

**CONFIRMED**  
**EDUCATION REVIEW**  
**REPORT**  
**SACRED HEART COLLEGE (AUCKLAND)**  
**September 2009**



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## **CONFIRMED EDUCATION REVIEW REPORT: SACRED HEART COLLEGE (AUCKLAND)**

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

### **1 About the School**

Location	Glen Innes, Auckland
Ministry of Education profile number	59
School type	Secondary (Years 7-15)
Decile rating <sup>1</sup>	8
Teaching staff:	
Roll generated entitlement	62.10
Other	2.25
Number of teachers	80
School roll	1078
Number of international students	35
Gender composition	Boys 100%
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 65%, Māori 7%, Samoan 6%, Tongan 6%, European 4%, South East Asian 4%, Chinese 1%, Cook Island Māori 1%, Fijian 1%, Indian 1%, Niuean 1%, other 2%, other Asian 1%
Review team on site	June 2009
Date of this report	1 September 2009

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

Previous ERO reports	Education Review, June 2006 Education Review, December 2002 Accountability Review, October 1998 Assurance Audit, June 1995 Review, August 1993
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## **2 The Education Review Office (ERO) Evaluation**

Sacred Heart College is a Year 7-15 state integrated school for Catholic boys. It includes a hostel for full and part-time boarding for 158 students in Years 9 to 13. The hostel is owned and managed by the New Zealand Marist Brothers' Trust Board.

The focus of this report is the effectiveness of school culture in supporting student achievement. ERO finds that the school culture promotes highly effective practices that support boys' holistic education.

Previous ERO reports have commented on the sound, nurturing relationships between students and staff. These positive relationships continue to characterise the supportive environment of the school. The school's holistic approach to boys' education includes the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and cultural dimensions of their development. The Marist and Champagnat traditions, which form the basis of the school's special character, underpin management and governance decisions and operations. The presence and involvement of the Marist Brothers helps to foster the Christian spirit of the school.

Students affirm the inclusive nature of the school, where cultural differences are acknowledged and celebrated. Strong pastoral systems promote an ethos of caring and emotional support for students. The values of respect, sharing, trust, tolerance, self-discipline, loyalty and pride are emphasised and celebrated throughout the school. These values contribute to students' development of positive social attitudes and provide a sound foundation for their learning and achievement.

Senior leaders and staff have high expectations of students. Many students attain high levels of sporting achievement and achieve success at regional, national and international levels in a variety of sporting codes. School results in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) continue to improve. The boys achieve at levels that are significantly higher than national averages and are above average achievement levels at similar schools. Excellent achievement results in 2008 for NCEA include twenty-four scholarships.

Reliable and nationally normed student achievement data indicate that most students in Years 7 to 10 achieve at or above national expectations in reading, mathematics and writing. Teachers monitor the achievement of Māori students and provide good support where necessary. School achievement data in junior literacy and numeracy and in NCEA indicate that Māori students are achieving above national averages. Teachers and senior leaders could now extend the usage and reporting of junior student achievement data to further improve teaching and learning.

Staff work collegially and show genuine interest in and care for the students. Whole-school professional development over the past three years has promoted teacher awareness of current best teaching practice. The current focus on the implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum* in 2010 should further assist teachers to equip students with the necessary skills and strategies for successful new learning so that they develop as active, enquiring learners.

The new principal, appointed in 2006, has led the senior leadership team and board in curriculum review that informs current strategic planning and promotes student achievement. Effective strategic planning has resulted in several key improvements in curriculum, sports, pastoral care and the arts.

Trustees continue to be reflective in their governance role. They support teaching and learning initiatives that contribute to student achievement. Effective board self-review practices continue to improve facilities, resources and teaching and learning opportunities. As a result of these good practices, which are evident at all levels of the school, Sacred Heart College provides students with a high quality education in a safe physical and emotional environment.

### **Future Action**

ERO is very confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests 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 four to five 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 majority of students entering the school at Year 7 have good levels of academic achievement. Reliable and nationally normed student achievement data indicate that most students in Years 7–9 achieve at or above national expectations in reading, mathematics and writing. Challenging writing targets set for students at Years 7-9 are achieved, with particularly significant gains at Year 9. School data show that the achievement results for students who enrol in Sacred Heart College at Year 7 are significantly higher by the end of Year 9 than for those who enrol at Year 9.

Students who are in need of academic assistance are supported by a comprehensive learning support programme while extension opportunities are available for more able students. Senior leaders could now further develop the collation of overall literacy and numeracy information for Year 7 to 10 students so that better use is made of assessment data to inform teacher planning and to provide more comprehensive reporting to the board of trustees.

The school has had a continuing trend of improved NCEA results since 2006. The Director of Curriculum Learning and heads of department collate student achievement information and provide the board of trustees with detailed analysis of NCEA results, referenced to national achievement levels and to achievement levels at similar schools. Examples of excellent achievement in NCEA in 2008 include:

- significantly higher levels of achievement than national averages and than achievement levels at similar schools, in a variety of subject areas;
- significant increases in the number of students achieving Levels 1 to 3;
- merit and excellence endorsements that have significantly increased in comparison with 2007 results and that are significantly higher than national averages;
- above national average results for Level 1 achievement in literacy and numeracy; and
- achievement of 24 scholarships across a range of subjects.

University Entrance (UE) results, though similar to national results, do not yet follow the consistent trend of improvement noted at other levels. As a result, senior managers are increasing their support for boys to help ensure that they achieve the necessary qualifications to gain UE. All school leavers are monitored and data show that boys leave the school with at least an NCEA Level 2 qualification and that the majority continue to tertiary study.

### **School Specific Priorities**

Before the review, the board of Sacred Heart College (Auckland) 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 Sacred Heart College (Auckland).

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

- the effectiveness of school culture in supporting student achievement.

ERO's findings in this area are set out below.

### **The effectiveness of school culture in supporting student achievement**

#### ***Background***

The senior leadership team, guided by the newly appointed principal, reviewed the strategic direction of the school in 2007. Surveys indicated that the community and

board of trustees wanted the culture of the school to reflect the holistic education and development of their boys. Within this vision, senior leaders, staff and the board formulated their strategic plan to support the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and cultural development of the boys. This holistic approach to the boys' education forms an integral part of the school's culture.

Senior leaders and the board asked ERO to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's culture in supporting achievement. The findings of this review will support the board's self-review processes.

### ***Student progress and achievement***

Academic achievement is reported above under the heading 'Student Achievement Overall'. In addition to academic achievement, senior staff report a 92% student participation rate in sporting and other co-curricular activities. Many boys attain high levels of sporting achievement and achieve success at regional, national and international levels in various sporting codes. Boys have many opportunities to take up leadership roles in a variety of activities. Continued links with past students provide them with good role models of successful leaders. Almost all students leaving Sacred Heart College go on to tertiary study, apprenticeships or employment.

As the board and senior leaders develop more specific and measureable performance indicators of high quality holistic education, they will be in a stronger position to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision for their students.

### ***Areas of good performance***

*Key developments in holistic education.* The new principal, appointed in 2006, has led the senior leadership team and board in curriculum review that informs the current strategic planning and promotes student achievement. Effective strategic planning has resulted in several key developments, including:

- a Sports Institute, established in 2006, to provide opportunities for Year 7-10 boys to develop their skills and ability in cricket, rugby, football and water polo;
- the appointment in 2008 of a Director of the Academic Institute, with particular emphasis on implementing the *New Zealand Curriculum* and promoting best practice in effective teaching;
- a focus on gaining scholarships, merit and excellence grades at NCEA;
- a review of the pastoral care system to provide more effective support and care for boys; and
- the introduction in 2009 of an Arts Institute, which has begun to identify talented artists and is providing opportunities for them to meet regularly.

*High academic expectations.* The board, senior leaders and staff have high expectations for individual student achievement at all year levels, as reflected in the 2009 focus on commitment to diligence. Specific and challenging targets for achievement in NCEA at Years 11 to 13, and writing targets for Years 7 to 9, are focused on improving achievement. Students with special abilities are well supported

and challenged in appropriate programmes. Success and achievement in a variety of levels and contexts are openly acknowledged and celebrated. These high expectations contribute to increased levels of student engagement and achievement.

*Student engagement.* Student engagement in classes is strongly supported by:

- well planned and well structured lessons;
- clear frameworks and tools to scaffold student learning;
- the effective use of student exemplars to show progressions of learning based on achievement criteria;
- specific oral and written comments to students on the areas in which they have achieved well and the next steps needed for improvement;
- clear instructions to guide and facilitate students' involvement in learning activities;
- interactive opportunities, including group work and self and peer assessment; and
- education outside the classroom (EOTC) trips that provide authentic learning opportunities.

In classrooms where these good practices are evident, students' learning is enhanced and their opportunities for success are increased.

*Writing practices at Years 7 and 8.* Students make very good progress in writing at Years 7 and 8. They are supported by high quality teaching practices that include:

- the effective use of data to inform programmes so that they meet student learning needs;
- differentiated planning and teaching of different curriculum levels within classes;
- increasing students' awareness of their own strengths and next learning steps;
- the provision of authentic learning contexts;
- the integration of writing skills into other learning areas;
- teachers' documented, detailed evaluation of units and programmes to improve teaching and learning; and
- the inclusion and involvement of parents in students' learning and goal setting.

These effective strategies encourage students to take greater responsibility for, and control of, their learning and progress.

*Learning support.* Reliable assessment tools facilitate the early identification of boys with specific learning needs. Support for these students includes:

- individualised programmes in an inclusive environment, with a particular emphasis on literacy;
- careful monitoring and guidance to facilitate academic progress, which is generally significant;



- closely linking learning support programmes to classroom programmes; and
- the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and other support programmes to provide learning opportunities at appropriate levels.

The effective learning support programme builds students' self confidence and enables them to participate better in mainstream teaching and learning.

*Ongoing teaching and learning development opportunities for teachers.* Teachers' knowledge and skills are developed by a well structured, whole school professional development programme. Over the past three years, this training has included:

- a Ministry of Education funded programme, for Year 7 to 9 teachers, on the teaching of writing;
- a Ministry of Education initiative for school-based ICT training to increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of the uses of ICT in classroom learning and their confidence in using new technologies; and
- a sequential weekly programme, internally provided through the Academic Institute, to facilitate well planned implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum*.

These initiatives have increased teachers' professional knowledge so that they are better able to meet the learning needs of students.

*Celebration of cultural diversity.* The school's active recognition and whole-school inclusion of students' cultural backgrounds and strengths fosters attitudes of appreciation, understanding and acceptance amongst all members of the college. This recognition is evident in:

- whole-school participation in the Sacred Heart College haka and in inter-house kapa haka competitions;
- students having the option of wearing lavalavas as part of school uniform;
- well attended and successful Fiafia nights;
- the acknowledgement of diverse cultures by presenting national flags to students of various nationalities at school assemblies;
- the natural inclusion of tikanga Māori in school protocols; and
- the numerous opportunities for non-Māori and non-Pacific students to participate in traditional cultural celebrations.

These inclusive practices promote attitudes of understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultural backgrounds of students.

*Developing artistic talents.* Senior leaders and the board of trustees place appropriate focus on increasing provision for programmes that develop students' artistic talents. The curriculum currently supports involvement in the arts through:

- opportunities for boys to express themselves creatively in music and art;
- the incorporation of students' interests and cultural backgrounds in art;

- performance opportunities through school productions, including school music contests, Rock Quest, Polyfest, and the school production; and
- maintaining links with high achieving former students to promote an interest in artistic achievement and to provide students with positive role models.

Plans for a Performing Arts Centre have been initiated to provide better facilities for an increased range of programmes and to raise the profile and achievement of the arts in the school.

*Sports institute.* A sports institute has been set up to focus on the development of boys' sporting abilities in rugby, football, cricket, waterpolo in Years 7-10. The well designed programme, led by knowledgeable coaches and experts:

- is evaluated through detailed reporting to the board, demonstrating a high degree of accountability;
- aims to recognise potential talent and to develop boys' skills and their understanding of their own development and performance;
- equips boys with transferable learning skills that are relevant to other curriculum areas;
- is delivered through effective formative teaching and learning practices;
- provides a positive focus for students and increases their engagement in learning;
- develops boys' self-management skills;
- presents opportunities for boys to experience success and to excel in areas of personal interest; and
- has resulted in increased achievement in sporting competitions.

The board is currently engaged in a review of the sports institute to gauge its effectiveness. They are also interested in finding whether there is a correlation between academic achievement and boys' involvement in the sport institute.

*Range of physical activities.* Resources support a wide range of sporting opportunities for boys at all year levels and levels of ability in a variety of physical activities. The boys have numerous opportunities for leadership and socialising through the array of sporting experiences offered. Committed staff are involved in coaching and mentoring, and getting alongside boys during training. These interactions strengthen relationships and set a sound foundation for learning.

*Pastoral care.* A recent pastoral care review has had a positive impact on support and care for students. High quality pastoral care systems have contributed to an environment of sound relationships that help to ensure that students are provided with, and are able to ask for, support. These systems are evident in:

- good support for students through deans and homeroom teachers;
- an increased number of deans at junior levels;
- a mentoring programme at Year 13 to help ensure that students' wellbeing is being monitored and that their achievement is supported and improves;

- good access to the guidance counsellor and chaplain;
- strong links to religious education and health programmes that are focused on developing values and understanding relationships;
- surveys of Year 7, hostel, Māori and Pacific students about their sense of emotional well being and achievement; and
- good levels of reporting to the board on different aspects of pastoral care and provision.

As part of self-review practices, student surveys could now be extended to include all students so that the board and staff can gain a better understanding of all students' emotional well being. The school's effective systems for pastoral care promote good relationships between and amongst teachers and students, and facilitate a focus on learning.

*Positive relationships.* Strong, positive and mutually respectful relationships are evident amongst teachers and students and are exemplified in:

- positive role models that senior students provide for junior students;
- the development of reciprocal learning amongst all year levels of students;
- the collegial work of teachers within and across departments;
- the presence and involvement of fourteen Marist brothers on site, in teaching, the hostel, governance, and as role models, in accordance with the school's special character; and
- continued support for students and their careers after the completion of their studies at Sacred Heart College.

These respectful relationships create a positive learning environment and provide a strong foundation for effective learning. Boys at all levels learn from each other, developing a sense of 'brotherhood'. Their shared commitment to the Marist school community provides boys with a sense of unity and belonging.

### ***Areas for improvement***

*Self review.* The strategic plan identifies five important areas of student learning to develop the desirable characteristics and attributes for a young man leaving Sacred Heart College. The board and senior leaders could further improve their self review by developing more specific performance indicators in the key areas of the strategic plan so that they can better evaluate the progress and effectiveness of teaching and learning programmes and initiatives that support the holistic education of boys.

*Building enquiring learners.* Senior leaders have identified and planned for the need to continue to develop effective strategies that promote active, enquiring learners. The formative practices evident in some classrooms could now be extended school-wide to promote high quality teaching and learning experiences across the school. Effective teaching practices should:

- develop students as active, enquiring learners;

- equip students with the skills and strategies needed to cope with new learning in a range of contexts; and
- teach students to evaluate their own learning.

Current professional development on the implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum* should support this direction.

*Extend the use of junior student achievement data.* Teaching and learning in the junior school could be further enhanced by:

- extending the good practice already used in writing in Years 7 and 8 to other curriculum areas and other year levels in the junior school;
- differentiating teaching on the basis of good quality assessment information, including achievement in literacy and numeracy; and
- setting achievement targets for all students and groups of students.

The effective use of junior student achievement data will enable senior leaders and staff to better meet students' learning needs. Extending the range of reporting to the board on overall junior student achievement in literacy and numeracy should help to inform board decision making and resourcing.

## 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 Sacred Heart College (Auckland) 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 the *Ka Hikitia* document but expects to do so in the near future.

Since the 2006 ERO review, the percentage of Māori students at Sacred Heart College has increased from 4% to 7% of the total school roll. The previous ERO report identified the collation and analysis of achievement information for Māori students and the development of consultation as areas for improvement.

### *Areas of progress*

*High expectations.* Teachers have high expectations for Māori student achievement. Achievement data in junior literacy and numeracy and senior NCEA indicate that Māori students are achieving above national averages. Data also show that most Māori students are accessing tertiary study. Teachers are monitoring Māori achievement well and provide good support where necessary.

*Reporting achievement.* Overall achievement for Māori students in junior writing and in NCEA is now being reported to the board. Some learning areas are reporting separately on Māori student achievement. The next step is to develop succinct analyses of these data to inform planning and decision making.

*Te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.* Students know school hīmene and haka and perform them with confidence. The school haka, in particular, is performed with pride at pōwhiri, tangihanga and sporting occasions. An appreciation of haka and hīmene embodies the school's values of family spirit and loyalty.

### *Areas for further improvement*

*Formalising senior management responsibility.* The principal should ensure that responsibility for overall Māori achievement is formally recognised in a senior manager's portfolio of responsibility. This should help to promote the presence and success of Māori students.

*Strategic planning.* It would be useful for the school's Māori achievement plan to include *Ka Hikitia* and to align with key national indicators of achievement for Māori students. The Māori achievement plan should also link with the school's annual and strategic plan to provide cohesion and concerted action.

*Consultation.* Senior managers and the board should continue to seek ways to improve the consultation process with Te Whānau o Matauranga, the Māori parents' support group, and should document outcomes of hui. Regular hui provide a good forum to celebrate the success of Māori students and an opportunity to discuss the aspirations of whānau. Hui are also a forum for the board to consult with parents of Māori students about policies and programmes to promote Māori student achievement, and to report the effectiveness of those programmes in enabling Māori students to achieve. Senior managers should endeavour to promote board representation for Māori to ensure that a Māori viewpoint is maintained at a key strategic level within the school.

## **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. Since the last ERO review, Pacific students have increased slightly from 14% to 15% of the total school roll. Sacred Heart College has Pacific representation on the board of trustees. The previous ERO report identified the collation and analysis of achievement information for Pacific students and the development of consultation as areas for development.

### ***Areas of good performance***

*Strategic planning and reporting.* Following consultation with Pacific parents and a survey of Pacific students, senior managers have devised a comprehensive Pacific Achievement Plan with specific outcomes. The plan is referenced to the school's annual plan and should now be explicitly aligned to the strategic plan to ensure the sustainability of improved learning outcomes for Pacific students.

*Achievement.* Pacific student achievement is well monitored and targeted learner support is provided where necessary. Pacific students are achieving above national averages in writing at junior levels and in NCEA. Senior managers have set specific targets for Pacific achievement in NCEA, thus enabling more effective monitoring of achievement levels. School leaver destination data indicate that most Pacific students are accessing tertiary education.

*Reporting achievement.* Overall achievement for Pacific students in junior writing and in NCEA is now being reported to the board. Some learning areas are reporting on Pacific student achievement. Some learning areas are reporting separately on Pacific student achievement and are measuring progress over time. A succinct analysis of these data would be useful in informing planning and decision making.

### ***Area for improvement***

*Pacific junior achievement.* Senior managers should broaden their targets to include the achievement of junior Pacific students in literacy and numeracy. The subsequent analysis and reporting of Pacific student achievement against these targets would identify areas for development and enable more specific measurement of progress over time.

## **Implementing the New Zealand Curriculum in 2010**

### ***Progress to date***

In preparing for teaching the *New Zealand Curriculum* in 2010 the school has:

- put steps in place to align the Sacred Heart College curriculum, based on the school's seven values pillars, with the vision and values of the *New Zealand Curriculum*;

- appointed a director of the Academic Institute to drive the implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum*;
- implemented a staged, well considered approach through weekly professional development to familiarise staff with the *New Zealand Curriculum* and to develop best practices for teaching and learning; and
- kept the board informed of its role in implementing the *New Zealand Curriculum*.

### *Next steps*

The school has decided that its priorities for preparation over the next three to six months are to:

- further develop staff understanding of effective teaching and learning practices;
- focus on incorporating inquiry-based teaching into practice; and
- develop staff understanding of the relevance of the key competencies to their learning areas and programme planning.

### **Thinking about the Future**

ERO is currently discussing with secondary schools how they are thinking about the future and what it might mean for their students.

The school reports that, after thinking about the future and what it might mean for students, it is doing the following:

- developing a more student-centred curriculum;
- continuing to develop a learning management system (LMS) to increase students' ownership of their learning and achievement;
- continuing to focus on the uses of ICT to promote student engagement in learning;
- further developing careers options for students through a carefully planned, personalised career management system;
- focusing on developing boys' life skills as a way of investing in their futures;
- involving the community through surveys about property needs to support student learning;
- planning for the inclusion of a Performing Arts Centre to further promote and enhance cultural opportunities and achievement for students; and
- carefully planning and designing new classrooms to cater for roll growth and effective teaching and learning.

## **Provision for International Students**

### **Compliance with the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* and the Provision of English Language Support**

Sacred Heart College (Auckland) is a signatory to the *Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* (the Code) established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. This is a requirement of all schools that enrol international students in terms of the Act. Schools are also required to provide English language support for their international students. Currently, thirty-three international students are enrolled at the school.

The school complies with all aspects of the Code.

### ***Areas of good performance***

*Documentation and systems.* The director of international students has established clear processes and documentation for the administration and management of international students. Effective self review is evident in the ongoing improvements to management systems and provision for students. The board of trustees receives regular reports about international students.

*Student support.* The school offers high levels of pastoral care for international students, who report feeling well supported at school. The director of international students meets regularly with all the students and maintains contact with their families overseas, home stay families in New Zealand, and the hostel's dean of boarding. Teachers responsible for providing English language support also play a big part in the pastoral care of the students. They provide incidental training for the whole staff so that they better understand cross-cultural factors in teaching and learning. One of the teachers is a supervisor at the school hostel. The special character of the school is inclusive of the diversity of cultures, and provides a strong sense of family support for the well being of international students.

*English language support and first language support.* International students are very well supported in their development of English language skills. Students are assessed on their arrival at school and the results are shared with all teachers. Students access English language support through their social studies, religious studies and English classes, which are taught by qualified teachers with special skills in English language learning. These subjects are taught with an emphasis on English language acquisition and have very small class sizes. Learning pathways are created for students through NCEA unit standards in English.

The school carefully sources first language support for all students and the students are aware of their contact person if required.

## **Provision for Students in the School Hostel**

In this review ERO evaluated the extent to which the school hostel provides a safe physical and emotional environment that supports learning for students accommodated in the hostel.



School hostels are required to be licensed by the Ministry of Education and to comply with minimum standards specified in the hostel regulations.

The school hostel accommodates 160 students, or 15% of the school roll, and is owned by the Marist Brothers Trust Board. The boarding facilities cater for students from Years 9 to 13, some as week-day boarders and the rest as full-term boarders.

The hostel is managed as a separate enterprise. The school principal is the chief executive officer of the hostel company. The day-to-day management of the hostel is the responsibility of the dean of boarding, who is also the school's director of special character.

### *Areas of good performance*

*Connections.* Well developed links between school and hostel provide positive connections for students. Marist Brothers, and school staff with hostel responsibilities, ensure that the Marist special character values are an important part of the hostel environment. Students experience consistent behavioural expectations as many hostel staff also have school pastoral responsibilities. The positive connection between school and hostel governors and managers supports students' well being and learning.

*Relationships.* Hostel students experience strong, supportive relationships in their boarding environment. Relationships between hostel staff and boarding students are positive. Students affirm the care and support they receive from the adults involved in the hostel. Junior students have senior buddies who provide a peer support role. Students appreciate the firm and fair approach of the dean of boarding to any behavioural concerns. Boarders are regularly surveyed to help ensure students' emotional safety. The well managed hostel environment provides a supportive atmosphere where students develop strong friendships.

*Comprehensive procedures.* The well managed implementation of comprehensive hostel procedures protects the safety and well being of students. The dean of boarding reviews and develops expectations and routines for staff and students to ensure the welfare of boarders. Students see the hostel rules and routines as fair. Student leave from the hostel is closely monitored. Hostel staffing is appropriate to monitor students' safety and to provide adult support in case of illness or emergency. Staff training and appraisal support the supervision and caring pastoral support of students.

The physical environment of the hostel is regularly checked. The involvement of school property managers in hostel management meetings helps to ensure that safety and maintenance issues are promptly resolved. Procedures followed by staff and students help to maintain high standards of hygiene and tidiness in all areas of the hostel. Consequently, students reside in a clean, comfortable boarding environment.

*Support with learning.* The hostel environment supports students' learning opportunities. Students have access to computers, library and other school facilities to assist their out of class study. They report that they appreciate the extra support they receive from teachers out of class time. Well managed study and homework routines give students adequate time for assignments and homework. The school values of

diligence and commitment are reinforced in the hostel study environment. Hostel accommodation is well arranged to give senior students more privacy for study. Students' health and readiness for learning are promoted through participation in many sport and recreational opportunities as well as through the provision of nutritious meals. Students spoken with during the course of this review affirm the strong, consistent support for their learning gained through hostel life.

### *Areas for improvement*

*Policy development.* As a matter of good practice, the Company Directors should consider adopting the school policy and procedures relating to protected disclosures. This policy provides appropriate protection to staff and students and encourages the reporting of concerns that may relate to students' physical and emotional well being.

*Reporting to the board.* Strong links are evident between the school and the hostel, with the school's senior leadership team well represented in hostel management. The board of trustees agrees that specific reporting by the hostel management would increase board knowledge and understanding of the effectiveness of provisions for hostel students, especially with regard to student health and safety.

## **5 Board Assurance on Compliance Areas**

### **Overview**

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of Sacred Heart College (Auckland) 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

During the course of the review ERO identified areas of non-compliance. In order to address these, the board of trustees must:

- 5.1 develop and make known and report to the school's community policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Māori students in consultation with the school's Māori community,  
*[National Administration Guidelines 1(v)]; and*
- 5.2 adopt a statement on the delivery of the health curriculum at least once in every two years, after consultation with the school community,  
*[Education Act 1989, 60B].*

## 6 Recommendations

ERO and the board agree that:

- 6.1 the board and senior leadership team should strengthen processes for self review by developing specific criteria against which they can evaluate the effectiveness of the board's provision of a holistic education, as identified in the school strategic plan;
- 6.2 senior leaders should continue to extend the use of junior student achievement data and the use of effective teaching practices to develop enquiring learners.

## 7 Future Action

ERO is very confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests 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 four to five years.



Dr Graham Stoop  
**Chief Review Officer**

1 September 2009

1 September 2009

## **To the Parents and Community of Sacred Heart College (Auckland)**

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Sacred Heart College (Auckland)**.

Sacred Heart College is a Year 7-15 state integrated school for Catholic boys. It includes a hostel for full and part-time boarding for 158 students in Years 9 to 13. The hostel is owned and managed by the New Zealand Marist Brothers' Trust Board.

The focus of this report is the effectiveness of school culture in supporting student achievement. ERO finds that the school culture promotes highly effective practices that support boys' holistic education.

Previous ERO reports have commented on the sound, nurturing relationships between students and staff. These positive relationships continue to characterise the supportive environment of the school. The school's holistic approach to boys' education includes the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and cultural dimensions of their development. The Marist and Champagnat traditions, which form the basis of the school's special character, underpin management and governance decisions and operations. The presence and involvement of the Marist Brothers helps to foster the Christian spirit of the school.

Students affirm the inclusive nature of the school, where cultural differences are acknowledged and celebrated. Strong pastoral systems promote an ethos of caring and emotional support for students. The values of respect, sharing, trust, tolerance, self-discipline, loyalty and pride are emphasised and celebrated throughout the school. These values contribute to students' development of positive social attitudes and provide a sound foundation for their learning and achievement.

Senior leaders and staff have high expectations of students. Many students attain high levels of sporting achievement and achieve success at regional, national and international levels in a variety of sporting codes. School results in National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) continue to improve. The boys achieve at levels that are significantly higher than national averages and are above average achievement levels at similar schools. Excellent achievement results in 2008 for NCEA include twenty-four scholarships.

Reliable and nationally normed student achievement data indicate that most students in Years 7 to 10 achieve at or above national expectations in reading, mathematics and writing. Teachers monitor the achievement of Māori students and provide good support where necessary. School achievement data in junior literacy and numeracy and in NCEA indicate that Māori students are achieving above national averages.

Teachers and senior leaders could now extend the usage and reporting of junior student achievement data to further improve teaching and learning.

Staff work collegially and show genuine interest in and care for the students. Whole-school professional development over the past three years has promoted teacher awareness of current best teaching practice. The current focus on the implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum* in 2010 should further assist teachers to equip students with the necessary skills and strategies for successful new learning so that they develop as active, enquiring learners.

The new principal, appointed in 2006, has led the senior leadership team and board in curriculum review that informs current strategic planning and promotes student achievement. Effective strategic planning has resulted in several key improvements in curriculum, sports, pastoral care and the arts.

Trustees continue to be reflective in their governance role. They support teaching and learning initiatives that contribute to student achievement. Effective board self-review practices continue to improve facilities, resources and teaching and learning opportunities. As a result of these good practices, which are evident at all levels of the school, Sacred Heart College provides students with a high quality education in a safe physical and emotional environment.

### **Future Action**

ERO is very confident that the board of trustees can manage the school in the interests 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 four to five years.

### **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, <http://www.ero.govt.nz>.



Dr Graham Stoop  
**Chief Review Officer**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS**

### **About ERO**

ERO is an independent, external evaluation agency that undertakes reviews of schools and early childhood services throughout New Zealand.

### **About ERO Reviews**

ERO follows a set of standard procedures to conduct reviews. The purpose of each review is to:

- improve educational achievement in schools; and
- provide information to parents, communities and the Government.

Reviews are intended to focus on student achievement and build on each school's self review.

### **Review Focus**

ERO's framework for reviewing and reporting is based on three review strands.

- **School Specific Priorities** – the quality of education and the impact of school policies and practices on student achievement.
- **Areas of National Interest** – information about how Government policies are working in schools.
- **Compliance with Legal Requirements** – assurance that this school has taken all reasonable steps to meet legal requirements.

### **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.

### **Review Recommendations**

Most ERO reports include recommendations for improvement. A recommendation on a particular issue does not necessarily mean that a school is performing poorly in relation to that issue. There is no direct link between the number of recommendations in this report and the overall performance of this school.