



catholic diocese  
of christchurch

to sanctify - to teach - to care for

*Āhuatanga Katorika Kaupapa Arotake  
Te Puronga Arotake o Waho*

*Catholic Special Character  
External Review Report*

**St Joseph's School, Timaru  
Te Kura o Hato Hohepa, Timaru**

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**September 2019**

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## Ngā Whāinga o te Arotake - Aims of the External Review

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference wishes the review to show how effective the school is in handing on the faith and forming a new generation of Catholics, and how students have grown in faith as a result of the Religious Education programme. This is the evangelising mission of the Church, in which the school participates.

The external review process is based on the requirements found in the document, *Āhuatanga Katorika Kaupapa Arotake Me Te Ahu Whakamua, Catholic Special Character Review for Development.* (New Zealand Catholic Education Office Limited, November 2018 Draft Edition).

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

- an encounter with Christ
- growth in knowledge and
- the development of Christian witness

The review also investigates stewardship of the relationship with the Church and the State.

Reviewers encourage and commend best practice, and, working with the school, provide indications of opportunities to further strengthen and develop the Catholic culture.

## School Details

<b>School Type:</b>	Full primary school Years 0-8
<b>Roll based staffing entitlement</b>	10.5
<b>S464 Tagged positions</b>	5 plus Principal and DRS
<b>S464 Tagged positions filled</b>	Yes
<b>Maximum roll</b>	230
<b>Actual roll</b>	219
<b>Non-preference entitlement</b>	11
<b>Non-preference actual</b>	11
<b>Principal</b>	Carmel Brosnahan-Pye
<b>Director of Religious Studies</b>	Trish McCambridge
<b>BOT Chairperson</b>	Pam Allan
<b>Parish Priest</b>	Fr Brian Fennessy
<b>Dates of onsite review</b>	3-4 September 2019
<b>Review Leader</b>	Mark Gregory
<b>Support Reviewer</b>	David Armstrong (Principal, Sacred Heart School, Timaru)

## Response to Recommendations from the 2015 external review

- 1. For performance management, some schools have added a thirteenth criterion: Special Character using indicators such as teaching Religious Education and participation in the wider special character life of the Catholic school. St Joseph's teacher induction documentation would be further improved by adding a schedule of lesson observations for Religious Education and observations/discussion regarding prayer and other religious observances. The excellent documentation would be enhanced by referring to *the Code of Ethics for Staff and Board of NZ Catholic Schools*, and *The Character of a Catholic School: Expectations for Staff Employed in Catholic Schools*.**

Leaders have worked to ensure their performance management system includes the Catholic Special Character dimension. It is also included in the job descriptions of teaching staff. Senior leaders use a 'walk through' model to observe teachers in action. As a recent example, faith-based leaders observed classroom prayer sessions throughout the school. The documents mentioned above are now included in letters of appointment and the induction process.

- 2. The delivery of the Religious Education curriculum is to be commended. Most teachers have timetabled the mandated time for teaching the Religious Education Curriculum. The Principal and DRS are required to ensure that the teaching hours mandated by the Bishops' Conference are met.**

All teachers are supported by the principal, DRS and learning leaders to ensure that the teaching of RE reflects the teaching hours mandated by the New Zealand Bishops' Conference.

- 3. Trustees should specify Special Character as Catholic Special Character in all school documentation, and ensure policies and procedures include Catholic special character reference and are critiqued from a Catholic perspective reflecting the ethos of Catholic education. (Recommendation 2005 and 2009 reports)**

Once policies come up for review, trustees check that the correct wording appears. To ensure all policies have a Catholic special character component reviewers recommend that the board include the school's Vision Statement on all policies. (*Recommendation 4, 2019*)

- 4. The Board and Principal are commended on the Charter, Strategic Plan and Annual Plan documentation. The school completes the three-year cycle of self-review for special character: Catholic Community, Pastoral Care and Religious Education. The analysis of the self-review data should generate the annual special character goal/s for the next year.**

School leaders and board members are involved in a regular process of self-review relating to the school's Catholic special character. This process involves gathering student, staff and parent voice. The analysis of the self-review data generates goal/s for further development.

## 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?*

### **Areas of Success**

#### ***Spiritual Formation***

The school motto, 'Enter to Learn, Live to Serve' encourages all to be people of hope, to step out, to face challenge, to live to serve, bringing about change in the world. Through the school's Mission, Vision, Mercy Charism and Core Beliefs, there is a shared understanding that St Joseph's School is centred on a daily encounter with Jesus Christ. Students have a meaningful range of spiritual formation opportunities through regular school and class prayer, liturgies and Masses.

The school attends a Parish Sunday Mass each term. Students are actively involved in leadership roles such as, greeters, readers, singing, playing in the school band, reading the prayers of the faithful and participating in the offertory procession. The Mass attracts a good attendance level by the school. A real strength are the parish school Masses held in the school hall on Wednesday mornings. Year 8 students do a fine job welcoming, interacting with and serving morning tea to the many parishioners whom attend, including school parents. The classes enjoy the presence of the parishioners and the parishioners enjoy seeing the children in their natural environment and the reverent way they participate in the Mass.

Weekly whole-school assemblies provide further opportunities for prayer, readings and a hymn or waiata. A student band, which includes talented students playing a range of instruments, leads the music for the school's liturgies, assemblies and Masses.

The school's chosen Gospel Values of *Service, Compassion, Charity, Respect, Justice and Hospitality* are central to all aspects of school life and have been strongly embedded in the Catholic culture of the school and linked to scripture references.

Senior students participated in a Young Leaders' Day for Year 7-8 students from the Catholic schools in South Canterbury. They gathered in Temuka to participate in prayer, workshops and seminars on servant leadership.

Prayer is an integral part of the daily routine of the school. Individual classroom prayer includes a variety of traditional and contemporary forms, including Christian meditation, that encourage a personal relationship with Jesus. Opportunities for regular prayer occur at the beginning of the school day, grace before lunch, at the end of the day, at assemblies and liturgies.

Staff gather for prayer every Tuesday after school. All have the opportunity to organise and take turns to lead. Each staff meeting begins with prayer, as does each board meeting.

#### ***Evangelisation***

All staff are positive role models who support, uphold and witness to the Catholic special character of the school. They also understand their role of being strong agents for evangelisation. In the pre-review questionnaire staff shared the following insights:

- *"To work in a Catholic school is a special privilege. For me it connects me to my faith and reinforces my background and beliefs."*
- *"We are in a privileged position of teaching our children about the Catholic faith and the important role God has to play in each child's life."*
- *"It's a gift for me to grow and share my faith with my students and their families."*

The school actively encourages ākongā and their whānau to enrol in parish-based sacramental programmes. This year the school has developed a process for encouraging whānau to consider baptism for their children. Each time the parish runs a Baptism programme, all families of 5.2, 5.3

and 5.4 preference criteria students receive a personal invitation from the DRS and principal, inviting them to join the programme. Four families took up the recent invitation and one Year 3 student has since received the Sacrament of Baptism. The other three families are in the process of arranging their child's Baptism. The DRS very generously offers extra support to families participating in the Sacramental programmes.

'Home sharing' of Religious Education learning is a great source of evangelisation. Students are asked to share their work with whānau and prompted to talk about what they have learnt. Likewise, parents are prompted to engage with and encourage their children through discussions and further questioning. Parents say they are learning themselves, through this process.

When a student begins their time at St Joseph's School, a '*Starting School Booklet*' is compiled and records the student's first few days at school. These booklets are presented to the students and their families at the Sunday Parish Mass.

There are meetings for parents of new students where the faith-based leaders explain the process and expectations of enrolling children at a Catholic school. A formal induction programme for new staff assist them deepen their knowledge and understanding of what it means to be part of a Catholic community.

As a further means of evangelisation, school communications, including the regular newsletter, DRS newsletters, school website, information booklet to parents and other social media, assist members of the school community to integrate their faith, culture and life.

### ***Faith-based leadership***

There is a strong working relationship between the principal and Director of Religious Studies. Both are vastly experienced leaders in Catholic schools and work collaboratively to lead the development of the Catholic special character of the school. Both leaders confidently and competently articulate their own faith and are committed to their own ongoing faith formation.

The principal and DRS encourage students and whānau to engage in faith practices and make connections between faith and life. The principal recognises the importance of the role of the DRS by providing appropriate release time and support. The DRS and leadership team collectively encourage and support teachers of Religious Education and their own faith development. As one teacher shared in the questionnaire, "*The DRS is a big strength at our school – her RE curriculum knowledge is outstanding. She is highly organised for Masses and liturgies, she keeps up with readings and will share knowledge about them.*"

Classroom teachers openly expressed their appreciation not only of the availability of the DRS, but also the principal in assisting them in matters relating to the school's Catholic special character.

### ***Opportunities for Development***

School and parish leaders are encouraged to continue looking for ways to increase the engagement of students and their whānau in parish and sacramental life. (*Recommendation 1*)

## 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?*

### **Areas of Success**

#### ***Leadership***

The principal and DRS are both active witnesses of faith in the school and in their parishes. The DRS receives one management unit for her role as DRS and is included in the leadership team. Due to her leadership qualities, she is now one of two leaders of learning. All three members of the leadership team are in tagged positions and have a strong unanimous voice ensuring the Catholic special character and the teaching of Religious Education retains its significant importance.

Increasing the Religious Education qualifications of staff and managing the associated workload remains a focus. St Joseph's, like a number of South Canterbury Catholic schools made a decision to enrol in TCI papers every third year. All teaching staff will participate in a paper during 2020. Bishop Paul Martin SM is of the view that it would be appropriate to complete the six (Level 5) TCI academic papers within an eight-year period. The principal and DRS, both vastly experienced with a Certification level of *Leadership Endorsed*, have needed to start afresh, and to date, have completed one paper each. Regarding other staff, three teachers have attained a Certificate in Catechetical Studies, and most remaining permanent teaching staff, have completed one TCI paper. Two teacher-only days will assist the workload of teachers for the delivery of the next year's paper. It is encouraging that staff are working, albeit at their own pace, towards a formal qualification in Religious Education.

#### ***Religious Education***

Reviewers observed a consistent level of quality teaching in Religious Education. Observations occurred in eight of the nine classes. Reviewers observed well-planned, structured lessons with an emphasis on engaging students with associated activities that were interesting and varied. Ākongā appeared well engaged in their learning and the relationships among students and between the teachers and students were very respectful. Teachers were well versed in their own content knowledge and confidently shared their understandings at an appropriate level according to the needs and abilities of their students.

Kaiako make effective use of the online curriculum material to support their teaching and learning. The use of RE digital resources featured strongly in classes. A number of teachers used slideshows from Faith Alive and adapted them according to the needs and abilities of their classes. Likewise, some teachers constructed slideshows to update parents as part of the 'Home Sharing' activities.

Each term on a selected week, students share their current RE learning with their families in the form of digital learning, worksheets games or activities. The purpose of the sharing is to inform parents and prompt students to talk about or demonstrate their learning. Parents are encouraged to comment on their child's learning. Helpful references to specific pages within the *Family Whānau Book* assist parents offering a range of suggestions.

The group of students interviewed shared how they enjoyed RE lessons, that teachers helped them to be good people, and appreciated that teachers did a good job in varying lessons to make them more fun for them. They particularly enjoyed working on their digital devices, as they were able to be more creative.

Also witnessed was the effective support for students with specific learning needs. Teachers and learning support staff worked gently and patiently with them to adapt the curriculum and provide appropriate tools and individual assistance to reinforce their learning outcomes. Learning support workers are to be commended for the compassionate manner in which they work with their students.

Classrooms are vibrant and clearly create a way to share faith learning and concepts with whānau. All rooms feature a wall space to display work achieved in Religious Education, as do the laptops and tablets for the storing of individual and group work. Despite the amount of work stored on devices, students still used a Religious Education workbook as a paper record of their learning. The examples observed demonstrated plenty of content.

Professional learning took place during 2019 on the Religious Education Bridging Document and assessing and reporting on RE with the assistance of the RE Advisers. Staff found these opportunities to be very worthwhile. They are continuing to explore the document and look for practical ways to assess the affective domain in the RE programme using the Religious Education Bridging Document.

The assessment of Religious Education is generally classroom-based for the majority of strands and modules. The DRS presents reports to the Board of Trustees on the internal self-review of the Catholic Special Character Action Plan and the results and implications of the Year 4 Online Assessment. For the last four years senior leaders have analysed data from the Year 4 RE Online Assessment Tool looking for gaps in the teaching and learning of Religious Education. The Sacrament Strand has consistently shown to be the strand that students have the least understanding of. As a result, teachers are now covering the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and Eucharist in more detail and relating them to the practical experiences of those who participate in the Sacramental programmes.

Faith-based leaders have identified the need to look at ways to gather effective assessment information to describe the impact on student learning from their teaching. Included in their thinking is the possibility of basing cumulative records on the RE Benchmarks and investigate how to assess the affective domain so that the information is useful for decision-making, action-taking and improvement.

Curriculum guidelines in Religious Education outline detailed information for teaching staff. The document clearly outlines the purpose and planning requirements for teaching RE and the New Zealand Bishops' minimum time allocations. Class timetables and observations by the leadership team confirm Religious Education is being delivered regularly according to mandated hours and is receiving priority teaching time (mornings).

School leaders and teachers acknowledged the effective support they receive from the Religious Education Advisers. The DRS values the regular DRS Meetings and is generous in sharing her expertise, experience and resources with others in the South Canterbury Catholic school network.

Whānau receive appropriate updates about their child's progress in Religious Education through formal reports and student-led learning conferences. Both forms of reporting include information about the child's learning in Religious Education appearing first in the reporting documentation. Examples observed cover student self-assessment, the knowledge obtained from their learning and written comments by their teacher in the end of the year written report.

Whānau receive useful information about the content and emphasis of the Religious Education programme and matters relating to the Catholic special character. Each term, the DRS writes an extensive newsletter that informs parents of the classroom RE programmes at each level of the school, the upcoming Catholic special character happenings for the term, such as Sacramental programmes, events linked to the Church's year, links containing readings and reflections and the regular advertising of parish contact details. Regular communication occurs in the weekly newsletter that also includes parish information such as Masses and any news from the diocese. Parents are appreciative of the detail and open lines of communication between the school and home on matters relating to the school's Catholic special character.

## ***Catholic Curriculum***

To ensure a growth in knowledge occurs, Religious Education is still taught as a separate learning area but with a natural overflow into other curriculum areas. For a number of years St Joseph's School has chosen an over-riding theme to link their integrated curriculum. Partnership is the 2019 theme and is looked at through the lens of *'Enter, Live and Serve.'* RE is featured prominently in this theme alongside contexts for social action. The *Caritas Challenge* was a significant component earlier this year.

As part of the integrated curriculum learning in Term One, and an ongoing focus throughout the year, ākonga explore the history, identity, traditions and practices of St Joseph's School as a Catholic school in the Mercy tradition. An integral part of this learning is the focus on the life and work of Blessed Catherine McAuley, the Charism of Mercy and the Gospel/Mercy values.

When teaching Sexuality Education, a Catholic perspective is central to the delivery of the programme. Most kaiako involved in teaching the programme have participated in the professional learning delivered by the Catholic Education Office. Consultation with the parent community occurred in May 2019.

## ***Opportunities for Development***

Faith-based leaders have identified the need to look at ways to gather effective assessment information to describe the impact on student learning from their teaching. Included in their thinking is the possibility of basing cumulative records on the RE Benchmarks and investigate how to assess the affective domain so that the information is useful for decision-making, action-taking and improvement. This direction is endorsed and encouraged. (*Recommendation 2*)

## **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?*

### **Areas of Success**

#### ***Catholic School Community / Partnership and Collaboration***

The culture of the school is characterised by warm relationships at all levels. It is a welcoming environment where all are treated with hospitality, aroha and courtesy. As reviewers, we experienced this same genuine sense of hospitality and welcome as soon as we entered the school. We were officially welcomed as part of the school's mihi whakatau process by all students and staff.

Inter-relationships between student and student, student and staff, staff and staff, principal and board, principal and staff all contribute immeasurably to the Catholic special character. Every group interviewed, whether student, staff, board or parent representatives, spoke of the mutual respect and devotion of care widely experienced by those in this supportive community.

Displays and symbols provide witness to the Catholic identity of the school. The hall/staffroom features significant content relating to the school's Catholic special character. On one wall is a photographic representation of the Catholic community of St Joseph's School all housed under one 'roof.' This includes individual photos of every student with Pope Francis, Bishop Paul and the two priests of the parish. Above the display are a number of posters, one stating, *We are the Church happy to be the children in God's family.* Other rooms throughout the school appropriately highlight the Catholic special character of this place of learning for all to witness.

The relationship with the South Canterbury Parish of the Holy Family focuses on developing the faith journey of its parishioners. There is a positive relationship and a high level of respect between the parish and its school and vice versa. School staff and students appreciate the regular presence of the priests of the parish within the school and the importance of the weekday Parish Mass on the

school site. Service leaders ensure parishioners and school parents receive suitable hospitality and refreshments following the Mass.

The parish priest appreciates the work of the preference panel made up of retired Catholic principals in South Canterbury who deal with all the requests for preference of enrolment within the parish.

The school acknowledges its past and the connections with its founding order, the Sisters of Mercy. The school explicitly teaches students about the charism of this religious order during Term 1 of each year. The religious order's foundress, Catherine McAuley, is one of the school's house names. Contact with local sisters occurs at School Masses where they receive invitations to attend and stay for a cup of tea afterwards.

The school is a member of the South Canterbury Catholic Kāhui Ako, led by the principal of St Joseph's School, Timaru. Roncalli College, St Joseph's Timaru, Sacred Heart, St Joseph's Temuka and St Joseph's Pleasant Point work as a collaborative Catholic network of schools in South Canterbury. Their goals are to strengthen their combined Catholic community by working collaboratively, facilitating a smooth transition between primary and secondary school, and improving the teaching and learning outcomes of students and staff.

Evidence from the reappointment of the principal as leader of the Kāhui Ako concludes she models highly effective practice in her own school and in her current leadership role of the Kāhui Ako. The process demonstrated a knowledgeable and influential leader whose determination and resilience are helping facilitate significant change for this educational community.

The school purposefully works to build whānau participation in the education of their tamariki. Parents spoken to informally in the school grounds feel very welcome within the school setting. They appreciate the work of staff and how they live and believe in the Catholic special character of the school. Whānau have a number of opportunities to participate in and contribute to the life of the school that include open invitations to class prayers, liturgies, assemblies and being able to provide voluntary help at school. Wherever possible, parents' ideas are incorporated into the life of the school through regular opportunities of consultation on a range of issues, including the Catholic special character.

### ***Te Tiriti o Waitangi***

There is an increasing number of Māori students at St Joseph's School. The school recognises the importance of te Tiriti o Waitangi and the status of Māori as Tangata Whenua. Bicultural elements such as Māori tikanga, wairua, te reo, karakia, customs and spirituality are part of the daily life of the school. Reviewers experienced the school's mihi whakatau and kapa haka group as part of the official welcome. Students took an active role in all proceedings confident in their use of te reo Māori. Classrooms feature te reo Māori regularly and consistently in wall displays. Teaching staff are making an effort to use te reo Māori where appropriate. During RE observations, some teachers tried to integrate small phrases, commands and words into their natural vocabulary.

A Māori Achievement Strategic Plan identifies objectives and key tasks outlined for 2019 that include monitoring and improving the achievement of Māori tamariki and implementing opportunities for the school and wider community to embrace, understand and experience tikanga Māori. Relating to Religious Education is the desire to incorporate a greater understanding of Māori spirituality.

Consultation with whānau occurs on an annual basis. In its recent Whānau Hui, whānau shared their aspirations for their tamariki as they move through St Joseph's. Their collective wish is that tamariki leave the school being proud of their Māori culture and heritage and reach their full potential in their passions.

The school celebrates and enjoys an increasingly rich ethnic diversity. In a recent student survey, ākongā agreed that the school acknowledges and honours cultural diversity by living out the Gospel/Mercy Values, encouraging pride in cultural identity and pronouncing names correctly. Students are encouraged to respect and celebrate this diversity in all areas of life with the constant promotion of the school's chosen Gospel/Mercy Values of *Service, Compassion, Charity, Respect, Justice and Hospitality*.

### **Pastoral Care**

St Joseph's School community nurtures, supports, and cares for individuals. Pastoral care offered by the school is strongly based on the Gospel values of Jesus Christ and the charism of the Sisters of Mercy. An ethos of aroha, compassion and care permeates the whole community.

Sectors of the community including staff, children, board and parents are regularly surveyed as part of the internal programme of self-review. In a recent 2019 Pastoral Care Survey of Year 5-8 students, 83% of ākongā claimed relationships at St Joseph's School were friendly and respectful. It also concluded students feel safe, supported, listened to, accepted and affirmed.

Matters relating to pastoral care are discussed at the weekly leadership team meeting. Recorded for teachers and learning support workers are any related concerns and recommended strategies.

At various times in the year a buddy system operates whereby senior students take some responsibility for pairing up with junior school students to assist them with aspects of their learning.

The 'Casserole Club' is a group of parents who provide pastoral support to fellow parents and their families. The team prepares meals and baking to acknowledge new family additions and to anyone requiring any assistance. Staff members are welcome to contribute and participate in the club's pastoral care focus.

The Board of Trustees funds a discretionary account for the principal to use to support families in need. Members of the local St Vincent de Paul Society generously assist the school with support as required. Treating individual circumstances in confidence is a priority.

Analysis of the staff questionnaire indicates teachers feel affirmed and appreciated by fellow staff and school leaders. Teaching staff shared the following discernments:

- *"We are a great team that works in a happy environment with a shared interest in doing our best for our students."*
- *"Relationships are positive, respectful and collegial. Strengths are acknowledged and individuals given opportunity to grow. Relationships between staff members and the wider community are mutually respectful, appropriate and supportive."*
- *"I think as a staff we are supportive and readily listen to each other...The principal is extremely approachable and supportive especially with understanding when family issues arise."*

In talking with support staff, they also feel highly valued and very much part of the staff team. They voiced how fortunate they were to work in such an affirming and compassionate environment and appreciated the positive community spirit and the leadership of the principal, DRS and learning leaders.

The school's Positive Behaviour Management and Restorative Practice Procedure states, *the premise of relationships at St Joseph's School are the Gospel values*. "Love one another as I have loved you," is the chosen quote from John's Gospel to introduce the procedure. The focus on restorative practices enriches the Catholic special character of the school by its spirit of reconciliation and the promotion of the Gospel values.

### ***Service and Outreach***

Service leadership is an area of focus for the school community. Senior students involve themselves in service and outreach opportunities and role model their efforts to their younger ākongā. Year 8 students are chosen as Service Leaders and Catholic Special Character Leaders. They operate under a strong servant leadership model.

The school supports local and national Catholic groups in their service and outreach. Caritas secures priority by the school in its social justice activities. St Joseph's School hosted the Social Justice Education Adviser for Caritas in early May this year. She spoke to the students about the work of Caritas throughout the world and specifically on the Caritas projects in South Sudan, which provided an authentic context for the upcoming social action event, the Caritas Challenge.

The challenge allowed students to experience aspects of daily life similar to a South Sudanese child, and build solidarity with those living with poverty or injustice, through hands-on experiences that were fun and informative, while raising over \$2000.

Another major initiative saw the Student Service Leaders organising a Caritas Breakfast at school with all proceeds going to the Caritas Lenten Appeal.

### ***Opportunities for Development***

Using the Māori Achievement Strategic Plan, continue to provide support for teachers and share best practice across the Kāhui Ako to increase the knowledge and confidence of staff to integrate te reo Māori into their natural teacher-based vocabulary. (*Recommendation 3*)

## **TE KAITIAKITANGA ME TO WHAKAPAKARI I TE TUAKIRI KATORIKA – SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING CATHOLIC CHARACTER**

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

### **Areas of Success**

The Board of Trustees is a hard-working group of people centrally focused on safeguarding and enhancing the school's Catholic special character and governing the school towards excellence. There is a high level of skill and expertise among both elected and appointed members. In the recent board election, seven candidates were nominated for the five parent representative positions.

The school's Charter strongly features the Catholic special character in both strategic and annual sections. The diagram on the front page of the Charter links the importance the school places on its Mission, Vision, Mercy Charism and Core Beliefs. Under the domains of *Catholic Special Character / Katorika Motuhake*, *Student Centred Learning / Whakamana* and *Partnership / Whanaungatanga* outline the board's objectives and strategies for the next three years.

The board has a Catholic Special Character Statement that features the following quote from Pope Benedict XVI from a 2008 address to Catholic educators in the United States. *"First and foremost, every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God; who in Jesus Christ, reveals his transforming love and truth.* The internal self-reviews of Catholic Community (2016), Pastoral Care (2017) and Growth in Knowledge (2018) provide a comprehensive account of work achieved and areas for further development. The Catholic special character committee is to be commended for its process of self-review that includes the collecting of student, staff and parent voice. Analysing data from the self-review generates future considerations for further development.

The board has its own comprehensive Board of Trustees Handbook. This ensures board members, including proprietor's appointees, are well informed of their expected roles and responsibilities. To

ensure all policies have a Catholic special character component reviewers recommend that the board includes the school's Vision Statement on all policies.

Employment documentation includes clear and concise information relating to the Catholic special character of St Joseph's School and the expectations of staff in a Catholic school. The school has an Appointments Policy in keeping with the Catholic special character and tagged positions with correct wording used to advertise teaching vacancies. Letters of appointment templates recommended by the New Zealand Catholic Education Office confirm the appointment of new employees. However, leaders need to ensure all new appointment letters are initialled on each page by the successful applicant.

Enrolment procedures are transparent and meet the requirements of the Integration Agreement. Job descriptions and appraisal systems acknowledge the importance of staff members supporting the Catholic special character of the school. Teaching staff have specific outcomes relating to the school's Catholic special character. Support staff could now be included in a similar process.

The Board budgets for Religious Education and for Catholic special character, including release time for professional development opportunities for teaching and support staff as required.

The school is compliant with its Integration Agreement in terms of maximum roll compared to actual roll, non-preference roll, correct number of S464 positions filled according to the school's Integration Agreement and consultation with the Proprietor through its annual Attestation and Internal Review reports.

The preference/non-preference details, as at the time of the Catholic Special Character review (September 2019), were as follows:

<b>St Joseph's School, Timaru</b>	<b>Maximum Roll (as per Integration Agreement) = 230 students</b>	<b>Non-Preference Maximum (as per Integration Agreement) = 11 students</b>
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<b>Preference Criterion</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>% of Current Total Number Students</b>
5.1	146	66.7%
5.2	5	2.3%
5.3	44	20.1%
5.4	13	5.9%
5.5	0	0.0%
Non-Preference	11	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

### ***Opportunities for Development***

- The school faith-based leaders may like to consider implementing the Catholic School Elaborations into the current appraisal process for teaching staff and include a Catholic character component in the appraisal process for support staff.
- Ensure all new appointment letters based on the NZCEO template are initialled on each page by the successful applicant.
- To ensure all policies have a Catholic special character component reviewers recommend that the board include the school's Vision Statement on all policies. (*Recommendation 4*)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*It is expected that the Board of Trustees and staff include these recommendations in its strategic and annual plans and address them fully before the next external review. Catholic Education Office staff are available to offer professional support as required.*

### *Encounter with Christ*

1. School and parish leaders are encouraged to continue looking for ways to increase the engagement of students and their whānau in parish and sacramental life.

### *Growth in Knowledge*

2. Faith-based leaders have identified the need to look at ways to gather effective assessment information to describe the impact on student learning from their teaching. Included in their thinking is the possibility of basing cumulative records on the RE Benchmarks and investigate how to assess the affective domain so that the information is useful for decision-making, action-taking and improvement. This direction is endorsed and encouraged.

### *Christian Witness*

3. Using the Māori Achievement Strategic Plan, continue to provide support for teachers and share best practice across the Kāhui Ako to increase the knowledge and confidence of staff to integrate te reo Māori into their natural teacher-based vocabulary.

### *Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Character*

4. To ensure all policies have a Catholic special character component reviewers recommend that the board include the school's Vision Statement on all policies.

The review team is confident that the leaders of St Joseph's School (Board, Principal and DRS) have the willingness and ability to address the recommendations of this report. The reviewers thank the community of St Joseph's School for the welcome extended to them and for the opportunity to observe and experience the way they safeguard and strengthen their Catholic special character.

**Mark Gregory**  
**Catholic Special Character Reviewer**