

To the Parents and Community of Craighead Diocesan School

These are the findings of the Education Review Office's latest report on **Craighead Diocesan School**.

Craighead Diocesan School is a Year 7 to 13 state integrated Anglican school for day girls and boarders located in Timaru. Of the 339 students at the school, approximately one third are boarders, and there are 13 international students. The board of trustees has gained approval from the Ministry of Education to increase the roll to a maximum of 350 students. Since the 2006 ERO review, the board has effectively managed a period of change in leadership. A new principal was appointed for the start of 2008. New members have joined the board of trustees and the board of proprietors. There have been improvements to the buildings and grounds including a new auditorium, and refurbished learning and administration areas. Students now have increased access to information and communication technologies (ICT).

Students learn in a positive and caring culture. They are encouraged to achieve and excel in all aspects of their life and learning. Christian values are part of the special character of the school. The school's values have been revisited and reinstated. ERO observed respectful and courteous relationships among students and teachers. The chapel, the central location of the boarding house and common dining room help to ensure that boarders and day girls enjoy a sense of belonging in a family-like atmosphere. The chapel plays a significant role in the school culture. Trustees have consulted with the school community on a number of matters, and are encouraging all parents to increase their involvement in the life of the school.

Students achieve at very high levels in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) compared with students in similar schools. Teachers set high expectations for academic success. In 2008, all students gained their literacy and numeracy requirements for University Entrance and many were offered tertiary scholarships. Students out perform their peers in similar schools in the attainment of merit and excellence endorsements and scholarships. In addition, they achieve considerable success in sporting, cultural and service activities. For example, a significant number of students attain gold Duke of Edinburgh awards. A next step for the school is to analyse and report more extensively on the achievement and progress of students in Years 7 to 10 compared with their peers nationally.

Students receive a high quality education. Recent professional development initiatives have encouraged teachers to increase their range of effective teaching strategies. They are planning units of work that incorporate aspects of the revised New Zealand Curriculum (NZC), the school's values and current good practices in teaching and assessment. Students are being increasingly encouraged to work with their teachers in making decisions about their learning and its effectiveness. Teachers know students well. They encourage them to set goals and achieve their personal best. Students spoken with by ERO said that they appreciate the extra support they receive from their teachers, and the high expectations that their teachers have of them.

High quality pastoral care provides students with a safe learning environment. Students have access to effective counselling and careers advice, and are well supported by their year

level deans and form teachers. Students were surveyed and they reported very low incidents of bullying. They told ERO that concerns are dealt with effectively and that they felt safe in the school and the boarding house. International students receive a high standard of pastoral care and tuition.

Since the 2006 ERO review, the principals and senior leaders have maintained the focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching. They have led ongoing professional development in strategies for learning and the use of information technology. The new principal has worked with trustees and proprietors to establish the school's strategic focus for the next five years.

Trustees and proprietors work collaboratively in providing effective governance focused on continuous improvement. They have reviewed their own procedures and structures and are now developing a governance manual. The board of trustees has used the help of external advisers in the development of the new strategic plan. The principal and board of proprietors, with boarding house committee have rewritten the boarding manual and reviewed roles and responsibilities. While the boards have carried out some effective self review, they now need to develop a more formal programme and procedure for ongoing self review that covers all aspects of their operations.

Future Action

ERO is confident that the board of trustees can govern the school in the interest of the students and the Crown and bring about the improvements outlined in this report. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in three years.

Review Coverage

ERO reviews do not cover every aspect of school performance and each ERO report may cover different issues. The aim is to provide information on aspects that are central to student achievement and useful to this school.

If you would like a copy of the full report, please contact the school or see the ERO website, www.ero.govt.nz.

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