



catholic diocese
of christchurch

to sanctify - to teach - to care for

*Āhuatanga Katorika Kaupapa Arotake
Te Puronga Arotake o Waho*

*Catholic Special Character
Review for Development*

*External Report on the
Review of*

**Te Kura o Hato Hohepa
St Joseph's School
Fairlie**

**Review Conducted: 8-9 April 2021
Confirmed Report: 31 May 2021**

School Details

Name of School:	St Joseph's School, Fairlie
Address:	7 Gall Street, Fairlie
School Type:	Full primary school Years 0-8
Actual roll:	22
Maximum roll:	70
Non-preference maximum:	4
Actual non-preference number:	3
Roll based staffing entitlement	2.3
Required number of Special Character: CI 47 positions:	1 plus Principal
Filled number of Special Character CI 47 positions:	1 plus Principal
Principal:	Angela Marshall
Director of Religious Studies:	Bridget Story
Chairperson, Board of Trustees:	Kelly Cassie
Parish Priest	Fr Joselito Quinones

Review Team

Lead Reviewer:	Mark Gregory
Accompanying Reviewer:	Aroha Stewart (Principal, St Joseph's School, Pleasant Point)

Ngā Whāinga o te Arotake - Aims of the External Review

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference 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. This is the evangelising mission of the Church, in which the school participates.

The external review process is based upon the, *Āhuatanga Katorika Kaupapa Arotake Me Te Ahu Whakamua, Catholic Special Character Review for Development document (draft, 2018)*.

In the review, schools are asked to consider and demonstrate the ways in which they have provided for their students:

- Te tūtaki ke a Te Karaiti - an encounter with Christ
- Te whakatupu mā - te mātauranga - growth in knowledge,
- Te whakaatu Karaitiana - Christian witness.

And how the school is te kaitiatanga me te whakakari I te tuaakiri Katrorika - Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Character.

The review is designed to look at the work the school has done, in its internal evaluation and development, to grow Catholic Character. It affirms what the school has done and the opportunities for further development the school has discerned. It challenges the school to be more transformational. Reviewers encourage and commend good practice, and work with the school to analyse opportunities to further strengthen and develop the Catholic culture.

Progress With Recommendations from the 2016 Catholic Special Character Review for Development Report

1 The focus of the Principal and Board is to ensure that all the Preference students in the district are enrolled or will seek to be enrolled this year or next year. Many non-Preference students seek enrolment. The promotion might well include the wider town communication, responding to the request of the pre-school for information, and through parish newsletters helping grandparents and extended family members to identify the criteria for Preference of Enrolment.

- Promotional material had preference criteria included and an explanation of non-preference availability.
- Enrolment policy is advertised on the school's website <http://www.stjofairlie.school.nz/enrolment.html>
- Promotion through social media (Facebook) and in the local newspaper (*The Fairlie Accessible*).

2 In support of the Bishops' document: *Catholic Education of School Age Children* the school could more directly link the school values to the values of the Gospel. For example, link a specific value to a parable or other teaching of Jesus such as *Aroha – Love one another as I have loved you (John 13:34)*

- Faith, aroha, respect, honesty - these were the previous values.
- At the end of 2020, the BOT undertook a major community consultation and the school's new values are *Respect, Confidence and Love of Learning*. Some may need further reviewing, for example change Confidence to Courage to better fit with the teachings of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Part of the consultation process included finding Bible verses to reflect the chosen values. These are yet to be embedded in what we do.

Respect - Whakaute

Do to others as you would have them do to you. *Luke 6:31*

Confidence - Māia

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. *Philippians 4:13*

Love of Learning - Te Ngakau Nui ki te Ako

How much better to get wisdom than gold, to get insight rather than silver.

Proverbs 16:16

3 Recognising the challenges of teaching multiple year levels in each class is important to provide information to parents on individual student's learning and understanding developed through the Religious Education Curriculum. In identifying the success criteria for each strand, it would be useful to indicate whether or not the students have achieved success.

Challenges of teaching multiple year levels have been tackled in many ways since the previous review. However, staff felt that even within year groups there are children who are on different learning/fairth journeys and that they needed to have more of a holistic, yet strategic approach. They are in the beginning stages of working through their thinking with the REAs. They have explored all the Achievement Aims and organised them into Big Ideas - for example Jesus has three big ideas: Life of Jesus, Who Jesus Was and Jesus in Action today. Within the big ideas, the programme will include achievement objectives from all year levels. The school is in its first year of planning in this way.

- 4 **Over time the school can develop a timeline for reporting Religious Education achievement to the Board of Trustees. Perhaps this overview including some achievement data from pre/post testing could be discussed at the Board Meeting immediately preceding National Standards Reporting. Each year one or two strands can be reported on and will reflect the multi-level learning against selected key concepts. Many different models are used throughout the Diocese and shared best practice at a Cluster Meeting might be helpful.**

Developing a timeline for reporting to the BOT - has been completed.

	Strands to be assessed and reported on:	
Year 1 (2019, 2022, 2025, 2028)	God	Sacrament
Year 2 (2020, 2023, 2026, 2029)	Jesus	Communion of Saints
Year 3 (2021, 2024, 2027, 2030)	Holy Spirit	Church

- 5 **In the Bishops’ document, *Catholic Education of School Age Children*, we are guided to not only preserve, but to strengthen and develop Catholic Special Character. One significant way to do this is to review all policies and procedures through the Catholic Special Character viewpoint. As your policies come up for renewal each one can include the components necessary to make Catholic Special Character documented as the living spirit of school governance and leadership.**

Policies and procedures are reviewed through a Catholic special character viewpoint. As policies are being reviewed, the board is adding a Catholic special character “voice” or introduction explaining how the policy relates to the Catholic special character of the school.

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 school provides opportunities for the spiritual development of its community. Although many school whānau are not regularly involved in Sunday worship, faith leaders make every effort to present opportunities for ākonga to develop a personal relationship with Christ. A weekly Mass ensures the school community participates in the Eucharist. Kaiako have been instrumental ensuring ākonga are well prepared for Masses. Several sessions in the parish church have concentrated on displaying appropriate reverence and practising using the holy water font and genuflecting before and after entering the church. The impact of their efforts are now being appreciated. Reviewers attended a parish Mass with the school and agreed with kaiako about the appropriate reverence of the students.

Within the refurbished classrooms, an area has been allocated for a sacred space. Once fully operational, kaiako and ākonga will be able to utilise this room for personal prayer and reflection.

Prayer is an integral part of the daily life of the school. Ākonga shared how they prayed at the beginning and end of the school day, and recited Grace before lunch. Kaiako have developed resources to promote a range of prayer types during the last two years as part of the school's internal evaluation action plans. These new prayer forms were modelled by kaiako and the parish priest and include personal and reflective prayer in preparation for the utilisation of the sacred space.

Staff gather for prayer each week as part of their staff meeting. All take their turn to organise and lead. Classroom prayer tables include a range of Catholic symbols and resources to assist those who lead prayers.

Experiencing a priest who is active and known in the school community is having a positive influence on the students. Ākonga and kaiako appreciate his presence in the school and in their classrooms and are enjoying getting to know him on a personal level.

Faith-based leaders support and promote parish programmes for the Sacraments of Initiation. The principal, DRS and parish priest are involved in preparing ākonga. Due to the small numbers, the personal touch of approaching school whānau and ākonga is seen to be more effective for encouraging the reception of the Sacraments. Four have been identified as potential candidates for the First Holy Communion programme this year while another small group will be offered the Sacrament of Baptism. As one of the teachers shared in the staff questionnaire, *'We are looking at focusing on the Sacrament of Baptism, leading to Eucharist to enable more of our students to join in the Mass fully.'* The priest offers an opportunity for reconciliation twice a year usually in Lent and Advent. As there are no Year 7-8 students at the school, Confirmation is totally parish-based.

The school actively encourages attendance at Sunday Mass. Last year faith-based leaders surveyed parents, ākonga and parishioners to get their views and feedback on ways to encourage people to attend. An outcome from the survey responses suggested initiating monthly Family Masses on a Sunday morning. As only three families participated in these Masses during the year, faith-based leaders are looking to include an activity or function following the Family Masses in future with the hope of attracting more families.

Staff are positive role models who support, uphold and witness to the Catholic special character. As all current teaching and support staff are Catholic, they can assist whānau and new members of the community to deepen their understanding of what it means to be part of a Catholic community.

Sharing of Religious Education learning is a great source of evangelisation. Students are asked to share their work with whānau using the app, *Seesaw*, and any related RE homework sheets. Parents appreciate the segment, 'What students are learning in RE,' in homework sheets to prompt discussion at home.

The school purposefully works to build whānau participation in the education of their tamariki. Parents spoken to informally in the school grounds feel very welcome within the school setting. They appreciate the work of staff and how they live and believe in the Catholic special character of the school. Whānau have several opportunities to participate in and contribute to the life of the school that include open invitations to class prayers, liturgies, assemblies, school camps, sporting activities and being able to provide voluntary help at school.

As a means of evangelisation, school communications, including the regular newsletter, website, and other social media, assist members of the school community to integrate their faith, culture and life.

The board supports the expectation of the NZCBC that the principal and teachers of Religious Education are working towards a formal qualification and the next level of NCRS Certification.

DIMENSION 2:

TE WHAKATUPU MĀ TE MĀTAURANGA – 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?

The principal is an active witness of faith in the school and in the parish. She is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion and provides an excellent link between the parish and school. The relationship between the principal and parish priest is based on genuine mutual respect. Both feel they can speak openly with each other, and they possess a common desire to enhance the Catholic special character of the school and wider Catholic community of Fairlie.

Having already attained a Leadership Level in NCRS Certification and working through the Catholic Theological College papers, the principal is experienced in teaching and leading Religious Education. She is well supported by an experienced, dedicated DRS who is also well qualified having completed a Certificate in Catechetical Studies, as has the third teacher on the staff. All three kaiako work as a team in a collaborative manner to increase the knowledge of ākongā within the RE programme and on matters relating to the school's Catholic special character.

The teaching of Religious Education is given priority time as the curriculum is being regularly delivered during morning sessions when ākongā are more alert. Being in a small school, the three teachers have been exploring, with the help of the RE Advisers, a more manageable approach to the teaching of RE within multi-level classes. Although teachers are in their first year of this development, they can already see the value of this new initiative. It allows teachers to explore the achievement objectives and organise them into *Big Ideas* or key concepts using achievement objectives from a range of curriculum year levels. The planning also provides evidence of content coverage to ensure the curriculum is delivered over time to all ākongā.

Kaiako became aware of identified gaps in the learning of ākongā, for example, little was known of the life and time of Jesus growing up as a child. As a result, planning was amended. Reviewers observed both classes in engaging Religious Education lessons. Every effort is made by kaiako to make lessons more interactive and fun. In the junior room, ākongā categorised photos according to whether they depicted life in New Zealand or Palestine. Dress-up clothing items were used to show how Jesus and his family looked when he was a child. Photos were taken in pairs and uploaded to *Seesaw* to celebrate with family and friends. The senior class were asked what they already knew

about Hehu Karaiti before given an activity to research life in Jesus' time. Aspects such as clothing, food, transport, employment and countryside were collectively suggested to investigate.

Students expressed how they really enjoyed learning about what Jesus did and what life was like as he grew up as a child. They got pleasure from Religious Education and appreciated the efforts made by the teachers to make it fun. Positive relationships were observed in both classes. Kaiako knew ākonga well and responded in a caring, nurturing manner.

Classrooms are attractively presented and consist of wall space titled, *RE Working Wall*, devoted to the school's Catholic special character and the teaching of RE. Displayed were examples of student art, prayers and picture resources relating to Holy Week.

Leaders have developed a rotational plan to assess Religious Education twice a year. Over a period of three years, six strands will have been assessed. These assessments should then be used to report to ākonga and whānau and collated, school-wide, as a student achievement report to the Board of Trustees. (*Recommendation*)

Updates about individual children's progress in Religious Education occurs twice a year. Comments reflect the knowledge gained and the effort demonstrated alongside observations of participation in class prayer life.

Whānau receive useful information about the content and emphasis of the Religious Education programme and matters relating to the Catholic special character. Regular communication occurs in the fortnightly newsletter informing whānau of upcoming liturgies, Masses and parish notices. The inclusion of *'Faith Facts'* assist whānau in their faith learning. Parents are appreciative of the communication between the school and home on matters relating to the school's Catholic special character and teaching of Religious Education. They shared, *'the communication by the principal was great.'*

The principles of Catholic Social Justice are included in the school's curriculum long term plan. Each term, a principle is highlighted for promotion. As one teacher shared in the staff questionnaire, *'We are not just teaching stand-alone subjects, we are integrating the Catholic teachings in all aspects of our teaching. We need to be excellent role models and we have a responsibility to help guide our students on their faith journey.'*

All three teachers have participated in either *Understanding Sexuality* or *Having Life to the Full*. They are currently liaising with a teacher responsible for Sexuality Education at Roncalli College who is willing to share resources and a programme of work with local Catholic primary schools within the South Canterbury area.

The school is due for Sexuality Education consultation with whānau during the current year. Parents shared they trusted the teaching staff to deliver the sexuality education programme in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

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?

The school is a welcoming environment where all are treated with hospitality, aroha and courtesy. Reviewers witnessed the positive, caring relationships among staff and students. Staff, whether teaching or support staff, work well together and are very passionate about their school. There is

strong and caring leadership provided by the principal, who is regarded highly by parents, staff and ākonga. Parents openly spoke of how the principal 'just loves the children.'



Witnessing the Catholic special character in action occurred within a larger community setting with the blessing of the refurbished school buildings by Archbishop Paul Martin SM. The liturgy and blessing involved staff and students and was attended by numerous visitors, many of whom either attended the school themselves or had their own children attend. It was a joyous occasion and exhibited a real sense of pride in the local Catholic school.

Being a country community, whānau still support the school long after their children leave. Grandparents were noted during the

review assisting with tidying the school grounds in preparation for the blessing of the newly refurbished buildings. Parents of staff members were generously helping behind the scenes. This collective loyalty and support of their local Catholic school was a delight to observe.

St Joseph's School belongs to *Te Manahuna Kāhui Ako* a group of kura and ECEs in the Fairlie area and Mackenzie Basin. One of the greatest impacts of the kāhui ako to date is the positive collegiality among the schools, their leaders and the support and respect each has for each other's kura and ECE. This was demonstrated during the review with several principals in the kāhui ako present for the blessing of St Joseph's refurbished buildings. Secondly, Mackenzie College Kapa Haka Group generously agreed to perform during the blessing as several of its members were previous pupils of St Joseph's School.

The school acknowledges its past and the connections with its founding order, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, founded by St Mary MacKillop. This connection is publicised on its website and included in its Strategic Plan. Four primary schools founded by St Mary MacKillop and the Josephite Sisters in the South Canterbury region have strong ties together. They regularly meet on the Feast Day of St Mary MacKillop to celebrate Mass and compete in sports events at each school on a rotational basis. These celebrations are seen as having a real impact on keeping the school's connection with its founding order to the fore.

Displays and symbols provide witness to the Catholic identity of the school. Each classroom featured wall displays relating to the school's Catholic special character and presented prayer tables comprising appropriate Catholic symbols and resources for class and staff prayer.

Good liaison occurs between the parish and school by having the principal on the Parish Leadership Team and the school office administrator assisting the parish on financial matters. Visits to the school by the parish priest are scheduled weekly and are enjoyed by ākonga. It is not unusual to hear the students say, '*Cool. Fr Lito is here.*' The school invites parishioners to school events and regularly includes parish news items in the school newsletter.

The importance of te Tiriti o Waitangi and the status of Māori as Tangata Whenua is well respected by the school. Classes, as part of the Social Sciences curriculum, compiled their own class treaty at the beginning of the year.

Classrooms feature te reo Māori consistently in wall displays. Teaching staff are endeavouring to use te reo Māori where appropriate. During RE lesson observations, teachers integrated instructions and

words into their class lessons. One of the teachers who is ECE trained naturally embeds te reo and tikanga Māori within her teaching and learning programme.

Consulting with the school's community is usually a regular feature, however, there are currently no Māori ākonga enrolled in the school. A prospective parent who is intending to enrol her student is working with the principal to enhance te reo and tikanga Māori within the school prior to her child's arrival.

Being a close-knit small community, staff members know their children and community well and are good at wrapping support around those in need. Support is provided, in terms of pastoral care, food parcels and financial assistance to whānau and individuals as required. The South Canterbury Principal's Discretionary Fund allocation of \$600 per year is appreciated and used to assist whānau with costs such as outdoor education experiences. The Bishop's Hoatu Fund is also accessed to subsidise costs relating to school activity fees.

As staff have been working together for many years, they know each other incredibly well. As one shared, *We have the ability to 'read' each other and provide support when required.* Others, including support staff, expressed their gratitude for the caring and supportive nature of the principal. One stated that she learns so much from her by observing her positive interaction with people.

Analysis of the staff questionnaire, which forms part of the Catholic special character external review, indicates teachers feel affirmed and appreciated by fellow staff and school leaders. Teaching staff shared the positive, collaborative relationships that occurred on the staff and interviews with support staff reinforced the same positive sentiments.

St Joseph's School has a close relationship with the local community rest home. Any left-over food from a school function is delivered to the rest home for the residents. Students regularly visit to sing, chat, and present cards and gifts on special occasions such as Easter, St Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day and Christmas. Residents appreciate and value the contact from the local children.

The school involves ākonga in local service work such as the picking up of litter within the Fairlie community. On St Patrick's Day the school has a presence in the town centre as staff and students dress up, sing songs, and give out cards featuring Irish Blessings.

Next Steps for Development

Investigate further service opportunities for ākonga that could include providing support for the parish and parish priest.

DIMENSION 4:

TE KAITIAKITANGA ME TO WHAKAPAKARI I TE TUAKIRI KATORIKA – SAFEGUARDING AND STRENGTHENING CATHOLIC CHARACTER

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

The Board of Trustees Strategic and Annual Plan clearly indicates that the school is Catholic and endeavours to safeguard and enhance its Catholic special character. Strategic goals and core strategies are identified for the next three years alongside annual improvement strategies. To strengthen the document, the Catholic Character strategic and annual goals and the associated improvement plans would be best placed as priority one i.e., above other curriculum areas.

The internal self-reviews of Growth in Knowledge (2018 and 2019) and Encounter with Christ (2020) provide a useful account of work achieved and areas for further development. Making use of the RE Advisers in assisting with the Internal Evaluation Plan has developed a more streamlined approach.

These plans indicate progress achieved on a range of measurable indicators relating to the school's Catholic special character.

Employment documentation includes clear and concise information relating to the Catholic special character of St Joseph's School and the expectations of staff. At least one proprietor's appointee is included in the process appointing teachers to CI 47 special character positions. Letters of appointment templates recommended by the New Zealand Catholic Education Office were being used and were sighted.

The principal has Catholic Special Character expected outcomes as part of her annual performance agreement. The recommendation of including similar expectations in the teacher's individual performance agreements would be seen as strengthening this process.

All promotional material reflects the Catholic identity of the school. Enrolment procedures are transparent and meet the requirements of the Integration Agreement.

The Board budgets for Religious Education and for Catholic special character including release time for professional development opportunities for teaching and support staff as required.

The school is compliant with its Integration Agreement in terms of maximum roll compared to actual roll, non-preference roll and consultation with the Proprietor through its annual Attestation and Internal Review reports.

The preference/non-preference details, as at the time of the Catholic Special Character review (April 2021), were as follows:

St Joseph's School, Fairlie	Maximum Roll (as per Integration Agreement) = 70 students	Non-Preference Maximum (as per Integration Agreement) = 4 students
--	--	---

Preference Criterion	Number of Students	% of Current Total Number Students
5.1	6	27.3%
5.2	4	18.2%
5.3	8	36.4%
5.4	1	4.5%
5.5	0	0.0%
Non-Preference	3	13.6%
Total	22	100%

Please note that the 13.6% non-preference level is not a breach of the Integration Agreement for St Joseph's School – the 13.6% is because of the school having, in April 2021, a roll of 22 domestic students (48 students less than its maximum roll).

Next Steps for Development

To strengthen the Board's Strategic Plan, the Catholic special character strategic and annual goals and associated improvement plans would be best placed as priority one i.e., above other curriculum areas.

St Joseph's School, Fairlie Catholic Special Character Review Report Summary

Areas of growth since the last review report:

There are three notable areas of growth since the last review report:

1. At the end of 2020, the BOT undertook a major community consultation to agree on the school's new values of *Respect*, *Confidence* and *Love of Learning*. Leaders are keen to change Confidence to Courage to better fit with the teachings of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Part of the consultation process included finding Scripture verses to reflect the chosen values.
Respect - Whakaute
Do to others as you would have them do to you. *Luke 6:31*
Confidence - Māia
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. *Philippians 4:13*
Love of Learning - Te Ngakau Nui ki te Ako
How much better to get wisdom than gold, to get insight rather than silver.
Proverbs 16:16
2. Challenges of teaching multiple year levels have been tackled in many ways since the previous review. However, staff felt that even within year groups, there are children who are on different learning/faith journeys and that they needed to have more of a holistic, yet strategic approach. Being in a small school, the three teachers have been exploring, with the help of the RE Advisers, a more manageable approach to the teaching of RE within multi-level classes. Although teachers are in their first year of this development, they can already see the value of this new initiative. It allows teachers to explore the achievement objectives and organise them into *Big Ideas* or key concepts using achievement objectives from a range of curriculum year levels. The planning also provides evidence of content coverage to ensure the curriculum is delivered over time to all ākongā.
3. Faith-based leaders support and promote parish programmes for the Sacraments of Initiation. The principal, DRS and parish priest are involved in preparing ākongā. Due to the small numbers, the personal touch of approaching school whānau and ākongā on a personal level is seen to be more effective for encouraging the reception of the Sacraments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been identified in conjunction with the faith-based leaders. Most of these have been acknowledged in the school's own processes of self-review and evaluation.

1. Currently, there are only 3-4 students receiving Holy Communion during Masses attended by the school. Faith-based leaders are challenged to look for ways of encouraging ākongā and their whānau to receive the Sacraments of Initiation so they can take a more active role in the Eucharist.
2. Faith-based leaders have identified the need to look at effective ways to gather assessment information to report to the Board of Trustees on student achievement in Religious Education. This could be linked to the RE Assessment Plan and the data collected used for reporting to whānau and ākongā while also reporting in a more general way to the Board of Trustees.
3. The principal has Catholic special character expected outcomes as part of her annual performance agreement. Including similar expectations in the teacher's individual performance agreements would strengthen the appraisal process.
4. It would be advantageous involving the proprietor's appointees within the school's process of internal self-evaluation. It could be an opportune time to form a Catholic Special Character Committee of the board comprising the principal, DRS and proprietor's appointees.

The review team is confident that the St Joseph's School leadership team (Board of Trustees, Principal and DRS) have the willingness and ability to address these recommendations fully before the next external review. The Catholic Education Office staff are available to assist the Principal, Board of Trustees and staff in compiling an action plan to address these recommendations.

The review team thank the community of St Joseph's School for the welcome, hospitality and cooperation extended to them and for the opportunity to experience the way that they safeguard and strengthen their Catholic special character. The organisation and preparation for the review by the school is greatly appreciated.



Mark Gregory
Catholic Special Character Reviewer