

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

Pompallier Diocesan Centre, 30 New Street,
Ponsonby, Auckland 1144

*He Arotake Whanaketanga mō te
Mātauranga Ahurea Katorika-Te Ture mō
ngā Kura Katorika*

*Catholic Special Character External
Evaluation for Development
Report*

Marist College

Evaluation conducted on September 13-15 2023

Confirmed Report 17 October 2023

School Details

Name of School:	Marist College
Address:	31 Alberton Avenue, Mt Albert, Auckland, 1025
School type:	Single sex girls State Integrated Catholic School Years 7 to 13
Actual roll:	775
Maximum roll:	750
Non-preference maximum:	38 (5%)
Actual non-preference number:	61 (8.1%)
Roll based staffing entitlement:	FTTE 48.10
Required number of Special Character CI 47 positions:	19.24
Filled number of Special Character CI 47 positions:	21
Principal:	Raechelle Taulu
Director of Religious Studies:	Katherine McGillivray
HOD Religious Education:	Sarah Cunningham
Presiding Member, School Board:	Stephen Dallow
Chaplain:	Currently no chaplain

Evaluation Team:

Lead Evaluator:	Mary Cook
Accompanying Evaluator:	Philip Mahoney
Accompanying Principal:	Sarah Kemble

The Aims of Catholic Special Character External Evaluation for Development

Effective evaluation processes enable the school to understand how ākonga are developing in relation to valued outcomes, how improvement actions have impacted on ākonga, what needs to be changed and what further actions are required. Therefore, 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. 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. 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.

Introduction

Marist College was established in Mt Albert, Tāmaki Makaurau, in 1928. The Parish Priest of St Mary's Parish invited the Marist Sisters to build a Catholic girls secondary school next to the church. The Sisters purchased the land from the parish and subsequently purchased other properties bordering the original site to build Marist College as it is today. In 2001 the proprietorship of the College was gifted to the Bishop of Auckland but links with the founding order remain strong. The present community of nine Marist Sisters live on the site and are a valued part of the College community. The founding principles, ethos and philosophy of Catholic education in the Marist tradition remain the framework within which the College continues to operate.

Connecting with local Iwi has proven challenging as there are thirteen within the school catchment area. The school management and Board were very pleased to learn that Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust are piloting their Education Plan and have guaranteed Marist College one of the eight available places.

The current Principal took up her position in 2019, as a beginning Principal, and was immediately confronted with the covid outbreak. The school was the first in New Zealand to be severely compromised by covid. Viewed as the "Marist Cluster" a lot of extremely negative publicity was received and its community was in isolation for many weeks. It is a tribute to the leadership of the Principal, who with her management team and Board, immediately set in place systems to be able to communicate with all staff and families, to enable distance learning to take place and to ensure that families in need received help. Thus, living the Marist charism that leads the school's vision today: *In Mary's Way - Bringing the Gospel of Jesus to the world. Thinking, judging, feeling and acting as Mary would in the world today.*

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

Recommendation 1. That RE certification be pursued by the remaining staff member not currently involved in the relevant PLD.

Response: The DRS ensures that staff members are all involved in the relevant PLD to gain certification.

Recommendation 2 That the Board continues to manage and monitor the small number of non- preference students over the maximum percentage.

Response: The Board continues to do this.

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 opening statement from the Principal on the Marist College website intentionally declares what this school stands for:

- ***"Our College is vibrant and diverse yet firmly grounded in its ethos of Catholicism and family"***
- ***"The spirit of community and partnership between students, teachers and families, with high expectations and clear boundaries underpinned by Gospel values, is a successful formula."***
- ***"Marist women will graduate as well qualified, faith-driven, competitive, nurturing, community leaders who have a sense of purpose and a sense of belonging."***

The school actively and effectively encourages and facilitates the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ using the phrase *"To Jesus through Mary"*. This is being embedded throughout the school as a means of bringing the Gospel message alive. The Catholic Character Action Plan for 2023-2024 states its strategic focus as: *"Bringing the gospel of Jesus to the world, thinking, judging, feeling, and acting as Mary would in the world today"*. In discussions with the Board, Principal, kaiako, rangatahi and whānau it was apparent that by using Mary as the direct link to Jesus the gospel messages are alive in all aspects of school life.

Spiritual Formation

Opportunities for ongoing Catholic spiritual formation are provided evidenced from meetings with Board, kaiako, rangatahi and whānau. Owing to the difficulty in being able to have a priest to celebrate a weekly Mass, a student led liturgy is held every Thursday morning in St Mary's Parish Church. Classes are rostered to take turns and the liturgy is open to all. Whole school masses take place three times each year. Prayer plays an important part of the daily life in school. Whānau commented that they perceived the effect of praying in te reo is accepted as normal and has given rangatahi more confidence. Retreats have been led by the LOGOS team and the Marist Network. Senior rangatahi commented that using, and explaining, the 2023 school value "*Empowerment in Mary's Way*" as a focus at the beginning of the year in school assemblies has helped them to understand their leadership role. The effect of these opportunities is expressed in the shared understanding of Jesus through Mary and understood across the school community. This is a school where the wairua is strong and genuine and community support is real. A comment from the parent survey was: "*We pray for the fantastic teaching team to continue educating strong Catholic women*".

Evangelisation

The school actively facilitates an encounter with Christ and spreads the Good News to the community in all of its practices and communications. The sacramental programme is one of the ways in which the school demonstrates this. Previously it has been facilitated by one of the Marist sisters. As she is on leave this year the programme is being offered through the Marist network. Fourteen rangatahi and one kaiako are enrolled in the 2023 programme. One parent commented that she became a Catholic as a result of her daughter being baptised having completed the sacramental programme.

A number of senior rangatahi are trained to become Ministers of the Eucharist and are able to serve in this ministry in their local parish. This provides an opportunity for them to become involved in their parish and also to enhance the role of young people in a parish. The Director of Religious Special Character (DRS) provides the link between the school and parish to facilitate this connection.

Faith-based Leadership

The school is led by an outstanding faith filled Principal whose authenticity and mana has helped to strengthen the school's vision and direction to ensure an ongoing encounter with Christ. She is totally supported by the Board and Senior Leadership team. The DRS is part of the Senior Leadership team and known as the Assistant Principal Special Character. Both the Principal and Assistant Principal Special Character, confidently and competently articulate their own faith and are committed to their own faith development. They are both

highly respected and ensure that their leadership of Catholic special character underpins the life of the school. The effect of this is that servant leadership is witnessed and seen as normal practice in the school community. Inspired by these leaders, senior rangatahi expressed their desire to have more leadership opportunities to lead Catholic special character events even though there is a Special Character Leader in Year 13 supported by a team of sixty liturgical representatives. It is a credit to the school that, while recognising that they may make mistakes, these young women demonstrate that Marist College is a safe and encouraging place for them to personally develop and experience faith-based leadership for themselves.

Next Steps for Development

1 Continue to evaluate retreat programmes to ensure that the content provides a meaningful and relevant Encounter with Christ.

2 Senior rangatahi have expressed a strong desire to have more responsibility in leading Catholic special character events. Look for more opportunities to enable senior rangatahi to gain confidence and experience through leading as servant leaders, eg form a special character/liturgy group which provides leadership opportunities at the same time supporting kaiako.

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?

Leadership

Both the Principal and Assistant Principal Special Character provide outstanding and effective leadership in Religious instruction and observances. This was witnessed during meetings with kaiako, in assemblies, and feedback from rangatahi, kaiako, whānau, Board and the wider community.

The Assistant Principal Special Character is in her second year at the school. Last year she also had responsibility as Head of Department for Religious Education (HOD RE) and DRS. This year the roles have been separated and a new person appointed as HOD RE. Both the Assistant Principal Special Character and HOD RE are well qualified and effective Catholic leaders who have established a collaborative working relationship as both were new to the school and their roles within the school.

Recommendation 1 refer page 11

All staff new to Marist College have an introduction to the Catholic special character of the school provided by one of the Marist sisters. The effect of this was shown in feedback from staff surveys with comments on how valuable this introduction was for them, especially if they were not Catholic. Some kaiako were able to accompany a group of senior rangatahi to Marist Youth Leader and participated in *Kaiako New to Marist Schools*. They reported back that it gave them an even greater insight and understanding of Catholic special character.

The Religious Education department makes good use of professional development to further develop skills, strategies and understanding, ensuring that the school is well placed to implement the new Religious Education curriculum *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith* in the near future. The Religious Education programme is well planned, and lessons delivered using current culturally responsive pedagogy. Student voice is being sought around preferred topics eg John's Gospel and how it is being assessed. Kaiako are beginning to incorporate te ao, tikanga and te reo, mātauranga, and wairuatanga Māori into their Religious Education teaching. In discussion with kaiako who teach Religious Education, it was obvious that they have a passion for teaching this important subject and feel affirmed and supported by the Principal, DRS and HOD RE.

Religious Education is seen as an important subject by rangatahi and they achieve above the national standards in NCEA and in common assessment at junior levels. Rangatahi commented that they enjoyed Religious Education classes, especially the opportunities for discussion, which were encouraged, so that they were able to clarify their understanding and interpretation of the topic that they were studying.

Whānau commented *"This is a school which reinforces virtues such as integrity, humility and compassion"*.

Catholic Curriculum

At Marist College the Catholic worldview is integrated into the daily practices of the school and all curriculum areas. The effect of this is that the leadership in all practices and curriculum areas take the Catholic worldview seriously. The strategic direction and policies set by the Board also incorporate the Catholic worldview. The Annual Plan, Catholic Character Action Plan, Curriculum and Learning Plan, and Pastoral Plan for 2023-2024 all fall out of the strategic direction set by the Board and each have a very clear Catholic worldview focus.

All staff have the opportunity to engage in regular, planned Catholic professional development which includes the principles of Catholic social teaching. There is greater understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and all kaiako understand mātauranga Māori and apply it to curriculum development.

The Health curriculum is taught from a Catholic perspective. Health and sexuality units in Years 9 and 10 are taught by the Physical Education teachers during Health. Health becomes an option subject in Years 11-13. As all rangatahi take Religious Education in the senior school the Religious Education department is able to incorporate areas which need to be covered. All kaiako teaching any aspect of the Health curriculum undertake the course *Having Life to the Full* to ensure that they understand the Catholic teaching around sexuality.

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?

Marist College is effective in providing a hope-filled Christian witness which empowers all of its members to integrate their faith and life. This is demonstrated in the relationships with the wider Catholic community and the partnership and collaboration that has been developed as a result of its caring pastoral network and outstanding service and outreach.

Catholic School Community

The school has a very good relationship with local Catholic parishes. The neighbouring Mt Albert parish church, St Mary's, is freely available for the school to use for weekly liturgies/masses. Whole school masses are celebrated at school, or in the Cathedral of St Patrick and St Joseph, while the Kāhui Āko celebrate masses in the parish church of Christ the King in Owairaka. This enables the wider community to be invited to join in the celebrations.

The large number of staff and parent survey returns gave testament to the authenticity of this school as a Catholic community. Meeting with Māori whānau comments included: *"Wairua here stands out as authentic." "It is awesome to see how te ao is thriving, it is not just a token thing." "Every student is known as an individual." "The wairua is strong among past and present students"*.

Pasifika parents commented on the strong Catholic faith demonstrated in the school and how it keeps the connection with their families. They expressed how grateful they are for the way in which every culture is accepted and celebrated, as demonstrated by the Cultural Leader showcasing specific cultures during each national language week during the year.

Partnership and Collaboration

In 2022 the new position of Kaiāwhina was introduced in Year 13. This has given both status and recognition to leadership for Māori rangatahi. Māori whānau expressed how

confidence has grown as a result for all Māori rangatahi as they now have a voice.

The school is an active member of the Auckland Central Catholic Kahui Ako. Belonging to this group is very effective in enabling the fifteen Catholic schools to work together, as well as supporting each other, for the common good. Kahui Ako masses are prepared by different members of the Kahui and celebrated in Christ the King parish church. A Mass was held earlier in the year with a Pasifika focus. During Māori Language week a Miha Māori was celebrated and well attended by representatives from each of the schools with Marist College stepping up to provide their Kapa Haka to support the singing.

The Principal is attempting to communicate with the Iwi of each rangatahi going on to university to enable the Iwi to celebrate this achievement. The school is looking forward to working with Ngāti Whātua Ōrakei in the near future.

There is a good relationship with the Marist order. Marist Sisters live close to the school and where possible attend school events. A Marist sister runs a programme on the Marist charism as part of the induction of all new staff to the school. Rangatahi have the opportunity to participate in the Marist Young Leader and Marist Young Neighbour programmes while kaiako are able to participate in the Marist Aspiring Leaders programme.

Pastoral Care

There is a strong pastoral care system, led by the Deputy Principal Pastoral Care, which ensures that the school is a safe, nurturing environment in which every person is known, respected and cared for. During the covid lockdowns regular contact was maintained with all staff members (including relief staff) and whānau of every rangatahi, by phone, to ascertain needs and provide as much support as possible. Board, whānau and kaiako worked closely together to support all rangatahi. After the lockdowns restorative practices helped with conversations and in re-building trust with kaiako, rangatahi and whānau having had shared experiences. The Well-Being Centre provides a total wrap around including the Calm Space, guidance counselling, physiotherapy, and a nurse. Guidance staff commented that using *Mary's Way*, along with themes from school liturgies, have proved to be very useful in working with the pastoral needs of rangatahi. The effect of all of this is a focus on the needs of each rangatahi using individualised learning, with personal excellence as the aim, recognising that this will be different for every rangatahi. As a result, the ethos of the school ensures that all staff and rangatahi understand that they are loved unconditionally by God and Catholic teachings underpin these working relationships.

Service and Outreach

Service and outreach are viewed as living the Gospel values and the practical extension of being part of this Marist community. Ongoing contact with whānau during lockdowns

identified the urgent need for practical help. This resulted in \$30,000 worth of parcels being prepared and delivered to whānau and the wider community by staff. Whānau commented on how appreciative they were of this support from the school. The long-term effect of this outreach is that people now come forward to ask for help when they need it, this also includes mental health issues.

Rangatahi all have the opportunity to participate each year in a social justice-based service programme. After it was reviewed in 2022 it was separated into junior and senior sections. The next review will be at the end of 2023 to ascertain its effectiveness. The scheme is monitored by whānau teachers and awards presented at the end of each term. Several service opportunities are available through school e.g., assisting the PTFA with preparing meals to be stored in the parish freezer for people in need.

The school has responded to a number of disaster relief funds

Next Steps for Development

3. Continue to re-evaluate the service programme to differentiate between year levels and ascertain its effectiveness.

Dimension 4: Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Character – Te Kaitiakitanga me te Whakapakari I te Tuakiri Katorika

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

Meeting with the Presiding Member and Board it was apparent that this is a Board which understands and is committed to effectively govern the school in all aspects and to safeguard and strengthen its Catholic identity.

Stewardship

Catholic identity is woven through all aspects of school life and articulated in documentation and communications. The Board understands its obligations and is committed to strengthening and safeguarding the Catholic identity of Marist College at both governance and management levels.

All policies and practices reflect special Catholic Character.

The Board appropriately recognises the obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. At this stage the Board is learning about Ngāti Whātua Orākei.

Staff feel well supported with professional development opportunities and the new Religious Education curriculum *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*. The Board are aware that priority is given to these important areas.

Legal Obligations

The Special Character compliances School Board Attestation document was completed and signed by the Presiding Member and Principal in May 2023.

Health and PE teachers have either completed the *Having Life to the Full* course, or are due to complete the course by the end of this year. One of the Guidance Counsellors is enrolled in the course for 2024. A community consultation on the Health and Sexuality programme is scheduled for Term 1 in 2024.

As a condition of appointment all staff sign a declaration called ‘*You and our school’s Catholic Character*’. Employment documentation explains that “*This statement outlines what Catholic Character is, your rights and your commitment as a staff member of a New Zealand Catholic School.*”

Refer Recommendation 2 page 11

Catholic Special Character Evaluation Report Summary

Since the last external Catholic Special Character report, Marist College has both a new Principal and new DRS who is known as Assistant Principal Special Character. In her first term as Principal the school experienced extremely difficult challenges as a result of covid. Challenges which required an immediate response and ones which required a long-term response. Being presented with this situation taxed even the most experienced Principals, the challenge was even greater for a beginning Principal. In spite of this, Catholic Special Character effectively provided the stepping off point for every action. The Principal is recognised as a person who empowers a faith-filled response, a leader who leads by example and who inspires others to follow.

The Assistant Principal Special Character, who joined the school in 2022, is also a faith filled leader and member of the senior leadership team. As a unit this team ensures that the focus “*In Mary’s Way - Bringing the Gospel of Jesus to the world. Thinking, judging, feeling and acting as Mary would in the world today*” is evident in every way in which the school operates. Ultimately this has resulted in the school having an authentic, dedicated, committed staff who set the tone and ensure that every rangatahi can achieve her own personal excellence with strong Catholic values, respecting one’s self and others.

Recommendations:

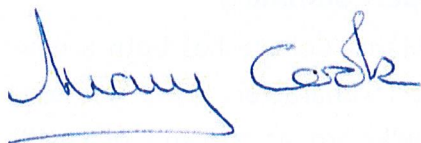
- 1. Review the implementation of different staffing positions in the school being mindful of new NCEA standards and the new RE curriculum.***

2. The Board needs to ensure that there is a plan in place to ensure that the maximum roll is not exceeded and that the non -preference numbers are within the required percentage.

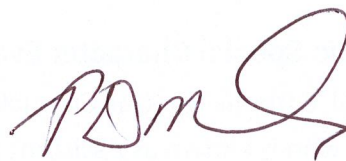
Conclusion:

It was a privilege to lead the external evaluation of the Catholic Special Character of Marist College. To witness the total involvement of the staff and students, fully supported by the Board of Trustees and wider school community, *In Mary's Way* through social justice outreach while striving for, and achieving, excellence in all areas of the curriculum.

The organisation and preparation by the school for this evaluation was greatly appreciated. The evaluators would like to thank the Marist College Community for the welcome and hospitality extended to them and for the opportunity to visit and experience the special Catholic Character of its school. We wish you every blessing for the future with the important work that you do.



Mary Cook
Lead Evaluator



Phillip Mahoney
Manager for Education Auckland Diocese