

17 November 2010

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 Year 7 to 13 Catholic boys' school in Hutt City. Reconstruction of the administration block was recently completed.

The college takes pride in its special character and cultural diversity. The values of brotherhood and respect are strongly affirmed by students, staff and board members. Relationships among students and with teachers are positive. Students benefit from learning in a settled, orderly environment in which their well-being and learning needs are closely monitored and effectively responded to by pastoral care and learning support staff. Senior leaders expect high levels of engagement from students and staff.

Students' attainment in Levels 1 and 2 of the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEAs) is comparable to that of students nationally and in similar schools. The percentage of students who achieve Level 3 is below national figures. Pacific students' achievement in the NCEAs is generally well above school and national percentages.

The achievement of Māori students, who comprise 15 % of the college's roll, is inconsistent. Some patterns of underachievement are fully acknowledged by school leaders and recognised as a matter needing urgent attention. A comprehensive Māori Achievement Plan, approved by parents and whānau, is currently being implemented, with the aim of increasing Māori students' engagement and achievement.

The quality and use of achievement information in Years 7 to 10 is inconsistent and is an area that requires review and development. Other practices identified as needing continued schoolwide focus are teachers' evaluation of programme effectiveness and their engagement of students as independent learners.

The board of trustees and senior leadership team are strongly committed to improving outcomes for all students. They have a systematic approach to self review, using analysed data to evaluate the college's effectiveness and identify areas for development. Planning and decision making are firmly based on evidence. Strategic priorities and goals reflect identified trends, with consideration given to areas where students are underachieving.

Parents, whānau and ethnic communities are well engaged in the life of the school and in decision making about student learning programmes. The recently elected board has clearly defined roles and responsibilities and has adopted a detailed three year review schedule.

Future Action

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

Review Coverage

This report provides an evaluation of how effectively the school's curriculum promotes student learning: engagement, progress and achievement. ERO's evaluation takes account of the school's previous reporting history and is based on;

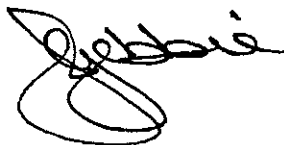
- what is known about student achievement information, including the achievement of Māori and Pacific students;
- decisions made to improve student achievement using the information; and
- teaching strategies and programmes implemented to give effect to the school's curriculum.

ERO's review is responsive to the school's context. For example, when ERO reviews a school, it takes into account the characteristics of the community, from which it draws its students, its location, and the aspirations the community has for its young people, and relevant local factors.

ERO also builds on the school's own self-review information. That is, ERO is interested in how a school monitors the progress of its students and aspects of school life and culture, and how it uses this information.

ERO also gathers information during the review to contribute to its reports on national education evaluation topics. Comments relevant to this school are included in the report. The national reports are published on ERO's website.

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



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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 integrates the following.

- **school curriculum;**
- **national evaluation topics** –contribute to the development of education policies and their effective implementation; and
- **Board Assurance Statement**, including student and staff health and safety.

It also integrates external review with school self review by taking the most useful aspects from external and self review to build a picture of the school and its context.

This helps ERO to answer the major evaluation question for reviews:

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote student learning: engagement, progress and achievement?

Areas for Development and Review

ERO reports include areas for development and review to support on-going improvement by identifying priorities. Often the school will have identified these matters through its own self review and already plans further development in those areas.