

ERO External Evaluation

Liberton Christian School, Dunedin

The purpose of ERO's external evaluations is to give parents, whānau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. ERO reports on the equity and excellence of learning outcomes for all students and for specific groups including Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs. This includes a focus on accelerating learning for those students who need it. ERO also reports on the quality and effectiveness of the school's processes and practices for continuing and sustaining improvement. The report gives evaluation findings that answer four key questions about the school's performance.

School Context

Liberton Christian School is a special character, non-denominational primary school for children in Years 1 to 8, located in Dunedin. The school has a culturally diverse roll of 102 children. Since the last ERO review in 2015, some new trustees have been elected to the board and two new teachers have been appointed.

The school states that its mission is to support Dunedin's Christian community by providing high quality primary education within a Christian framework and encouraging family involvement. The mission is underpinned by Liberton Christian School's vision and eight cornerstone values. Since the last ERO review, further strengthening of these values has been undertaken to better reflect the school's commitment to bicultural partnership. Other valued outcomes of the school include fostering in students creative ways of expressing their faith and developing their gifts.

The vision and strategic goals are closely aligned. They articulate the shared understanding that students will learn with enthusiasm, grow in knowledge, develop their abilities and desire to serve God. Other strategic priorities are focused on raising student progress and achievement so that all the students can access a stimulating curriculum.

Leaders and teachers regularly report to the board, schoolwide information about outcomes for students in the following areas:

- achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- engagement and wellbeing for success
- progress and accelerated progress for priority learners
- achievement in relation to the school's valued outcomes, including visual art
- achievement in relation to special character and values enactment.

The school is part of the Christian Schools' Network and Dunedin North Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako.

Evaluation Findings

1 Equity and excellence – valued outcomes for students

1.1 How well is the school achieving equitable and excellent outcomes for all its students?

The school is very effectively achieving positive outcomes for its students. There are excellent and equitable outcomes in reading, visual art, and the school's valued outcomes.

Over the last three years most students have achieved at or above expected levels in mathematics and writing. A very high proportion of students achieve excellent outcomes in particular aspects of the mathematics and English curriculums.

1.2 How effectively does this school respond to those Māori and other students whose learning and achievement need acceleration?

The school is responding very well to students whose learning needs to be accelerated. The majority of students identified as needing extra support in writing and mathematics made accelerated progress.

Students' progress and achievement is closely monitored, and individual students are provided with personalised support programmes that effectively meet their needs.

2 School conditions for equity and excellence

2.1 What school processes and practices are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence?

The school has a number of processes and practices that are effective in enabling achievement of equity and excellence.

The shared faith and values that underpin all aspects of the school learning community are effective in creating a positive and caring environment.

Students' achievement and wellbeing are effectively promoted by a culture that is inclusive and supportive, and where their abilities and interests are valued. They are actively engaged in authentic purposeful learning. Students are very well supported to take increasing responsibility for themselves and their learning by teachers who use a range of effective strategies. 2017 school assessment information shows that well considered initiatives designed to lift achievement in writing and mathematics have been successful.

Māori culture, identity and language is valued within the school.

Children identified with additional needs are very well catered for through a range of specific individualised responses. Teachers work with students to design a curriculum that best meets individual student's social, emotional, cultural, spiritual and academic needs.

The board of trustees, leaders and teachers are strongly focussed on continuous improvement. The strategic priorities and the areas for improvement are clearly aligned. The principal and trustees regularly review how well they are meeting these priorities. The principal and teachers have established robust systems for the sharing and analysis of learner information to identify students who need extension or support. Trustees make effective use of this information to provide extra resourcing that supports students' access to high quality personalised programmes.

The principal has a clear focus on continuing to support and build effective teaching practice to improve outcomes for students. Since the 2015 ERO review the principal has strengthened teacher appraisal and inquiry. Trustees and the principal support teachers by providing:

- purposeful professional development based on the identified needs of students
- clear guidelines for curriculum delivery and assessment
- a systematic approach to gathering, tracking and sharing learning information that is then used to adjust teaching to better meet the needs of students.

School-based assessment information shows that these approaches have been highly effective for enhancing children's learning, engagement and sense of belonging.

2.2 What further developments are needed in school processes and practices for achievement of equity and excellence?

It would be timely for the school to strengthen evaluation capacity to enable leaders and teachers:

- to clearly identify the most effective teaching practices from recent innovations
- identify the most effective strategies to accelerate the learning and progress of students working below expected levels.

3 Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board 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 the following:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management
- finance
- asset management.

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

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration and certification
- processes for appointing staff
- stand down, suspension, expulsion and exclusion of students
- attendance
- school policies in relation to meeting the requirements of the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Provision for international students

The school is a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989. The school has attested that it complies with all aspects of the Code.

No international students were enrolled at the time of the ERO review.

4 Going forward

Key strengths of the school

For sustained improvement and future learner success, the school can draw on existing strengths in:

- clear direction setting and a culture of trust that successfully promotes innovation to improve student achievement
- a responsive well-integrated curriculum that effectively supports the motivation and engagement of children in their learning
- systematic and purposeful use of learner information for improvement that enhances and improves outcomes for learners
- the consistent use of assessment for learning and formative feedback by teachers that enables students to effectively monitor and improve their own learning.

Next steps

For sustained improvement and future learner success, development priorities are in:

- strengthening collective capacity to use internal evaluation that includes inquiry into the impact of innovations in teaching practices to improve outcomes for students.

ERO's next external evaluation process and timing

ERO is likely to carry out the next external evaluation in four-to-five years.



Dr Lesley Patterson
Deputy Chief Review Officer Southern
Te Waipounamu - Southern Region

23 May 2018

About the school

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| Location | Dunedin |
| Ministry of Education profile number | 4117 |
| School type | Contributing Primary, Years 1 to 8 Special Character Integrated School |
| School roll | 102 |
| Gender composition | Boys: 51% Girls: 49% |
| Ethnic composition | Māori 5% Pākehā 62% Pacific 12% Other 21% |
| Provision of Māori medium education | No |
| Review team on site | March 2017 |
| Date of this report | 23 May 2018 |
| Most recent ERO report(s) | May 2015 January 2012 |