

Liberton Christian School Education Review

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1 Context

What are the important features of this school that have an impact on student learning?

Liberton Christian School provides a Christian-based values education for students from Dunedin and the wider area. The school's vision for students to be part of the Christian community, learn with enthusiasm, grow in knowledge and develop their abilities and gifts is strongly evident in the learning and everyday life of the school.

Relationships among staff and students are respectful, inclusive and caring. The school fosters parent partnership and support. Teachers know the students well as individuals and as learners. They focus on supporting the development and well-being of the whole child (emotional, physical, academic and spiritual) and preparing them for life beyond school.

The school roll has increased since the 2012 ERO review. In 2014, a third of the students were new to the school. The board of trustees has helped fund an additional teacher to accommodate the recent growth and maintain small class sizes. Property developments include building a new classroom, a library and extending the size of the hall.

Significant progress has been made in addressing the recommendations in the 2012 ERO report. The school has developed a very useful framework to guide effective self review. Successful use is made of self review to support ongoing improvements to curriculum development and delivery. This includes the meaningful integration of Māori language and culture.

2 Learning

How well does this school use achievement information to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement?

The school uses achievement information very effectively to make positive changes to all learners' engagement, progress and achievement. Teachers and leaders use student achievement information throughout the year to identify and respond to those students at risk of not achieving as well as expected.

School achievement information in 2014 showed that 92% of students achieved at or above the National Standards (NS) for reading, 83% at or above the NS in writing and 79% at or above the NS in mathematics. The school has effective systems for the identification and ongoing monitoring of students who need extra support to succeed.

Students are actively involved in their own learning. With teacher support, they use learning information to set goals and monitor their own learning.

Teachers gather useful information across many areas, including student wellbeing and learning. They gather this through observations and a range of assessments. Teachers analyse the information thoroughly to make decisions about the best ways to support students and reflect on how well these practices are working:

School leaders are well informed through comprehensive reports on school-wide student achievement and progress. They use this information appropriately to inform and monitor their decisions about:

- targets in specific curriculum areas, for groups of students and the charter
- resourcing, and the effectiveness of learning interventions and programmes.

Parents receive useful reports on their children's progress and achievement in relation to the National Standards. This includes the school providing them with helpful information about how they can help at home.

3 Curriculum

How effectively does this school's curriculum promote and support student learning?

Students experience a curriculum that effectively builds on their knowledge, skills and character. This is achieved through meaningful learning that is based on the New Zealand Curriculum and the Christian values of their parents and community. Teachers effectively integrate the school's values in learning occurring in and out of the classroom.

Positive relationships are evident among the students and with their teachers. Students know the special school character and values. Senior students appreciate the many opportunities they have for leadership, and the role they share in looking out for the younger students and for each other.

Teachers seek to know students as learners and as individuals, and identify and develop students' gifts and abilities.

Teachers place a strong emphasis on literacy and mathematics. Students experience a broad range of meaningful learning integrated across all learning areas in and beyond the school. Teachers aim to make students' learning relevant and enjoyable. They work collaboratively to support students and to find ways to broaden their own teaching.

The principal, curriculum leaders and teachers regularly review the learning programmes. In 2014, they undertook effective teacher development for teaching writing.

Students benefit from regular talks with their teachers and with each other about their learning. They are actively involved in the learning process and take responsibility for their own learning, and on occasion, that of their peers. Students' achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways.

How effectively does the school promote educational success for Māori, as Māori?

Māori students overall achieve at similar levels to their peers.

Trustees have maintained the priority to develop the way in which the Māori language and culture is taught across the school in meaningful and appropriate ways. Students sing Māori waiata and have opportunities to participate in local cultural celebrations and to visit places and attend events of cultural significance. Teachers have been working on ways to improve their inclusion of the Māori language and culture within the daily programme. Leaders are seeking greater consistency in how the learning is delivered across the school. External expertise has been accessed to help develop teachers' skills and knowledge.

Area for development and development

The principal has identified the need to achieve greater school-wide consistency in the delivery and review of tikanga and te reo Māori programmes.

The board and principal have identified that they now need to ensure that the school's curriculum and guiding document reflect current practice and the aspirations of its parents and community. This includes how students' views are gathered to inform curriculum review.

4 Sustainable Performance

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance?

The school is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

School leaders and staff share a strong sense of common purpose and responsibility for achieving the school's vision and, in particular, what is best for the students.

The board is very well informed. The principal provides useful reports that show students' progress, engagement and achievement. Trustees place a strong emphasis on responding appropriately so that students and teachers are supported in teaching and learning.

Trustees carry out their governance roles and responsibilities well. They have useful frameworks and processes that guide effective planning and review. They have a strong focus on using self review to monitor the school's performance and for making decisions for improvement.

The school's performance management and support systems for staff include school-wide targets and goals.

Area for review and development

Aspects of appraisal need to be further developed. The board agrees that it needs to further develop its guidelines and processes to ensure a robust and useful appraisal process is implemented for all teaching and support staff.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. No international students were enrolled at the time of the ERO review.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists. 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
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

Conclusion

Liberton Christian School provides a Christian-based values education for students in and around Dunedin. School achievement information shows that most students achieve well. Students experience a curriculum that effectively builds their knowledge, skills and character. This is achieved through meaningful learning that is based on the New Zealand Curriculum and the Christian values of their parents and community.

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

Graham Randell
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern

5 May 2015

School Statistics

Location	Pine Hill, Dunedin	
Ministry of Education profile number	4117	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	92	
Number of international students	0	
Gender composition	Boys 54 Girls 38	
Ethnic composition	Māori	7
	NZ European/Pākehā	78
	Asian	2
	African	1
	Samoan	3
	Niuean	1
Special Features	Special Character Integrated School	
Review team on site	March 2015	
Date of this report	5 May 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	January 2012
	Education Review	August 2008
	Education Review	July 2005