

Religious Education - Board Report May 2019

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Religious Education Bridging Document

We spent time on our teacher only days before the start of the year unpacking the new Religious Education Bridging Document (REBD).

St Joseph's Key Ideas

St Joseph's key ideas were introduced in 2014 as a way of ensuring all children left our school with an overall understanding of the Catholic faith. This became schoolwide after Paul Ferris saw it in one class and made it a recommendation in our 2012 special character review that it should be a schoolwide practice. This was affirmed by him in our 2015 review.

Our way of approaching RE is based on the commitment that our leaving students will understand the basic beliefs of their faith and encounter Christ in our school.

Our key ideas were a means of addressing at the time:

- that we were probably the child's only faith teacher
- some of our children knew nothing at all about our faith and some didn't want to know
- some knew a lot and needed to be deepened and have opportunities to question and challenge
- that the national curriculum method of teaching RE led to lots of knowledge to be retained which wasn't retained
- **that the children didn't have an overall big picture with which to arrange their knowledge.**
- that each year was like starting again

If our key idea method is taught as intended it addresses this through:

- Accessible simple ideas which can be grasped to some degree at any level - in theory a child at our school for only one year should leave with a full rudimentary understanding of the Catholic faith.
- Statements which have enough inner complexity that they can continue to be unpacked at any level particularly if SOLO is used.
- An **overall big picture**
- Repetition - each year the same basic statements are made and unpacked, whereas the RE curriculum achievement objectives are hard to track and the child never remembers them.
- They fit within the RE program and overarch all of the teaching objectives.
- They provide coverage - so for example no child was left thinking that Jesus was just a great man 2000 years ago (like the year 7 child a few years ago who wrote in a test - Jesus came to teach us how to make shelves, cabinets and side tables).

Our first review of our data from the three year cycle of 2014 to 2016 showed an increase in understanding across the school with most classes making a two year jump in the first year.

Achievement Update - Jesus Strand Assessment 2019

Using SOLO for our assessment:

unistructural - one idea

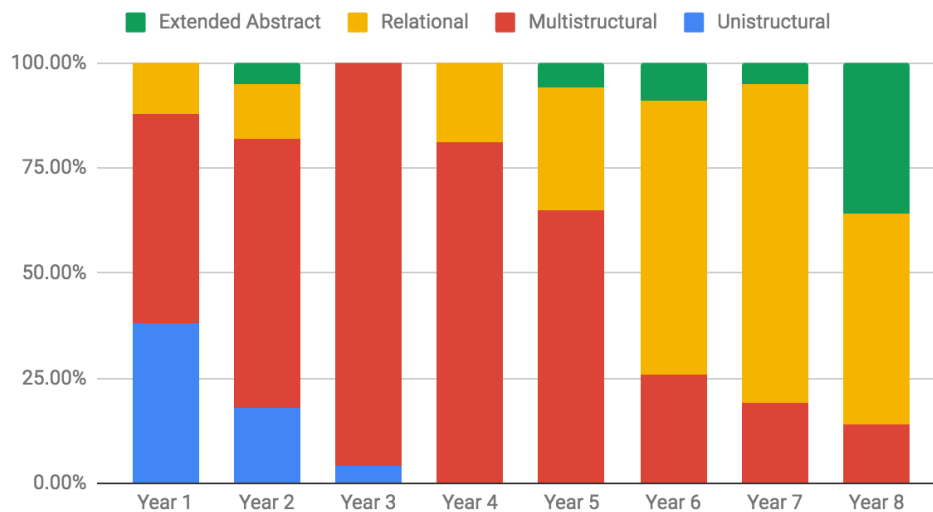
multistructural - many ideas

relational (equivalent to NCEA merit) - integrating the RE teaching into their lives and making connections to the world

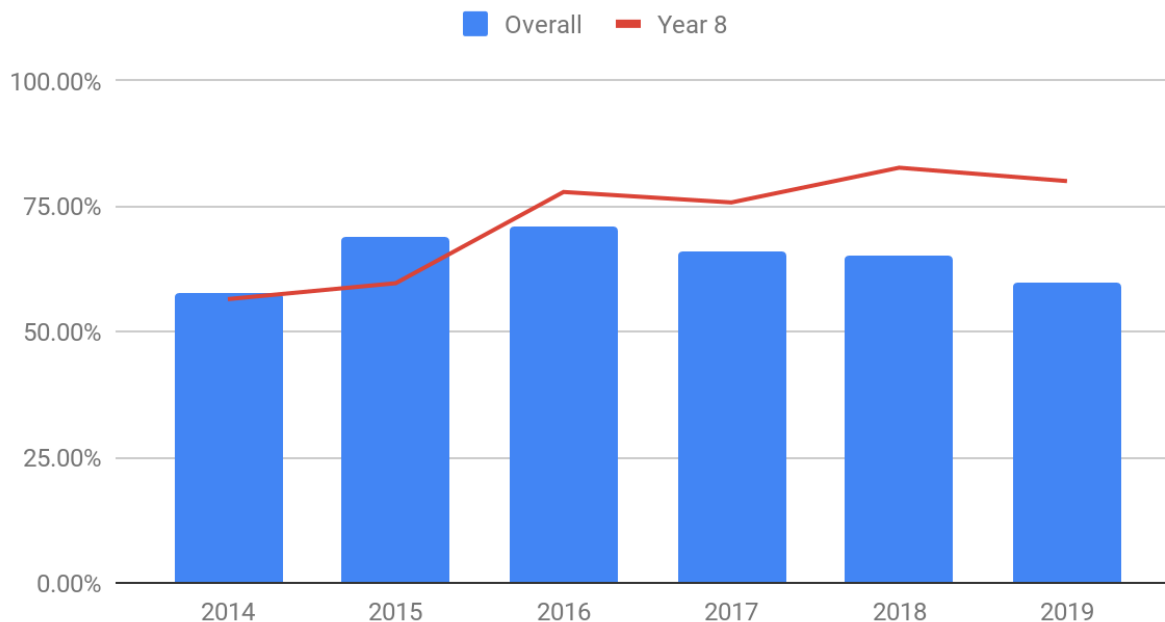
extended abstract (equivalent to NCEA excellence) - wider integration - into other curriculum areas, wider world picture and adapting into other contexts.

For us, ultimate success for our year 8s has got to be relational or extended abstract thinking.

2019 Jesus Strand achievement



Overall RE achievement



25-50% = multistructural - ie has the knowledge

50-75% = relational - (merit) - knows what to do with the knowledge

75-80% = extended abstract (excellence)

There's sufficient aggregate data in this chart to have some significance, covering roughly 180 children at each year level over the past 6 years covering six strands a year and 6,500 assessment judgements, a cross-section of which have been moderated at some point over the 6 years by me (ie the same person), so there is some consistency and validity to this data. The year 8 data is showing a gradual incline, the year 6 to 7 data a very small but variable overall incline and below year 6 there is a gradual decline in achievement since our peak of 2016.

This would suggest that the way we have been doing RE has benefited our children over time as the older children are doing well. But for the school as a whole there is a gradual decline.

I believe this is because we have given a few things away that I had to do through some difficult times in order to ensure staff wellbeing. But if we don't turn it around now we will not achieve our mission for our graduates.

The two DRSs and myself have had extensive conversations about this and this is how we intend to address this:

- Use the present opportunity to collaboratively develop our understanding of the Religious Education Bridging Document and how it ties in with our key ideas. We are going to take it strand by strand and integrate our St Joseph's way of doing things with the new document and do it together as a team. This will strengthen our consistency and depth expectation across the school and help everyone to have an ownership of how we do it now. In collaboratively planning the overview of the units we have the opportunity to make all the key ideas explicit and we can benefit from each other's knowledge.
- We will unpack the liturgical year and ensure staff are aware of feast days and scripture readings for prayer time where they can integrate the key ideas and how they can fit it in with the weekly Gospel without creating more work.
- We need to look at a way of celebrating and sharing learning in RE (something like the whanau groups we used to do).
- We are organising for teachers who have not completed their RE diploma to do a paper this year.

I will be tracking each strand as we complete it in 2019 and monitoring what sort of direction we are going in.

Lorraine Frances-Rees

May 2019