

## Broadsheet of Good Practice in Integrated Schools

### Editorial

Education is changing so rapidly that it is hard for leaders to keep themselves, let alone their staff, on board with the new trends and research, as well as ensuring that parents have a voice, digital technology is up to speed, and there is actually time and emotional energy to care for the students!

Good leaders create trust, and many factors feed into creating that trust: integrity, capability, respect, transparency, loyalty, listening first, sharing willingly are just some of those factors. We can find all these practices deeply embedded in the Catholic view of life, and in the work of our schools and leaders. Trust is one of the key reasons that our school teams work effectively as learning, loving, living communities

The Wellington Archdiocese has developed principals' learning communities, which have a significant impact on their school communities. Fr Paul Martin gives us a succinct article on building adolescent boys' faith. Our Lady Star of the Sea School, Sumner has shared their community work making hug rugs. We have highlighted some of Pope Francis's recent statements. And we are sharing some more photos from Catholic Schools Day.

All these articles and photos show Catholic schools doing what we know you do so well, working with faith, integrity, transparency, respect, listening, extending trust and building community. Thank you to our writers, and thank you to you all for everything you do to build community, to build education and to build our Catholic faith.

Susan Apáthy

## Facilitating a Group of First Time Principals

**Bernadette Murfitt Principal, St Francis Xavier School, Tawa**

Having already belonged to a highly functioning Professional Learning Community the opportunity to co-facilitate, with Celeste Hastings from Holy Cross School, Miramar, a small group of First Time Principals, has given me another avenue to further reflect on my own leadership practice.

Michele Lafferty, Manager of Catholic Schools, facilitates the group that I belong to and has been mentoring me in my role as a Facilitator.

This has many advantages. It has allowed me to reflect on my own practice and skill while being exposed to new ideas and thinking from the First Time Principals. The ability to be part of quality professional learning will only enhance our ability as Principals to lead the professional learning in our own schools.

Reciprocal benefits include:

- getting ideas from colleagues within the Professional Learning Group to improve teaching and learning
- building team capacity
- raising ability to be culturally responsive in leadership capacity
- building and extending own personal and professional networks

Being a facilitator of a First Time Principals group requires one to be an active listener, have a shared approach to problem solving and of course to be trustworthy and confidential.

The group members strengthen their understanding of "Principalship" while helping each other to grow in competence, identity and effectiveness. Feedback provided to individual members is constructive, motivating and reflective.

Being able to give back to our profession through sharing of practice and experiences provides a great deal of personal satisfaction.

I am extremely grateful to:

Michele Lafferty for specific feedback that is improving the way I facilitate the group

Vanessa Jensen, Principal St Patrick's Kilbirnie

Steve Douglas, Principal St Anthony's Seatoun

Mary Angela Tombs, Principal St Teresa's Karori

Thank you for the privilege of being part of your professional journey

# Catholic Primary Principals' Learning Communities

Michele Lafferty, Manager Catholic Schools, Catholic Schools Education Services, Wellington

The Archdiocese of Wellington has a number of Catholic primary principals' learning communities, which started in 2008.

They were based on the Ariki project, developed by the late David Stewart. It was collaborative critique based on evidence of practice.

Two of our Catholic principals were invited to join the original trial group so we were able to learn from them.

We established the first group in 2008. Four principals, Celeste Hastings, Holy Cross School, Miramar, Sue Jury, St Claudine Thévenet School, Wainuiomata, Linda Birch, St Michael's School, Taita, and Bernie Murfitt, St Francis Xavier School, Tawa, decided that they saw this as a valuable and authentic way in which professional development and appraisal could take place. I was asked to facilitate the group.

We discovered that the process was all we hoped it would be. The members of the group committed themselves to two 3 hour meetings a term and these were attended by all of the team at all times as they were considered so valuable.

We followed the process which we learned with direction from Kay Tester, who was working closely with David Stewart. We were fortunate that she was one of forty principals selected from throughout New Zealand to lead Ariki groups.

Each meeting consists of a time, usually over coffee, in which each principal can talk about "What's on top." Since the rest of the meeting is formally structured, this is a valuable time.

Each principal prepares a presentation – two will present a major and two a minor. These develop the principal's theory for improvement and are based on current enquiries they are following. A portfolio based on these presentations is established.

The process ensures that there are links to the professional standards, teaching criteria and the five dimensions of leadership.

The questions that follow the presentations are very carefully structured around meaning, lateral links, existing data and validation. These cause the presenters to question in depth, the philosophy, the validity and the purpose of what is being implemented.

This in turn allows an opportunity to improve practice in all aspects of leadership.

The appraisal aspect of the CPPLC is validated by a meeting with the facilitator, Board Chair and principal at the beginning and end of the year. Reports are presented to the Board at every meeting that follows a presentation. Specific feedback may be requested by Boards or principals and this will be carried out by the facilitator. A natural next step is that the process will be introduced at the next level within the school – say at syndicate level. This has happened in several schools and is proving most effective as part of teacher inquiry.

The first group has been so successful that there are now four groups operating, including a group set up specifically for the Beginning Principals that have recently been appointed to schools in the Archdiocese.

In my extremely lengthy time in education, I believe this to be one of the most effective ways in which principals can reflect deeply about their practice in a situation which is completely safe. The groups have become close colleagues – an important feature of what can often be an isolated position.

I thank the principals with whom I work for the wonderful opportunity they have given me. It has enhanced my practice in the same way.



▲ Students at St Joseph's School, Ashburton working to support the environment on Catholic Schools Day.



▲ St Francis Xavier School, Tawa joined with St Brigid's School, Johnsonville and St Benedict's, Khandallah on Catholic Schools Day for activities focussing on the uniqueness of our Catholic schools and the Brigidine schools. This was followed up with co-operative activities including the making of a Tapa cloth.



▲ Year 7 and 8 students at Our Lady Star of the Sea School, Sumner re-enact the Last Supper as part of their Catholic Schools Day celebrations.

## St Mary's Mosgiel Mercy Values

Justice    Compassion    Care  
Respect    Service



▲ *St Mary's School, Mosgiel has designed a delightful bookmark to promote the school's core Mercy values.*

## Evangelising Boys

Fr Paul Martin, Rector, St Patrick's College, Kilbirnie, Wellington

The Catholic school has become the place where many young people experience moments of faith and learn about their religion, often for the first time. We are exposing them to the things of God, and hopefully helping them to 'taste' God. The following are some reflections on how we do this with boys.

Boys like ritual. They like to understand what is going to happen and how it will happen. They also like variety if it is done well. The challenge is to develop strong rituals that speak of the things of God, and are well presented. Liturgy for boys is effective when it is clear and structured and allows them to experience the solidarity of being together for prayer. Music gives boys an experience of the sacred and they will sing if the music has a strong melody.

We need to teach the boys the many different ways of praying in our Christian tradition. It works well if prayer is practised and happens regularly. If we are going to help them to build a relationship with God, then they need to learn how to communicate with him and experience his presence in prayer.

Boys have a good heart for social justice. They like to be doing things, being active, and social justice programmes tap into this.

The important step is creating the link between the action and the gospel values that lie behind it. This involves good teaching and the repetition of the reasons behind why we do what we do.

Boys respond to good role models. We have to walk the talk if we are to have any impact on them. They want us to show by our actions what we are trying to teach them, and this is especially so in matters of religion. They will very quickly pick up on any hypocrisy and then they switch off. Relationships are important, they will engage with us if they think we are genuinely interested in them and their lives.

Boys are willing to be challenged about their values and motivations. They also like to see coherence around belief and practices. Part of good evangelising is good teaching and having people who can intellectually present the reasons behind why we believe what we do and engage in discussion and debate around this.

The key task is to show boys that a life lived in relationship with God and expressed through our Catholic faith is one which will bring true happiness and fulfilment. They will see this if we have a deep faith ourselves and are willing to show that to them. That is why this is holy work.



▲ *Despite buildings being badly damaged in the Christchurch earthquakes, students at St Anne's, Woolston thoroughly enjoyed Catholic Schools Day.*

## Extending into the Community – an ongoing commitment to resthome residents

Monica Robb, Our Lady Star of the Sea School, Sumner, Christchurch

On 28th August our twelve Year 7 and 8 students, who are all members of the Young Vinnies, presented Hug Rugs to the elderly residents of Edith Cavell at Sumner. The polar fleece blankets had been carefully stitched and embroidered by the students and were gifted to their “buddies” in the rest home. The students have visited the rest home regularly and each rug was designed with a particular recipient in mind.

Our Lady Star of the Sea School is a small, Catholic school in Sumner, Christchurch. The Young Vinnies are a branch of the St. Vincent de Paul Society whose focus is on serving the needs of the community.

The photo shows five of the students with their Hug Rugs. From left to right they are: Molly Dougherty, Lucy Wehi, Zoe-Amelia Robinson, Aaron Smith and Jacob Greig.



## Some Thoughts from Pope Francis

“Missionary spirit is not only about geographical territories, but about peoples, cultures and individuals, because the ‘boundaries’ of faith do not only cross places and human traditions, but the heart of each man and woman.”

“We must always have the courage and the joy of proposing, with respect, an encounter with Christ, and being heralds of his Gospel.”

“Let us bring to the world, through our witness, with love, the hope given by faith! The Church’s missionary spirit is not about proselytising, but the testimony of life that illuminates the path, which brings hope and love.”

“A Christian first bites his tongue and then talks. That is good because the tongue gets swollen and the person cannot gossip any more. Gossip is hurtful and causes division.”

“The thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the Church as a field hospital after battle.”

“Development cannot be reduced to economic growth alone... A better world will come about only if attention is first paid to individuals; if human promotion is integral, taking account of every dimension of the person, including the spiritual; if no one is neglected, including the poor, the sick, prisoners, the needy and the stranger; if we can prove capable of leaving behind a throwaway culture and embracing one of encounter and acceptance.”

“Too often we fail to answer the basic question of life everyone is asking: ‘Am I loved?’”

“God sees our lives as a movie, not a snapshot.”

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