

3 October 2006

To the Parents and Community of St Bernard's College

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **St Bernard's College**.

St Bernard's College is an integrated Catholic school catering for boys from years 7 to 15. It is located in central Hutt City and serves the Catholic community across the Hutt Valley and Wainuiomata.

The special character underpins every aspect of college life. The Boards of Trustees and Proprietors work collectively to promote the school philosophy and give strategic direction. Staff embrace the school ethos and participate in team reflection to support implementation of the Marist beliefs and values. Boys are offered a wide range of learning opportunities for their academic, physical, social, cultural and spiritual development. An effective pastoral care system meets a range of student needs in these areas.

This review evaluates the quality of teaching and learning to support student achievement across the curriculum, and in particular, in health and physical education for year 8 students. This report comments on the provisions made for the achievement of Māori and Pacific and those who are underachieving. Measures taken to support international students and compliance with requirements for health and safety, including strategies to prevent bullying, are also reviewed.

The principal provides effective leadership for the school and is held in high regard by the school community. He has high expectations for the achievement and welfare of students, and of teaching staff. He is well supported in this work by a capable and committed management team.

Since the 2003 ERO review, the senior management team has led development initiatives in response to the report findings and recommendations. The impact of this work is evident in documentation to guide teaching practice, the range of teaching strategies implemented, and the strengthened systems for quality assurance. The college's self review is assisting with the identification of areas for further development. This report acknowledges the principal's evaluation of school performance and outlines additional aspects of programme management for consideration.

The overall quality of teaching is sound with particularly effective practice in years 7 and 8. Classroom tone is respectful and settled in most lessons. Students know and observe expectations for work and behaviour. The learning support department provides programmes to support those students who are underachieving. The school has a good knowledge of the impact of these programmes and interventions.

Teachers have gathered achievement information for students from years 7 to 10, mainly in literacy. Results have been effectively analysed in the National Certificates of Educational Achievement. This analysis identifies areas of strength and improvement and trends and patterns across subject areas, year levels and ethnic groups. Literacy and numeracy results at Level 1, are markedly higher than those nationally, and for schools of the same decile. The school recognises the need to raise achievement in Levels 2 and 3, and has put strategies in place to do so. The high retention rate of students into years 12 and 13 is seen by the school as a factor affecting these results. Very few students leave with no formal qualifications.

The school-wide system of reporting to parents provides a range of opportunities to share individual students' achievement with parents and caregivers. Caregivers and students have formal opportunities to discuss the reports with appropriate college staff. Students' parents and caregivers are well informed by this process.

The board has formulated a recommendation to improve formative assessment and reporting practices.

Future Action

ERO is 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 will review the school again as part of the regular review cycle.

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>.

SIGNED

Lennane Kent
Acting Area Manager
for Chief Review Officer