



***He Pūrongo Arotake Mātauranga
Ahurea Katorika ā Waho***

***Catholic Special Character External
Evaluation Report***

**Te Kura O Hato Petera e Paora
Ss. Peter & Paul School, Lower Hutt**

May 2022

Evaluation conducted on 9th-11th May 2022

Confirmed Report: 8th June 2022



School Details

Name: Ss Peter & Paul School

Address: Myrtle St, Lower Hutt

School Type: Co-ed Years 1-6 for boys and Years 1- 8 for girls

Decile: 9

Actual roll: 437

Maximum roll: 485

Non-preference maximum: 26

Actual non-preference number: 9

Roll based staffing entitlement: 21

Required number of Special Character Cl 47 positions: 13

Filled number of Special Character Cl 47 positions: 12 (appointment in process)

Principal: Kay Tester

Director of Religious Studies: Aurea Casino (Acting)

BOT Chairperson: Tanya Wilton

Parish Priest: Father Patrick Bridgman

Evaluation Team:

Lead Evaluator: Zita Smith

Accompanying Evaluator: Donna MacDonald, Principal, St Theresa's School, Plimmerton



The Aims of Catholic Special Character External Evaluation for Development

The Catholic special character evaluation process produces a focused picture of the impact of Catholic schooling and the effectiveness of its goals on the lives of all tamariki and rangatahi¹. The process seeks to determine whether they have encountered the living God revealed in Jesus Christ, grown in knowledge of Him and His Church, and as a result are forming a deep and lasting relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church². The process also evaluates how the whole school community engages in authentic Catholic Christian witness and evangelisation.

The evaluation also investigates how the school is acting as kaitiaki of Catholic special character including meeting its statutory compliances.

A collaborative external evaluation process between school and the evaluators helps the school see what it is doing well and identify next steps.

¹ New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference. *The Catholic Education of School Age Children*. Wellington:2014.

² Ibid.

Introduction

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

- 1. Continue to monitor the coverage of the national RE Curriculum through the integrated units. Also begin the development of assessment structures that will reflect the students' faith development and to support the planning of the units.***

Actions taken since the last Review include engagement with the RE Bridging Document, Depth & Complexity PLD, systems established to monitor coverage of key learning, collaborative planning and alignment with developing school wide assessment practices and principles. As a result, there has been greater clarity regarding the big concepts to be taught, more connections across the strands and other learning areas, better consistency across the Areas and more meaningful and high quality learning experienced by all students. Evidence of this can be seen in engagement in deeper thinking and more authentic evidence of learning created by students and shared with parents. Written reports summarise and connect to classroom learning.

- 2. As policies and procedures are reviewed, ensure that each one reflects the Catholic Character of the school e.g. the Behaviour Management Policy could begin with a Bible quote on forgiveness etc.***

The school utilises *SchoolDocs*, a generic set of policies used by many schools across NZ. The majority of these cannot be adapted to individual schools. However the special character permeates through all possible documents and actions. An example relating to behaviour management outlines the school's journey to support behaviour and learning based on a restorative justice model. The continued use of *SchoolDocs* has provided the school with an effective and on-going source of updated documentation that is under consistent review.



- 3. Review the current way in which the school's charism is communicated to the students and their families and find an effective way for the charism to be remembered. Align the charism and the identified Gospel values of stewardship, joy, faith and aroha with the "Head, Heart and Hand" and "Walking in the footsteps of Jesus" concepts. Also specify to students which of the Gospel values are being demonstrated through the above concepts. Display values around the school and highlight regularly in school newsletters, website etc.***

The concept and messaging of formerly used 'Head, heart and hands,' was predominantly a junior school one. It grew from an interpretation of the Mission Sisters' motto, 'Virtue and Knowledge'. It has been incorporated into the whole school values development - *Living and learning by our values*. The connection to the Mission Sisters continues. There is a record of the history of the school and plans have begun to better display and use this as an educational tool.

The Gospel values, well established at all levels, strengthen and act as beacons for how to act and how to be at Ss Peter and Paul. They are visually displayed across the school, actively taught and are the basis for the strong focus on restorative practice.

Dimension 1: 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?

Spirituality

A major focus for the school since the last review has been the development of the school values. Aroha, faith, stewardship and joy, clearly sourced from the Gospels, are taught, modelled and displayed prominently around the school and in documentation.

The values have been further embedded into the life of the school and are made meaningful by being used as the basis for all behaviours and interactions. Each value has a description of what it looks like in practice. This feeds into and strengthens the challenge as a community to “Live our Catholic Identity”, the primary strategic goal.

The values fit with the school motto, *“Following in the footsteps of Jesus”* which also encompasses the mission of Ss Peter and Paul and the charism of the Mission Sisters, the school’s founding Order. The school values are consciously linked to the teachings of Jesus and are woven through all aspects of the curriculum and behavioural expectations which students and staff can articulate. In PD sessions the Principal invites staff to think about the bigger picture so that there is a unity of purpose which is grounded in and informed by the Gospel values.

The school incorporates tikanga, te reo Māori and Māori expression of Katorikatanga into all aspects of Catholic special character, including Masses, liturgies, and prayer. Classes share karakia at the start each day, at lunch time and at the end of the day. The first two weeks of each term are used as an opportunity to teach an aspect of prayer. Evidence of this was seen in two classes unpacking the Our Father phrase by phrase, exploring the meaning of specific words, looking at the big picture through their Depth & Complexity thinking tools i.e. why Jesus taught this prayer. Students were also learning to pray and sing it in te reo Māori. Children experience a variety of prayer styles, like meditation, praying in colour and Lectio Divina. Teachers work to integrate te reo in meaningful ways in everyday interactions, prayer, classroom, waiata. There is also a school karakia and waiata which students know well.

Weekly karakia as a staff is shared on a roster system. Staff report that this time is very



important and highly valued as it supports individual spirituality as well as staff well-being, helping to build relationships and honouring each person's dignity,

Teachers encourage restorative practice, reflection and meditation. Teachers model and speak about Jesus, to convey to children their own understanding of faith. Making good choices, apologising and forgiving as Jesus does are hallmarks of daily conversations between teachers and students. The introduction of restorative practice has resulted in more positive playground behaviour and a greater student understanding of forgiveness and starting afresh.

Evangelisation

The school actively supports and promotes Parish programmes for the Sacraments of Initiation, and the faith of tamariki in the years beyond the Sacraments of Initiation. Students and their families are also supported by the school if they choose to prepare for the Sacrament of Baptism. The DRS is part of the Sacramental Team and as such provides a vital link and positive role model to students and families who enter the programme.

Prior to Covid-19, the school and Parish had an active programme of regular Masses and liturgies calendared throughout the year, the termly Sunday school and parish Mass being a highlight. A pōwhiri whakatau to welcome new families and students each term, a beginning and end of year school Mass, the school's Feast Day Mass and seasonal liturgies all contribute to the rich faith life of students and their families. Te ao, tikanga and wairuatanga Māori is being woven into the Catholic special character of the school with senior students learning to lead karanga and korero, and waiata included in school and parish Masses.

Building Families of Faith, a programme devised and presented by parishioner Chris Duthie-Jung, is actively promoted and offered to all parents of New Entrant students. The school has demonstrated a huge commitment to involving parents in the faith journey with their children through this programme, offering it at different times of the day, providing childcare and extending a warm invitation. Despite this, there has been a low uptake.

Faith Leadership

The Principal is very much seen as the leader of the school's Catholic Character in the way that she models the values, articulates the vision and challenges the community to authentically live the Gospel of Jesus. She is well supported by the Acting DRS who is an active and visible member of the parish. Together with the Leadership Team they provide effective leadership for the development and implementation of activities and programmes that help students to encounter Jesus Christ.

Next Steps for Development

- Re-establish the faith links with the parish and community that have been on hold because of the Covid-19 pandemic

Dimension 2: Mā te Mātauranga ka Tipu: 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?

Leadership

The Principal and Acting DRS actively lead the Catholic Character of the school. They ensure the provision of high quality PLD and kaiako express that they feel affirmed and supported by the DRS and Principal and that there are effective systems in place that support their own spirituality as well as the teaching and learning in Religious Education.

All staff members engage in a regular, planned programme of Catholic special character professional learning and formation, targeted to the needs of the staff and the direction of the school. Staff refer to positive support for teaching the RE Curriculum through DRS support as well as this year's Teacher Only Day with an RE focus facilitated by RE Advisor Anna-Maria Vissers. The availability of relevant and timely courses (such as *Having Life to the Full* and Teachers new to Catholic schools), Te Kupenga Paper TH502, weekly staff prayers, discussions during team meetings, school and parish Mass, school and Area liturgies and Father Patrick Bridgeman's guidance builds increasing confidence and competence in teachers.

The DRS supports teacher learning and understanding, sending suggestions, liturgy outlines that can be customised to different levels, resources etc. and is always ready to help with any aspect of the RE programme.

The shared, collaborative attitude of kaiako maximizes the integration of RE across the curriculum.

Religious Education Curriculum

The RE Bridging Document is the main tool used by the teaching staff to collaboratively plan together their RE lessons within an overarching theme (the current theme is *Relationships*).

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RE AOs are highlighted throughout year in teacher long term planning to show curriculum coverage.

The RE programme is planned and taught faithfully across the school using the NZ RE Curriculum and tapping into resources such as Faith Alive. Well planned, progressive and sequential lessons are linked to the Long Term Plan. Teachers use RE lessons to develop wider skills for learning such as making connections, asking questions, taking risks, participating and contributing. To do this they use the Depth and Complexity Tool which promotes deeper learning. To plan and deliver an effective programme, teachers find opportunities to integrate RE into other areas of the curriculum. Students interviewed could talk specifically about their learning in RE.

Te ao Māori and te reo Māori are woven through the curriculum and used where possible in conversational interactions and instructions. The school has been piloting the NZ Histories Draft Curriculum which highlights links with the Catholic Church and Māori. The inclusion of Māori world concepts like kaitiakitanga, manaakitanga and taonga are supported by resource leaders and representatives of the local Iwi.

All students have RE workbooks in which teachers give individual feedback. There is evidence of a variety of children's work in RE on walls and in corridors, especially the big idea and how it looks in different contexts.

Teachers use a range of teaching strategies and styles, linked to their plan. Tapping into prior learning and linking learning back to the big idea is in evidence across all levels. Teacher relationships with students are positive, friendly and respectful. There is evidence of good questioning, with positive student participation and engagement. Students demonstrate a sound understanding of their learning, can articulate their learning and show pride both in their work as individuals as well as their group work. Students work as individuals, in pairs and groups with lots of conversation and co-operation evident. They are respectful, interested in matters of faith and inclusive. Students asked about the effect of RE lessons on their faith, said that the teachers helped them to pray, to learn how to follow in Jesus' footsteps and to know that they are loved by God.

All classrooms have Prayer Tables, well set out with appropriate icons and an appropriate cloth representing the season of the Church's year.

There is evidence of cognitive assessment within individual classes. Affective assessment is carried out orally with individual or class discussions. Three-way Learning Conversations, held three times a year, include students talking to their parents about what they have learnt in RE. Written reports contain a section on the coverage of learning in RE. There is a space

for student voice, but there was no evidence of the student's self-reflection on their journey of faith in the reports sighted.

The units of work around human sexuality and personal relationships are taught from a holistic Catholic perspective at all levels, with those teaching it having participated in the *Having Life to the Full Course*.

Next Steps for Development

- Continue to integrate other curriculum areas into RE, making authentic connections between RE and the life experience of students.

Dimension 3: Te Whakaatu Karaitiana-Christian Witness

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

Catholic School Community

Displays and symbols provide witness to the Catholic special character of the school, in relation to its context. Artwork and displays in the grounds, in the foyer and hallways of the school speak of a culture that invites the community to live the Gospel authentically. The culture of the school is characterised by warm relationships at all levels, friendly communications, active listening, and a sense that all are treated with respect. The school is a welcoming environment of hospitality, aroha and courtesy. Newsletters and the website clearly reflect the Catholic Character priorities of the school, with informative articles for both school and parish written regularly by the Principal or by the Sacramental Team.

The Principal and Leadership Team are seen as approachable, supportive and caring. Staff report that they are provided the space to learn and grow, deepening their identity and connection to the school. Through relevant and targeted professional development they are provided opportunities to explore practices that ease the load and look after well-being. Examples of staff feeling cared for were being provided wholesome meals on Learning Conversations nights, celebrating important occasions and milestones in the staffroom and being frequently reminded of the Counselling services available.

Partnership & Collaboration

Ss Peter and Paul School is part of the Catholic Parish of Te Awakairangi. Formed in 2015, the parish is composed of the churches and schools of St Michael's in Taita, St Bernadette's in Naenae, St. Martin de Porres and Ss Peter & Paul in Lower Hutt. The school and parish work collaboratively to build relationships that are an example of Christian witness, as demonstrated by the shared delivery of the sacramental programme in Years 3-4, and the very well attended school-led Sunday Masses at Sts Peter and Paul Church. The Parish Priest has a very positive relationship with the staff and school community and is warmly welcomed into the staffroom and classrooms. The school and parish are committed to re-establishing the traditions, ceremonies, liturgies and Masses, curtailed during the past two years because of Covid-19. As a Mission Sisters' school, the Mission sisters are recognized and remembered in the naming of Mission House among the school houses and Sr. Merle has an ongoing relationship with the school.

The school's second strategic goal is to "*Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi.*" Accompanying this goal are specific actions with an expectation that "*te reo and tikanga Māori are normalized as part of our students' identity in living in Aotearoa.*" Teaching staff are part of the Kura Ahurea programme, run by local iwi and Government funded. This provides 200 hours of PLD centred around the local curriculum and cultural competencies in te ao Māori and te reo Māori. Important aspects in tikanga Māori, like manaakitanga and 'being a kaitiaki' of the school environment are taught in the context of the school's Gospel values and are referenced alongside Laudato Si.

Evidence of inclusivity of all ethnicities can be seen in prayers of the faithful in different languages, of welcomes being in a range of languages and classroom prayer reflecting the wider school culture.

Kapa haka is taught at all levels for the children, led very ably by a staff member. The school has developed a pōwhiri whakatau to welcome new students, staff, whanau and visitors.

All members of the school community are assisted to understand that Christian witness is a response in faith and action to the encounter with Christ. This is particularly evident in the school's approach to behavioural expectations through restorative justice. The Principal regularly writes articles for both the school and parish newsletter, explaining the synthesis of faith and life from a Catholic perspective, which is often counter-cultural, and therefore challenging to put into practice. In a recent article, she writes: "*The Prodigal Son provides a lesson that remains very relevant for us today and is at the very heart of restorative practice.*"

It's a complex story with many different perspectives. It speaks to us of forgiveness and equally of repentance – turning away from sin, being truly sorry and turning back to the way God wants us to love. In the same way that you cannot help but be touched by a father's love for his wayward son, restorative practice in schools calls us to look through a less punitive lens at those students whose behaviour or decision-making has caused harm to relationships.”

Teachers regularly unpack the school values with students, discussing how to practice them together as the essence of school behavioural expectations. Teachers use Gospel stories to illustrate to children how Jesus is the model for the school values, and a model for restorative practice. Students were able to articulate what this looks like in action in their school.

Service and Outreach

Ss Peter and Paul school recognises the importance of social justice and there is a strong desire to demonstrate community outreach. This has been actioned in a variety of ways.

Christian Service leaders are chosen from the Year 8 girls and Year 6 boys each year. They meet regularly with the DRS and help with ideas, planning and organising outreach activities. Examples of these are leading assemblies and liturgies, visiting retirement homes or making cards for the elderly, helping to organise the annual collection for the food bank, fundraising for organisations in need through non-uniform days, fundraising for the Wellington Children's Hospital, Caritas initiatives and Te Omanga Hospice. Within the school, student service leaders support reading time with juniors, sport and PE, helping support students with additional needs within the syndicate area, carrying out road patrol and serving as school librarians.

The school vegetable garden provides produce that is donated to the Home of Compassion Soup Kitchen. More recently students wrote thank you cards to the essential workers who assisted during lockdown. Caritas involvement, the annual St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal and Daffodil Day are other examples of outreach and service. The Newsletter each fortnight informs the community of service initiatives carried out in the different Areas (syndicates) of the school.

Seasons For Growth, a programme to support students experiencing grief, is run in the school and teachers and support staff are given the opportunity to train as *Seasons for Growth* companions in order to provide this programme.

Next Steps for Development

- Continue to develop knowledge from the Kura Ahurea programme, being clear about its integration into the specifically Catholic Character of the school.

Dimension 4: Te Kaitiakitanga me te Whakapakari I te Tuakiri Katorika- Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Special Character

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

The Board's preference and non-preference enrolment policy and the school's procedures are clear and transparent and meet the requirements of the school's Integration Agreement and Ministry of Education regulations. See Table below.

Preference Criteria	Number of Students	% actual roll
5.1	331	76%
5.2	12	3%
5.3	54	12%
5.4	27	6%
5.5	0	
Preference with no criteria		
Total of signed preference roll	428	98%
Non-Preference Roll	9	2%
International Fee Paying Students	0	0

The school has one fewer special Catholic Character Cl 47 positions than specified in the Integration Agreement. The Board and Principal are aware of this and are currently in the process of making application for a currently employed, eligible Catholic teacher to receive the Cl 47 “tag.” Letters of appointment indicate the role-specific responsibilities of all staff members to actively support the Catholic special character of the school.

Each review of policies and procedures occurs with opportunities for staff, community and Board feedback. The *SchoolDocs* platform of policies and procedures is generic, but those that can be, have been tailored to reflect the school’s unique Catholic character.

All Board meetings commence and end with prayer. At Ss Peter and Paul school, each Board meeting covers all strategic goals. Strategic Goal 1, *Living our Catholic Identity*, is reported on at every meeting by the Principal, with robust discussion contributed by all Board members. The Board Chair and Principal have a transparent, positive and professional relationship.

As a group, the Board has previously attended useful sessions run by the Proprietor for all Catholic School Boards. Individual members have also attended sessions delivered by the Catholic Education Service. Since the COVID-19 pandemic fewer sessions have been offered and some planned for have had to be cancelled.

The Board demonstrates its commitment to Te Tiriti O Waitangi through its second strategic goal, implemented since the last Catholic Character Review. Whānau Māori are invited to an annual hui to provide feedback on success for Māori learners which is reported to the Board. Staff capability and confidence to educate in te reo and tikanga by the association with Te Kura Ahurea is supported by the Board. In 2021, the Principal who is a passionate advocate for the school’s commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, organised a bus trip for participants from across all Te Awakairangi schools, where local kaumātua shared their mātauranga at sites across the locality. The Board strongly supports Māori achieving success as Māori and are working towards an improved understanding of Te Kahikitea strategy.

The Board does not currently have in their Three Year Workplan a regular cycle of internal evaluation. However, the Catholic Character goal in the school’s strategic and annual plan arise from rigorous internal and external evaluation requirements and are focused on growth and improvement. Since the last Review, a deep internal evaluation on the school’s *Journey of Supporting and Developing Behaviour in our School* has taken place lead by the Principal and Leadership Team. This has involved understanding, dealing and working with students around behaviour and has resulted in significant schoolwide change. Restorative Justice is now at the centre of all behavioural management policies and systems. The school Gospel values were reviewed to better reflect school culture and linked to positive

behaviours that describe faith in action. The Principal and Leadership Team are to be commended on the depth of this review which is meaningful, ongoing and continues to inform staff PLD, strategic planning and practice. Perhaps most importantly, it has at its heart the message of Jesus. The school proclaims the mission and Gospel of Jesus Christ to all members of the school community and challenges the authentic living out of the Gospel values, which can be counter-cultural to societal priorities.

Next Steps for Development

- Build-in community engagement and whanau understanding of practices supporting the school's strategic direction and vision, particularly around Restorative Justice.
- As Policies are updated, challenge *SchoolDocs* to provide greater flexibility to insert a statement that reflects the unique Catholic Character of Sts Peter and Paul School.
- Continue to provide resources for staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the new RE curriculum and to ensure that the delivery of this is effective for all learners, including *Having Life to the Full* professional development where needed.

Recommendations

- 1. Using the newly published NZRE Curriculum, continue on the journey to develop and embed the school's RE conceptual framework with your Depth and Complexity Thinking Tool to give students an holistic knowledge and experience of the integration of faith and life.**
- 2. Develop the affective domain of assessment to capture the ongoing impact of learning on students' personal relationship with Christ. Use this information to formulate a schoolwide picture of the impact of the teaching of RE, to inform next steps and to report to the Board.**
- 3. The school is to be congratulated on its commitment to restorative practice, which is at the heart of the Gospel of Jesus. Continue to embed restorative practice as an integral part of the school's strategic direction and vision.**

The evaluation team is confident that the Ss Peter & Paul leadership team (School, Principal, Leadership Team and Director of Religious Studies) have the willingness and ability to address these recommendations fully before the next external evaluation. The Catholic Education Office staff are available to assist the Principal, Board and staff in compiling an action plan to address these recommendations.

The evaluation team thank the community of Ss Peter and Paul 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 external evaluation by the school is greatly appreciated.



Zita Smith
Lead Evaluator