

# Catholic Diocese of Auckland

*Āhuatanga Katorika*

*Kaupapa Arotake*

*Te Pūrongo Arotake O Waho*

*Catholic Special Character Review for  
Development*

*An External Responsive Evaluation of St Francis  
Catholic School Thames.*

*Undertaken during the Covid Pandemic 2021-2022.*

Review conducted on 10 November 2021 and 8 March 2022

Confirmed Report 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

## **Post Review Statistical Profile**

Name of School: St Francis, Thames

Address: 202 Mackay Street

School type: Full Primary

Actual roll: 80

Maximum roll: 120

Non-preference maximum: 12

Actual non-preference number: 16

Roll based staffing entitlement: 4.7

Required number of Special Character Cl 47 positions: 3

Filled number of Special Character Cl 47 positions: 3

Principal: Oliver Fahey

Director of Religious Studies: Oliver Fahey

Chairperson, Board of Trustees: Anna Dinneen

Parish Priest: Father Valerian D'Souza

## **Review Team:**

**Lead Reviewer: Mrs Christine Smith**

**Accompanying Reviewer: Mr Phillip Mahoney**



### Ngā Whāinga O Te Arotake-Aims of External Review

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference wishes the external 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 ki 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.

[This Catholic Special Character Review was undertaken during the period of the Covid Pandemic 2021.](#)  
[The Format for the Review was as outlined;](#)

1. [School's written material and evidence sent to Reviewers for synthesis and evaluation: 7 October 2021](#)
2. [Zoom interviews with the Principal, Parish Priest, Leader of Religious Education, Senior Leadership Team: November 10<sup>th</sup> 2021](#)
3. [School visit were to be undertaken to involve classroom visits and interviews with members of the school community. Date to be advised in 2022.](#)
4. [Due to onset of Covid Omnicron, in February onsite visits were unable to proceed therefore student and support staff interviews were held via Google on 8 March, 2022.](#)



## Progress With Recommendations from the June 2017 Catholic Special Character Review for Development Report

Opportunities for development have been addressed well. An opportunity for eligible students to go to Reconciliation during Lent and Advent each year should be arranged with the Parish Priest. *In place*

There needs to be a progressive Te Reo and Tikanga Maori curriculum to ensure continuity across the school. Teachers need to use Te Reo for instructions and provide scaffolding to develop vocabulary. *In place and being very effectively integrated throughout the school*

The Behaviour Management Policy refers to a Behaviour Code and Bullying Prevention procedures, neither of which could be found. This Policy needs to be reviewed and the procedures used by the school need to be well documented. *In place and being very effectively integrated throughout the school*

With up to three year groups in one room it is suggested that teachers' plan using prior knowledge assessment to differentiate teaching across the year levels rather than teaching one year level per year to the class. It is suggested that the next steps for teachers is to step back and review their pedagogy, by facilitating the students to manage their own learning and to begin to differentiate the teaching of the Achievement Objectives to more specifically meet each individual student's need, as they do in other curriculum areas. *In place and being very effectively integrated throughout the school*

Assessment for Religious Education needs to be consistent across the school to show student progression. Students record their learning responses in a Religious Education book. With the introduction of digital learning it is suggested that a review be undertaken as to the best way to present the Religious Education books, digital and integrated student work. *In place and being very effectively integrated throughout the school*

The school is using an inquiry approach to planning and integration of all curriculum areas. It is suggested that when planning for each term a gospel quote or Special Catholic Character focus is the key idea for the term. It is through this Catholic lens that all teaching and learning should happen. *In place and being very effectively integrated throughout the school*

The integration of the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the Special Catholic Character of the school should filter through everything. The "Myself and Others" module is used with some units however there needs to be a more formal approach to its use across the curriculum. *In place and being very effectively integrated throughout the school*

Because of the remoteness of the school it is difficult for teachers to attend all Auckland Diocese professional development. It is suggested that the school ask to be involved in some professional development in the Hamilton Diocese if this is easier to attend. *The leadership and teachers are very proactive participants in Auckland's PLD programmes.*

The Board of Trustee members were all acquainted with the Bishop's Conference publication, "The Catholic Education of School-Aged children in New Zealand" (2014). It is suggested that they begin to



'break open' the Bishops' message and use the messages to support their documentation writing and decision making. *Integrated into Board process achieved, valued document.*

The Board of Trustees have planned to begin consultation with the community to review and update the Charter and Strategic Plan. It is suggested that this document be simplified and made more strategic for future development. *Regular consultation with the community very evident in the charter strategic plan, effective working documents*

The annual internal Special Catholic Character Review must be completed each year and added as Part C to the Proprietor Representatives annual report to the Bishop. A plan of action should be designed each year to undertake the review and to collect relevant data on the chosen area. Recommendations from the annual Special Catholic Character Internal Review should appear in the Strategic or Annual Plan to ensure they are implemented. *Sound reporting to the Bishop. Authentic, robust, internal review undertaken.*

The Board of Trustees has recently adopted the policies on 'SchoolDocs'. It is necessary to review these policies to ensure they reflect the Special Catholic Character of the school throughout. *Process in place*

Being a small community, communication is mainly informal. It is suggested that the Board of Trustees Chairperson writes and publishes a Christmas message to highlight the successes for the year. This could be posted on the school website. It is suggested that the Board of Trustees develop a plan at the start of each year, listing the actions planned for each month to ensure that everything is completed by the end of the year. The plan should be monitored and reviewed at each monthly meeting. *Reflected in the strategic and annual plan.*

**Recommendations:** To develop in consultation with the school community, and implement a Pubertal Change programme from a Catholic perspective for Year 7 and 8 students. That all teachers, particularly those involved in the Pubertal Change Programme, attend and complete the "Understanding Sexuality" course. *The principal has completed the Pubertal Change Programme (PCB). the next step is for other staff to complete the PCP.*

## 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 very effectively develops encourages and facilitates young peoples' development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. For the School's principal Catholic Character comes first and last in the school, it is the alpha and the omega. Catholic Character and authentic Gospel Values are seen as the core business of the school.

The principal was appointed to St Francis School 3 years ago. He actively leads the school in the Franciscan tradition ( know me by my actions, rather than my words) wholeheartedly lives out daily life as Teaching Principal and Director of Religious Studies. This is evidenced in a revitalization of spiritual formation practices at many levels in the school and the schools' reconnection with the Parish and the wider community. Each day classes engage in the simplicity and ritual of daily prayers, beginning, middle and end of day, preparation, reflections and thankfulness.

The school environment is visually connected to the person of Jesus Christ through visual symbols of community and children's art in the school and the beauty of God's creation are reflected in the school's wider environment and serves to remind young people of school/churches history, as well as building a connection and relationship with the person of Jesus.

The principal is an experienced DRS models a number of contemporary Religious Educations and prayer practices and adaptations for teachers to share with their classes. These recently introduced practices are enabling young people to start developing a personal connection with Jesus. Parish Priest Father Vally and Sister Paula spoke of the "joyful noise of the school that enlightens the lives of others, it's a happy place, Good things are coming out of this school...a great place to be." They spoke of the authentic relationships with Jesus and the evidence of the Holy Spirit everywhere in the school. "staff are genuine in how they speak to children, their love of Jesus shows through"

Both the Principal and Parish Priest are recently appointed 2018 and 2016 respectively. People interviewed for this review spoke of the strengthening in the Catholicity of the school. They attributed this to "the Principals strong, yet gentle Catholic approach" it was observed that his "whole approach was charged with a sense of Catholic identity". The Principal's ability to lead the school community is recognized and valued by the wider School- Parish community. It was noted by people interviewed that the community (parish and school) had strengthened with the arrival of the new Principal. The school Vision, ako ki te aroha, te aroha ki tem ako. Learning to love- Loving to learn, is modelled from the top and lived out by everyone. Parents described the school as an optimal place for all learners, of note vulnerable learners, reviewers would add that this is a measure of a strong school. People spoken to by reviewers attested to the environment at St Francis being enriched by transforming love of Jesus Christ. " Since Mr Fahey came there



has been change, his faith shines through. He lives it and people can see it and that's what they want for their children. He has been fabulous for the school.' This undoubtedly has led to the many opportunities to facilitate the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and reveal the transforming love and truth of the living God? Importantly the strengths of many young people within St Francis school are being grown to ensure they have the opportunity to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals the transforming love and truth of the living God? School leadership and Board are committed to enabling this outcome for the young people of St Francis.



## **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?

This School is highly effective in the way it enables its community to grow in knowledge and deepen their understanding of the person of Jesus Christ, his teachings and the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is evidenced in the intentional commitment of this action at every level of the school. It works towards enabling the expected outcome of Faith filled young people, who have informed knowledge about the person of Jesus Christ and the Gospels and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The Principal not only holds the title of DRS but is an exemplary leader and practitioner in the DRS role. Together with the Parish Priest, the Principal's leadership has been seminal in shaping and promoting the Special Character of the school. He has been deliberate in embedding a rich Christ-Centred culture throughout the school enriched by the Franciscan and Charism, simultaneously building a robust professional environment. This wholehearted approach to leadership has resulted in a vibrant and authentic Catholic community steeped in a knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ in conjunction with a teaching and learning environment that is provocative, encouraging students to inquire, question and challenge, as was modelled by Jesus with his disciples.

Staff commitment to professional development is commendable, given the schools physical distance. There is support for teachers to undertake theology papers as a whole staff in 2021 working alongside St

Mary's in Papakura towards completing TH501 'What Catholics Believe'. Zoom cluster meetings have been particularly enabling for St Francis Staff as they overcome all distance barriers. This has been appreciated by teachers and has further built professional knowledge and strengthened Special Character across the school. Termly Strand meetings led by the D.R.S are held to discuss the theological focus for each Strand, strengthening teachers' knowledge and confidence.

The School under the leadership of the Principal senior leaders and teachers has developed a clear and coherent implementation plan for Religious Education. Growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, his teachings and the Catholic Church is centre front when teachers plan collaboratively. The Franciscan Charism, Laudato si and Tupa wha are values and understandings that bring the community together. Teachers draw on Gospel teaching for the key curriculum concepts to frame up and deliver the curriculum. They use formative teaching and learning approaches and deliberate acts of teaching to deliver classroom programmes. Each term all elements of learning and school life are categorized under God-Atu, People-Tangata, land-Whenua. These become the context for the other learning areas e.g, literacy and inquiry through a given term. Religious Education Learning takes precedent over all other learning. Prayer, liturgical year and social justice learning is taught each term.

School Values have been reviewed by school, community and Board. The outcome is four Gospel values, Love; Faith, Respect, Truth. Each value is supported by a social justice teaching, a whakatau that supports the Gospel and clear child- speak interpretation that is easily understood. This promotes teachings of Jesus to permeate all school curriculum and documentation. Catholic Special Character is seamlessly integrated 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.

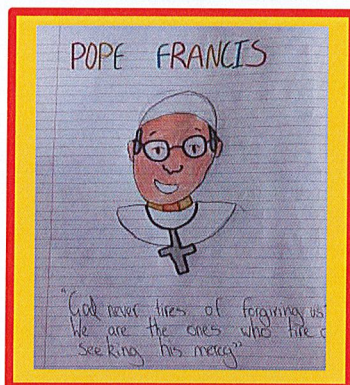
A central part of St Francis Curriculum is the integration of 'local Curriculum' this sits with ease alongside the Religious Education curriculum and the Franciscan Charism of the school. An anecdotal example of this being the life size nativity crib that sits in the school's main entrance year round. As part of 'behaviour support' young people are asked to choose a strand of wool, they take this to the school foyer and lay it in the crib awaiting the Christ child in December. Young people consider this a great honour and over the course of the year the crib is lined with 'our wool in preparation' A truly integrated curriculum.

Reviewers acknowledge the variety of authentic learning tasks used in lessons and in the students' Faith Journals alongside a range of digital devices. Digital learning is also very evident. It is differentiated and authentic to children's learning experiences and needs. Differentiation is effectively used in teaching and learning to support the faith stages of children. Teachers are responsively teaching to these when delivering the Religious Education programme as is expected with all other curriculum areas.

St Francis School welcomes students with special needs. Input from external agencies is encouraged and valued. The Deputy Principal is also SENCo and has extensive experience in this area. She has very successfully introduced Mason Durie's, Te Whare Tapa Whā (Maori health model) to the school and this sits harmoniously alongside Gospel Values and the school's Franciscan Charism shaping behaviour and learning directions. Resourcing is generous and targeted to best support and develop the needs potential of young people. Similarly, the ability of gifted and talented students is identified and developed in class. Reviewers evidenced good examples of responsive and adaptive teaching, with students who have diverse and additional learning needs being well supported in their learning by the school's approach to pedagogy and learning within a social context of friends and peer group. Support staff at St Francis feel



valued and acknowledged for the very good work they do. They undertake training for the relevant professional roles they hold and participate fully in Catholic Special Character PLD. The SENCO ensures that identified students have a current Individual Education Plan (IEP). The school is very inclusive of families and responsive to the needs of their children.

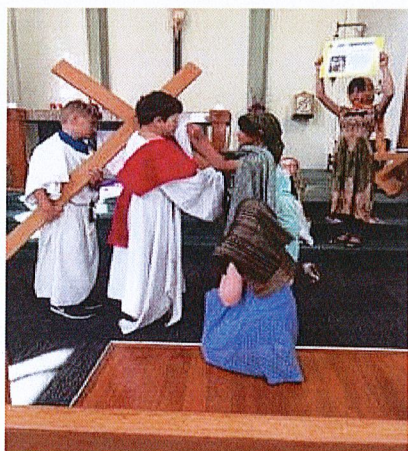


St Francis young people actively promote Laudato Si with an environmental programme that ensures they develop a growing understanding for the fragility of our planet and importantly, how they can make a positive difference. The school is a Green-Gold Enviro School recycling, tending vegetable gardens is undertaken by St Francis young people and is successful at every level. Laudato Si is alive and well at St Francis and students have a good knowledge of Pope Francis thinking about the 'care for the environment'

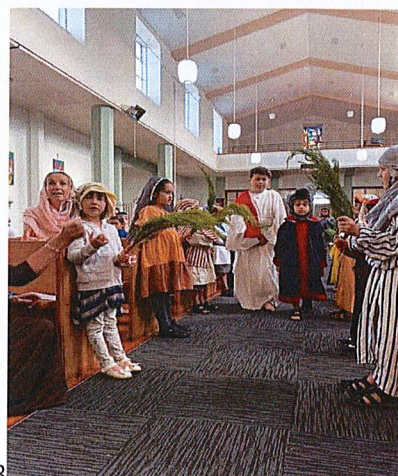
St Francis young people actively promote Laudato Si. Their environmental programme flows into the community and enriches God's world.



When speaking with reviewers, senior students demonstrated a spiritual maturity. They described to reviewers how they were active participants in their Religious Education learning, participating fully in their faith journey, understanding that God as Holy Spirit is ever present in their hearts.



Young people have good understanding of what living life as a Catholic means. Young people told reviewers "It means to love God with all your heart, soul and mind" "To know the Beatitudes" They celebrate the diversity of cultures and ethnicities embraced by Catholicism. Students articulated well a Spiritual and Gospel based response to many of life's big questions. There is good evidence of active student agency in classroom and community at every level





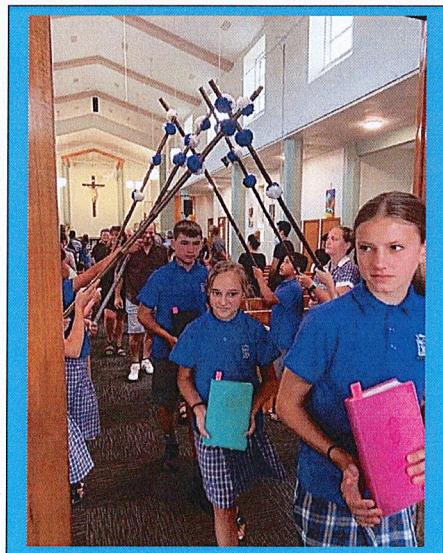
Caritas is well supported by students. The school's vegetable gardens and weekly whanau can collections delivers food to the local Baptist Church where food is prepared and served for the vulnerable and hungry in the Thames community. Senior students participate in this outreach. The 'Convent Café' held in its namesake is well patronised by parishoners who are hospitably looked after by St Francis young people.

### Young people caring for those in their local and global community



Reviewers evidenced young people responding with critical thinking to social- global and ethical issues in discussions between students and reviewers. They adeptly described Catholic social teaching, giving reviewers rapid fire answers, the common good, human dignity, kaitiaki, Pope Francis treating others equally, answers seemed to come very naturally to St Francis' Young people.

### Student Leaders at St Francis



***Leavers Mass 2021***

Leadership opportunities are plenty at St Francis and are found across all spectrums of the school, catering for many students strengths and skills and attributes. The inner confidence - strength of young people, deep faith, was conveyed to reviewers throughout the interview. Students described St Francis as a special school because it gave them 'a strong faith and belief in God' 'a positive attitude to life' 'we like coming to school' 'we live our values' 'know about Mary and the Saints' 'live the values' 'We're getting a good reputation in Thames' 'We would encourage others to come here'.

The Senior Leadership team together with the staff and board have recently reviewed and redeveloped the school's Charter-the mission- school Values and school Charter , they now align. They are cohesive, underpinned by Gospel Values, infused with Catholic Character. Everything is grounded in the person of Christ. Te Whare Tapa Whā ensures authentic cultural relevance is maintained and current curriculum is

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integrated as appropriate. Because the Principal provides CRT release across the school he has first hand understanding of the nuances of each classrooms teaching and learning programmes, what's working and next steps. This is supporting for teachers, resourcing next steps and has enabled teachers and leadership to refine Religious Education programmes as a team over the last three years. Teachers told reviewers they feel "we are part of one big team. We can talk to (the principal) any time, he gets it! We work together to make things better for Tamariki better ourselves as teachers"

Learning support teachers are a highly valued at St Francis and are an integral part of the teaching team. The Learning support participate fully in all school professional learning, an example being a recent lecture on 'Negative Bias'. In addition to this specific support is given when needed for example speech therapy. Communication is robust at all levels of the school and part time learning support are always included.



**Kapa Haka Performance**

St Francis school through it's Kahui Ako membership is associated with local iwi Ngati Maru. This is St Francis primary relationship, though there are other Marae, who have relationships with whanau and the school in the Thames area. At St Francis, Tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori and te ao Māori are evident in all planning, policies and procedures. Māori Spirituality is interwoven into Catholic Spirituality and local iwi and whanau are increasingly important in consolidating the school Te ao Māori identity. Young people know their School Mission and Values in te reo and staff are active in Te reo PLD. This means that Te reo is now heard at all Assemblies, Liturgies and Masses as well as being more deliberately spoken in everyday classroom and school activity.

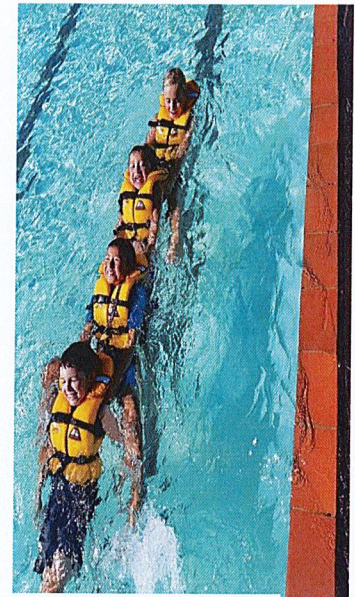
School Leaders are mindful of the nearly simultaneous introduction of the new, New Zealand History Curriculum and the new Religious Education Curriculum. The senior leadership team are aware of the complexities of this roll out and have a sound Integrated planning process that will support this to happen.

Religious Education is taught very well. It is integrated throughout the school and as a stand alone subject when required to maintain the integrity of new learning. In addition to this, religious education is widely evident throughout the wider curriculum. Student's Religious Education books and digital communication with parents have well defined guidelines that give young people a sense of pride and ownership. Religious Education books are sent home at the end of each strand for parents to read and provide their feedback. Student's learning has meaningful feedback from teachers and thoughtful comments are made by the students and their families. Digital and written communications provide one



of many links between the school and home and are a good springboard for discussion as are the rostered prayer Ketes.

The Health curriculum is set in the context of the Catholic Church. Parents are consulted about the Pubertal Change programme which has clear guidelines with a Catholic perspective. The school has introduced a new puberty programme for 2021. This will give parents and whanau the opportunity to have greater involvement with their young people in this sensitive developmental area. A positive initiative on the school's part.



**A Very healthy health Curriculum Mind body and Spirit**

### **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?

St Francis school community are very effective Christian witnesses. *“At the heart of the Catholic character of a school are the hearts of those who work in the school, principal, teachers, chaplains and this staff. They are witnesses to the students of a mature faith, and an integration of faith with life. The teachers in a Catholic school may teach secular subjects ....do so in a way that assists in the human and faith formation of the student”* (CESAC.47. Pg 11)

Young people and community members describe St Francis as a place of openness and welcome, where everyone is treated with dignity, fairness, compassion and kindness. The school community are proudly Catholic and promote living the Gospel values and witness to the life of Christ. In the last three years there has been a resurgence in school's Catholic identity and the commitment to Jesus Christ is explicit.. There is good visibility of staff at Sunday Mass and this is encouraging for families and cohesive for school and Parish. The school is an integral part of the greater parish community. The school positively impacts the Parish, the Parish positively impacts the school and together they work for the common good of each other.





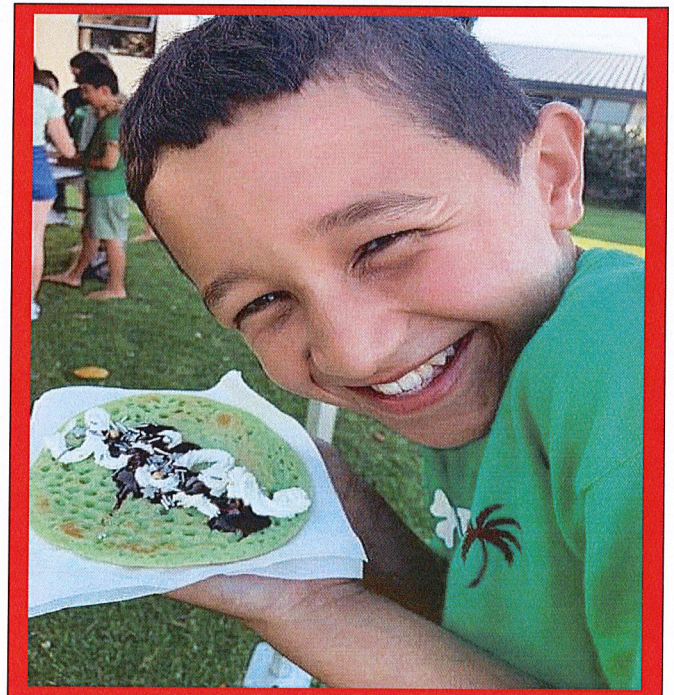
Bishop Michael Father Vally and St Francis young people ready to race!



Father Vally & Sister Paula celebrate Sr Paula's Diamond jubilee with the St Francis Community

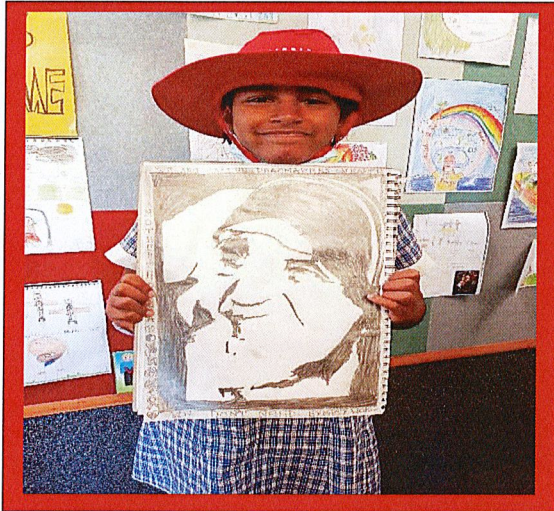
School leadership spoke of the valuable contribution and support of the Parish Priest to St Francis. They valued his openness and willingness to stand alongside the school and work with the school as it continues to grow and develop. This is a real strength of Christian witness visible in the leadership of Parish and School as the leaders of both Church and School work harmoniously for the greater good of the Christ they serve and the people they lead. Community members spoken to by Reviewers said this model of integration, faith and life, is empowering for the school and church community.

The Behaviour Plan outlined at St Francis is fair, clear to all, and based on Catholic social teaching. This is a very effective Buddy System. This was very clear to reviewers while in the school. The Buddy system is in action at break times, it is intuitive and used as and when needed demonstrating good student agency. 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. This 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 with all adults in the school community consciously modelling what this 'looks like'. School life at St Francis provides opportunities in its day to day life for young people to live out Catholic Social teaching.





The School honours Biculturalism and celebrates cultural diversity. Students and families are encouraged to share their language and identity and prayers are spoken in these languages. Students are inclusive of each other and are aware that they are each made in the image of Christ. In 2020, 2021, Covid provided challenges and opportunities to witness and connect to the wider St Francis community. It also provided many opportunities to support and enable young learners to integrate their faith and life and make meaning of the two entities. The school is deliberate in this undertaking, fulfilling St Francis' outreach to the poor in the community.



Pastoral Care is highly effective, shaped by Gospel teachings. Sister Paula is the key organizer of the majority of Pastoral works in partnership with the Parish Priest. As the Pastoral arm in the Parish she is a galvanizing element in the Parish /school care for those needing support. Sister Paula is a force for good and has a very positive impact. She knows the community well and is trusted, the essence of effective mission. This conjoint School- Parish outreach to the community of Thames, it is a credit to the School and Parish.

- School and Parish events in the school newsletter to readily connect with parents and whanau.
- Tuesday meal outreach with the community, involves children cooking and serving those in the community needing meals
- Visiting local rest homes- comfort to the elderly
- Laudato Si- the school holds a green-gold enviro award. Food grown at the school is a resource and provision for the community
- The (upcoming) purchase of a school Van will increase the school's pastoral activity

The school has robust relationships within the local community and has many links to The Principal and Deputy Principal are actively involved in partnership with the Local College and local Primary schools to improve the transition of students, particularly those with additional needs transitioning to College. The Principal is highly visible to the school community. Both staff and parents find him accessible and responsive to their needs. He has *"a clear realisation of the identity of a Catholic school and the courage to follow all the consequences of its uniqueness"*. ( 43. CESAC, pg.11) There is very good evidence in the school that the dignity of all people is regarded and upheld at all times.

Communication is an area of strength for this school. The Principal has an open door policy as does the DP/ SENCo. At the end of each day the Parish Priest and the Principal are farewelling children and families at the school gate. Communication at St Francis is strong on all the conventional fronts, newsletters, Board reports, Clarity of Policy and Charter statements. There is an email from class teachers each week, and a weekly school newsletter. There is primacy of Special Character Information in all literature. However Reviewers observed that the greatest strength in communication St Francis lay in the robustness of relationships which existed across all levels of the school. Its's people work together to uphold the Gospel and the Gospel and the Mission, Goals and Vision of St Francis School.



#### Dimension 4: Te Kaitiakitanga Me Te Whakapakari I Te Tuakiri Katorika-Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Character



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

The Board, through the Principal, ensures the Catholic Special Character permeates the Mission, Values and Strategic direction of the school. Strategic planning, policies and procedures are aligned with the Vision and Mission and Gospel Values. The clarity and synergy of school direction is strong. Principal's reports are prepared to a very good standard. They are relevant and place Catholic Character centre front. Internal evaluation of Religious Education and Special Character is clear and relevant. It promotes and affirms good practice and focuses on growth and improvement.

Board members, both new and experienced are highly committed members of the Board. The Board are willing to undertake Board training and value and understand its importance. The entire Board value the Special Catholic Character of their school they are diligent and hardworking trustees.

The Principal reports against the Strategic and Annual Plans which includes a detailed and robust Special Character Goal. Rigorous internal school evaluation promotes ongoing good practice as well as identifying areas for growth and improvement. The Board are very good stewards of the school's Catholic Character.

'The Catholic Education of School Age Children' is a seminal document and the general themes of the document are reflected positively in day to day operations, conduct and documentation of the school. The Board, unpack a section of 'The Catholic Education of School Age Children' at each board meeting and they are encouraged to continue this practice as stewards of Catholic Special Character.

The Board and Leadership are committed to meaningful internal review. Strategic and Annual planning shows a commitment to authenticity, to meeting the community, both the school and the parish where they are at and working across the two entities as partners. This is reflected in strengthened relationships and acts of good will between the two entities, as well as being reflected in strategic and annual planning, showing good organisation and progress of the school's planned review cycle. The Board are steadfast and very committed to the school and Parish. They operate with integrity and model Gospel Values to safeguard and nurture the school's Special Catholic Character. The Board Chairperson has regular meetings with the Principal. There is a Special Character meeting held before each board meeting. Special Character reports are presented to the Board at each meeting.



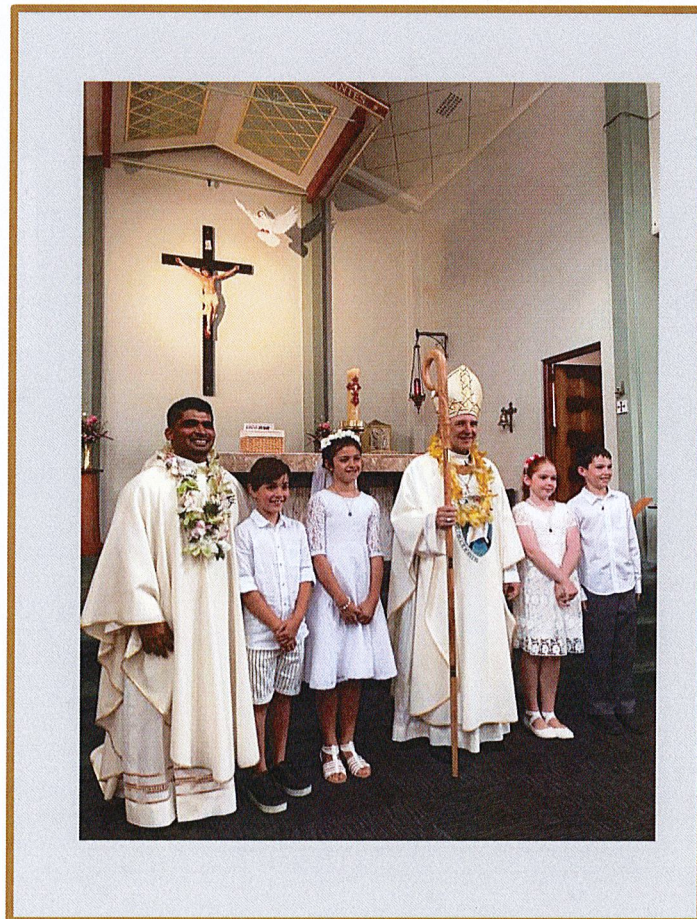
The Board is a good ethical employer, employment systems are robust. 'The Code of Ethics in a Catholic School' is enacted. At the time of the External Review the School was compliant with its Integration Agreement in regard to:

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

CES understand the complexity of Thames as a rural location with regard to appointing. The Reviewer preference audit was unable to be undertaken at this time. The school assured CES that 90% of the students are preference, 10% of the students are non-preference, total Roll 73.

#### **Next Steps for Development**

- Considering with your community ways of using your newly acquired Van, to undertake outreach in your community.
- Thinking about introducing Service Hours for senior students, now you have the Van to support this undertaking.
- Finding ways to involve families new to the Parish with an existing family/families



**Holy Sacraments celebrated at St Francis with Bishop Michael, Father Vally, ākonga and whānau**

St Francis Thames. Catholic Special Character Responsive Evaluation March 31<sup>st</sup> 2022



## St Francis Catholic Primary School

### Catholic Special Character Review Report Summary

#### Areas of growth since the last review report

Since the last review a new principal and Deputy Principal have been appointed. This has been a very positive move. Senior Leaders have been deliberately grown and nurtured a Christ Centred Culture of openness, trust and kindness across the school. The Board, Senior Leaders and teachers are unequivocal in their support of their new leaders. The Principal is open and enabling of teachers new learning. This has been beneficial on many levels. Re-distributed leadership across the school is a very positive area of school development.

The new Principal is "unequivocal in his commitment to communicate Christ and to help form Christ in the lives of others" (*Blessed John Paul II 1979, CESAC*). This commitment flows through to his team and is evidence as joy, kindness and compassion in the school community and impacts positively on everyone.

For young people at St Francis daily life is guided by the Gospel. They are each regarded as an individual in the likeness of Christ, they are at the very heart of their school. It is the everyday Christ centric practices, implemented in the daily life of the school, that brings about the integration of faith with life. In the Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools, "Christ is the Teacher in Catholic schools.... and Catholic schools have the task of being the living and provocative memory of Christ". St Francis Catholic School exemplifies this longstanding tradition of Catholic Education


#### Next Steps for Development

#### Recommendations

The review team is confident that the St Francis leadership team and Board of Trustees, 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.

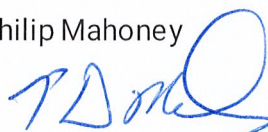
The Review Team thank the community of St Francis Catholic Primary School for the welcome, and cooperation extended to them and for the opportunity to experience the way that they safeguard and strengthen their Catholic Special Character. The organisation and preparation for the review is greatly appreciated.

Christine Smith



Review & Evaluation Advisor

Philip Mahoney



Manager Catholic Schools Office