



WELLINGTON CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTRE

TE TARI TOKO I TE MĀTAURANGA KATORIKA O TE WHANGA-NUI-A-TARA

1 October 2010

Peter Fava
Principal
St Bernard's College
183 Waterloo Rd
Lower Hutt 5010

Dear Peter

Report on Catholic Special Character Review, St Bernard's College

Enclosed is a copy of the Catholic Special Character Review and Development Report for St Bernard's College.

As you know, the Wellington Catholic Education Centre has responsibility for ensuring there is an external review during the three yearly cycle of self review. This year, the Centre contracted Helen Newfield, a Catholic Character reviewer in the Auckland diocese, to conduct the review, in conjunction with Fr Paul Martin, rector of St Patrick's College, Kilbirnie

The report shows that St Bernard's is an outstanding example of Catholic school that is proud of and knowledgeable about its Marist heritage but more than that, puts the five Pillars of Marist Spirituality and their underlying values into practice in all aspects of college life. The part you play in this as principal is clearly critical with the report describing you as an inspirational leader in the college community and as someone who is authentically Catholic, setting the tone for the whole school. It is also good to note the strong relationships between senior management and governance and with the local Marist Brothers community.

The report, as any useful review should identifies some areas for development which will further enhance "an already successful school". These are:

PASTORAL CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a Pastoral Care Plan be drawn up which includes reference to Marist values.
2. That a review of the pastoral care processes be carried out to ascertain whether they can be simplified or streamlined.
3. That strategies be put in place to encourage student accountability and responsibility.
4. That the time allocation for Deans be increased if it is possible.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the number of Religious Education topics taught and the time allocated to them at senior levels be reviewed to achieve a better coverage of the National Religious Education Curriculum. This would require a re-balancing of the time allocation and of the number of topics taught from the Religious Education curriculum and the Health curriculum.
2. That in the Year 12 Religious Education Course the relevance of the topics currently taught in both Religious Education and Health be reviewed.
3. That the status and timetabling of the Year 13 Religious Education programme be addressed for 2011.
4. That the DRS keep an up to date record of the qualifications and accreditation status of the members of the Religious Education Department.
5. That all Religious Education teachers be encouraged to gain Level 1 Accreditation and that those on Level 1 work towards gaining Level 2.
6. That the DRS keep a record of the relevant professional development undertaken by each member of the department to be used as evidence of eligibility for Accreditation.

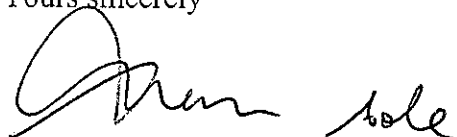
COMPLIANCE ISSUES

1. The Catholic Special Character compliances required of Boards of Trustees of Catholic Integrated Schools have all been met by St Bernard's College in 2010 with the exception of the situation regarding Tagged Positions. At present the college is one under the required number of tags. The Principal is aware of this and is keen to address the issue when it is possible.
2. It is suggested that the BOT checks that Schedule 5 of St Bernard's Integration Agreement preserves the Marist/Champagnat charism of the college. If it does not, the college's Integration Agreement with the Crown should be amended to cement it in.

As you know, the WCEC is available to support you in any way we are able so please contact me or Philippa Barker if there is anything we can do to assist.

Congratulations to you and staff on this very positive report which affirms the hard work and commitment of all people connected with the college in ensuring that St Bernard's College continues to firmly uphold the values and traditions of the Catholic faith, to carefully nurture the Marist charism and to deliver a quality Catholic education.

Yours sincerely



Sharron Cole
Director

CATHOLIC SPECIAL CHARACTER REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT ON THE EXTERNAL REVIEW VISIT FOR ST BERNARD'S COLLEGE, LOWER HUTT

Principal: Mr. Peter Fava

Visit Date: 24-26 August 2010

Reviewers: Mrs. Helen Newfield and
Fr. Paul Martin SM, Principal, St Patrick's College, Wellington.

Introduction

St Bernard's College, Lower Hutt, is an integrated Year 7- 13 Catholic college for boys with a roll of 533. In addition there is currently 1 international student. This report will focus and comment on the three dimensions, their related foci and the statutory compliances required by the Board of Trustees and the Proprietor, the Catholic Archbishop of the Diocese of Wellington.

Process

The college provided the required documentation for the visit and arranged the programme as requested. This included interviews, visits to Religious Education (RE) classes and other classes over a range of subjects and year levels, meetings and other activities. Interviews were conducted with the Principal, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Director of Religious Studies (DRS), the Pastoral Care Team, the Director of Pastoral Care, the Guidance Counsellor, the Special Character Committee of the Board of Trustees (BOT), the Chaplain and the Campus Minister. Also interviewed were members of the BOT, a group of parents and groups of junior and senior students. There were conversations with various other staff members on an informal basis.

All members of the school community were welcoming and helpful and this resulted in a visit that was both informative and enjoyable.

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

St Bernard's College is strongly Catholic and firmly upholds the values and traditions of the Catholic Faith and the charism of St Marcellin Champagnat, founder of the Marist Brothers, whose members staffed the college at the time of its establishment. The Marist charism continues to be carefully nurtured and promoted by the Principal, with the support of the Senior Leadership Team, and is deeply embedded in all aspects of school life.

Spirituality

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

The spirituality of St Bernard's College is evident in the way that God's presence is acknowledged through prayer in liturgical celebrations, assemblies and meetings. At morning staff briefing teachers open the meeting with a reflection or prayer and, for the students, prayer seems to be a natural and normal part of the daily routine. It is good to see students in most

classes leading the prayers at class registration. Posters proclaiming "It's OK to Pray" were observed around the school.

Each week the school focuses on a Gospel value which is the first item on the Daily Notices. It is followed by a prayer based on the theme and written by a student. There is also a short reflection on practical ways of living out the value and finally, the school community is challenged by a question on when that day they acted in accordance with the value. This is a good example of the school fostering a link between Gospel values and the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the daily life of the college.

The chapel in the school grounds provides a venue for class Masses and appropriate meetings as well as a place for quiet individual prayer and reflection when it is open.

The commendable retreat programme which has been revamped in 2010 by the Chaplain and Campus Minister has been given a stronger Catholic focus and provides another opportunity for students to deepen their spirituality. The retreats are a full day for all year levels except Year 13 which has an overnight retreat.

School newsletters regularly have a column from the DRS or Chaplain informing parents of Catholic Special Character activities within the college and the Principal in his section frequently reflects the values and Marist charism of St Bernard's College.

Focus

Evangelisation

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

The education provided at St Bernard's College is based, as the Mission Statement says, "in an environment generated by Gospel values" and all members of the school community are encouraged to model their behaviour on these values. Relationships between staff and students and between students and their peers were observed to be positive and respectful. The daily mention of a Gospel value in the Notices keep staff and students mindful of them.

The Principal leads by example in living a Christian and Catholic life of faith and service. He is supported by the SLT, the members of which have an excellent understanding of the significance of the Catholic Special Character in their respective roles within the school.

Teachers new to the college come from a variety of faith backgrounds. Information about the Catholic Special Character of the college is given to them at the time of application and this is discussed by the Principal at the interview. A deeper understanding of the Catholic Special Character, the charism of St Marcellin Champagnat and the Marist Brothers is provided by the Principal and the DRS during the induction programme. Before feast days and other liturgical events further information is given. New teachers also attend the "Teachers New to Catholic Schools" course provided by the Diocese. There is, too, ongoing professional development for the whole staff in this area. In addition, a Special Character Information Booklet has been created for staff which is an excellent resource. For new members of the BOT, the Principal provides an induction on the Special Character of St Bernard's College and it is planned to hold a session delivered by a Marist Brother for the whole BOT on what it means to be a Marist school.

The college is to be commended for keeping a sacramental register. A number of students, while Preference, come into the college without having celebrated some or any of the

Sacraments of Initiation. These boys are invited to participate in the RCIA programme run by the Chaplain and the Campus Minister. It is pleasing to report that 17 students have expressed interest in participating this year. Their parents, too, are invited to some sessions and this becomes another opportunity for evangelisation.

Students who, though nominally Catholic, have no experience of Church have needs which the college is addressing. The Principal has asked the Chaplain to prepare a resource to be used with these students so that they have an understanding of Catholic rituals and traditions.

Senior students are trained as Young Christian Leaders at the start of each year and a group of senior leaders attends the Marist Leadership course. From these students are drawn Peer Support leaders. These students along with other students help with junior retreats. Peer Support leaders also have an opportunity to serve as mentors for Year 9 students.

A feature of the college is that all sections of its community - BOT, staff, students and parents - are aware of and knowledgeable about the college's unique Catholic Special Character and its traditions.

Focus

Partnership

Education is a collaborative responsibility

St Bernard's College works effectively to build relationships between all sections of the school community. There is an emphasis placed on the home and school working collaboratively to ensure successful outcomes for the students. Form teachers make contact by telephone with the families of the students in their class in the first few weeks of the year. This might be a factor in the very successful 70% attendance from parents at parent/teacher interviews.

In turn, parents are really appreciative of the very high level of involvement of the staff in activities within the college. Both parents and students commented on the willingness of teachers to give time over and above normal school hours for tutorials and in other ways enhance the life of the college. Many teachers make themselves available to parents and students outside regular school hours through email and other electronic communication systems. Both groups saw the generosity of the teachers as one of the great strengths of the college.

Strong relationships have been forged between the Principal and the BOT. The members of the Board interviewed are highly supportive of the college and have an excellent working relationship with the Principal. The Proprietor's appointees regularly report fully to the Proprietor. One Proprietor's Representative of long-standing is a Marist Brother. He plays a very active role on the Special Character sub-committee and serves as a link between the college and the Marist Brothers. The school treasures its Marist heritage and the Brothers who live locally are invited to major liturgical celebrations.

Efforts are made to foster good relationships with the local Maori community. The teacher only day at the start of the school year is held at the Koranui Marae and the Chaplain consults on correct protocols through the Director of Maori Achievement. Hui are held with Maori parents as part of the effort to lift Maori achievement. The college is making a strong commitment for partnership with its Maori whanau with the promotion and implementation of its Maori Achievement Plan. Other commendable initiatives which reach out to various sections of the

school community are the Home School Partnerships with Maori, Samoan, Tokelau and Filipino groups. Extra support is provided also for refugees.

Focus

Values

The school identifies and actively promotes gospel values

Gospel values underpin all activities and relationships within the school. St Marcellin Champagnat developed the five Pillars of Marist spirituality: Presence, Simplicity, Family Spirit, Love of Work and In The Way of Mary. With their underlying values of Compassion, Giving, Honesty, Perseverance, Respect, Responsibility and Self-control, the Pillars form the core values of St Bernard's College. They are displayed in classrooms as posters and are constantly taught, modelled and promoted by the Principal and key staff. Each year there is a special focus on one Marist Pillar which is promoted in liturgies and assemblies and is highlighted in the retreats for students, in presentations to the staff and in the newsletter. Junior students are awarded badges at a formal ceremony for behaving as role models of the school's values.

When students were asked what made St Bernard's College different from other schools they immediately said, "We live by Gospel values". They knew the Marist Pillars and could explain how they were lived out in everyday life. When asked to give a word that summed up the school for them, "brotherhood" and "family" were the most frequent responses. These are indicators that the school is successful in instilling an understanding of its core values into its students.

Values are integrated into the school and department strategic plans and now that the New Zealand Curriculum requires explicitly stated values, departments are encouraged to attach values to all unit plans.

Excellence in the learning process is upheld as a strong Catholic value. This is promoted by the Marist Pillar of Love of Work and a student's interpretation of the school motto as "Aim high. Look to Mary for strength" is another exhortation to do one's best and supports the promotion of excellence in the learning process.

Focus

School Culture

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

St Bernard's College is overtly Catholic in its practices and relationships. St Marcellin Champagnat's vision of caring for all strongly permeates relationships between staff and students. Respectful and courteous behaviour was noted between students and staff.

Visitors to the college are welcomed hospitably by staff at reception. The reviewers at all times received a cordial welcome from the SLT and teachers, the latter being most accommodating and gracious when their classrooms were visited. The students were polite and well-mannered not only in formal interviews but in the corridors and school grounds.

Classrooms are well-presented with student work based on the Religious Education programme, crosses or crucifixes, pictures of St Marcellin Champagnat, posters of the Marist Pillars and the school's Values for Life prominently displayed on the walls. These are a clear indication to the visitor that he/she is in a Catholic and Marist school.

The Champagnat Suite, which by its name acknowledges the founder of the Marist Brothers and strengthens the college's historic links with the Brothers, is a very attractive new facility. It has two magnificent stained glass windows in place. The one on the road frontage depicts St Marcellin Champagnat and the other, facing the school grounds, depicts St Joseph. They are two of a set of windows which were donated by St Bernard's College students for the chapel at Marcellin Hall in Auckland; it is fitting that, with the demolition of Marcellin Hall, they are now enhancing the Catholic Special Character of St Bernard's College.

In the foyer and waiting area of this new building are the school crest and banner, a Bible, a picture of St Bernard, a copy of the Treaty of Waitangi and a slide presentation of the opening of the Champagnat Suite. These are simple but effective symbols of what the college stands for.

Finally, the memorial plaques for deceased members of the school community near the main entrance are a touching reminder that as part of the family of St Bernard's College they are remembered and prayed for.

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

St Bernard's College has a written Catholic Special Character policy and all its statements of mission, philosophy, values and goals are Catholic in substance. The school is to be congratulated on the meticulous standard of its documentation. All communication from the college which includes the web site, prospectus, newsletters and Year Book make explicit reference to its Catholic Special Character.

The Principal is an inspirational leader in the college community. He is authentically Catholic and this sets the tone for the whole school. He tirelessly promotes Catholic and Marist values and traditions and his passion for the Special Character of the college has been identified as a major factor in its success. In all his efforts he is well supported by the SLT and staff.

The college is fortunate in its Senior Leadership Team. They are strong leaders in their areas of responsibility and role models of the Catholic Special Character of St Bernard's College in action. They work collaboratively with the Principal to uphold his vision for the school.

Senior students have many opportunities for leadership within the college. It is commendable that selected students attend the Diocesan Young Christian Leaders programme and that from these students are chosen the Head Boy, his Deputy and the Special Character Leader. Marist Schools' leadership training is also provided. This ensures that, based on Marist principles, student leaders operate on a servant leadership model. Other opportunities for leadership include House Captains, Sports Captains, BOT Student Representative, Peer Support Leaders and Student Council Form Captains.

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

St Bernard's College is proud of its Marist heritage and its association with the Marist Brothers. The Marist Champagnat charism is strong and is at the forefront of all activities within the school. The Principal is faithful to the Marist charism in his words and actions and he has nurtured it in such a way that both staff and students have an excellent knowledge and

understanding of the charism and of its implications for behaviour. Students could speak knowledgeably about St Marcellin Champagnat and the House patrons but less so about the life and importance of St Bernard. They also had a good understanding of the school motto and the symbols of the school crest.

In the organisation of the college care is taken that the charter, the strategic and annual plans and the departmental management documents have a Catholic Special Character component and that goals relating to this are reviewed annually.

The BOT budgets for Catholic Special Character activities and operates an enrolment policy that is clear, transparent and inclusive. In accordance with Champagnat's philosophy of care for the poor, needy students receive support.

Catholic Special Character needs are important in the employment of staff. Information is included in application packs for positions and is discussed at interviews. Job descriptions and appraisal systems indicate the responsibility of each teacher to actively support the Catholic Special Character of the college. The college is in the process of ensuring that this is included in job descriptions and appraisal systems for current and new ancillary staff.

There is ongoing professional development for staff members and BOT members on the Marist charism. This is presented as a whole in-service day biennially with a half day in alternate years. In addition, as previously mentioned, the two day induction process for new staff covers the Marist charism. New members of the BOT are also invited to attend an induction provided by the Wellington Catholic Education Centre.

The college has undertaken annual Catholic Special Character Self Reviews with Catholic Community being reviewed in 2009 and Pastoral Care in 2010. The Catholic Community Self Review is a very thorough and detailed document which concludes with Areas for Growth and Future Development Goals. The Pastoral Care Self Review which is currently being conducted is similarly detailed in its documentation. It is good to see that surveys of staff, students and parents are being undertaken as part of the review process in Pastoral Care. This will enable a wider perspective to be gained and can confirm and affirm strengths and identify areas that need further development. Progress made on Areas for Growth and Goals for Future Development should be monitored and reported to the Board. Surveys should be part of each annual Catholic Special Character Self Review.

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

The liturgical life of the college is rich and full. There is a class Mass for each Form class and whole school Masses or liturgies are celebrated at the beginning of the school year, at the end of each term, on Leavers' Day and to mark major feast days and significant days in the Church's year such as Ash Wednesday and Holy Week. Members of the student liturgy committee assist the Chaplain with the preparation for these and Maori and Pasifika elements are incorporated, including Prayers of the Faithful in different languages with an English translation provided. In addition, at least once a year Maori, Samoan and Filipino Masses are held. St Bernard's College is to be commended for the number of liturgical celebrations it holds and over recent years it has increased the hours allocated to the Chaplain to reflect the time required for their organization. School management is aware that this needs to continue to be monitored.

The college is fortunate to have the services of a Chaplain and a Campus Minister who respond very generously to needs of the college in relation to its liturgical and prayer life. As well as their previously mentioned involvement in the retreat programme, Masses and liturgies and the RCIA programme, the Chaplain supports the O'Shea Shield Team, liaises with the Young Christian Leaders and the REMAR group and supports and supervises the student prayer group, Freedom Youth Group.

Community prayer is part of the daily life of the college. As mentioned previously, teachers are invited to open morning briefing with prayer, there is a prayer in the daily notices, prayer is part of Form class registration, Religious Education classes and sometimes other classes. Twice each term each Form class attends Registration in the chapel. Resources are available from the DRS and Chaplain to assist teachers with ideas for prayers which can be used at this time. Some sports teams pray before competing. Prayer is always a component of whole school and year level assemblies and generally meetings begin with prayer. A teacher commented that, although not Catholic, he/she gets students to pray before trips and activities. These are indicators that St Bernard's is a prayerful community.

The sacrament of Reconciliation is available each year in one lunch time session. The possibility of extending this to allow wider reception of the sacrament, for example to a whole year level at one time, is limited by the unavailability of a suitable space.

Focus

Service

Students assist people in need through service and outreach opportunities

Care and concern for others are promoted in the college. Although, according to the students, the St Vinnies group has not been so active over the past two years, the college is still providing opportunities for student outreach to people in need within the local community and beyond. Some examples are the cans collected as part of House celebrations which are donated to local foodbanks, support for Caritas appeals, the Catholic Social Services and the Te Omanga Hospice collections and the recent gold coin collection for a young man seriously injured in Samoa.

It is good to see that a Marist Brother has restarted a REMAR group within the college and the Chaplain is planning to use Caritas material with the Young Christian Leaders so that they can involve other students in community outreach.

A positive initiative which was planned but is not running at present is the Champagnat Charism Club. Leaders drawn from staff, students and others from the wider community would support students academically, socially, in sports and with homework.

Focus

Collaboration with Parish

The school collaborates with the parishes of which it is part

St Bernard's College attracts students from a wide range of contributing schools and from many different parishes but its main focus for collaboration is with the parish of St Peter and St Paul in Lower Hutt. The college uses the parish church for its full school Masses and the Champagnat feast day celebrations there are attended by staff and student representatives of St Bernard's

College. The school has an active involvement with the St John Vianney Icon at that church. The Mass for the Marist Brothers at Our lady of the Rosary parish is also attended by representatives from St Bernard's College. School promotional material is displayed in the parishes and parish priests are invited to school functions.

Pastoral Care *The school community nurtures, supports and cares for individuals*

The quality of its pastoral care is seen by parents as one of the major strengths of St Bernard's College. In its pastoral care documentation the school states that "With Christ the Good Shepherd as its model, the school community nurtures, supports and cares for individuals." It could also state that it aims to reflect the philosophy of Marcellin Champagnat who said, "Our hearts must have no bounds" and that "to bring up children properly, we must love them and love them all equally" because this attitude lies at the heart of its pastoral care systems.

The Director of Pastoral Care shows outstanding leadership and has set up a comprehensive and compassionate framework to support students at St Bernard's College.

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

Interactions between members of the college community are friendly and open. Parents reported very positive dealings with the Principal and staff. They feel welcomed at the college and stressed their appreciation of the way teachers make themselves available to students and their parents. They described St Bernard's as a welcoming and open school.

Students feel a strong sense of brotherhood. They describe the college as a family where people are kind and caring, they help you out. They feel that the staff are there for the students and bend over backwards for them, they actually care and are not there just for employment. They believe that the relatively small size of the school allows them to get close, make friendships and look out for each other. They feel that they can talk to everyone. Good links are made between senior and junior students through the House system, the Peer Support programme and by having senior students participate in junior retreats.

When a conflict occurs the process of resolving it involves resolution and reconciliation through mediation. Any incidents are dealt with quickly to avoid escalation of the problem.

The college is aware of the need to support ethnic minority groups and arranges meetings for Maori, Samoan, Tokelau and Filipino community groups. It is in the process of setting up a home-school partnership for its Tongan families. It also celebrates Maori, Pasifika and Filipino Masses annually. Refugee and immigrant students are given ESOL support and, after the need was identified, a support programme has been set up for Tokelau students.

Special needs students are welcomed into the college and extensive support networks are provided for them. Teacher aides support these students in mainstream classrooms and there is a high level of interaction between their parents, the HOD Learning Support, the Form teachers and Deans and also outside agencies.

Safety

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

St Bernard's College is committed to providing students and staff with an environment that is safe physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and culturally. There is zero tolerance of violence. The school carries out surveys among its students about bullying twice a year. Anti-bullying units are part of the Year 7-10 Health programme. Clear statements and material in the form of anti-bullying and anti-racism posters and posters outlining anti-bullying procedures are displayed in the classrooms. The school's values also promote a strong positive message of respect for others. Parents and students interviewed were confident that St Bernard's College is a safe school.

Behaviour Management

Discipline processes are just, compassionate, respectful and consistent.

Marist values underlie behaviour management systems in the college. Teachers know and understand the values and were observed putting them into practice managing student behaviour in the classroom. There is an expectation from the Principal that all teachers are involved in pastoral care and are expected to care for each student. He sees that good, effective relationships in the classroom create a basis for learning to take place.

The college provides positive reinforcement for behaviour based on Gospel values. Students modeling them are rewarded at all year levels. School rules and standards of behaviour are set out for students in the college diary and the staff manual has a section on student behaviour for teachers. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour but when this breaks down the use of a simply managed withdrawal system allows for situations in class not to become overheated. Daily monitoring cards are another tool used to effect change in student behaviour.

In keeping with Marist philosophy, discipline is dispensed with compassion and forgiveness and yet with the consequences demanded by justice. Students are given more than second chances. After a stand-down students participate in re-entry interviews, restorative contracts and daily monitoring and counselling with the Director of Pastoral Care.

Cultural Awareness

The school is open to the enrichment of diverse cultures.

St Bernard's College is committed to fulfilling the intent of the Treaty of Waitangi. Te Reo is compulsory for students at Years 7 and 8 and students at all other levels have the opportunity of continuing their study of the language. Te Reo is incorporated into liturgies and Masses and into greetings at assemblies and in the newsletter. The college consults with its Maori community at regular meetings and celebrates Mass in Te Reo with them. A whanau class has been set up in 2010 to support Maori students. New staff, students and special guests are welcomed with a powhiri and the college has a school haka. Students are given the opportunity to participate in

kapa haka and speech competitions and the college is very active in pursuing strategies to lift Maori achievement.

The college has a great diversity of cultures in both its student body and its staff. As has been mentioned previously there are Home School Partnerships with Maori, Samoan, Tokelau and Filipino communities. A Filipino priest is a regular visitor to the college and he participates in liturgies and college events. Community Masses are also held for the Filipino and Pasifika communities. The languages and cultural traditions of these community groups are incorporated into school events, liturgies and Masses. Samoan is offered as a language from Year 9.

The needs of the International Student are met by the Dean of his year level and the Director of International Students who has daily contact with him.

Focus	Organisation	<i>Pastoral care is organised in a way which is evident to all members of the school community</i>
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The Director of Pastoral Care has set up a comprehensive system of support for students at St Bernard's College. At Years 7 and 8 students are in home rooms for their core subjects. From Year 9 their Form teacher provides the primary pastoral role but they are also overseen by a Dean who moves through the year levels with the same group of students. This is an excellent system as it ensures that the students and their families are very well known by the Deans. The Deans hold weekly meetings with their Form teachers and regular level assemblies.

The pastoral care network which meets regularly includes the Deans, an experienced Guidance Counsellor and a Learning Support Team. In addition, students who are at risk of leaving school early are monitored. There is a real effort made to maintain links with families and a wide range of outside agencies are used to support the students including the provision of free health services. The Director of Pastoral Care sees the role of the Pastoral Care Team as not only disciplining students but managing their behaviour and advocating for them.

It would be useful to have a Pastoral Care plan which is a brief overview of the school's procedures and organization in this area. It is recommended that one be drawn up and that it includes a reference to Marist values which are at the heart of the pastoral care delivered at St Bernard's.

There is a tension between providing a comprehensive pastoral care system, hugely supportive of the students, based on Champagnat's philosophy of "Our hearts must have no bounds" and the danger of burn out for the Deans on whom most of the workload falls. The reviewers believe it is time for a review of the pastoral care processes to be carried out to ascertain whether they can be simplified or streamlined and to put strategies in place to encourage student accountability and responsibility. It would also be helpful for a greater time allocation to be given to the Deans if this is possible.

PASTORAL CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a Pastoral Care Plan be drawn up which includes reference to Marist values.
2. That a review of the pastoral care processes be carried out to ascertain whether they can be simplified or streamlined.
3. That strategies be put in place to encourage student accountability and responsibility.

4. That the time allocation for Deans be increased if it is possible.

FOCUS AREA

Religious Education

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

St Bernard's College has a Director of Religious Studies (DRS) who is responsible for both the Special Character activities in the college and, as Head of Religious Education, the management of the Religious Education Department. She is supported by the Chaplain and Campus Minister in Special Character activities and in the retreat programme so her main focus is as Head of the Religious Education Department.

FOCUS

Leadership

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

The DRS has creative ideas about the way the Religious Education programme can be structured and taught. The challenge would appear to be in the actual implementation of these ideas. The experience of the reviewers was that the requested management document which was expected with other school documentation two weeks before the commencement of the review was not available until the last afternoon of the review. It is good to know that Senior Leadership has put in place support structures and guidance to assist the DRS with management issues.

FOCUS

Religious Education Curriculum

The Religious Education programme is soundly managed and professionally delivered

The Religious Education curriculum followed is the appropriate National Programme as laid down by the Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand for each part of the college.

The DRS coordinates the Religious Education programme for Years 7 to 13. A system of syndicates has been set up for all levels up to Year 12 so that the DRS and another teacher plan units of work and provide resources for each year level.

The Religious Studies Department Management Document 2010 is comprehensive. Among other information it contains a Religious Education Policy and course overviews and units of work for Year 9 onwards. There is excellent coverage of the National Syllabus for Religious Education at junior levels. However, from Year 11 only two topics from the National Religious Education Curriculum appear to be taught in any one year. The third topic which completes the year's work is from the Health syllabus. This raises a concern regarding the ratio of Religious Education topics to Health topics. Two Religious Education topics a year does not give sufficient coverage of the curriculum. It is recommended that the number of Religious Education topics taught and the time allocated to them at the senior levels be reviewed so that there is better coverage of the National Religious Education Curriculum. Additional topics do not have to be assessed as Achievement Standards.

When, as is currently the case, the coverage of the Religious Education curriculum is limited the relevance of the topics taught becomes significant. This is especially so with the Year 12 Religious Education topics being taught. It is recommended that the topics covered at Year 12 be reviewed.

The DRS is aware that the status and timetabling of the Year 13 Religious Education programme needs to be addressed in future. The current situation is a compromise which may not fulfil the requirements of the syllabus and the needs of the students. The college has had difficulty in providing all students at this level with an appropriate programme in past years but other delivery systems are currently under consideration.

Achievement Standards are the method of assessment at senior levels with students able to achieve a total of 12 credits at each year level. It is good to see that assessments at junior levels are in the process of being adapted to the Achievement Standards model. It was exciting to observe a class of Year 7 and 8 boys very competently deciding on appropriate criteria for achieved, merit and excellence in a task they were about to undertake.

The Religious Education Department is staffed by enthusiastic and competent teachers who are working collaboratively and sharing the responsibility for updating resources and planning units of work in their respective syndicates.

Focus	Integrated Curriculum	<i>The teaching of Religious Education is integrated with other curriculum areas especially those which include ethical issues, personal relationships and sexuality education.</i>
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St Bernard's College has made a significant commitment to the Health curriculum and it is good to see that it is taught within the Religious Education programme. However, as has been mentioned above, the generous amount of time allocated to Health in the senior school raises concerns about the adequacy of the Religious Education programme. There is also a concern about the relevance of the Health topic covered at Year 12. It is recommended that the time allocated to Health topics and the relevance of the Year 12 topic be reviewed.

Sexuality education is presented in the context of the education of the whole person and with due regard to the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is taught as part of the Religious Education programme at Year 11. One of the teachers at this level is CFLE trained, two underwent the Understanding Sexuality Course last year while another is completing it this year.

Focus	Resources	<i>The Board of Trustees makes financial provision for Religious Education and Catholic Special Character resources</i>
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The budgets for Religious Education and Catholic Special Character are adequate and provision for professional development within these areas is made from the Professional Development budget.

The DRS is in the process of reorganizing the department's resources. When the task is completed they should be readily accessible to all members of the department.

Professional Development

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

The DRS is unsure of the qualifications and accreditation status of members of the Religious Education Department. It is recommended that she keep an up to date record of this information. Any teacher who has not reached Level 1 accreditation should be encouraged to do so and those with Level 1 should be working towards Level 2. Further to this, the DRS should keep a record of relevant professional development undertaken by each member of the department to be used as evidence of eligibility for accreditation.

Communication

The school communicates with parents about Religious Education programmes

Parents have regular feedback on their son's progress in Religious Education through written reports and parent/teacher evenings. Teachers are invited to make direct contact with parents if and when necessary. The parents interviewed stated that they knew what was being taught through discussions with their sons and through information given in the college newsletter.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the number of Religious Education topics taught and the time allocated to them at senior levels be reviewed to achieve a better coverage of the National Religious Education Curriculum. This would require a re-balancing of the time allocation and of the number of topics taught from the Religious Education curriculum and the Health curriculum.
2. That in the Year 12 Religious Education Course the relevance of the topics currently taught in both Religious Education and Health be reviewed.
3. That the status and timetabling of the Year 13 Religious Education programme be addressed for 2011.
4. That the DRS keep an up to date record of the qualifications and accreditation status of the members of the Religious Education Department.
5. That all Religious Education teachers be encouraged to gain Level 1 Accreditation and that those on Level 1 work towards gaining Level 2.
6. That the DRS keep a record of the relevant professional development undertaken by each member of the department to be used as evidence of eligibility for Accreditation.

Compliance Issues

The Catholic Special Character compliances required of Boards of Trustees of Catholic Integrated Schools have all been met by St Bernard's College in 2010 with the exception of the situation regarding Tagged Positions. At present the college is one under the required number of tags. The Principal is aware of this and is keen to address the issue when it is possible.

It is suggested that the BOT checks that Schedule 5 of St Bernard's Integration Agreement preserves the Marist/Champagnat charism of the college. If it does not, the college's Integration Agreement with the Crown should be amended to cement it in.

Concluding remarks

The community of St Bernard's College can be justifiably proud of its school. It has a competent and supportive Board of Trustees, a Principal who is totally dedicated to the college and a generous and committed staff. All aspects of school life are imbued with and enhanced by its Catholic Special Character and its Marist and Champagnat charisms. The college continues to reflect faithfully the vision for education established two centuries ago by St Marcellin Champagnat and the Marist Brothers.



Helen Newfield
Reviewer