the classroom it is both creative and varied. Staff have been intentional in establishing routines around prayer, resulting in young people who are reverent and engaged in this encounter opportunity. This has a positive effect on the children as many spoke of how prayer strengthens their relationship with Jesus. Some shared that prior to being at St Joseph's School they had no idea who Jesus was. It has been through RE and prayer they have learnt more about Him and as a result become closer to Him.

Parents commented on the holistic way staff support their children to develop a close relationship with Jesus in an age and stage appropriate way. Prayer kete have had a significant impact on both students and their families. They were described by parents as a gentle way of engaging family in prayer and a tool to support them to pray together as a family. These prayer kete connect parents to the faith stage of their children and give children agency to lead prayer at home. This resource, led by tamariki, is gently assisting to evangelise this community.

The school has numerous strategies to support families as first educators of the faith. Parish-run sacramental programmes are fully supported by the school. The successful baptismal programme, offered at the end of the school day, is an example of how positive relationships and collaboration between parish and school can meet the needs of families. For some families this flexibility has been the impetus to begin and continue the sacramental journey of their children. Other more general examples such as the school newsletter's faith facts, SeeSaw, Friday assembly, a Bible gifted to new families and RE books going home, assist this community to integrate their faith, culture and life.

The Principal and DRS confidently and competently articulate their own faith resulting in effective leadership for the development and implementation of activities and programmes that help people to encounter Jesus Christ. The principal displays integrity in her leadership. She is highly respected by her colleagues and the school community. Building and nurturing



relationships are a defining feature of her leadership, and these are modelled through both word and deed. Through her journey as Acting Principal to Principal, her leadership has always focussed on how St Joseph's School is a place where children are supported to be the best possible person God has created them to be. The dignity of each child and staff member is always valued. St Joseph's School has grown to become the Catholic school parents want to send their children to.

This report would like to acknowledge the strength of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) all of whom hold Special Character Positions (CI 47 positions). Because of the many gifts each brings to this leadership space, there is an intentionality of ensuring a Catholic lens is put across all aspects of their respective roles and responsibilities.

All staff at St Joseph's School contribute to a culture that is defined by caring, welcoming and an understanding of the needs of each person. Collectively, staff through their interactions with learners and parents model the school's Gospel values. As a result, the school's vision, *"by connecting as a community we are developing self-worth and self-awareness. Through our faith and life journey we nurture this in others becoming the best version of ourselves spiritually, physically and academically while encouraging others to do the same,"* is both shared, understood and lived by all.

Next Steps for Development

Consider seeking the voice of your learners about how their encounter with Christ is being developed, grown, and nurtured by what you as a staff are intentionally doing to facilitate this. This will guide any next steps and/or affirm your intended effect.

Each school house, while named after a Saint, is not strongly understood by students. They identified more with the house colour than the Saint. Consider adopting a similar teaching approach around growing students' understanding of their house Saint in the same way you have for your Gospel values. This could be included in the 'Who are we?' inquiry that occurs at the start of the school year. In doing this, students will see how each Saint is an example of someone who because of their encounter with Christ had their life transformed.

The Monday hui karakia gathering provides students the chance to have the Sunday Gospel unpacked at their level. Students enjoy this opportunity to gather and mention that when given some time to share their thinking with a buddy their understanding grows even more. Consider creating further opportunities for this to occur, so students can grow in their understanding as they bear witness to Christ for each other.



Dimension 2: TE WHAKATUPU MĀ TE MĀTAURANGA – GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE

How effectively does the school assist its community to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ, his teachings and the Catholic Church?

The DRS is a responsive curriculum leader who is cognisant of the needs of her team. Kaiako all expressed appreciation of the high level of support they receive from the DRS. Four out of the six teachers at the school are in their first three years of teaching RE. The DRS believes that one of her key responsibilities is to develop capacity in others, and she demonstrates this by the intentional way she supports new teachers. A thorough induction programme is in place, followed by regular one-on-one meetings and differentiated guidance. New kaiako are also actively engaged in the diocesan longitudinal Teachers New to Teaching RE (TNTRE) support programme. A collaborative staff culture further supports new kaiako to grow in confidence.

The DRS is part of the school's senior leadership team and has leadership coaching. This makes her feel that the DRS position is valued and supports a cohesiveness amongst the school leadership team. A practical example of where her leadership training is applied is the use of an inquiry template and coaching model when she undertakes RE lesson observations.

Strand meetings are planned carefully to ensure there is a shared theological understanding and building of knowledge in preparation for the learning ahead. All kaiako work on the same unit plan, identifying and discussing key theological understandings and collaboratively pooling ideas for resources and integration. Teachers then use this unit plan as the foundation for their own planning. Completed unit evaluations provide evidence to feedforward into the following strand, and they are also revisited the following time the strand is taught. This process ensures there is a reflective approach that is responsive to student needs. These systems will also be beneficial when the new RE curriculum is implemented.

Faith Alive is the basis of all planning and this provides confidence for the new teachers in terms of the content that must be covered in RE. However, all teachers consider the needs and interests of tamariki in their classes, and they were observed adapting the resources accordingly. Opportunities for hands-on activities and student agency promote engagement, for example: links with science experiments, research topics, visual art linked to RE and group role play scenarios. Senior students commented that they enjoy independent contracts based on Bloom's taxonomy and multiple intelligences. The classroom walls support integration of faith and life by reflecting the RE learning taking place, as well as links to Catholic character in other curriculum areas.

A thematic approach to planning each term is documented in a connected curriculum overview. All staff collaborate in a brainstorm where links are made to the RE topic being taught and the wider Catholic curriculum. The Term 2 theme, *A Way Forward: He Huarahi Whakamua*, highlights science and social studies as the two key inquiry learning areas, with a focus on Matariki and local Māori histories. 'Te Wairua Tapu dwells in all cultures and in each one of us,' is one of the big ideas for the unit linking to the Holy Spirit RE strand.



Catholic curriculum concepts whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wonder and awe of creation, kaitiakitanga of God's creation, charism and the history of the local iwi and area are also evident, demonstrating the school's commitment to their local curriculum. Catholic social teaching principles would add a further richness to the connected curriculum by showing how we can live lives of holiness in our school and in our world.

The importance of relationships and sexuality education have already been recognised by the school because it is a strategic goal. The principal reports on progress on this goal in her Board reports and the Board have begun their own formation on the *Framing Document*. Led by the DRS, kaiako have also had formation on the *Framing Document* and two members of the staff, including the principal, are currently doing the *Having Life to the Full* course. Board members and kaiako are, therefore, gaining an understanding of the Catholic lens that underpins relationships and sexuality education and their role in supporting this within the school. The school is compliant with the Ministry requirement to consult with their community on the health programme every two years. Currently Years 6-8 students have a bi-annual pubertal change topic. A greater Catholic lens is needed in this programme. The Health and PE section in the Curriculum Implementation Plan requires updating to reflect the current health programme. The next stage would be to identify specific relationships and sexuality education learning at each year level to provide an overview from Years 1-8. Once that is completed, it is suggested that the school then consider how best to consult with your diverse school community on relationships and sexuality education.

Next Steps for Development

Explore Catholic social teaching principles as a means to add rich integration opportunities to the connected curriculum.

Using a strategic approach, implement a relationships and sexuality education programme underpinned by the teachings of the Catholic Church in Years 1 - 8. The PNCEO is available to support this.

Dimension 3: TE WHAKAATU KARAITIANA- CHRISTIAN WITNESS

How effectively does the school provide a hope-filled Catholic Christian witness which empowers its community members to integrate their faith and their life?

Respectful relationships are important at St Joseph's School because people are known and valued which results in genuine care for one another. This is evident by the school's pastoral care outreach and behaviour management strategy, where in both instances the dignity of the person is paramount.

With a focus on forgiveness and restoring relationships students at St Joseph's School are developing key life skills which will assist them to navigate their way through all kinds of situations now and later in their lives.

Relationships with St Vincent de Paul and local iwi are mutually beneficial for the school and along with the care staff have for each other, illustrate how St Joseph's School community



has as Pope Francis describes, “a commitment to protecting and promoting the dignity and good of all, a willingness to show care and compassion, to work for reconciliation and healing, and to advance mutual respect and acceptance.”

Tuakana teina relationships work to unite students from Year 1 through to Year 8 and this structure is valued by the parent community who want their child/ren to experience this as both teina and later as tuakana.

The school is committed to developing an ongoing positive relationship with St Joseph’s Parish community. Strong links have been forged through the principal serving on the Parish Council, collaboration between the school and parish around sacramental programmes, weekday Mass attendance, a positive relationship with the Parish Priest, Proprietor Appointees on the Board and the faith witness of staff. The school is to be acknowledged for partnering with the Holy Spirit and continuing to be courageously creative in the ways they engage families in Parish life.

Other key relationships have been developed between St Joseph’s School and other Catholic primary schools in the Tararua and Central Hawke’s Bay region. These relationships show students they are connected to a much larger community who all share in the Mission of the Catholic Church.

An understanding of the charism of the school’s founding order is deepened by the close relationship the school has with the Sisters of Our Lady of the Mission RNDM. By living out your Mission charism children are encouraged to and understand that by engaging in ways of serving others they too are following in the footsteps of Jesus.

Places and spaces around the school including displays and symbols are a visible reminder of St Joseph’s School’s Catholic Character. The school’s whare is a central place of gathering; every Monday karakia is shared, it is a place for wananga, and where new families are welcomed.

Dimension 4 : TE KAITIAKITANGA ME TE WHAKAPAKARI I TE TUAKIRI KATORIKA-SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING CATHOLIC CHARACTER

How effectively does the school, in its stewardship, and its compliance with legal obligations, safeguard and strengthen its Catholic identity?

To be a kaitiaki of Catholic Special Character carries the responsibility of ensuring that the taonga that is Catholic special character is safeguarded and strengthened for future generations; keeping it alive and aligned with the purpose of Catholic education. This report would like to acknowledge the Board, and the faith leadership team of Principal, DRS and AP in their stewardship, and compliance with legal obligations to safeguard and strengthen the Catholic identity of St Joseph’s School Dannevirke.

The Board has recently been engaging in a regular programme of Catholic Special Character professional learning and formation. They are currently unpacking the Framing Document Human Sexuality Education: A Guide for Catholic Communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. By



engaging with this key document, the Board provides another layer of understanding within the school community of why cohesive sexuality education across the school is important.

The school is compliant with its Integration Agreement in all areas regarding:

- Number of Catholic special character positions (CI 47 positions) required
- Maximum roll compared with actual roll
- Number of non-preference students – currently 1 over the beyond maximum but this has been granted by Manager of Catholic Schools
- Correct number of Proprietor’s Appointees on the School Board
- Board’s consultation with the Proprietor to ensure Catholic Character is safeguarded and strengthened
- Board’s preference and non preference enrolment statement including its criteria meeting the requirements of the Integration Agreement and MOE regulations
- the Board’s appointments committee includes at least one Proprietor’s Appointee for all permanent principal, DRS and teaching positions

A process of Catholic Special Character self-review for development has been spearheaded by the Board’s Catholic Character subcommittee. This self-review process, with its focus on Dimension One – Encounter with Christ, provided the school with valuable data enabling good practice to be affirmed and areas for growth to be identified. The PNCEO would like to support the SLT and Catholic Character subcommittee to streamline their internal evaluation process to a more manageable format that would also include gathering voice from key stakeholders.

There has been a genuine and ongoing effort to adapt Board policies to show how decision making is made from a Catholic perspective. This has been prioritised by the Board’s Catholic Character sub-committee. It is highly recommended that the Board actively lobby the provider for changes to be made so the Proprietor’s interests and those of the Board are protected.

As good employers the Board has prioritised staff well-being by including it as one of the school’s strategic goals. At a practical level this includes a subscription to EAP services, teacher only days to balance teacher workload and regular ‘check-ins’ by the Presiding Member and Proprietor’s Appointees with the Principal. There is continuing dialogue between staff and between Board members about how to best address wellbeing and the positive ongoing effect this will have on effective curriculum delivery and overall hauora of staff.

Job descriptions reflect how employees at St Joseph’s School have a responsibility to support Catholic Character, demonstrating through word and action the school’s Gospel values. This intentional wording ensures that there is a shared understanding that everyone is responsible for strengthening and safeguarding the Catholic Character of the school.



Next Steps for Development

An area of growth since the 2017 Catholic Special Character review report is the development of strategic and annual goals within the school Charter. Moving forward consider how the principles of learning in the introductory section of St Joseph's School strategic plan can be strengthened by;

- the inclusion of Catholic Social Teaching principles such as Human Dignity. This will intentionally link your ways of being to your Catholic context.
- acknowledging wairuatanga Māori as highlighted in Article Four of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a way of reflecting the commitment of the Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic Church to bi-cultural partnership.

Board Governance policies are required to show how governance is from a Catholic perspective. The PNCEO will provide support to the Board with policies that can be adapted to reflect your context.

Job descriptions for staff who hold Special Character positions should more explicitly show how their leadership reflects expectations from the school's Integration Agreement to safeguard Catholic Character.

As the SLT continues to develop each teacher's Professional Growth Cycle, consider how NZCEO's Catholic Elaborations of the Education Council's Standards for the Teaching Profession, alongside the reflective toolkits, can be integrated into your current template and practice. These resources provide a framework for personal and professional reflection and support the growth of an encounter with Christ.



ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL DANNEVIRKE CATHOLIC SPECIAL CHARACTER REVIEW

REPORT SUMMARY

Areas of growth since the last review report

The school is committed to developing an ongoing positive relationship with St Joseph's Parish community and is to be acknowledged for partnering with the Holy Spirit and continuing to be courageously creative in the ways they engage families in Parish life.

The DRS is part of the school's senior leadership team and has leadership coaching. This makes her feel that the DRS position is valued and supports a cohesiveness amongst the school leadership team.

Strand meetings are planned carefully to ensure there is a shared theological understanding and building of knowledge in preparation for the learning ahead. All kaiako work on the same unit plan, identifying and discussing key theological understandings and collaboratively pooling ideas for resources and integration.

Catholic curriculum concepts like whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wonder and awe of creation, kaitiakitanga of God's creation, charism and history of the local iwi and area are also evident, demonstrating the school's commitment to their local curriculum.

Respectful relationships are important at St Joseph's School because people are known and valued which results in genuine care for one another. This is evident by the school's pastoral care outreach and behaviour management strategy, where in both instances the dignity of the person is paramount.

The Board has recently been engaging in a regular programme of Catholic Special Character professional learning and formation.

A process of Catholic Special Character self-review for development has been spearheaded by the Board's Catholic Character subcommittee.

There has been a genuine and ongoing effort to adapt Board policies to show how decision making is made from a Catholic perspective.



Recommendations

Encounter with Christ

Each school house, while named after a Saint, is not strongly understood by students. They identified more with the house colour than the Saint. Consider adopting a similar teaching approach around growing students' understanding of their house Saint in the same way you have for your Gospel values. This could be included in the 'Who are we?' inquiry that occurs at the start of the school year. In doing this, students will see how this Saint is an example of someone who because of their encounter with Christ had their life transformed.

Growth in Knowledge

Using a strategic approach, implement a relationships and sexuality education programme underpinned by the teachings of the Catholic Church in years 1 - 8. The PNCEO is available to support with this.

We are confident that with support from the Palmerston North Catholic Education Office, the St Joseph's School leadership team, (School Board, Principal/DRS) will be able to address both the recommendations and the next steps for development highlighted in this report.

The review team thank the community of St Joseph's School for the welcome, hospitality and cooperation extended to them and for the opportunity to experience the way that they safeguard and strengthen their Catholic special character. The organisation and preparation for the review by the school is greatly appreciated.



Pauline Balm

Review and Development Advisor



Teresa Edwards

Manager Catholic Education Office

