

Matamata 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?

Matamata Christian is a state integrated school catering for students from Years 1 to 8 and currently has a roll of 58. It is situated in a residential area of Matamata and is set in spacious and attractive grounds. The proprietor of the school is the Matamata Christian School Association.

Since the last ERO review in 2012, the principal, deputy principal, board and proprietors have continued to provide effective leadership, management and governance for the school. Recently a new teacher has been appointed and two new members have been appointed to the board.

The school has made significant progress in addressing the areas for development identified in the 2012 ERO report. These related to use of assessment tools, moderating judgements about student achievement against National Standards, and using data to reflect on teaching practices. During this time teachers have received ongoing professional development to enhance their teaching in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technologies (ICT).

Teachers and students work in an inclusive, positive school culture where the Christian character permeates all aspects of school life. The school community and parents continue to strongly support activities and events.

2 Learning

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

The school uses school-wide student achievement information effectively to make positive changes to learners' engagement, progress and achievement. A range of appropriate assessment tools is used to gather data in the core learning areas of reading, writing and numeracy.

Information at the end of 2014 indicates that most students were achieving at or above National Standards in all these learning areas. Girls and boys achieved at comparable levels. While a number of Māori students achieved at lower levels than other students, information gathered over time shows that there have been significant learning gains for this group.

Management has collated and analysed student achievement school wide to identify trends in achievement. Board members use this information to set appropriate targets for all students in reading, writing and numeracy, with a particular emphasis on students who are achieving below or well below National Standards. These targets and outcomes are carefully monitored to ensure that students are making accelerated progress, with school strategies and initiatives being adjusted if necessary.

Teachers use achievement information effectively to plan and implement learning programmes that match the abilities and learning needs of individual students in multi-level classrooms. Students with special learning needs are well catered for through specific support programmes and the use of experienced and knowledgeable teacher aides.

There is effective reporting to parents about each student's progress and achievement. Parents spoken with by ERO reported that they felt very well informed about their children's learning. Reporting is done regularly through interviews, written reports and student-led conferences as well as informal discussions with teachers. A feature of the reporting system is the 'Learning Journal' where samples of work and testing are collected and form a picture of students' learning over time.

School management has identified and ERO agrees that to further enhance learning the school should continue its efforts to build learning partnerships with all parents.

3 Curriculum

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

The school curriculum strongly promotes and supports student learning and is responsive to the school's students and context. It is closely aligned to The New Zealand Curriculum and is taught through the school's special Christian character. The curriculum is implemented through a 'Discipleship' model of education where students are encouraged to learn about God and have a personal relationship with him. The school's philosophy is linked to the 'Kid on the Rock' concept, which promotes eight core values in school life. These values of respect, initiative, compassion, self control, truthfulness, diligence, perseverance and service are strongly promoted in the life of the school.

The curriculum places priority on literacy and numeracy and promoting physical activity through school programmes. It also has special emphases on students making best use of technology, education outside the classroom, biblical studies and the provision of te reo and tikanga Māori. A special feature of the curriculum is a focus on the heritage of the school and how it fits into the world around it. This programme looks at Matamata history for the juniors, Waikato history for the middle school and NZ history for senior students. Guidelines and implementation plans are in place for the essential learning areas of the NZ curriculum framework.

Teachers demonstrate effective teaching practices and use authentic learning contexts for students. They know students very well and plan programmes that meet the varied learning needs. Teachers use a range of appropriate strategies to encourage purposeful student engagement and have high expectations for their learning and success.

Management and ERO agree that teachers should continue to develop the teaching as inquiry approach to enhance their teaching practice.

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

The school promotes educational success for Māori students. The staff are familiar with and have used Ka Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013 and Tataiako to understand practical dimensions that can make a difference for Māori students. As a result they have made changes in school operations. These changes relate to the way:

- hui are undertaken with whānau
- targets are set for accelerating progress and achievement
- teachers develop te reo and tikanga Māori in classrooms

- a specific programme looking at the school's heritage and history, Māori identity and connection with the land is in place
- senior students visit Waitangi and Russell and re-enact the Treaty of Waitangi signing as well as having Christian devotions at Marsden Cross.

In the two target areas of writing and numeracy in 2014 there were significant improvements in Māori student achievement.

ERO and management agree that a levels based sequential programme be developed and documented to guide teachers in delivering te reo and tikanga Māori programmes in their classrooms.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

The school is very well placed to sustain and improve its performance because:

- effective governance and support for the principal and staff are provided by enthusiastic and knowledgeable trustees and proprietors
- strong professional leadership is being provided by the principal and deputy principal
- self review is integral to board and school operations
- teachers are continually working towards enhancing their teaching practice
- there is an inclusive , positive school culture where respectful relationships and a Christian ethos permeates all school activities
- the school community and parents are very supportive of the school and actively involved in school life.

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

Matamata Christian School is providing high-quality educational services to its students and community through its special character. The needs of all students are being well met through the skilled delivery of effectively planned learning programmes. Staff and students benefit from well-informed governance, strong professional leadership, and ongoing parental support.

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

Dale Bailey
Deputy Chief Review Officer Northern

8 May 2015

School Statistics

Location	Matamata	
Ministry of Education profile number	1186	
School type	Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
School roll	58	
Gender composition	Girls 34 Boys 24	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā	30
	Māori	12
	Other European	9
	Pacific	3
	South East Asian;	1
	Other	3
Special Features	Christian Special Character	
Review team on site	March 2015	
Date of this report	8 May 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	May 2012
	Education Review	May 2008
	Education Review	December 2004