

2016 End of Year Newsletter



'Let Your Light Shine' Love Faith Justice Courage Community



Dear Parents, Caregivers, Whānau and Parish

I would like to begin by taking this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate what has been a wonderful year for our school. Holy Cross School provides numerous opportunities for our students, staff and community; we are incredibly proud of our achievements. We are blessed with the support we receive from numerous individuals and organisations and we are extremely grateful for this.

On the 31 October this year we received our finalised ERO review. This review affirms and acknowledges our programmes of work, the direction we are taking and the significant achievements that are a feature of our school. I invite you to read the full review either by going onto the ERO website, www.ero.govt.nz or by clicking on the link on our website; www.hcm.school.nz Below is a short extract from the report:

"The school's vision for learning and success is well articulated and effectively shared and promoted through Gospel values and Māori concepts.

Students demonstrate a sense of belonging and confidence in participating in the life of the school. Learning environments foster respectful interactions and promote participation, risk-taking and confidence. Students make very good progress as they move through the school.

The school has high expectations for the learning success of all students and works to promote equitable and excellent outcomes. ERO is likely to carry out the next review in four-to-five years. "

This kind of review is not easy to achieve, so in relation to this success I would like to acknowledge the BOT for their support, ensuring all decisions made keep what is best for our precious children at the center.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our staff for their professionalism and commitment to excellence for all of our children, and I thank you, parents and whanau for your involvement, the support you give and the trust you place in us. WELL DONE HOLY CROSS.

Let's Celebrate....

CATHOLIC CHARACTER

We have a staff who are committed to their own spiritual development and to the implementation of a quality Religious Education programme that nurtures the faith development of all students.

This year a number of special Liturgies and Masses have taken place in line with the Church year, as well as celebrations relating specifically to our school e.g., the Feast of the Holy Cross. We always mark these special occasions and aim to do so in a way that will be meaningful to our students.

In May of this year the three schools that are part of Holy Trinity Parish came together to celebrate Catholic Schools' Day. This was a special day for all students and staff and we look forward to sharing religious celebrations increasingly in the future.



This year we took up the invitation of Pope Francis to focus our attention on the Year of Mercy; to show our love, care and concern for others.

Throughout the year we discussed and reflected upon what the Pope's message to us. Our Year 7 and 8 students were commissioned at the start of the year as Leaders of Mercy and they worked to fulfill this role.

Our students performed at the Michael Fowler Centre as part of Artsplash; when they introduced their dance they began by stating, **'We are students from Holy Cross, we are proud to be Catholic and we look forward to sharing through this performance, our understanding of the Year of Mercy and what this means to us'**.

LEARNING

At our end of year Liturgy last Tuesday night I acknowledged our dedicated and talented staff; we have a strong team of professionals who strive for excellence in all areas.

As we have stated many times, we aim to provide **authentic learning experiences** for our students, experiences based on both need and interest. In all we do, we work to integrate areas of learning thus we incorporate religious education, literacy and numeracy into topic work - so that students see how these core learning areas are part of all learning.

This year we have implemented three innovative programmes to foster a love of learning for our students:

Intensive Oral language Programme: We have personalised IOL to Holy Cross School and have renamed it, Think-Talk-Create. Recognition of the success and significance of this programme has been recorded in the Dominion Post and Wellingtonian newspapers in recent times. Currently we are the only Wellington school implementing Think-Talk-Create. What we love about IOL is that it supports the literacy development of EVERY CHILD- whether they are confident speakers of English or English language learners. Every child makes significant progress.



Garden to Table: This year we introduced in earnest, the Garden to Table programme. The whole philosophy and concept of 'Garden to Table' fits so well with our school's direction and focus; last year you expressed a desire to increase students' awareness of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle.

We love the fact that Garden to Table incorporates every area of learning: religious education, literacy, maths, science, social science, health, technology and the arts. It provides real life, authentic learning experiences for students. The programme helps to enhance their teamwork, problem solving and thinking skills. Each week, recipes are shared on our Facebook page and the chef or gardener of the day are interviewed and share their learning with us. Through Garden to Table we have partnered with many local and national businesses, we look forward to our continued GTT journey next year.



William Pike Challenge Award: This year we introduced the WPCA programme to Holy Cross School. The WPCA is specifically tailored to support and challenge Year 7 and 8 students and help them develop new skills, greater awareness of others and to build resilience; it is the Year 7-8 equivalent of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

What a fantastic year these students have had!

Yesterday we reviewed the programme with the students before presenting them with certificates that acknowledge their significant achievements. Their reflections showed that not only have they benefitted personally, but as a group they have formed close bonds and have supported each other to achieve goals and meet challenges.



National Standards: Each year we report on our National Standards literacy and numeracy results.

As a school our achievement results are excellent, with 80% of our students working at or above the National Standard in reading, 73% of our students achieving at or above the Standard in writing and 74% of our students at or above the National Standard expectation in Mathematics.

Māori student data shows 81% of our Māori students working at or above the National Standard in reading, 81% of our Māori students achieving at or above the Standard in writing and 77% of our Māori students at or above the National Standard expectation in Mathematics.

Pasifika student data shows 81% of our Pasifika students working at or above the National Standard in reading, 75% of our Pasifika students achieving at or above the Standard in writing and 73% of our Pasifika students at or above the National Standard expectation in Mathematics.

Holy Cross School National Standards data overall shows our students levels of achievement are higher than the **national average for all ethnicities** across reading, writing and mathematics.

Holy Cross levels of achievement are **higher than the national average** for boys and girls across reading, writing and mathematics.



Within our data there are groups of students whose progress we need to accelerate to ensure they are working at the expected level, sooner. The majority of these students are in the junior school, some may not have completed a full year at school and some are students who have English as an additional language thus it takes time for them to reach the expected level. Our Think-Talk-Create programme clearly shows an acceleration of progress for these students.

Year 8 Leadership and Achievement. A significant aspect of practice at Holy Cross is our Year 8 Leadership Programme, as mentioned this year we also introduced the William Pike Challenge Award for our year 7 and 8 students. Every one of our Year 8 students is considered a leader and is supported to develop skills that will help them achieve success throughout their school years and beyond.

We are extremely proud of the programme we offer and know it helps to 'grow' our young leaders..

We state, 'Our vision is for each student to achieve more than he or she ever dreamed possible' and I truly believe this is the case for our young leaders. The achievement of our Year 8 leavers reflects the focused and specific input provided over the years; our students leave Holy Cross well-prepared for college.

Our Year 8 achievement levels are as follows: 96% at or above the standard in reading, 86% at or above the standard in writing and 90% at or above the standard in mathematics. Fantastic results indeed but success is not measured by academic results alone; the following words of wisdom were shared with me by some of our Year 8 students, in response to the question, "What is a key lesson you have learned at Holy Cross"? These thoughts also confirm for me our all-round education focus

- I have learned to be proud of my achievements but also to be humble
- I have learned to just be myself- when I was younger I got into the habit of trying to be like other people- it slows things down - so just be you
- I have learned, always let your voice be heard- and stand up for the things you believe in
- I have learned to strive for excellence - and never give up
- I have learned to live in the present moment- not to worry about the future or dwell on the past
- I have learnt the importance of 'giving things a go' there are some things I thought I'd never be able to do but through hard work I have achieved my goals

We congratulate our Year 8 students on their achievements and growth as young leaders this year. We know they will carry these skills with them; in these young leaders and indeed, in all of our students, we see great hope for the future.



CULTURE

This year many rich learning experiences have been provided for all learners at Holy Cross: students, staff and community.

There is a strong whānau group in place and I acknowledge the support and guidance we continue to receive from them. Our pou Māori are currently under development and will be a significant feature within our grounds when complete.



In the latter part of the year Ethel Renata took on the leadership of our ka hikitia group. Ethel is working closely with our Māori students supporting their continued cultural and learning journey. We also congratulate Ethel who tomorrow graduates with a Masters Degree. Well done Ethel, what a positive role model you are.

Cultural Group: This year our cultural group had seventy proud and committed students. The group performed on numerous occasions throughout the year, each time with pride, dignity and strength.

Throughout the year students also performed at powhiri and at a kapa haka festival. They entertained over sixty guests who attended our Thank you morning tea, providing a fusion of pop culture with traditional sasa!



Celebrating Diversity. At Holy Cross we have a wonderful diversity of cultures many of which you saw represented by students in National Costume at our Christmas Liturgy.

At Holy Cross we have families of: Maori, Samoan, NZ European, Tokelauan, Indian, Chinese, Assyrian, Greek, Australian, Tongan, French, Cook Island Maori, Japanese, German, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Italian, Cambodian, Filipino., English, Lebanese, Fijian Indian, Norwegian, Croatian and South African descent. Thank you all for sharing aspects of your culture with us. Our International Food Fair was a wonderful celebration of who we are at Holy Cross School.



COMMUNITY

Community is one of our core school values. I feel privileged and proud to be part of the Holy Cross Community. I believe that as a community we are called to truly 'Live the Gospel Values'; we look forward to reflecting on what this looks like for us, in 2017.



We are proud of the continued development of Holy Cross as a community hub, in 2016 this was reflected in the following areas:

English Language Learners: We continued to host a community group of adult English language learners and extended the programme from one to two days a week. We have loved having the tutors from MCLaSS (Multicultural Learning and Support Services), the volunteers who have given their time so generously and of course the learners themselves. We will continue in 2017 but would love to have more adult learners and volunteers. Thank you especially to Marcia Isles who has coordinated this group at Holy Cross for the past two years. We have loved working with you and value your significant input.

Computers in Homes: This year a further ten school families participated in this amazing programme, supported by the 20/20 Trust. We were all very proud and moved at the graduation ceremony when the adults who completed the course received their new computers after many hours of hard work. Computers in Homes is a great initiative and we are grateful that we were offered the opportunity to take part. We also appreciated the wonderful sense of community that evolved- people came to know, appreciate and support one another. Thanks Kristina Pahbu for making this happen.



Stepping Up Computer Training: Following on from the Computers in Homes programme and at the request of parents, this training was offered to our community. This is the first time Stepping Up has been provided through a school and we were delighted to be able to offer this to our families.

Incredible Years Parenting Programme: This year fifteen families made the most of the opportunity to take part in this very powerful programme. They committed to fifteen weeks of intensive input and sharing. We congratulate them for their commitment.

Garden to Table: This programme, also mentioned above, relies on the support of parent and community volunteers. We are extremely grateful to have so many willing volunteers who come along, get involved and share their passion and knowledge with us. Thanks too to our amazing kitchen and garden coordinators: Marija, Sarah and Kelly-Ann- you do an AMAZING job!

Holy Cross Angels: At Holy Cross School we have always worked to offer support to those in need, both within the school and in our wider community. This year Holy Cross Angels provided support for those in need- prayer as well as practical support. I know that the kindness and generosity of our school community has again touched the lives of many and I thank you for this.

Please continue to keep in your prayers members of community who are unwell or going through difficult times. Please also keep in your prayers, our families with loved ones in war torn areas, we ask for God's blessing upon them during the Christmas Season and in the New Year.

Looking ahead:

In 2017 we will again take our lead from Pope Francis; our learning will be focused on 'Care for our Common Home'- We will be exploring ways to care for our world, locally and globally- we will have a Religious Education, Science and Social Science focus. Tied into this will be deepening our understanding of Kaitiakitanga, Guardians of our World. 2017 will be an exciting, productive year. We look forward to working with you and hearing your ideas. We will be seeking your input early in the new year.

I would like to conclude by thanking each and every one of you for your contribution to the immensely successful year we have had as a school. To our wonderful staff, thank you for your commitment to teaching and learning and to our team; your efforts are deeply appreciated.

We farewell Anne Gordon and thank her for her contribution to, and support of, our school during the past year. We thank Joanne Graham-Mika for the significant leadership role she has managed so capably over the past eighteen months.

I wish to thank the Board of Trustees, the Parent Support Group, the Parish and wider parent community for their active, on-going support. The combined and focused efforts of each person and each group help to make Holy Cross the wonderful school it is.

I wish to acknowledge our precious children, the students of Holy Cross. I thank them for the joy they give us all and for reminding us of the things that matter most.



Farewell to all of our school leavers; we pray that for each of you, Holy Cross will hold a special place in your heart and be filled with many fond memories. I wish you a Happy Christmas as well as safe and fun-filled holidays.

May God bless and keep you all

Celeste Hastings

Celeste Hastings

2017 SCHOOL YEAR – IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE

Points to note for students returning to school after the holiday break:

2017 Dates: Please note school starts at **8:45am on Wednesday 1 February**. There will be a beginning of year **liturgy at 9:30am** that morning. All are welcome to attend.

In 2016 there will be a "Teacher Only Day" for Professional Development on **Wednesday March 30th 2016**, children will not attend school on this day.

Term Dates

Term 1:	Weds 1 Feb- Fri 13th April
Term 2	Mon 1 May - Fri 7rd July
Term 3	Mon 24th July - Fri 29th September
Term 4	Mon 15 October - Fri 15 th December

Attendance:

If you are planning a family trip overseas in 2017 please endeavour to take it during the school holidays. The Ministry of Education now requires a new code to identify those students who travel overseas during term time. We appreciate your co-operation

Uniform

Shoes and Sandals: In the summer months students are permitted to wear plain black or brown sandals or they may continue to wear black leather shoes. No other colours are to be worn.

Hats: Plain navy sunhats must be worn in Terms 1 and 4- a variety of hats are available from the school office.

Year 7-8 Girls Shirts and Boys Polos:

The **blouses for our year 7 & 8 girls** and the **polo shirts for all boys**, designed with our school logo, are sold at the school office.

Hair colour and hair styles

We remind you, students are not permitted to colour or dye their hair. Hair must be tied up neatly with plain coloured bands and hair ties.

'Rats tails' and shaved patterns in the hair are not permitted at Holy Cross.

Other information:

Stationery:

Your child has already been given his/her 2017 stationery list. Please check to see whether your child already owns any of the items listed in which case they do not need to be purchased. Please ensure all items are clearly named and labelled on the first day of school, 1 February 2017. A copy of the stationery list has been delivered to Warehouse Stationery in Kilbirnie and has also been posted on our school's website.