

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL ORAKEI



FAITH AND UNITY

Whakapono me Kotahitanga

DRS Report for 2011

Focus for the Year:

This year our self-review focus has been “Religious Education.” Initially when we met as a staff back in term 1, the words which were meaningful to us collectively were “The school *helps* to fulfil the teaching mission of the Church.” With these words in mind we set about sharing and discussing the indicator examples and then giving examples of evidence we felt St Joseph’s was providing. This review has been a work in progress and has been revisited several times during the year.

We decided to use the survey format again this year as we felt it was a good way to receive relevant and important information from parents, staff and students about a very crucial part of our curriculum. We wanted to find out exactly what these stakeholders felt, heard, saw and experienced about our RE programme and its integration into the wider Curriculum.

In further consultation with Kathryn Hira and Sue Bennett, four surveys were designed specifically for the St Joseph’s School community - Junior students, combined Middle and Senior students, parents/whanau and staff members. Draft copies were circulated to the Proprietor’s Representatives for comment and input.

In Term 3 surveys were sent home, given to staff and the students filled in their surveys at school. The collation and writing up of the results was the next part of the process. Each question’s results were tallied up and converted to a percentage. All comments were recorded too.

In Term 4 there was a staff meeting to discuss the results, paying particular attention to trends, strengths and areas to develop. From this discussion we were able to prioritise and develop our ‘Action Plan’ for 2012. We also revisited the Review document and included new evidence that had occurred over the year.

Results and findings of the survey were shared with parents via a newsletter. The Proprietor’s Reps were also given copies of the survey

results via email prior to a BOT meeting. The DRS, principal and proprietor's reps met for a meeting to consolidate the findings and make sure all important points of interest were covered.

Please find attached the Action Plan for 'Areas of growth from 2010' which came out of our Pastoral Care Review. It can be seen that much work and development has taken place.

Strengths that were identified from the review are:

- Principal and DRS show leadership in managing the RE programme.
- Prayer is an important part of our school day
- RE is valued as an important curriculum area by parents, staff and students
- Parents are encouraged to attend masses, liturgies and to be a part of their child's faith journey.
- Students have the opportunity to share their learning in RE with their parents/whanau on a regular basis.
- Parents receive feedback and are able to comment/respond to their child's progress in RE.
- Parents were able to offer many ways in which they are able to support their child's religious education. Some were: encouraging values, being a part of the school's parish community, answering questions, attend mass as often as possible as a family.
- Teachers teach the school values and Charism.
- Teachers are confident in using the digital resource.
- Teachers receive adequate professional development and support.
- Adequate resources are made available to support RE programme.
- Student progress is monitored and appropriate feedback is given.

- Students take part in masses, liturgies, daily class prayers because they are all rostered onto a class timetable and given responsibilities throughout the year.

Areas identified for further development:

- Disappointing return from parent community (4380 families)
- Teachers' abilities to vary strategies and show creativity in RE lessons.
- RE planning reflects differentiation in catering for the needs of all students.
- Learning Intentions are visible and in child speak.
- Where possible RE is integrated into other curriculum areas.
- Increase awareness in children of praying and singing in Te Reo and other languages.
- Teaching of our Charism, and St Joseph and St Brigid needs to be strengthened and where possible included in other curriculum areas

The ways in which we intend to address these areas are:

- For next year's review to possibly select a sample group of students from each year level to interview and share ideas and input. Then also to invite a cross section of parents to attend 'review' meetings where we can get first hand, detailed and informative feedback/evidence.
- Through integration of RE into other subjects (with support of Principal and DRS in planning) creativity and variation on Teacher strategies should develop. Also specific integration planned for with each RE strand – staff share with one another. Planning formats for other curriculum areas to be reviewed and modified to include Catholic perspective and RE integration.

- Differentiation by using new strategies (to be shared next year in RE staff meetings) so as to extend more able students. Teacher expectations to be made clearer to students, review and modify RE planning to include space for differentiation.
- Drawing student attention to RE connections in as many lessons as possible (incidental learning could be added to planning in pencil and visually included in displayed learning.)
- Learning Intentions visible at all times during lessons / strands – not just used on digital resource at the beginning of lesson and then not referred to again. Children need them to be visible throughout whole lesson/strand
- Student work books – RE meeting to be held early in 2012 to discuss uniformity, teacher expectation including value of RE books, care and neatness important, work marked with relevant feedback about student learning and related to LI's. Evidence of differentiation of learning, student reflections and understanding in RE.
- Consistent inclusion of prayers and singing in Te Reo and other languages.
- Charism – each year group will focus on a different aspect of Charism thus building knowledge and understanding over the years at school.
- Renaming of school house -Chanel for Delany – more in keeping with our Charism. Make students aware of the difference between 'founder' and 'patroness.'
- Expectation that books will go home after each strand and that books are shared and comments made by parents on their child's learning.

Religious Education Programme

The delivery of the Religious Education programme continues to improve and develop. All teachers are confident about the content they have to teach and they share their knowledge and experience willingly.

Prayer is the starting point of each day at St Joseph's and a calm serenity seems to fill the school from 9 o'clock onwards. The students lead class prayer under their teacher's supervision and the variations and types of prayer has really developed this year.

Each term I visit the classrooms to observe a prayer session, RE lesson, interact with the students and observe their learning or ensure that current strand are displayed. I have collected all teachers' planning and given feedback to them as well as a selection of students' books. I have been pleased with the displays both in the classrooms and in the foyer this year. RE is becoming more visual around the school.

Parents have the opportunity to share in their child's learning when their book is taken home after each strand. We have encouraged parents to spend time discussing their child's learning with them and to write positive comments pertaining to it.

At the beginning of this year two Liturgy Leaders were elected and they have been able to work together with other teachers and myself in organising masses, liturgies and rosters for altar servers.

This year we introduced a day retreat for senior students. Father Tony led us in his gentle, charismatic way at the Mary McKillop Centre in Mission Bay. The feedback from the students was positive and they said they really enjoyed that it was held early in the year. We hope to make this a permanent fixture in our calendar.

Father Tony has also visited many classrooms during the year to share his knowledge and also to answer many questions students have prepared for him! We value the time he spends with the children and his willingness to assist us in the faith development of our students.

It was with sadness that in September we bid farewell to our three Marist Sisters, Julie, Margaret and Anne. They too were an integral part of life at St Joseph's and we will miss them. We have been blessed however with the arrival of Sisters Francine and Karen. It was lovely that they were able to attend our Cultural Day performances and have joined us for Staff prayers when they are free. We look forward to a continuation of the special bond we have always cherished with the Marist Sisters.

In Term 1 Catherine Gibbs from Caritas shared an afternoon with Room 1 students by informing them of the work done both here in New Zealand and overseas. The students felt they learned a lot about this organisation and were happy to support Caritas this year, when we had Mufti Days etc.

In Term 2 the students were treated to a visit by the Troubadour Theatre group which was called "Young Mary." This brought to life the work of St Mary McKillop.

This year has seen the continued inclusion of Te Reo and other languages in the form of prayers, waiata and during our Whakapapa unit. All students know the sign of the cross in Maori and now Samoan, Korean and Tongan are being introduced. Our School prayer has been translated into Maori and some of the classes have already started to learn it.

We have discussed the importance of integrating Religious Education into other curriculum areas and from the feedback from the RE Self Review this year we have ear marked this as a priority for 2012. This will include the sharing of ideas and teaching strategies as a staff before planning of each strand takes place, identifying opportunities for integration in curriculum planning and ensuring that curriculum displays reflect integration of RE.

One of the highlights of this year has been the introduction of data projectors and Mimio interactive devices to all classrooms. With this teachers have been able to access the RE Digital Resource and utilise it to its maximum potential. The updated version of each Strand has enhanced

learning for all our students especially in its interactive ability and the way we can individualise images and make them wholly ours.

Earlier this term I introduced a 'getting acquainted with the RE programme' for new parents to the school. It was a worthwhile opportunity to share aspects of the programme with parents and many expressed their amazement at how comprehensive and well organised it was. We were able to demonstrate the use of the new Digital resource and this produced many 'ooohs and aaaahs.'

This term students in the Gifted and Talented group display special talents in Manaakitia (hospitality) and Ringawera (mix with people of all ages) and one of the 'jobs' they have been commissioned to do is make Brigidine Crosses to include in the Year 6 School Leavers' kete.

Students are regularly informed on their child's learning in RE in the newsletter. The focus for new strands is included and other information relating to the RE programme or upcoming masses etc.

I feel that the RE programme is rich in diverse experiences for all the students and that it underpins everything that we do at St Joseph's School. We hope to be able to build on this each year.

Charism and Values

At the beginning of this year, the St Joseph's Catholic School 2011 Handbook was issued to all families. It contains a wealth of information about the school and the year ahead. On the first two pages there is 'Our Mission Statement', our 'Vision for St Joseph's Learners' and a brief outline of our Brigidine Charism and values. The parents are informed about our Catholic Special Character, liturgies, prayer and school and class masses. This has been a valuable handbook for parents as many have commented on how they have referred back to it over the year to clarify their understanding of something that has come up.

The introduction of our Brigidine Charism started in earnest this year. In Term 1 our 'Charism' book and Photostory movie made last year was shared with the students. It was decided that each year group would be introduced to a different aspect of our Charism so that by the time each child leaves school at the end of Year 6, they will know and have experienced much of it. The school prayer has been learned by all classes and is often shared at assemblies.

Going hand in hand with our learning of Charism has been the introduction of our four values. A new value has been introduced each term; namely Aroha, Faith, Tika and Pono and with each of these a visual symbol representing them. Keeping our Brigidine motto of 'Strength with gentleness' at the forefront of our minds we have integrated these values throughout the school curriculum and been able to draw analogies between them.

Masses

Once again we have been blessed with having Father Tony as our resident priest. He has been very flexible and accommodating as we know he has many commitments outside of our school.

Each term we have a combined Parish/School Mass which is usually held on the second Sunday of term. These have been very successful and well attended. Parishioners and members of the school share a cup of tea afterwards in the parish hall. On the last day of each term we celebrate mass before the students leave to go on holiday with their parents. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to celebrate the good things that have happened over the past term.

Special feast day masses have been celebrated as they have occurred throughout the year.

During the term we have class masses every Wednesday morning at 9.15am and students write their parents special invitations. As the year

has progressed so the numbers of parents/whanau has increased. The students enjoy leading the liturgy and sharing this special time with their parents.

Father Tony introduced Benediction on the feast day of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This was a new experience for many of the students and some teachers.

In term 3 students from Rooms 1 and 2 attended reconciliation and we plan to include this sacrament at least once a term from now on.

Assemblies

School assemblies continue to be held every Monday afternoon. The format changed slightly in Term 3 when students from each class were encouraged to be more responsible for the running of assembly and a greater emphasis on prayer at the beginning. The timing of assembly items was also defined more clearly.

Sacramental Programme

This year six of our students have been baptised. We welcome them into God's family.

Once again students of St Joseph's had the privilege of attending the Sacramental Programme starting in Term 2 this year. Father Tony ran the sessions each Friday from 12.30 to 1pm. The students' parents attended adult sessions after mass on the Sunday following their lessons. There were ten students who received the Sacrament of Reconciliation on 29 May. On the 25 June Bishop Robin Leamy officiated at Confirmation when 13 students from St Joseph's and 6 from outside the school received this sacrament. This was a wonderful time for the parish and school to come together as a community. The sacrament of First Eucharist was celebrated on 7 August and a special party was put on afterwards in the parish hall.

Staff Prayers

Our weekly prayers on a Tuesday during morning tea are eagerly awaited by the staff. It has become a special time when we all come together (both permanent and part time staff) to share time with God. The prayers and themes are becoming more reflective and a lot of time is spent in preparation. We have had the Marist sisters join us from time to time and this has been wonderful.

Staff birthdays have also been celebrated with a special morning tea and a small gift given to the birthday person.

Resources

In Term 1 we purchased a new school candle and the Brigidine cross has been transferred onto it. This is used during school masses.

We have also been able to add to our resources by buying new Bibles for the senior classes and Action Bibles for Rooms 1, 2 and 3. We have bought symbols for each class that represent our new 'values' that we have introduced over the year. For example for Aroha (love) we have hearts, for Faith Brigidine crosses, Tika (justice) we have Koru necklaces and Pono (integrity and honesty) we have driftwood. Music resources from Michael Mangan, including music for the revised Roman Missal 3rd Edition have been purchased.

Professional Development

All teachers have attended professional development and cluster meetings this year. Four staff members attended the "Understanding Sexuality" course during terms 2 and 3. Two staff members attended Maori Spirituality. We have had several RE staff meetings where we have looked at the new strand and also discussed the RE self review.

Staff have enjoyed special tuition from Arminda Wood in terms 2 and 3 on the use of the Mimio boards and RE Digital Resource.

Certification

Two teachers have been awarded certificates this year. One has achieved Endorsement of leadership Level and the other has Classroom certification in Catholic Special Character.

Conclusion

2011 has been a year of considerable growth and development at St Joseph's School. The efforts of all teachers in delivering the Religious Education programme have been shared and heralded by both Kathryn and myself. The introduction of the four values and symbols has given the students visible and tangible objects with which to guide them through each day. These tie in well with our unique Charism which is still in its fledgling stage but huge growth and understanding has been made this year.

Our Vision for all St Joseph's Learners encapsulates what we believe in:

*Enthusiastic, successful learners, living their
Catholic faith with strength of mind and
gentleness of heart.*