



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND
CATHOLIC EDUCATION SERVICES
SPECIAL CHARACTER REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

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REPORT ON THE EXTERNAL REVIEW VISIT FOR
MARIST COLLEGE, AUCKLAND

Principal: Mrs Monica Johnson

Visit Date: September 12th, 15th, 16th, 2014

Reviewers: Ms. Kathleen Petrie
Miss Linda McQuade
Mrs Emilia Burke

Date of Confirmed Report: 17th October 2014

Introduction

Marist College Auckland is a Catholic School for Girls Years 7-13. Based in the Marist tradition which originated in France in the early nineteenth century, it was founded by the Marist Sisters in Mount Albert in 1928. The Bishop of Auckland is now the Proprietor. The college roll at March 1st was 742, with an additional 11 International Students.

Process

The review team of three received the required documentation, prepared very thoroughly and in good time. It included responses to questionnaires from teaching and support staff, the BOT, and the DRS, which were previously distributed by the college. At an initial meeting with the Senior Management Team and DRS, a draft timetable was arranged, to include classroom visits to both Religious Education classes and other subjects across the curriculum and range of levels. The timetable also allowed for meetings with the Principal and SMT, the DRS and Assistant DRS, the college Chaplain and Campus Minister, the Pastoral Care and Guidance Network including Deans and the school Counsellor, and groups of senior and junior students, parents and the Board of Trustees. The review team was also able to arrange interviews with Sr Lorraine Campbell SM, and the HOD Learning Support. Informal conversations were held during the review timeframe with other staff members.

Dimension

Catholic Community

The school is a community where gospel values are central, where faith is nourished and where Christian celebration in the Catholic tradition is highly valued

Focus

Spirituality

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

Marist College proudly proclaims itself a Catholic School for Girls, and its Mission Statement, *The Marist College community is committed to fostering excellence in education founded on living Catholic values and the spirit of Mary, is prominently displayed in published material, as well as in reception and public areas alongside photos of students in liturgical and outreach events. The school motto, Ad Jesum per Mariam, is well known and understood, and its four core values, In Mary's Way, Family Spirit, Presence and Empowerment are emphasised by a focus on one in particular each year. In 2014, staff, students, BOT and parents were able to give evidence of the ways in which Family Spirit was exemplified in the school.*

The Principal articulates a strongly-held belief that students encounter Jesus Christ and grow their relationship with Him through the actions of others, citing the saying of St Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel at all times. Where necessary use words." In this she is supported by members of the SMT, RE staff, and other teachers who are prepared to be open with students about their own faith journey.

Students report that what they learn in school encourages them to walk with Mary as a role model, and interpret the school motto as meaning that following Mary brings us closer to Jesus and to know more about God. During the Chavoin House Mass, which the reviewers were able to attend, students presented a re-enactment of the Marist call of Jeanne Marie Chavoin and Sr Lorraine Campbell SM provided a reflection on the courage and compassion of Mary as both the mother and the first disciple of Jesus – a theme which could be usefully developed.

Staff are also offered regular opportunities to reflect on communal and individual spirituality. There is a roster for reflection at staff briefings, and the DRS is keen to see these develop a closer focus on Jesus and Gospel values, with an emphasis more on prayer than general

reflection. Liveable Spirit is a two-day workshop offered by the Marist Sisters, originally Sr Lorraine but now by Sr Margaret Cross who comes from Wellington on a regular basis. More than 100 people, many of whom are still on the staff, have completed the course in small groups since its inception in 2003, thus ensuring the “spirit of Mary” continues to grow in depth in the school.

Focus

Evangelisation

The school is a faith community which endeavours to spread the Good News by word and witness

Father Kevin Murphy SM continues as the school’s sacramental chaplain, saying Mass every Thursday in the convent chapel as well as the large whole-school Eucharists. To extend the scope of chaplaincy, in employing a young woman as Campus Minister, the Board has made a significant commitment to evangelisation, recognising that peer ministry is very influential. She has a strong background in theology and pastoral care, through training and work experience overseas and with the LOGOS team in New Zealand. She spends 80 minutes of break time, on each of the three days for which she is employed, out and about with students, offering companionship in faith, which she sees as their most pressing need. She meets regularly with the DRS and supports the Assistant DRS in the preparation of school Masses and liturgies, and the training of Eucharistic ministers. She also assists with student retreats. She has responsibility for running the sacramental programmes and involves parents in the programme by emailing them the material which is to be covered with students the following day.

A Ministry Team has been established since the last review, led by the DRS. It includes the Principal, DP Pastoral Care, and Guidance Counsellor as well as the Campus Minister whose work it is designed to support.

The school has begun this year to analyse the preference categories for students enrolled, and currently advertises the sacramental programme through the newsletter and RE classes. Consideration is being given to other means of invitation. A parent evening for new families is held in November of each year, attendance at which is an expectation of enrolment. It was well-attended last year, and the Principal, DRS and Head of Liturgy spoke to parents about what it means for students to be in a Catholic school. In 2013, 5 students were baptised and 10 received the sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation; in 2014 those numbers were 5 and 10 respectively. While these figures represent pleasing outcomes of the sacramental programme, the percentage of students receiving a blessing rather than receiving Holy Communion at Mass would seem to indicate that this is a continuing field of endeavour.

The Principal publishes a weekly newsletter which always includes references to Special Character and could be developed by the inclusion of further teaching material. She is confident in the process of orientation of new staff at the start of the academic year, which involves attendance at the Diocesan course for teachers new to Catholic schools as well as internal input from the DRS and SMT.

Focus

Partnership

Education is a collaborative responsibility

Partnership is strong in the Marist context. There is continuing evident involvement of Marist Sisters living on-site, particularly Sr Lorraine who acts as college archivist and is present in a very obvious sense on both day-to-day and special occasions. There is also an emphasis on deepening involvement with the Marist network, for students – through participation in Marist Youth Leadership and Marist Neighbourhood courses – and for staff, through Marist Forums which have been attended by the Principal, successive BOT Chairs, “tagged” teachers and support staff. There is also a growing sense of partnership with Marist Primary, next door to the college, through shared projects and liturgies, and joint celebration of Catholic Schools’ Day in 2013 and Assumption Day this year.

There are commendable links between Marist College and the wider Catholic secondary education sector. The Principal is actively involved in both local and national Catholic secondary principals' organisation, and the DRS is a passionate proponent of, and role model for, collaboration between schools in both curriculum and Special Character Activities. They are both generous in sharing Marist-created resources with the wider sector. Students too are involved in the wider Catholic network through participation in Diocesan Youth Masses and 'Faith'n'Chips' sessions.

This year a member of the Board took the initiative of running a reflection morning for parents, following discussions by the Special Character Committee. This supports the Diocesan "Fit for Mission" document. It was addressed by the DRS, and was well-received by the 12 people who attended; The Board intends to continue this annually. The parents interviewed spoke highly of the school's commitment to Special Character, and appeared well-informed through communication by newsletter, email and the ultranet.

The college can justly feel proud of its 2014 ERO review report, which commented on high levels of achievement for all students, including Maori students who are achieving well above national cohorts. Partnership with tangata whenua is fostered through regular hui, and the Board has made significant commitment to the training and retention of a teacher of te reo, enabling the language to be a compulsory subject from Years 7-9. The use of te reo was evident in staff room notices, in student work displayed, and in the Mass. The achievement of Pasifika students, while above national averages, is below the Marist cohorts, and useful partnerships have been built to address this, resulting in two mentoring programmes and the appointment of a liaison teacher for Pasifika students. The fono for Pasifika parents which occur each term, and which feature former students talking about their challenges and achievement, are in general well-attended. Other ethnic groups are given opportunities to celebrate their cultures through the Family Festival at the beginning of the year, which features food and entertainment by 10-12 ethnicities, and through liturgical participation.

Partnership with past pupils is maintained through a database of around 2000. A past pupil and long-time staff member who is currently a Dean and the Careers Teacher at the school liaises with Sr Lorraine and others to look for ways to draw groups into the school, while being aware that more informal links are being maintained through social media. It is hoped to have a history of the college written in time for the centenary in 14 years time.

Focus Values *The school identifies and actively promotes gospel values*

The four core Marist values are named in documentation such as the charter, staff induction handbook and student diary; one is chosen as the special focus each year. In 2014 Family Spirit has been taught and promoted through liturgical celebrations, newsletters, staff formation, and displays around the school. The Family Spirit corner in the staff room was colourful and attractive.

Both senior and junior students communicated their strong impression of Family Spirit at Marist, fostered through the vertical tutor groups which facilitate the "Big sister-little sister" relationships. They could see clearly that "Mary's Way" affected how we treat others, that respect coming through in both large and small ways, from an absence of what might be seen as bullying behaviours to a willingness to stand aside in corridors and hold doors open for others. Students and staff widely echoed the exhortation "to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do", which is often used by the DP in charge of Pastoral Care. One parent quoted the example of the enthusiastic public accolades given by senior students to award-winning junior teams at the recent AML netball prizegiving, which was remarked upon by parents from other schools.

It is recommended that all of the four values be displayed in each classroom and around the school with special emphasis being given to the focus value for that year.

The document “The Catholic Education of School-Aged Children”, produced by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops’ Conference towards the end of 2013, has given rise to discussion as to how a personal encounter with Jesus Christ might be fostered by the way in which the Marist values are promoted so that the college’s Mission Statement becomes a deepened, living entity. It is suggested that each of the values be linked to a Gospel story and that students grow more familiar with these links, becoming more able to clearly articulate them.

The value of academic excellence is a clear focus for the college and commendable NCEA results show the benefit of this. Managing the tension between an emphasis on academic excellence, the provision of a holistic education, and the goal of fostering disciples of Christ in the way of Mary will provide an ongoing challenge for the school.

Focus

School Culture

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

The warm welcome extended to the review team appears to typify the hospitality, courtesy, consideration and aroha that is the culture of Marist College, modelled and influenced by the school’s leaders. No request went unanswered and both staff and students appeared very ready to engage in conversation. Staff questionnaire responses provided strong endorsement of a culture of kindness, safety and empowerment, as did interviews with parents.

Classrooms and corridors provide lively displays of art work related to the Special Character of the school, and many of these are very topical. The newest buildings in the college have provided space for beautiful artistic expressions, including plaques of the four House Saints which have recently been installed.

Each Tutor Group homeroom contains a well-maintained and obvious prayer focus.

Focus

Leadership

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

Marist College is blessed with strong, faith-filled and witnessing women leaders. The Principal, senior managers and the DRS work collaboratively to lead the enhancement of Special Character in the school, and were able to articulate clearly their vision and direction, as well as progress made since the last review, on a platform that was already very secure. It can be clearly seen from comments by staff, students and parents that these leaders “walk the talk” on a daily basis.

There is a strong culture of reflection and review, and decisions by the Board and by management are clearly evidence-based. Documentation on expectations of the Marist Teacher and the Marist Graduate are central to the strategic and annual plans, with the clear goal of encouraging *a confident, connected young woman with faith, Christian values and skills, abilities and the qualifications to achieve her potential and contribute to society*. The Principal’s vision includes the handing-on of the Marist charism, and doing justice to all aspects of the special character by enrolling passions for causes in a collegial way. The Special Character of the school is seen as a responsibility of each member of the community, and devolved leadership was observed, for example, in the environmental and sustainability initiatives this year.

The Board is extremely supportive of the Principal, funding overseas professional development in 2013 focussed on the Marist heritage, and this year her attendance at the Darwin Conference of Catholic Australian Secondary Principals’ Association. The Principal has made her own arrangements for spiritual direction, involving personal meetings three or four times a year, and from a distance at other times.

Growing future leaders is a focus for the school. The Principal has appointed a number of young teachers and the school is supporting their growth as Catholic leaders through internal professional learning and development, and in some cases by funding external training.

During the period of the review, a Year 12 Leadership Formation Day was held off-site, in preparation for student leadership choices in 2015. The emphasis was on servant leadership, with Jesus as the ultimate leader, and the resource booklet for the day included Scripture study and prayer.

Focus

Stewardship

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

Marist College has been assiduous in following a three- year programme of self-review related to Special Character, and the reviewers were able to view the considerable amount of documentation for last year's review on Pastoral Care. Parents interviewed indicated they found the format of the review, using Survey Monkey, accessible and useful.

The wide range of documentation made available to the reviewers indicates that the school gives priority to Special Character requirements in job descriptions, employment processes, staff induction, and professional development, where it is a number one priority on application forms. The Board sees Special Character as "the weft and weave" in all things. A Board Member, along with two senior managers and two special character staff, were offered the opportunity to attend the Marist Network of Catholic Schools Conference in Christchurch in June of this year, which focused on Forming Catholic Minds and Hearts; input on Faith amid Secularity at this conference will provide a useful basis for further unpacking of the NZCBC document on the Catholic Education of School-Aged Children.

Annual reports from learning areas are closely examined by small groups within the BOT, assisted by a senior manager, and there is a clear onus on heads of departments to describe to the Board how they are supporting the integration of Special Character; these range from the general to a pleasing number of specific comments around curriculum resources and topic choices.

The school's appraisal systems are undergoing development at present, and include a clear Special Character component.

Focus

Prayer & Worship

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

The college engages the service of a Sacramental Chaplain who has had a long relationship with the school and is a member of the Marist order, which results in an enthusiastic and cooperative approach. He is available one day per week and says the Mass before school on Thursdays in the Convent Chapel, which is prepared by one RE class at a time. That class is expected to attend, but numbers frequently stretch the capacity of the chapel, as they are supplemented by other students, staff and, sometimes, parents. The Sacramental Chaplain is less involved in the classroom or the sacramental programme now than previously, largely because of the decision to employ a Campus Minister three days a week. Both the Chaplain and the Campus Minister are linked with the school through the LOGOS project.

There are 6 whole school Masses a year, celebrated by the chaplain and other priests of the Diocese, including the Bishop. Apart from the Opening Eucharist, which takes place at St Patrick's Cathedral, these are celebrated in the new gymnasium, which can be converted to a beautiful sacred space. The Chavoin House Eucharist showed a high degree of prayerfulness, planning and participation, largely student-driven. The hymns sung during the Mass were both reverent and enthusiastic, and cultural components such as the procession of the Word by a

Tongan group or a thanksgiving hymn in te reo after communion, were accorded respectful attention.

The weekly Assembly is also held in the gymnasium. During the review we observed an Assembly which began with prayer and a celebration of the feast day of Our Lady of Sorrows; it also included a video about the reason for prayer through Mary followed by intercessional prayers and the hymn Mo Maria. These prayers and liturgical components are organised on a rotational basis involving students from all tutor groups, which means that students from the very youngest in the school are involved.

Reconciliation is not offered regularly, as it has proved difficult to get sufficient numbers of priests on any one occasion. It may be useful for the DRS and Head of Liturgy to investigate how other schools are overcoming this challenge. One suggestion is that the Chaplain is available in the Sisters' Chapel during first break on Thursdays for individuals wishing to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation.

There is a Rosary group of 10-20 students which meets weekly, as a result of student initiative. This group has been going for more than four years now – a remarkable commitment.

Retreats at Years 7,9,11 and 12 offer an experiential opportunity for Marist students to encounter Christ. A decision was made several years ago to make them a prayerful retreat experience, rather than combining them with outdoor education or other activities, and as a result students move around various “stations” in smaller groups on the retreat day. Some of the year 13 leaders participated in a 3-day “Salt and Light” retreat run by LOGOS at the beginning of this year.

Students reported that they pray regularly in Tutor Groups and RE classes, and the reviewers noted both formal and reflective prayer, including some instances focused around social justice topics which were pertinent for the week. Intercessory prayer, or “special intentions” was frequently observed. Staff have recently had the option to experience Christian meditation at a staff day, and it could be worthwhile for the college to investigate the introduction of meditation across the school in the future, giving students and staff the experience of stillness and silence which are difficult to find in the busy school day.

Focus

Service

Students assist people in need through service and outreach opportunities

Servant leadership is promoted and modelled by the Principal, senior managers, RE and other staff, and is a prominent emphasis in the formation of student leaders. Specific initiatives have included a stream clean-up project and peer mentoring through Co-lab, a series of tutorials outside of school hours staffed by senior students with relevant experience and expertise in particular subject areas. Some staff members also participate in this, but it is largely a student-to-student initiative, further illustrating the culture promulgated by the core values of “sisters within a family”. This year’s environmental focus, promoting stewardship of God’s earth, is another example of service that is promoted and reinforced.

Successful former students have been invited to offer service to present students through the Pasifika mentoring programme.

Focus

Social Justice

Students assist people in need through service and outreach opportunities

Service opportunities at Marist College are often linked to social justice outreach. The Young Marist Neighbours programmes have been running for eight years, taking two selected students four times a year to other areas of Aotearoa where social inequity will be experienced first-hand. In 2014 Pawarenga and Ruatoria were examples of such places. There is an expectation that

on their return, the students will communicate the effect of the experience to enhance social justice outreach at the college. One result of this at Marist has been the definition of a Social Action student leadership position, with support from a designated liaison teacher.

Father Frank Bird was a previous Marist College chaplain, and the school now raises funds to support his mission in Ranong. Local beneficiaries of social justice outreach include the James Liston Hostel, Monte Cecilia, local Foodbanks, who received 5000 cans donated by staff and students, and prison inmates who receive Christmas cards. Many of these activities are coordinated by a large and enthusiastic branch of Young Vinnies, whose numbers continue to grow.

One student reported an in-depth knowledge of the work done by Monte Cecilia, and this is a potential opportunity for development of social justice outreach, building on the addresses to students by representatives from the various charities. Personal experience by students would bring the reality of the service offered into sharper focus.

The college is working hard to build partnerships with parishes and the wider Diocese, recognizing that it is a spiritual need for students to see that they are part of a wider Church life. At present there is very limited follow-up to the sacramental programme with the students' home parishes.

Many staff and students have links with St Mary's Mt Albert, and these were mentioned by a staff member at staff briefing one morning during the review. The school has also retained strong links with Fr Peter Tipene and the Owairaka parish, having celebrated Mass in that church while the most recent building project was under way. Fr Siteki of St Mary's parish, Mount Albert, is involved with the Pasifika group and in the mentoring programme.

Links with local primary schools have also been strengthened in recent times, with joint celebrations of liturgies and musical events with Marist Primary and St Francis, as well as shared projects for those schools with the Marist College PE, Art and Drama departments.

Student awareness of Diocesan-wide foci is obvious: RE staff and junior students participated in a pilgrimage to the Hokianga to mark the end of the Year of Faith in 2013, and Fit for Mission, the 2014 Diocesan Pastoral Plan, was echoed in student artwork.

A large number of student Ministers of the Word and the Eucharist are commissioned for the school each year, and it may be helpful to invite their parish priests and/or members of the parish council or the parish youth coordinator to the Mass of Commissioning, to help build those links through service in their own parishes. Board members and senior staff also suggested negotiating a roster for Marist liturgy leaders and culture groups to have input to parish Masses during the year at appropriate times.

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT: CATHOLIC COMMUNITY.

1. Ensure the job description for the Health Coordinator includes a requirement to frame programmes with regard to the Special Character of the school, as well as the New Zealand Curriculum.
2. Make provision for adequate induction of new staff who join the College during the school year.
3. Investigate wider invitation to the sacramental programme, based on closer analysis of preference categories, particularly for students whose sole sacrament may be Baptism.

4. Continue attempts to provide stronger links to parishes, including the provision of opportunities for Reconciliation.
5. Investigate the possibility of introducing meditative prayer across the school.
6. Continue discussion of the recommendations contained in the NZCBC document, “The Catholic Education of School-Aged Children”.

Dimension

Pastoral Care

The school community nurtures, supports and cares for individuals

Focus

Relationships

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

The school fosters a welcoming, family-orientated environment. Senior students affirmed the common belief in God and the sacredness of each person, which leads to an inherent respect in the treatment of others.

The thorough review of pastoral care systems in 2013 affirmed the positive way in which relationships within the school are viewed by students, staff and parents, as did the responses to questionnaires conducted in association with the Special Character Review. The Pastoral Care Plan 2014-17 indicates ongoing attention to this aspect through the Dimensions of Active Community and Special Character.

The six vertical tutor groups within each House, and the more recent introduction of “travelling” Deans who move through the school with the year levels ensures students are more fully known, and continuing relationships with families can be developed. Senior students in tutor groups assist with the induction of new students, and have a practical mentoring role with those younger than themselves.

Focus

Safety

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

“Doing the right thing because it’s the right thing to do” precludes instances of bullying, as does the core emphasis on thinking, judging, feeling and acting as Mary would in the world today. Interviews with staff, students and parents confirmed that these are not merely words at Marist College but an everyday reality. This was also confirmed by the ERO report this year. Where a student feels unsafe in any situation, the school culture encourages her to tell an adult, and the open-ness of staff makes this more likely to happen.

Where potential issues of safety arise they are addressed swiftly and effectively, by the appropriate staff member. The Guidance Counsellor indicated a high degree of professional respect for the Deans, in knowing when to hand over more complex issues, which can often arise from family backgrounds. The Counsellor uses her discretion in referral to outside agencies to encourage faith-based choices, and has on occasion involved the parish priest, with the families’ permission.

Focus

Behaviour Management

Discipline processes are just, compassionate, respectful and consistent.

Restorative justice principles and the possibility of “forgiveness with a fresh ‘ start underpin behaviour management at Marist, and students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, and for their own learning. Observation of students in classrooms and around the school indicated high levels of focus and self-discipline. They are proud to be “Marist women.”

The pastoral care network focuses on taking time to sort out issues while they are at a minor level, rather than allowing them to grow, and parents are contacted as needed.

There have been 6 stand-downs in the last year and no suspensions.

Focus

Cultural Awareness

The school recognises and honours cultural diversity

The college recognises and celebrates cultural diversity, and students mix easily across cultural groupings. One of the earliest events each year is the Family Festival, where the food, art and cultures of the many school ethnicities are shared and showcased. The school also participates with great pride in the Auckland Secondary School Maori and Pacific Islands Festival.

Liturgy also provides opportunities for cultural awareness and celebration, through liturgical dance, processions, and the use of ethnic languages in hymns and prayers of intercession.

The college is aware of cultural norms which may cause challenges for some students, and these are dealt with sensitively by involving the whole family, where necessary. Poor attendance has been identified as a barrier to achievement for some students and possible strategies have been put in place to address this.

There is good support for the regular Pasifika fono. Mentoring is in place for Pasifika students, and training for mentors is being strengthened as a result of evaluation.

Focus

Bi-Cultural Commitment

The school is committed to the Treaty of Waitangi

The Board of Marist College has indicated that it recognises the Treaty of Waitangi and the status of Maori as tangata whenua through its commitment to the retention of te reo Maori as a compulsory subject in Years 7-9. There is good consultation with Maori parents through hui which are held once a term, and there is a fledgling kapa haka group.

The academic achievement of Maori students is in general very good, and te reo is used by the whole school in prayer and liturgy.

Towards the end of last year the Board funded a hikoi to the Hokianga to allow junior students and RE teachers the opportunity to deepen their appreciation for the beginnings of the Church in Aotearoa, and to recognise the early bonds that existed between the Marist bishop Pompallier and the rangatira Maori.

Focus

Organisation

Pastoral care is organised in way which is evident to all members of the school community

There is a clear structure of pastoral care, led with passion by one of the Deputy Principals, with a focus on knowing each student fully as a person, and providing a wrap-around system of care and support for the student and her family. As well as attending to the physical, mental and emotional health of the students, many of the staff involved in pastoral care are interested in the students' spiritual hauora. The Year 10 Dean, for example, attends the Thursday Masses for her level and encourages students to enjoy the liturgy by taking an active role in it, even when, as is common at this age, they may be undergoing their own rebellion against faith. Affirmation and praise, not always in public, are cited as means of letting students know they are known and noticed.

Parents have easy access to tutor teachers and Deans by email. The Caring Committee makes a significant contribution to pastoral care by organising prepared food to be delivered to the school on the first Tuesday of each month for distribution to families in need.

The Campus Minister has a pastoral role in the time that she spends with students during breaks. The Guidance Counsellor comes from a faith-based perspective and shares her faith with students as appropriate. In 2015, when a new Campus Minister will be appointed, it may be useful to clarify her role in relationship to that of the Guidance Counsellor.

Once a week a year level meeting is run by the Dean and attended by all teachers who teach that level, as well as the Guidance Counsellor and the Enhanced Learning Coordinator, who is in charge of Learning Support. The latter has created a digital register on MUSAC with an index page for each year level, enabling teachers to be aware of and track progress of students with learning difficulties. She also works with the DP Curriculum to provide opportunities for differentiation and acceleration through a flexible senior timetable for students who have been identified as gifted and talented.

As a result of last year's internal review, a report was submitted to the Board and a wide-ranging Pastoral Care Plan 2014-17 has been put into place. While this clearly identifies possible sources of evidence and ways in which the team might work to use the evidence, it may have increased robustness if specific targets had been set, for example around attendance.

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT: PASTORAL CARE

1. Clarification of the role in pastoral care of the Campus Minister, particularly in relation to that of the Guidance Counsellor.
2. Consideration of targets to be included in the Pastoral Care Plan.

Dimension

Religious Education

The school helps to fulfil the teaching mission of the Church by living and teaching the values of Jesus Christ

Focus

Leadership

The Principal and the Director of Religious Studies provide leadership and sound management in Religious Education

The Principal and the DRS are passionate witnesses to faith in word and action. The Principal is seen as a faith-filled leader, articulate in witnessing to her beliefs which she communicates confidently in speech and in writing through the weekly newsletter and Board reports. The Board is confident that the Principal is a living example of Catholic, Marist faith, citing her clear communication of values which can be seen in the way staff and students treat each other. She actively supports and values the work of the DRS and Head of Liturgy.

The RE department consists of the DRS, Assistant DRS and 5 other teachers, one of whom is a member of the SMT in charge of Pastoral Care. Classes with all teachers and at most levels of the school were visited. The DRS takes responsibility for the curriculum, while the Assistant deals more with the liturgical role, providing assistance for the RE teachers in preparing classes for the weekly Mass and training students to participate meaningfully in liturgy. Appropriate and thorough documentation for the RE department was provided by the DRS to the reviewers well in advance of the review.

The DRS has been the instigator of very productive discussion with other schools around the Yr 7-10 RE curriculum and is seen as a leader in her field. It is due to her hugely significant contribution, with the support of the Principal and Senior Management, that what began as a pilot programme for Marist and 3 other Auckland schools is close to approval by the NZCBC as

a curriculum model for other Yr 7-13 schools. Staff at Marist report that they see benefits from this revised junior curriculum in the depth of senior knowledge and in assessment results, and this is borne out by examples of student work seen.

It is heartening to see that some discussion has taken place at leadership level this year about the NZCBC document *The Catholic Education of School-Aged Children*, and that the issues raised are being considered at both operational and governance level.

Focus

Religious Education Curriculum

The Religious Education programme is soundly managed and professionally delivered

The scheme of work is thorough and continuously being reviewed. Students report the inclusion of topical issues at appropriate levels. Teachers of RE work collegially to plan both units of work and individual lessons within the scheme of work, and share resources generously to cater for the needs of the students in front of them. Collaborative and comprehensive power point presentations to accompany units of work are available for all staff to use. While providing more than adequate guidance for new teachers of RE, the scheme also leaves room for adaptation by experienced teachers; in this way it follows the emphasis on teaching as inquiry in the New Zealand Curriculum.

Units of work in RE are regularly evaluated and reviewed by the appropriate staff. Evidence was observed of the planning of units to coincide with Church and School events, such as Social Justice Week. All Year 7 students are prepared for the Opening Mass by a presentation which is run by the DRS, and their initial unit of work, *Discovering our Identity*, aims to answer common questions about prayer and the practice of Catholicism within the school.

Time allocation at all levels for Religious Education is in line with the Bishops' requirements, with extra time allowed in Year 13 since the last report, enabling a full academic programme worth 18 Level 3 NCEA credits to be delivered and assessed. At levels 1 and 2 of NCEA, the focus is on units taught in depth, with fewer assessments, which translates into better understanding of the course content. This can be evidenced from results achieved. The majority of students report that they enjoy RE, are happy with what they learn, and feel it applies well to their lives. Seniors emphasised the topicality of RE units which enable them to make good choices about here and now issue such as the analysis of moral implications of current election policies.

Effective pedagogy was observed in RE classrooms, allowing for differentiated learning and learning styles, and making good use of ICT. Colourful and detailed examples of student work on classroom walls and in the corridors exemplify the high standards expected. The key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum are integrated into RE units at junior levels.

The peer tutoring group, Co-lab, provides opportunities as needed for assistance with RE assessment by senior students.

Focus

Integrated Curriculum

The teaching of Religious Education is integrated with other curriculum areas especially those which include ethical issues, personal relationships and sexuality education.

The intention to integrate a Catholic world view across the curriculum was in evidence, through the majority of the staff questionnaires returned. In some of these the comments reflected Catholic values in classroom relationships, while 30 of the 55 responses indicated specific links between Special Character and the subject areas through resources chosen and content covered. In Science, for example, choices around bioethics showed the influence of the RE curriculum. To reinforce this relationship, it would be useful to ensure that Science laboratories, which are not used for vertical tutor group classes and therefore do not have a prayer focus, could display suitable religious pictures or sayings such as the one seen in an English

classroom: *The one who discovers God's approval no longer needs the approval of others in quite the same way.*

All but two of the staff teaching Health have completed the professional development on sexuality provided by the Diocese, and if in doubt as to the appropriateness of a resource they are consistent in checking with senior RE staff.

Resources

Focus

The Board of Trustees makes financial provision for Religious Education and Catholic Special Character resources

Religious Education and Special Character are generously resourced at Marist College. Clear and comprehensive booklets for each unit of work for senior levels are produced by the DRS using NCRS material, with permission, and other sources. The photocopy budget enables each student to have her own copy. These booklets are up to date, current and attractive to students.

All classrooms have access to teacher laptops and data projectors and RE classes are taught in teacher home-rooms enabling strategic management of resources, and large-scale displays of student work. The Chavoin block area of 4 designated RE classrooms provides additional corridor space for display, and this is well utilised.

In providing resources for International students the DRS has been assiduous in sourcing foreign language Bibles and other sources, but admits there are still issues with language for some of the small number of international students, RE being such a language-dense subject. The DRS feels well supported by the Board and Senior Leadership Team in the provision of resources.

The Secondary RE advisor was a member of the review team, and is a frequent visitor to the school, working closely with the DRS to assist with the delivery of the curriculum. The DRS herself is a frequent presenter at Diocesan in-service courses and national meetings.

Professional Development

Focus

The school provides opportunities for regular Religious Education professional development and spiritual development for all staff

Professional development related to Special Character is a significant commitment for Marist College. All staff have recently undertaken a Wellness PLD day and as part of that, modules such as Christian meditation were offered. At the start of each year the teachers new to Catholic schools attend the required Diocesan course. A seminar for all 'tagged' teachers was held recently, and 3 'tagged' teachers were sent to a seminar in Wellington earlier this year.

The DRS, senior and specialist teachers of RE are all well qualified, meeting or exceeding the current levels of required certification. The Assistant DRS is currently completing a Master's degree in RE and another young teacher is undertaking a post-graduate RE qualification.

The Board offers a \$5000 Special Character/RE Scholarship and overseas visits to Lyons, Belley and other important places in the Marist tradition have been, and will continue to be, funded by this scholarship.

Communication

Focus

The school communicates with parents about Religious Education programmes

Parents reported that the school's newsletter and ultranet provide adequate information about RE programmes and that they receive regular feedback on student progress. Although parent-

teacher conferences can be rushed because of time constraints, parents are given the opportunity to follow up concerns by email.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. Records of all professional development completed by RE staff need to be sent to the Secondary RE advisor so that components for certification can be updated.

Compliance Issues

The Attestation Document was completed by the Principal and approved by the Board.

The percentage of non-preference students is at present slightly above the 5% permitted by the Integration Act – 42 non-preference students as opposed to 37. It would appear that this increase has occurred since the last external review in 2010. It is important that the Board takes steps to bring the non-preference ratio back into line with legislation.

COMPLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the identified issue be addressed.

Concluding remarks

The reviewers congratulate the Board, Principal, senior managers, the DRS and staff on the outstanding strength of Special Character at Marist College – it is real, pervasive and alive! Marist is rightly seen as a leader among Catholic schools, and it was our privilege to be part of the community for the period of the review. We wholeheartedly thank all those involved, including students and parents, for their warm welcome, and for their frankness in entering into discussion.

We wish you all of God's blessings as you continue to grow in the way of Mary, and her son, Jesus.

Kathleen Petrie
(Reviewers)

Linda McQuade

Emilia Burke