

External Review of Catholic Special Character at St Francis Xavier School

St Francis Xavier is a well established school in the heart of Dunedin. It has good support from parents and families in the area because it has a supportive and caring culture. Following the last review it prepared a pro-active response to the recommendations and has worked to try and meet them.

It continues to be responsive to opportunities for growth and development.

The Educational Review Office made very positive comments early in 2014 about the way the Special Character was integrated throughout the school and the positive influence it had on the school climate.

It noted the quality of the relationships among the children and the strong support of staff to Restorative Justice. The recognition of this outside agency is to be celebrated.

The Board is very supportive and aware of its obligation to support Special Character. It focuses resources and time on the mission of the school. As it continues to respond it will develop an even more robust self review programme to help measure the gains it makes. The school is fortunate to have had stable leadership over a period of time from both the Board, Principal and Director of Religious Studies. All parties have combined to continue to build an authentic Catholic school which responds to the needs of all in the community. It has maintained its links to the Mercy Charism and embedded its school values in the Gospels.

The experience and inclusive style of the Principal is a critical component in the way the culture of the school welcomes and supports everyone in it. Children comment on his affirming style and staff are given opportunities to participate in decision making. He has created a robust culture without making himself central to it.

The Director of Religious Studies has considerable experience in teaching religious education and in leading sacramental programmes.

She is open to continuing formation which will support her to be even more effective as a catechist in the school.

The Deputy Principal has strong links to Catholic Character and to families in the school community.

Together the leader of the school and the staff have the capacity to encourage strong links with the parish and the support of parents.

St Francis Xavier is a school with a big heart. It fosters genuine commitment to social justice among the children. It welcomes and includes people from other cultures and with special abilities.

The Catholic Review Team are confident that the school will continue to reflect and grow the Special Character and look forward to seeing the fruits of their work in three years' time.