

Hastings Christian School Education Review

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1 Context

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

Hastings Christian School is a state integrated school for students in Years 1 to 13. Years 1 to 8 classes have 129 students, while 94 attend in Years 9 to 13. Five students identify as Māori and three have Pacific ethnicities.

Since the February 2012 ERO review, there have been increases in the roll, particularly in the senior school. This has led to the expansion of the school site for development of new facilities and classrooms for teaching technology and performing arts. Additional leadership and teaching positions have been established.

Teachers of junior classes have recently been involved in a Ministry of Education professional learning and development (PLD) programme in Accelerated Learning in Literacy (ALL). Senior school teachers are actively involved in a PLD programme to improve teaching and learning strategies across all levels and subjects.

The principal, teachers and trustees are committed to fostering the special character of the school, which is based on Bible values and principles. These are upheld across teaching, learning and the wider life of the school and are further expressed through the HCS Way: Honour and Respect, Common Sense and Striving for Excellence.

2 Learning

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

Leaders and teachers use achievement information well to increase opportunities for learners to be successful. They use data for schoolwide analysis, setting targets and designing interventions and support for priority learners who need additional support.

Learning support is strategically targeted, well resourced and effectively integrated into classroom teaching programmes. Learning support teachers use assessment data appropriately to guide decisions and identify areas of focus for their targeted students. However, all teachers should contribute to improved tracking and monitoring of progress of target students during the year.

Since 2012, there have been significant improvements in National Certificates of Education Achievement (NCEA) results, especially at Levels 1 and 2. Achievement results are above similar types of schools and well above national rates. Several New Zealand Scholarships were gained by students in the past two years. High rates of student retention and leavers gaining Level 2 NCEA provide students with increased vocational pathways. Teachers use a range of successful strategies to support most targeted students at NCEA Level 1 to make good progress.

Achievement rates for Years 1 to 8 in relation to National Standards are above national averages in reading and writing and similar to national rates in mathematics. Leaders should continue to support the development of teachers' assessment practices in the junior school, including:

- strengthening processes for moderation of overall teacher judgements in assessing learning in relation to National Standards
- further developing teachers use of formative assessment to support learning.

Teachers are developing their skills in evaluation and monitoring of learning using portfolios to record information and reflect on student progress over time. Leaders are reviewing the range and value of assessment data and tools, to improve their use for teaching and to inform decisions across the school.

3 Curriculum

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

The school curriculum effectively promotes and supports students' learning and achievement.

Leaders and trustees provide an increased range of curriculum opportunities and programmes. They make strategic staffing, resourcing and timetabling decisions to respond to the needs and aspirations of the diverse groups of learners in their growing school roll. These decisions include multi-level classes, the use of specialist teachers, classes with blended subjects and flexible provision of learning support programmes.

Leaders and teachers work collaboratively to develop a cohesive schoolwide approach to curriculum expectations and implementation across Years 1 to 13 programmes. Some subject leaders and teachers have established broad frameworks for developing seamless learning pathways across all year levels. Continuing this process should assist leaders to ensure that:

- the principles, values and competencies of The New Zealand Curriculum are more explicit in practice
- consistent guidelines and expectations inform teaching, learning and assessment practices
- local contexts, including bicultural perspectives, strengthen the enactment of the Treaty of Waitangi
- responsive programme design and pathways match learners' interests, culture and aspirations.

These developments should also assist school reviews and evaluation of quality and effectiveness to inform ongoing improvement.

Students' experience of learning is enhanced through caring, supportive and respectful relationships with their teachers and each other. They demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and being valued. Teachers know students and their families well. Close relationships and regular communications with parents contribute to positive learning partnerships.

Teachers identify the importance of further developing student ownership of their learning. Improved opportunities and processes for student involvement in assessment and reporting is a next step. Students' use of digital technology in some secondary classes promotes engagement and increases opportunities to extend learning.

Careers education programmes and activities support students' decisions about their programmes and qualifications. A next step is to review the effectiveness and quality of careers education, and the value and relevance of pathways that are provided for students' ongoing study, training and employment destinations.

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

Some past initiatives and programmes have successfully promoted te ao Māori, However these have not been sustained. Leaders and trustees should in consultation with whānau and iwi, develop strategic goals and priorities to provide increased opportunities for Māori students' success as Māori through their language, identity and culture.

4 Sustainable Performance

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

Hastings Christian School is well placed to sustain and improve its performance. The board's elected and proprietor representatives have a mix of experience, skills and backgrounds. Trustees proactively provide for the school's roll growth and expansion of facilities. They promote close partnerships with the community.

Growth in leadership opportunities and development for staff and students is evident across the school. Professional learning programmes provide good support for teachers to share and extend their practice. Regular sessions support teachers to be reflective learners in a collaborative school culture

School leaders have developed a well-considered process to integrate staff PLD, appraisal, and teaching as inquiry with school goals and priorities to improve learning and achievement. Some teachers are beginning to use this integrated process to focus and respond more deliberately to specific student needs. Ongoing support and feedback from school leaders assists this process. This is a useful basis for evaluating the effectiveness of actions to improve learning and achievement, particularly for priority learners and those at risk or poor education outcomes.

Self-review processes are increasingly used to inform decision making, planning and resourcing. Trustees review policies and procedures. Data is used to inform charter development and setting strategic goals and priorities. Parent and student views contribute to these processes.

To improve and strengthen self review, leaders should more deeply inquire into a wider range of sources of evidence, including student voice, to better evaluate the effectiveness of actions, initiatives and programmes to improve outcomes.

Board assurance on legal requirements

Before the review, the board of trustees and principal of the school completed the ERO Board Assurance Statement and Self-Audit Checklists. In these documents they attested that they had taken all reasonable steps to meet their legislative obligations related to:

- board administration
- curriculum
- management of health, safety and welfare
- personnel management

- financial management
- asset management.

During the review, ERO checked the following items because they have a potentially high impact on student achievement:

- emotional safety of students (including prevention of bullying and sexual harassment)
- physical safety of students
- teacher registration
- processes for appointing staff
- stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions
- attendance.

Conclusion

Students value the supportive environment and opportunities to learn and achieve well in a school committed to its special character based on Bible values and principles. Teachers are actively and collaboratively involved in ongoing learning to improve their practice. Continuing review and development of curriculum, assessment and learning pathways should sustain improvement.

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

Joyce Gebbie
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4 June 2015

School Statistics

Location	Hastings	
Ministry of Education profile number	443	
School type	Composite (Years 1 to 13)	
School roll	223	
Gender composition	Female 55%, Male 45%	
Ethnic composition	Māori	3%
	NZ European/Pākehā	88%
	Pacific	1%
	Other ethnic groups	8%
Review team on site	April 2015	
Date of this report	4 June 2015	
Most recent ERO report(s)	Education Review	May 2012
	Education Review	February 2009
	Education Review	February 2006