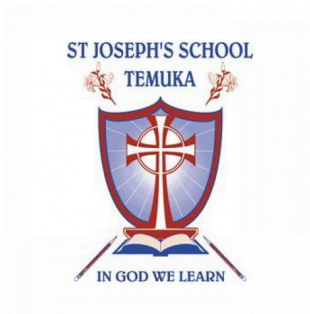


CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH

TE TAKIWĀ Ō TE PĪHOPA

*He Pūrongo Arotake Mātauranga
Ahurea Katorika ā Waho.*

Catholic Special Character External Evaluation Report



St Joseph's School,
Temuka

Evaluation conducted on August 25 - 26, 2025

Confirmed Report October 30, 2025

School Details

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of School: | St Joseph's School, Temuka |
| Address: | Wilkin St, Temuka |
| School type: | State Integrated Full Primary - Years 0 - 8 |
| Actual roll: | 121 |
| Maximum roll: | 130 |
| Non-preference maximum: | 6 |
| Actual non-preference number: | 3 |
| Required number of | |
| Special Character Cl 47 positions: | 3 (excluding Principal and DRS) |
| Filled number of | |
| Special Character Cl 47 positions: | 0 |
| Principal: | Brenna Sugrue |
| Director of Religious Studies: | Anna Galbraith |
| Presiding Member, School Board: | Charlotte Bowan |
| Parish Priest: | Fr Francis Joseph (Fr Jolly) |

EvaluationTeam:

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Lead Evaluator: | Tony Shaw |
| co-evaluator | Jill White |

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.

Introduction

St Joseph's Catholic School, Temuka, is an integrated full primary Catholic school offering education with a special character to children from Year 1 to 8. It was established in 1883 by the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. The school is an integral part of the Parish of St Mary MacKillop, Opihi, along with St Joseph's School Pleasant Point.

The school motto is: "*In God we learn*"

There is a diverse range of cultures which is celebrated by this school community. 25% identify as Māori, 1% as Filipino, 6% as Pasifika and 62% as NZ European.

Progress with Recommendations from the 2020 Catholic Special Character Review for Development Report (Principal's comments in blue)

Encounter with Christ

1. School and parish leaders are encouraged to continue looking for evangelising opportunities to nurture, strengthen and increase the number of families active in regular Catholic worship and parish life.

- Family Liturgies and Masses: Our school schedules regular liturgies where students take active roles as readers, altar servers, and musicians, liturgical dancers and projectionists. Families are personally invited to attend.

2. Continue to promote and nurture positive relationships with the parish community by participating in the proposed development and implementation of a Strategic Plan for the parish.

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

² Ibid.

- Sacramental Programmes: The school runs sacramental programs with the parish to support students preparing for Baptism and First Communion. Preparation sessions are held at school, and families are invited to be part of the journey with preparation meetings etc.
 - Communication and Invitation: newsletters and social media posts include, parish events, shared parish Facebook posts and the parish newsletter is sent weekly to families, helping families stay informed and engaged. School whanau pages are sent home for parent engagement.
 - Joint School-Parish Events: Celebrations such as the Feast of St. Joseph and Ash Wednesday etc. Shared Parish /school mass gatherings once a year are planned together, strengthening the bond between school and parish. Class Masses in The Mary Mackillop Chapel each week
 - Pastoral Outreach: Students from the school are involved with the church cleaning roster and assisting parishioners with cleaning.
- The principal is part of the Parish Council and attends meeting sharing what is happening in the school to strengthen our school parish connection.
- A new Proprietors Appointee has been appointed who is on the Parish council to help build school and Parish connections. To work together more closely.
- Parishioners have been invited into the school to speak to children about their role in the parish.

Growth in Knowledge

3. The Year 4 RE Online Assessment indicates students are achieving below the Diocesan Average. The Strands of Holy Spirit and God are somewhat weaker than the remaining strands and modules. Faith-based leaders, in consultation with staff, should review these results and look at ways to boost the knowledge of students within the weakest strand(s) during 2020 and 2021. The actions taken could form a Student Achievement Target / Learning Improvement Plan to be included within the school's charter document.

Following the integration of the new curriculum, the Year 4 test was disestablished. Prior to this change, the school had been actively working to ensure that student knowledge continued to grow and remained aligned with diocesan expectations. To support equitable access to the assessment, we introduced the use of readers during the test, ensuring that students who had trouble with reading the questions were not disadvantaged. This approach reflected our commitment ensure an accurate assessment of student understanding.

4. Senior leaders should now begin the process of developing a sexuality programme for all levels of the school using the recently released NCRS (National Centre for Religious Studies) Framing Document Human Sexuality Education: A guide for Catholic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Due to changes in teaching staff, very few current staff have participated in the professional learning, 'Having Life to the Full' or 'Sexuality Education' delivered by Catholic Education Office staff. Priority should be given to enrol new teaching staff in 'Having Life to the Full' over time.

Our school has been actively engaged in the implementation of the new sexuality education resource with other schools in our Kahui Ako, ensuring it is delivered in a way that reflects our Catholic Special Character.

Teachers in Years 5–8 have been involved in the rollout of the new sexuality resource for schools. These resources have been integrated into classroom teaching, with a strong emphasis on presenting content through a Catholic lens. This ensures that students receive

accurate, respectful, and values-based education that aligns with Church teachings on human dignity, relationships, and personal responsibility.

While the full rollout is still in progress for the junior school, teachers are currently using the Ministry of Education's sexuality education programme, adapted to reflect Catholic values. This approach ensures consistency with national curriculum expectations while maintaining our faith-based perspective.

5. School leaders have decided to cover three strands of the RE Curriculum on an annual basis to provide a deeper understanding for students. Careful planning, assessment, tracking of students and evaluation will be required in order to effectively evaluate this change of emphasis while ensuring the school delivers the entire religious education curriculum effectively to all students every year.

Christian Witness

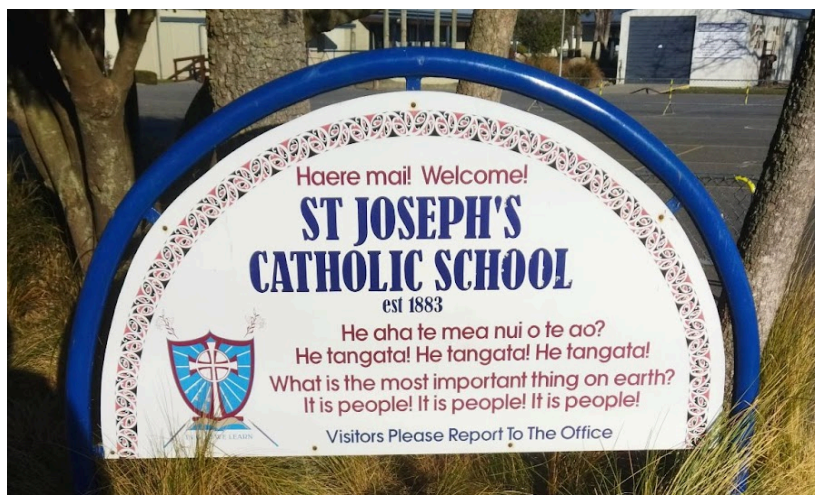
6. Ensure all classrooms have a crucifix displayed providing witness to the Catholic identity of the school.

All classes have a crucifix displayed providing witness to the Catholic identity of the school.

Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Character

7. Due to the school being three S464 positions short, priority must be given to rectifying this shortfall as soon as practicable. The review team is confident that the leaders of St Joseph's School (Board, Principal and DRS) have the willingness and ability to address the recommendations of this report. The reviewers thank the community of St Joseph's School for the welcome extended to them and for the opportunity to observe and experience the way they safeguard and strengthen their Catholic special character.

The school has continued its efforts to recruit for S464 positions. In 2024, we successfully appointed one teacher; however, they resigned after a year to relocate overseas. We have since re-advertised the vacancies and will be conducting interviews on 31st August. Encouragingly, we have received some applications from Catholic candidates and are hopeful that we will be able to appoint a suitable applicant/s to strengthen our team.



Dimension 1: Te Tūtaki ki a Te Karaiti-Encounter with Christ

St Joseph's School encourages and facilitates the development of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals the transforming love and truth of the living God in the following ways:

Spiritual Formation:

How does the school provide an ongoing Catholic spiritual formation to assist individuals to deepen their personal relationship with Christ? What is the effect of this?

Opportunities are available for the spiritual development of members of the school community (including whānau, non-teaching staff as well as tamariki and kaiako).

Kaiako have previously had special character input on Teacher Only days at the start of the Term, and whilst Sr Lyndall was residing in the community they had the opportunity of learning all about the charism on a regular basis. Now Sr Lyndall has moved away the tumuaki and DRS will continue to plan for effective spiritual nourishment of the staff and students by inviting others to visit. Fr John O'Connor has been approached and is willing to contribute in this way as time allows.

The school incorporates tikanga and te reo Māori and Māori expression of Katorikatanga into aspects of Catholic special character, including Masses, liturgies, and prayer. Following specific goals in previous annual plans, kaiako have made a concerted effort to learn te reo Māori and to use and normalise some key phrases in te reo. Tamariki were observed responding in class to key greetings and verbal exchanges.

Varied and rich prayer is an integral part of the daily routine of school life. This includes individual and community prayer using traditional and contemporary forms. Tamariki were taught various ways of praying, including silent meditation. Junior tamariki were guided in the process of reflecting and then bringing their personal prayer to the class.

There is space and time for quiet personal reflection and prayer. St Joseph's School in Temuka is blessed to have the Mary MacKillop Centre and chapel on site, and the beautifully restored parish church across the road. Together with a well-formed prayer garden in the school grounds, tamariki have several options for time and space for quiet prayer.

The school's values, referred to as "our Mary MacKillop Values", are based on the Gospels and are taught, modelled and promoted. Each week of Term the tumuaki announces a new value that will be the focus of the week, and this is then displayed in classrooms and kaiako reinforce this during lessons.

Displays and symbols, including those significant for Māori, provide witness to the Catholic special character of the school. Each classroom has a white cross mounted above the spouting on the roof of the building. These are a clear symbol that this is a Catholic school. Each

classroom has a prayer table and sacred focus, and there are pictures of Pope Leo and Bishop Michael Gielen in each room.

Tamariki have the opportunity to encounter Christ through the charism of the school's founding order, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. When Mary MacKillop was first asked to send Sisters to South Canterbury they came to Temuka, and this is now a significant historical pilgrimage site. Tamariki all have a good understanding of who St Mary MacKillop was, and what she achieved in starting a number of Catholic schools in South Canterbury.

St Joseph's School has rich treasures in terms of the chapel and church, and the history of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. It is important to continue to promote this legacy as new families arrive in the community, with new tamariki and changes in staff. The effect of this is to ensure that the charism of the Sisters is understood, and tamariki grow in their faith as they follow the values of Mary MacKillop and the Gospels.

Evangelisation:

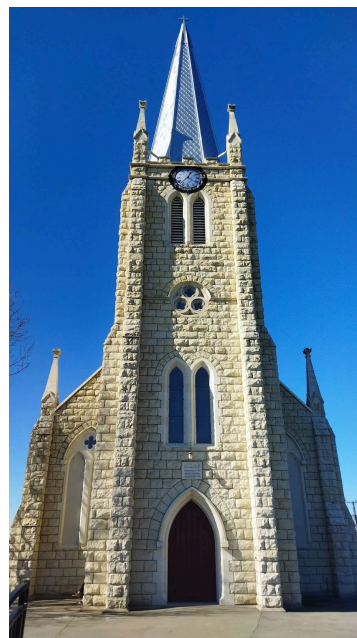
How does the school, through its practices and communications, facilitate an encounter with Christ and spread the Good News to the community? What is the effect of this?

The school provides a variety of opportunities for members of its community to develop and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and teaching of the Catholic Church.

On Monday mornings the school gathers in the beautiful church to start the week with communal prayer and singing. The DRS prepares some input each week based on the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. This is broken down and explained so that even the youngest tamariki will understand the key message.

There is a school Mass once per Term, and leaders work hard to encourage all whānau to attend with their tamariki. In addition to this each class is rostered to attend a class Mass in the chapel every Wednesday. Fr Jolly visits a classroom every Thursday.

The school promotes Mass attendance and other events in the parish through the newsletter, Facebook, and through the Hero student management system. The Sacramental programme is promoted through both school and parish newsletters, and tamariki are prepared for the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist by school staff, in collaboration with St Joseph's School, Pleasant Point. The parish facilitates the Confirmation programme, and St Joseph's School promotes and encourages this through their communications.



With Tamariki making their first Holy Communion the weekend following the external visit, this is a key opportunity where the school is facilitating an important encounter with Christ. The Parish of Opihi will have extended families gather for this special occasion, and so an opportunity to evangelise these people who may not be regularly at Mass.

Tamariki and whānau Māori feel valued as tangata whenua due to the normalisation of te ao, tikanga and te reo Māori into the Catholic special character of the school.

The school and parish work collaboratively to include tamariki and their whānau in Sunday Mass and to be involved in their local parish. There is a roster of altar servers and many tamariki are enthusiastic about serving after receiving their first Holy Communion.

St Joseph's School has been involved with the South Canterbury Catholic Kahui Ako since its inception, and by working collaboratively with Roncalli College there is an effective transition to school and orientation programme to assist tamariki who will enrol there after leaving Year 8.

A current initiative, the *St Joseph's Challenge*, started in 2013 and is an incentive for ākonga to strive towards particular goals: Being an 'active Catholic', Work ethic, Community Service, and personal effort. This is a positive way to motivate tamariki to be a Christian Witness and develop their encounter with Jesus.

Whānau are encouraged to be actively engaged in the faith journey of their tamariki. As the first educators in the faith of their children, whānau are supported and encouraged by the School to confidently guide their tamariki on their faith journey.

Faith-based Leadership:

How does faith-based leadership effectively shape the school's vision and direction, so as to ensure a genuine and ongoing encounter with Christ? What is the effect of this?

The strategic direction of St Joseph's School has certainly maintained a constructive Catholic Special Character focus through the faith-leadership of the school, alongside long-serving Proprietor's appointees, such as Sr Lyndall.

The tumuaki and DRS competently articulate their own faith and are committed to their own ongoing faith formation, and to lead the development of Catholic special character.

The tumuaki and DRS are involved in the Board's annual internal evaluation of Catholic special character. Working alongside the proprietor's appointees they follow the templates provided by the Catholic Education Office to gather initial data to determine what is working well and what could be identified as a goal to strengthen an aspect of Catholic Special character. Whilst the process they follow is positive, consideration could be given to seeking tamariki and whānau voice in this process. Their responses, ideas and desires would add an important dimension.

The tumuaki and DRS have engaged in professional learning and formation in the areas of te reo, tikanga, and te ao Māori. This was largely through the Catholic Kahui Ako, and consisted of following an online programme. Efforts have been made to engage with local mana whenua.

The tumuaki and DRS would ensure that opportunities are provided for kaiako in special character positions (Schedule 6, Clause 47 Education and Training Act 2020) to deepen knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith-based leadership role and capabilities, once the School has been able to appoint a suitable kaiako. This has been a challenge, but the current kaiako with fixed term contracts have been well-supported.

The next steps for the tumuaki and DRS would be to look at providing retreat opportunities for tamariki, kaiako and the Board which focus on encountering Jesus on the journey of discipleship. The effect of this would be to strengthen the faith formation of all of these key groups.



The prayer garden in the St Joseph's School grounds.

Dimension 2: Mā te Mātauranga ka Tipu: Growth in Knowledge

St Joseph's School assists its community to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ, his teachings, and the Catholic Church in the following ways:

Leadership

How does leadership enable growth in knowledge and understanding, which are necessary factors in the disciple's journey? What is the effect of this?

The tumuaki and DRS provide leadership in religious instruction and observances. Kaiako ensure that tamariki are given the opportunity to develop faith, leadership, knowledge and skills.

The tumuaki and DRS support kaiako to develop their confidence and knowledge in Religious Education and Catholic Special Character. It is most important that kaiako in Catholic schools are 'formed' in terms of having the knowledge of scripture and theology and the confidence to deliver the Religious Education programme. The six papers that are offered by Te Kupenga and delivered by the Catholic Education Office are the best way to achieve this. Kaiako must be encouraged to complete at least one paper a year.

The role of the DRS is given appropriate status in terms of such things as having appropriate release time, and having opportunities for their leadership capability to be developed.

The DRS provides leadership for the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum, and kaiako feel supported by her as they navigate *Tō Tātou Whakapono - Our Faith*.

There have been challenges in appointing Catholic teachers at St Joseph's School, but all kaiako, whether they are in special character roles or not, need to be encouraged to complete the Diocesan Certificate of Attainment in Religious Studies. The effect of this would be kaiako who are confident and competent in their own understanding of Church teachings.

Religious Education

How is the Religious Education programme given high status, and what evidence is there that it is soundly managed, appropriately resourced, and professionally delivered by qualified kaiako? What is the effect of this?

The school implements the nationally mandated Religious Education curriculum, *Tō Tātou Whakapono - Our Faith*, delivering its Achievement Objectives with integrity, for no less than the minimum time each week specified by the New Zealand Bishops.

St Joseph's School delivers the Religious Education programme with adequate and appropriate resourcing. The programme is taught in a way that enables tamariki to integrate their faith, culture, and life.

Religious Education teachers participate in Catholic special character professional learning and formation when it is available. They have previously enjoyed input on the Josephite charism with Sr Lyndall being resident in the community. Now she has left Temuka school leaders will plan for other ways to support kaiako to offer spiritual formation and faith development.

The school makes good use of Catholic education advisory services.

Whānau are informed regularly of the content and emphasis of the Religious Education programme. This is mainly through the Hero student management system, or with detailed notices in the school newsletter provided by the DRS. Board members are kept informed regarding *Tō Tātou Whakapono - Our Faith* through the 'starter' videos that are sent out each month to assist Boards to understand the framework and expected outcomes of the new curriculum. The effect of this is that tamariki are being formed in their faith through the Religious Education programme, and the DRS ensures that all kaiako are supported in the planning and delivery of the programme.

Catholic Curriculum

How is the Catholic worldview integrated into the daily practices of the school and into all curriculum areas? What is the effect of this?

The school teaches the core principles of Catholic social teaching and their application, as an integral component of a lived faith. Tamariki are encouraged to show compassion for those less fortunate, and to support Caritas, MissioAotearoa, St Vincent de Paul and their own 'Young Vinnies' group, in its various formats: Working Vinnies, Visiting Vinnies, Creative Vinnies.

The school teaches about Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the importance of tangata whenua and the partnership between tangata tiriti. All kaiako have endeavoured to improve their understanding and use of Te Reo, and basic words are frequently heard in the classroom - thus normalising the use of this.

The school develops students' awareness of their responsibilities as global citizens as well as citizens of Aotearoa, New Zealand, and ensures that a Catholic perspective is included in all curriculum areas.

School policy ensures that those aspects of the Health Curriculum which involve human sexuality education are set in the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church and delivered

using culturally responsive pedagogy. Kaiako involved in teaching the Human Sexuality and Personal Development components of the Health Curriculum must participate in professional learning and formation approved by the Proprietor. This includes the *Having Life to the Full* course. This was a recommendation made after the last external evaluation in 2020, and whilst all kaiako are delivering these sexuality aspects of the Health Curriculum, no one has completed *Having Life to the Full* since the last external visit. It is important that this is provided for kaiako in the next 12 months.

The school has a very clear policy on the requirement to consult with its community on how the sexuality aspects of the Health Curriculum will be delivered. It would be timely for Board members to read this policy and ensure that it is being followed appropriately. The Board must consider the most appropriate way to consult Māori, and the whānau of other cultures within their community, on sexuality education programmes.

The Board Policy states that a draft statement will be published first, with the community invited to respond to this. The last time this happened, in 2024, only two responses were received. The process was incorrectly entitled “Health and Safety Consultation” The Board has conducted other consultation processes which certainly give the community several opportunities to provide feedback, including written, verbal, individual conversations and community meetings. The area of consultation regarding these sexuality aspects of the Health Curriculum could be strengthened for the next opportunity in 2026.

Kaiako new to Catholic schools receive support to enable them to understand the Catholic special character of the school and to integrate a Catholic perspective across the curriculum. Because of the challenge of finding Catholic teachers who can fill the required special character positions, several kaiako are on fixed term contracts and clearly make every effort to support the Catholic character of the school.

Academic achievement and depth of learning are promoted in all curriculum areas and opportunities are available to all ākonga to achieve their individual best in the life of the school.

Next Steps for Development

It is most important that kaiako in Catholic schools are ‘formed’ in terms of having the knowledge of scripture and theology and the confidence to deliver the Religious Education programme. The six papers that are offered by Te Kupenga and delivered by the Catholic Education Office are the best way to achieve this. Kaiako must be encouraged to complete at least one paper a year.

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It is recommended that when the Board next prepares to consult the community on the delivery of the sexuality aspects of the Health Curriculum, a draft statement is prepared and a range of ways are developed to invite responses from all sections of the community, especially Māori whanau.

Dimension 3: Te Whakaatu Karaitiana-Christian Witness

The school provides a hope-filled Christian witness which empowers its community members to integrate their faith and their life in the following ways:

Catholic School Community

How does the school, as an authentic Catholic community, promote and support active Catholic Christian witness and practice in the school and in the parish community of which it is an integral part? What is the effect of this?

Kaiako, tamariki and whānau are assisted to understand that Christian witness is a response in faith and action to our encounter with Christ. Tamariki are presented with many opportunities to contribute to charities, fundraising, and Young Vinnies.

The school community has the opportunity to encounter Christ through prayer and liturgy. A 'liturgy committee' of senior ākonga works with the DRS to plan liturgies. All kaiako lead prayer in their classroom at the start and end of each day, and with grace before lunch. Parishioners are invited to attend the weekly Mass in the chapel.

The school community has the opportunity to encounter Christ through the charism of the school's founder, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. The charism of St Mary Mackillop and the virtues are promoted each week and reinforced by kaiako.

The school works to develop an understanding of te ao Māori, and to normalise the use of basic te reo Māori in the classroom. This is a result of setting goals through the Catholic Kāhui Ako and kaiako accepting the challenge of working towards these.

There are opportunities for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tamariki being prepared to receive their first Holy Communion recently were offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and this was a special and sacred opportunity.

The school and parish work collaboratively to build relationships that are an example of Catholic Special Character Evaluation St Joseph's School, Temuka August 2025

Christian witness. The tumuaki also serves on the Parish Council and every effort is made to build connections with the parish. This includes promoting parish activities through the school newsletter, and the parish advertising school events in their bulletin. Parishioners are invited to attend the Wednesday Mass in the school chapel.

The effect of this is that the school is actively encouraging tamariki and their whānau to be involved in parish activities, and to support efforts of the school and parish to be a Christian witness. This includes support for the parish St Vincent de Paul chapter, as well as supporting the local community by visiting Wallingford Home.

Partnership and Collaboration

Recognising that education is a collaborative responsibility, how does the school build strong commitments to all the groups it relates to including mana whenua, its whānau, its parish, its founding religious congregation, and its Bishop? How do tamariki develop an understanding of, and respect for, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the cultural diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand? What is the effect of this?

As a community within the larger communities of the parish and the diocese, the school seeks to work collaboratively and constructively with both. The tumuaki's presence on the Parish Council is testament to her efforts to strengthen the relationship with the parish and the local Catholic community.

Acknowledging that whānau are the first educators of their tamariki, the school actively works to build whānau participation in the faith development of their tamariki, their education and in the wider life of the school and parish. Whānau are certainly encouraged to attend the school Mass each Term, but are also encouraged to attend Sunday Mass. Fr Jolly is very welcome in the school and ākonga and kaiako appreciate his presence.

The school works to build and maintain respectful and affirming relationships with whānau Māori so that they feel welcome and 'at home'. St Joseph's has engaged in authentic consultation with its Māori community and mana whenua, through the Catholic Kāhui Ako whilst it appreciates that it is difficult for local mana whenua to respond to requests from all the schools in the area.

The school provides clear information and opportunities for whānau to understand school systems and practices in general and in relation to Catholic special character.

Effective systems are in place to support ākonga to transition to, within, and beyond schools, particularly with only one Catholic secondary school in South Canterbury. Senior ākonga from St Joseph's School have an annual opportunity to visit Roncalli College as part of a "leadership day" which is led by rangatahi from Roncalli College. This is an effective way of exposing

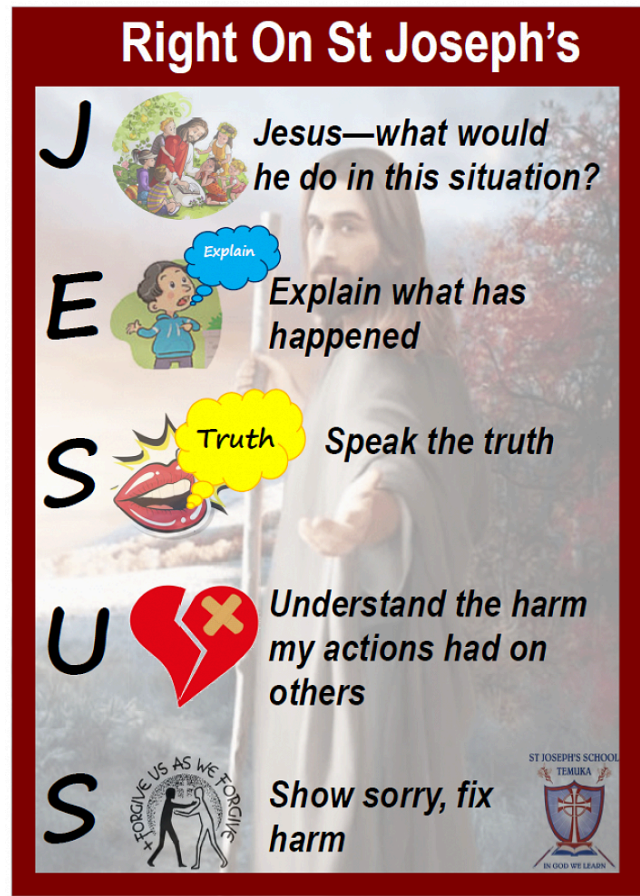
tamariki to the Catholic secondary school, and in this way promotes a smooth transition as they graduate from St Joseph's School.

Pastoral Care

How does the school ensure that education occurs in a safe, nurturing environment supported by a strong pastoral care network in which each member of the community is known, respected, cared for and aware that they are loved unconditionally by God? What is the effect of this?

Systems are in place to ensure that tamariki are personally known, cared for, and provided with support as required. Kaiako, like the Good Shepherd, know their ākonga well. Many examples were observed of this knowledge and care of tamariki, and it is clear that tamariki feel safe and cared for.

Behaviour management processes are just, fair, clear to all, and guided by restorative practice, linked to Catholic social teaching. The system used at St Joseph's is called "Right On". *"If it's right, do it. If it's not right, don't do it!"* This flows onto another set of statements as indicated in this poster:



Pastoral care systems make use of the support offered by the parish and an active group of parents and friends of St Joseph's School. Any family in need, after being identified by the school, receives appropriate support in terms of meals, uniform, or assistance with costs for camps and learning outside the classroom.

The effect of this is a school community that cares for each and every member and is willing to respond to calls for assistance generously.

Service and Outreach

Recognising that each person is called as a Christian to take care of others and to work for justice and equality, in what ways does the school explicitly base service and outreach activities according to Catholic social teaching, and grow the practice and understanding of caring for others and the environment? What is the effect of this?

The school provides opportunities for tamariki and kaiako to contribute actively to the life of the local community. Tamariki in meeting with the evaluators could list a range of ways they can serve the needy in the community and beyond. The younger ākonga are encouraged to support various fundraising projects, such as Caritas and MissioAotearoa and local projects for those in the school community who are in need. The school arranges visits to Wallingford Home so tamariki can visit the elderly in this aged care facility.

Senior tamariki can join various Young Vinnie groups within the school, depending on the type of activity they feel comfortable with. 'Working Vinnies', 'Visiting Vinnies' and 'Creative Vinnies' give ākonga a range of options as they are encouraged to respond to the Gospel call to love their neighbour through identifying a need and giving service and outreach.

The school recognises and acknowledges the service efforts of tamariki and kaiako through school assembly, Newsletters, and parish bulletin.

The effect of this is that all tamariki learn that Jesus is calling them to love their neighbour, to give generously, to support Church projects, and to address social injustice both within and beyond their community. Through performing 'good works' their faith is developing.



Above: A mural at the entrance to the school.

Dimension 4: Te Kaitiakitanga me te Whakapakari I te Tuakiri Katorika-Safeguarding and Strengthening Catholic Special Character

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

Stewardship

How does governance and management safeguard and strengthen Catholic special character within the areas of organisation, employment, professional development and formation, and enrolment? What is the effect of this?

The Board ensures that the vision and strategic direction for the school clearly and explicitly reflect the Catholic special character of the school. Board policies and school procedures explicitly reflect Catholic special character, particularly the principles of Catholic social teaching.

The Board incorporates an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, te ao and tikanga Māori into their policies and school procedures and Board documentation sets clear expectations for appropriate cultural responsiveness across the school.

The Board strives for educational excellence for all ākonga.

The Board receives regular reports from the tumuaki on Catholic special character and Religious Education.

The Board has a plan for annual Catholic special character internal evaluation, which includes the evaluation of one of the four dimensions of Catholic special character each year. The evaluation involves staff and parish personnel and consideration could be given to inviting tamariki and whānau contributions to this process.

Board members have access to, and are familiar with, the following documents: The Declaration, the Handbook for Boards of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic State Integrated Schools, any diocesan guidelines for the appointment of special character CL47 positions including tumuaki, DRS and other teachers in CL 47 positions, the Certification Handbook, The Catholic Education of School-Age Children, Being Church in Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic Schools, and Catholic Character Evaluation for Development, He Mea Hanga Mīharo ki tō te Atua Āhua – Wonderfully Made in God’s Image: A revised Framing Document for human sexuality education in Aotearoa Catholic schools.

All school promotional material reflects the Catholic identity of the school.

Whilst Board policy and plans support the expectation of the NZCBC that the tumuaki and teachers of Religious Education are working towards a formal qualification in Religious Education or Catholic Special Character and that all kaiako are working towards the next level of Catholic Special Character Evaluation St Joseph’s School, Temuka August 2025

certification, kaiako need to be encouraged to complete at least one of the six papers each year to grow their knowledge and confidence to deliver the Religious Education programme effectively.

Board policy ensures that those aspects of the Health Curriculum which involve human sexuality education are set in the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church, and that whānau and the Proprietor are consulted about the programme every two years. It is recommended that the Board follow their policy on this when they next consult the community in 2026.

Employment

School procedures for advertising and making teaching appointments to positions are in line with the requirements of Schedule 6: Education and Training Act 2020 and the school's Integration Agreement, as outlined in the Handbook for Boards of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic State Integrated Schools.

Job descriptions indicate the role specific responsibilities of all staff members to actively support the Catholic special character of the school.

Documentation supplied to people seeking employment includes information about the nature of the Catholic school, and what is expected of staff in a Catholic school. When an offer of appointment is made the employment letter templates provided by NZCEO are used.

Professional Development

The Board has previously engaged in a programme of Catholic special character professional learning and formation, including the principles of Catholic social teaching, and their application to Board responsibilities. The Board makes good use of the videos produced by the Catholic Education Office to outline the new *Tō Tātou Whakapono - Our Faith* curriculum.

The Board has previously engaged in professional learning on cultural competencies including an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its application, te ao, tikanga, mātauranga, and te reo Māori.

An induction programme for all new trustees later this year will ensure that they understand their Catholic special character responsibilities.

The Board ensures that opportunities and financial assistance are available for at least the tumuaki and DRS to take part in an annual retreat and/or to have ongoing spiritual accompaniment.

Enrolment

The Board's preference and non-preference enrolment policy and the school's procedures are clear and transparent (including its criteria) and meet the requirements of the school's Integration Agreement and Ministry of Education regulations.

The preference/non-preference details, as at the time of the Catholic Special Character review (August 2025), were as follows:

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| St Joseph's School, Temuka | Maximum Roll (as per Integration Agreement) = 130 students | Non-Preference Maximum (as per Integration Agreement) = 7 students |
|----------------------------|--|--|

| Preference Criterion | Number of Students | % of Current Total Number Students |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 5.1 | 82 | 67.8% |
| 5.2 | 2 | 1.7% |
| 5.3 | 27 | 22.3% |
| 5.4 | 7 | 5.8% |
| 5.5 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Non-Preference | 3 | 2.5% |
| Total | 121 | 100% |

Legal Obligations

The school is working towards compliance with its Integration Agreement regarding: Number of Schedule 6: Clause 47 Education and Training Act 2020 (CI 47) positions held (excluding tumuaki and DRS) compared with number or percentage of CI 47 positions specified in the Integration Agreement or the supplementary schedule. It has been very challenging to fill these roles. St Joseph's School is compliant in the following areas:

- If the School Board has an appointments committee it must contain at least one Proprietor's Appointee for all permanent tumuaki, DRS and teaching positions.
- Maximum roll compared with actual roll at time of review.
- Number of preference students.
- Number of non-preference students, if any (lists are kept).

The Board consults, communicates, and works with the Proprietor to ensure Catholic special character is safeguarded and strengthened.

Catholic Special Character Evaluation Report Summary

Areas of growth since the 2020 Review for Development Report

The leaders at St Joseph's School in Temuka have addressed many of the recommendations in the 2020 Report, and these efforts are reflected in positive signs of growth in several areas. The number of families engaging in the Sacramental programme is a strong testament to these efforts. A significant number of 5.3 and 5.4 Preference tamariki have now been baptised, and through the Sacraments of Initiation more families are engaging with the parish as they accompany their tamariki on their faith journey.

The tumuaki is an active member of the parish council, and through this connection the links between the parish and school have strengthened. Parish and school join for celebrations and liturgies such as Ash Wednesday, the Feast of St Joseph, and the school leaders are regularly encouraging families to attend Sunday Mass.

The lack of suitable teachers to fill the Special Character Clause 47 positions was identified in the 2020 Report and this remains a challenge currently. As this Evaluation Report is being finalised there have been applications for a permanent special character position that do meet the criteria, and it is expected that this situation will change. It is also evident that the teachers who have been in fixed term appointments have made a committed contribution to the school, and have been well supported by the tumuaki and DRS to deliver the Religious Education Programme.

An important recommendation from the 2020 Report related to the delivery of the Sexuality Programme, and the need to have teachers trained through programmes approved by the Bishops Conference, namely *"Having Life to the Full"*. This professional development of teachers must remain a priority for school leaders and the Board to address in 2026.

St Joseph's School in Temuka is a very special site, being the school where the first Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart were sent by St Mary MacKillop to start their foundation in South Canterbury. The beautifully restored church opposite the school and the St Mary MacKillop Centre and Chapel on the school grounds have been designated a pilgrimage site in 2025. These treasures enable the tamariki at St Joseph's School to be immersed in the charism of the Josephite Sisters as they grow in knowledge of God, learn how they can be a Christian witness, and develop a genuine encounter with Jesus. The tumuaki and DRS are dedicated to ensuring that the school and parish collaborate to continue the evangelising mission of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. Through this charism the whole community is strengthened in faith.

Recommendations

1. It is most important that kaiako in Catholic schools are 'formed' in terms of having the knowledge of scripture and theology and the confidence to deliver the Religious Education programme. The six papers that are offered by Te Kupenga and delivered by the Catholic Education Office are the best way to achieve this. Kaiako must be encouraged to complete at least one paper a year.
2. Kaiako involved in teaching the Human Sexuality and Personal Development components of the Health Curriculum must participate in professional learning and formation approved by the Proprietor. This includes the *Having Life to the Full* course. This was a recommendation made after the last external evaluation in 2020, and whilst all kaiako are delivering these sexuality aspects of the Health Curriculum, no one has completed having Life to the Full since the last external visit. It is important that this is provided for kaiako in the next 12 months.
3. It is recommended that when the Board next prepares to consult the community on the delivery of the sexuality aspects of the Health Curriculum, a draft statement is prepared and a range of ways are developed to invite responses from all sections of the community, especially Māori whanau.

The evaluator is confident that the St Joseph's School leadership team (School, Principal and Director of Religious Studies) have the willingness and ability to address these recommendations fully before the next external evaluation. The Catholic Education Office staff are available to assist the Principal, Board and staff in compiling an action plan to address these recommendations.

The evaluation team thank the community of St Joseph's School for the welcome, hospitality 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 external evaluation by the school/college is greatly appreciated.



Tony Shaw

Catholic Special Character Adviser

Catholic Diocese of Christchurch