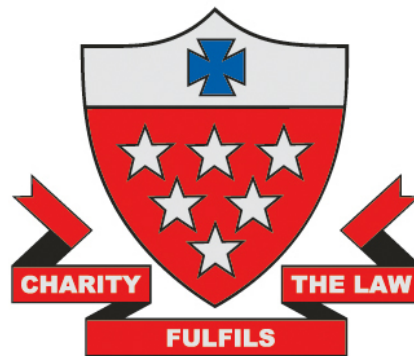




**CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF DUNEDIN**
Covering Otago & Southland

**He Pūrongo Arotake Mātauranga
Ahurea Katorika ā Waho**

**Catholic Special Character
Evaluation for Development**



St Peter's College Gore

Evaluation conducted 27 – 29 February 2024

Confirmed Report 28 March 2024



School Details

Name of School: St Peter's College

Combined Charism: Mercy / Rosminian

Address: 121 Kakapo Street, West Gore, Gore 9710

School type: Integrated Co-educational Year 7 – 13 College

Maximum roll: 512

Actual roll: 396

Non-preference maximum (5% of maximum roll) : 26

Actual non-preference number: 110

Roll based staffing entitlement: FTTE 31.43

Required number of Special Character CI 47 positions: 13

Filled number of Special Character CI 47 positions: 8

Principal: Tara Quinney

Director of Religious Studies: Brendan Terry

Presiding Member – Board of Trustees: John Hogue

Parish Priest / Chaplain: Rev Sani Lam

Evaluation Team

Lead Evaluator: Paul Richardson - Lead Evaluator, Dunedin Diocese
Assisted by: Jo Walshe – Principal, St Kevin's College Oamaru

The Aims of Catholic Special Character External Evaluation for Development

The Catholic Special Character Evaluation process produces a focused picture of the impact of Catholic schooling and the effectiveness of its goals on the lives of all tamariki and rangatahi¹. The process seeks to determine whether they have encountered the living God revealed in Jesus Christ, grown in knowledge of Him and His Church, and as a result are forming a deep and lasting relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church². The process also evaluates how the whole school community engages in authentic Catholic Christian witness and evangelisation.

The evaluation also investigates how the school is acting as kaitiaki of Catholic special character including meeting its statutory compliances. A collaborative external evaluation process between school and the evaluators helps the school see what it is doing well and identify next steps.

Progress with Recommendations for continuing growth and development from 2021 review.

1. Continue to explore new ways of evangelisation within the school / parish community including promotion of regular family involvement in Sunday Eucharistic gatherings and actively promote opportunities for Sacramental formation across the school.

‘Continuing to maintain and support evangelisation within the school and parish communities’ is an ongoing focus in the strategic planning and performance intentions. Pandemic disruption since 2020 has hindered progress in this area. Initiatives are in place to work more closely with St Mary’s School.

2. Survey the ‘student voice’ as a part of Religious Education curriculum self-review to gain a clearer picture of attitude, satisfaction, preferred learning styles at various year levels.

Ākonga believe that their collective voice has been heard in a number of consultation opportunities in school activities including curriculum. They value opportunities for discussion and debate and believe that these increase as they progress through the learning levels.

3. When carrying out Pastoral Care Reviews, refer to Dimension 3 in the Special Character Review Document (Focus Area for Pastoral Care) to align with Catholic Special Character review perspectives.

This is acknowledged by senior leadership in strategic documentation.

4. Refine the Catholic Special Character Internal Review process:
 - Emphasise a particular focus area, of challenge, within the dimension to show how the review will strengthen Special Character.

A recognised focus in future internal evaluation and still a work in progress.

- Report at each board meeting under the four Review Dimension headings as a form of ongoing self-evaluation.

This format has been actioned with success, including the incorporation of the school values. Evaluation might be strengthened by including ‘effectiveness’ and ‘impact’ reflections.

¹ New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference. *The Catholic Education of School Age Children*. Wellington:2014.

² Ibid.

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?

Spiritual Formation

St Peter's College has a priority strategic focus to 'encourage and facilitate a personal relationship with Jesus Christ for all staff and students, to support its mission to educate the whole person.' Leaders recognise that success in this mission can only happen where there is a unified approach to living the college mission to 'love one another through actions of Compassion, Community and Commitment.'

During the external evaluation visit in-depth discussions took place with the Principal, and groups comprising senior leaders, staff, representative student groups and whānau. These discussions revealed sincerity and authenticity and a deep awareness of the importance of assisting individuals in 'their personal relationship with Christ.'

The Principal believes that co-construction of ideas and shared understandings enable spiritual development and connection to happen. Examples of this can be found in a culture of prayer and reflection, 'especially at busy times and when it is sometimes most needed.' This extends across this diverse and inclusive community with whānau encouraged to participate in Catholic Special Character events and community activities.

Faith-based Leadership

The college has a leadership team that is effective in shaping the college's vision and direction. The Principal and Director of Religious Studies and senior leadership members are active in the parish. The Principal is a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, adding strength in the relationship. This also supports the college annual goals of organising a sacramental programme, participatory roles for students at Mass, and celebrating students welcomed into the church through the sacraments. The DRS is a member of the senior leadership team and contributes a great deal of passion and energy into ensuring that Catholic Special Character is at the forefront of college life. This team of faith leaders values the importance of relationship and collegiality, seeking to overcome challenges for the good of the college. They are intent on working effectively as a team to advance the spiritual life, growth and development of ākonga and the college.

Evangelisation

The college, through its practices and communications, aims to spread the gospel to the community. Kaiako are regarded as strong and supportive witnesses to the faith and this is recognised by ākonga and whānau. They recognise the challenges of imparting authentic faith to adolescent learners. Teachers of Religious Education talk about their own faith seeking to make Jesus 'relatable' and as one teacher stated, 'I expend a lot of energy on the reasonableness of faith in Christ.' The mission and values of the college are reflected in their shared belief that all are made in the image and likeness of God and that ākonga respond positively within this respectful learning environment. This was particularly evident in the responses from senior ākonga.

Senior and junior representative student groups participated enthusiastically in discussion. They described their experiences of college prayer life, school liturgy and participation in the Mass. Some articulated the spiritual impact of this Catholic place in their lives particularly well, citing the daily routine of prayer to begin classes and meetings. They acknowledged their fondness and respect for their school chapel as a place of prayer and contemplation and a gathering place during difficult times, recalling deaths within the community and more recent floods. Parents also expressed their satisfaction and appreciation of spiritual and sacramental life of the college. Participation in sacramental formation was low throughout the pandemic and remains so. The college leadership will continue to review the effectiveness of communication in this area. Some whānau in the non preference category expressed the view that a personal approach would have more of an impact.

The college recently welcomed the new Parish Priest into its community as Chaplain and Proprietor Representative on the board. This new relationship has boosted the spiritual energy of the college and its impact has been enthusiastically commented on throughout our discussions. We were privileged to witness this energy by attending the college opening Mass in the parish church and opening Mass for the hostel in the chapel.

Ongoing development:

- Continue to explore new ways of evangelisation within the school / parish community:
 - Promotion of regular family involvement in Sunday Eucharistic gatherings.
 - Promotion of opportunities and actively promote opportunities for Sacramental formation across the school.
 - Consider personal approach for whānau in the non-preference category.
- Continue to nurture a healthy, effective and diverse prayer life through regular review and renewal and consider more frequent parish and chapel Mass opportunities throughout the year.

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?

Leadership

The college has effective systems and procedures to assist its community to grow in knowledge and understanding. The advancement of the curriculum and strategic planning is a focus in regular Principal / DRS meetings and there is a strong focus on supporting effective teaching practice through guidance, resourcing, and professional development opportunities to support accreditation levels.

All teaching staff attend weekly professional development which is currently provided by the Deputy Principal. The Catholic Special Character focus areas have included, bi-cultural

Church and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The Deputy Principal has also led bi-cultural growth initiatives including, staff development in Te Reo, Tikanga, the Potamu Pounamu programme, and will be leading a teacher development day at Te Tomairangi Marae on 6 March.

The leadership recognises that there is significant work to be done in updating accreditation records including the monitoring of staff development within the theology, curriculum, and personal formation categories. In-school and external staff development such as staff meetings and professional learning relating to Religious Education and the Catholic Special Character dimensions may also attract accreditation hours. This year a number of staff and board members have the opportunity to attend the National Catholic Education Convention, an additional opportunity for participating teachers to gain accreditation hours.

Religious Education

The Principal, DRS and senior leadership are a united team who have ensured that the Religious Education curriculum has retained its high status within the college. Observations of Religious Education classes clearly showed the passion and commitment of teachers. The programme is well structured and planned and with effective examples of questioning and discussion between ākonga and kaiako. The principal and DRS provide support through classroom observations and feedback. Tō Tātou Whakapono the new Religious Education curriculum is gradually being implemented in the college. The programme is in action at year 10-11. Kaiako believe it is effectively resourced, and the removal of NCEA level one is seen as a positive. Online resources such as Faith Central and Faith Alive are being effectively used at appropriate levels. Ākonga, both junior and senior, stated their satisfaction with the learning topics. Senior students value teachers being more open to discussion, ‘more into depth and talking about it way more.’ Year 8 ākonga expressed enjoyment of the topic areas of creation and co-creation. Year 10 ākonga mentioned religious artwork and symbols ‘different people around the world with different images of God,’ and enjoyed learning about the history of the diocese and Catholic Education.

Kaiako for Religious Education are very aware of the challenges of capturing and retaining the interest of learners and navigating the literacy challenges at year 7-8. They are looking to improve the effectiveness of their teaching through drama, appreciating that Tō Tātou Whakapono affords more opportunity in this area. Their professionalism in trying various approaches to improve student engagement and impact is commendable.

Catholic Curriculum

The college leadership is also to be commended for intentionally incorporating the Catholic worldview into daily practice and in particular, all curriculum areas. Discussions throughout the evaluation indicate that this is being done systematically with good effect. This mahi has been going for some years now with the originating focus being Catholic Social Teaching. As an example, Achievement Objective 9, *Recognise the taonga of being a person of integrity, what happens when we lose integrity and what we can do to repair it*, from Tō Tātou Whakapono has been applied across the entire year 11 cohort. It is believed that the removal of NCEA level one allows learning to ‘naturally occur to a deeper level’ increasing its effectiveness,

Kaiako affirm that Religious Education is deliberately woven through the curriculum with ‘naturally occurring links in other subjects,’ citing as an example, the incorporation of Catholic Social Teaching in the Social Sciences curriculum.

Ongoing development:

- There is significant work to be done in updating accreditation records and monitoring staff development within the Theology, Curriculum and Personal Formation categories.
- Ongoing evaluation, through student voice, of the effectiveness and impact of learning in Religious Education particularly within the environment of a changing curriculum, to maximise the knowledge acquisition and faith formation opportunities for ākongā.
- Continue to pursue options to enhance PLD and spiritual development opportunities for the DRS and Religious Education teachers across the diocese or possibly establishing links with other secondary colleges.

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?

Catholic School Community

The authenticity of St Peter’s College as a place of Christian witness is evident through discussion with the various groups which comprise this Catholic community. The values of the college, *compassion, community, and commitment* are well articulated by ākongā, some of whom have assumed leadership roles. A recent initiative has seen the formation of student groups representing the college values. The *compassion* leaders described the nature of their work which includes links with Caritas and Women’s Refuge. They also take responsibility for arranging assemblies in cooperation with *community* and *commitment* leaders and head students. One leader spoke of ‘being chosen’ as an honour and how they appreciate being able to reach out to other students who come into the school from other non-Catholic cultures. Their current vision is to have more chapel and year group Masses, and interactive stations of the cross to enable ākongā to engage more spiritually with the forthcoming Holy Week and Easter observances. The DRS works closely to guide these emerging and innovative models of student leadership.

Discussions with senior ākongā included the founding history of the college, mostly from a Mercy perspective, recalling their time at St Mary’s contributing school. It would be opportune to re-emphasise the Rosminian tradition to recognise and honour the combined founders of the college. The Principal spoke of a tradition of college representatives visiting prominent Rosminian places of interest across England and Italy, most recently in 2019. The transition for year six ākongā was also discussed and they suggested there be more contact between the college and its contributing parish school. This would include the combined sacramental programme, interactive school visits and Kapa Haka performances.

Such initiatives will be considered by college leadership as a way of building or strengthening these links across the Catholic community and are timely with the arrival of the new parish priest / chaplain.

Partnership and Collaboration

The college, in recognising that education is a collaborative responsibility, strives to maintain commitments to all the groups it relates to. This includes an effective relationship with the local Hokonui Rūnanga. The principal meets regularly with the Rūnanga and community consultation features in this relationship. This engagement impacts on the multi-cultural life of the college with regular routines such as a recent whanau evening with a consultation focus. A Kapa Haka Hikoi to the Hokianga in Northland was scheduled to take place in 2022 and did not proceed due to pandemic restrictions. There is a vision for future Hikoi to take place in the South Island.

Discussion took place with senior ākonga about compulsory Te reo Māori in years 7 – 9 and some expressed a desire for this opportunity to be available from year 10. They acknowledged that a variety of Mātauranga Māori experiences are available, and they suggested asking Māori ākonga what opportunities they would like to see in the college including the further enrichment of Kapa Haka in relation to the wider community. It is noted that the explicit development of Mātauranga Māori is a current strategic goal with an action to imbed Tikanga, te Reo, and Mātauranga Māori in all learning areas as a Kahui Ako initiative.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is a current strategic focus seeking to ensure that current systems and procedures are ‘responsive to the needs of ākonga and reflect Gospel values and church teachings.’ A future internal evaluation of pastoral care would ideally align with the Dimension 3 evaluation for development.

An initiative, now in its third year, is the establishment of vertical whānau groups. The deans describe this as creating space for significant adult relationships to occur. They believe that the effectiveness of the initiative will be fully realised over the time that a student moves through the college and three years in, are starting to see the benefits. This focus has also been a significant growth area for the school with the strengthening of tuakana teina relationships.

Restorative Practice forms a major component of the Pastoral Plan and had undergone significant review and development at the time of the last external review. The college deans report that it takes time to be effective alongside training and risks becoming less effective over time due to staff change. It would be timely to re-evaluate the effectiveness of RP to ensure that it continues to serve the needs within the college community with adequately trained staff.

Service and Outreach

In the 2021 review, service and volunteering was described by the then board chair as a way of life in Gore and was reflected within the college through the actions of ākonga. Although growth in this area has been impacted by the pandemic, the DRS continues to coordinate workdays which are focused on outreach into the wider community with a focus on fundraising for charity, and fits well with the Rosminian motto, Charity Fulfils the Law. There are plans to revitalise and strengthen student service and outreach opportunities.

Ongoing development:

- Future plans include more Chapel and year group Masses, and interactive stations of the cross to enable ākonga to engage more spiritually with Passion week and Easter observances.
- Ākonga suggested more contact between the college and its contributing parish school. This would include the already planned combined sacramental programme, interactive school visits and Kapa Haka performances.
- Survey ākonga about what Mātauranga Māori opportunities they would like to see in the college including the further enrichment of Kapa Haka in relation to the wider community.
- It would be timely to re-evaluate effectiveness of Restorative Practice to ensure that it continues to serve the needs within the college community with adequately trained staff.

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?

Stewardship and Legal Obligations

This external evaluation was requested by the Limited Statutory Manager in late 2023 and carried out early in 2024 as part of the regular three-year cycle. It affirms that Catholic Special Character is being lived out in the college, through its faith-based leadership, with strength, commitment and passion and has remained a priority since the 2021 review.

The make-up of the school board has changed significantly since the 2021 external review. The four proprietor appointees have changed and a new presiding member with a strong background in Catholic secondary college leadership and governance recently took office. Key to success in guiding the college in its mission to safeguard and strengthen Catholic Special Character will be highlighting the importance of timely and transparent communication and the preservation of right relationships among leaders and kaiako - critical focus areas for the future growth and development of the college.

The foundation for continued improvement is evident in the mission, vision, values and direction and goals which are explicitly Catholic and within its vision is highlighted the core values of *Compassion, Commitment and Community*.

The challenges of ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of Catholic Special Character initiatives are recognised in recent annual planning. Examples include a focus on sourcing new opportunities for Professional Learning and Development, updating staff accreditation records, strengthening student service and outreach opportunities and recognition of such service.

The process of annual internal evaluation is well embedded, and the leadership is open to adding strength to the process. We discussed narrowing the evaluation focus and consider an inquiry-based approach (Rolfé, Jasper & Freshwater,(2011) or Education Review Office & Ministry of Education recommended model Effective School Evaluation: How to do and use evaluation for improvement (2016)

An examination of all areas in the board’s annual attestation document shows a high level of compliance. The following is noted and has been ongoing since the 2021 review:

- The college is significantly above its non-preference limit and is taking steps to address this. The Principal will identify siblings [who may continue to be enrolled with concurrence from the diocesan office] and continue to reduce remaining numbers through attrition.
- The college is five short in its CI47 (tagged) positions due to the scarcity of suitably qualified applicants. The Principal believes that the situation is satisfactorily covered within existing staffing.

College roll as at the date of the evaluation

Preference Category	Number of Students	% of Current Total Student Number
5.1	161	41%
5.2	0	0%
5.3	70	18%
5.4	34	9%
Exemptions	74	19%
Non-Preference (26 max) 5%	36	9%
International	14	4%
Total roll	389	100%
Maximum roll	512	76% of capacity

Ongoing development:

- Maintain a strong improvement focus:
 - Sourcing new opportunities for Professional Learning and Development
 - Updating staff accreditation records
 - Strengthening student service and outreach opportunities and recognition.

- Narrow the internal evaluation focus and consider an inquiry-based approach or an Education Review Office & Ministry of Education model.

Areas of strength / growth since the 2019 review

Staff Development

The Deputy Principal is leading effective Te Tiriti focused growth initiatives including, staff development time in te reo and tikanga, staff involvement in the Potamu Pounamu programme and a teacher development day on 6 March at Te Tomairangi Marae.

Religious Education / Catholic Curriculum

Tō Tātou Whakapono, the new Religious Education curriculum, is gradually being implemented in the college. Resources such as Faith Central and Faith Alive are being effectively used at appropriate levels. Ākongā believe that their collective voice has been heard in a number of consultation opportunities in school activities including curriculum. They value opportunities for discussion and debate. Religious Education is purposefully woven through the curriculum with ‘naturally occurring links in other subjects,’ citing as an example, the incorporation of Catholic Social Teaching in the Social Sciences curriculum. The college leadership and kaiako are to be commended for intentionally incorporating the Catholic worldview throughout the curriculum. This is being done systematically with good effect.

Partnership and Collaboration

Ongoing engagement with Hokonui Rūnanga impacts positively on the multi-cultural life of the college with regular routines such as a recent whānau evening with a consultation focus. There is a vision to revitalise Hikoi and for a future Kapa Haka focused event to take place in the South Island.

Pastoral Care

A growth initiative is the establishment of vertical whānau groups. The Deans describe this as enabling significant adult relationships to occur. They believe that the effectiveness of the initiative will be fully realised over the time that a student moves through the college. This has been a significant growth area with the strengthening of tuakana teina relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Te Tūtaki Ki A Te Karaiti: Encounter with Christ

- *Continue to explore new ways of evangelisation within the school / parish community:*
 - *Promotion of regular family involvement in Sunday Eucharistic gatherings.*
 - *Promotion of opportunities and actively promote opportunities for Sacramental formation across the school.*
 - *Consider a personal approach for whānau in the non-preference category.*

Te Whakatupu Mā Te Mātauranga: Growth in Knowledge

- *There is significant work to be done in updating accreditation records and monitoring staff development within the Theology, Curriculum and Personal Formation categories.*

- *Continue to pursue options to enhance PLD and spiritual development opportunities for the DRS and RE teachers across the diocese or possibly establishing links with other secondary colleges.*

Te Whakaatu Karaitiana: Christian Witness

- *Survey ākongā about what Mātauranga Māori opportunities they would like to see in the college including the further enrichment of Kapa Haka in relation to the wider community.*
- *It would be timely to re-evaluate effectiveness of Restorative Practice to ensure that it continues to serve the needs within the college community with adequately trained staff.*

Te Kaitiakitanga Me Te Whakapakari I Te Tuakiri Katorika: Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Character

- *Narrow the internal evaluation focus and consider an inquiry approach or an Education Review Office & Ministry of Education model. (See references)*

In conclusion

The evaluation team is confident that the St Peter's College Board, Principal and senior leaders have the willingness and ability to address these recommendations. Ongoing assistance is available from the Catholic Education Office.

We extend our sincere thanks to the board, leadership, staff, whānau and ākongā of the St Peter's community for the welcome, hospitality and cooperation extended to us, opportunities to dialogue with various groups and for the opportunity to experience the way that they safeguard and strengthen their Catholic Special Character. The organisation and preparation for external evaluation by the Principal and senior leaders is appreciated.

Ngā mihi nui

Paul Richardson B Ed, Dip Tehg, Dip Ed L, Dip RE, CFLE

Lead Evaluator

28 March 2024

