

Sabbatical Study

HOW WE CAN GROW YEAR 7 AND 8 CHILDREN INTO LEADERS

This includes identifying the unique needs of Year 7/8 children, putting suitable curriculum and extra-curricula programmes in place, growing the opportunities for these children to become leaders, how we are able to show this within our community and how to acknowledge their roles within our school.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support of the Cust School Board of Trustees in approving my leave. The opportunity to take time away from school allowed me to reflect about improving practice at Cust School.

I would like to acknowledge following organisations, schools and individuals who assisted me in my research:

- The Ministry Of Education for generously allowing this sabbatical. For this I am grateful.
- My Deputy Principals – Ros Stringfellow and Eddie Foskett – and fellow staff members who rose to the challenge in my absence
- North Canterbury Principals, who willing shared their information with me

Purpose and Background Information:

Over the last two years as Principal of Cust School (U3/4), I have been fulltime teaching in the Year 7/8 class. Due to a number of factors, I had to increase my classroom teaching role, which has been added onto my principalship role. This was not sustainable in the near future and I wanted to explore ways, as stated above, where I can take a step back but ensure the Year 7/8 area of the school continues to thrive and develop.

The aim of this study was to develop Year 7/8 programmes to improve both my school's and that of fellow principals, by collecting examples of best practice. The reporting at the conclusion of the study leave would include analysis of information collected and provide specific examples of best practice. I hope that the report will support schools and principals with reviewing their Year 7/8 programmes and implementing any suitable changes.

I wanted to make contact with up to twenty principals and classroom teachers in the Canterbury area initially, to ascertain whether they would be prepared to share their Year 7/8 programmes – how they:

- Create a learning environment for these children,
- Any specific programmes they might be running,
- What leadership opportunities they provide for these children and
- How they acknowledge their unique role in a full primary, within community and school.

As well as visiting schools, there was the ability to complete a survey, as shown here.

HOW CAN WE GROW YEAR 7/8 CHILDREN INTO LEADERS

CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR YEAR 7/8

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC CURRICULUM PROGRAMMES BEING RUN FOR YEAR 7/8 CHILDREN?

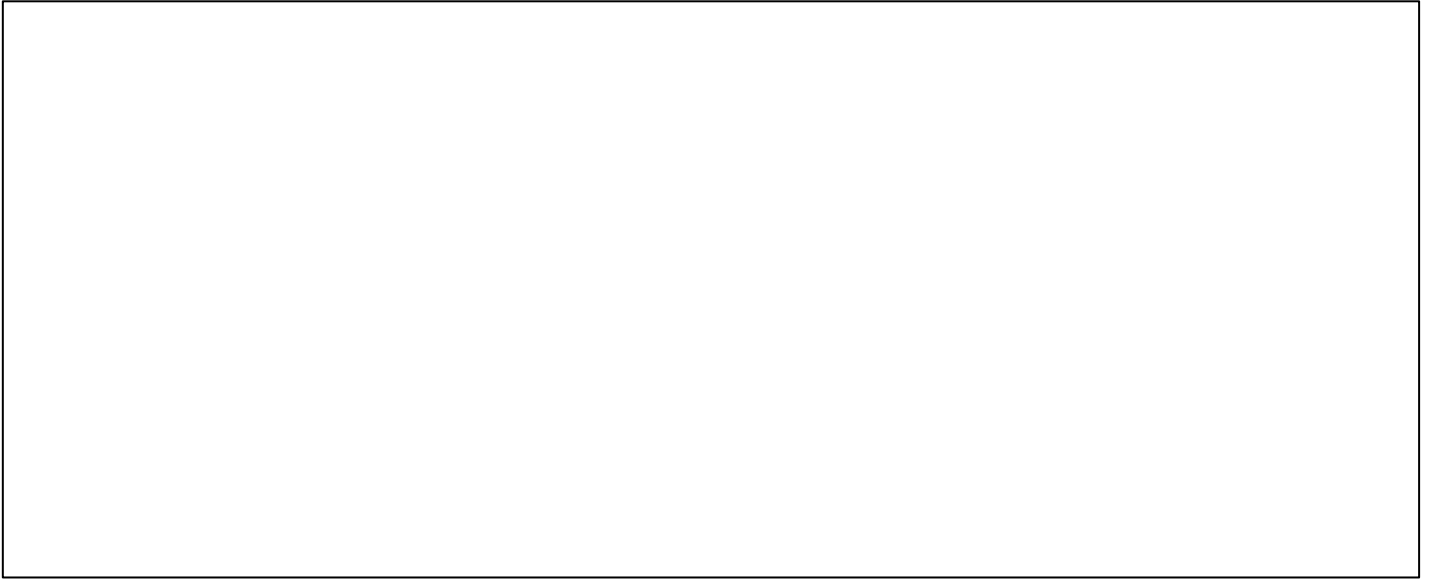
ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC EXTRA CURRICULA PROGRAMMES BEING RUN FOR YEAR 7/8 CHILDREN?

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

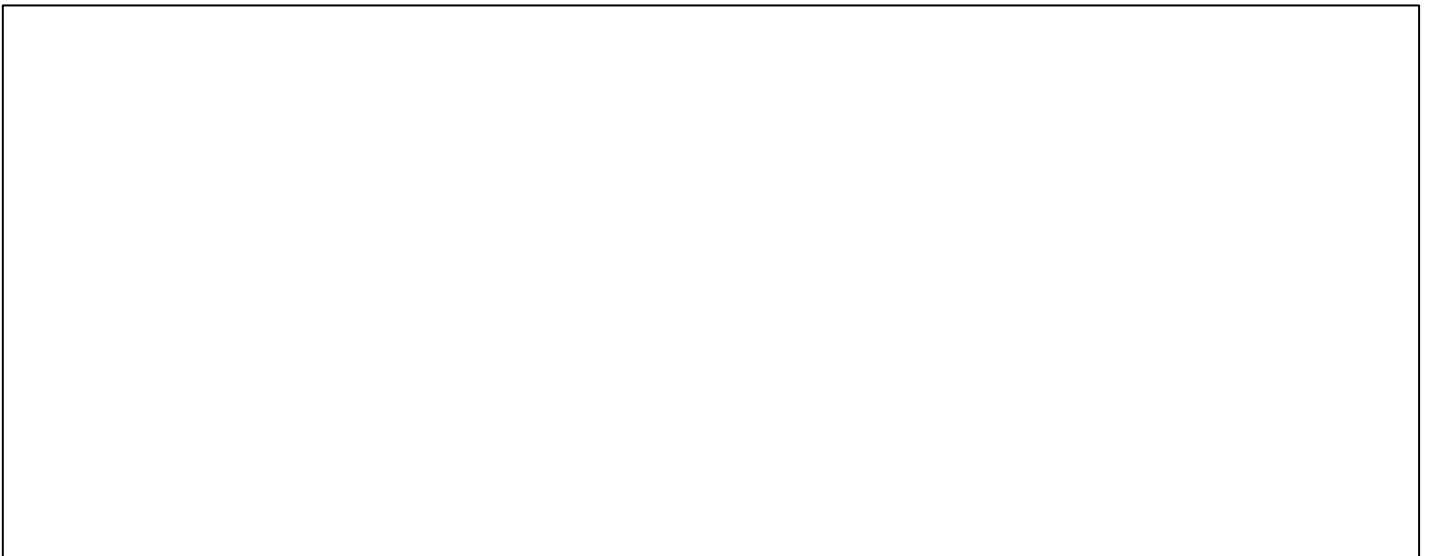
WHAT LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU PROVIDE FOR YOUR YEAR 7/8 CHILDREN?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

HOW DO YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THESE CHILDREN - WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL?



HOW DO YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THESE CHILDREN - WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY?



Unique Needs of Year 7 / 8 Students:

Summary: 10 -12 Years Old

The age between ten and twelve is generally a time when children get a view of approaching adulthood.

There are important physical and sexual changes for your child especially if she is a girl.

Social relationships can be unsettled for girls and very competitive for boys.

Activities, sports and clubs can help them to feel good about themselves and form safe relationships outside the family.

Children still need guidance and safe limits, but they also need to be a little more independent.

Summary: 12-15 Year Old

Developing Understanding

Adolescents are now capable of conceptualising broadly.

They see the 'negative side' of people and things they thought perfect in their childhood.

Physical Development

Both girls and boys undergo radical physical changes – boys some what later than girls.

The changes include hormonal changes, which may affect mood.

These changes are self-absorbing for the adolescent and may be frightening.

It is a time of strength and physical dexterity, adolescents can reap satisfying rewards through sport.

Social/Emotional Development

Adolescents often feel some grief at the passing of their childhood.

They can feel strange about their bodies changing so fast.

They are moving away from their family emotionally [relatively speaking].

Their peer group is of utmost importance.

The family is still the adolescent's strongest social support.

Summary:

Curriculum Programmes -

Overall there is a slight change to programmes that are taught to Year 7/8 children, with more emphasis on self regulated learning and self management. Social skills, relationships, key competencies and children leading their own learning have more of a focus. Schools still emphasise core elements but tend to teach these in a different way. There is more independence within the curriculum areas but specific programmes are languages and problem solving activities.

Extra Curricula Programmes -

Many schools offer students in Year 7/8 extra curricula activities such as challenges, camps, sports, arts, buddy groups and peer mediators. These provide leadership opportunities for the children.

Leadership -

A huge range of leadership opportunities are being provided. Common ones are student councils, house captains, school responsibilities around the school – peer mediators, bus monitors, librarians. Often schools allow their Year 7/8 children to run assemblies and fundraising events e.g. Mufti Days, Disco's

Acknowledgement -

There are common trends on how schools acknowledge these leaders within the school and in the wider community. These are at assemblies, particularly community ones e.g. Year 8 Leaver's assembly, badges for specific jobs, newsletters and at any school gathering.

It is not uncommon to see that the larger the school the more roles the children have an opportunity to lead in. There are more children so it is easier to spread the load. Smaller schools solve the problem of jobs versus number of children by having a culture whereby children are expected to take these roles and it is “cool” to do so. They are then acknowledged and “rewarded” by doing so.

Throughout these investigations, I wanted to see what I could do to change the leadership dynamics at Cust School.

This has led to me trialling the following initiatives / Leadership Opportunities:

Sports Gear monitors

Sports Teams trainers

Library monitors

Assemblies

School Council

Bus Monitors

EnviroGroup

New Entrant Buddy

Lunchtime duties – reception / activities

While some of these are not new it was important that I, and the staff, acknowledged leadership roles. Firstly giving time to the children so they could organise these and feel valued. Allowing them time out of class on a short but regular basis, showed that they were actually making a difference.

In recognition of these leadership roles, the Year 8 children are exploring badge options (but there seems to be an “uncoolness” to these at the moment) and a sweatshirt that distinguishes them as leaders of the school.

FINDINGS:

CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR YEAR 7/8

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC CURRICULUM PROGRAMMES BEING RUN FOR YEAR 7/8 CHILDREN?

- No set classes – 38 children in Year 7/8 – 2 teachers
- Focus on Key Competencies – Steven Coveys “Habits of Teenagers”.
- Year 8’s have an offsite training day and overnight camp for this. Children pay their own way and invite all parents for a meal where children make a speech about their goals.
- Timetabled Leadership Roles – approximately 1 hour a week. Every Year 8 has leadership roles e.g PE monitor, catering crew, fundraising, ICT, media teams, newsletter team, librarians, peer mediators, envirogroup. Within this 1 hour a week they discuss with teacher their responsibilities and complete their tasks. There is an expectation that they have to do a job as a Year 8. Can negotiate their leadership roles / jobs but need to apply for these – teachers choose.
- Self Regulated Learning – the Year 7/8 children have a very self regulated / discovery type programme, where they have lots of opportunity for inquiry but, can opt into specific workshops.
- Specific programmes include:
 - Self Defence – girl’s
 - Second Languages
 - Technology Challenges
 - Maths Problem Solving
 - Future Problem Solving
 - Careers
 - Financial Literacy
- Parallel programmes run over three classes – fluid groupings and flexible environment to assist learning programmes. Interchange in core subjects.
- Year 7 & 8 in a class together. Not so much about a different programme but how it is taught is different for Year 7/8’s – more inquiry, self directed learning.
- Year 7/8 higher level immersion class – plan and teach Te Reo to lower immersion class pupils once a week

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC EXTRA CURRICULA PROGRAMMES BEING RUN FOR YEAR 7/8 CHILDREN?

- Student Council – Year 7/8 children run the student council (with a teacher in charge). This provides a voice for the students and they actively seek out fundraising ideas for a school charity. This is done twice a year. Student council have a fortnightly meeting, with every class choosing their representatives.
- Year 8 student representatives lead the school's final assembly.
- Learning Stories – the year 7/8 children produce a learning story based around their leadership. The learning story provides evidence about the “service” the children provide for the school. It must include measurable outcomes and evidence and is reported to parents, with next steps. Once they have evidence of all the leadership abilities, the children can earn a 7 Habits Cap. The Board of Trustees give these caps out, with the teachers talking about their children's stories / leadership roles.
- Year 8 Wellington Camp – every year in November, this provides an opportunity for the children to plan and implement the activities completed in Wellington, as well as logistics of food and travel.
- Buddy Group – vertical grouping through the school. Year 7/8 children lead their group and plan for some teaching / game activity every alternate Friday morning.
- Reach Outdoor Education
- William Pike Challenges
- Jump Jam – leadership opportunities
- Survival Swimming / Beach Education
- Camps – specialised / class
- Sports Interchange
- Kapa Haka
- Peer mediation training
- Playground activity leaders
- Leadership Day
- Debating
- Science Challenges
- Bands

- Pupils read with juniors in Te Reo once a week
- Kemu Maori, with the Waka Tapu
- Extension Reo sessions weekly with resource teacher of Maori and Kaiarahi I Te Reo
- Leadership Programme – 4 Head Students, 2 Service Leaders, 2 House Leaders, 2 Performing Arts Leaders, 2 Cultural Leaders, 4 Sports Leaders
- Physical Activity Leaders
- Peer Mediators

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU PROVIDE FOR YOUR YEAR 7/8 CHILDREN?

- Timetabled Leadership Roles – approximately 1 hour a week. Every Year 8 has leadership roles e.g PE monitor, catering crew, fundraising, ICT, media teams, newsletter team, librarians, peer mediators, envirogroup. Within this 1 hour a week they discuss with teacher their responsibilities and complete their tasks. There is an expectation that they have to do a job as a Year 8. Can negotiate their leadership roles / jobs but need to apply for these – teachers choose.
- BYOD – Year 7/8 are allowed to bring their own device, with the majority of children doing so. These children have their own blog, which leads to the sharing of assessment. Their “class” / team also has a blog which provides a timetable. This is lead by senior children.
- Selected children are chosen to participate in the Young Leaders Day
- Year 7/ 8’s have an offsite training day (Papanui) and overnight camp to develop leadership skills, through a focus on Stephen Covey’s Habits of Highly Effective Teens. This involves leadership team from school.
- Houses – all children are placed in Houses. The leadership team from previous year select the leaders for each house for the present year. They run assemblies, morning tea duties, house events, sports shed, interval and lunch games and prize giving.
- Assemblies – Leaders in the school run all assemblies
- Student Council – teacher monitors but Year 8 representatives organises meeting and sets agenda. There are two representatives per class and their focus is on a “project” around the school.
- Year 7/8 Leaders will run Charity Days e.g. Red Nose
- There is an expectation that all Year 7/8 children are involved in Envirogroup, Library, Jump Jam etc.
- Year 7/8 children run Friday Clubs. This involves the whole school participating in a variety of “club” type activities in an afternoon.
- Senior Discovery – the year 7/8 children take part in activities based around the qualities and values of leadership.

- Year 7/8 Leadership Responsibilities:
- Reception – “manning” of during morning tea / lunch
- Bus Monitors
- Property Managers – in conjunction with caretaker, children complete tasks, e.g. gardening and monitor playground
- ICT “Techies”
- Council – meet weekly, run assemblies and organise fundraising e.g. mufti days
- Lunchtime activities
- Librarians
- Monthly video news
- Peer Mediators
- House Captains – in charge of a particular school house. They need to apply for this job through the use of a CV.
- Four Head Students – Year 8 children only. Criteria – must apply in writing, prepare a notice and deliver to an audience, then a committee consisting of present head students, Deputy Principal and Principal will shortlist and choose the top 4. They will be announced at the final assembly.
- The job description of these head students is:
- Run assemblies, run student council, put notices in newsletter, be in charge of safe school drive team, ensure health and safety within school (reporting to Principal and Board of Trustees) , organise Senior Colour (House) Day, welcome guests, represent school at ANZAC parade, outside of school assemblies and promote school whenever possible.
- Student representative on Board – brings up issues but main focus is on Health and Safety.
- Student Council – meet weekly and organise safety displays, fund raising, library and sports shed
- EnviroGroup – improving the school environment
- Peer mediators.
- Senior Buddies – teaching / mentoring individuals / small groups in junior school
- Representing / speaking the kura at Mihi Whatataua
- Leading all Hui – daily and for whanau twice a term
- Assist in planning and supporting at junior sports
- Fortnightly working with Te Kohaka o Tuhaitara Trust – environmental education
- Supporting events, e.g. mihi at advisory service – which includes waiata and support for manuhiri
- Basketball and Netball Coaching – Year 7/8 children run and coach mini basketball and netball for juniors
- PAL Squad – providing activities for year 0-4

- Playground activity leaders
- Family group leaders
- House leaders
- Liturgy Group
- Sometimes used as mentors for younger children
- School Council
- Environment Council
- Librarians
- Sports – running junior sports events
- Special Projects

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

HOW DO YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THESE CHILDREN - WITHIN SCHOOL

- Board of Trustees provides a 7 Habits Cap.
- Year 8 MC assemblies
- Use of curriculum time to complete leadership tasks – values their role and time
- Year 8 Leavers gift
- Staff provides references for each child as they leave
- Student Council – principal listens and acknowledges ideas
- With the Year 8 Challenge – children are required to complete 10 leadership activities. If they do so they become a “legend” and at the end of year assembly they are presented a jacket in recognition of their achievements.
- House Leaders reports at assemblies and reported in newsletters
- T Shirts are provided for specific groups to identify them e.g Jump Jam
- Year 8 page on website to acknowledge their successes
- Uniform – looking at differentiating between Year 8 and other students e.g. hat
- Badges for specific groups
- Leaders advertised in newsletter and on noticeboard
- Own seating are at lunchtime
- Back seat on bus
- Assembly seating different (own seats)
- Certificates / Awards at assemblies
- Badges for head students and school council
- Badges awarded at Assembly.
- Celebrating success assemblies.
- End of year awards for different areas of leadership and achievement.
- Uniform – Year 8 children choose the Year 8 shirt and this is embroidered with their name / senior leader and school monogram. Year 7/8 children likely to have a school cap – whereas rest of school would have bucket hat
- End of Year prize giving
- Assemblies – leaders run

- Mostly it is natural – mutual respect – a way of relating to each other
- Lots of verbal praise and feedback in class and at hui
- Certificates at hui
- Sports Night evening – term 4
- Performing Arts evening – term 4
- Cultural Night – term 4 evening
- Citizenship Assembly – term 4 day
- Year 7 Excellence Certificate Assembly – term 4 day
- Year 8 Graduation and Social

HOW DO YOU ACKNOWLEDGE THESE CHILDREN - WITHIN COMMUNITY

- Weekly assemblies – report to school and community on their activities
- Newsletters – as above
- Any chance – school gatherings – children lead and staff acknowledge their contribution
- Leavers Assembly – at end of year the school and community acknowledge Year 8 leavers with prize giving, morning tea and gift
- Final assembly – responsibilities are acknowledged in front of parents through certificates
- Newsletters.
- Parents are at assemblies.
- Liturgy Group leadership shown at Masses as children are very involved in leading so Parish also see them.
- Lots of leadership events / promos and sales expos
- Fronting funding / sponsorship applications
- Website
- Special graduation celebration
- Senior leaders have a jacket to wear