



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

**Pompallier Diocesan Centre,
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ĀHUATANGA KATORIKA KAUPAPA AROTAKE ME TO AHU WHAKAMUA

CATHOLIC SPECIAL CHARACTER EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Review Visit: 11-12 March 2020

Confirmed Report: 25 May 2020

SCHOOL DATA

Principal:	Ms Peta Lindstrom
Director of Special Character:	Mrs Ana Silva
Parish Priest:	Fr Peter Murphy
BOT Chair:	Mr Philip Cortesi
Reviewers:	Mrs Christine Smith, Mr Philip Mahoney
Accompanying Principal:	Mr Alister Bridgman

NGĀ WHĀINGA O TE AROTAKE - AIMS OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference (NZCBC) wishes the review to show how effective the School is in handing on the faith and forming a new generation of Catholics; this includes evaluating the efficacy of Religious Education and how the whole School community engages in authentic Catholic Christian witness and evangelisation.

The External Review process is based on the requirements of the *Catholic Special Character Review for Development* (Draft) that came into effect at the end of 2017.

In the review, Schools are asked to consider and demonstrate the ways in which they provide for their students:

an encounter with Christ, *Te Tūtaki ki ā te Karaiti*
growth in knowledge, *Te Whakatupu mā te Matauranga*, and
the development of Christian witness, *te Whakaatu Karaitiana*.

The review also investigates stewardship, including stewardship of the relationship between the Church and the State, *Te Kaitiakitanga me te Whakapakari i te Tuakiri Katorika*.

Reviewers encourage and commend best practice, and work with the School to formulate opportunities to further strengthen and develop the Catholic culture.

Introduction

Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Takanini had prepared themselves well for their Catholic Special Character External Review. This is the school's first review and the documentation provided prior to the Review was thorough and presented a good overview of the School. Considerable thought and time had obviously gone into the completion of the Review Questionnaires and together they gave a very comprehensive picture of how the school lives its Catholic Special Character.

The Board of Trustees, Principal, staff, parents and students warmly welcomed the Reviewers and were happy to talk about their school, sharing their thoughts and opinions generously. They were open and responsive to new ideas and next steps continually seeking to improve.

Situated in Takanini South Auckland, the school serves two Catholic Communities. St Mary's Papakura and St Anne's Manurewa. The majority of students attend St Mary's Parish. Since the school's opening in 2017 the roll has grown rapidly, and this trend continues.

Encounter with Christ – Te Tutaki ki a Te Karaiti

The School encourages and facilitates the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals the transforming love and truth of the living God.

Areas of Success

Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School is a strong community of faith. In this school there is a shared understanding of Catholic Spirituality. Students and staff see each other as the face of Christ, and they are mindful of what it means to belong to a Catholic community where children can articulate the attributes of a personal relationship with Christ through prayer.

"Every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth" School leadership believes this description of Catholic education by Pope Benedict XV1 in 2008 underpins the purpose of Holy Trinity Catholic School.

The opportunities for encounter with Christ at Holy Trinity are plentiful. Encountering Christ is evident in the way the community pray together, relate to each other, welcome visitors and support each other and their wider community. Prayer, both traditional and contemporary, is a significant part of life at Holy Trinity School. The entire school community participates in daily meditative prayer led by the children, inclusive of all adults. Members of the Student Special Character Team lead non-teaching adults in the school in Christian meditation and visitors are invited to join. Christian meditation has been integral to the school since its foundation and student participation is meaningful.

Classroom prayers are a sacred and reverent time at Holy Trinity School. The classroom prayer focuses are set up with the appropriate liturgical coloured cloths and symbols of the faith. The prayers are both child-centred and traditional with classes using audio and visual equipment to support the theme, waiata and prayers. There is good evidence of the relationship students are developing with Jesus found in the deep personal prayers written in prayer journals.

Prayers said before all gatherings and meetings reflect the nature of the meeting and the circumstances of those attending. Prayer life in the school is a heartfelt and authentic opportunity for encounter with Christ. Prayer kete are presented to each new family at school assembly and students take these home to lead and share prayers with their family.

School Mass is held twice a term in the school hall and once a year in either of the contributing Parishes. Additional feast day Masses are also held at either St Mary's or St Anne's and children attend the healing Mass with parishioners at St Anne's Parish.

The Student Special Character Team is a group of senior students, whose formation is led by the Director of Religious Studies. To become part of this initiative, students apply for this leadership role stating how they can contribute to the team. The team meet with the Director of Religious Studies for support and guidance in their role. These students plan and lead school prayer, meditation and school liturgy. They model classroom prayers throughout the school and introduce and model new styles of prayer throughout the year.

Holy Trinity students are spiritually insightful and mature. They comprehend and participate in the mystery of the Trinity, understanding that God as Holy Spirit is present in their hearts. They value Christian meditation and prayer and are nourished by the times set aside for prayerful encounter. Students say: "We have different ways of praying, instead of rules, we see images of God in others, we have a very good and generous principal who leads us"; "We have peaceful times with God to share our pain"; "Trust in God and never push him away"; "When we are lost God will always find us".

Students have the opportunity to experience an ongoing encounter with Christ at Holy Trinity, and this creates a desire to know more about him and his teaching. Some examples are: the Year 6,7 and 8 students annual retreat at the St Francis Retreat Centre early in the year, meditative prayer, student special character team, school values and charism.

The Special Catholic Character of the school, and the Charism of the Holy Trinity are the foundations on which the school has been built. This has continued to be strengthened substantively in the three years since the school has opened. Most years, all staff together with the Parish Priest and Board members, participate in an annual retreat before the school year starts.

The deeply authentic and innate Catholic Spirituality of the School is led by the Principal, supported by the Board Chair and Parish Priest who have held these roles since the time of the school's establishment. The Senior Leadership Team in turn reflect the school's Gospel values and these are mirrored in the children, and their families.

"Our school community is formed from the top, our principal, our priest are always present. We have authentic liturgies where you can express your faith, you are encouraged to live your faith".
(Senior Leadership Team interview response)

Parents interviewed, shared how integral the school's Gospel values were to the children's "way of being". They described how children brought the School's Values into the home. They thought the children had become 'influencers' as they enabled opportunity for Christian Encounter and Growth in Knowledge in the homes of Holy Trinity families.

Opportunities to Encounter Christ visually, are everywhere within Holy Trinity's school buildings and grounds. The symbols, artefacts and displays witness and reflect the school's Catholic Character, faith and values, and confirm to students, staff, families and visitors that they are in a Catholic school.

Children's learning and outputs are highly visible in innovative learning spaces and within all learning environments across the school. The interior of the school is Strand relevant with child centred wall displays enhancing the Special Catholic Character, and the Religious Education programme running throughout the school providing a further teaching opportunity. There is good evidence of integration across other curriculum areas. The school is working with the board to establish a Prayer and Meditation garden to

nurture and support children's personal prayer. This project aligns with the school's highly successful meditative prayer tradition that is a cornerstone of the school's prayer life.

School Values are deeply embedded in the children and they are authentically lived out at school. Parents attest that they are also very evident at home. They are well displayed throughout the School most notably in the Taamaua Space (Hall) where beautifully crafted banners of substantial size, each appliqued with a matching symbol, are suspended across the rear wall of the Taamaua space. This gesture denotes the importance afforded to the Values by the school community. Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School proclaims the mission and Gospel of Christ to all staff, students and their families, forming a link between the School, home and Parish.

The school has robust communication including a very effective website and other social supports through which Holy Trinity families integrate their faith, culture and life. A fortnightly newsletter reflects on the Sunday Gospel and the Liturgical season or feast days, with both the Principal and DRS contributing to this commentary.

The Director of Religious Studies has regular contact with the Parish Priest, as does the Principal. The Parish Priest from St Mary's Parish is an active member of the Board of Trustees and the Parish priests from St Anne's and St Mary's are invited to all school functions and activities. Parish priests from either St Mary's or St Anne's visit classes each week to talk with students, frequently revisiting the Gospel from the previous Sunday. The DRS provides a mailbox for students to post questions that they want to ask anonymously, and the parish priests respond as appropriate.

The Principal is supported in her role by a committed Senior Leadership Team, including the Director of Religious Studies, two Deputy Principals and Learning Community Leaders. Many members of the leadership team are active participants in the two parishes. All are positive role models who support, uphold and witness to the Special Catholic Character of the school.

Growth in Knowledge – Te Whakatupu ma te Matauranga

The School assists its community to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ, his teachings and the Catholic Church.

Areas of Success

The Principal articulates and models a faith-based vision for the school. She encourages, enables and nurtures faith in others. The Principal and Director of Religious Studies (DRS) have worked together since establishment to collaboratively lead the development of the school's Catholic Special Character. Together with the Director of Religious Studies and Parish Priest, the Principal's leadership has been seminal in shaping the Special Character of the school.

Regular staff meetings led by the Director of Religious Studies are held to discuss the theological focus for each Strand. The staff have a commitment to professional development that upholds their Catholic Special Character. In 2018 all Board Bishop's appointees attended the Catholic Convention and benefitted from this unifying experience. As a whole staff they have completed a Catholic Theological College Paper each year: SC502 Interpreting the New Testament, TH501 What Catholics Believe and in 2020, RE501 Religious Education Today. At the start of the 2019 school year all staff and board members participated in a retreat day with Father Merv Duffy SM to strengthen their understanding of the Holy Trinity. Board and Principal have identified in their current strategic plan that developing and deepening their understanding of the Charism will be an ongoing process.

Growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, his teachings and the Catholic Church is centre front when teachers plan collaboratively. They draw on Gospel teaching for the key curriculum concepts using the

'Curriculum by Design' modelling to deliver the curriculum. Teachers use formative and deliberate acts of teaching. The Religious Education curriculum at Holy Trinity school is comprehensive and grounded in the teachings of the Catholic Church. Four key documents influence the delivery of religious education.

- HTCPS Kaupapa: this is the school's vision for what good innovative teaching and learning looks like at Holy Trinity
- HTCPS Charism Progressions: indicators for the Trinity, scaffolded through levels one to four
- HTCPS Whakapuāwai: Religious Education Overview for the year, stands alone with integrity, transferring the perspective of the Catholic Church into the 'Connected Curriculum'
- HTCPS Whakapuāwai: School Curriculum- 'Overarching Transfer Question'- pulls all curriculum together

Teachers and students draw on School Values to nurture academic excellence, social responsibility, spiritual encounter and growth in knowledge. The teaching of Jesus permeates all school curriculum and documentation. Catholic Special Character is seamlessly integrated well into the school's curriculum. The use of quality and appropriate resources is evident in all learning areas particularly concerning Social Justice issues with a Catholic perspective.

Reviewers saw a variety of authentic learning tasks being used in lessons, in the students' exercise books and a range of digital devices. Differentiation is used to identify the faith stages of children. Many teachers are responsively teaching to these when delivering the Religious Education programme as is expected with all other curriculum areas. Senior leaders have identified that some teaching of the Religious Education programme is not yet sufficiently adapted to the needs of some learners. There is an expectation from senior leaders and the review team, that this will be addressed.

All staff and board members are conversant with 'The Catholic Education of School Age Children'. The document is reflected in day to day operations, conduct and documentation.

The board and leadership are committed to meaningful internal review. Their 2019 review under 'Growth in Knowledge' was confronting and rigorous. The choice of review question showed the integrity of a Board and leadership team who were safeguarding the school's Special Catholic Character. The review was very well executed, and the voice of all stakeholders reflected. The evaluation and outcome of findings was a valuable process for the school and positive next steps were identified.

Families are informed regularly of the Religious Education Strand and concept being covered through newsletters, school website and communications and the Linc-ed digital platform. Linc-ed is a secure student management system used by the school. It enables teachers and parents using Linc-ed to post responses to student's new religious education learning and learning goals.

A new families morning is held each term to share the Charism and information about the Religious Education programme. A walk through the school gives new parents an introduction to teaching and learning in I.L.E. spaces. The student's Religious Education books are sent home at the end of each strand for parents to give feedback in them. Students' learning has meaningful feedback from teachers and there are pertinent comments made by the students and their families. These books serve to provide the link between the school and the home and to provide a good springboard for discussion.

The Director of Religious Studies supports new teachers and teachers new to Catholic schools. She works conscientiously with each teacher, visiting classrooms in her release time, undertaking walk-throughs throughout the year to observe Religious Education lessons and classroom prayer in action. Positive feedback and feedforward is given to each teacher and further support and modelling is given when needed.

The Health curriculum is set in the context of the Catholic Church. Parents are consulted about the Pubertal Change programme for Year 6,7,8 students and given clear guidelines with a Catholic perspective. The school is now working to develop a year 1-8 sexuality and pubertal changes programme that is aligned and scaffolded across the school.

Next Steps

- Plan to differentiate, teach and evaluate Religious Education teaching and learning programmes. Then implement to ensure the faith stages and learning needs of all children are being met.
- To establish a sexuality - pubertal change programme for years 0-5 aligning to the existing years 6-7-8 pubertal change programme.

Christian Witness – Te Whakaatu Karaitiana

The School provides a hope-filled Catholic Christian witness which empowers its community members to integrate their faith and their life.

Areas of Success

The virtues of love, hope and charity are tangible in the relationships and environment of Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School. Parents interviewed during the review described the school as a family where everyone is welcome. The school community are proudly Catholic and promote living 'The Silent Witness of St Francis' as a witness to the life of Christ where everyone is treated with aroha and manaakitanga.

The School acknowledges Māori as Tangata Whenua and has a strong commitment to The Treaty of Waitangi. The Review Team were welcomed into the school by the students who were school leaders and the Student Special Character Team. The Whakataua included whaikōrero, karakia, waiata and hongiri. The liturgy that followed was inclusive of children from across the school. They prayerfully led their peers and school community with both reverence and joy.

Holy Trinity whakapapas to Karaka Marae. School Kaumatua Ted Ngataki gifted the name "Taamaua" to the school hall. Taamaua means "a place where all that we hold sacred, takes place". The CEO from Papakura Marae Tony Kake frequently acts as Kaumatua- advisor to the leadership team, and Board. The school's pepeha haka "Te Tokotoru Tapu" was gifted to the school by a local kaumatua (Wiremu Turner) and the Papakura-Takanini pepeha haka was gifted to the school by the local marae elders. At Holy Trinity each child has their own pepeha. While many have chosen to whakapapa to the Papakura-Takanini greater district and Karaka marae, those children who identify as Māori were supported to identify their whakapapa and write their own pepeha. Te reo is visible in all classroom displays and te reo Maori is developing in the school. The school has a robust Kapa Haka group comprised of all senior students from Years 4-8. Holy Trinity has its own karakia, pepeha and waiata, unique to their school. This signals the importance the school places on educating about local Māori-Pakeha history and deepening their students understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The School celebrates its cultural diversity. Students and families are encouraged to share their language, culture and identity and prayers are spoken in many languages. Students are inclusive of each other and are aware that we are each made in the image of Christ.

Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School welcomes students with special needs. Input from external agencies is encouraged and highly valued. Resourcing is generous and targeted to best support and meet the needs and develop the potential of children. Similarly, the ability of gifted and talented students is identified and developed in class. Both groups are able to learn within a social context of friends and peer group enabled by the 'Curriculum by Design' model providing all teachers access to planning for all levels and areas of the

curriculum across the school. Reviewers saw students with diverse and additional learning needs being well supported in their learning, and some good examples of responsive and adaptive teaching.

Support staff feel valued and are acknowledged for the work they do. They receive training for the relevant roles they hold and participate in Catholic Special Character PLD. The SENCO ensures that each identified student has a current Individual Education Plan (IEP) to work from. The school is inclusive of families and responsive to the needs of their children. They give special consideration to supporting and empowering the parents with workshops, seminars and gatherings organised for parents as needed. In 2019 the Board Chair and principal attended the Alpha programme run by St Mary's Parish to show support to school families and strengthen family - school relationships. There is ongoing evangelisation of non-preference families who are increasingly deciding to receive the sacrament of baptism. In 2019, eight children were baptised, in 2018 thirteen children were baptised and in 2017, fourteen children were baptised. Staff and Board members at Holy Trinity support a local Inter-Church outreach, participating on the ground, to provide meals for people in need. Teachers and students participate in service and outreach within the school community, Parish and local community. The senior leadership team undertake significant outreach with families in crisis and ensuring they feel supported and that relevant agencies are engaged with the family. The leadership team is in the process of formalising the Awhinatia pastoral care group. The purpose of this group is to centralise external, social, government, NGO agencies to work alongside Catholic agencies. The need for Awhinatia was identified by parish and school because of the need to provide coherence and alignment to the increasing number of social and family support and crisis needs requiring to be addressed with urgency by the school and parish community. The school enables students to identify ways and opportunities to carry on Jesus' mission in the world and students ensure Caritas is active in the school

Behaviour Education at Holy Trinity is fair, clear to all, and based on Catholic social teaching. When interviewed the 'Student Special Character Team' told reviewers, "We don't have school rules, we just follow the school Gospel values." This was very clear to reviewers while at the school. Behaviour Education is based on modelling Gospel Values and when needed, de-escalation techniques and restorative justice. Restorative conversations and application of the discipline plan are utilised for all conflict issues. There is a genuine level of care among older children for younger ones (Tuakana/Teina). The school has a strong expectation of respect and honouring the intrinsic dignity of all. This expectation is explicit at Holy Trinity with teachers and adults in the school community consciously modelling what this 'looks like'.

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

The School in its stewardship and compliance with statutory obligations, safeguards and strengthens its Catholic identity.

The Board of Trustees, when interviewed, stated that *"the School's Catholic Special Character is the life blood of the school."* The board ensures the Catholic Special Character permeates the vision and strategic direction. Strategic planning, policies, and procedure are aligned with the Vision and Mission and School Values: so the clarity and synergy of school direction is strong. Principal's reports are prepared to a high standard. They are erudite, relevant and place Catholic Character centre front. Internal evaluation of Religious Education and Special Character is rigorous. It promotes and affirms good practice and focuses on growth and improvement.

Board members, both new and experienced and are led by a dedicated Chairperson who previously served as Chair of the Establishment Board. Trustees are committed members of the Board. They engage in regular Catholic Character formation and professional development and are fully conversant with the Church's key Catholic Character documents. The board chair has summarised *'The Catholic Education of School Age*

Children' to ensure all new trustees, prior to induction, can readily access this pivotal document. The influence of this document is manifested within the workings of the board and school.

The Principal reports to the BOT against the Strategic and Annual Plan which includes a detailed and robust Special Character Goal. The Board are very good stewards of the school's Catholic Character. They continually review and update documentation including school policies so that they reflect the unique position of our bi-cultural heritage and the School's Catholic Special Character and their cultural diversity. The Board Chairperson has regular meetings with the Principal. The Special Character Committee meet regularly and present the Special Character report to the Board each meeting.

The school has very positive working relationships with both St Mary's and St Anne's parishes. Since establishment it has become an increasingly complex arrangement for the school and parishes, despite the best of intentions from all three entities. The majority of children are part of St Mary's Parish and it is geographically closest to the school. St Anne's Parish is a very large parish, serving an equally large school. The Board, Principal, Parish priest and Review team agree, that now it is timely, for these relationships to be reviewed.

The Board is a good ethical employer. Employment systems are robust. The Code of Ethics in a Catholic School is enacted. At the time of the External Review the School was compliant with its Integration Agreement in regard to:

- Maximum roll compared to actual roll
- Teachers completing hours of professional development in Religious Education.

The board is working towards compliance in the areas of required number of S464 positions.

As part of the Catholic Special Character Review process, a preference audit was conducted on 2 March 2020 and updated at the time of the Review. The roll on that day was 223.

The audit found that:

- 95.% of students are preference
- 5% of the students are non-preference.
- Total Roll 235

Preference Students

Year	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	Total	NP
Y0							
Y1	35	1	2			38	2
Y2	44		8	2	1	55	
Y3	27		4	1		32	3
Y4	20		4	1		25	2
Y5	11		4	1		16	3
Y6	25		3			28	
Y7	10		3			13	1
Y8	14		1	1		16	1
Total	186	1	29	6	1	223	12

The school has very sound systems in place for managing preference enrolment. Both digital and hard copies are maintained. The Parish Priest interviews all parents and re-signs preference cards when changes in preference criteria are made. This gives clarity to the school's processes.

For consideration

- It is now timely for the Board to approach the Diocese with regard to moving their school parish relationship to St Mary's Papakura
- Consider holding a copy of student's Baptism certificates in enrolment files

Conclusion

Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School is ably led by the Principal and BOT Chairperson who work tirelessly along with their teachers, staff and Board members to provide an excellent Catholic education for their students. At the heart of this school are the Catholic hearts of those who work in the school. The Board of Trustees, Principal and staff see their work as safeguarding and strengthening Catholic Character.

The school has a strong learning environment. Gospel values are modelled by staff and adopted by students. The integration of faith and life is evident and characterised by warm relationships and the active witness of Catholic Faith in the school. The Board of Trustees, parents, teachers and children have a clear understanding of the school's goals and all members of the school community live by the charism, 'A Three in One Relationship, Unity, Model of Love'.

Senior students are a living testament to what the school is achieving and what the community aspires to in their Trinitarian Vision.

Vision: *'Learn love and Serve in the name of the Father, the Son and the Father and the Holy Spirit.'*

Charism: *'A Three in One Relationship, Unity, Model of Love'.*

Gospel Values: *'Unity- Integrity- Respect- Compassion- Resilience- Excellence'*

The Charism, Vision and Values provide encouragement, spiritual nourishment and resource for students and staff and families within the school community to develop and grow their own faith journey.

All students are cared for as unique beings in the likeness of Christ and while they are at the centre of the school, they are at the same time within a greater organisation that upholds, practices and implements the principles of 'The common good'. The Catholic concept of community is encapsulated by the common good which is explicit at Holy Trinity.

The school emblem a triquetra, is a visual representation of the cohesive trinitarian relationship. The three interlaced arcs, overlapping in relationship with each other remind everyone in the school community, students, staff, board, families and parish to be the Face of Christ for each other, to do the simple things well, for each other, every day.

Daily life at this school is intentional and guided by the Gospel. Board, leaders and teachers who are committed to the school. Eager students are joyful and responsive learners who have a passion for their school. Holy Trinity Catholic school bears the distinctive "Spirit of Catholicism" and this permeates its whole curriculum and is understood by students as being embued, in all things through its Charism. *'A Three in One Relationship, Unity, Model of Love'.*



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