

CATHOLIC SPECIAL

CHARACTER REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT

For

GARIN COLLEGE

NELSON

School type	Y9-13 Co-Educational
Roll	400
Visit Date	16-18th March 2009
Confirmed Report Date	6th May 2009
Principal	John Boyce
Reviewer	Collene Roche
Assistant Reviewer	Mary Cook

REPORT ON THE REVIEW VISIT TO GARIN COLLEGE, NELSON, AS REQUIRED BY THE 'CATHOLIC SPECIAL CHARACTER REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT' PROCESS OF THE NZCEO.

UNDERTAKEN BY COLLENE ROCHE

ASSISTED BY MARY COOK, PRINCIPAL OF ST MARY'S COLLEGE, WELLINGTON

The Ministry of Education requires all schools to develop a strategic plan, maintain a programme of self-review and report to the community. In Catholic Schools this plan must include provision for the maintenance and development of the Catholic Special Character. The self-review of Catholic Special Character is carried out over three years considering the following three key dimensions.

Dimension

Focus

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Te Iwi Whanui Katorika

The extent to which the school is a Christian community where gospel Values are central, where faith is nourished, and where Christian celebration in the Catholic tradition is highly valued.

Spirituality
Evangelisation
Partnership
Values
School Culture
Leadership
Stewardship
Worship
Service
Collaboration with Parish

PASTORAL CARE

Manaakitanga

The extent to which the school Community nurtures, supports and cares for individuals.

Relationships
Safety
Behaviour Management
Cultural Awareness
Organisation

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Te Whakaakoranga Whakapono

The extent to which the school helps to fulfill the teaching of the mission of the Church, by living the teaching the values of Jesus Christ

Leadership
Religious Education Curriculum
Integrated Curriculum
Resources
Professional Development
Communication

Garin College, Nelson is an integrated Year 9 – 13 Catholic Co-educational College with a roll of 400 students and is under the Proprietorship of the Archbishop of Wellington. This report focuses and comments on the three dimensions, their related foci and the statutory compliances required by the Board of Trustees (BOT), and the Proprietor.

PROCESS

The College provided the required documentation for the visit. During the review visit interviews, classroom visits to Religious Education (RE) and other subjects over a range of levels, meetings and student activities took place. The Principal, the Deputy Principal, the Director of Religious Studies (DRS), the Head of Religious Education (HOF RE), the Guidance Team, the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) students, parents and members of the BOT were interviewed.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY - Te Iwi Whanui Katorika

Garin College, clearly a Catholic school, has been most successful in developing and enhancing its charism. The Catholicity and charism are clear and drive the school in its practices, relationships, decision-making and day-to-day running. It is a most interesting to visit again and see further development and enhancement of the site taking place. A new classroom block has been built and the growth of the original planting is noticeable.

Spirituality - The individual and communal spirituality of the whole school community is promoted and nurtured.

Whole school Masses, class liturgies, liturgies at assemblies and class prayer are part of the daily life of the school and participated in willingly and with commitment by the students and staff. The Sacred Space is used for class liturgies and group prayer and provides a spiritual focus proudly recognised by everyone whom we interviewed.

The Principal's newsletter includes promotion of the Special Character as a focus.

Evangelisation - The school is a faith community which endeavors to spread the Good News by word and witness.

The students and staff are in no doubt that they are part of the faith community which is Garin College. The outreach to others by students is clear with opportunities for this evangelisation experienced amongst students and staff. The induction programmes for new staff and students introduces them to the faith community.

Part of the evangelisation for students is the Journey programme for all students as they progress through the school.

Partnership - Education is a collaborative responsibility

The Principal and the Board work together for the good of the College. The need for the strong support and working relationship between the Board Chairperson and Principal is recognised. Garin has to deal with its geographic situation and the opportunity to have ongoing training in Special Character is part of this. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to arranging a visit from a suitable person to assist the Principal in his work with the Board in this area. In other parts of the Archdiocese, boards have the opportunity to attend training sessions in Special

Character with similar schools. Such training sessions assist them to understand and work with their Principals in Special Character

The Principal clearly sees his staff as a team and works to enhance the way in which they work together by providing them with leadership and development opportunities.

The school has worked successfully to enhance academic achievement – the results are very encouraging and the school is performing well above the national mean in all areas. Further plans for continuing improvement are in place.

The enrolment documentation gives clear information about what the school offers and reflects the Special Character clearly.

The school works to build relationships with priests in the surrounding parishes. One of these priests visits regularly,, celebrates Masses, and is available to students and staff alike.

Values – The school identifies and actively promotes gospel values

There is no doubt that gospel values are a key to the operation of the school. Clear promotion of these is visible through teaching and example. Opportunities for students to respond and promote these values are also available through leadership and the encouragement of initiatives.

School Culture – Catholic Special Character is visible in the relationships, and the artistic expressions seen throughout the school

The relationships in the school are most positive and visitors are treated with respect. Catholic symbols and art are clearly visible.

Leadership – Leadership effectively shapes the faith-based vision, direction, values and outcomes of the school programme

The Principal works unstintingly to enhance the Catholic Special Character and the Garin charism. He is supported by his management team, in particular the DRS and the HOF of Religious Education. The faith-based vision of the school is clear and the values and outcomes which are part of the school programme key to the ongoing recognition of Garin as a Catholic school which is clear in its vision and purpose. The Principal is very committed to distributed and shared leadership and staff have opportunities to be part of the leadership of the school. The drive towards the vision of the school is important and the Principal has a staff keen to assist in driving that vision.

Stewardship - The school accepts responsibility for delivering education with a Catholic Special Character

The school takes the responsibility for providing education with a Catholic Special Character most seriously. Work has been done to ensure that schemes of work specifically reflect the Special Character. The Catholic character is clear in job application details for staff and staff have mention of the support of the Special Character in their appraisals. As mentioned previously the need for Special Character training for the Board of Trustees needs to be addressed. A self-review cycle along the lines set down in this review process has been introduced and the school is responding to data collected. It would be advantageous for the school to work on a promotion plan so that the Nelson community gets to know more of the successes of Garin College.

Prayer and Worship – A Catholic culture of prayer, liturgy and faith-based celebration is promoted in the school

The Catholic culture is strong with prayer celebrated in many formats. Student participation and leadership on prayer is notable and commendable. Reflections at staff meetings are a positive feature. The college is delighted to be developing a relationship with a local priest, relatively new to Nelson, who will lead and celebrate with the community.

Service – Students assist people in need through service and outreach opportunities provided by the school

The college has become known for its generosity and witness in assisting with street appeals in the area. Caritas, Young Vinnies, 40 hour Famine and other causes which may have a particular focus because of the predicament of a students or students are always embraced.

Social Justice – The school promotes social justice

As mentioned, the school is known for its outreach. Social Justice is accentuated and students are encouraged and respond positively, often initiating specific issues themselves.

Collaboration with Parish/Eucharistic Community – The school collaborates with the parishes of which it is part

The school collaborates as much as possible with the local parishes. The Boarders attend Mass at one of the local churches weekly. Parish priests continue to be invited to functions and celebrations in the school e.g. prize giving. The Parish primary schools have also been included in invitations and opportunities for students to build a relationship with Garin.

Key Recommendations

1. That the Board of Trustees addresses the need for training in Catholic Special Character. This should be ongoing for all Board_members both new and established

Areas for Development

1. That the Board of Trustees communicates with the community either through the Garin College Newsletter or through a publication of their own.

PASTORAL CARE - Manaakitanga

Pastoral Care at Garin College is important to all. The school does not have the usual appointment of a Guidance Counsellor and has instead a Guidance Team led by the Manager of Pastoral Care and HOF Student Services. The school brings in an outside counsellor to support students who are in need of this and outside agencies are used through recommendations by the HOF Student Services. The counsellor who is contracted in is empathetic to the Special Character of the school. The role of Specialist Classroom Teacher is used to support beginning teachers and to lead whole school professional development. This included developing strategies for classroom management.

Pastoral care is clearly evident and students can be confident that they are part of a safe environment which supports their learning and well being. The strength of work in the Pastoral Care area of the school includes:-

Relationships - The school is a friendly, welcoming co-operative, learning environment where the sacred dignity of each person is respected

Students who were interviewed made it very clear that students support each other strongly irrespective of year level. Students comment positively about the family atmosphere of the school and the inclusiveness demonstrated. The wider community relationships including families are supported and parents/caregivers feel confident to approach the school should an issue arise. The response from the college in cases of hardship or grief is noteworthy.

The school has had a pastoral chaplain who was attached to the RS faculty and the Pastoral Care Faculty. This role no longer exists and it is important that the work that was done in this role is allocated specifically to the Pastoral Care Faculty. The work particularly emphasised the Catholic character in support and dealings with students. It is understandable that a school of this size would not carry the role but it is equally important for management to ensure that the nature of the work is continued. As there is no on-site Guidance Counsellor and no longer a Pastoral Chaplain it appears that there could be a gap in support and day to day dealings with students.

Organisation - The way pastoral care is organised is evident to all members of the school community

The organisation of pastoral care systems is clear. All members of the school community know the processes to use.

Boarders in the school are well served by the systems which support them and they know well how to access assistance if necessary both through the school and the boarding houses.

Bi-cultural commitment - The school is committed to the Treaty of Waitangi

The school continues the annual Mahi Toi three day cultural celebration which highlights Maori culture and Te Reo is taught at Y9 and becomes an option subject at levels beyond that.

Cultural awareness - The school recognises and honours cultural diversity

The cultural awareness of the college is evident. The variety of cultures in the college is acknowledged – particularly through liturgies. St Patrick's Day was celebrated while the review team was in the school and the participation by students and staff was commendable.

Behavioural Management – Discipline processes are just, reasonable, respectful and consistent

Restorative Justice is the key to the way in which behaviour management with student issues is carried out. Occasionally there is need for a different option and should the students spend time out of the school the support during that time is evident as is the support upon re-entry to the college. All disciplinary actions are handled in a pastorally appropriate manner. A small number of classes need very clear indications of classroom behaviour so that opportunities for all to learn are not hampered. The Specialist Classroom Teacher could be used to assist teachers who struggle with classroom management.

Safety – The school provides for students and staff an environment that is safe – physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and culturally

Students report that they feel safe at school. The dignity of all persons in the community is highly respected and this is borne out through support and structures.

Areas for Development

1. That the Manager of Pastoral Care and the deans link with the Specialist Classroom Teacher to find ways to support teachers who struggle with pedagogical requirements.
2. That the work of the pastoral chaplain is delegated specifically to a teaching staff member so as not to lose this avenue of Special Character input in the day to day needs of students.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Te Whakaakoranga Whakapono

The national syllabus for Religious Education is followed and Unit Standards are offered in senior levels. The faculty is also offering Achievement Standards this year. All year levels and all those who teach RS teachers were observed.

Leadership – The Principal and HOF RS provide leadership and sound management in Religious Education

The Principal and the HOF RS work together to provide leadership and sound management of the Religious Education Faculty. The Principal is committed to Catholic education and staff knows that his support for their work is strong. The DRS has been appointed recently and is keen to be fully involved. There are three full-time RS teachers in the department with others teaching over a range of disciplines.

The faculty is to model a piece of learning which is in line with the revised NZ Curriculum and it is commendable to see that this subject area is playing a leading role in this school-wide development.

Religious Education Curriculum – The Religious Education programme is professionally delivered

There is still work to do to ensure that the teaching and classroom expectations are strong in this area. It is most important that students know that the teaching in RS is part of the school-wide pedagogy and is handled in the same manner as other subjects, e.g. students are aware of learning outcomes and evaluating progress etc. throughout the class. It is also important that students know that the expectations of behaviour are the same in all subjects.

Integrated Curriculum – Catholic teaching is integrated with other teaching areas

Work has been done to incorporate Catholic teaching into other subject areas. Schemes note how Catholic values and specific Catholic teaching can be incorporated into subject areas. The Revised NZ Curriculum offers superb opportunities for the inclusion of Catholic values across all subjects.

Resources – The school makes financial provision for Religious Education Special Character resources

The financial resources for the faculty are suitable and strong support is provided by the Principal.

It was good to see technology used in some RS classes and staff using the equipment in creative ways.

Professional Development – The school provides opportunities for regular Religious Education professional development and spiritual formation for staff

The geographic constraints create an issue for the RS faculty and in the past there has been professional development available through the RS Advisor from Wellington. This will be available again later in the year and the college will take up the opportunity.

Communication – The school communicates with parents/caregivers about Religious Education

It would be advisable for the Faculty to communicate with parents about the curriculum which is covered in RS through a specific newsletter or by having input into the Principal's newsletter. Parents are invited to school for special liturgies/Masses. With Unit Standards being offered and

Achievement Standards being introduced in RE, an ideal opportunity is provided for this communication at senior levels.

Areas for Development

1. Work should be done to ensure that Religious Education teaching is in line with school-wide pedagogical decisions.

COMPLIANCE

Tagged Positions

Due to a resignation earlier in the term, the number of tagged positions is not at the required level. The Principal is working on this and may be able to tag a number of positions of current staff if needed. The College has a high number of Catholic staff including part timers and support staff.

Preference and Non-Preference Students

The school holds a clear data-base of preference and non-preference students. The non-preference allocation is 10%.

Religious Education

The Religious Education programme and 'religious observances' are monitored to ensure that it follow the guidelines published by the NZ Bishops' Conference.

General Board Policy and Practice

The BOT recognises the importance of Religious Studies and religious observances. A Special Character goal is part of the School's Strategic and Annual Plan. It is important that the Board has ongoing training in Catholic character.

Health Curriculum

The sexuality area of the Health curriculum is delivered in accordance with the Special Character of the school. Parents are consulted with and given the right to withdraw students if it be their wish.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY - Te Iwi Whanui Katorika

Key Recommendations

1. That the Board of Trustees addresses the need for training in Catholic Special Character. This should be ongoing for all Board_members both new and established

Areas for Development

1. That the Board of Trustees communicates with the community either through the Garin College Newsletter or through a publication of their own.

PASTORAL CARE – Manaakitanga

Areas for Development

1. That the Manager of Pastoral Care and the deans link with the Specialist Classroom Teacher to find ways to support teachers who struggle with pedagogical changes.
2. That the work of the pastoral chaplain is delegated specifically to a teaching staff member so as not to lose this avenue of Special Character input in the day to day needs of students.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Te Whakaakoranga Whakapono

Areas for Development

1. Work should be done to ensure that teaching is in line with school-wide pedagogical decisions.

FINAL COMMENT

It was a pleasure to be part of the Garin College community over the days of the review visit. Garin College is clearly Catholic in all that it does and its charism has been well developed and work is constantly being done to enhance this further.

Collene Roche
Reviewer
6th May 2009

