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CONFIRMED

EDUCATION REVIEW
REPORT

MONTE CECILIA SCHOOL (MT ROSKILL)

March 2010



EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
TE TARI AROTAKE MATAURANGA

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**CONFIRMED EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT:
 MONTE CECILIA SCHOOL (MT ROSKILL)**

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

1 About the School

Location	Mt Roskill, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	1376
School type	Integrated Full Primary (Years 1-8)
Decile rating ¹	6
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated entitlement	10.96
Number of teachers	11
School roll	209
Gender composition	Girls 55%, Boys 45%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 48%, Māori 9%, Indian 11%, Samoan 11%, Tongan 7%, Chinese 5%, Filipino 3%, other 6%
Review team on site	December 2009
Date of this report	16 March 2010
Previous ERO reports	Education Review, June 2007 Education Review, September 2003 Accountability Review, February 2000 Effectiveness Review, May 1996 Assurance Audit, September 1993

¹ Decile 1 schools draw their students from areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage, Decile 10 from areas of least socio-economic disadvantage.

2 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation

Monte Cecilia School provides students with very good standards of education and a welcoming and supportive learning environment. The school's vision, values and special Catholic character are clearly reflected in everyday practices. Teaching programmes, daily routines and religious celebrations foster students' knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Positive attitudes to learning are encouraged and emphasis is placed on values such as love, respect and empathy for others.

As at the time of the 2007 ERO review, students continue to achieve well. Information gathered about students' achievement in reading and mathematics shows that most children perform at or above expectations for their age and year level. The development of a school-wide database of students' achievement in writing would be a useful next step to provide a more holistic overview of literacy learning and achievement within the school.

School initiatives to further improve teaching and learning have continued to progress. The 2007 ERO report noted that teachers had been focusing on establishing more child-centred approaches to learning. This focus remains evident, with staff now working to encourage more independent, self-directed learning through the development of inquiry learning approaches at all year levels. The school's strengths in pastoral care, and its emphasis on holistic learning, have been extended through the introduction of a range of programmes to promote improvement in students' interpersonal relationships, self-confidence, resilience, and readiness to engage in learning.

Students have responded positively to inquiry learning approaches and pastoral care developments. Early indications of increased student engagement in, and motivation for, learning provide good signposts to guide teacher evaluations of programme effectiveness. Planned work to improve the assessment of inquiry-based studies and to extend data analysis of social and emotional programmes should provide further useful information about the impact of these initiatives on student progress and achievement.

The principal and staff are well supported by the board of trustees in their efforts to bring about continuous improvement in teaching and learning. Trustees bring a wide range of experience and expertise to their governance role. School strategic plans are well documented and set clear directions for school development. Priorities outlined in the principal's performance agreement and annual plans reflect the board's responsiveness to key findings from school self review.

ERO affirms the good progress the school has made over the last three years and recommends that the senior leadership team and teachers now work to build a unified school-wide approach to the delivery and assessment of inquiry learning studies. Increased opportunities for classroom teachers to support and reinforce the school's social and emotional programmes are also recommended.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

3 The Focus of the Review

Student Achievement Overall

ERO's education reviews focus on student achievement. What follows is a statement about what the school knows about student achievement overall.

The school gathers a range of nationally standardised data about student progress and achievement in reading and mathematics. This information shows that children beginning school arrive with a wide range of early literacy knowledge. They make good gains during their first years at school and, by Year 4, the large majority are achieving at or above expectations for their chronological age. This good progress continues in the senior school (Years 4 to 6).

Information about students' written language abilities is gathered by individual classroom teachers. Class-based information is not yet collated and analysed to provide a school-wide overview of student progress and achievement in this area of literacy learning.

The small number of students not achieving to expectation are provided with targeted support to address their individual learning needs. Students' social and emotional progress is also monitored, and where necessary, special programmes are provided to help ensure that students are well placed to benefit from classroom teaching and learning programmes.

School Specific Priorities

Before the review, the board of Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill) was invited to consider its priorities for review using guidelines and resources provided by ERO. ERO also used documentation provided by the school to contribute to the scope of the review.

The detailed priorities for review were then determined following a discussion between the ERO review team and the board of trustees. This discussion focused on existing information held by the school (including student achievement and self-review information) and the extent to which potential issues for review contributed to the achievement of the students at Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill).

ERO and the board have agreed on the following focus areas for the review:

- the impact of inquiry learning approaches on student learning; and
- the impact of social and emotional programmes on student learning and engagement.

ERO's findings in these areas are set out below.

The impact of inquiry learning approaches on student learning

Background

In 2008 work began on promoting inquiry learning approaches across the school to increase opportunities for students to become independent, self-motivated learners. This work builds on initiatives that focus on developing more child-centred teaching

practices, which were evident at the time of the 2007 ERO review. Inquiry learning approaches also align well with teaching practices advocated in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

The principal and board were interested in an independent evaluation of the impact of inquiry-based approaches on student learning. ERO agreed to this evaluation and its findings are presented below.

Areas of good performance

Laying foundations for inquiry learning approaches. The principal has planned well for the introduction of inquiry learning approaches. A programme of internal and external professional development has helped build teachers' understanding of the benefits of inquiry-based learning and the teaching practices that facilitate its successful implementation in the classroom. Work in this area is providing a sound foundation for extending the range of effective teaching practices evident in the school.

Impact on teaching practice. Professional development programmes for increasing teacher knowledge of inquiry-based learning are impacting positively on classroom practice. Teachers are providing students with a range of interactive, hands-on learning experiences. They are actively working to extend students':

- thinking and problem-solving skills;
- ability to ask questions and to seek out useful information on inquiry topics; and
- ability to work independently and in collaboration with their peers.

Many teachers use questioning and conferencing strategies well to help students think more deeply about their work and to encourage further exploration of their selected inquiry study. Formative teaching practices are also used to good effect in some classrooms to help students to recognise their own achievements and next learning steps.

Student enthusiasm for inquiry approaches. For many students, inquiry-based studies have become a highlight of the school's curriculum. They are motivated by opportunities to develop their own inquiry questions and appreciate the chance to work with, and to learn from, their peers. Older students in Years 4 to 6 see inquiry approaches as allowing them to investigate issues that are important for them personally and are also important for promoting a sustainable and peaceful world.

Cross-curriculum benefits. Inquiry learning approaches are proving beneficial in promoting good cross-curriculum links. They foster the development of information literacy as students read to learn. Written and oral language skills are improved through students' verbal and written presentations of their inquiry studies. Teachers often integrate concepts from mathematics, science, technology and other learning areas into inquiry-based programme plans. E-learning skills are promoted as students use computer-based resources to find answers to their questions.

Areas for improvement

School-wide inquiry approaches. While teacher development programmes have included whole-staff training, teachers of junior (Years 1-3) and senior (Years 4-6)

classes are generally working independently to develop and implement inquiry learning programmes. A more unified school-wide approach that provides a cohesive and sequential framework for supporting inquiry learning approaches is likely to be more beneficial for students. A unified approach would encourage shared teacher understandings about, and the use of a common language for, developing students' inquiry and independent learning skills.

Assessment of inquiry-based programmes. Senior leaders and teachers have identified the need to establish consistent practices for assessing student learning in inquiry-based programmes. Developments in this area would ensure that data gathered about student achievement could be used to obtain reliable and meaningful indications of student progress and achievement over time.

The impact of social and emotional programmes on student learning and engagement

Background

The school has a number of support programmes for students needing additional help with their learning. The school's special education needs coordinator (SENCO) noted that these programmes were not always successful in raising students' literacy, numeracy and general academic achievement. Her investigations found that social and emotional issues were impeding good academic progress for a number of students on learning support programmes and, more widely, throughout the school.

In response to this finding, the school decided to make emotional literacy a priority in its strategic plan. It was successful in obtaining special funding for 2008 and 2009 from the Ministry of Education through its *Enhanced Programme Funding (EPF)* scheme. Over the past two years, EPF has enabled the SENCO to introduce a variety of social and emotional programmes.

The principal and board were interested in an external evaluation of the impact of these programmes on student learning and engagement. ERO agreed to this request and its findings are presented below.

Areas of good performance

Social and emotional provisions. There is widespread recognition amongst staff that readiness for learning is underpinned by high quality pastoral care provisions that foster students' wellbeing and personal confidence. The introduction of new social and emotional programmes has considerably strengthened the school's existing good pastoral care systems. It has also complemented work done by teachers to develop the key competencies for learning, such as self management, relating to others, and participating and contributing, as outlined in *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

Catering for differing needs. The SENCO, working in consultation with local resource teachers of learning and behaviour (RTLBs), is providing a range of programmes to meet the differing needs of children. These programmes focus on developing students' ability to understand and manage grief, change or loss; improving social behaviours; and on helping students to develop emotional resilience, empathy for others, and positive attitudes to learning. Students involved in these

programmes affirm their value and appreciate opportunities to work with specialist staff, mentors and others involved in the programmes.

Programme documentation and monitoring. The school is maintaining high quality documentation of programme development, teaching approaches, goals and associated performance indicators linked to goal attainment. Records show evidence of strong and continuing partnerships with parents to support children's social and emotional wellbeing. The impact of programmes is closely monitored in terms of students' individual progress against relevant goals and performance indicators. These good features encourage purposeful, evidence-based teacher reflection and ongoing evaluation of the responsiveness of social and emotional programmes to student needs.

Areas for improvement

Increasing staff involvement in programmes. Classroom teachers and teacher aides have a good awareness of the purpose of the school's social and emotional programmes, but lack in-depth knowledge about the teaching principles and strategies that underpin most programmes. Providing opportunities for teachers and teacher aides to learn more about these programmes could, therefore, be useful and would enable staff to better support and reinforce the work of the SENCO and RTLBs. A greater knowledge of how the programmes work should strengthen teachers' ability to respond to the pastoral care needs of all students and would encourage the sustainability of the school's social and emotional programmes as the special Ministry of Education funding draws to an end.

Extending programme evaluation. The school is accumulating extensive data about the impact of its social and emotional programmes on individual students and their families. A useful next step would be to collate and analyse data to evaluate the overall effectiveness of each programme in achieving its stated goals. Aggregated data would also provide a baseline for exploring correlations between students' involvement in social and emotional programmes and their more long-term academic progress and achievement.

4 Areas of National Interest

Overview

ERO provides information about the education system as a whole to Government to be used as the basis for long-term and systemic educational improvement. ERO also provides information about the education sector for schools, parents and the community through its national reports.

To do this ERO decides on topics and investigates them for a specific period in all applicable schools nationally.

During the review of Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill) ERO investigated and reported on the following areas of national interest. The findings are included in this report so that information about the school is transparent and widely available.

Success for Māori Students: Progress

In this review, ERO evaluated the extent to which the school was familiar with the *Māori Education Strategy – Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success* and progress made since the last review in promoting success at school for Māori students. The school reports it has not yet discussed *Ka Hikitia* but expects to do so in the near future.

Areas of progress

Progress and achievement. Information on Māori student achievement continues to be included in reports to the board on student achievement in reading and mathematics. This information indicates that the majority of Māori students achieve at and above expected levels in reading and mathematics. Students who underachieve receive targeted support for their learning.

Initiatives to promote successful learning. Since the last ERO review, teachers have introduced initiatives that promote student engagement. These include the introduction of inquiry learning approaches and an increased focus on helping students to think about their learning. Teachers place a strong emphasis on positive, respectful relationships and the provision of a supportive learning environment. Social-emotional programmes support students to understand themselves and to engage better in learning.

Te reo me nga tikanga Māori. The school's religious education programme includes teachings on Māori spirituality in relation to the special character of the school. Teachers also include aspects of te reo and tikanga Māori in their inquiry studies. This integration of the Māori language and culture in the school's curriculum affirms Māori students and acknowledges their place as tangata whenua.

Consultation. The board has responded positively to recommendations made in the 2007 ERO report. Consultation with the school's Māori community is now included in the board's charter and strategic planning as part of its three-year cycle of self review. This systematic approach ensures there are planned opportunities for whānau of Māori students to discuss their aspirations for their children's education. Parents and teachers also discuss students' progress during parent-teacher interviews and, more informally, as they meet throughout the year at various school events.

Areas for further improvement

Strengthening partnerships with parents. The principal and board should continue to seek ways to work together with Māori whānau to promote ongoing improvement in their children's learning and achievement.

The Achievement of Pacific Students: Progress

In this review ERO evaluated the progress the school has made since the last review in improving the achievement of its Pacific students and in initiatives designed to promote improved achievement. Pacific students compose 17% of the school roll.

Areas of progress

Progress and achievement. Information on Pacific student achievement continues to be included in reports to the board on student achievement in reading and mathematics. This information indicates that, while the majority of Pacific students achieve at and above expected levels in reading and mathematics, they do not perform as highly overall as the total student population. Students who underachieve receive targeted support for their learning.

Initiatives to promote successful learning. Since the last ERO review, teachers have introduced initiatives that promote student engagement. Pacific students benefit from inquiry learning approaches and associated integrated curriculum programmes. An emphasis on thinking skills, teacher commitment to providing an inclusive learning environment, and the growth of the school's social and emotional programmes, also help Pacific students to engage in learning.

Areas for improvement

Strengthening partnerships with parents. The principal and board should continue to seek ways to work together with Pacific families to promote ongoing improvement in their children's learning and achievement.

Preparing to Give Effect to the New Zealand Curriculum

Schools are currently working towards implementing *The New Zealand Curriculum* by February 2010. During this review ERO investigated the progress Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill) is making towards giving full effect to the curriculum as part of its planning, organisation and teaching practice.

ERO finds that school leaders and teachers at Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill) are beginning to give effect to *The New Zealand Curriculum* in their planning, organisation and teaching.

Including Students with High Needs

During this review ERO investigated the extent to which the board and school leaders of Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill) provide an inclusive education for students with high needs. This included collecting evidence about the school's policies, processes and practices to support the enrolment and induction of students with high needs and to support their participation and achievement at school. The information collected during this review will contribute to information that will be reported in a national education evaluation report.

Prior to a review, a board of trustees and principal attest in the Board Assurance Statement that they have taken all reasonable steps to meet their legal requirements including those detailed in Ministry of Education circulars and other documents.

The board of Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill) was asked to attest to whether it had '*ensured that teachers of students with disabilities, and other contact staff, have a sound understanding of the learning needs of students with disabilities and, where necessary, have put in place support systems centred on each individual with disabilities.*' The board was also asked to attest that '*policies and procedures that*

relate to students who have special education needs are implemented without discrimination'.

ERO's findings confirm these attestations.

5 Board Assurance on Compliance Areas

Overview

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill) completed an ERO *Board Assurance Statement* and *Self-Audit Checklist*. 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; and
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on students' achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment);
- physical safety of students;
- teacher registration;
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions; and
- attendance.

Compliance

The school has a number of good programmes and systems to promote a safe and inclusive environment for students. These include its religious education programmes and other whole-school programmes that include a focus on respecting and caring for others. Regular checks are conducted on grounds and buildings as part of processes for ensuring a safe physical environment.

During the course of the review ERO identified one area of non-compliance that has also been brought to the board's attention by auditors and the Catholic Diocese. In order to address this area of non-compliance, the board of trustees must:

- 5.1 ensure that information and invoices to parents about attendance dues, stationery costs, and other financial matters clearly distinguish between compulsory charges and voluntary donations,
[Education Act 1989, s3].

6 Recommendations

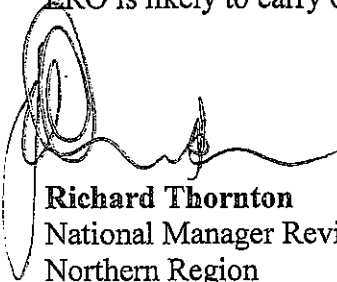
The board of trustees and ERO agree that, in order to sustain and embed work in progress to improve teaching, learning and student achievement, the principal and senior leadership team will:

- establish a coordinated school-wide approach to guide the planning, delivery and assessment of inquiry learning programmes;
- increase opportunities for teachers to reinforce and support the school's social and emotional programmes within their daily classroom teaching; and
- collate and analyse individual student, parent and teacher evaluations of social and emotional programmes to provide an overview of the extent to which these programmes are meeting their stated goals and objectives.

7 Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report.

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



Richard Thornton
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region

16 March 2010

16 March 2010

To the Parents and Community of Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill)

auckland@ero.govt.nz

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on Monte Cecilia School (Mt Roskill).

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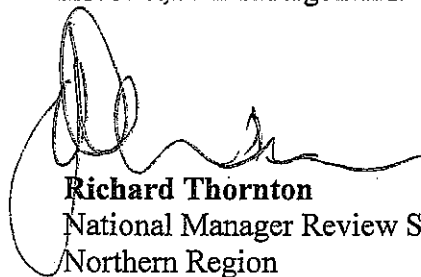
Future Action

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Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, www.ero.govt.nz.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Thornton', is written over the printed name and title.

Richard Thornton
National Manager Review Services
Northern Region