

# Holy Cross School (Papatoetoe) Education Review

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## About the School

Location	Papatoetoe, Auckland	
Ministry of Education profile number	1315	
School type	Integrated Full Primary (Years 1 to 8)	
Decile [ 1]	2	
School roll	581	
Gender composition	Girls 55% Boys 45%	
Ethnic composition	NZ European/Pākehā 9% Māori 8% Samoan 44% Tongan 18% Middle Eastern 5% Indian 5% Cook Island Māori 3% other ethnicities 8%	
Special Features	Attached Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour	
Review team on site	June 2011	
Date of this report	31 August 2011	

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Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	June 2008
	Education Review	June 2005
	Accountability Review	August 2001

## The Purpose of an ERO Report

The purpose of ERO's reviews is to give parents and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education that schools provide and their children receive. ERO's reports are intended to be clear, concise, constructive and evaluative. An ERO school report answers the question "How effectively is this school's curriculum promoting student learning - engagement, progress and achievement?" Under that overarching question ERO reports on the quality of education and learning outcomes for children and for specific groups of children including Māori students, Pacific students and students with special needs. ERO also reports on the quality of the school's systems for sustaining and continuing improvements.

This report has been prepared in accordance with standard procedures approved by the Chief Review Officer.

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School deciles range from 1 to 10. Decile 1 schools draw their students from low socio-economic communities and at the other end of the range, decile 10 schools draw their students from high socio-economic communities. Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state integrated schools. The lower the school's decile the more funding it receives. A school's decile is in no way linked to the quality of education it provides

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## 1 Context

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

Holy Cross School in Papatoetoe is a Catholic state integrated school for girls from Years 1-8 and boys from Years 1-6. Most students are of Pacific heritage. The values and beliefs of the Catholic Church, as reflected in the Mercy charism, are central to the school's special character. The special character of the school is interwoven through a holistic approach to learning as outlined in the school's curriculum. The school values its close links with the Holy Cross parish and students participate regularly in the celebration of Mass.

The school has a history of positive ERO reports. In 2008, ERO noted the school's focus on close monitoring of student achievement and its provision of targeted programmes to support student learning. These good practices continue to be evident.

Parents' aspirations for their children's success are supported by a dedicated staff who provide students with an extensive range of learning opportunities. Teachers' high expectations for students' learning have resulted in the introduction of innovative practices in a wide range of curriculum areas. Students, teachers and parents are proud of their school's academic, cultural and sporting achievements.

## 2 Learning

How well are students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

A wide range of student achievement information is collected and shows high levels of achievement in literacy and mathematics for most students. Good systems are in place to track students who are not achieving at expected levels. These students make good progress over time and the progress of some students is significantly accelerated with additional support and specific programmes.

Students are keen to learn and focus well on set activities. They are respectful of staff and each other, and are well settled in class. Students' interests and abilities are encouraged through good opportunities to participate in sporting, cultural and pastoral leadership activities.

Teachers are beginning to emphasise teaching and learning strategies that help to engage students more effectively in the learning process. They are developing teaching strategies that enable students to understand their own progress and that give them more ownership of their learning. Many teachers have positive relationships with students that promote their engagement in learning. Strategies to encourage this engagement in learning could now be further developed school-wide.

It would be useful for school leaders to clarify their expectations and to develop a shared understanding of effective teaching practices. Incorporating these expectations in the school's performance management system would help to further extend the use of good teaching practices in the school's learning culture.

Parents are well informed about their children's progress and achievement and next learning steps. They receive written reports on their children's achievement in relation to the National Standards. The board has set targets for students' achievement in relation to the National Standards in 2011.

How well are Māori students learning – engaging, progressing and achieving?

Māori students are positive about school and participate well in school-wide activities. Trustees, managers and staff all take responsibility for raising the achievement levels of Maori students. Most Māori students are achieving at and or above national expectations in literacy and numeracy. Te reo Māori is a strength in the senior school and the school's kapahaka group performs with pride and dignity. Teachers have a sequential te reo Māori programme to

support the ongoing development of students' knowledge of te reo as they move through the school. All teachers should continue to promote this programme to further develop confidence in using te reo and tikanga Maori during classroom lessons.

### 3 Curriculum

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

The school's curriculum aims to promote the values of compassion, service, human dignity and justice. The curriculum has a strong literacy and numeracy focus and promotes and supports students' core curriculum learning. Teachers have identified the importance of developing students' speaking and listening skills in the junior school to improve their engagement and achievement. This focus could be further promoted at all year levels throughout the school.

A feature of the school's curriculum is the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) as a learning tool. The curriculum also places a strong emphasis on equity of opportunity in learning. Teacher aides provide a good level of additional learning support for special needs students, including English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) students. Variety within the curriculum enables students to actively participate and contribute in the performing arts, music, art, chess and sport.

Teachers work with students to help them to develop the key competencies of The New Zealand Curriculum. As key competencies such as thinking, managing self, relating to others and participating and contributing, underpin The New Zealand Curriculum it would be timely to further develop aspects of these, particularly in classroom settings. Some teachers are beginning to introduce in-depth inquiry learning in science and school leaders should continue to evolve a curriculum that challenges students' thinking and creativity. Careers education and technology in Years 7 and 8 have also been identified as learning areas that could be further developed in the school.

Student learning is supported through a variety of practices that promote engagement. Classrooms are attractive, print-rich environments. They are well resourced, particularly in relation to literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school has introduced innovative approaches, including the Mahi Tahī preschool initiative to promote a smooth transition for five year old entering the school, to strengthen community links with parents and whānau. High quality practices help parents to support their children's learning at home. Students' pastoral needs are closely monitored by teachers and effective support is provided where necessary.

## 4 Sustainable Performance

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

Holy Cross School, Papatoetoe, is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. The school benefits from the input of an experienced chairperson and a stable board of trustees that is representative of its community. Trustees bring a range of useful skills to their governance role, have a good understanding of their responsibilities, and keep themselves well informed. They use student achievement information to guide decisions about future planning.

The principal has been instrumental in developing the school's comprehensive strategic plan, which provides a clear vision for ongoing improvement. Trustees are committed to the goals of the school and actively support resourcing to promote students' learning.

Senior leaders are supportive of school goals and model strategic thinking well. Teachers are committed to accessing internal and external professional development to improve their practice.

A process for self review that encompasses the views of the community is well implemented. The school is well placed to enhance self-review processes by including a stronger student voice. School leaders could now consistently document the actions to be taken as a result of self-review findings.

### Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed an ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklist. 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 students' achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)

- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

When is ERO likely to review the school again?

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

Richard Thornton  
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Northern Region

31 August 2011