

NEW SCHOOLS READINESS TO OPEN REPORT: confirmed June 2015

Cornerstone Christian School

Palmerston North

MoE Profile Number: 1172

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Education (MoE) commissioned the Education Review Office (ERO) to conduct a review of preparation work in order to help determine the readiness of Cornerstone Christian School to change class from being a Year 1 to 8 full primary school to become a Year 1 to 13 composite school.

Terms of reference

The MoE asked ERO to:

- support the preparations for the change of class of Cornerstone Christian School with the Board, by reviewing its planning, development and implementation of policies and procedures to enable the school to operate successfully as a Year 1 to 13 composite school.

METHODOLOGY

Over the course of 2014 and 2015, ERO met a number of times with the principal, senior leadership team and trustees to evaluate Cornerstone Christian School's progress towards readiness to change class. ERO also met with teachers and read documents developed to guide the school's operation.

An interim report was prepared for the MoE in December 2014 to provide information on progress to date.

FINDINGS

Cornerstone Christian School is a well established Years 1 to 8 school. Careful planning and the development of a range of policies and procedures during 2014 and 2015 should enable the school to operate successfully as a Year 1 to 13 composite school in the future.

At the time of ERO's visit in March 2015 secondary school roll was at the expected level. There were 20 Year 9 and 31 Year 10 students. Year 11 to 13 students will be progressively enrolled from 2016.

The vision and direction for the extended school is clearly reflected in the school charter. The board is committed to providing high quality education for all students that reflects both *The New Zealand Curriculum* and the Christian special character. Trustees are involved in training that reflects the changing roles and responsibilities they will have as the roll grows. The community is well informed about the current and likely future development of the school.

Appropriate structures and delegations support the board to operate efficiently. An effective working relationship has been established between trustees and senior managers. Review

associated with compliance matters is well established. Board policies and procedures have been appropriately modified and developed to reflect the changing age composition.

In association with the board of trustees the principal has shown considered and systematic leadership in his approach to moving to a composite Years 1 to 13 school. An assistant principal has specific responsibility for the secondary area. He is working collaboratively with the principal and teachers to ensure that the curriculum and systems to support student well being are appropriate and effectively implemented. Shared understanding of curriculum and assessment across the extended school is being built.

The Year 9 to 13 curriculum framework is aligned with the principles, vision, values and achievement objectives of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. The Christian special character is very evident.

Curriculum and resourcing is in place to provide for the secondary level students as they move through the year levels. A curriculum planner indicates the range of subjects likely to be available in the senior school. Some specialist classes are to be provided externally. NZQA have granted the school Consent to Assess for NCEA qualifications from 2015.

The employment of specialist, experienced teachers along with the comprehensive facilities in the new building support the learning needs of the secondary students well. The modern learning environments and digital technology available are likely to enable students to be involved in a range of learning programmes, including those focused on their individual strengths and interests.

Inclusive practices are supportive of students and families from a range of cultural and socio-economic groups. Building positive relationships is prioritised. Additional assistance is provided for students with extra learning needs. Pastoral support for students is helped by Year 9 and 10 students spending approximately 50% of the day with their form teacher. Systems are in place to ensure careers information and advice is provided.

The school has planned to consult with whānau and iwi in 2015 as part of extending the reflection of te ao Māori in the school. This is likely to include developing a shared understanding about further promoting Māori language, culture and identity.

Priority areas to be addressed

Key next steps for the school are to:

- review and develop current provision for Māori learners through reference to best practice guidelines for developing cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners
- extend self review to ensure it further considers effectiveness of curriculum provision and support of student well being.

CONCLUSION

As the secondary year levels are introduced systems, appropriate curriculum and resourcing are either in place or planned for these students. Cornerstone Christian School is well placed to cater for the needs of Years 9 to 13 students.