

Dear Parents

### **End of Year letter from the Board of Trustees**

The St Leo's Board of Trustees wishes you all a Merry Christmas and hope you are able to relax and spend well earned time with your families over the holiday break.

#### **ERO**

2015 has been a very successful year for our wonderful little school. After the uncertainty involved in changing principal in 2014, there has been a real sense of positivity and moving forward under the dynamic leadership of Mrs Walker this year. Our school received a very affirming ERO report in July which recognised both the warm and nurturing nature of St Leo's, but also the high expectations and standards of excellence which permeate throughout. We thank Mrs Walker, Mrs Pryor and the rest of our teachers for all the hard work they have put in throughout the year to make this happen.

#### **What has the Board has been up to?**

By law, the fundamental focus of every Board of Trustees is to raise student achievement. The Board sets strategic targets for achievement each year and was very pleased with the 2015 results, which Mrs Walker reported to our final Board meeting of the year. In 2015, our focus was not just aiming for all students to reach standard but for all to accelerate their progress and to increase numbers of students achieving above standard. 87.4% of our students are now at/above standard in Maths and 92.2% at or above standard in Reading. A particular focus for 2015 was improving achievement against National Standards in writing. With the leadership and support of Mrs Stack as Head of Literacy and the hard work of all teachers, we have seen real improvement in these areas. 9.2% of our students are now above standard in writing up from 6% last year. In February the Board will reflect on the results to set our strategic targets for 2016.

Mrs Walker has also developed new school reports to allow parents a clearer picture of their child's progress, including a chart, which will track their year-on-year progress against National Standards.

Other notable areas the Board have worked on in 2015 include:

: the **Property subcommittee** have continued to develop the school grounds with new fencing, signage and much work on the gardens throughout the school;

: the **Catholic Character subcommittee** have worked with Mrs Walker, Mrs Bullard and Father John to establish a number of new initiatives to ensure prayer, liturgy and celebrating our Catholic Character is integral to the life of

the school. Over the last fortnight they have presented their Annual Report to Bishop Pat;

: the **Policy and Personnel subcommittee** have developed a new 3-5 year plan of policy review and are still working on the implications of proposed changes to the Education Act and the Health and Safety Act in 2016;

: managing a budget in a small school always proves challenging. The **Finance Subcommittee** have worked closely with Mrs Walker all year to keep within budget while at the same time providing the resources our children need and our community expects. A huge thank you here for the funds which the PTFA so enthusiastically raise for our school which goes a long way towards those resources and makes a real difference in the experience of our children at school.

### **Board Elections in 2016**

As with the majority of schools in NZ, 2016 brings an end to the current Board of Trustees three-year term. An election for the 4 parent representative roles on our school Board will be held on 13 May 2016. Some of the current parent representatives will be retiring, while others will re-stand for election.

At the same time, the Bishop will appoint a new Bishops Representative to replace Bill Maloney who will be retiring following the departure of his son Will at the end of this year. Jody Gill and Sasha Gillies will remain as Bishops Representatives on the Board.

Every Board needs a balance of skills and expertise to ensure that it operates effectively. If you think you can share your skills for the betterment of St Leo's and our lovely children, please take time over the Christmas break to consider putting your name forward next year. Nominations will be called for in April 2016. In the meantime, if you have any questions about how the Board works and what the workload involves, don't hesitate to speak to me, Mrs Walker or any of the current Board members.

All the blessings of Christmas to every member of our school community. You are all part of what makes St Leo's Catholic School so special. A big farewell and good luck also to our Year 6 leavers. The Board wishes you and your families all the best as you move onto the next stage of your learning journey. We hope to see many of you at the nativity and Carol Service tomorrow evening and then for a picnic back at the school afterward.

See you all in 2016.

**Rachel Steel**

**Chairperson**

**On behalf of the St Leos Catholic School Board of Trustees**

