

# Holy Cross School (Papatoetoe) Education Review

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## 1 Context

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

Holy Cross School (Papatoetoe) is a Sisters of Mercy Catholic integrated school and caters for girls from Year 1 to 8 and boys from Year 1 to 6. The school serves a widespread Catholic community in South Auckland. As noted in the ERO 2011 report the school continues to value its close links with the Holy Cross parish and students continue to participate regularly in the celebration of Mass.

A new senior leadership team consists of the long standing principal and deputy principal and two new associate principals. The associate principals are well supported by the senior team to lead a school-wide approach to raising student achievement in partnership with families.

Families and staff have long-standing relationships with the school, and some family relationships span generations. The board reflects the community well with a good balance of experienced and newly appointed trustees.

There is a caring and friendly school culture evident. The multicultural school community consists of a high percentage of students with Pacific heritage.

The school has a history of positive ERO reports. The areas of good practice identified in the 2011 ERO report such as high expectations of students and a strong pastoral care programme, continue to be evident.

## 2 Learning

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

Leaders and teachers at Holy Cross School (Papatoetoe) use student achievement information very well to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement. Most students are achieving at or above National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Students made significant progress in writing results in relation to national Standards during 2013. Senior leaders have very good processes and strategies in place to support the students who are yet to meet the National Standards.

The board is well informed about student progress and achievement. They make very good use of this information to set school-wide goals that focus on raising the achievement of identified groups of students. Progress towards these goals is closely monitored and reported to the board.

Students are confident, articulate and active learners. They are highly engaged in their learning and monitor their own progress. Students have access to a wide variety of information and communication tools. They have many opportunities to take part in sporting, cultural and pastoral leadership activities.

Students' individual learning needs are closely monitored by the school. The board ensures that appropriate programmes are available and well resourced for students with special abilities and needs. There is a strong commitment to catering for students' specific needs through:

- good parent school partnerships
- tuakana teina/ peer learning approaches
- increasing students' direction of their own learning
- providing interesting and relevant contexts for learning.

Oral language and an emphasis on reading and writing skills in the younger years continues to be a school focus. The well-established Mahi Tahi programme supports students' successful transition into school and provides opportunities for parent education about the school's curriculum.

The achievement and progress of Pacific students is carefully monitored. Students from a variety of Pacific nations make up 67 percent of the school roll. The largest groups are Tongan and Samoan. School data indicates that most Pacific students are at or above

National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The board meets with Pacific families to talk about their aspirations for their children's learning.

Successful partnerships between the school and families are a feature. Parents and the wider school community have electronic access to information about students' ongoing learning. Senior leaders continue to explore ways to make this information available to families without internet access.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's broad curriculum effectively promotes and supports students learning. The curriculum is underpinned by the school's four values and the concept of developing life-long learning. Teaching programmes are well resourced and planned to enhance students' interests and learning.

The board continues to implement a variety of new initiatives to integrate "21st century learning" into the curriculum. A programme of updating the classrooms continues so that students are working in modern learning environments. Some classrooms are specifically designated as "digital classrooms". However, all students throughout the school have good access to a wide variety of digital tools.

The school has participated in the Ministry of Education Student Achievement Function (SAF) programme to strengthen written language achievement. An outcome of this programme has been the development of stronger parent-school partnerships to promote student learning. The principal and board agree that it would be useful for the board to receive regular information on the effectiveness and the impact of such initiatives on student progress and achievement.

There is a high standard of teaching across the school. Teachers participate in professional development that aligns well with the school's strategic goals. They regularly reflect on their teaching practice. Teachers could strengthen their reflections by considering the impact that their teaching strategies are having on the achievement and progress of groups of students.

The school has responded to whānau consultation by implementing staff professional learning and development on the Treaty of Waitangi and the Māori education strategy, Ka Hikitia-Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017.

The board and principal are committed to working in partnership with Māori whānau to enhance the integration of aspects of Te Ao Māori and te reo Māori through the school's curriculum.

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

The school effectively promotes educational success for Maori as Māori. Nine percent of all students identify as being of Māori descent. Most of these students are achieving at or above the National Standards. The school's information indicates students are making accelerated progress in reading and writing and maintain high levels of achievement in mathematics.

The school has consulted their Māori whānau group te Puawaitanga o Te Kura Ripeka Tapu about how to promote educational success for Māori students and create opportunities for them to succeed as Māori.

The proactive whānau Māori group have developed a comprehensive Māori strategic plan. The group have provided direction for strengthening the school's curriculum and strategic plans. They also offer advice to the board and senior leaders on local kawa, appropriate school kawa and whānau aspirations for their tamariki. This year the strategic focus is whanaungatanga, to build collaborative relationships.

Celebrating Māori cultural events and activities play an important role in reflecting New Zealand's cultural heritage. Te reo Māori is successfully integrated into class programmes and all students benefit from the formal and sequential te reo Māori programme. Māori staff offer students the opportunity to participate in the school's three kapa haka groups.

The school has recently implemented the "Mana Potential" leadership programme which increases student voice and develops effective leaders. To further promote success for Māori students as Māori it would be useful for the board to know about the effectiveness of this and other initiatives.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

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

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

The board are knowledgeable about their governance role, have a planned approach to school improvement and work collaboratively with the senior leadership team.

The principal provides inclusive and distributed leadership. The senior leadership team is supportive of the principal and staff and has high expectations for students' learning. Teachers work collaboratively for the benefit of students' success. The principal offers opportunities to grow the leadership capability of all teachers and students.

Trustees have a good understanding of the purpose of self review. They have an established agenda to review their policies and have student progress regularly reported to them. Senior leaders have recently reviewed and strengthened the appraisal process and the board agrees that it would be beneficial for the principal to participate in an external performance review.

In order to further improve current self review practices, senior leaders should continue to develop and document organisational structures, processes and expectations for both planned and emergent reviews. This could promote collaborative activity, collective and evidence based decision making and further build the school's capacity to sustain ongoing learning and improvement.

### 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.

### Conclusion

Holy Cross school (Papatoetoe) effectively promotes student learning and well being. The school's responsive curriculum ensures there are high levels of engagement and learning by all students. The school is well led and leaders and teachers value partnership with parents. The board governs the school well.

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

Dale Bailey  
National Manager Review Services  
Northern Region

7 November 2014

## School Statistics

Location	Papatoetoe, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1315	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	605	
Gender composition	Girls 58% Boys 42%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	9%
	NZ European/ Pākehā	6%
	Samoaan	44%
	Tongan	17%
	Indian	5%
	Middle Eastern	5%
	Cook Island Māori	4%
	Filipino	4%
	other	6%
Special Features	Attached Social Worker in Schools	
Review team on site	August 2014	
Date of this report	7 November 2014	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	August 2011
	Education Review	June 2008
	Education Review	June 2005