

Year 7 – 10 Curriculum Review 2018

Term 2 Update

Rationale for Change

There have been several key changes that have led to the review of the Year 7 – 10 Curriculum:

- **The Removal of National Standards:** There has been the claim that the National Standards led to a narrowing of the curriculum and an assessment culture. The removal of National Standards has prompted a timely consideration of what is being taught in years 1 – 8 within New Zealand schools and how it is being taught.

- **The Review of NCEA:** The Ministry of Education are currently working on a review of the National Certificates of Education. The initial suggestions from the Ministerial Advisory Group involve a focus on literacy, numeracy, and project-based learning. The MAG has proposed 6 Big Opportunities that the review opens up for learners and teachers. More information can be found at:

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/ncea-have-your-say/big-opportunities-he-aria-nui/>

- **Concerns About Over-Assessment and Workload:** There are concerns from many areas within education about workload issues – for students and teachers. Part of this may be due to an over-emphasis on assessment. Is our curriculum (and our REACH programme) dominated by assessment?

- **BYOD and Digital Literacy:** The mode of teaching and availability of information, opportunities, and activities online requires a re-think about *how* we teach within the classroom. This is already happening but the changes in thinking and practice are not formally represented within our school curriculum.

- **Board Focus for 2018:** In September 2017 the Board of Trustees signalled that a review of the junior curriculum was one of its focuses for 2018.

Review Considerations

Our School – mission/vision/touchstones: the review needs to keep the school and its special character central to the process

NZC – vision/values/key competencies: the review needs to consider how well our curriculum aligns with the NZC – particularly the “front end”

Timetable – loadings/structure: the review needs to consider how the timetable loadings and structure demonstrates priorities and consider whether changes are needed (eg inter-disciplinary studies, project-based learning, contextualised learning etc)

Assessment – how/why/what: the review needs to consider the shape of authentic assessment within a modern school context (collaborative assessment, online assessment, portfolios, The Aquinas Learning Project – an AC version of the D of E program? etc)

Reporting – how/why/what: the review needs to consider the shape that reporting on learning may take within the new context at the school (this is likely to be an additional process/review after the initial curriculum review has finished)

Pedagogy – how/why/what: the review needs to reflect on the pedagogical requirements that will fit within the new curriculum structure (what do we want learning to look like, what do we want teaching to look like, etc)

“A strong curriculum knowledge that will provide a solid foundation for life-long learning, strong personal principles that provide gospel-based responses to support life experiences and life decisions.”

Parent response to, “Why did you send your child to Aquinas College?”

Community Consultation

Surveys were used to gauge the priorities and concerns of three sets of primary stakeholders: students, staff, and parents. Questions used in these surveys are appended to this report.

1. Please identify the three (3) most important qualities that you/your students/your child will have when they leave Aquinas College:

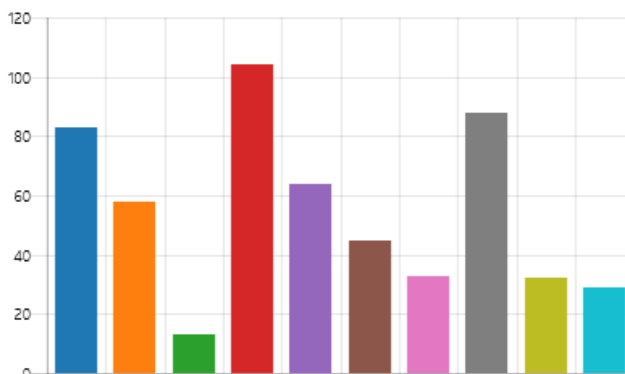
● To take responsibility for my o...	83
● To work collaboratively	58
● To have a Gospel-based respo...	13
● To think creatively	104
● To solve problems	64
● To read, write and do maths	45
● To use digital technology for l...	33
● To take risks and be resilient	88
● To understand social justice a...	32
● Other	29

● Equipped with the skills to tak...	9
● The ability to work collaborati...	13
● Can model a Gospel-based re...	9
● The ability to think creatively	14
● Problem solving ability	18
● To be literate, articulate and n...	20
● ICT (Information and Commu...	5
● The ability to take risks and th...	14
● To have an awareness of socia...	13
● Other	3

● To take responsibility for their...	55
● To be able to work collaborati...	22
● To model a Gospel-based res...	23
● To be able to think creatively	26
● To be able to solve problems	37
● To be literate, articulate and n...	63
● ICT (Information and Commu...	11
● To be able to take risks and h...	48
● To have an awareness of socia...	39
● Other	3

Highest rating responses

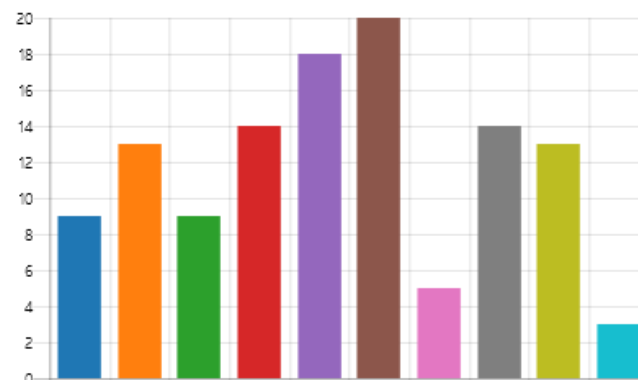
Student Responses



Highest rating responses:

Think creatively (57%); To take risks and be resilient about outcomes (49%); Take responsibility for own actions (46%)

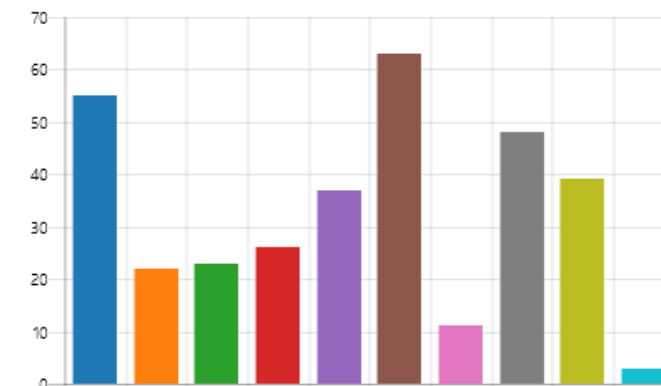
Teacher Responses



Highest rating responses:

Literate, articulate & numerate (65%); Problem solving ability (58%); Take responsibility for own actions/To think creatively (45%)

Parent Responses



Highest rating responses:

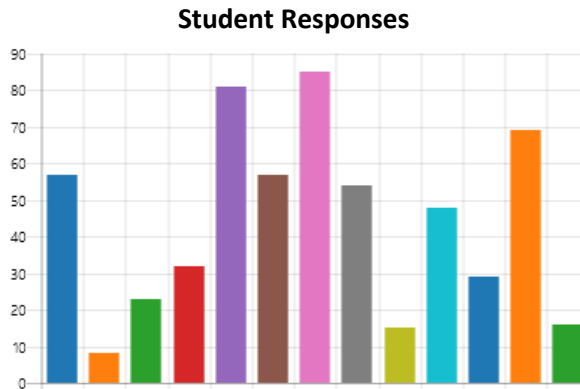
Literate, articulate & numerate (59%); Take responsibility for own actions (52%); To take risks and be resilient about outcomes (45%)

"The values and the touchstones of the school closely reflects our own as a family. Sending our children to a school that would incorporate prayer and a relationship with God daily was important to us."

Parent response to, "Why did you send your child to Aquinas College?"

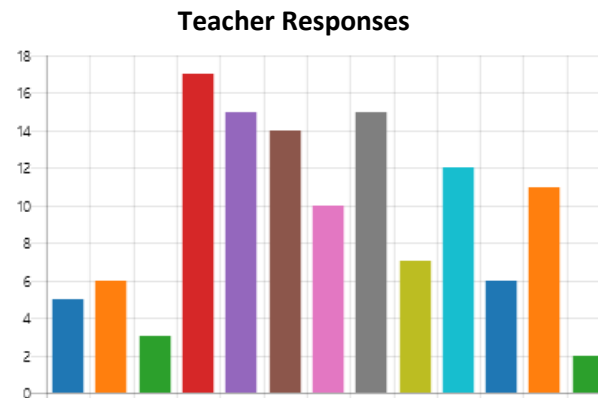
2. Considering your responses to question 1, what do you see as the three (3) most important elements of the school programme in the junior school (Years 7 – 10):

● Group work	57
● Gospel values	8
● Subject knowledge	23
● Literacy/numeracy	32
● Self-management and time m...	81
● Problem solving	57
● Creative thinking	85
● Real life contexts	54
● Inquiry based learning	15
● Opportunities to take risks in...	48
● Online and digital learning	29
● Choices in my learning	69
● Other	16



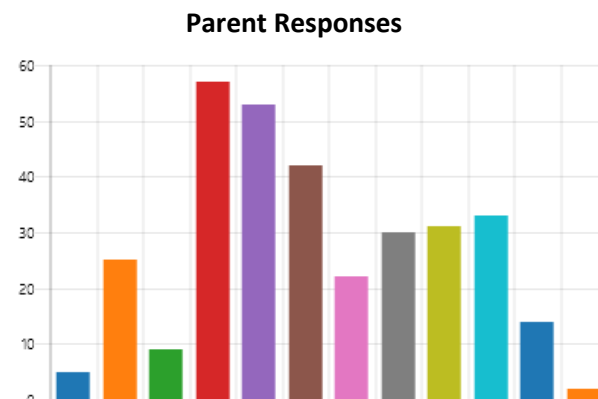
Highest rating responses:
 Creative thinking (47%); Self-management & time management (45%);
 Choices in my learning (38%)

● Group work	5
● Gospel values	6
● Subject knowledge	3
● Literacy/numeracy	17
● Self-management	15
● Problem solving	14
● Creative thinking	10
● Real life contexts	15
● Project based learning	7
● Opportunities to take risks in t...	12
● Online and digital learning	6
● Inquiry based learning	11
● Other	2



Highest rating responses:
 Literacy/numeracy (55%); Self-management (48%); Real life contexts
 (48%)

● Group work	5
● Gospel values	25
● Subject knowledge	9
● Literacy/numeracy	57
● Self-management and time m...	53
● Problem solving	42
● Creative thinking	22
● Real life contexts	30
● Inquiry based learning	31
● Opportunities to take risks in t...	33
● Online and digital learning	14
● Other	2



Highest rating responses:
 Literacy/numeracy (54%); Self-management (50%); Problem solving
 (40%)

"Catholic culture, great teachers, good learning outcomes."

Parent response to, "Why did you send your child to Aquinas College?"

It is particularly noteworthy that there was a substantial amount of overlap in the feedback from the three groups of primary stakeholders in relation to the qualities that they want graduates from Aquinas College to possess. The table below highlights the elements identified by all three sets of stakeholders. These areas of focus will need to be considered alongside our commitment to the intent of the New Zealand Curriculum and the special character of the College.

<i>Graduate Qualities</i>	<i>Curriculum Element</i>
Literate, articulate & numerate	Literacy/numeracy
Take responsibility for own actions	Creative thinking
Think creatively	Self-management
Take risks and be resilient about outcomes	Problem solving ability
Problem solving ability	Choices in my learning
	Real-life contexts

From these we can establish priorities or non-negotiables as we move forward into the design of the Year 7 – 10 curriculum for Aquinas College.

In addition to the questions common to all stakeholders there were specific questions asked of each separate stakeholder group:

Additional Student Question:

Please tell us about one of your most enjoyable and valuable experiences of learning that has occurred while you have been in Years 7 - 10 at Aquinas College.

Responses typically focused elements such as:

- Subjects and Learning (33)
- School Events (28)
- Relationships with Teachers (12)
- Friendships and Social Aspects of School (11)
- Sports (3)
- Other (eg timetable elements, music, cultural elements) (7)

Additional Teacher Questions:

Please identify up to three (3) elements you would definitely keep in the curriculum in Years 7 – 10

- Literacy and numeracy (15)
- Exposure to a wide range of curriculum (11)
- Collaborative focus: includes cross-curricular/group work (10)
- Inquiry/ problem solving (9)
- Digital/computing skills (6)
- Special Character Focus (5)

Please identify up to three (3) important changes you would like to see introduced in Years 7 – 10:

- Cross-curricular units/projects (18)
- Real life contexts/ inquiry-based learning (8)
- Greater consideration given when timetabling 7's and 8's out for events (3)
- Alternative assessments or less reporting in general (6)

"The standard of education and expectation of student behaviour is very high. The teaching staff are excellent.

Parent response to, "Why did you send your child to Aquinas College?"

Professional Readings and Research

Several articles and research papers were used to inform the review process. Some of these papers referred to are Hughes C., Acedo C. (2016) *Guiding Principles for Learning in the Twenty-first Century*. The International Academy of Education.

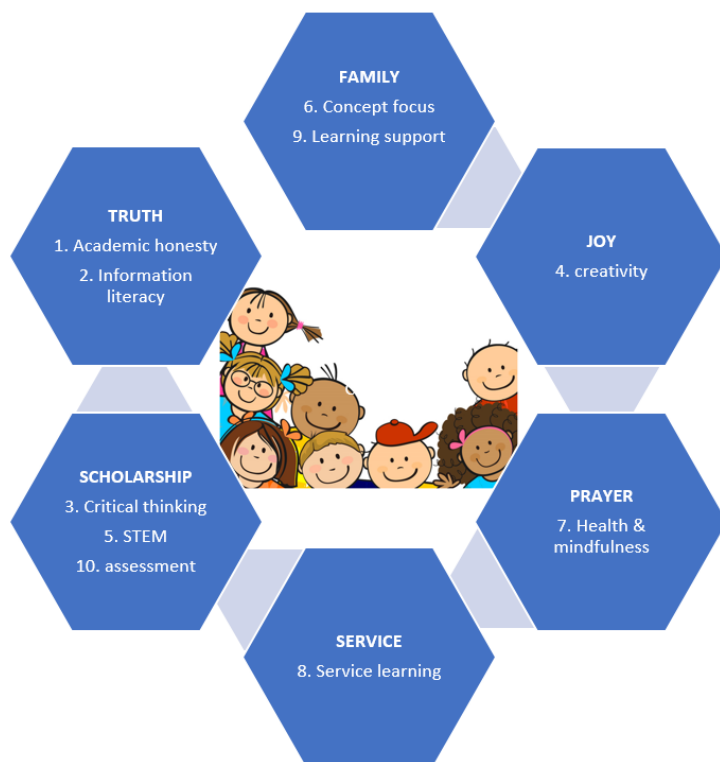
Rata, E. (2013) *Let's Bring Knowledge back Into New Zealand School* New Zealand Herald article accessed from https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11120838 (22 June 2018)

Education Review Office (Crown) (2018) *Leading Innovative Learning in New Zealand Schools* accessed from <http://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Leading-Innovative-Learning-in-Schools-2018.pdf> (5 May 2018)

From these and other readings the Curriculum Review Committee were able to determine that some of the important elements of our revised curriculum. These elements include, but are not limited to:

- Foundational Literacies and Knowledge
- Learner Competencies
- Character Qualities
- Pedagogically Powerful Knowledge
- Pedagogical Approaches
- Curriculum collaboration

We realised that there was a considerable amount of alignment between these key elements and our school special character as exemplified by the touch stones:



Next Steps

Following on from the initial literature review and community consultation the Curriculum Review Team are now planning to visit other schools, locally and further afield, to see some models of innovative curriculum in action. The team has already visited Papamoa College and Te Puke High School. We are now planning to visit Mount Maunganui College (Design Learning) and Rototuna Junior High School. We are also looking at some structural ideas from Bethlehem College (modified Home Rooms at Year 9).

Some of the ideas being investigated are:

- ways to bring cross-curricular collaboration into classroom practice
- greater openness/transparency of practice and collaborative planning/teaching
- drawing service and big projects together in student learning
- student agency and engagement
- digital literacy and citizenship

"A positive learning environment with a strong culture, with clear learning and behavioural expectations backed up by a well-disciplined yet caring environment. The relatively small school size and year group sizes support a close community style culture, while still delivering a healthy diversity of people and cultures."

Parent response to, "Why did you send your child to Aquinas College?"