

Ponatahi Christian School Education Review

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

About the School

Location	Carterton	
Ministry of Education profile number	528	
School type	State Integrated (Years 1 to 13)	
School roll	77	
Gender composition	Female 39, Male 38	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	76
	Fiji Indian	1
Review team on site	October 2013	
Date of this report	16 December 2013	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	February 2010
	Education Review	November 2006
	Education Review	May 2004

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. The report answers four key questions about the school.

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1 Context

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

Ponatahi Christian School is a state integrated school in Carterton. It is a small school whose special character is based on a biblical foundation.

Currently the school has 77 students from Years 1 to 12, with 25 studying at secondary level. The teacher-pupil ratio supports small classes.

Students experience a stable, family-type environment in which they know each other and their teachers well. There is low staff turnover, and many students have regular contact with their teachers outside school hours. Close links exist with the adjacent church, and a playgroup is held onsite once a week.

The senior management team comprises experienced teachers with a long-term association with the school.

2 Learning

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

The school gathers and collates a suitable range of reliable assessment data to monitor students' progress and achievement. This information shows that most students achieve at or above expected levels throughout the school. There is no identified under-achieving group.

Teachers have sound knowledge, both formal and informal, about students' learning. They know about those learners achieving below expectations, and teacher aides provide learning support. The next step for the school is to ensure that teachers use specific strategies to address particular individual and group learning needs. The effectiveness of these strategies for accelerating progress then needs to be evaluated.

In National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA), students enjoy high levels of success and endorsements. School leaders and trustees are investigating ways to ensure that senior students are not disadvantaged by the assessment constraints related to being in a small school.

Achievement information is reported regularly and clearly to parents and the board. Annual targets reflect identified trends and patterns.

3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum is conservative in nature, reflecting its special character. Careful consideration has been given to developing programmes that align with The New Zealand Curriculum. School leaders demonstrate a flexible approach to timetabling and staffing.

Teachers work collegially to implement the curriculum. They reflect on their own professional performance and set goals for continued development. School leaders recognise the need to monitor the quality and usefulness of goals and strategies in relation to improved outcomes for students.

Students are well engaged in classes and interact positively with each other. Teachers should now focus on increasing learners' active involvement in their own progress and achievement. Knowing how to learn is likely to help students become independent lifelong learners.

ERO's evaluation found, and school leaders and trustees agree, that it is timely to:

- ensure that all The New Zealand Curriculum principles are fully enacted, by strengthening management guidelines for classroom practice
- integrate information and communication technologies fully into teaching and learning
- explore ways to increase the scope and breadth of the curriculum, particularly in the senior school
- inquire into ways in which students can enjoy increased participation in cultural, sporting and social activities in the wider community.

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

Although there are no Māori currently enrolled, the school has policies that reflect its commitment to providing an environment in which the language, culture and identity of tangata whenua are valued.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

Close relationships within the school community strongly underpin its special character and associated priorities and values. Parents, teachers and students share a commitment to preserving and enacting the Christian foundation of the school. Decision-making is informed by regular formal and informal consultation with parents.

School leaders have clearly defined roles. They work as a cohesive team and manage the school well whilst fulfilling their responsibilities as teachers.

Board members are experienced, with up-to-date knowledge of their governance roles and responsibilities. They focus on the achievement and wellbeing of students, and have a close partnership with school managers.

To further promote sustained improvement, school leaders and trustees understand the importance of strengthening aspects of their self-review practice. In particular, they are aware of the need to evaluate the quality of programmes and initiatives in terms of student achievement and wellbeing. Seeking and acting on students' voice more regularly is acknowledged as a useful approach.

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, the board and school leaders need to review the procedures for managing aspects of students' physical and emotional safety.

[National Administration Guideline 5]

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Joyce Gebbie
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