

*He Pūrongo Arotake Mātauranga  
Ahurea Katorika ā Waho.*

*Catholic Special Character  
External Evaluation Report*

Te Kura o Whānau Tapu  
Holy Family School  
Porirua

Evaluation conducted 20-22 June 2022

Confirmed Report 29 July 2022

### **School Details**

**Name of School:** Te Kura o Whānau Tapu Holy Family School

**Address:** 169 Mungavin Avenue, Cannons Creek, Porirua

**School type:** Co-educational Years 1-6

**Actual roll:** 207

**Maximum roll:** 305

**Non-preference maximum:** 5 % of maximum roll-15 students

**Actual non-preference number:** 0

**Roll based staffing entitlement:** 14.97

**Required number of Special Character Cl 47 positions:** 7

**Filled number of Special Character Cl 47 positions:** 5

**Principal:** Suzanne Goodin

**Director of Religious Studies (Acting):** Linda Chinna

**Presiding Member, School Board:** John Lafaele

**Parish Priest:** Father Andrew Atonio

### **Evaluation Team:**

**Lead Evaluator:** Rosalie Connors, New Zealand Catholic Education Office

**Accompanying Evaluator:** Kelly Ross, Archdiocese of Wellington

## **The Aims of Catholic Special Character External Evaluation for Development**

The Catholic special character evaluation process produces a focused picture of the impact of Catholic schooling and the effectiveness of its goals on the lives of all tamariki and rangatahi<sup>1</sup>. The process seeks to determine whether they have encountered the living God revealed in Jesus Christ, grown in knowledge of Him and His Church, and as a result are forming a deep and lasting relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church<sup>2</sup>. The process also evaluates how the whole school community engages in authentic Catholic Christian witness and evangelisation.

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Introduction

This Catholic Special Character Evaluation was undertaken during the period of the COVID-19 Pandemic 2020-2022, when for the preceding two years and four months, New Zealand was under either the governments *Alert Levels* or *the COVID-19 Protection Framework*. This restricted the way that school events could be held, engagement with the community was conducted, and how teaching occurred. At the time of the evaluation the school was open, teaching was face to face and there were no restrictions on gathering numbers.

When this evaluation was due to occur, the Archdiocesan contracted evaluator was not available and Rosalie Connors, Manager, Special Character, from the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, was asked to be the external evaluator. Due to this, an initial meeting between the Archdiocese, school board and leadership, mana whenua and the Parish did not occur.

Holy Family School was founded by the Brigidine Sisters in 1960 to service the education needs of the Parish and Catholic families of the Porirua East area. Bishop Viard College, also in Porirua, is the encouraged secondary education for the school's students. The children and staff are a culturally diverse group mainly from Pacific communities. The school is supported by the Brigidine Sisters, the Missionary Sisters of Charity and three priests of the Parish. Mana whenua are Ngāti Toa, and the school engages with them through the local Kāhui Ako.

Since February 2020 there has been a significant change in school leadership. The previous principal, Chris Theobald, has taken up principalship at Bishop Viard College and the school board appointed a new principal, Sue Goodin, an experienced principal from a non-integrated state school. A new Deputy Principal (2020) and an Acting Director of Religious Studies (DRS) (2022) have also been appointed. The current permanent DRS is on maternity leave. From this the school community needed to 'rebuild' and the principal has identified that behaving like a Catholic community was the answer.

## **Progress with Recommendations from the September 2018 Catholic Special Character Review for Development Report**

***Write and embed a school Religious Education (RE) Curriculum with clear guidelines that reflect the school's community, using the NZ RE Curriculum together with the Religious Education Bridging Document (REBD). Ensure that:***

- *The document contains a long-term plan overview, professional development plan, prayer samples, mass/liturgy expectations, pastoral care procedures, behaviour management procedures and expectations of S464 (tagged) positions.*
- *All teachers participate in external PD on the REBD*
- *Planning and teaching, based on the school's RE Curriculum document, is consistent*
- *Teachers have an appraisal goal based on their teaching of RE*
- *Regular classroom RE observations and feedback are carried out by DRS*
- *The effectiveness of teaching and learning for students is evaluated*

### **Action taken:**

- All teaching staff participated in two REBD professional learning and formation sessions with Catholic Education Services, Archdiocese of Wellington in 2019.
- The Acting DRS and Principal have instigated regular RE and prayer observations.

**Further action:** The ethos of this recommendation will continue as a recommendation in this report.

***Develop and teach a Health curriculum programme for human sexuality education across the school, set in the context of Catholic teaching.***

- *Ensure all teachers have participated in the "Having Life to the Full" (HLTF) sexuality professional learning.*
- *Ensure whānau and the Proprietor are consulted about the programme.*

**Action taken:** All teachers other than those new to the school and the Principal have completed the *HLTF* course. The principal and one other teacher are registered to complete the course this year.

**Further action:** This will be a continued recommendation in this report.

***Carry out an internal review of one Catholic Character dimension per year as part of a 3-year cycle. Ensure that:***

- Reviews are based on the dimensions in the *Catholic Special Character Review for Development* Draft Document
- Catholic Character review is included in the Board triennial work plan

**Further action:** The ethos of this recommendation will continue as a recommendation in this report

***Ensure preference forms are completed fully and accurately before a child is accepted into the school.***

- Analyse preference data by both preference criteria and year group, to give clear information about the faith needs of students.

**Action taken:** The school has a clear process for analysing preference data using their student management service.

**From the time of enrolment, ensure that there is an invitational process for receiving the appropriate Sacraments as part of the school welcome and culture.**

- Invitation to Baptism followed up with a Baptismal programme
- Sacraments of Initiation programme run within the school (but not necessarily by school staff)

**Action taken:** The school has clear processes to identify and invite those who are eligible to receive the appropriate Sacraments of Initiation. A sacramental programme has been offered in 2022.

### **Dimension 1: Te Tūtaki ki a Te Karaiti-Encounter with Christ**

#### ***How effectively does the school encourage and facilitate the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals the transforming love and truth of the living God?***

The encounter with Christ is central to the school's Catholic special character and is provided through a range of faith opportunities including weekly staff and daily classroom prayer, liturgies of welcome and to mark significant liturgical events, participation in the Eucharist and sacramental programmes, the school values, Catholic special character display's, visual symbols, which are bi-culturally and multi-culturally appropriate, and the school charism.

These provide the opportunity for coming to know Jesus Christ, understanding how a Catholic community comes together to worship and gives thanks to God, and learning the practices and traditions of the Catholic Church.

Holy Family School is aware of the need to and are taking steps to strengthen their facilitation of the encounter with Christ for staff, students and their whānau/'aiga. Through an informal internal evaluation, the school identified a need to strengthen students' personal relationship with Christ through prayer. This is being addressed by teachers engaging in professional learning and formation, including discussing and sharing examples of good practice and new ideas. The school intends continuing this journey so that staff can provide, for students and their whānau/'aiga, a rich prayer life allowing them to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Though some whānau/'aiga are not present at Sunday Mass in the/their Parish they are learning to be part of a Catholic community by their presence and activity in the school.

There is evidence that the school is incorporating and normalising te reo Māori and some aspects of tikanga Māori into the varying aspects of Catholic special character. This is enriching the lives of the community and witnesses to honouring te Tiriti o Waitangi as an active expression of Catholic special character.

The encounter with Christ is further facilitated through staff consistently enacting Christ's central message of love, compassion and mercy through their and the

Catholic Special Character Evaluation Report Holy Family School, Porirua, 29 July 2022

community's actions of caring for the emotional and physical needs of students and their whānau/'aiga. Students also show the face, hands and heart of Jesus in the way they interact with each other and their teachers. All of these ways of building God's Kingdom make the sense of welcome, joy, acceptance, and generosity in the school tangible. This evidence of evangelisation is a strength of the school and its community and witnesses to the staff's ability to show what it means to be an adult Catholic. Staff know and understand this and should share with the school community that acting in the ways of the Gospel, reflects how Jesus acted and sharing this is part of the evangelising mission of the school. This provides an understanding of how, as Catholics, we integrate our faith and life.

Accordingly, there is a strong Catholic identity within the school, particularly in its vibrant multi-cultural expression.

The Principal and Acting DRS are bringing a freshness to the Catholic special character of the school, through their strong leadership. They understand the steps required to strengthen prayer and Religious Education and with the board have set goals for 2022. Both are strong role models for faith formation and are committed to the development of teachers and themselves, having taken part in several *Certificate of Christian Studies papers*, through the Catholic Theological College (CTC), one with the whole staff. This has been strongly supported by the school board.

The principal has taken action to develop her skills and knowledge as the main faith leader including linking with other Catholic principals and from this group using one as her appraisal partner.

Though the evaluation team were able to identify some evidence of the effect of the spiritual formation provided, and the evangelising actions of the school, the school is yet to formally evaluate these themselves. Doing so will identify which programmes and actions are effectively assisting staff, students and their whānau/'aiga in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.



## **Next Steps for Development**

The school has the 'Phenomenals' as a set of behaviour expectations, the four values of respect, excellence, love, and integrity, and the Brigidine charism values of strength and gentleness. There is limited connection between these and the mission and vision statement of the school. Consider finding ways to provide a consistent message to students and the community.

With a new senior leadership team, it is an opportune time to collectively, with the board and staff, inquire into how Catholic special character should be lived in the context of Holy Family School.

## **Dimension 2: Mā te Mātauranga ka Tipu: Growth in Knowledge**

### ***How effectively does the school assist its community to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ, his teachings, and the Catholic Church?***

There are early signs that the school, under the leadership of the new Principal and Acting DRS, are working to implement more effective practices for growth in knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ and his teachings, and the Catholic Church. This is evident in the work being done to implement sound pedagogy within Religious Education (RE) through frequent 'walk-throughs' by the Principal, termly RE classroom observations, RE curriculum discussions on planning and assessment at every staff meeting, and the Acting DRS sharing good practice in planning and assessment.

Many of the board's annual goals for raising students' academic achievement could be aligned with improvement in RE. For example, teachers 2022 *Professional Growth Cycles* include research, reflection, change in teaching practice and sharing progress to raise student achievement in writing (Board Strategic Goal 2: Annual Goal 1), these actions could next be focused on teaching and learning in RE.

It is evident that learning is occurring in RE (and through other Catholic special character activities) as those students who come in with limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith are learning overtime about Jesus Christ, his life, message and Church. It is evident from their interaction with each other and the teachers that they are applying relative learning to their lives. As the school develops strong assessment practices including expected stages of progression, they will be able to identify how effective the teaching and learning programmes are.

The school's understanding of their Brigidine charism and founding order is strengthening due to the implementation of a school wide teaching and learning programme on the Brigidine Order. Vibrant symbols and art related to this learning is on display around the school. Students interviewed expressed their new understandings.

Staff professional learning and formation through CTC has assisted teachers to gain a greater understanding of the theological foundations of Catholicism and increased their confidence in teaching within the classroom.

The Principal and Acting DRS are aware that the development and implementation of a Health Curriculum, including human sexuality and relationship, which reflects the teachings of the Catholic Church is yet to be achieved. The school has consulted whānau/’aiga on the Health Curriculum and most teachers have completed the *Having Life to the Full* programme; the latter should assist in teaching this curriculum with confidence.

The school was awarded in 2019 a *Prime Ministers’ Education Excellence Award* for *The Family So’otaga* programme which empowers whanau/āiga to advocate for their children’s education and builds a strong bridge between child, class, teacher/school and home. It works to eliminate barriers to education for their children and has been increasingly needed through the pandemic. The programme is an active expression of the Gospel message.

### **Next Steps for Development**

The school could identify specific teacher Catholic special character professional learning and development needs and develop both individual and an across staff professional learning and formation plan. This will target learning to where it is most needed.

Understand and implement ways to assist whānau/’aiga in supporting and encouraging their children in their faith journey. Many of the strategies from *The Family So’otaga* programme may assist in this.

### **Dimension 3: Te Whakaatu Karaitiana-Christian Witness**

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

The provision of a hope-filled Christian witness is a strength of the school and is evidenced in the active living out of the Gospel message particularly in their provision of pastoral care of students and outreach to students and their whānau/'aiga. This is a family school where whānau/'aiga feel welcome, cared for, included and sincere relationships are evident. Relationships between the children were strong with a tuakana-teina system in place. It was warming to see members of the wider community involved in providing breakfast and completing 'van-runs' to collect children for school. Students in year 6 are actively involved in Young Vinnies whereby they do service around the school as their way of giving back to the community. All of these actions evidence the Catholicity of the community.

The school works collaboratively with: mana whenua through the Kāhui Ako, the Parish, the diocesan education team and their Proprietor, and other Catholic schools in the wider Wellington region. The Missionary Sisters of Charity, present in the parish community, are actively involved in the school through regular teaching and learning sessions in each class. This provides a connection to a religious order and another voice of persons committed to Christ. The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced the ability for parish and school to interact and the school looks forward to reconnecting and strengthening the relationship when they are able to.

The relationship with whānau/'aiga is a strength of the school community with many being actively involved. 'Aiga expressed that they were known, and their children cared for.

Staff well-being is attended to with a 2022 annual goal to promote teacher wellbeing through consultation, hauora, social activities, and gathering of regular data on staff wellbeing.

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

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

The board, which contains a level of experience and expertise, is committed to supporting Catholic special character and providing an academically excellent education for students. It is evident from this evaluation that the Catholic special character of the school has been safeguarded, and in some respects strengthened.

To safeguard Catholic special character the board has set an annual Catholic special character goal with several actions including:

- engaging in some Catholic special character professional learning and formation,
- receiving regular updates through the Principal's report to the board,
- establishing protocols to ensure it reflects a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which include making connections with mana whenua through Principal engagement with the local Kāhui Ako, consulting with Māori whānau, and setting annual goals to reduce racial bias, including te reo and tikanga Māori in teaching weekly programmes and supporting Kapa Haka in the school,
- continuing to strengthen, prayer, teaching and learning in RE, faith development of staff and partnership with the parish.

The board with the support of the Principal and DRS should now look to set in place further actions for effective internal evaluation of Catholic special character to ensure stewardship of this taonga so that staff, students and their whānau/'aiga have every opportunity to develop a personal and life-long relationship with Jesus Christ. This will be a recommendation of this report.

#### **Next Steps**

When setting Catholic special character annual goals ensure they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound.

Catholic Special Character Evaluation Report Holy Family School, Porirua, 29 July 2022

When reviewing *Schooldocs* policies and procedures ensure that their language reflects decision making from a Catholic perspective and cover all responsibilities stated under Schedule 6: Education and Training Act 2020, the school's Integration Agreement and set by the Proprietor.

The board survey completed as part of this evaluation, and discussions with those board members that meet with evaluator, indicate that the board require a deeper understanding of the boards responsibilities especially in protecting the interests of the Proprietor. The Archdiocesan Catholic Education Services can assist in developing a planned programme of professional learning and formation.

## Catholic Special Character Evaluation Report Summary

### Areas of growth since the 2018 review report

- The new Principal has identified areas of Catholic special character that require strengthening and has begun to address them.
- The Acting DRS has brought a professional focus to the role, and is strongly leading curriculum development. This is impacting on the quality of RE teaching and learning.
- Teaching staff engagement in a CTC paper that has provided confidence in teaching theological concepts.
- A Catholic understanding has been applied to the 'Phenomenals' and they are now common language in the school.

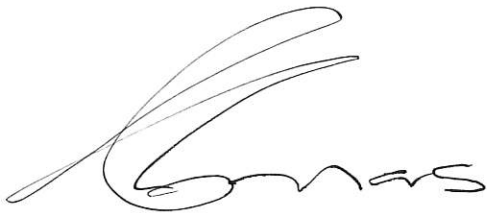
### Recommendations

1. ***Continued from the last Catholic special character review report:*** To continue strengthening Catholic special character and its impact on the faith life of students, the board should develop a four-year cycle of internal Catholic special character internal evaluation. Each year this should take a narrowed focus or question arising from one of the four dimensions of Catholic special character evaluation: Encounter with Christ, Growth in Knowledge, Christian Witness or Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Special Character.
2. ***Continued from the last Catholic special character review report:*** Inquire into what current and effective RE pedagogy looks like especially in the context of Holy Family School and its community. From this develop a school-wide RE Curriculum plan that outlines expectations on teaching and learning, assessment, evaluation and reporting to the board and whānau/āiga on both cognitive and affective learning. The new RE Curriculum should be a guide for this work.
3. ***Continued from the last Catholic special character review report:*** Develop and teach a Health Curriculum programme (including human sexuality and

relationships) across the school which reflects the teachings of the Catholic Church. The resource *Wonderfully Made in God's Image* (National Centre for Religious Studies) will be a useful guide.

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

The evaluation team thank the community of Holy Family School for the welcome, hospitality, and cooperation extended to them and for the opportunity to experience the way that they safeguard and strengthen their Catholic special character. The organisation and preparation for the external evaluation by the school is greatly appreciated.



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