

ST IGNATIUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

BOARDTALK December 2023

Introduction

Kia ora St Ignatius Families

What a wonderful way to end the year watching our students at Celebrate last week. I particularly enjoyed the kapa haka and farewell performance from Year 6 as well as the nativity by Year 1 plus it was fantastic to see inclusive performances in all of New Zealand's official languages - Te Reo, English and NZSL! After another busy year I am sure all our families are now looking forward to Christmas and the summer break.

From a Board perspective we have also had a busy 2023. We have coordinated a number of property projects including the new junior playground, astroturf and signage. We have worked with our ERO Evaluation Partner to formulate a new School Profile and separately create a new Strategic Plan setting out the goals for the school through to 2025.

At this time, the Board is reviewing our budget and planning for the next year, which you can read more about in our financial update below, together with other updates to round out the year.

In 2023, we fondly farewell a number of our St Ignatius families: the Arcus, Bade, Bryant, Driver, Ellis, Gonzales-Hunwick, James, Kerr, Langridge, Lopez, Monaco Tofono, O'Hagan, Pryde, Pulotu, Rowley, Ryall, Simich, Hosking, Townsend, Venegas Ortega, Vettori, Welch-Peters, Woodcock and Zame families. We thank them for their generosity to our school, as many of them served on our Friends & Family, Board or as volunteers at our many school events over their years at St Ignatius. We also farewell some staff members: Miss Jones, Mrs Biermann, Mrs Saunders and Mrs Ortega. We thank them for their time at St Ignatius and wish them all the best in their next endeavours.

Lastly we wish to thank our wonderful school community. Our staff for their enthusiasm and hard work which is shown in our fabulous student achievement results set out below; our Friends & Family for their tireless fundraising and community events and our wider school family for showing that we are an amazing and strong community who support each other through both good and bad times.

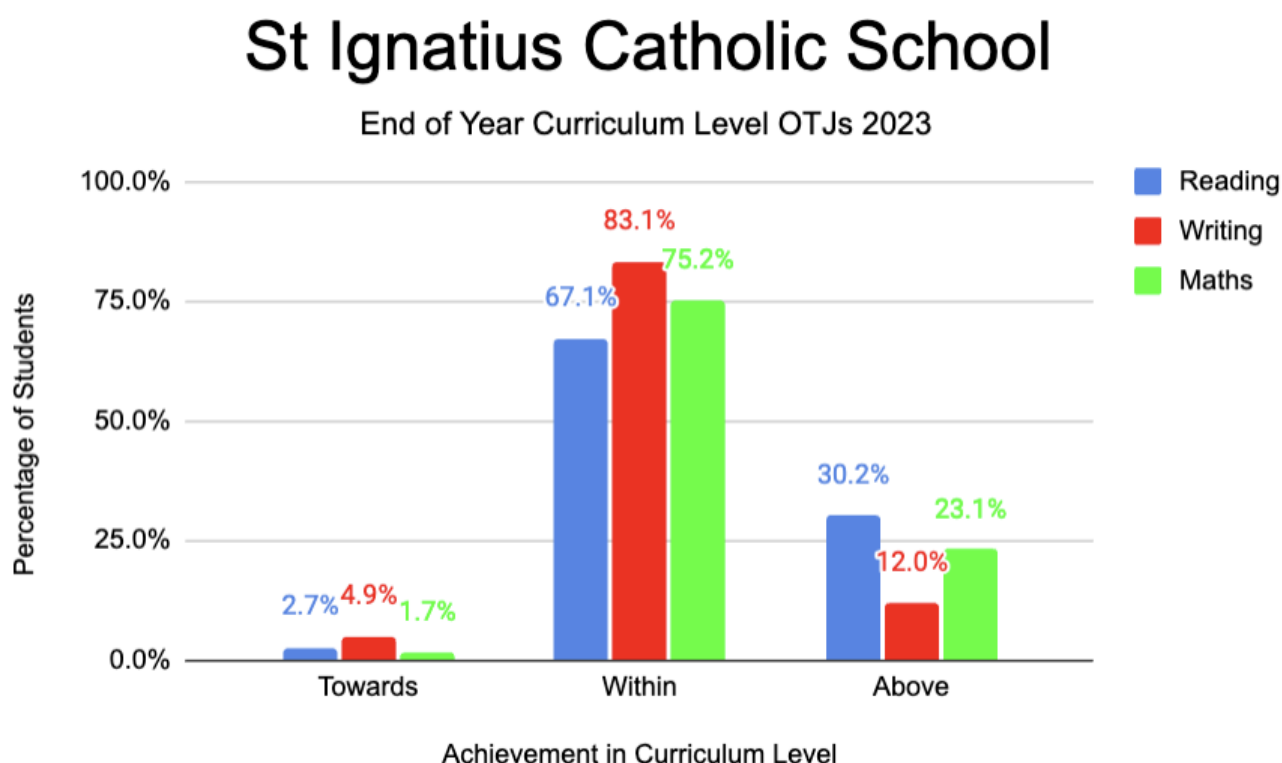
We wish you a peaceful Christmas, a happy New Year and look forward to welcoming you back in 2024.

Ngā Mihi,

Rhian Thompson, Board Presiding Member.

Student Achievement

End of year assessments for all year levels show a fantastic final result with an extremely high number of our students tracking within or above the expected curriculum levels. The Board would like to congratulate the students, principal, teachers, support staff and our whānau on these wonderful achievements and hard work this year.



Percentage of learners achieving at or above expected curriculum level:

	Mid-Year results	End of Year
Maths	94.2%	98.3%
Writing	92.8%	95.1%
Reading	88.5%	97.3%

The school offers multiple initiatives to help achieve these results including:

- professional learning and development in numeracy and literacy for teachers;
- Better Start Literacy, STEPS, PPP and Maths No Problem programs;
- writing progressions; and
- targeted support for year levels where it is most needed.

In addition to providing continued support for our target learners, the school will also continue to provide extension learning opportunities for all students, especially those who have been identified as having particular strengths in different learning areas.

One of the goals set out in our annual Implementation Plan for 2023 was for 90% of our students to be working AT or ABOVE their relevant curriculum level by the end of the year. The results more than exceeded our goals in this respect for the year and when compared to 2022 results, also show great consistency in our student performance.

Update on School Finances and Contributions for 2024

This is the time of the year where the Board reviews the school finances for 2023 and then sets a draft budget for 2024.

We look at what income we need to ensure we continue to provide the education our students require and our parents expect. We receive funding from the Ministry of Education to cover teacher's salaries up to a certain teacher to student ratio and to cover property and administration costs.

Financially, the school has weathered 2023 better than expected. A big thank you for your generosity as parents in continuing to make your contributions.

As part of the end of year financial review, the Board also considers the level of parent contribution we need. This is a voluntary donation and is tax deductible. It is, however, vital if we are to provide the quality of education that is expected for our children. Along with the support we receive from the Friends & Family, this funding enables the Board to:

- employ staff in addition to the Ministry of Education allocation;
- provide learning assistants who directly contribute to higher quality learning;
- provide staff with continuing professional learning and development to ensure they are kept up to date with the latest changes in teaching methodology and technology;
- provide educational resources and opportunities required for learning today e.g. digital technology; and
- meet other operational expenses required to run the School.

In addition to these voluntary parent donations there are also compulsory attendance dues and Catholic Special Character Contribution, set by the Catholic Diocese of Auckland. The 2024 attendance dues are being increased by \$122 to \$129 per child per term and the CSC Contribution from \$12.50 to \$15 per child per year.

In setting the level of parent contribution required for 2024, the Board has had regard to the current economic climate and the continued financial challenges that many may be facing. We have therefore decided the only increase will be in relation to the uplift in compulsory attendance dues and CSC Contribution by the Diocese as mentioned above. The various other charges and donation levels will remain unchanged so that the total amount requested for 2024 will be \$543.50 per child per term. A full breakdown will be provided in our fee letter to be circulated prior to the commencement of Term 1.

School Planning & Performance

One of the key priorities of the Board is to set the goals and priorities for the school. We do this through our Strategic Plan which is created every 3 years and through an Implementation Plan which is revised annually. The current Plan is available on the School website at [Strategic Plan - St. Ignatius \(stignatius.school.nz\)](https://stignatius.school.nz)

When formulating these Plans our Board must ensure they align with:

- our board primary objectives;
- the National Education Learning Priorities (NELPs);
- the aspirations, vision and values of our community; and
- our special character and other visions and values.

The Board is pleased to tell you that the school has performed very well in relation to satisfaction of its goals for 2023. In particular:

- maintaining consistent student achievement demonstrated by over 90% of children achieving at or above their curriculum level in literacy and maths;
- ensuring teachers are responsive to and cater for the different cultures of children in their learning spaces through ongoing training and linked programs through our Kahui Ako;
- maintaining innovative teaching and learning that is personalised to the present and future needs of each child;
- building stronger connections with our parish through shared events such as Learning Communities attending Sunday mass;
- engaging with the new RE curriculum (see further details below);
- fostering resilience and wellbeing through the introduction of the Mitey programme; and
- developing, promoting and honouring the identities, languages and cultural diversity within our school.

The 2024 Implementation Plan will be finalised in the new year and made available on the School website at that time.

Our new ERO School Profile can be found at: [ERO Reports - St. Ignatius \(stignatius.school.nz\)](https://stignatius.school.nz) and is valid for the next 3 years. Going forward it requires the school to prioritise:

- continuous improvement of teaching and learning programmes and sustaining excellence of achievement for all learners;
- further development of a localised curriculum that equips all learners to be courageous and take their place in the world; and
- broadening the educational connections to ensure all parents and learners are supported and nurtured through the parish and community.

Catholic Special Character

Throughout the year students, staff and parents have had many opportunities to contribute to the Catholic Character of our school. Children learn through daily prayer, the religious education programme, masses and liturgies. Our school vision and values are all underpinned by our faith.

The religious education programme has been rewritten and schools are gradually introducing the new version, beginning with Year 1 and 2. Our teachers have taken part in professional development to become familiar with the new curriculum and it is being implemented from next year. For more information please see: [Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith](#)

A Catholic Special Character Internal Review which was undertaken by Mrs Penney and Miss Lobo, the Director of Religious Studies this year in the area of **Te Tūtaki ki a Te Karaiti- Encounter with Christ** with a focus on Spiritual Formation.

This topic aligns with our annual goal 1.2 *To provide opportunities to nurture faith development* which sits under the school's Strategic Goal 1: *To be Christ-Centred*.

We looked at how the school provides ongoing spiritual formation for individuals and gathered feedback through surveys. After collating survey responses from students, staff and whānau the following recommendations were made and will be fed into our 2024 Implementation Plan:

- providing different ways to help our children learn to pray, including creating a prayer/meditation space within the school grounds;
- continue to have regular hapu, learning community and whole school masses and, at least 3 times a year, join with parish for mass on a Sunday;
- consider ways different cultures can be involved in masses and other aspects of our special character and take action to include these;
- provide professional learning for teachers on understanding Māori spirituality and how it aligns with our Catholic faith; and
- organise retreats for staff and students to provide opportunities for further spiritual formation.

Our next external Catholic Special Character Review will occur in July 2024.

"Do all you can with the means at your disposal and calmly leave the rest to God"
Saint Mary MacKillop (1891)