

ST IGNATIUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

BOARDTALK December 2025

Introduction

Seasons greetings St Ignatius families,

The new School Board has now met twice this year and has been busy reviewing policies, the 2026 budget, and discussing ways to help ensure the continued success of our school. We're really looking forward to connecting with you throughout our next year and as always, you're welcome to contact any of us directly or email us at board@stignatius.school.nz

I'd also like to acknowledge those of you who put your hand up to run for the Board earlier this year. It's no small undertaking, and we truly appreciate everyone who was willing to give their time to support our school. If you were unsuccessful this time around, thank you for stepping forward. We know you will continue to contribute to our community in other ways, and we encourage you to consider putting your name forward again in the future.

It was wonderful to see our students at Celebrate last night. I always love seeing their hard work and creativity come to life through their performances. A heartfelt thank you to the teachers and students who helped choreograph all the wonderful items.

In 2025, we will farewell a number of families whose children are moving on to the next stages of their education. We thank you all for your support of St Ignatius and wish you every success in what comes next. We are also farewelling some valued members of staff, Mrs Catherine Marusich, Mrs Nicky de Lacy, and Mrs Lian De Charmoy. We thank them sincerely for their service to our school and wish them all the very best in their next endeavours.

Finally, thank you to our entire school community. Our wonderful staff for their dedication and enthusiasm, reflected in the excellent student achievement results outlined further below, our Friends & Family team for their incredible fundraising and community events, and our wider school whānau for supporting our learners in so many ways throughout the year. Whether it's helping at sports events, coming in to read with students, or providing a plate for Cultural Day, it's truly inspiring to see our community in action.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year. We look forward to welcoming you back in 2026.

Kind regards,
Anna Radich
St Ignatius Board Presiding Member

Catholic Special Character - Faith alive in our community

At St Ignatius, our Catholic special character continues to be lived, celebrated, and strengthened through prayer, learning, and service. Daily prayer and reflection are at the heart of our school life, guiding our community and nurturing faith in our students. This is enriched through Pasifika Fono, Māori Hui, cultural celebrations, and the Prayer Garden — a sacred space of peace, stillness, and reflection for all.

Christ's teachings are woven throughout the curriculum, with learning viewed through the lens of faith. Through *To Tātou Whakapono*, scripture stories, and Gospel values, students and families are supported to connect faith and knowledge in meaningful ways. Living the Gospel is evident each day as respect, responsibility, generosity, and happiness are reflected in relationships, leadership opportunities, and service to others.

Our staff model authentic Christian engagement, bringing faith to life in classrooms and across the school. Teachers have engaged in rich professional learning to support the new Religious Education Curriculum, including understanding Māori spirituality, ensuring teaching remains grounded in faith and culturally responsive. Our Director of Religious Studies, Mrs Alexander, has led the school with care and purpose in planning liturgies, sacramental preparation, and significant faith events throughout the year.

Strong connections with our parish remain a blessing. Monsignor Bernard Kiely has become a familiar and valued presence within our school community, celebrating Mass with us, visiting classrooms, welcoming new families, and offering ongoing support. His role as both parish priest and a member of the School Board strengthens the partnership between school, parish, and families.

The rhythm of the Church year is lived and celebrated through Masses, feast days, and liturgical seasons, including Hapū Masses that bring together students, families, and parishioners. Year 4 and 5 students have the opportunity to prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Eucharist alongside their families, while those journeying through RCIC/RCIA are welcomed and supported within our wider faith community.

Faith in action is visible through our commitment to service and outreach. Thank you to everyone who has generously supported organisations throughout the year such as Te Waipuna Puawai, Caritas, St Vincent de Paul, and the Child Cancer Foundation, demonstrating compassion, generosity, and Christ's love for others.

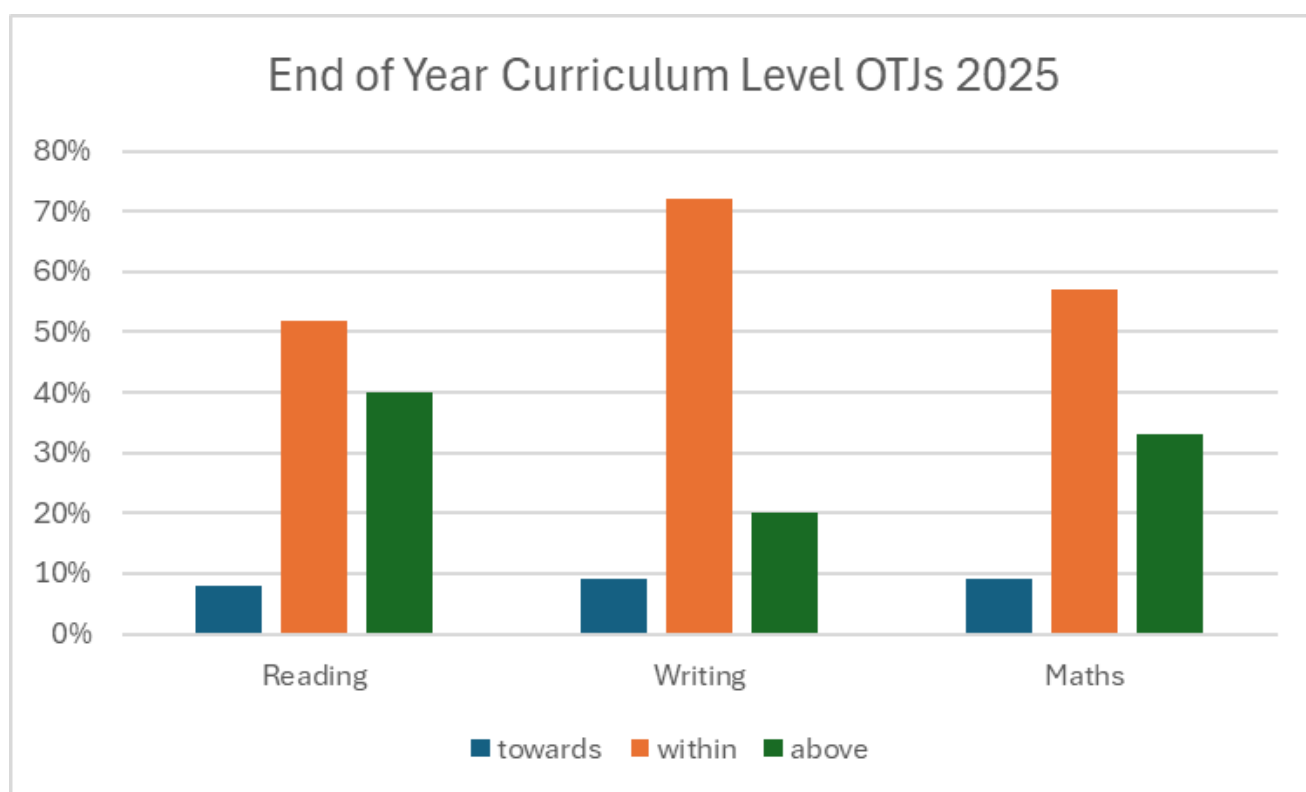
Our Christ-centred environment is reflected in religious symbols, well-kept grounds, and a values-based approach to pastoral care that honours the dignity of every person. We are truly blessed to see faith alive and flourishing in our students, staff, and families.

Additionally, as you may be aware, the government has removed the requirement for school boards to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. At St Ignatius, we align ourselves with the position of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, which has made clear that Te Tiriti is integral to the mission and special character of Catholic education in Aotearoa.

Student Achievement

End of year assessments for all year levels have showcased outstanding results amongst our learners, with an extremely high number of our students tracking within or above the expected curriculum. The Board would like to congratulate our students on their success and thank Jane and all the teaching and support staff on these wonderful achievements and their hard work across 2025.

End of year curriculum level results OTJs for 2025 across Year 1-6



Percentage of learners achievement at or above expected curriculum level:

	Mid-Year results	End of Year results
Maths	89%	90%
Writing	84.5%	92%
Reading	87.9%	92%

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 and Maths No Problem programs
- Writing progressions

- Targeted support for year levels and learners where it is most needed

Update on School Finances and Contributions for 2026

This is the time of year when the Board reviews the school's 2025 finances and begins preparing a draft budget for 2026.

As always, we look carefully at the income required to continue providing the high-quality education our students need and our parents expect. While the Ministry of Education funds teacher salaries (up to a certain student & teacher ratio) as well as property and administrative costs, additional funding is essential to maintain the breadth and quality of our programmes.

We are pleased to share that the school's finances for 2025 are tracking well and are in line with budget expectations. We extend our sincere thanks to all families who have been able to contribute this year—your support truly makes a meaningful difference.

As part of our annual financial review, the Board considers the level of voluntary parent donations needed for the coming year. These contributions are tax-deductible and remain an important part of ensuring we can continue to offer a rich and well-resourced learning environment. Alongside the generosity of our Friends & Family community, these donations enable the Board to:

- employ staff in addition to the Ministry allocation;
- provide learning assistants who directly support student learning;
- ensure staff participate in ongoing professional development;
- supply up-to-date educational resources and digital technology; and
- meet essential operational costs.

Over the past two years, the school has absorbed significant cost increases across many areas. To help us continue meeting these rising expenses while maintaining the quality expected by our community, the Board has agreed to a 2.6% increase in voluntary donations for 2026.

In addition to voluntary donations, compulsory attendance dues and the Catholic Special Character Contribution are set by the Catholic Diocese of Auckland. For 2026, the Diocese has advised that attendance dues will increase from \$133 to \$136 per child per term.

A full breakdown of fees and contributions for 2026 will be provided in our fee letter before the start of Term 1.

School Planning and Performance

All schools are transitioning to a new planning cycle, with the next major strategic plan expected to start from January 1, 2027.

This will follow on from updates to regulations in late 2025 that shifted timelines and removed the National Education Learning and Priorities (NELPs).

Current plans can be extended and if need be amended for 2026, with a key focus on aligning with new board objectives and national priorities like attendance by Term 1 2026.

The Board currently has three overarching Strategic Goals:

1. To be Christ-Centred
2. To Empower Learning
3. To Build Hauora

There are annual goals under each of these headings and then the principal prepares an Annual Implementation Plan with actions for each goal. The Board tracks the plan at each meeting and this year we are pleased with the outcomes, especially the actions under Goal 2 which were to:

- effectively implement the NZ Curriculum refresh in to planning, assessing and reporting
- strengthen and sustain teacher capability so learning is engaging and there is focus on student outcomes
- update and implement writing progressions

One of the main outcomes of these goals was high achievement levels being sustained in maths, reading and writing with over 90% of students achieving AT or ABOVE the expected curriculum level by the end of the year.

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the Board strategic planning consultation survey and face to face session. This data will be valuable for us as we look at our objectives going forward.

“Do all you can with the means at your disposal and calmly leave the rest to God”

Saint Mary MacKillop (1891)