

Broadsheet of Good Practice in Integrated Schools

Editorial

Is it the quality of the teaching or the qualities of the teacher that make the difference to student learning?

The latest edition of the NZEALS publication *Leading Lights* includes an article by Christine Harris which poses this question. The answer is, of course, both, but I would agree with Harris, and indeed with our whole Gospel tradition, that the human qualities in each teacher are even more important than their teaching ability, because students react so strongly to them. Integrity, honesty and enthusiasm are among the many qualities we rank highly for teachers in any school, and Catholic schools will hopefully be further distinguished by the qualities of faith, hope and love displayed by our teachers. The willingness to share and to love are central to who we are in Catholic schools, and central to how we can take our children along their journey not just in curriculum-based learning, but in growth towards their adult selves.

Our contributors to this edition show this faith, hope and love in a range of ways, and we thank them for strengthening our community by sharing their good news with us.

Susan Apáthy

Principals' Catholic Character Appraisal - A Trial, 2014

Trisch Inder, St Joseph's School, Queenstown; Annie Nelson, St Mary's School, Gore; Trina Eastwood, St Gerard's School, Alexandra; Julian Ineson, St Thomas's School, Winton.

We are a group of Principals who met when we were First Time Principals and who have, over the years, developed strong professional connections and good trusting relationships. We try to meet regularly as part of our First Time Principals group and also as Principals in Catholic Schools in the Dunedin Diocese.

In our discussions, we had all been reviewing our appraisal systems. Each of us had different ways that we were being appraised – using outside experts as mentors and appraisers, 360 degree appraisals where different people such as students, parents, and Board of Trustees members were surveyed to get an overall view of the Principal's performance, the use of Catholic Character and Education Reviews and our Board members carrying out this task.

Our thinking was that we wanted to ensure that our Catholic Character did not get overlooked in all of these systems. We felt that there was no one really giving us rigorous annual feedback on our Catholic Character. We believed that the best person to understand the requirements and challenges was another Principal in a Catholic school, so our next step was to consider how we might arrange this within our existing group. Having already developed trusting relationships was a key element to this being a success.

We developed some protocols around what to use and who would do whose appraisal to ensure that our process was both professional and rigorous. We looked at the Professional Standards attestation for a Catholic Principal from the Handbook for Certification in Catholic Special Character and Religious Education for Staff and Boards of Trustees in Catholic Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand (NCRS, 2008). These lined up perfectly with the Professional Standards for Primary Principals from the Primary Principals' Collective Agreement.

Questions that were developed by Anne Kennedy from the Dunedin Diocese using the Leadership level Certification Professional Standards challenged us to find examples of good practice in our schools. These were used initially for personal reflection. We then met with the allocated Principal in our group, and provided evidence in support of our reflections. This meeting was an opportunity for debate and challenge.

Though it is still very early days, the main benefit we believe is that not only did the process and discussions affirm the good things that were happening in our own schools but we also learnt a huge amount from each other about ways we could improve our school practices. The biggest challenge is to find the time to meet, especially as we are spread geographically from Gore to Winton, Alexandra and Queenstown. We have trialled both face to face and the use of Google docs and telephone or skype conversations. Whatever way, so far, it has been well worth the effort for the learning that takes place for both the appraiser and the person who is the subject of the appraisal.

Turangawaewae, our place to stand: building community at Holy Cross, Miramar



Celeste Hastings, Principal, Holy Cross School, Miramar, Wellington

I would like to begin by sharing our Vision, Mission and Motto as they guide and underpin everything we do at Holy Cross School.

VISION:

We are a Christ-Centered, Child-Focused, Living, Loving, Learning Community.

Our Vision is that each student will achieve more than he or she ever dreamed possible.

MISSION:

Celebrating Diversity- Promoting Excellence

MOTTO:

Let Your Light Shine – Ka Whiti Mai te Rā

We are indeed a diverse community and we both honour and celebrate this. We have set in place a number of practices to support our stated direction and to help create a sense of belonging for all those who are part of our community.

Powhiri: Each term we hold a powhiri to welcome new staff and students to our school community. Powhiri are led by our Year 8 students but all students and staff are actively involved.

The Early Childhood Centres the students have attended, along with whānau and friends, are invited to introduce the new student to the school.



When families receive their invitation to attend, they also receive a booklet outlining our powhiri process.

Cultural Group: We have a very strong cultural group whose current presentations include a fusion of Māori and Pasifika song, dance and sasa.

At present there are over forty students in this wonderfully talented group. These students have a deep sense of pride and perform with reverence and dignity. They regularly present to our own community but also take part in Kapa Haka festivals and perform at significant events, when invited.

Our Families' Stories: Last year I was very fortunate to be awarded a sabbatical and as part of my research topic I made time to meet with a number of our refugee families to discuss their experiences. I felt so incredibly privileged to hear their stories that I decided to provide an opportunity for staff to hear these also. To date, a parent and a student from our school community have shared their story with the staff.



Obviously the sharing has to be well-managed, ensuring the vulnerabilities of the person sharing are considered and supported. In both instances, I believe, the person sharing found it to be a positive and empowering experience.

The parent who spoke with staff had lived in Iraq all his life until he was forced to flee to save his life and that of his wife. His was a story of survival, forgiveness, resilience and hope; it helped deepen our understanding and appreciation of the incredible challenges some of our families have overcome as well as the sense of urgency behind the hopes and dreams they have for their children.

A few weeks later one of our Year 8 students, from Ethiopia, spoke to the staff of his life experiences to date. His comparison of life in his village and the life he has here was very moving. He spoke in a very matter of fact manner, outlining the many changes and challenges he had taken in his stride in the past five years; challenges 'regular kiwi kids' would never imagine; very powerful.

It is my intention to continue to invite our families to share their stories with staff, as they both deepen our understanding and serve to remind us why we work so hard to meet the needs of all our learners. To know your learner, you have to know their story.

Adult Learning: This year, with the support of MCLaSS (Multi-cultural Learning and Support Services) we have been able to introduce Adult English Language Classes, which run two mornings a week.

Classes are run by a trained tutor but rely on the support of parent and community volunteers who work alongside the English language learners. Free childcare is also provided.

Some of the adults attending never had the opportunity to attend school until now. It is incredibly humbling to see the focus with which they work and the joy they have in learning.

Last term we held a multi-day to raise money for resources to support our adult learners and were touched to receive hand written letters from them. In turn our students wrote back and I include excerpts from some of these letters:

Maryam (Adult learner): 'We would like to thank you for the gift of \$200 from mufti day last term. The gift will help us get new resources for the class. Thank you for making it possible to learn English at this school. The class helps us to improve our English'.

The replies from two of our Year 3 students:

Falantina (daughter of Maryam) "You are welcome for the money. Holy Cross School loved fundraising for you. You can buy some writing books so you can write five sentences a day. I have been learning to write, just like you. PS I like how you tried your hardest to learn English Maryam, I love you. Have a nice time working hard."

Antonio: "We are happy to give you this huge amount of money, we enjoy helping people. We hope you use your \$200 wisely. We loved the letters you sent"

Cultural Morning Teas and Activities

Each term we have a special morning tea to celebrate one of the many cultural groups who are part of our community. The parents usually provide food, or demonstrate craft, from their culture and they talk about this with the other parents attending the morning tea. The children of the parents who are presenting also come to the morning teas and they are always so proud of their parents and their culture.

Where to from here? We are committed to further developing a 'community hub' at Holy Cross to strengthen and develop what we are able to offer to our diverse community. We want every person to not only feel welcome but to know that he or she is a valued member of our community.

And so our journey continues.



The Cullinane Journey

Kevin Shore, Principal, Cullinane College, Whanganui



Cullinane College is a Catholic co-educational college that was founded in 2003 from the merger of St Augustine's College and Sacred Heart College. The two founding orders of the Sisters of St Joseph and the Marist Fathers have a significant history of service to the Catholic community in Whanganui and in particular to the Tangata Whenua of the Whanganui River. Almost 45% of our current roll identify as Māori.

In late 2010 the College set out on a deliberate path to improve attendance rates and academic results for our students. There was a strong focus on our Māori students and our subsequent three year participation in the He Kākano programme supported our progress and the journey we undertook. We were always very aware of research that argued that "what worked for Maori will work for all students" and in our situation that has certainly been the case. Evaluation and self-review processes have highlighted data that clearly shows improvement in attendance, retention and academic outcomes in our school for all students. The improvement in outcomes for our Māori students has, however, been an area that we have been particularly pleased with.

There are a number of aspects to our approach that are worth mentioning. First, we looked to capture our Catholic values and virtues within a triangle of partnership involving students, whānau and the school. This partnership emphasises stronger relationships, higher levels of three-way communication, and a subtle change in the power structures. The second element was reflection on our own values and assumptions and subsequent attempts to change our practices to be more inclusive and understanding of the communities we serve, particularly our Māori community. The final element was to build support structures and processes in the college that support students to raise their levels of self-belief rather than put barriers and obstacles in their way.

It is difficult in an article of this length to describe each of the strategies that we have put in place nor can I state the affect size of each strategy. However, what we do know is that the combination of strategies and initiatives has led to achievement rates for NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3 of approximately 90% and that these rates are replicated by our Māori cohort. Attendance rates are also rising to the same levels and there is a quiet, gentle and supportive spirit in the College that is indicative of students who are in an environment that they value.

Some specific strategies that I will mention briefly include extending the school day to support students' academic goals, a very focused mentoring, tracking and monitoring process for every Year 11, 12 and 13 student involving parents, students and staff, academic retreats for our Māori students on Marae along the Whanganui River, Māori literacy programmes at Year 9 and Year 10, Family Day Report/Feedback sessions and the list goes on. I am aware of over 20 different strategies that we have implemented in our journey over that last three years that have now become embedded in our systems.

The journey is nowhere near complete. Our current involvement with a programme called Te Kākahu (involving the Ministry and Cognition Education) is taking us on the next few steps that we have identified. Our goal here is to develop a partnership with local iwi so that they see value in contributing to enriching our curriculum. The other focus is to develop a relationship-based pedagogy in the classroom that increases students' ownership of their learning and develops reciprocity in the classroom. It is early days but very exciting.

Religious Education Teaching in a Modern Learning Environment

Gina Benade, Principal, Sancta Maria Catholic Primary School, Auckland

Designing educational environments that reflect the needs of 'future-focused' learning and the revised New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) has presented major challenges and new opportunities for teaching and learning. In the past five years several new schools have been designed and built to reflect a special configuration more suited to a very different approach to teaching and learning and these spaces are now being called 'modern learning environments' (MLE's) . These modern learning environments have an open, flexible and interactive design offering opportunities for a variety of teaching and learning approaches. These changes from a traditional single cell classroom to an open shared environment have encouraged and challenged new understandings about philosophies of teaching and learning.

Four years into the life of Sancta Maria Catholic Primary School we were faced with the design and development of our second building phase. The Catholic Diocese was keen for us to consider building the next block of six classrooms as modern learning environments. Our school Leadership Team set about investigating and visiting existing open, flexible learning environments and we soon realised that it was not just about the building but actually fundamentally about a shift in mind set and pedagogy. These new shared environments would create learning opportunities that would enhance and encourage 21st century teaching and learning that we were implementing and would create opportunities for students to take more ownership and lead their learning.

This exciting journey has allowed us to have 85 Year 1 and 2 students in an open, shared environment and 83 Year 5 and 6 students in another modern learning environment. There are three teachers in each shared environment. During this year we have seen teachers and students embrace this challenge of working together through collaboration, sharing knowledge and strengths, motivating each other and igniting a passion for teaching and learning. Innovative and exciting approaches to the teaching of the Religious Education programme in both the junior and senior classes have been trialled.



The Year 2 RE programme is being taught in the junior shared environment and the Year 5 programme in the senior environment. A range of teaching approaches is used, from whole class (all 85 students) to withdrawal of various sized groups. The physical flexibility of the spaces enhances the RE learning by allowing the possibility of a smaller group of students to independently create and practise a liturgical dance, or complete a creative response to a concept learnt. Drawing on the strengths and expertise of three teachers creates richness and a flexibility that would not have been possible in a single cell classroom. We have seen the same RE concept being taught in three different ways for example, using the active board, singing and an art activity approach, increasing student engagement and participation. Teacher Aides are also being used to facilitate smaller groups as they respond to an RE concept that has been taught. Morning Prayer sessions are approached in various ways from whole class to create a sense of unity as a community to more intimate smaller group prayer sessions and meditation.

Students are taking up the responsibility of leading smaller group sessions. Students are trained through small group workshops facilitated by the teacher and this can be part of the literacy time. The workshop will focus on a specific area, for example leading prayer through recording themselves reading the scripture so that the recording can be played through the whiteboard and speakers during the prayer session, for visual and auditory clarity. The aim is for the teachers to equip the students through providing the experiences and opportunities for students to pray, learn and encounter Jesus.

As a school we feel we have only just started to tap into the endless opportunities and challenges presented by our modern learning environments and know that teachers and students will continue to experiment with ways of bringing alive the teachings of Jesus and growing our faith together.



Growing Good Boys into Great Young Men

A conversation with Principal Debbie Marshall-Lobb, Hato Pāora College, Feilding

Hato Pāora, a boarding school for Māori boys, was founded by the Society of Mary whose original purpose in coming to New Zealand was to evangelise Māori. The school opened in 1948 with Fr Isaac Gupwell SM as the first rector. In the last six years, under Principal Debbie Marshall-Lobb, the school has spent time re-learning its founding story, and really appreciates the assistance of the Society of Mary in this respect. Boys, teaching and hostel staff, whānau, Board of Trustees and the Proprietor Board all share the knowledge and the expectations arising from the founding story.

The college's success with its young Māori students is linked to very explicit standards, values and expectations, which are consistently reinforced in every area of activity. The school's website documentation says:

HE TAPAPA RANGATIRA (*Leaders for Tomorrow*)

Hato Pāora is unique in that we have students from tribal regions throughout the country. The core purpose of the College is education which empowers the community to maximise its collective and individual potential, and to nurture the whole person - spiritually, intellectually, physically, artistically, socially and emotionally.

TAHA MĀORI TAHA WAIRUA

Hato Pāora blends the teachings of the Gospels of Christ, with Māori language, culture and traditions. This integration of faith and culture provides students with a clear direction for leading and celebrating their lives. The spiritual and cultural traditions that we have inherited from those who have gone before us make Hato Pāora a unique and stimulating learning environment.

At enrolment students and their whānau have a 1-2 hour interview with senior leadership, which includes orientation on the standards, values and expectations of the school, and the goals and targets of the individual student. These individual goals are passed on to the deans and teachers, and are revised at the whānau/teacher/student conferences at the end of each term. The relationship with whānau is crucial. Attendance by whānau at the termly conferences is very high, and the school arranges a skype conference if whānau members have a significant inability to attend. The Board of Trustees and Trust Board developed a list of questions to assist whānau to ask teachers and students about learning progress, and Board members are in attendance at conferences, to chat with whānau members and explain the process. Assessment has increased because of the need for evidence for the termly conferences.

The R's: The school consistently stresses Respect and Responsibility, as these lead to Results, Rewards and Resilience. (There is great awareness of the need to teach boys resilience so that they can cope when confronted by a "No"!)

Boys also learn the four Rights: be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing, with the right attitude. Simple, consistent repeated messages have a great effect.

Pastoral care is significant: The students learn and live in a whānau setting, aligned to Catholic special character and core Māori values. There is very close interaction between the Leaders of Learning and Living, i.e. the staff in charge of the hostel and the curriculum.

To cater for the needs of teenage boys, physical activity is incorporated into learning, and there is planned, supervised, fun physical activity from 4-5pm each day. Kapa haka is huge, boys sing and haka about everything, and waiata and haka act as narratives to sustain and sign post their life journey. Marae visits, two recent tangihanga onsite, and other occasions enable the boys to gain an appreciation of their role in the life of their community. Learning to become men who will contribute to their family and community is another constant theme.

The ten Call Back days each year provide collective PD, where both learning and living staff come together to strengthen the school's focus. Each teacher writes a monthly report for the principal (which is later tabled at the Board meeting). Teachers detail what tests and strategies are being put in place to ensure progress aligned to the school's targets. There is particular emphasis on students at risk and gifted students. The pattern of reporting has been refined and embedded over six years and teachers are proud to show their evidence file on student progress. Teachers can see how their professional development goals and outcomes align with the school's strategic plan and goals.

Literacy is pivotal to students' learning but many boys arrive in the school with literacy levels below the national average. Students learn that they are all 'cognitively able' and therefore as long as they can read well they can learn. To ensure this the school has signed up for the *Fast ForWord Reading Intervention Programme*, which is an IT-based literacy intervention provided by Kaipuke Limited, to lift literacy levels of Māori boys. The school has also signed up for the tertiary literacy research initiative at Massey University, which enables the school to prepare students for the big leap to tertiary study. All Year 13s (including those who are not intending to go to university) have two days at Massey University, and come back very enthusiastic about what they learn. Those who go on to university have an academic mentor provided.

The school feels confident that it can fulfil its vision:

To be a leader in education

To be strong in Tikanga Māori

To be a beacon in our society for the promotion of the Catholic and Māori values

To encourage and nurture a climate of achievement and success.

*Ko Hato Pāora e ngūnguru nei, ko Hato Pāora e
whakapono nei, ko Hato Pāora ewhāia ana te pae rangi
kia hiki ai te pae taumata.*

Interfaith Activities in a New Zealand Catholic Secondary School

Adele Churchman, DRS, Roncalli College, Timaru

Next year we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, a document given to us from the Second Vatican Council, through the work of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI. These men were people who engaged in “Dialogical Dialogue”, and who valued their relationships with “the other”. In *Nostra Aetate* we are urged to “...enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions. Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, and also their social life and culture.”

The everyday life of a secondary school provides us with lots of practical opportunities to live out the spirit of this Vatican document. Roncalli College is fortunate to have a well-developed International programme with students from over a dozen countries enriching the experience of our Roncalli Community. These students bring their own religious traditions and cultures. We recently celebrated the canonisation of Angelo Roncalli, Pope Saint John XXIII. Here was a marvellous opportunity where we as a school could witness to our own faith (celebrate a School Mass) while collaborating with and acknowledging the spiritual and cultural truths found amongst those from a variety of different religious traditions; just as Roncalli himself did. To reflect a valid voice from other religious traditions I met with the international students and asked them whether they would like to be a part of our celebrations for the canonisation of Angelo Roncalli, and if they would, what part would they like to play. Initial shyness soon evaporated and ideas were flowing fast about how they could contribute to this very ‘Catholic’ celebration and yet have their own spirituality valued. We considered a range of possibilities and the students themselves arrived at the idea of taking part in the offertory procession dressed in their cultural costumes and carrying a representation of their religious beliefs/cultures to place in front of the altar. This also reinforced to the rest of the Roncalli community the fact that Roncalli himself had witnessed to his own faith while acknowledging and respecting the faith of others.

Other interfaith opportunities can arise during the yearly cycle of religious celebrations. Roncalli students, along with members of the extended Roncalli family, travelled to Nepal for a Social Justice trip in 2013. As part of the preparations for this trip and for the exposure to a variety of religious traditions that the students would encounter while in Nepal, our group responded to an invitation from the local Hindu community to attend the celebration of Diwali, where they joined the evening festivities sharing in the food and entertainment. This initial interfaith encounter further prepared our students for encounters and experiences of both Hindu and Buddhist religious practices in Nepal such as the Hindu funeral ceremonies. It built on the year 12 curriculum topic of World Religions, bringing to life for our Social Justice group a variety of religious traditions found in Pacific rim countries and allowing our students to acknowledge the spiritual and moral truths found there alongside people’s social and cultural life. This is all part of the interfaith journey of young New Zealanders in today’s society.

Adele Churchman is a member of the NZCBC’s Committee for Interfaith Relations. For further information on the work of the committee, and for information about educational resources, contact Adele, or contact St Catherine Jones, c.jones@wnicatholic.org.nz.



Contact Details:

New Zealand Catholic Education Office (NZCEO)
PO Box 12 307, Wellington
Tel: 04 496 1739 | Fax: 04 496 1734
Email: nzceooffice@nzceo.org.nz
Website: www.nzceo.org.nz

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