HOW THE PRINCIPALS OF NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS UNDERSTAND AND IMPLEMENT SPECIAL CHARACTER

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP AND SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committee of Australian Catholic University (Appendix A).

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore how Catholic education authorities guarantee the Special Character of New Zealand Catholic schools. Since principals hold primary responsibilities in demonstrating evidence of Special Character of the Catholic school, this study particularly explores how secondary school principals fulfil this responsibility.

New Zealand Catholic schools are State integrated schools under the 1975 *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* (PSCIA). This Act enabled private schools to be fully government funded, while continuing to maintain and enhance their Special Character. Special Character is important to the Catholic Church because it enables its schools to offer an authentic Catholic education as a State funded school. They are State schools with a Special Character

The following specific research questions were generated from the Literature Review to focus the study:

1.   What do principals understand by the term Special Character?

2.   How do principals implement Special Character in their schools?

3.   How do Catholic education authorities understand the role of the Catholic school in mission?

An epistemological framework of constructionism underpins this study as it explores the meaning constructed through the experiences of principals. An interpretivist design is adopted, with Symbolic Interactionism providing the particular interpretivist lens. Case study is the methodology chosen to orchestrate the data gathering strategies. The strategies utilised are focus groups, semi-structured interviews and questionnaire. There were 31 participants in the study: 20 principals and 11 members of the National Catholic Special Character review group.

The research generates six conclusions that contribute to new knowledge about the Special Character of Catholic schools. First, New Zealand Catholic schools operate in a pluralistic society where the Christian Worldview no longer prevails. This influences the traditional school-family-Church relationships. This lack of clarity of relationships impacts the implementation of Special Character.

Second, while Special Character is a term used extensively in New Zealand education, there is a lack of clarity about the precise meaning of this term. Consequently, there is a dissonance between Government and Church expectations of what demonstrates Special Character.

Third, principals recognise that the implementation and enhancement of the Special Character of their school is important to both their school identity (Catholic) and purpose (education).

Fourth, tensions concerning the status of Religious Education in the timetable have been mitigated with the introduction of Achievement Standards in Religious Education. Religious Education is acknowledged as a primary contributor to demonstrating a Catholic school's Special Character.

Fifth, principals are concerned that Catholic education authorities critique schools' mission endeavours through evidence concerning students' personal relationship with Jesus. Principals perceive that Catholic education authorities 'measure' this relationship by student attendance at Sunday Mass.

Finally, principals are expected to nurture Special Character by assuming the role of faith leader. Principals lack understanding about this role and its practicalities.

KEY WORDS

New Zealand Catholic schools, *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* (1975), Integration, Special Character, Authentic Catholic education, Mission.

ACRONYMS

For the purpose of this research, the following acronyms are expanded to lend clarity to their usage.

ACU   Australian Catholic University

ADW   Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand

BOT   Board of Trustees

CEO   Catholic Education Office

CS   The Catholic School

DRS   Director of Religious Studies

EFG   Expert Focus Group

ERO   Education Review Office

GE   *Gravissimum Educationis*: Declaration on Christian Education

EG   *Evangelii Gaudium:* The *Joy of the Gospel*

I   Interview

LCS   Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith

NCEA   National Certificate of Educational Achievement

NCRS   National Centre for Religious Studies

NZ   New Zealand

NZCBC   The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

NZCPCIS	New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools
NZCEO	New Zealand Catholic Education Office
PPTA	Post Primary Teachers Association, (Teachers' Union)
P	Principal
PFG	Principal Focus Group
PSCIA	Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (1975)
Q	Questionnaire
RDCS	The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal
S/CCE	Sacred/Congregation for Catholic Education
SOI	Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist
TCI	The Catholic Institute of Aoteaora New Zealand
TTM	The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium
USCCB	The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

These words are understood in a particular way throughout the research and are explained here in order to provide clarity for readers.

Acceptability
Judgment that an applicant for a *tagged* teaching position meets the criteria and is suitable to hold the position. It is the policy of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops that the person appointed must be a Catholic who is baptised, active, and in full communion with the faith community.

Attestation
The Board of Trustees is obliged to provide the proprietor with an annual compliance attestation, indicating the school's degree of fulfilment of its statutory obligations regarding Special Character.

Board of Trustee (BOT)
Every State school in New Zealand is a single Crown-based entity governed by a Board of Trustees. Three to seven members are elected; the principal is ex-officio and up to four members may be co-opted. The proprietor may appoint the four co-opted positions in a State integrated school.

Those appointed by the proprietor are called proprietor's appointees. They are full Board members.

Certification
The New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference has set up a procedure to recognise pre-service and in-service training in Religious Education and Special Character. While not a condition of service, it is the standard expected. Satisfactory

completion of training gives Certification at different levels.

Church

When used as a proper noun in this thesis Church refers to The Roman Catholic Church. (Abbreviated to Ch in tables and figures).

Education Review Office

The agency of the New Zealand Government, under the Ministry of Education responsible for evaluating and reporting on the education and care of children and young people in schools.

Integration Act

The *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* (PSCIA). The 1975 Act of Parliament by which private schools were incorporated into the Government education system.   Consequentially operational funding would be provided for State integrated schools, if particular conditions concerning staffing, enrolment, plant provision etc. were met.

In 2017 the *Integration Act* was subsumed into the *Education Act* (1989)*.*   All conditions of incorporation and the resulting legal obligations were transferred to Section 33 of the reviewed Act.

Integration Agreement

Under the Inte*gration Act* each school was integrated with a particular memorandum of understanding between the proprietor and the Crown. This memorandum is called the *Integration Agreement.*   It is unique to each school but particular aspects are common to each Catholic school.

	These outcomes and conditions were maintained under the 2017 revision of the *Education Act 1989.*
Kura Kaupapa Māori	Māori-language immersion schools. The philosophy and practice reflect Māori cultural values. Often shortened to either Kura Kaupapa or Kura.
State integrated School	A school under a proprietor that has been integrated into the State system according to the *Integration Act* (1975)/*Section 33 of the New Zealand Education Act* (1989).
Te Reo Māori	The language of the first people of Aotearoa New Zealand. Alongside English and New Zealand Sign Language it is one of the three official languages of New Zealand.
Proprietor	The owner of a State integrated school who has negotiated integration into the State system. The proprietor is responsible for ensuring the Special Character of the school is maintained and that school plant is provided.
	The proprietor of all New Zealand Catholic primary schools is the local Bishop of the Diocese. Of the 49 New Zealand Catholic secondary schools the local Bishop is the proprietor of 29. The other 20 have a Religious Institute entity as their proprietor e.g. The Mercy Trust Board.
Proprietor's Appointee	Full member of the Board of Trustees appointed by the proprietor.

Religious Instruction	Term used to indicate the role of teachers holding a *tagged* position. It is seen as the ability to support the Catholic religious life of the school by actions, and by providing a personal example of what it means to be a Catholic. It does not necessarily mean the requirement to teach the Religious Education curriculum.
S Form	Sometimes referred to as s65 form referring to Section 65 of the PSCIA that legitimises *tagged* positions. Candidates applying for a *tagged* position complete the form in order to prove that they are acceptable to hold the position.
State school	Government funded school. Each State school is a single crown-entity governed by a Board of Trustees.
Tagged positions	Particular teaching positions within a Catholic school. It is mandatory that the teachers in the position have a willingness and ability to participate in religious instruction appropriate to the Special Character of the school. There are a number of criteria a teacher must meet to be acceptable for holding this position. The proprietor assesses a candidate's acceptability from the information provided by candidates completing an s65 form or 'S Form'.
Vatican II	*The Second Vatican Council* (1962-1965). Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church whose renewal of the expression and understanding of Catholic doctrine resulted in several significant institutional changes.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

I am a Sister of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, who has been involved in the New Zealand Catholic Education system for over 25 years. Currently, I am the leader of the Religious Education team in the Catholic Diocese of Auckland. As a team, we are responsible for parish-centred faith education. In recent years since leaving school advisory work I have served the Vicar for Education as a 'Catholic Special Character' [1] reviewer within Catholic secondary schools.

My teaching career began after I had spent some years as a youth worker for the Catholic Church. After religious profession[2] I accepted a position in a Catholic Secondary School to teach Science. My timetable indicated that I had been allocated six classes of Religious Education. On questioning my suitability to undertake this responsibility, since I lacked qualifications in the curriculum area, I was informed that as I was a 'nun' I would be fine. My undergraduate degree majored in Chemistry. I had little experience in the field of Religious Education. Furthermore, I attended secondary school at a time when, as a response to the changes of the Second Vatican Council[3](1962-1965) Religious Education was characterised by an inductive experiential approach with a "perceived lack of content" (Wanden, 2010, p.11). Supported by my Congregation, the Sisters of St Joseph, I studied to become qualified to teach Religious Education.

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[1]Special Character is defined in a Catholic School's Integration Agreement. "The school is a Roman Catholic school in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its religious instructions and observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the practices, worship, and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese".

[2] Religious profession is the admission of men or women into a religious order (priests, brothers, nuns or sisters) by means of public vows.

[3] The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was an Ecumenical Council whose Bishop delegates from around the world considered the spiritual renewal of the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church, her relationship with other Christian and religious communities, and its place in the modern world. As a result, a number of changes in Church practices occurred.

During my time in the Catholic education system, I have held the following leadership positions: Director of Religious Studies, deputy principal and acting principal. I have also been a diocesan secondary Religious Education Advisor and coordinator of the pre-teaching Religious Education formation programme in the Wellington Archdiocese[4].

I became a member of the National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS) after sabbatical studies in 2009. I had particular responsibilities for the provision of resources and support for secondary Religious Education. With the national restructuring of qualification-based formation programmes, NCRS became incorporated into the newly established The Catholic Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand [TCI]. TCI is the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference national centre for Catholic formation for mission (TCI, 2011). I have been a sessional teacher for TCI and currently serve on its council.

As advisor to the secondary schools of the Archdiocese of Wellington, I worked with staff of many Catholic secondary schools observing how they believed they contributed to the generation of an authentic Catholic school culture. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that the authenticity of a Catholic school is maintained and enhanced (The New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools [NZCPCIS], 2010). During the time I worked at TCI, I contributed at a national level in promoting professional learning in Special Character and Religious Education. Special Catholic Character and Religious Education are important characteristics of Catholic education.

Two significant events in the past 55 years altered the dynamics of Catholic Education. First, the theology generated from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) underpinned important changes in the structures and practices of

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[4] No Catholic institution in New Zealand provides teacher training. Each diocese negotiates with its local teacher-training provider to provide access to pre-service training in Religious Education and Special Catholic Character. The qualification awarded is The Certificate in Catechetical Studies.

the Catholic Church. Second the *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* [PSCIA] was drawn up. This Act was passed by Parliament and signed into law in 1975. This Act enabled the integration of all New Zealand Catholic schools into the national State education system. As a consequence of these two events, staff-membership in Catholic schools changed. Previously, Catholic school staff consisted primarily of members of religious congregations. Another consequence of these changes was a decline in the number of religious vocations resulting in a decline in the number of religious directly involved in schools.

A further consequence concerned how families of children in Catholic schools engaged with parish life. Traditionally, Catholic families were immersed in Catholic culture and tradition through participation in the Catholic parish, where they attended Sunday Mass weekly. In contrast, most contemporary families have minimal connection to Church other than their relationship with the Catholic school. They do not attend regular Sunday Mass. These realities invite reconsideration of what constitutes Catholic identity, and therefore Special Character. Catholic education authorities concur that it is timely to reconsider the nature of this Special Character stating "the redefinition of Catholic schools' identity for the 21st century is an urgent task" (CCE, 2014, 1a).

The connection between Catholic identity and Special Character is important to understanding the relationship between Catholic schools and the Government. At the time of the integration negotiations, Catholic leaders agreed to endorse the *Integration Act*, only if it contained safe-guards to preserve the Catholic identity of their schools (Sweetman, 2001, p.20). Catholic identity could not be incorporated into the Act because not all private schools were Catholic. Therefore, the term agreed to was 'Special Character'. Under the Act State integrated schools agree to provide education within the context of providing and demonstrating a Special Character.

Education with a Special Character means education "within the framework of a particular or general religious or philosophical belief, and associated with observances or traditions appropriate to that belief" (PSCIA, 1975, #2.1).

For Catholic schools education with a Special Character means education within a Catholic framework. A common understanding of Special Character is important because under both Government legislation and the expectations of Catholic authorities, Principals are responsible for Special Character.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This research occurs within the New Zealand Catholic education system. New Zealand is an island nation in the South Western Pacific Ocean. It lies approximately 1,000 kilometres south of the island groups of New Caledonia, Fiji and Tonga, and 1,500 kilometres east of Australia. It is a constitutional monarchy with parliamentary democracy.

New Zealand has a relatively small population of 4.6 million people of whom about 68% are from Europe or of European decent. 14.5% of the population identify as Māori (the first peoples). Census data identifies that 38.5% of people declare they have no religion, while 27% identify themselves as undeclared religion (New Zealand Government, 2014). Consequently, fewer than 50% of New Zealanders consider themselves Christian. From 2013, Catholics were identified as New Zealand's largest Christian denomination at 11%. Catholic diocesan authorities conclude from their annual 'Mass counts' that approximately 17-22% attend Mass weekly (Catholic Diocese of Auckland, 2015).

The statistical data concerning New Zealand Catholic schools concludes contrasting trends. The New Zealand Catholic Education system comprises 238 schools in which 66,000 students attend. Approximately 9% of New Zealand school children attend Catholic schools.

The demographics of students in Catholic schools are insightful. 56% of students are of European decent, 13 % are Māori, and 15 % are Pasifika (New Zealand Government, 2014). Of these schools 49 are secondary schools. Three of these are Māori schools. While six are in the top two decile rankings (high socio-economic catchment), three are in the lowest decile ranking (NZCBC, 2017). Figure 1.1 shows the distribution of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools. Appendix D presents more details as to the nature of each of these schools.

Figure 1.1: Map of New Zealand Showing Location of Catholic Secondary Schools.

As a result of the *Integration Act* (1975) and the collaborative arrangements between private schooling providers and the New Zealand Government the Church in New Zealand is able to offer education with a Catholic 'Special Character'.

The *Integration Act* (1975) provides private schools with Government support conditional on these schools demonstrating their 'Special Character'. The nature of an individual integrated school's Special Character is established between the proprietor and the Government through the school's unique *Integration Agreement*. On signing the agreement, a private school becomes a State integrated school. All Catholic schools are State integrated schools.

The research underpinning this thesis concerns how principals promote this 'Special Character' in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools.

1.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this research is to explore the understanding and implementation of Special Character by principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools. The rationalization and justification of this research purpose is explained in Chapter Two.

The Literature Review (Chapter Three) generates three specific research questions that focus the manner of the research design. They are:

What do principals understand by the term Special Character?

How do principals implement Special Character in their schools?

How do Catholic education authorities understand the role of the Catholic school in mission?

The research is interpretive in nature and the following design structured the research (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Summary of the Epistemological Paradigm and Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Data Gathering Strategies.

Epistemology	Constructionism
Theoretical Perspective	Interpretivism | Symbolic Interactionism
Methodology	Case study
Data Gathering Strategies	Focus groups Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews Questionnaire

1.3.1 EPISTEMOLOGY

A constructionist epistemology was adopted for this research. Constructionism[5] maintains that as human beings engage within contexts, meaning is generated. Knowledge is therefore perceived as being constructed rather than created. Based on individual historical and social perspectives, humans make sense of personal and social experiences (Crotty, 2003). A constructionist epistemology is invited because this study explores how principals construct their reality in response to Special Character. The meaning making of principals is socially constructed and linked to the cultural, historical and social contexts within which a principal operates.

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[5] Often the terms "constructionism" and "constructivism" are used interchangeably. Crotty (1998) offers clarification. *Constructionism:* Meaning is constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting and agree at least temporarily on what is constructed. *Constructivism:* Meaning is constructed by an individual irrespective of what others construct i.e. *meaning making of the individual mind.* In other words, *constructionism* is another term for *social constructivism.*

1.3.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This research focusses on the lived experience of principals and how they construct their understanding of the world. Therefore, the theoretical perspective adopted for the research is interpretivism (Crotty, 1988).

1.3.2.1 Symbolic Interactionism

The lens chosen to inform the theoretical perspective of this study is Symbolic Interactionism (Neuman, 2006). Symbolic Interactionism is a theoretical perspective based on understanding the perception of the individual within the collective. The belief that individual humans respond to things according to the meanings they ascribe to them is foundational to the Symbolic Interactionism perspective. The meanings individuals ascribe to things are managed and modified through an interactive process (Charon, 2007). It is appropriate to view situations from the viewpoint of an individual in order to appreciate their actions. Humans constantly adjust their behaviour to accommodate the behaviours of others. Studying principals' understandings and actions of implementation, through the lens of Symbolic Interactionism enables the researcher to explore their situation, incorporating the past and present, and their personal and social contexts.

1.3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the orchestrating rationale defending the choice of particular research methods adopted to explore the phenomenon under study. Case study methodology is adopted to explore the particular phenomenon, namely how principals understand and implement the Special Character in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools.

1.3.4 PARTICIPANTS

Principals from each of the 49 Catholic secondary schools were invited to participate in the study through involvement in the following data gathering

strategies: focus groups, interviews or questionnaire. Further, members of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office Catholic Special Catholic Character Committee were invited to engage in an expert focus group.

1.3.5 DATA GATHERING STRATEGIES

The strategies chosen for the gathering of data for this research are:

- Focus groups
  - Principals (n=6 participants)
  - Experts (n=11 participants)
- Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews (n=6 participants)
- Questionnaire (n=11 participants)

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

There are three reasons this study is both important and timely. First, minimal research about Catholic schools in New Zealand has been conducted (Wanden & Birch, 2007). Second, the *Integration Act* (1975), a significant landmark in New Zealand education has attracted little research (Sweetman, 2002, p. 18). Finally, related research regarding Special Character in Catholic schools evaluated the way two schools exhibited various aspects of Special Character (O'Donnell, 2001), and failed to scrutinise the principal's influence. Recent research concerning the role of Directors of Religious Studies in one New Zealand Diocese focussed on their particular responsibilities for the preservation of Special Character (van de Nest, 2015) and did not take into account the perspective of the principal. Both Catholic education authorities and the Government consider the principal as being ultimately responsible for maintaining and enhancing Special Character (Readman, 2009, p. 8).

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The following outlines the structure of this thesis.

Chapter One: The Research Problem Identified. The purpose of this chapter has been to introduce this study which explores what Special Character is and the Catholic secondary school principals negotiate their own understanding of Special Character and how they implement it within their schools.

Chapter Two: Defining the Research Problem. This chapter explains the context in which Special Character is maintained and implemented in New Zealand Catholic schools. The study presents a summary of the purpose of Special Character in Catholic schools.

The problem underpinning this study concerns Catholic Education authorities' maintenance and enhancement of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools.

Chapter Three: Review of the Literature. This chapter generates an evaluation of the appropriate literature concerning the maintenance and enhancement of Special Character in Catholic schools. Through this process research questions are generated and defended.

Chapter Four: Mission, Church and Catholic Schools. The intention of this Chapter is to explore the meaning of the terms 'mission' and 'Church' within the framework of this study. This is important as both are linked to the understanding of the role of the Catholic school in mission.

Chapter Five: Design of the Research. Chapter five outlines and defends the research design and defends the choice of data gathering strategies.

Chapter Six: Presentation and Analysis of New Understandings. In this chapter, the themes generated from an analysis of the data are presented and the new understandings emerging from these themes are justified.

Chapter Seven: Discussion of New Understandings. This chapter presents a critical discussion of the new understandings generated from the research.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and Recommendations. The final chapter of the thesis generates conclusions from the research and demonstrates how the study has contributed to scholarship. It makes recommendations that offer influence to practice, policy and theory regarding New Zealand Catholic secondary school leadership and the ongoing support and enhancement of Special Character.

CHAPTER TWO: DEFINING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the research problem addressed by this study.

2.1   CONCEPTUALISING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Catholic identity is integral to the New Zealand Catholic education system. There are a number of concepts that influence an understanding of Catholic Identity in an education setting.

- The contestable profile of Catholic identity;
- Expectations of school Catholic identity by Church educational authorities;
- The role of Special Character in informing Catholic identity; and
- Integration – the relationship between the Church and Government regarding Catholic education.

Figure 2.1 presents the conceptualisation of the research problem.
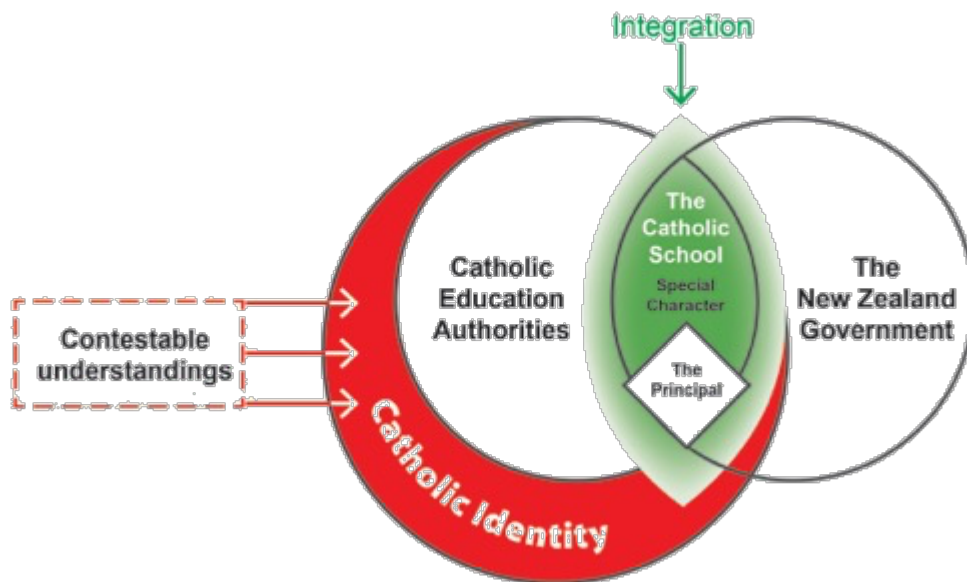
Figure 2.1: The Conceptualisation of the Research Problem

2.2　The Contestable Profile of Catholic Identity

2.2.1　The Contemporary Catholic Church

The contemporary Catholic Church is 16% of the total global population, and comprises 50% of the Christian population.　Previously, about two-thirds of all Catholics lived in Europe.　By 2010, only 24% resided in Europe (Pew Research, 2013). There has been a decrease in Catholic Church membership in the 'West', including New Zealand (Kurth, 2004).

2.2.1.2　The Catholic Church in New Zealand

The Catholic Church of New Zealand is part of the Oceania region. Oceania comprises Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific nations and contains 0.8%, or 9 million of the global Catholic population (BBC, 2013).　The Catholic population of New Zealand is 11% of the general population, approximately half a million people (New Zealand Government, 2014).　The percentage of New Zealanders identifying as Catholic has remained static. This fixed percentage of New Zealanders identifying as Catholics is a result of recent migration trends from the Pacific and Asia. Without these migrant communities, the decline in the New Zealand Catholic practice would be more pronounced (Orejana, 2016).

2.2.2　The Declining Catholic Church

The decline in Catholic practice in New Zealand reflects the general changes in New Zealand society. For the first time, the 2013 census demonstrated that the majority of New Zealanders (51%) held no religious affiliation (New Zealand Government, 2014). Additionally, for the first time, Catholics became the majority Christian denomination, mainly because many new immigrants were Catholics.　Despite this apparent static proportion of population, Catholic practice in New Zealand is declining especially amongst the European and

Māori populations (New Zealand Government, 2014). The Catholic Bishop of Auckland refers to this phenomenon as 'kiwi drift'.[6]

2.2.3 CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES ON CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Various rationales explain "kiwi drift". The predominant response is that the Church is unappealing because 'educated' people neither accept unquestioningly, literal interpretations of Scripture nor particular dogma. Others consider the Church a religious museum for the uneducated, or the poor for whom religion is a safety net (Tacey, 2012). These Catholics reject the Church. In contrast, others have drifted away, seemingly abandoning belief and practices (O'Murchu, 2014). For these Catholics, the Church is irrelevant to their personal living (Schuttoffel, 2013). For them, religion is archaic and irrelevant (O'Murchu, 2014). Some of these people still engage with the Church culturally. They attended Christmas and Easter serives for example. Despite considering the Church irrelevant, other Catholics are reluctant to jettison it completely because of their previous close relationship. Nevertheless, their relationship with the Church and its teachings holds minimal relevance to their lives (O'Murchu, 2014).

Moreover, many Catholics who attend weekly Mass are challenged to relate Church beliefs to the complexities of their lives (D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 2008; Rymarz, 2017). They no longer accept official teaching concerning artificial contraception, divorce and remarriage, and homosexuality (Schuttoffel, 2013). The term 'cafeteria' Catholics has been generated to describe practising Church members who choose and reject Catholic teaching and practices on the basis of personal beliefs (Everett, 2012).

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[6] During his annual Bishop Forums in 2016 Bishop Patrick Dunn of Auckland spoke of his concern regarding the drift of New Zealand born Catholics away from parish engagement including Sunday worship. He noted that Catholic schools were popular as were programs for the preparation of children for Confirmation and Eucharist.

Another term used to describe a person's commitment to participation in parish life is 'practising' Catholic. This term describes weekly Sunday Mass attendance, by those who accept Catholic teachings (Casson, 2011). This group of Catholics includes those for whom belonging to the Catholic Church is an integral part of their lives (Richardson, 2014). Consequently, the word 'Catholic' lacks precision in describing those who call themselves Catholic.

2.2.4 THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The lack of precision in the term 'Catholic' has implications for Catholic education (McGrath, 2012). Catholic education relies on its institutions which employ large numbers of staff in order to ensure its values are honoured and its educational philosophy nurtured (Cook, 2007). Ironically, the term Catholic in contemporary New Zealand lacks clarity in meaning.

This lack of clarity manifests itself when employing applicants for positions in Catholic schools. Some applicants may have been baptised Catholic but have had little association with the Church since infancy. In contrast, others may be baptised and have attended Catholic school but since then have had no connection with the Church. Lastly, there are those who, while worshiping weekly, are selective regarding specific Catholic dogmas to which they subscribe. Yet all these diverse applicants identify themselves as Catholic and are enthusiastic teachers in Catholic school. The implication generated from this plurality is that different understandings of what it means to be Catholic influence the focus of Catholic education (Franchi, & Rymarz, 2017). Further, as fewer Catholics engage with the Church the number of prospective teachers available with the desired commitment to 'Catholic' identity diminishes (Cho, 2012). The challenges for Catholic school administrators are that some schools may well be Catholic in name but not in philosophy or practice (Ozar, 2012).

2.2.4.1 Acceptability and Tagged Positions

In an attempt to ensure that the Catholic school is identifiably Catholic particular policies believed to safeguard Catholicity were negotiated at the time of integration. A key policy is the authority for Catholic employers to '*tag*' teaching positions for those who might be responsible to uphold the Catholic Special Character of the school. In order to demonstrate their 'qualifications' for such positions, prospective teachers are required to offer evidence to employers that they are Catholic. The primary way of demonstrating this is to verify that they are baptised Roman Catholics. In addition, it is required that a priest confirms that they regularly attend Sunday Mass.   If these key criteria are demonstrated the candidate is able to apply for the '*tagged*' position (NZCEO, 2016, p. 29). As the number of Catholics who attend Sunday Mass declines, so does the number of acceptable applicants for '*tagged*' positions. Moreover, teachers may not meet specific criteria of acceptability or may be reluctant to align themselves with the Catholic Church as an institution (Rymarz, 2010).   Ironically, as individuals they choose to identify themselves as Catholic.

2.2.4.2 Relationship Between Families and the Catholic Church

The lack of precision in what defines Catholic identity also influences the quality of the relationship between families whose children attend the Catholic school, and participation in the Church community. With regard to who is able to enrol in Catholic schools, the *Integration Act* (1975) states that preference of enrolment at a State integrated school "shall be given only to those children whose parents have established a particular or general religious connection with the Special Character of the school" (Section 29 #1).   Proprietors of New Zealand Catholic schools have established criteria to indicate how this condition may be demonstrated. For the majority of students, preference of enrolment is given if they offer proof of being baptised as a Catholic (NZCBC, 2009b, 5.1).

Ironically, Catholic schools are popular (Casinader, 2006) with parents who send their children to them and who also choose not to attend Sunday Mass (Sharkey, 2015). They do so for a variety of reasons. Many families support

the ethos of their Catholic school, as well as maintaining tenuous association with the Church (Rymarz, 2010). Moreover, there is evidence that some parents have their children baptised as a strategy to gain access to what they consider an inexpensive private school education (Cross, 2008). For other families, choosing Catholic schooling for their children may be a nostalgic choice to reconnect with a Catholic culture. Alternatively, some parents want their children to experience high academic outcomes and Catholic schools have earned a reputation for the academic achievement of their students (Wilson[7], 2015). Lastly, families seek Catholic education to support them in bringing up their children in the Catholic faith. This latter category is a minority (Kennedy, Mulholland, & Dorman, 2011).

Clearly, parents have a variety of rationales supporting their choice of Catholic education for their children. Their motivations also influence how Catholic school authorities meet the expectations of maintaining and enhancing the 'Catholic' Special Character of schools.

2.3 EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHURCH OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The Church teaches that Catholic schools share in its role of mission (Stock, 2005). This was restated explicitly in The Declaration on Christian Education (Paul Vi, 1965. #33). Moreover, the Vatican's education bureaucracy, called the Congregation of Catholic Education, has amplified the teaching of Vatican II and issued a number of policy documents on the principles underpinning authentic Catholic education. These include:

- The Catholic School (SCCE, 1977)
- Catechesis in Our Time (John Paul II, 1979)
- Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (SCCE 1982)

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[7] *Metro* is an Auckland based magazine that publishes "league' tables each year in its July issue. It regularly praises the academic success of Catholic schools. (See Appendix F).

- The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (SCCE, 1988)
- The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (CCE, 1997)
- Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (CCE, 2014).
- Educating to Fraternal Humanism: Building a 'Civilization of Love' 50 Years After *Populorum Progressio* (CCE, 2017).

The Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law supports the principles articulated in these documents. According to Canon Law, Catholic schools exist because of two natural requirements of faith. These are the right and obligation of parents to give their children a Catholic education, and the right and obligation of the Church to support parents to fulfil this task (Grochotewshi, 2008, p. 151). All these documents emphasise that the purpose of the Catholic school is to integrate faith and culture in such a way that young people learn "how to relate the Gospel to all the strata of society" (Holohan, 2009, p. 7).

Church authorities believe that the Catholic school has a special responsibility to educate young people in developing an understanding of the Gospel as well as to assist them to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (NZCBC, 2014a). If a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is equated with attendance at Sunday Mass, then the supposed success of the Catholic school is limited (Gallagher, 2009, p. 34). Catholic education authorities consider that a Catholic school's Special Character, its framework for Catholic education, needs to be explicit rather than implicit (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009).

2.3.1 New Zealand Catholic Education Authorities

The policies of New Zealand Catholic education authorities regarding how the schools express their Special Character are informed by Vatican

documentation. This is formally incorporated in a document entitled The Declaration[8] (NZCEO, 2007). This is a statement from the proprietors of Catholic schools in New Zealand on the essential characteristics of authentic Catholic school education. It commits Catholic schools to:

- provide Catholic education
- strive for educational excellence
- contribute to the Church's mission and
- contribute to society.

To assist schools in addressing the expectations of The Declaration, a guidebook entitled *The Handbook for Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools* (NZCEO, 2016) is produced every three years. The document aims "to help Boards of Trustees focus on those aspects of a state-integrated school that differ from a standard non-integrated school" (p.1). These differences contribute to the rationale for the Special Character of the Catholic school.

In order to ensure the Special Character is honoured, and the expectations of *The Declaration* met, Catholic education authorities conduct audits in each school. The Catholic Special Character review documentation also provides guidance concerning the promotion of authentic Catholic education through the implementation of Special Character.

2.4 THE ROLE OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

Special Character is a term adopted by both Government and Church authorities regarding what is expected of Catholic schools.

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[8] For a full copy of *The Declaration* see (Appendix E)

2.4.1 THE DEFINITION OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

There is both a generic and particular legal definition of Special Character because *The Integration Act* (1975) addressed multiple faith-based schools each claiming Special Character.

2.4.1.1 Private Schools Conditional Integration Act (1975)

The generic definition of Special Character is incorporated in the *Integration Act.* The Act states: "education with a Special Character means education within the framework of a particular or general religious or philosophical belief, and associated with observances of traditions appropriate to that belief" (PSCIA, 1975, 2/1). All State integrated schools operate within this framework.

2.4.1.2 Integration Agreements

The more particular definition of Special Character is identified in each school's *Integration Agreement*. A school's *Integration Agreement* legally documents a partnership between the proprietor and the Government. The school's Special Character is further defined. For each Catholic school, the following wording is adopted:

> The school is a Roman Catholic school in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its religious instructions and observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop[9] of the diocese (NZCEO, 2016, p.12).

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[9] Although the Bishop is not the proprietor of all Catholic secondary schools he has the ultimate responsibility for Special Character. In this he is exercising the Church's teaching authority (NZCEO, 2016, p.13).

2.4.2 SPECIAL CHARACTER AS INTERPRETED BY NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC EDUCATION AUTHORITIES.

For New Zealand Catholic Education authorities, Special Character is also known as Catholic Special Character. "The Catholic Character is the framework within which the whole school curriculum is delivered; it is, in fact, integral to everything that takes place in the school, or on behalf of the school and its community" (NZCEO, 2016, p.13). The Church believes that the scope and influence of Special Character permeates all of school life in order to "provide a Catholic Faith environment that enables young people to develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills to become active and committed members of the Faith Community and to contribute positively to the world community" (NZCEO, 2016, p.15).

2.4.3 SPECIAL CHARACTER AS VIEWED BY OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The Government and Church are key stakeholders in Catholic schools. However, other stakeholders have contrasting understandings regarding the purpose of Special Character that are incongruent with those of the Government and Church.

2.4.3.1   Families of Those Who Attend Catholic Schools

Little research has been conducted into the reasons why New Zealand families choose Catholic schooling for their children. Anecdotal information suggests that the Special Character of the school is not the primary motivation for their choices (Casinader, 2006). In comparison, research concludes this is also the case for Australia (Kennedy et al., 2011).

2.4.3.2   Children and Young People Who Attend Catholic Schools

While Catholic education authorities, the government and school administrators might refer to Special Character as the difference between a Catholic school and other state schools this is not the experience of the young people attending school. In reality, "when asked to characterise any difference between their Catholic schooling and that provided by State

schools, they generally struggled, indicating uncertainty as to what actually made their school Catholic (beyond its Religious Education curriculum)" (Duthie-Jung, 2011, p.69).

2.4.3.3 Teacher Unions

Teacher unions accept Special Character as a way of determining the difference between schools. Although the PPTA[10] has sought a repeal of the *Integration Act* (1975) since 1984, it pursues amendments to the Education Act to "incorporate integrated schools in a manner that preserves their Special Character" (PPTA, 2009, p.7). For teacher unions, Special Character enables greater diversity within the State education system.   While valuing the diversity that results from Special Character, they do not publically express concern regarding its implementation.

2.4.4 AUDITING SPECIAL CHARACTER

The Government and the Church do have concerns regarding the implementation of Special Character. Both jurisdictions expect evidence that it is maintained through their respective auditing processes.

2.4.4.1 Government Auditing

The Government audits all New Zealand schools to ensure that they fulfil the requirement of the Education Act. The Education Review Office (ERO) conducts this audit. The purpose of the ERO review is to evaluate the education received by school students; its particular focus "…is on educational improvement" (ERO, 2003, p.4). The role of Special Character in a school is noted in review documentation. Reports often indicate that Special Character "permeates the school culture and/or is reflected in the learning

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[10] Post Primary Teachers Association – teachers' union

environment" (ERO, 2003, p.5). ERO's interest is to demonstrate how Special Character enables good educational outcomes for students.

2.4.4.2   Catholic Education Authorities Auditing

Catholic Education authorities are also concerned that Catholic schools demonstrate good educational outcomes for students (NZCEO, 2007). They are responsible to demonstrate how Special Character ensures that this education is authentically Catholic "with Christ at its centre" (CCE, 1997). Consequently, Catholic education authorities conduct regular Catholic Special Character Reviews. These reviews aim to explore how "…the school has appropriate systems in place to deliver the Catholic Special Character dimensions and foci, along with evidence of practice or implementation" (NZCEO, 2009, p.11).

Supplementary to this review schools are required by Catholic education authorities to conduct a self-review process. This "system of internal review to identify strengths and areas requiring development" (NZCEO, 2009, p.10) in the dimensions of Catholic Special Character over a three-year period.   In addition, schools are expected to complete annual Special Character compliance documentation determining "how well they are complying with their legal obligations in respect of the Catholic Special Character dimension of their schools" (NZCEO, 2009, p.16).   These legal obligations are determined in the *Integration Act*.

The Bishops and other congregational proprietors collaborate in the Catholic Special Character Review process in order to ensure consistency across all New Zealand Catholic schools. This collaborative arrangement is illustrated in Figure 2.2 (NZCEO, 2009, p.6).

Areas of responsibility for Catholic Special Character review and development

Diocesan Bishops acting in collaboration as the:

NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Define Catholic Special Character and have overall responsibility through Canon Law.

Can 804:
("The formation and education in the Catholic religion provided in any school is subject to the authority of the Church. It is for the Bishops' Conference to issue general norms concerning this field of activity and for the Diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it.")

INDIVIDUAL SHAREHOLDING PROPERTIES OF N.Z.C.E.O LTD.

Have legal responsibility for supervising the maintenance of Catholic Special Character (P.S.C.I. Act S.3)

MANDATED DIOCESAN EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Carry out external review. Report to School and Proprietors.

NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE
and
THE NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Have responsibilities for policies and monitoring, working with Proprietors.

N.Z.C.E.O.

Works with mandated Diocesan Reviewers, helping to establish national standards and co-ordinating quality assurance issues.

DIOCESAN PERSONNEL

Provide advice, support and guidance to schools.

SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Carry out self review and compliance to foster their own Catholic Special Character.

Figure 2.2: The Areas of Responsibility for Catholic Special Character Review and Development

2.5 INTEGRATION

The *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* [11] (1975) [*Integration Act*] provides the framework for partnership between the New Zealand

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[11] *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* 1975 was repealed, on 19 May 2017, by section 33 of the Education Act(1989) through the Amendment to the Education Act 2017 (2017, No 20). All rights, responsibilities and conditions of Integration are maintained as are the definitions of terms such as Special Character. See Appendix E

Government and the proprietors of private schools. If a private school chooses to integrate, it is officially known as a State integrated school. All Catholic schools are State integrated schools. Consequently, the Government becomes financially responsible for the operation of Catholic schools under the Act. State integrated schools are schools with a Special Character. The 'Catholic' Special Character of a Catholic school enables it to provide an authentic Catholic education (NZCEO, 2007).

2.5.1 An Historical Overview

Initially, in the 19th century, the Government financially supported all New Zealand schools. In 1877 the Government passed the Education Act, which guaranteed that all primary education was to be 'free and secular'. This legislation was similar to legislation passed in Great Britain and the Australian colonies. 'Secular' meant that schools wishing to retain a religious culture were ineligible to receive Government assistance. In order to be permitted to offer education, private schools were obliged to register but were denied State aid. By adopting this policy, the Catholic bishops established a parallel Catholic school system (Lynch, 2012).

After the Second World War, the number of Catholic schools in New Zealand rapidly increased because of the demands of parents and bishops for schools that would transmit faith as well as successfully rival other schools in State mandated exams (Collins, 2005). Even before this increase in demand, the Catholic education system was experiencing financial difficulties. From 1937, Catholic people and their bishops regularly requested the Government fund at least in part, Catholic schools.

However, any policy for the New Zealand Government to support private schools has been controversial. Indeed, teacher unions have always opposed State aid to private schools because they argued such a policy would create a dual education system. In order to respond to this argument Catholic negotiators adopted the term 'Special Character' to explain the uniqueness of

their schools. Teacher negotiators accepted the term because it was "vague enough not to offend and wide enough to cover the essentials" (Sweetman, 2002, p.100).   This was one of the influences that enabled the construction of a final draft of the Bill[12]. All teacher union branches were consulted regarding the draft. "The majority of their members supported integration in principle" (Sweetman, 2002, p.119).

Integration became law with the passing of the 1975 *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act*.   The Act enabled private schools to become integrated with the State system.   State integrated schools receive full operational funding, while the proprietor supplies and maintains the land and buildings (Pidd, 2001).   Integration allows Catholic schools to teach and practise Catholic faith traditions, while receiving financial support. Without this Government support assured by the *Integration Act* "the Catholic Education system would have collapsed" (Lynch, 2012, #14).   Consequently, the New Zealand Catholic education system is a "widespread and effective ministry in the Church" (Williams, 2004, p. 83).

2.5.2 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND THE CROWN

A New Zealand Catholic schooling system is possible because of the relationship of the Church with the Government.   When referencing this relationship, the Government adopts the term 'Crown' because like all other state schools the New Zealand Catholic School is a single Crown or Government entity.

2.5.2.1   The School as a Single Crown Entity

A Crown entity is an institute that forms part of New Zealand's State sector. The term 'Crown' refers to the Government. The Government has the

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[12] A legislative document that is being prepared to be passed into law is called a Bill until it passes through parliament and becomes law. Then it is referred to as an Act of Parliament.

controlling interest in a Crown entity. The Crown entity has an independent governance structure that is accountable to a Government minister. Boards of Trustees of New Zealand State schools, including State integrated schools, govern their schools under the direction of the Minister of Education. The families of the students attending a particular school elect Boards of Trustees. Nevertheless, BOTs may co-opt up to four members to reflect the local community. The proprietor of a State integrated school may appoint these four board members in order to ensure the Special Character is honoured (NZCEO, 2016).

2.5.2.2 Proprietors Appointees

All BOT members are liable for the preservation of the Special Character of the school. However, the proprietors' appointees who are full members of the BOT with all the rights and responsibilities of other BOT members have particular accountabilities regarding Special Character. These are detailed in the documentation that each appointee is requested to sign before assuming their role as trustee (NZCEO, 2016, p.10). Included is the requirement to ensure that at least one proprietor's appointee is on appointment committees including the committee that appoints the principal.

2.5.2.3 Issues in Principal Appointment

The Board of Trustees is responsible for appointing principals. According to the Trustees association, "…the most important task a board will undertake is to select and appoint a new principal" (NZSTA, 2015). Catholic education authorities concur. They are dependent on the proprietor's appointees ensuring that prospective principals meet the criteria of acceptability. This requires the principal to be "a fully committed Catholic, committed to Catholic religious practices, and to leadership of Catholic education" (NZCEO, 2016, p.36). This condition is the only influence that the Church has in the appointment of the principal. The principal requires the religious and pastoral capacities to honour their Special Character responsibilities.

2.6   THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL

The responsibilities of the Catholic school principal are twofold. First, they are responsible to the Government for "enhancing the learning and teaching" in their schools (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2015). Second, they are responsible to the Church for maintaining their schools' Catholic identity (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009).

2.6.1 RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CHURCH

Catholic school principals are responsible to the Church to maintain Catholic identity by acting as "guardians and custodians of the Special Character of the school" (O'Donnell, 2001, p.67).   Special Character is the means by which a Catholic school provides a Catholic education.   Catholic education offers a professional education and enables "a genuine and ongoing encounter with Christ" (NZCBC, 2014a, #13).   This expectation presumes the principal of the school, has an understanding of how an encounter with Christ is fostered.   To appreciate this crucial aspect of Catholic education suggests that applicants to the position of principal have been shaped by the values and beliefs of Catholicism (Cirello, 1993). Yet it cannot be assumed that principals hold an adult understanding of faith (Cook & Darrow, 2008).   Principals like other Catholics hold a variety of understandings regarding the Catholic faith (ref section 2.2.3).   Previously this diversity of understanding of faith was not apparent because the majority of Catholic School principals were religious who had a structured faith formation in preparation for religious life.   Currently the principals of all New Zealand Catholic secondary schools are lay.

2.6.1.1   The Lay Principal

As early as 1963, the emerging role of lay teachers in Catholic schools was noted (Fogarty, 1963) but religious dominated, especially in leadership roles. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) challenged religious to renewal. This renewal included a reassessment of priorities by religious congregations. Accompanied by a significant rate of membership departure this reassessment meant fewer religious were available to work in schools.   As a

result, the number of lay teachers, including principals greatly, increased. Currently there are few religious in New Zealand schools and none hold the role of principal.

The Church acknowledges the importance of the lay teacher within Catholic schools but notes that "all too frequently, lay Catholics have not had a religious formation that is equal to their general, cultural and especially professional formation" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982 #60). Church hierarchy also considers that lay teachers should "always be able to count on the support and aid of the entire Church" (#71). Yet sometimes expectations regarding Catholic education presume that the lay principal is pseudo-religious, leading to the question "how holy must a principal be?" (Drahmann & Stenger, 1989, p.12).

A layperson taking on the principalship of a school cannot be expected to have the same religious formation as those who have been prepared for religious life. This creates difficulties for those appointing principals who find it hard to attract candidates "formed in faith and willing to bear witness" (Brock & Chatlain, 2008; Fincham, 2010, p. 74). As a consequence, an apparent disconnection between a principal's Special Character responsibilities and other leadership tasks can develop (Fincham, 2010; Schuttoffel, 1999).

2.6.1.2   Formation for the Ministry of Principal

If the Special Character tasks of a principal and other leadership tasks are to be connected principals need to be well formed in Catholic identity and practice.   Although for potential principals a certain aspect of informal socialization occurs in the Catholic school setting (Stoffels, 1993) this is not enough. There is a need for ongoing specialized formation (Cook & Durrow, 2008; Downey, 2006) that extends beyond the initial induction phase of principalship (Fontaine, 2001) and includes aspects of spiritual formation (Bracken, 2004; Cannon, 2005). This need for spiritual formation expressed by both observers and researchers is also a concern of principals themselves (Davison, 2006; Wallace, 2000). There is a danger that to compensate for this

lack of formation a solution is created where spiritual leadership is split from other aspects of leadership. Spiritual leadership needs to be incorporated throughout all aspects of leadership formation (Nuzzi, 2007).

The incorporation of all aspects of principal formation is challenging. New Zealand is a small country with a relatively small population of Catholics. There is no Catholic College of Education and the provision of theological education is limited. Each diocese offers courses of some kind in Religious Education and Special Character. Along with formal academic courses, these contribute to Certification in Religious Education and Special Character Leadership. This system of Certification was introduced because the Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference (NZCBC) considered "the Catholic character of all schools was strongly influenced by the level of faith formation and commitment of staff particularly the principal" (2005). Levels of Certification are gained by teaching/leadership experience and the number of hours of formation attended over any number of years (The New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2014b). The later does not necessarily require reflection or review, but only attendance. This perceived casual approach to Certification has implications for the credibility and rigor of the process. Furthermore, although there is an aspiration on behalf of the Church for Certification to be considered in the appointment of principals it cannot be enforced as a mandatory requirement.

In New Zealand, the issue of mandatory principal formation is not limited to the Catholic sector. There is no expectation that a person applying for a principal's position has undertaken any professional learning in preparation since "the learning for this is only developed while in the role, often through experiences, errors and by chance. What is known is that the impact of the principal in the school is significant" (Graham, 2009, p. 145).

2.6.2 Responsibilities to the Government

The responsibilities of the principal to the Government are expressed through the Professional Standards for Secondary Principals (New Zealand Government, 1998/2017). These standards set down the framework for the implementation of the Government's educational aspirations. How they are realised informs a principal's annual appraisal. These standards make no mention of Special Character despite the conditions of integration that the Special Character is maintained. This is unsurprising because the Government's key interest concerns how learning and teaching are enhanced, not how young people encounter Christ.

2.6.3 Combining Responsibilities

The Church holds the principal responsible for a school's Special Character in order that young people are able to encounter Christ (NZCBC, 2014a). However, the Church also expects that a Catholic school is a place where student learning is supported and enhanced. In this respect, the Church and Government agree regarding the responsibility of the principal, but the Church expects more of the principal. As a consequence, when compared to other State school principals, the principal of a Catholic school holds additional areas of responsibility. These additional responsibilities are identified within the *Integration Act* (1975) and concern the Special Character of the school.

2.7 The Research Problem Defined

The problem underpinning this study concerns how Catholic education authorities ensure the preservation of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools.

2.7.1 THE RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore the infrastructures Catholic education authorities utilize to guarantee the Special Character of New Zealand Catholic schools. Given the important role that the principal plays in the Special Character of the Catholic school the intention of this study is to explore how the principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools ensure the maintenance and enhancement of Special Character in their schools.

2.7.2 THE MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The major research question underpinning this study is: How do the principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools understand and implement Special Character in their schools?

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this chapter is to generate a review of the literature concerning the maintenance and enhancement of Special Character in Catholic schools. As explained in the previous chapter, the research problem concerns the need for New Zealand Catholic educational authorities to provide structures to support principals in maintaining and enhancing the Special Character of its schools. The Special Character of New Zealand Catholic schools is important because it demonstrates to the Government that Catholic schools have a notable difference in character from other State schools. This difference justifies the Government provision of operational funding. Government operational funding of Catholic schools is important to Church authorities because without it they do not have the financial resources to support Catholic schools. Government operational funding enables New Zealand Catholic educational authorities to administer an educational system which is Catholic in purpose and nature without charging operational fees. How Catholic schools demonstrate a Catholic purpose and nature is reflected in a school's Special Character. Maintaining and enhancing the Special Character of the school is therefore both a legal and ecclesial requirement of a New Zealand Catholic school principal. Responsibility for any aspect of school leadership requires a principal's understanding of these responsibilities and their implications for the teaching and learning of the school, and for a school's culture, values and beliefs. For a Catholic school principal, this means understanding Special Character, its role in the school, and how it is maintained and enhanced.

Until recently, principals of Catholic schools were largely drawn from teaching members of religious congregations or past members of religious congregations. These principals were traditionally formed in Special Character through their preparation for religious life. Increasingly appointments are made of principals who have neither been formed for

religious life nor had formation in Special Character. Little, if any, research has been carried out in New Zealand about the formation in Special Character needs and accessibility for Catholic School principals. Overseas research suggests that there is a need for a deliberate and targeted system of ongoing formation for principals so that they can maintain and enhance the Special Character of the schools they lead (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009; Cook & Darrow, 2008). Therefore, the purpose of this research is to analyse the understanding and implementation of Special Character by the principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools.

3.1.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review was guided by three assumptions. First, Special Character is important to the identity of a Catholic school. Second, Special Character brings particular responsibilities to the role of principal of a Catholic school. Third, to carry out their leadership responsibilities Catholic school principals need to understand Special Character.

The literature review begins by exploring **Special Character in Catholic schools** within the New Zealand Catholic education system and the Church's relationship with the New Zealand Government. *The New Zealand Education Act* (1877) created an education system that supported schools that were free and secular. Since Catholic schools did not meet this criterion a parallel Catholic education system was established. This division was reconciled with the *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* (1975). As part of the condition of integration a school must demonstrate its Special Character (Sweetman, 2002). Special Character is supposedly the essence of a Catholic school, that which distinguishes it from other schools (CCE, 1997). Consequently, what constitutes Special Character invites exploration. In order to undertake this exploration, it is appropriate to make explicit the purpose of Catholic education and what is understood by the special nature of Catholic schools.

The special nature of Catholic schools influences how principals in Catholic schools perceive their role (Coughlan, 2010). Indeed, this perception influences how principals in Catholic schools negotiate and assume their roles and responsibilities (McLaughlin, 1998). **The role of the principal** is therefore explored through the literature.

Principals in New Zealand Catholic schools are Government employees so are required to meet the expectation of both the Church and the Government. The expectations of the Government are revealed in Government educational policies. Government educational policies are influenced by the political climate of a country. Appreciation of the role of the New Zealand principal therefore requires some review of the New Zealand political situation. Over and above implementing Government policies, New Zealand Catholic school principals are required to meet Church expectations. These expectations distinguish the role of Catholic School principal from other State school principals. This point of difference is explored through the literature. As part of this difference the role of the school as a faith community is examined. As a faith community, the Catholic school has a religious identity within a secular education system. The literature is reviewed to determine the influences this religious identity has on the principal role.

The role of the principal is significant and requires preparation (Graham, 2009). **Principal formation** includes the role of professional learning in the preparation and support of principals. This is explored through the literature including the need for specialised preparation of Catholic school principals (T.Cook, 2008; Morten & Lawler, 2016). The literature review explores what Catholic schools look for when appointing a principal and issues of principal supply. One question raised in the literature concerns the potential 'pool' from which future principals would emerge. This leads to an exploration through the literature of what academics, researchers and principals consider are the issues of ongoing supportive professional learning for Catholic school leadership.

These themes, and the sub-themes that provide a framework for exploring them, are influenced by the context of the New Zealand Catholic education system. The New Zealand Catholic education system is integrated into the State system of education with legal provision for maintaining a school's Special Character. The Special Character of a Catholic school is Catholic Special Character.

3.1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of *How New Zealand Catholic Secondary Principals understand and implement Special Character in their schools* evolved during the process of reviewing the literature in light of the research problem (Figure 3.1.1).

A synthesis of the literature generated three key themes:

1. Special Character
2. The role of principal
3. Principal formation.

These themes form the foundation of the conceptual framework as depicted by the three distinct circles. The first theme **Special Character** examines *the purpose of Special Character*, and why it is an important aspect of a school's identity. The theme also explores *the nature of Special Character* and how this nature influences the life of the school.

The second theme **the role of principal** includes issues of *the political climate* and its influence on Government policy and therefore the responsibilities of the principal. A Catholic school principal's *particular responsibilities* in their role as leader of a Catholic school are also investigated within this theme which additionally critiques how these particular responsibilities influence the religious identity of the school.

The third theme **principal formation** critiques *formation in Special Character.* This includes how principals implement infrastructures of Special Character in their school.

Although the issues explored in this study concern Catholic education, each theme may be examined from various perspectives. The role of a principal may be explored through the expectations of the school stakeholders including the parent community and the Government separately from any proprietor's expectations. Further, the importance of principal formation is not limited to Special Character professional learning. Therefore, the two large circles link the themes by the two particular contexts of New Zealand and the mission of the Catholic Church. These contexts focus the study in the New Zealand Catholic education system.
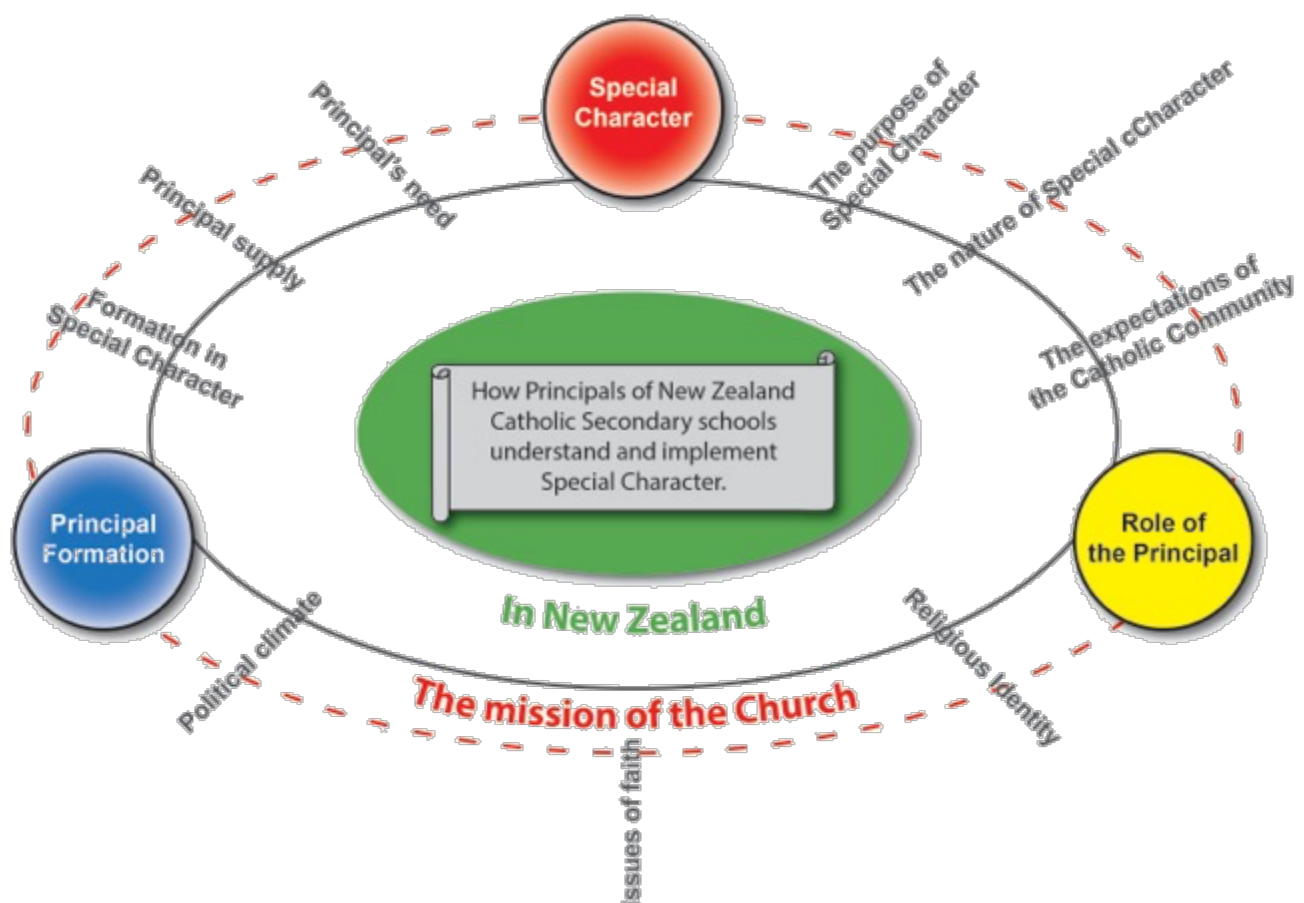
Figure 3.1: The Conceptual Framework of the Literature Review

3.2 SPECIAL CHARACTER

The term Special Character/'Catholic' Special Character is important to the identity of a Catholic school. The identity of a Catholic school can be seen in the way the ideals of Catholicism are expressed in the conduct of the principal and teachers (Nuzzi, 2007). The principal and teachers of a Catholic school are partners in achieving the aims of Catholic education. These aims identify the Catholic school as part of the Church's missionary endeavour. The way a Catholic school institutionalises the ideal of Catholicism and meets its Catholic education aims constitutes its Special Character (Buchanan & Rymarz, 2008).

Special Character in the New Zealand Catholic education system is also a legal term. The *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* (PSCIA, 1975) requires a State integrated school to demonstrate its Special Character. This demonstration is required for a private school to claim Government operational funding (PSCIA, 1975). Government funding of New Zealand Catholic schools allows them to be financially viable without the school's charging extra operational fees. The lack of operational fees enables Catholic schools in New Zealand to include students from across socio-economic groups. To be inclusive of the underprivileged is also important to the identity of the Catholic school.

The identity of a Catholic school is important to both the Church and the Government. The Church and the Government assess the authenticity of a school's Catholic identity through Special Character. Therefore, if they are to meet the expectations of the Church and Government to be a Catholic school the principal and staff need to understand Special Character.

3.2.1 THE PURPOSE OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

The purpose of a New Zealand State integrated school's Special Character is to provide evidence that the school is offering a unique, value added dimension not provided by other State schools (Smith, 2013). The Government requires this evidence to ensure that a school's conditions of

integration are met (PSCIA, 1975). The Catholic Church requires this evidence to ensure that the school is a place of "real and specific pastoral ministry" (CCE, 1997, #11), meeting the aims of Catholic education.

Special Character enables a New Zealand Catholic school to meet the aims of Catholic education by providing a school's legal basis for reflecting Catholic teachings and practices. Special Character is the legal basis for Catholic schools to have prayer, to hold compulsory Religious Education classes and to celebrate the sacraments. Without the Special Character protection of the *Integration Act* (1975) prayer and/or celebration of Mass for example, would be illegal because of the constraints of the *Education Act* (1989). The *Education Act* determines that primary education is secular and free of religious influences and that secondary schools must ensure that any religious practices such as assembly prayer comply with the Bill of Rights. To comply with the Bill of Rights religious practices in secondary schools must be voluntary and non-discriminatory (Human Rights Commission, 2009). All New Zealand State schools must conform to these constraints unless they have an *Integration Agreement* as provided by the *Integration Act* (1975). Accommodations for Special Character in an *Integration Agreement* provides a legal safeguard for religious practices.

Special Character accommodations in the *Integration Act* (1975) also influence the relationships between families whose children attend a Catholic school and the Special Character of the school. The Special Character of the school is acknowledged at the time of enrolment. At enrolment parents sign a form confirming their understanding that Special Character influences the education children will receive, the religious practices that the children will encounter and the general Catholic influences operating within the school. Through this acknowledgment families accept that the school is part of the Catholic Church.

As part of the Church the Catholic school is a means of meeting the needs of parents who are searching for support in educating their children in faith (O'Donnell, 2001). Educating in faith includes nurturing children in the

doctrines, values and beliefs of the Catholic Church (D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 2008). It is important therefore, for the Church to ensure that education in the faith tradition is part of the life of the Catholic school. Special Character is a way of demonstrating that this aspect of education is occurring in a school.

The Special Character of a Catholic school is the framework that shapes relationships so that they reflect the teachings and life of Jesus Christ (NZCBC, 2014a; O'Donnell, 2001). This framework provides a unifying force within the school by enabling relationships that are based on mutual understandings of the purpose of the school and the school's relationship with local society (Education Review Office, 2003). Mutual understanding of the purpose of the Catholic school is enhanced by stakeholders' appreciation that a Catholic school offers a set of distinct values. These values are perceived to positively affect student behaviour and create a strong sense of community (Jeynes, 2017). Mutual understanding of the purpose of a school helps shape the schools culture.

The culture of a Catholic school is further shaped and sustained by Special Character influencing learning, relationships, and school identity. Special Character influences relationships by acknowledging in word and policy the individual dignity of each person so that they can develop as human persons. Nurturing the development of the human person enables each person to exhibit a practical concern for the needs of others within the school and wider society (O'Donnell, 2001). Concern for the needs of others is demonstrated in the creation of Catholic schools that are inclusive and have a supportive school community that gives witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 2008). A witnessing community's Special Character is not just centred on students, but has a sense of the entire school joining with the wider Catholic community on the life journey with God. This journey with God requires a community where the faith dimension of people's lives is encouraged and supported. By encouraging and supporting the faith dimension of people's lives, schools are promoting both a counter-cultural concept of the human person and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Specia, 2016a). These concepts are indicative of the Special Character of

the school and the rationale for the school's role in the pastoral ministry of the Church (CCE, 1997; NZCBC, 2014a).

The contribution of Catholic schools to the pastoral ministry of the Church community has changed since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Previously the education of the Catholic child took a three-fold approach. The family, the Catholic school, and the parish all contributed to the education-in-faith of the child and young person (Pius XI, 1929). However, this three-fold approach no longer dominates in contemporary New Zealand. Many families consider that by sending their children to a Catholic school they have delegated the responsibility of faith-education and no further contribution is required (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). This abdication of responsibility includes taking their children to Sunday Mass. Less than one quarter of New Zealand Catholics attends weekly worship (Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2011). It appears therefore, that the link between the family and the parish has weakened (Sharkey, 2015). Indeed, the only experience of the Catholic Church for many families and children is through the Catholic school. This replacement of traditional parish relationships with the Catholic school, called "the new church of choice" (Coughlan, 2010, p7), highlights the need for the Church to ensure that the Catholic school is meeting the aims of Catholic education (CCE, 2014). The challenge to the Catholic school as Church is that beliefs of Catholicism are presented in ways that engage students and their parents, and meet their spiritual needs (Hack, 2008). In order to present Catholicism in relevant ways a Catholic school community needs to have a strong sense of Catholic identity and to understand the aims of Catholic education. The replacement of traditional parish relationships with the Catholic school highlights the need for the Church to ensure the Catholic school is meeting the aims of Catholic education. Its Special Character in part, demonstrates how the aims of Catholic education are implemented.

A further aim of Catholic education is to make the education in a Catholic school Christ-centred (Flynn & Mok, 2000). Special Character enables the education in a Catholic school to be Christ-centred by providing the scaffolding for the delivery of the entire New Zealand curriculum. This

scaffolding helps students assimilate their faith with contemporary culture beyond the school community (Sultman & Brown, 2016), weaving together the religious and educational purposes of the Catholic school. Weaving together the religious and educational purposes of the Catholic school forms a cohesive whole (Wanden, 2010), and an authentic Catholic education. Without this cohesion, an alternative model of Catholic education would arise. This alternative model would be dualistic in nature and separate the religious dimension of a Catholic school from the educational dimension (Grace, 2002a). Since the beginning of Catholic schools in New Zealand the aim of Church authorities has been a cohesive model of the two purposes (Wanden, 2010). The right of a Catholic school to amalgamate these purposes was influential in the negotiations around the *Integration Act* (1975) with Church participants insisting that schools be allowed to retain their Special Character (Sweetman, 2002). Therefore, both Church and Government need evidence of Special Character in a Catholic school.

There is some concern that schools consider that evidence of Special Character is found in providing Religious Education classes and Catholic practices such as Mass (Putney, 2005). Religious Education and Catholic practices are important aspects of a Catholic school, but Special Character is also concerned with the implementation of the broader aims of Catholic education. Catholic education aims to provide a Catholic faith environment that enables young people to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to become active members of the Church community and to contribute positively to the world community (NZCBC, 2014a; NZCPCIS, 2010; Sikimeti, 2008).

The Government is not concerned with Catholic young people becoming active members of the Catholic Church but does require a Catholic school to demonstrate its Special Character and therefore its distinctive Catholic nature. This demonstration of Special Character is a legal imperative. The *Integration Act* (1975) determines that the Special Character cannot be jeopardized and has to be maintained and preserved. Further, the *Integration Act* requires Special Character to be reflected in the school's teaching and operations. By the provision of education with a Special Character, a Catholic school meets

its proprietor's expectations that the Catholicity of the school animates the whole school programme (NZCEO, 2016) as well as addressing its legal responsibilities as a State integrated school.

3.2.2 THE NATURE OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

The Government recognized the contribution of Church sponsored schools to local communities when it passed the *Integration Act* (1975). This Act is the legislative agenda that allows private schools to become part of the Government education system. It contains legal safeguards to preserve a State integrated school's Special Character. All Catholic schools are integrated. They are responsible for their Special Character and the Government is responsible for funding their operational costs (ERO, 2003). While providing the funding required to keep Catholic schools open integration has also resulted in more scrutiny of the Special Character of schools (Lynch, 2002).

This scrutiny includes the authority of the Minister of Education to cancel an *Integration Agreement* if proprietors have not met their obligations to maintain a school's Special Character. How a school meets its Special Character obligations is audited through The Education Review Office [ERO]. To carry out this audit, evidence is gathered of Special Character's permeation of the learning environment and its contribution to a caring, inclusive, and supportive school culture. The supportive culture is seen to unify schools and underpin their pastoral care (ERO, 2003).

However, some debate exists about the effectiveness of such compliance assurance. ERO reports do not seem to demonstrate the tension experienced in some schools regarding the responsibility of supporting and enhancing Special Character. The responsibility for the Special Character of the Catholic school is a commitment of all staff members Catholic or not. This responsibility is spelled out in the statement given to all applicants for positions in Catholic schools (NZCPCIS, 2010). Despite the implied

acceptance of this responsibility when accepting a teaching position in a Catholic school there is evidence that some teachers consider Special Character maintenance burdensome.

Rather than supporting Special Character these staff members see their responsibility as solely to provide a safe, positive and successful teaching and learning environment. Over and above the teaching and learning environments such staff members consider that the Director of Religious Studies [DRS] (van der Nest, 2015) or the principal has the responsibility to create the distinctive Special Character of the school. These staff members may consider that Special Character expectations, such as provision on the timetable for the teaching of Religious Education, inhibit the school's focus on educational excellence and achievement (Ormerod, 2016; Wanden & Birch, 2007). That even Catholic staff may struggle with understanding and implementing Special Character is demonstrated by a lack of willingness amongst staff of taking the role of leading prayer. Many staff members are more comfortable with sharing a secular reflection (Neidhart & Lam, 2016).

It is important that all staff of a Catholic school understand how Special Character helps build Catholic identity by achieving a balance between claiming Catholic marks of identity from the past, and acknowledging the complex nature of contemporary society and Church (Tuite, 2007). Part of the nature of contemporary society is that the focus of school communities is academic achievement. Academic achievement becomes part of a school's marketing policy when success of the school is indicated by league table placement. The staff of a Catholic school need to appreciate that academic success is achieved without compromising key Catholic values such as working towards the common good (Bryk, Lee & Holland, 1993; van der Nest, 2015). For the school community to live out Catholic values the staff need to know what these values are. Some members of staff require formation so that they can understand the nature of Special Character and the consequences of a school's operation from a key set of Catholic values (TCI, 2015; van de Nest & Buchanan, 2014). This formation is most successful

when it occurs in a planned way (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016; Sharkey, 2015; Tuite, 2007).

Despite the perceived tension between an education focus and Special Character, one of the key areas creating the distinctive Catholic character of a school is "the search for excellence and education for all" (T. Cook, 2008). That many Catholic schools deliver high educational standards, suggests that the cultural ethos of Catholic schools helps them to become successful schools (Morris, 2005; Swallow, 2017; Wilson, 2010). Regardless of this conclusion, and the fact that the term 'Special Character' is used widely in school documentation, ambiguity exists in many people's minds regarding the meaning of the term (O'Donnell, 2001).

An emphasis on measuring Special Character through Catholic practices adds to this ambiguity. Catholic practices alone do not create a Catholic school (Putney, 2005). To prevent Catholic schools from becoming institutes with 'religious memory' (Wallace, 2000) Special Character is required to form and inform the essence of the entire school community. Defining exactly what Special Character is has proved elusive to Catholic educators for many years. It is difficult for even those immersed in Catholic education to explain how Special Catholic Character ensures that Catholic values and religious sentiments influence the curriculum of a Catholic school (Ryan, 1997).

3.2.3 A RESEARCH QUESTION

The term Special Character/'Catholic' Special Character is important to the identity of a Catholic school. The principal and teachers of a Catholic school are partners in achieving the aims of Catholic education. The way in which a Catholic school institutionalises the ideal of Catholicism and meets its Catholic education aims constitutes its Special Character (Buchanan & Rymarz, 2008).

There is a variety of stakeholders concerned with maintaining the Special Character of a New Zealand Catholic school:

First, Catholic Church authorities who provide school infrastructure.

Second, the New Zealand Government which provides operational funding.

Third, families who choose to send their children to a Catholic school.

Fourth, the teachers, including the principal, who are responsible for implementing policies that enhance and support Special Character in the school.

The perception of Special Character by each of these stakeholder groups may differ. Some families do not consider the nature and purpose of Special Character the primary reason for choosing a Catholic school (Kennedy, Mullholland, & Dorman, 2011). However, through official documentation Church authorities express their expectations of the nature and purpose of Special Character. Church authorities expect Special Character to be the essence of the school that safeguards Catholic identity and purpose (SCCE, 1977; NZCPCIS, 2010). The Government expresses its expectations regarding Special Character through the *Integration Act* (1975) in order to ensure that State integrated schools offer to the community a point of difference that cannot be found in non-integrated schools. Despite the critical nature of the term Special Character, there are indications of a lack of clarity in the interpretation of the term in the *Integration Act* (1975). As a consequence, there is support for reforming the Act to include a specific definition of the term and its meaning (The Education Forum, 2003).

Regardless of the legal obligations to 'preserve and enhance' the Special Character of their school, anecdotal evidence suggests that principal perceptions of Special Character may differ from those held by Government or Church authorities. This lack of clarity is the rationale for the first research question:

What do principals understand by the term Special Character?

3.3 PRINCIPAL FORMATION

The recruitment of a school principal in New Zealand is the responsibility of the governing body - the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees may seek advice from support agencies and the Ministry of Education but are not obligated to do so. BOT members alone have the overall responsibility to choose the best person for the position.

3.3.1 FORMATION IN SPECIAL CHARACTER

By law, the person a Catholic school BOT chooses as principal must be Catholic. The *Integration Act* (1975) also obliges the principal of a Catholic school to enhance, maintain, and support the Special Character of the school. This requires the principal to exhibit the qualities of religious leadership. Religious leadership presumes knowledge of Catholicism. It cannot be presumed that candidates for principal positions have the knowledge of Catholicism to build Catholic community and Special Character (Boyle, Haller & Hunt, 2016). A lack of knowledge of Catholicism is a result of a lack of formation. In New Zealand being a teacher in a Catholic school before becoming principal does not mean that a candidate has received religious leadership formation. Part of the reason for this shortage of formation is that the New Zealand Catholic Education system has no pre-service training institute for teachers. Loreto Hall Teachers' College was established in 1950 in order to meet the Government requirement for all primary school teachers to complete the Preparatory Certificate for Elementary Schools but closed in 1984 (Gimber, nd). Formation in Special Character for pre-service teachers is now the responsibility of local dioceses that have established relationships with providers of pre-service teacher training. This relationship means that dioceses are able to offer elective, non-credited courses in Special Character to pre-service trainees using the providers' facilities and advertising networks (NZCBC, 2014b).

There is a nationally agreed framework for the content of these elective courses on Special Character but completion of them is not a requirement for

a position in a Catholic school even if the position is '*tagged*'. A *tagged* position is reserved for Catholics in order to create a 'critical mass' of teachers to promote Special Character (Sullins, 2004).   The proportion of *tagged* teachers in a school was determined at the time of integration and is normally 40% of the teaching staff plus the principal and DRS (NZCEO, 2016).

All *tagged* teachers have particular responsibilities to support the special Catholic character of the school. The principal however has a particular leadership role. To carry out this aspect of their leadership the principal needs to understand what Catholic education is. Catholic education is more than a State education with Catholic bits attached. Principals need professional learning in identifying the features of Catholic education so that their religious leadership is an integral exercise of leadership rather than an overlay (Morten & Lawler, 2016; SCCE, 1982; Sullivan, 2001).

Religious leadership is required of a Catholic school principal because the Catholic Church holds a particular view of the human person. A human person has innate dignity from being made "in the image and likeness of God" (CCC[13], #225) which means that all persons deserve caring and respect simply because they are human beings. Recognising this view of the human person, commonly referred to as a Catholic anthropology of life (Groome, 1998) influences the way a Catholic principal interacts with other members of the school community, and the way they manage staff and discipline students (Starratt, 2011). Upholding the dignity of the human person creates a school environment tangibly different from other State schools.

Principals are also required to be religious leaders because a teacher in a Catholic school takes on the position of catechist. A catechist helps form faith both through both witness and instruction. The chief catechist in the school is the principal who needs specialised training and a willingness to share their

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[13] It is protocol to refer to a statement from the Catechism of the Catholic Church by the abbreviation CCC rather than the attributed author Liberia Editrice Vaticana.

faith (Morten & Lawler, 2016; USCCB, 2005). A willingness to share faith is an aspect of a principal's religious leadership which Church agencies consider important to the Catholic identity of a school (Davison, 2006). To support Catholic identity. principals need to understand the spiritual heritage of the Church and other aspects of Catholicism. By itself, teaching in a Catholic school does not provide the level of background in Catholicism that principals need even as experienced Catholic educators. Experienced Catholic educators may appreciate the value of formation in Catholic education only when they enter a theological or spiritual formation program (Grisez & Shaw, 2003). Spiritual formation is an ongoing task for all ministers of the Church, lay and religious alike. Regular spiritual nourishment is found in daily prayer, spiritual practices such as spiritual direction and sacramental experiences (USCCB, 2005). Part of the formation in Catholic Education which principals may require is guidance and support in how to nourish their own spiritual lives (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016).

Nourishment of a principal's spiritual life helps them to acquire and renew their spiritual capital. Spiritual capital is a "resource of faith and values derived from a vocational commitment" (Grace, 2010, p.25) to the Catholic tradition that enables principals to act professionally and as witnesses to the Gospel. A Catholic school principal's task to witness to the Gospel differentiates them from other State school principals because a Catholic school principal is required to be more than the professional leader of a learning community (Grace 2010). This difference requires specific formation and support.

In order to address the religious and theological formation needs of the Catholic school principal, Catholic education authorities may offer pre-formation programs for aspiring principals. These programs address the spiritual and ecclesial dimensions of a Catholic school principal and have developed as the number of lay principals of Catholic schools has risen (McDonald, 2005). Such programs include aspects of religious leadership such as faith development, exploration of community, Church expectations, and Catholic tradition (Cirelllo, 1993; Cook & Durrow, 2008). Aspects of

programs reflect the specialised knowledge required for Catholic leadership, identified by experienced principals (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009). A program for aspiring Catholic principals existed in New Zealand. A private company administered this program and did not publish the program content because it was commercially sensitive. This lack of transparency makes it difficult to ascertain the degree to which it prepared principals for leadership of a Catholic school within the New Zealand context.

The success of pre-role preparation opportunities is debatable (Boyle et al., 2016) as many principals consider their preparation for Catholic leadership, especially the religious dimension aspects, as being inadequate (Graham, 2006). Religious dimensions of leadership are not necessarily part of a Catholic institutes formation programs; because few offer exclusively Catholic preparation because this would narrow their client base (Wallace, 2000).

Despite the apparent lack of successful formation in religious leadership a Catholic School principal in New Zealand is legally obliged to "take part in the religious instruction appropriate to the school" (Clause 14, *Integration Agreement*; PSCIA, 1975, #65). Taking part in the religious instruction for a principal is means that the principal should be seen "through word or action, teaching, explaining and modelling the doctrines, values and practices of the Catholic faith" (NZCPCIS, 2010, p.34). To model the doctrines, values and practices of the Catholic faith requires knowledge of Catholicism.

To facilitate the provision of opportunities for aspiring and current principals in Catholic schools in New Zealand to further develop their knowledge of Catholicism dioceses have cooperated to establish qualifications in Religious Education, spirituality and leadership of Catholic schools. The cooperation of institutions of learning with Catholic education systems is necessary if there are to be sufficiently confident and qualified principals leading Catholic schools (Grace & O'Keefe, 2007). The cooperation of institutions to provide formation in Catholic school leadership has broadened to include agreements with Australian Catholic University so that New Zealand teachers have access to qualifications that have both a Catholic framework and a New Zealand

context (Wanden, 2010). This collaboration helps to provide the Catholic system in New Zealand with suitable leaders who have had exposure to some level of theology and are able to apply their knowledge to build a world of justice and peace (Duignan, 2002; Specia, 2016b).

Graduates of these academic programs do not have preference of employment. There are no compulsory requirements for a school's Board of Trustees as the employing body to insist that principal candidates demonstrate knowledge of Catholicism by qualification or experience. To assist BOTs to determine a teacher's level of Catholic knowledge and experience, the New Zealand bishops have established a system of certification for all staff in a Catholic school. Special Character certification states a desirable level of theological competency and formation (NZCBC, 2014b) but carries no legal status. Teacher Special Character certification is voluntary because it is a requirement of the Church. While the school is an agency of the Church it is also a Government entity and its staff are State employees. On application for a position in a Catholic school candidates are made aware of their role in supporting Special Character and participating in Special Character formation including the desirability of achieving Special Character certification.

Special Character certification is gained through attendance at approved formation opportunities such as conferences and one-day courses. Conferences are seen as collegial support rather than professional learning (Martin-Kneip, 2004). One-day courses are not effective because they do little to change practice (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung 2007). Conferences and one-day courses are *ad hoc* principal professional learning that does not always have sufficient depth or practical relevance to meet principals' needs (OECD, 2007). To meet these needs, professional learning has to be situational and contextualised (Walker & Dimmock, 2005). To be situational and contextual for a Catholic school principal, professional learning needs to include some recognition of the religious leadership aspect of their role. The formation in religious leadership available for principals is not well formatted (Boyle et al., 2016). Like the professional learning available in other aspects

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of their leadership it is spasmodic and irregular (Whelan, 2000). Spasmodic and irregular formation in Special Character results in a degree of information and discussion on the distinctive nature of the Catholic school but does not guarantee that ideas and guidelines are taken up and put into practice (Sullivan, 2001).

Evidence of participation in Special Character formation and the way that learning is taken up and put into practice, can be seen in a principal's appraisal. In New Zealand, an annual appraisal of the principal is a legal requirement and is centred on the job description of the principal. The job description of a Catholic school principal includes key tasks and expected outcomes that relate specifically to how the Special Character of the school has been supported and enhanced. A Catholic School principals' appraisal requires evidence of how these outcomes have been met. This evidence helps the Board of Trustees (BOT) to complete its annual proprietor's compliance report.

Annually the Board of Trustees completes a compliance report which informs Catholic education authorities of the manner in which the Special Character of the school has been supported and enhanced. The compliance report also includes statistics of the professional development undertaken by the principal and staff because the Special Character of Catholic schools is "strongly influenced by the level of faith formation of staff, particularly the principal (NZCEO, 2016 p.93). There is no regulation to enforce the principal to undergo professional development in Special Character. The only regulation is that a report is made when professional learning is undertaken. Neither the reporting nor appraisal systems regarding Special Character formation have been studied to determine their level of effectiveness (M. Cook, 2008) nor has there been publication of any analysis of compliance data.

3.3.2 PRINCIPALS' NEEDS

Despite this lack of reporting from New Zealand proprietors, Catholic school principals consider induction programs essential for newly appointed principals, especially when they are followed by structured support over the first years of appointment (Fontaine, 2001). However, despite the importance of religious leadership to the role of Catholic school leadership some principals consider that this aspect of the current preparation and induction programs is inadequate. Religious leadership requires confidence in articulating faith, which principals generally do not have the opportunity to develop. Another aspect of religious leadership is theological literacy, which gives principals the self-assurance to communicate theological and ecclesiological issues (Gallagher, 2007; Ostrowski, 2005). Self-assurance in theological and ecclesiological issues requires ongoing formation. The meaning of the term 'formation' here is open to interpretation. Some principals consider that ongoing religious formation is the establishment of quality relationships, and having positive leisure time and spiritual experiences such as retreats (Davison, 2006).

If the ongoing religious formation of Catholic school principals is essential (Specia, 2016b), their religious formation requirements for principals could be addressed by mandatory qualifications in Catholic school leadership. Since these are difficult to implement because of the associated costs, Church authorities would need to meet the costs. The cost of preparation and ongoing formation in religious leadership may be the reason why few potential and established Catholic principals undertake formation opportunities (T. Cook, 2008). Another reason that religious formation opportunities may not be taken up is that the requisite time commitment adds further stress to the principal's role as it becomes one more thing to do in an already busy life (Downey, 2006; Specia, 2016a).

Another aspect of religious formation is the central focus of a Catholic school. This focus is the person of Jesus. A principal may have qualifications in Catholic leadership, including background in Church teaching and beliefs, but this makes little difference to their ability to support and enhance the Special

Character of a Catholic school if they have not encountered Jesus (Cullinane, 2010). A person's relationship with Jesus is private and un-measurable, yet it can be an important source of strength to principals in their challenging and sometimes isolating position (Ostrowski, 2005). A relationship with Jesus requires ongoing nurturing including spiritual formation opportunities that extend beyond a retreat or Special Character day each year (Gallagher, 2007; Mulligan, 2006). Spiritual formation is important because it is assumed that the whole activity of Catholic school leadership is underpinned by Catholic values (Davison, 2006; Morten & Lawler, 2016).

In the past when principals of Catholic schools were clergy or religious (McDonald, 2005) opportunities for spiritual formation occurred within the religious or clerical communities where principals lived (O'Brien, 2013). Initial spiritual formation occurred in their preparation for profession or vows (Nuzzi, 2007) and was supplemented by opportunities offered by diocesan or congregational organizations. With the increasing numbers of lay principals, diocesan authorities need to respond to Catholic formation requirements in new ways. New ways of formation are required because the personal faith development, the ongoing professional learning in religious leadership and the improving or updating of theological knowledge needs of the contemporary Catholic principal require a balance of "heart and soul leadership" (Duignan, 2002, p.176) rather than a concentration on the cognitive and intellectual. Additionally, formation processes need to recognise all the responsibilities that call on a principal's time (Speica, 2016a). This balance of formation is necessary if principals are to build the skills and confidence required by the changing nature of the Church (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009).

The changing nature of the Catholic Church is seen in parish closures and the fragile future of sacramental life as previously experienced by its members. Sacramental life is less secure because there are fewer priests (Roberts, 2009). Priests in the past were relied on to deliver pastoral care and to provide Church leadership. Church leadership is now being carried out by record numbers of lay people (Allen, 2009). Lay leaders in the Wellington Archdiocese of 2010 led five of the 46 parishes and one ethnic chaplaincy.

Nationally nearly 60 parishes have been suppressed in the past 30 years (Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1980; NZCBC, 2010). In these 30 years changes in the leadership of Catholic schools have dramatically demonstrated the evolving role of laity in the Church. This evolution is exemplified by the fact that no secondary school in New Zealand currently employs a member of a religious order as principal. Thirty years ago, 85% of Catholic School principals were either religious or clerical.

This shift from religious to lay leaders in Catholic schools is a feature in many parts of the world. Lay leaders in Catholic schools do not participate in the missionary activities of the Church just by helping the hierarchy carry out their role, but they serve through their own baptismal vocation (McDonough, 2017). Like most Christians, Catholic school principals live out their baptismal vocation by spreading the reign of God in the everyday reality of their lives (Bacik, 2000). This change in understanding of the role of the baptised is a result of The Second Vatican Council's affirmation of the lay vocation and the Church's growing acceptance that "lay people have their own proper competence in the building up of the Church" (CCE, 1988, #24).

3.3.3 PRINCIPAL SUPPLY

Concerns have been raised that as religious, ex-religious and those formed by religious leave principal positions a new situation has developed of lay principals who have less confidence in their ability to participate in the building up of the Church (Brock & Chatlain, 2008; Haggarty, 2005). This evolving situation creates a need for new approaches to finding suitable candidates for a Catholic school principal position. One aspect of a new approach is to create structures for principal succession that challenge and support teachers who demonstrate the skills and sensitivity to fulfil the role of principal of a Catholic school.

Succession planning is required because despite the fact that many teachers accept positions in Catholic schools because of their desire to share faith, the

majority receive their formation in secular institutions and have little Special Character training (Grace, 2002; Schuttloffel, 2007). Lack of succession planning is of particular concern in New Zealand where between 2010 and 2015 it was estimated that 75% of Catholic secondary school principals will have either resigned or retired (Private Correspondence).

Those responsible for appointing Catholic principals are currently faced with a lack of candidates. Some candidates are reluctant to apply for positions in Catholic schools because of the additional pressures carried by Catholic School principals compared to their colleagues in secular schools (d'Arbon, Duignan, Duncan & Goodwin, 2001). That the Catholic School principal is both professional and religious leader is a potentially daunting duality for some candidates (McGrath, 2001). Other candidates, particularly those of Generation X, are unwilling to make a commitment to a position where they are identified with the institutional Church (Rymarz, 2002). Being part of the institutional Church in the New Zealand Catholic education system requires Sunday Mass attendance. Generation Xers are among groups of Catholics who have stopped attending Mass (Dixon, Engebretson, Rymarz, Cussen, & Wright, 2007) and are walking away from any form of relationship with the institutional Church. The institutional Church considers that Mass attendance is a significantly important expression of Catholic that it is a requirement of appointment to the role of principal of a Catholic school.

The Church imposes this requirement on a principal because there is a belief that the Catholic identity of the principal influences the Catholic identity of the school itself. Catholic identity is part of a Catholic school's context and provides certain opportunities and constraints (Rymarz, 2017). If a principal's core beliefs are disconnected to the school's context including the Church's beliefs, conflict may arise because educational values of Church, school and principal are not aligned (Harris & Johnston, 2010).

Alignment of values between school context and the principal can also be an issue for secular schools and is demonstrated in a similar shortage of suitable principal candidates in the State education system. One of the reasons for

this shortage is that candidates are uncertain about the expectations that they will have to meet to carry out their role (Drago-Severson, 2004). Another reason for lack of candidates is the way candidates perceive the stresses of the principal position.

Principals are teachers first. Teachers see the daily stresses on the principal so they become reluctant to consider taking on the role themselves (Schuttloffel, 2007). Therefore, even when there are adequate numbers of suitable candidates they choose not to become principals (Hine, 2003). Suitable candidates may be more likely to come forward if there is an intentional nurturing and encouraging of staff that demonstrate religious and professional leadership (O'Keefe, 2001; Paletta & Fiorin, 2017). Candidates may need encouragement because they consider religious leadership to be the role of religious and priests because of a dominant pre-Vatican II understanding of vocation that many Catholics still hold (Skinner, 2006). There is a need to find candidates suitable to be principals of Catholic schools if these schools are to continue to be institutes producing graduates that desire to "achieve in life, with a strong sense of service, of care and compassion for those in need, and above all with a love of life and a zest for living it to the full" (Williams, 2000).

3.3.4 A RESEARCH QUESTION

Catholic school principals in New Zealand are legally obliged to "take part in the religious instruction appropriate to the school" (PSCIA, 1975, #65/1/a), thereby involving them in the Church's missionary focus. This requires a principal "through word or action, teaching, explaining and modelling the doctrines, values, and practices of the Catholic faith" (NZCEO, 2016, p103). These responsibilities of faith leadership are reflected in the job description of a Catholic school principal. The job description includes key tasks and expected outcomes that relate specifically to how the Special Character of the school has been supported and enhanced. Correspondingly, evidence is required to demonstrate how these Special Character outcomes have been

addressed in the principals' appraisal process.   In order to offer such evidence, it is appropriate that Catholic education authorities offer principals professional learning in Special Character.   Such support would encourage their faith leadership to be an integral exercise of leadership rather than an overlay (SCCE, 1982; Sullivan, 2001).

Principals' professional learning in Special Character currently available in New Zealand is minimal, and tends to be merely attendance at conferences or one-day courses.   Conferences appear to be more collegial support rather than professional learning (Martin-Kneip, 2004) and one-day courses are not effective because they do little to change practice (Timperley et al., 2007). Conferences and one-day courses, therefore, are *ad hoc* principal professional learning opportunities that fail to offer sufficient depth or practical relevance to meet principals' needs (OECD, 2007).

A lack of professional learning opportunities in Special Character influences the faith leadership of a principal (Graham, 2006).   Faith leadership is demonstrated in the way principals enhance, maintain and support the Special Character of the school. This deficiency in formation experiences informs the justification for the second research question:

> How do principals implement Special Character in their schools?

3.4   THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL

The New Zealand State education system is made up of Government-funded schools educating over 90% of school aged students. Registered private schools account for the educating of the other 10% of students (Ministry of Education, 2015). State education is formed by Government agenda.

3.4.1 THE POLITICAL CLIMATE

During the last 35 years the New Zealand Government agenda has been influenced by neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism comes from a worldview that the

market is the criteria of success and that Governments should minimize participation in the social realm (Bowl, 2010). The acceptance of a minimization of Government involvement in the social realm arises from a political acceptance that the economic world is the political world formed by jobs, ideals, and people who are mobile and self-interested (Clark, 2002). This belief creates a political agenda where a competitive global market approach promotes enterprise, innovation, and profit in both the public and private sectors. This market place approach to public affairs lessens the impact of social democratic politics. Social democratic values of consensus, maximum welfare, and full employment, have been replaced by a model of Government where the market determines what is important and of worth (Cerny, 1997).

Working from this model of association, Government policy directs that divisions in the community must not get in the way of the transformation of New Zealand into a prosperous, modern nation (Clark, 2005). This restructuring of social democratic ideals is a response to globalization, the knowledge economy, and the growth of individualism (Giddens, 2000). It has created a blurring of political identity in New Zealand politics so that there is no longer a distinction between left wing and right-wing policies (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). The political identity of both major political parties in New Zealand, the traditionally right-wing National and traditionally left-wing Labour, has been influenced by neo-liberalism, particularly in their economic policies (Bowl, 2010).

The effect of neo-liberal ideals has not been as influential in New Zealand education where egalitarian principles including education for democracy have been retained. Retaining these principles is partially a result of the growing political influence of Māori whose renaissance movement prompts educational structures to support the social and cultural aims of education by not accepting neo-liberal ideas as tools for educational policy (Bowl, 2010).

Māori renaissance has formed education in New Zealand by challenging the notion that one model of education is suitable for every student. The key

element of this challenge is the provision of an alternative schooling system for Māori – *Kura Kaupapa Māori* [Kura]. *Kura Kaupapa* are Māori language and cultural immersion schools (Berryman, Eley & Copeland, 2017). They centre on self-determination, cultural aspiration, culturally preferred pedagogy, extended family structure, and collective philosophy (Pihama, Cram, & Walker, 2002). Internationally *Kura Kaupapa* are considered to have successfully reinvigorated the Māori language as well as impacting state-sponsored education (Gould, 2004; Smith 2000).

The education system prior to the establishment of Kura had begun to acknowledge the need to equip New Zealand students in two ways of knowing: the Pakeha (non-Māori) knowing of the European majority and the Te Ao Māori, the Māori knowing. However, this later knowledge was often presented as an add-on to the primary and most important form of knowledge as established by Europeans. The mainstreaming of Kura created an awareness of the need for students in New Zealand schools to be able to participate with knowledge and confidence in the two founding cultures of the nation. This is seen in a growing social comfortable acceptance with Māori greetings and simple exchanges (such that when the national song 'God of Nations' is sung it will be sung in both Te Reo Māori and English, with the majority of young people knowing the words of both versions), the popularity of the Māori television channel and the emergence of the Māori political party whose party vote includes a number of votes from electors not on the Māori roll (Penetito, 2009).

The Māori education system has also promoted education academics to look at methods of Kura teaching (Berryman, Eley & Copeland, 2017). This research has influenced various Government educational policies as seen in the health and physical education essential learning area. This learning area has at its core the holistic model of *Hauora* based on a Māori philosophy of health which includes a spiritual dimension and is unique to New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Incorporating Māori philosophy into mainstream education is important because less than a quarter of Māori students attend Kura Kaupapa. Those outside Kura are less likely to achieve at the same level as their Pakeha peers (Ministry of Education, 2007). Schools annually report on the success of their students according to ethnic identity; the success of Kura demonstrates that Māori students can achieve. This reality challenges State schools to explore teaching and learning methods that enable Māori achievement (Berryman, Eley & Copeland, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2007).

Concern about Māori achievement is one of the many aspects of the compulsory schooling sector that has been politicized (Berryman, Eley & Copeland, 2017). Raising the level of Māori achievement presents challenges to the structures and ethos of a school community. One of the responsibilities of a principal is to lead the school in meeting the challenges of raising Māori achievement. This responsibility forms part of the professional standards set down by the Ministry of Education that principals are expected to meet. These standards are grouped into key areas of practice, with each area having criteria for assessing performance (Fancy, 2010). Principals of Catholic schools as Government employees are obliged to meet these standards as well as the performance requirements of the appropriate Catholic authorities.

3.4.2 Catholic School Principals

The performance requirements of the New Zealand Catholic authorities are included in a school's *Integration Agreement*. The *Integration Agreement* contains a three-fold condition of employment focused on the principal's contribution to the Special Character of the school. First the principal must take part in the religious instruction appropriate to the Catholic character of the school. Second the principal must be able to make this contribution. Third the principal must accept these first two requirements as a condition of appointment (NZCEO, 2013, p.103). These three conditions of appointment form the legal relationship between the proprietor and the principal. The

ability to meet these conditions is determined by the proprietor from information supplied by the applicant. Applicants for the principal position must demonstrate that they can fulfil the condition of employment to take part in religious instruction.

The term taking part in religious instruction can be confused with the role of Religious Education teacher. A principal may be required to teach Religious Education but 'taking part' in religious instruction at the level of principal means having the professional and personal qualities needed to assume leadership of the religious aspects of the school. Elements of leading the religious aspects of a school include:

- providing leadership in specific dimensions of Special Character;
- being ultimately responsible to the Board of Trustees for the religious programme of the school and for its religious observances;
- being a suitable role model for staff, students and parents in a Catholic school;
- assuming appropriate leadership roles in liturgies and/or prayer services of any kind (NZCEO, 2013).

A Catholic school's *Integration Agreement* establishes that the Catholic Church through the Bishop of the diocese determines the content and nature of these religious aspects of the school.

In order to lead these religious aspects of a Catholic school the person appointed principal is required by the *Integration Act to* "accept and recognise a responsibility to maintain and preserve the Special Character of the school" (NZCPCIS, 2010, p.34). The Special Character of a Catholic school is based on the beliefs and practices of the Catholic community. The Catholic community through the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference (NZCBC) holds the policy that only baptised Catholics are acceptable applicants for the principal position. The NZCBC also desires that principal appointees have previous experience in some leadership roles in the Catholic community (NZCPCIS, 2010).

Previous leadership in the Catholic community is demonstrated to the proprietor through the completion of a verification form. This verification form is called the S65 Form because it relates to Section 65[14] of the *Integration Act* (1975). It is completed by applicants for a position related to Special Character in a Catholic school. The S65 Form requires evidence of parish involvement and Religious Education/theological qualifications. From the information provided on this form an applicant is classified by the proprietor to be an acceptable candidate for the position of principal. An acceptable candidate is a person able to be a role model for the whole school community (O'Donnell, 2001). A principal acting as a Catholic role model is important (Specia, 2016a) because creating a Catholic educational climate requires "witnessing and personal presence" (Sharkey, 2006, p.81). It is this requirement which shapes the principal's position.

A further challenge to a principal's religious leadership is the lack of connection between many families and the worshipping Catholic community. Although students in a Catholic school may be baptised, their parents may not have a relationship with a parish. This casual relationship with the Church is reflected in declining Sunday Mass attendance (Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2010). Despite falling Mass attendance enrolment in Catholic schools remains strong (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017). This changed paradigm presents Catholic school principals with new challenges about the Catholic school's role in the mission of Christ. A Catholic school's focus is missionary, it is to form a community of Christian faith (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009; Francis, 2013a; SCCE, 1982).

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[14] Reference Section 33: #464 New Zealand Education Act (1989) as per 2017 amendments.

3.4.3 ISSUES OF FAITH

Principals of all schools, State or State integrated require a commitment to building community (Harris & Johnston, 2010). Community is centred on relationships and one of the dimensions of New Zealand secondary principals' professional standards is relationship management. Relationship management is determined in part by the standard requirements of:

- modelling respect for others in interactions with adults and students;
- promoting the bicultural heritage of New Zealand;
- promoting an inclusive environment in which the diversity, multi-cultural nature and prior experiences of students are acknowledged and respected;
- managing conflict and other challenging situations effectively and actively work to achieve solutions (Fancy, 2010).

The uniqueness of the Catholic principal's role comes from a commitment to Christian community and the faith dimension of their role. The public faith dimension of a Catholic school principal's role implies personal alignment to the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is problematic because there are principals who are personally disillusioned by a number of scandals in the Church, as well as some of its traditional teachings (Bracken, 2004; Coughlan, 2010). Many Catholics including some who are principals of Catholic schools do not accept official Church teachings on a number of contentious issues (Rymarz, 2017). Irrespectively, principals generally accept that their religious leadership responsibilities incorporate an ability to understand and articulate the place of the school in the Church's educational mission (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009) and consequently their role as an agent of the Catholic Church (M. Cook, 2008).

As an agent of the Church, the principal is required to lead the school in achieving the aims of Catholic education. Catholic education's emphasis on promoting a particular view of the person and the world, centred on the person and teaching of Jesus Christ may be perceived as being in tension with a school's need to provide academically robust programmes. For

example, full school Mass replacing scheduled classes takes time away from teaching and learning that may affect student achievement. Academic achievement is currently measured by league tables and media attention to a particular model of success (Wilson, 2010). This model of success influences Catholic schooling in such a way that the very integrity of the Catholic school's participation in mission can be threatened (Gleeson, 2015; Grace, & O'Keefe, 2007).

The perceived threat to the integrity of the Catholic school's participation in mission by an over emphasis on academic success has been noted since the first Catholic secondary schools were established in New Zealand. The first Catholic secondary schools were not established until many years after Catholic primary schools. Catholic primary schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries focused on providing basic education for the children of the working classes. Basic education was founded on the catechism supplemented by prayers and devotional practices. It aimed to hand on the Catholic faith, form well-behaved children and teach the children to pray, add and read (Simmons, 1978). Along with the desire to provide basic education for the average child the clergy also wished to lift the social status of the Church by enabling Catholics to move up from their under-privileged minority status. This desire saw the development of post-primary classes attached to parish schools and the opening of Catholic secondary schools. Secondary education was seen as creating social mobility.

With the introduction of the right of every New Zealand child to two years post-primary education the Church saw more students leaving Catholic schools to attend Government secondary schools. The Church considered Government schools dangerous and wished to "save" students from attending them (Power, 1997, p.56). This along with a recognition by the Church that working-class children needed access to qualifications that would enable them to move on to higher education and provide opportunities for social advancement saw Bishops encouraging religious institutes to open Catholic secondary schools. These Catholic secondary schools measured their success by how well their pupils did in State examinations (Collins, 2005).

Success in State examinations advanced students socially but concerns arose that the integrity of the Catholic school's educational mission was compromised by study of material mandated by the Government rather than Church authorities (Catholic Secondary School Teachers, 1943).

Catholic parents prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) did not consider State examination success a priority when choosing a school for their children. Before the Council Catholic parents sent their children to Catholic schools because that was what they were instructed to do by the clergy. Parental choice of schools is more complex today. School choice is not made solely on the religious nature of the school (Kennedy et al., 2011). The religious nature of the school may be important to parents. However, tension between families and the school regarding religious beliefs and practices may arise (Darmody, Lyons & Smyth, 2016) if the more compelling reason for school choice is the academic success of a school (Herron, 2003; Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). Academic success in secondary schools is largely measured by achievement of students in national qualifications. The achievement level of individual schools is publicly recorded in the media (Wilson, 2010).

This public comparison of results creates a competitive educational system where academic achievement is a major judgement of a school's worth and a consideration when parents are making school choices (Fincham, 2010). Parents understandably chooses a school that delivers a high level of academic achievement because they want what is best for their children (McLaughlin, 2005). When academic success is the primary reason for school choice Catholic schools may find they face a conflict of expectations. This conflict of expectations creates a perceived tension between academic achievement and the need to ensure that the Christian message permeates school curriculum and culture (Cook & Durrow, 2008; Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). The very focus of the Catholic school is that it is a ministry within the Church that proclaims the Christian message (Sultman & Brown, 2016). Tensions arise when schools under pressure to ensure academic achievement consider that academic achievement requires their compromising of aspects of Special

Character, and therefore their proclamation of the Christian message. Aspects of Special Character that might be compromised include; shortening time allocations for Religious Education classes so that more time can be devoted to 'real' subjects where students can gain scholarships or limiting religious practices because they take students from the real purpose of school which is preparation for State examinations (Conroy, Lundie & Davis, 2013).

This tension between the perceived uncomplimentary expectations of academic success and the expectations of Catholic identity, fails to recognise that the Church expects the Catholic school to be a good educational institute where "its academic standards are at least as outstanding as that in other schools" (Code of Canon Law, 1983, 806#1). Such school excellence is part of the Catholic tradition of education (T.Cook, 2008). Many schools demonstrate that they can be responsive to the desire for academic success without compromising their mission (Sultmann, Thurgood, & Rasmussen, 2003).

The need to be an academically successful learning institution is not the only challenge to maintaining a school's integrity of mission that a Principal must negotiate (Fincham, 2010; Griffiths, 1998). Disengagement by students and their families from the formal institutional Church (Monahan, 2003) and the secular nature of broader society (McEvoy, 2006) also challenge the school's participation in Christ's mission.

3.4.4 RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

Since European settlement New Zealand has been a secular state. There is no State religion and the *Treaty of Waitangi* (1840) includes an article assuring religious freedom. Although the majority of Catholics in early settler New Zealand were working class Irish (Collins, 2005) the secular nature of the Government saw a high level of religious tolerance including the acceptance of a Catholic Prime Minister in 1906 and the appointment of an Anglican Archbishop to the position of Governor General in 1985 (King, 2003). Today this tolerance is expressed in an acceptance in New Zealand that a politician's

religious beliefs are a private matter (Colless & Donovan, 1985). Although a number of 20th century Prime Ministers were professing Christians, the early 21st century has seen both self-identified agnostic Prime Ministers as well as a practising Catholic. This religious tolerance has seen Christianity contribute in a significant and at times controversial manner to New Zealand politics (Ahdar & Stenhouse, 2000). Both the public role of religion and the tolerance of a secular State were demonstrated in the political accommodation that resulted in the *Integration Act* (1975). As a result of the Act those private schools that choose to integrate were eligible for State funding. The need for Churches to negotiate with the Government to obtain State aid for their schools was due to the secular clause of the *New Zealand Education Act* (1877). This secular clause required communities including the Catholic Church to form a parallel system of education if they wished to include religious instruction in their curriculum (Wanden, 2010). In the 19th century, the secular State placed financial burdens on the Catholic education system. One hundred years later the secular State created an environment of religious tolerance that enabled Government financial aid to religious schools (Sweetman, 2002).

Religious tolerance in the political domain does not negate the influence that a secular society has on the religious ethos of a school community (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). The secular community is not anti-religious but there exists in society a lack of interest in religion. A lack of religious interest is illustrated by the fact that over one quarter of New Zealanders do not associate themselves with a named religion and another quarter decline to state their religion (New Zealand Government, 2014). Students attending Catholic schools are not isolated from this half of the population who are disinterested in religion and regard religious ideals as irrelevant. Secular society challenges Catholic school communities to make religion relevant to young people through bringing them to "a knowledge and experience of God in a world which seems increasingly indifferent to these questions" (Grace & O'Keefe, 2007, p.4). These questions are the existential questions such as: Who am I? What happens when I die? Creating a safe environment that encourages the asking of these questions and provides opportunities for exploring them is one of the challenges a Catholic school faces (Roebban, 2017). It is a challenge

that contributes to the role of the Catholic School principal as catechist and leader of the school's educational mission within the Church (Fincham, 2010; Mellor, 2005).

A school's participation in mission is an activity complemented by and shared by the wider Church because the Catholic school is not a separate entity from the Church (Frabutt, Holter, Nuzzi, & Cassel, 2010). However, many of the families whose children attend Catholic schools do not understand this school-Church relationship because of their disengagement from the formal structures of Church. This disengagement creates challenges to the integrity of the school's participation in mission because families and Church authorities have differing appreciations of the school's place within the wider Church community. Church authorities perceive the school-Church relationship to be a shared relationship between parents and the wider Church to educate children in faith (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016; SCCE, 1982; SCCE, 1977). This collaboration is managed and supported by the provision of Catholic schools. Catholic schools build on the faith education children receive from their parents whom the Church recognises as first educators in faith (Darmody, Lyons & Smyth, 2016).

In contrast, not all parents send their children to Catholic schools for faith education. The motivation for choosing a Catholic school for a child can be complex and across a number of families will range from familiarity with the institution to a perception that the Catholic school provides a good education (Kennedy et al., 2011). The motivation for many parents is that a Catholic school will support and enhance their child's faith and religious knowledge. Increasingly, however, the Catholic nature and purpose of the school is not a decisive motivation for parents' choice of a Catholic school (Sultmann et al., 2003). By sending their children to a Catholic school these parents are not "committing themselves to formal Catholicism as their religion of practice" (McLaughlin, 2005, p.219) nor are they concerned with finding "a very human Christ, in the school's daily contact" (McLaughlin, 2005, p.231).

Parents send their children to a Catholic school for a range of reasons. One set of parents understands that the Church establishes Catholic schools because they provide an education where Christ is central (John Paul II, 1999) and expect their children to experience Catholic values and tradition within the school (Darmody, Lyons & Smyth, 2016). Another set of parents appear disinterested in the reasons behind the Church's provision of schools and do not understand the central importance of the religious and spiritual dimensions of Catholic education (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). These divergent understandings challenge Catholic schools to engage children and their families in understanding the purpose of Catholic education and its religious dimension so that they can participate in the religious and spiritual life of the school (CCE, 1998).

Participation in the religious and spiritual life of the school can be challenging to students whose parents have not chosen a Catholic school because of its Catholic nature (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). The Catholic nature of a school includes a level of religious language and culture with which an increasing number of children are unfamiliar with because families are less religiously engaged. As part of the Church community, Catholic schools have the opportunity to support students and their families in connecting with the religious spiritual heritage of the Church. Increasingly the Catholic school is providing the only experience of Church that many families encounter (McQuillan, 2010). By creating an experience of Church the Catholic school has the opportunity to enable families to experience the mission and outreach of the Church (Brisbane Catholic Education Office, 2008; Sultman & Brown, 2016). The responsibility of enabling families in the school to experience the outreach of the Church through the distinctive Catholic education that the school provides is part of the principal's role in maintaining a school's Special Character (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). This task distinguishes Catholic School principals from other principals.

The distinction between Catholic school principals and other principals is evident in the spheres of influence that affect their role. Catholic school principals are influenced by: their own beliefs and values as an individual and

a school leader, the beliefs and values of the community as represented by students' families, and the beliefs and values of the Church particularly regarding the purpose of Catholic education (Harris & Johnston, 2010). In order to understand how these influences, interact, a Catholic school principal needs to know and understand the beliefs and values of the Church regarding the purpose of Catholic education. The purpose of Catholic education is the evangelisation and formation of young Catholics (Francis, 2013b). This is enabled through the leadership of the Catholic school principal (Simmonds, Brock, Cook, & Engel, 2016).

3.4.5 A RESEARCH QUESTION

A Catholic school is obliged to meet the requirements of its stakeholders, Government, family, and Church. Therefore, a Catholic school principal needs to be familiar with what each stakeholder group expects of Catholic schools. These expectations are presented in a variety of ways. The Government stipulates its requirements through regulation. Families express their requirements through enrolment, parent organizations and personal contact with the school. The Church expresses its requirements by its beliefs, documentation, and Catholic education authorities (Paul VI, 1965; CCE, 2017; NZCBC, 2014a). One of the requirements of Catholic education authorities is that the school should contribute to the Church's participation in the mission of Christ (SCCE, 1977).

The nature of this contribution is changing because of the loose casual relationships many families have with the institutional Church. Increasingly, the Catholic school is providing the only experience of Church that many families encounter (McQuillan, 2010). To enable families in the school to experience the outreach of the Church, a distinctive Catholic education is required. A school participates in the mission of Christ by providing a Catholic education. As faith leader of the school, the principal is responsible for this mission. However, the Catholic school principal is not the only stakeholder who participates in this mission. It is a shared mission involving family and

the Church community. This complexity contributes to the justification for the third research question:

> How do Catholic education authorities understand the role of the Catholic school in mission?

CHAPTER FOUR: MISSION, CHURCH AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The terms 'mission' and 'Church' are used in a variety of ways. It is therefore judicious to explore the meaning of both concepts within the framework of this study. Furthermore, "mission is contextual" (McGrath, 2012, p. 287) and linked with Church (Benedict XVI, 2008). Therefore, an exploration of the Catholic school and mission is linked with an understanding of the Church of mission (D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 2008).

The conceptual framework for exploring the relationship of mission, Church and the Catholic school is illustrated in Figure 4.1. It demonstrates that the Church of mission is embedded within the mission of Jesus. The Church's purpose is to evangelise, to "Go! to the ends of the Earth" (Acts 1:8). The Catholic school is an evangelising agency of the Catholic Church (CCE, 1998). New Zealand Catholic Schools as government schools have additional expectations to demonstrate to the government. Consequently, the Catholic school aims to integrate culture, faith and life (CCE, 1977).
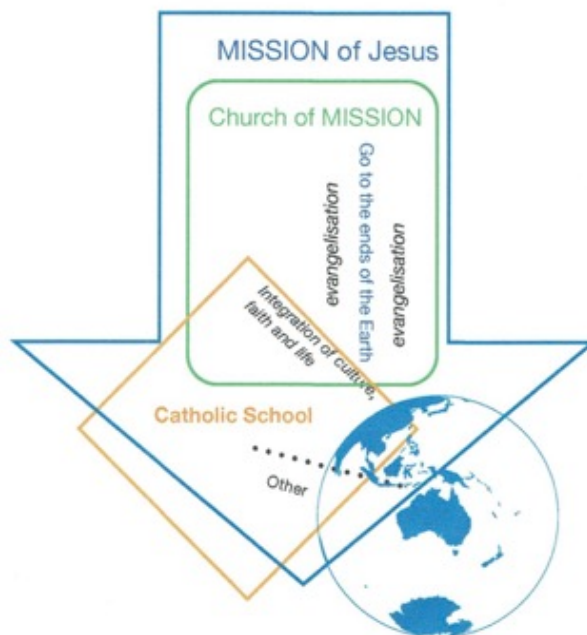
Figure 4.1: The Conceptual Framework for Exploring the Relationship of Mission, Church and the Catholic School

4.2   The Meaning of the Term 'Mission'

'Mission' is derived from the Latin word *missio* meaning 'to be sent'. It parallels the term 'apostle*'* meaning one who is sent.   The word for Catholic worship, Mass is also derived from *missio.*   Mass refers to the sending out/dismissal that concludes the Eucharistic celebration. Those who celebrate Mass are missioned.   In other words, there are mission obligations after worship.   The Second Vatican Council referred to Eucharist as "the source and summit of the Christian life" (Paul VI, 1965b, #11).   From Eucharist the baptised are sent on mission.   This missionary activity has been part of the Church since Christ sent his followers "to make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19)[15] at the conclusion of his earthly ministry (Gorski, 2013).

Unfortunately, making disciples of all nations came to be understood as sending expert 'missionaries' to foreign lands to convert, that is to baptize the local peoples.   Being sent on mission meant going to foreign countries (Gorski, 2013).   Since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), there has been a dramatic change in the understanding of mission.   Previously, mission was an activity specific Church people engaged in.   Now the Church is by definition missionary, in which all are expected to be engaged (Paul VI*,* 1965a, #2).   Each baptized person is on mission (D'Orsa & Do'Orsa, 2008)*.* The baptized share in Christ's mission to bring the Good News to all people (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009).   This understanding, that the mission is not a Church agenda but a Godly one, is a significant insight from Vatican Council II (McGrath, 2012).

This paradigmatic change in understanding the nature of mission can be appropriately summarized as: it is not the Church that has a mission but the mission of Jesus that has a Church (Bevans, 2009). Therefore, it is from mission that the Church exists and is understood (Kasper, 2015).

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[15] The Scripture quotations contained in this thesis are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition copyright: © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

An understanding of mission does not begin with Church but with the realisation that God's very nature is mission. This mission is particularly proclaimed in the person of Jesus Christ (Bevans, 2009). Mission is an ongoing expression of the love of God. The Second Vatican Council's Decree, *On the Mission Activity of the Church (Ad Gentes,* 1965*)* explains it this way:

> …(God) generously pours out, and never ceases to pour out, the divine goodness, so that the one who is creator of all things might at last become 'all in all' (1Cor 15:28), thus simultaneously assuring God's own glory and our happiness (Paul VI,1965b, #2).

Pope Francis has revitalized the concept of mission as the work of Christ. He emphasises that through the Church, Christ's primary mission is caring for the needs of the marginalised and giving hope to those who lack hope (Francis, 2017).

4.2.1 THE MISSION OF JESUS

Although the Church has used the term mission to refer to the work of Jesus, and the Church over many centuries, it is not a word found explicitly in the Scriptures. The concept of mission is however based on biblical theology.

No single Scriptural passage explains mission (Bevans, 2009), but both New and Old Testaments generate a mission theology based on the mission of the people of Israel and the first century Church community (Bevans, nd). Scripture demonstrates that God is the origin of this mission and that the agenda of mission is primarily God's own action (Kasper, 2015).

The missionary action of God is incarnated in the person of Jesus. Jesus' missionary purpose is to enable people to live genuinely in right relationship with themselves, other people and creation. Doing this authentically becomes the basis of being in right relationship with God (Brown, 2016). This means transforming relationships so that the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed are treated justly and fairly so that all people "may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus actively rebuilt, restored and

renewed the lives of despairing and broken people (Slaughter, 2010). Further these neglected people were not a community but were 'crowds' of people loosely gathered together - in need of sustenance and emotional support (Bailey, 2003). Jesus felt compassion for them (Matt 9:36) missioning his followers, the disciples, to "go proclaim 'the kingdom of heaven has come near'. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons" (Matt 10: 7-8). Through these actions of compassion followers abide by the great commandment. In the great commandment Jesus commissions his disciples "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10: 27). The realisation of this mission establishes the kingdom of God.

4.2.1.1 The Kingdom of God

The Gospels use the term 'kingdom of God' over 140 times (O'Murchu, 2010). These kingdom statements are typically identified with sayings of the historical Jesus. Furthermore, the concept of the kingdom of God is foundational to the Gospel message (O'Murchu, 2010). Despite agreement on the importance Jesus placed on the kingdom of God there are difficulties in defining clearly what Jesus meant by the term (O'Murchu, 2010).

There are a number of reasons for the lack of precision regarding Jesus' use of the term 'kingdom of God'. One reason is that 'kingdom' is a translation from the original text, indeed, at times it is a translation of a translation. Translations often lose accuracy particularly when there is a specific cultural context to the way in which the word was originally used (Lee, 2015).

Because of such ambiguity, the use of other phrases such as the 'companionship of empowerment' (O'Murchu, 2010) may convey more accurately the original meaning for a contemporary audience. The importance of the kingdom of God in the contemporary context is asserted through the papal document *Redemptoris Missio* (John Paul II, 1990). 'kingdom' is an invitation from Jesus to all people to experience a fuller humanity, a humanity that is found through the kingdom of God (Bevans,

2009). Further, the kingdom is relational. It "aims at transforming human relationships; it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another.... The kingdom is the concern of everyone: individuals, society, and the world" (John Paul II, 1990 # 14-15). Jesus desired the kingdom proclamation to be an ongoing outreach to all people "in every nation, in every culture, in every time period" (Bevans, 2009, p. 10).

Despite the ambiguous nature of the phrase, 'kingdom of God' many commentators concur with the following aspects (Lee, 2015). They contribute to a broader understanding of mission and the role of the Church.

A   The Kingdom is About People and Their Importance to God
For the Kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

The kingdom of God preached by Jesus promoted a change of priority regarding the implementation of religious/social regulations. The kingdom does not provide freedom from the norms of Jewish dietary requirements but frees disciples to respond to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit becoming promoters of peace and "slaves to one another in love" (1 Cor 8:1) (Fitzmeyer, 1999). Jesus considers freedom of the spirit contributed more to right relationship rather than to legal obligations. Through his ministry he hoped to restore right relationships and demonstrate how people could live peaceful lives, experiencing a loving God while living in a society where justice was the hallmark of relationships (Schroeder, 2008). Jesus was passionate about people and their importance no matter what their social standing. This is reflected in the Māori proverb "**He aha te mea nui o te ao?** What is the most important thing in the world? **He tangata, he tangata, he tangata** It is the people, it is the people, it is the people" (Whakataukī/Māori proverb).

B.   The Kingdom Requires a Change in Attitude
The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news (Mark 1:15).

The kingdom of God is more than a theoretical framework or aspirational way of life. For Jesus "only the kingdom is absolute" (Paul VI, 1975, #8). An absolute kingdom requires a reorientation of life towards the other (Harrington, 1999) that brings liberation from oppression, poverty and hunger (Nolan, 2010). This change of orientation toward the kingdom is a radical conversion that aspires to generate right relationships (Lee, 2015). This conversion prompts the followers of Jesus to create structures and processes that support the human dignity of each person. As such, service by Christians to alleviate the needs of the poor is an obligation for the kingdom to come (Fullenbach, 1998). The poor are a priority in the kingdom of God.

C. The Kingdom Prioritises the Poor and Marginalised

> But Jesus called for them [the children] and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is such as these that the kingdom of God belongs' (Luke 18:16-17).

Jesus prioritised those who suffered and people who were marginalised, such as children. By doing so he illustrated the characteristics and expectations of the kingdom (John Paul II, 1990, # 14). Domination and oppression are the characteristics of the historical kingdom as represented by the authorities of Jesus' day. In contrast, God's kingdom is inclusive of all persons (Nolan, 2010). This was a scandalous concept to the religious authorities of the time who ascribed sin as the reason for a person's illness or low social-status. In contrast, Jesus forgave sin and healed people offering a message of liberation. By this example of compassion, Jesus publicly challenged conventional beliefs concerning the treatment of the marginalised and oppressed (O'Murchu, 2010). This counter-cultural stance to bring forth the kingdom of God is not limited to Jesus' historical time and place. The mission of bringing about the kingdom of God is ongoing and contemporary.

D. The Kingdom is Here and Now

> Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6:9-10).

When Jesus taught his followers to pray (Mat 6:5-14), he believed that the work of the kingdom of God was not complete. Continual effort was required for it to be realised. This implies action, the kingdom needs to be built (Cook, 1998). Jesus, in healing the sick, feeding the hungry, forgiving sins was proactively building the kingdom by providing a vision for a better way of life for everyone (Nolan, 2010). Continuation of this action requires that the disciples of Jesus live and act as Jesus did. These missionary disciples (Francis, 2013) are invited to bring about the kingdom of God in the 'now' (Fullenbach, 1998).

Participation in bringing about the kingdom is a choice for each person. Jesus did not wish to coerce discipleship. He wanted people to freely choose participation by announcing through word and action the kingdom of God (Groome, 2014). Announcing the kingdom of God as Jesus did is the fundamental purpose of the Church (Kasper, 2015).

4.3   THE CONCEPT OF CHURCH

There are many understandings of the word Church, and the concept it describes. Commonly, the word church describes a building where religious communities worship (Oxford Dictionary, 2010). For members of worshiping communities who gather around a church building, this is insufficient because Church also defines how relationships within the community are structured (Dickey, 2000). Christian communities therefore use a number of sources to broaden their description of Church. These sources include theology, scripture, tradition and liturgy (Komonchak, 2013). As a result, rather than abstract terms, symbols or images are used to describe Church. No one image offers a comprehensive understanding of the concept (Kasper, 2015). The source of many of these images is Scripture. Indeed, there are 96 images of Church in the New Testament (Komonchak, 2013). Several of these incorporate an agricultural motif such as the sheepfold (John 10:1) or vine (John 15:1), or from architecture (1 Corinthians 3:9). At various times in the history of the Church different images have prevailed. However, that building image insufficiently highlights that the "Church is primarily a people"

(Komonchak, 2008). Prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Church organisation focused primarily on Church as building and organisation. As a result, the Church was presented as the kingdom of God (O'Murchu, 2010).

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) asserted unambiguously that the Church is the People of God (Paul VI, 1964, Chapter II). This image "expresses the being-on-the-way in the history of God's people and, at the same time, God's being with us and among us on this way" (Kasper, 2015, p.122). It reflects that Christian faith centres on the person of Jesus Christ. Knowing Jesus is to know God. As a result, the Church is both a sign and a means of relating with God (Paul VI, 1964, #1) (Ormerod, 2010).

This understanding of Church insists that the divine and human in the Church are integrated not distinct entities (Komonchak, 2008). The image of Church as the People of God implies the adoption of collaborative structures rather than the traditional one where priests lead and control laity (Denig & Dosen, 2009).

This change in relationships moved the Church from a Catholic ghetto consciousness to a more pluralistic appreciation of identity. This pluralistic understanding of Church has resulted in members holding a variety of opinions regarding belief and religious practices. This variation may be appreciated as a continuum of expressions of Catholic Church identity. Progressive, outward-focused expressions of what it is to be Church exist alongside internally focused ones. The Latin American Church with its theology of liberation is a progressive expression that understands the Church as an agency to build social consciousness and work for freedom (Grace, 2003). Being more inward-focused the Neocatechumenate movement is at the other end of the continuum as it wants to make more Catholics through initiation and strengthen Catholic practices through teaching dogma (Piccolo, 2012). These two expressions of Church identity vary in attitude and practice. Both are expressions of Church identity as it emerged from the Second Vatican Council and members of both groups call themselves Catholic and

participate in Catholic Church worship. Although they express their identity differently, both groups consider themselves Catholic (Thornhill, 2007).

Various other examples of Church identity within the Catholic community exist. Yet of itself Church identity is not foundational to Jesus' mission but an instrument of bringing to reality the kingdom of God (Kasper, 2015). Further, the Church is not of itself an end point but a "humble instrument and mediation of the kingdom" (Francis, 2017, p2).

Many people struggle to see the Catholic Church in terms of humility and kingdom building. For them the Church reflects more the social norms of the secular culture rather than the priorities of the kingdom (Slaughter, 2010). This has impacted on Church membership particularly in European communities.

4.3.1 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Proportionally the worldwide Catholic population remains static between 1910 and 2010 (BBC, 2013). During this period, the geographic distribution of the world's Catholics significantly changed. In 1910 the largest proportion of Catholics was in Europe but by 2010 it was in Latin America (Pew Research, 2013). A number of rationales exist to explain these changes in membership patterns. The fact that many people have left organized religion in the modern Western world is due to indifference and apathy (O'Murchu, 2014).

In contrast, others have turned away from institutional structures because of the Church's inadequate response to clerical sexual abuse of minors (Allen, 2009) or because they feel the Church opposes those with a "thinking mind" (Tacey, 2012, p.1) or they are unsatisfied with traditional Church teachings. This repudiation of religion is especially identified among young people and is particularly noticeable in the number of young people engaged with Church.

4.3.2 Young People and Church

Many young people have a strong value base informed by their religious upbringing (Webber, Mason, & Singleton, 2004). Young Catholics may call themselves Catholic but have little appreciation of what that involves. For them, Catholicism is a heritage, a comforting background faith, but not something to engage with (Duthie-Jung, 2012). The Church does not offer them a community to relate with (Ganley, 2013). The change in Catholic attitudes and identity of young adults in the 21st century has seen young people move away from Church membership. They move away because the Church appears unchanging and unwilling to accommodate different perspectives (Duthie-Jung, 2012).

Church authorities are concerned with the number of young people withdrawing from the Church (NZCBC, 2014a). For many in the Church hierarchy engagement with the Church is closely aligned to participation in Sunday worship. In contrast, rather than concerning himself with attracting people to belong to the Church that gathers for Sunday worship, Pope Francis describes his understanding of Church as mission for disciples (Slaughter, 2010). A Church of missionary disciples is proactive in announcing the kingdom of God and will therefore be attractive to young people (and many adults) (Duthie-Jung, 2012). This Church is a Church of mission.

4.4 A Church of Mission

After the death of Jesus, his followers experienced his living presence among them in a new way. They grew in awareness that being a follower of Jesus meant living the kingdom of God by word and action (Wright, 2001). Their purpose was to continue the mission of Jesus. The Acts of the Apostles recorded these missionary endeavours of the early Church. The term 'acts' is important. The Christian community told stories about how they had acted as those who 'were sent' in contrast to believing doctrine. Acts shows the early Church faithfully struggling to demonstrate the Good News of the kingdom (Slaughter, 2010).

Faithful members of the Church today may participate in Church activities such as Mass at parish or school, but if their energies are confined to these activities they fail to appreciate that the Christian life includes sharing the mission of Jesus (Ormerod, 2010). While the Church aspires to present a message of love, acceptance and salvation through its mission endeavour (Paul VI, 1975), this is poorly communicated. For this message to be relevant to the contemporary world, it needs to be simplified and presented so that it becomes accessible (Paprocki, 2013). It needs to focus on announcing the kingdom of God.

By focusing on the kingdom, the Church becomes outward looking and transforms its own identity into a Church of mission (Ormerod, 2016). This requires the Church to move beyond the model of Sunday worship and sacraments (Norton, 2013) because the very nature of the missionary Church is evangelisation (Gorski, 2013).

4.4.1 EVANGELISATION

Prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Catholics considered the term 'evangelisation' an activity in which Protestant clergy engaged. After the Council, it became a concept synonymous with the Church's mission and identity (D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 2008). "The Church exists to evangelise – to preach and teach and to be a channel of grace, reconciling sinners with God and perpetuating Christ's sacrifice in the Mass" (Paul VI, 1975, #14). This change in emphasis has seen an evolving understanding of 'evangelisation'. Evangelisation is understood as authentically engaging with people. This process involves dialogue, respect and listening (D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 2008).

An additional concept of evangelisation emerged in the late 20th century with the concern of the 'Western' Church that a significant portion of baptized Catholics had lost their sense of belonging to the worshiping community and ceased any visible contact with the Church (Gorski, 2013). Efforts to bring these Catholics 'home' were named the "new evangelisation" (John Paul II, 1990, #2).

The task of new evangelisation was of such importance to the life of the Church that the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelisation was established (Benedict XVI, 2010). One of five designated tasks for the Council was "to promote the use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church as an essential and complete formulation of the content of the faith for the people of our time" (Benedict XVI, 2010, p.3).

The new evangelisation emphasises the importance of dogma. Promoters of the new evangelisation believe that dogma provides a foundation for the re-engagement of Catholics, drawing them back to the Church (Grogan, 2015). The focus of mission becomes "'re-proposing' the Gospel to those who have experienced a crisis of faith" (USCCB, 2017). Critics assert that the new evangelisation is a way of avoiding the scandal crisis facing the Church and marginalising those Catholics seeking renewal and reform (Marrin, 2012). Those seeking reform and renewal are motivated by the Second Vatican Council's desire that the Church not exist for its own sake but to be "Church in the world and Church for the humans in this world" (Kasper, 2015, p.321). This Church works in service to God's mission in the world, responding to needs and working for justice (Bevans, 2009)

4.4.2 POPE FRANCIS AND EVANGELISATION

For Pope Francis, there is an inseparable link between evangelisation and the call to justice. Evangelisation through "words, attitudes and actions, personally and communally, in the public domain and in private" (Francis, 2013, # 258) transforms lives. He desires a Church that is merciful rather than an organisation that makes religion demanding and a 'burden to the faithful' (Cummins, 2013). Francis' emphasis on evangelisation which makes a social difference to people's lives (Cornish, 2013) challenges the new evangelisation movement (John Paul, 1990, #2) with its concentrated effort to re-engage non-practising Catholics. He considers that the new evangelisation is more about responding to the needs of the poor, than about bringing people back to Catholic practice. It is a sense of "religion with sleeves rolled up" (Connolly,

2013, p.11). Additionally, because Francis expresses the need for a Church of missionary disciples that befriends rather than critiques, he is less concerned with people's meeting the criteria of sacramental practice in order to be Church (Connolly, 2013). Therefore, the entire Church needs to be "permanently in a state of mission" (Francis, 2013, #25) rather than stressing a particular form of missionary activity such as the new evangelisation or overseas missions (Teulan, 2013). Because the Church defines itself as a community of missioned disciples (Komomchak, 2008), its leaders are responsible to initiate an evangelisation that is relevant and engaging (Teulan, 2013).

One of the Church's agencies for building missioned disciples is its education system. Pope Francis considers "Catholic education … (to be) one of the most important challenges for the Church, currently committed to new evangelisation in an historical and cultural context that is undergoing constant transformation" (Francis, 2014, #1). The Pope considers schools to be "places and experiences of evangelisation" (Francis, 2017 p.3). He believes schools are missionary.

4.5   THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND MISSION

The Catholic school may be understood within the context of Christ's mission to the world (McGrath, 2012). One of the rationales for Catholic schools is that they have a responsibility in this mission (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009; Rymarz, 2010), and this is often elaborated in official Church documentation. It is particularly appropriate to appreciate the Church's understanding of the mission of the Catholic schools, especially since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

4.5.1 CHURCH DOCUMENTATION CONCERNING CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Gavissimum Educationis-Declaration on Christian Education (Paul VI[16], 1965)

> …the Catholic school can be such an aid to the fulfilment of the mission of the People of God and to the fostering of the dialogue between the Church and [hu]mankind, to the benefit of both (#8).

The Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Christian Education* was the final document to be authorised (or promulgated). As a result of time pressure, it is a brief and inadequate Church response to education (McLaughlin, 2001). It does acknowledge the importance of the Catholic school's responsibility to engage with the world in fulfilling the Church's missionary endeavours. It presents a cautious but favourable appreciation of the developments of the modern world and encourages "an integration of [these] developments into Catholic education for a renewal of the mission" (Fleming, 2015, p.60). For the Council, Catholic schools are instruments of mission (#8).

The Catholic School (SCCE[17], 1977*)*

> In the light of her mission of salvation, the Church considers that the Catholic school provides a privileged environment for the complete formation of her members, and that it also provides a highly important service to [hu]mankind (#16).

The focus of *The Catholic School* is the mission of the Church and how the educational aims of the Catholic school contribute to this mission (Fleming, 2015). The document also emphasises the importance of schools creating

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[16] Attributed to the Pope who propagated Gavissimum *Educationis* is the declaration on Christian Education of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

[17] Pope Paul VI named the Vatican office with overview of Catholic Education the *Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education* in 1967. John Paul II gave the office its present name the *Congregation for Catholic Education (Institutes of Study)* in1988.

communities, whose benchmarks for authenticity are the Gospel (#91) (McLaughlin, 2001). Schools are expected to enhance the dignity of all people (#35) and promote justice (#58). The challenge presented to schools is to live the Gospel message. The Gospel message is not simply about the individual's doing good deeds, but living the kingdom of God, by acting for justice and inclusion for all (Paprocki, 2013).

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (SCCE, 1982)

> Lay teachers must be profoundly convinced that they share in the sanctifying, and therefore educational, mission of the Church; they cannot regard themselves as cut off from the ecclesial complex (#24).

The document, *Lay Catholics in Schools*, acknowledges changes in both access to theological education and the decline in the numbers of religious Brothers and Sisters in schools since the Second Vatican Council. Moreover, the document encourages lay Catholics to energetically engage in the Church's education mission (Fleming, 2015). The lay teacher is presented as an example of discipleship and the vocation of the lay teacher is presented as witnessing to authentic Christian living (McLaughlin, 2001). The document acknowledges that these committed teachers contribute to the quality of the Catholic school. Indeed, Catholic schools are internationally recognised as mission bases (Fleming, 2015). *Lay Catholics in Schools* also identifies appropriate theological formation as a necessary prerequisite for authentic mission. Such initiatives are to focus especially on a curriculum that promotes teachers' spiritual development (#60).

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal (CCE, 1988).

> The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church (#34).

The Religious Dimension in a Catholic School expresses concern about the decline in faith in young people (#11). The document suggests that family, parish and Catholic school share responsibility for this crisis. A way to

address this crisis is for the Church to develop clearer guidelines supported by appropriate resources and professional development in order to promote more professional religious teaching in schools (Martin & Gadd, 2015). The document encourages obedience and service to Church initiatives (#87). In addition, teachers are expected to nurture students to be practising Catholics and observant of Catholic teachings.

The model of mission communicated in *The Religious Dimension in a Catholic School* maintains the status quo. Regretfully, it fails to encourage a critical perspective that honours the Gospel's social justice foundations or the formation of teachers with such values (Martin & Gadd, 2015).

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium
(CCE, 1997)

> ...we must recognize the contribution it [the Catholic school] makes to the evangelizing mission of the Church throughout the world (#5).

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium is a "letter to those engaged in Catholic education to convey to them encouragement and hope" (McLaughlin, 2001, p.13). It reminds Catholic educators that the whole person is the focus of their education endeavours (#9). While it acknowledges that many students in Catholic schools are disinterested in religion (# 6), it unambiguously asserts that the Catholic school is to "be a school for all, with special attention for those who are the weakest" (#10). However, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* goes further as it requires schools to "scrutinise the structures within society that generate inequalities" (McLaughlin, 2001, p.16). It obliges schools to be missionary. It encourages them to be outwardly focussed evangelising communities.

Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (CCE, 2007)

> The Catholic school participates in this mission like a true ecclesial subject, with its educational service that is enlivened by the truth of the Gospel (#3).

Educating Together in Catholic Schools addresses issues that influence the missionary nature of Church and therefore the Catholic school. Two of these issues - globalisation and the growing gap between rich and poor (#1), are addressed by exploring how the mission of Jesus is related with solidarity with others. Such a dynamic demands that schools act justly in engaging the poor and marginalised (Martin & Gadd, 2015).

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love (CCE, 2013)

> Due to the advanced process of secularization, Catholic schools find themselves in a missionary situation, even in countries with an ancient Christian tradition (#57).

Compared with previous documents, *Education to Intercultural Dialogue* develops more thoroughly the concept of the Catholic school as an agent of justice (Martin & Gadd, 2013). It envisages the role of the Catholic school in helping students to reflect on the causes of poverty and how they might be addressed (#66). Unlike other education documents, it explores the role of students in the educational endeavour and their mission responsibilities (# 47, #63).

Educating Today and Tomorrow: Renewing Passion (CCE, 2014)

> Undoubtedly, missionary openness towards new forms of poverty must not only be safeguarded, but also further stimulated (III, f).

Written in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of *The Declaration of Christian Education* (Paul VI, 1965), the main theme of this document is a vision for Christian education within the context of the faith of a poor Church for the

poor (#1). It energetically affirms Pope Francis' passion for a Church of justice and mercy (Martin & Gadd, 2015).

The Catholic Education of School-aged Children (New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2014)

> The Catholic school is embedded in the Church; it is the Church in action, an authentic expression of the Church's mission (#6).

The Catholic Education of School-aged Children was issued nearly forty years after the integration of New Zealand Catholic schools with the Government education system. It was the first significant reflection on Catholic education by local Church authorities. Although the title suggests it is aimed at all those involved in Catholic education, it focusses on the Catholic school as "the Catholic school is better placed to counter the influences which dilute faith than any other part of the Church" (#37).

The introduction acknowledges that the Catholic school shares in the responsibility of mission to young people. Schools are "at the heart of evangelisation of the young".   The purpose of a Catholic school's evangelisation is the formation of committed disciples (#44). A number of paragraphs are directed to the 'facilitating' of discipleship within the school (#50-56). The Catholic school is envisioned as a community with the potential to lead students to an intimate encounter with God (#50). The importance of prayer and liturgy in this formation is highlighted (#51).   It encourages students to have a personal relationship with Jesus, but this relationship needs to extend beyond learning about Jesus and his teachings. It needs to lead to the formation of missionary disciples, who are energetic in pursuing justice in the world (Groome, 1998). Regretfully, the section of the document 'facilitating discipleship' fails to recommend possible strategies to nurture 'missionary hearts' in students. The Bishops assert that social justice is an important dynamic in the culture of Catholic schools. They presume that Catholic social teaching principles guide the operations and policy of the school.   In itself this is perceived as enabling students to appreciate social justice as integral to their faith (#83), but the section concerning facilitating

disciples fails to confirm this foundation. The document suggests that schools are part of the missionary outreach of the Church but it is not clear from the Bishops' document that Catholic schools have a role in forming students for mission (Francis, 2017).

4.5.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Church documents on education acknowledge the need for students to experience living in a faith community that is focussed on the 'other'. They name the priority of the Catholic school as promoting human dignity and worth (Coughlan, 2010). These documents assert that Catholic schools are authentic agents for mission (Fleming, 2015).

There is some divergence among the documents as to how a school's participation in mission is focussed. These differences reflect the tension between the new evangelisation and evangelisation that is more justice focussed.

Evangelisation is the means by which mission is proclaimed in word, and action employed (D'Orsa & D'Orsa, 2008). Justice is a fundamental characteristic of a Catholic school and assists in clarifying its purpose (Rieckhoff, 2014). By means of the Catholic Special Character review processes New Zealand Catholic education authorities recognise the importance of a school's evangelisation endeavours. One of the foci in the section on Catholic community is evangelisation (NZCEO, 2009). As such Catholic schools are both educational and evangelising communities (Brisbane Catholic Education Office, 2008), which make "…a great contribution to the mission of the Church" (Francis, 2017) because Catholic educational institutions are "places and experiences of evangelization" (Francis, 2017).

4.6   THE POPE FRANCIS EFFECT

The 2013 election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope shifted the Catholic Church's understanding of itself.   Having suffered under the military dictatorship of Argentina, and confessing to inadequacy in his own leadership of the Jesuits, Pope Francis is aware of the crisis facing the Church (Bevans, 2013).

Pope Francis is cognisant that across the Catholic community, many people have left the Church because they are disillusioned by scandals including, but not limited to, sex abuse by religious and priests, the exclusion of same-sex relationships, and the isolation of the divorced and remarried (O'Murchu, 2014).   Pope Francis connects to people who feel disengaged from the Church because the message he presents stems from love (Ganley, 2013). He constantly calls for the Church to be inclusive (Francis, 2016, #299) and to demonstrate mercy (#293).

A particular concern of Pope Francis is that young people feel included in the Church.   Many young people do not accept the Church's dogmas. Nevertheless, young people are attracted to communities where people are working to 'save the world' (Cornish, 2013).   This is the Church with which Pope Francis identifies, a Church that works for justice and aligns itself with the poor (Francis, 2013, #194).

An outward focussed Church that reaches out to those on the margins is a major theme of Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium,* (The Joy of the Gospel) (Ormerod, 2016) where he promotes the mission of the Church as witnessing to the kingdom of God (Lennan, 2016).   This is not a mission centred on drawing people to the Church but rather meeting people where they are (Ormerod, 2016).   In Pope Francis' own words

> I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation (EG #27).

One of the structures for evangelisation is the Catholic school (Francis, 2014). In fact, the Catholic school has a "fundamental duty to evangelise" (CEC, 1997, #3). This duty of evangelisation calls for the Catholic school:

1. to be a place of encounter with the living Jesus Christ;

2. to be a place of Spirit-filled community;

3. to impart a Catholic worldview through the curriculum;

4. to assist students in becoming free; and

5. to send students out as missionary disciples to transform the culture.

(Olmstead, 2017, p.2).

For Pope Francis "to help young people to be builders of a more supportive and peace-filled world" (Francis, 2017) is the purpose of Catholic education. If this dynamic is missing, then the Catholic school is not fulfilling its part in mission. Mission is at the heart of Francis' vision for the Church. For him, "the Church is missionary by nature; otherwise, she would no longer be the Church of Christ" (Francis, 2017).

The election of Pope Francis generated an excitement and a sense of new beginnings for the Church. He encouraged its leaders to embrace values of mercy and inclusion in contrast to a culture of rules and judgement (Cummins, 2013). This new orientation challenges and confronts the status quo. It has implications for the understanding and implementation of Special Character.

Special Character is the framework for delivering an authentic Catholic education (NZCEO, 2016, p.13) which is the foundation of the Church's mission in schools (Paul VI, 1965b). A number of presumptions regarding Special Character are contestable given the variations of understanding of what it is to be missionary (4.2) and Pope Francis' call for invitation, not judgement. A particular example of this tension is how preference of enrolment criteria is enacted.

4.7 THE RELEVANCE TO THIS RESEARCH

The mission of Jesus is to build the kingdom of God (Luke 4:33). This mission has a Church (Bevans, 2009). One of the Church's "instruments of mission" is the Catholic school (Paul VI, 1965b, p5). There are two aspects of mission *ad intra* and *ad extra* (Kasper, 2015). *Ad intra* is directed inwards. The Church builds the kingdom by nurturing the People of God. In the school context, this is evangelising students, caring for them in the Catholic tradition (Sharkey, 2015). Church authorities promote this model when they are concerned about the baptism of students and staff, and believe facilitating discipleship is about offering students an opportunity to form a relationship with Jesus (NZCBC, 2014a).

Ad extra is less concerned with membership and more concerned with promoting a kingdom of justice, peace, and welcome (Norton, 2015). When *ad extra* is the focus of evangelisation schools not only aspire to create just systems within their schools (NZCBC, 2014a) but also to challenge unjust systems within society (McLaughlin, 2001). Facilitating discipleship is therefore about offering students an opportunity to become missionary disciples (Francis, 2014). The formation of disciples is a criterion of authentic Catholic education (Groome, 1998).

The purpose of the research reported in this thesis is to explore how principals understand and implement Special Character. Special Character is the framework for ensuring authentic Catholic education. One expectation of this authentic Catholic education is mission. Pope Francis is challenging the Church, including Catholic schools, to ensure that this mission is about addressing poverty, and including all (Francis, 2017) rather than the following of laws and exclusion (Cummins, 2013). However, the New Zealand Catholic education system is challenged by recent official documentation (NZCBC, 2014a) that focusses on *ad intra* aspects of the school's role in mission. This creates tensions for those wishing to understand and implement Special Character with the heart of Francis.   This is illustrated in Figure 4.2.
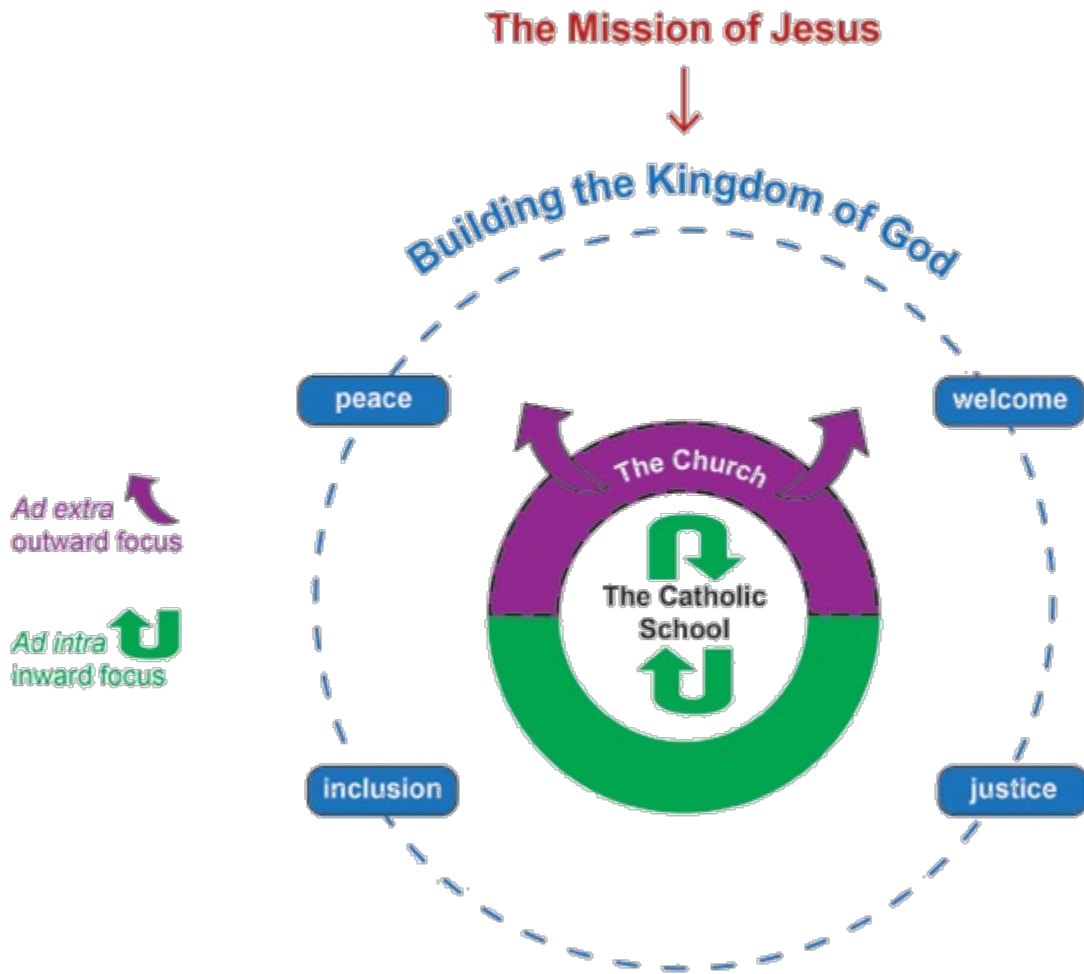
Figure 4.2: Relationship Between Mission, Church, Catholic School

CHAPTER FIVE: DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the research design adopted in the exploration of how New Zealand principals understand the Special Character of Catholic schools and how they implement Catholic Special Character in their schools.

The following research questions focus the conduct of the research design:

What do principals understand by the term 'Special Character'?

How do principals implement Special Character in their schools?

How do Catholic education authorities understand the role of the Catholic school in mission?

5.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is a structured presentation of the elements that orchestrate the research design. It presents a basic set of assumptions about knowledge and how it is constructed and accessed, the research perspective, and the methods employed to inform the research questions. By informing research design the theoretical framework achieves consistency between the research problem being explored, and data-gathering strategies.

The appropriate theoretical framework for this study included three elements: an epistemology of constructionism, a theoretical perspective of interpretivism, and a methodology of case study. Table 5.1 illustrates the research design and demonstrates the links between the theoretical underpinnings of the research, the choice of methodology and data gathering methods.

Table 5.1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

Epistemology	Theoretical perspective	Methodology	Data Collection Strategies
Constructionism	Symbolic interactionism	Case study	• Focus group • Interview • Questionnaire

5.2.1 EPISTEMOLOGY: CONSTRUCTIONISM[18]

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified belief. It is a negotiation between the knower and the knowable (Gough, 2002). It is the study of the nature of human knowledge, its origins, modes of communication and limitations (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). The epistemological position of constructionism is appropriate for this study because it accommodates human knowledge that is negotiated and influenced by, and formed through, social interaction (Crotty, 2003, p.57). Meaning making is relational because it is generated from the relationship between the knowing subject and known object. Clearly then, the generation of knowledge occurs within a social context (Creswell, 2002).

Constructionism is a view that knowledge generation, and therefore perceived reality, is conditional upon human interaction within a social context (Crotty, 2003, p.57). Constructionism is concerned with "the collective generation of meaning" (Crotty, 2003, p. 58, 2003). The experienced world and the social world are not separate spheres, "they are one human world. We are born; each of us, into an already interpreted world and it is at once natural and social" (Crotty, 2003, p. 57).

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[18] Often the terms "constructionism" and "constructivism" are used interchangeably. Crotty (1998) offers clarification. *Constructionism:* Meaning is constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting and agree at least temporarily on what is constructed. *Constructivism:* Meaning is constructed by an individual's response irrespective of what others construct i.e. *meaning making of the individual mind.* In other words, *constructionism* is another term for *social constructivism.*

Constructionism is an appropriate epistemology for researching the ways principals interpret their professional practice regarding Special Character. It is concerned with meanings that inform actions. Constructionism acknowledges that the process of negotiating meaning about Special Character is ongoing and active, drawing on professional training, practical experience and potentially, on a large range of other factors. Constructionism is also appropriate for interpreting the complexity of the many relationships between principals and other members of the Catholic and education communities including parents, teachers, Church authorities, and Ministry of Education officials.

Further, constructionism is an appropriate epistemology for this study because it provides the researcher with an interpretative lens to understand data generated from a variety of sources, interviews or questionnaire (Ping, 2000).

5.2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: INTERPRETIVISM

A theoretical perspective is the philosophical reference in which the epistemology is embedded. It indicates how knowledge generation is understood in a more nuanced manner. A theoretical perspective explains the research design and explains why it is "suited to the purpose of the research" (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009, p. 687). The theoretical perspective acknowledges the assumptions about knowledge and knowing that the research design employs so that the research design is transparent (Crotty, 2003, p.22).

Within the constructionist paradigm, interpretivism is an appropriate perspective for this study. The aim of interpretivism is to "understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Marion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 23), and it "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world" (Crotty, 2003, p. 22). Interpretative research seeks to explore the understandings, attitudes, beliefs and values that influence

people's behaviour. In interpretative research, theory emerges from the research rather than being imposed or found from external sources. This generated theory develops "sets of meanings which yield insight and understanding of people's behaviour" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 23). The aim is to provide a descriptive analysis that interprets the social phenomenon being studied; it studies the social action in which people attach subjective and shared meaning; it "identifies patterns in evolving meaning systems and social conventions that people generate as they interact" (Crotty, 2003, p.57).

Interpretivism uses the knowledge the researcher adopts as a social being to understand others' perceptions of the world. Knowledge within this framework is a mutually-negotiated construct specific to the situation being explored (O'Donoghue, 2007). Central to interpretivism is the concept of context which includes the set of conditions under which research takes place (Walters, 2009). By considering context interpretivism recognizes that human development or organizational behaviour is not pre-programmed (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2001).

Interpretive approaches include hermeneutics, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. The interpretation within this study is congruent with symbolic interactionism because of its focus on the negotiated rather than the objective aspect of social life (Neuman, 2006).

Symbolic interactionism is an approach where the researcher puts themselves in place of the other (Crotty, 2003) as it addresses language, communication, interrelationships and community. Thus, the symbolic interactionism lens is appropriate in exploring the understandings existing in culture as a "meaningful matrix" (Crotty, 2003, p.71) that influences the way meaning is created from the experience of living in a particular place, time and situation.

Four principles underline symbolic interactionism (McCarthy & Schwandt, 2000). First, the human world is symbolic, material and objective. Understanding how human beings assemble meaning is found through appreciating human beings' interactions with one another. Second, the

process of assembling meaning characterizes human lives, situation and societies that are always evolving, adjusting and emerging. Third, the primary source for understanding meaning is neither the individual nor society. The starting point for understanding meaning is "the joint act of people doing things together" (McCarthy & Schwandt, 2000, p. 60). Fourth, people 'do things together' in an empirical world which can be observed and thus enables meaning-making to be investigated.

Meaning-making depends on the ability humans have to interpret society's symbols. Symbols are shared meanings that people come to associate with objects and activities. Therefore, people engage in symbolic interactionism through their daily encounters and relationships (Charon, 2007). Using symbolic interactionism as an interpretive approach enables researchers to develop an account of how individuals and their social environment mutually define and influence each other through their interactions (Candy, 1989). Through their interpretation of interactions human beings construct meaning according to the worthiness they attribute to the knowledge gained via the interaction. Worthiness of knowledge is judged by the practical application and usefulness in understanding the social situation that the new knowledge invites (Charon, 2007). Because symbolic interactionism concentrates on this "process of interaction and active construction of meaning" (Barbour, 2008, p. 22) it is an appropriate lens for the study of how principals understand the Special Character of their school and how they implement Catholic Special Character.

Symbolic interactionism informs the exploration of how principal respondents construct their professional beliefs. This includes analysis of the meaning and purpose of Special Character in the relevant authoritative documents to provide a baseline for interpreting the personal meanings as articulated by respondents (Crotty, 2003). Symbolic interaction enables the researcher to focus on the principals' construction of reality and how their actions are influenced by the reality they have constructed (Charon, 2007) within the culture of the New Zealand Catholic education system (Crotty, 2003).

5.3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is the justification that orchestrates the research method and links it to the research narrative such that the researcher is able to answer the research questions (Crotty, 2003).

5.3.1 CASE STUDY

The research methodology adopted for this research is case study. Case study is "an intensive description and analysis of a phenomena" (Merriam, 2002, p.8) within a particular bounded context. Case study is an orchestrating research methodology that enables the researcher to (Bassey, 1999, p. 65):

1. Explore significant features of the case;
2. Create plausible interpretations of what is found;
3. Test the trustworthiness of these interpretations;
4. Construct a worthwhile argument or story;
5. Relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature;
6. Convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story;
7. Provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments.

Certain limitations are linked to case study. One limitation is that case study appears to result in a narrow knowledge base that cannot be used to form patterns or generalisations (Shuttleworth, 2008). However, as a case is a bounded system, case study research is a process of narration (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). While such narratives may be difficult to summarize into generalisations, they can be analysed (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) for general patterns and emerging themes which reflect complex realities (Flyvbjerg, 2004).

 Another perceived limitation of case study is the concern that the understanding gained through the case study is context-dependent and therefore less valuable than context-independent knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 421). An opposing view to this criticism is that "human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest

end of the learning process" (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 422). The case study offers the researcher and reader a "nuanced view of reality" (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 422).

A further criticism of case study is that it produces a narrative open to bias that only confirms the preconceived ideas of the researcher (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 421). This limitation of case study research is refuted by the ability of case study to "close-in on real life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice" (Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 425).

The strengths of case study research provide a rationale for its selection for this research because case study enables the researcher the opportunity to draw a comprehensive and meaningful account of the phenomena under study through focusing on "holistic description and explanation" (Merriam, 1998, p. 29).

Case study is able to incorporate many different data gathering strategies from which data emerges within a manageable time frame. The initial task of case study methodology is creating the limits of the study, the case, as a single entity around which there are natural boundaries (Merriam, 1998). In this case study the phenomenon is the Special Character of a Catholic school within the boundary of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools. The case provides a supportive role, whereas the information gained from the case gives new understanding of the issue being considered, which in this study is principals' understanding and implementation of Special Character. Therefore, this study is an "instrumental case study" (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p.377).

Having bounded the case for consideration the research methodology of case study has the following characteristics (Merriam, 1998). First, it is particular. It studies the whole unit of the case in its totality and not small fractions or variables of this unit. Second, it is descriptive because it creates a rich description of the issue being studied through the employment of several methods of data gathering to ensure completeness, and to prevent errors and

distortions (Sarantakos, 1998). Third, it is informative. It broadens the researcher's understanding of the issue being studied. This may result in the discovery of new meaning, extend the experience of the researcher, or confirm what is already known.

Case study is an appropriate research methodology for this research because it enables construction of the description of the context experienced by the principal of a Catholic secondary school in New Zealand. It establishes an understanding of how principals understand Special Character and describes their implementations that maintain and enhance the Special Character of the school (Tellis, 1997).

Policy implementation study provides a framework for identifying the construct and the relationships between these constructs that provide an understanding of how individuals and systems implement policy (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). This research concerns how principals implement the policy of Integration to maintain and enhance the Special Character of the school. The ability of the principal to implement Special Character depends greatly on the extent of their "existing knowledge and experience" (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002, p.393). Therefore, the research can be considered a policy implementation study concerning the apparent intention of the Integration Act of government and private schools and the way the Act is ultimately actioned (O'Toole, 2000).

However, this research project uses case study as an interpretive tool. The purpose of the research is to explore the Special Character understandings and implementation experiences of the New Zealand Catholic secondary school principals in this study, rather than to present broad generalizations about all Catholic school principals (Tellis, 1997). By collecting and inductively studying rich, descriptive data patterns, themes emerge about the understandings of Special Character held by Catholic principals and how they implement Catholic character in their schools. Through this methodology the voice of the principals is heard and meanings and responses negotiated.

5.4 PARTICIPANTS

Participant selection is guided by the chosen methodology of a study. The criteria for participants in case study are set by the bounded system which forms the case under investigation (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the bounded system is the New Zealand Catholic secondary schools. This bounded system was chosen because of the researcher's familiarity with the system. There are two groups of stakeholders within the case. Members from both stakeholder groups were invited to participate.

Members of the NZCEO Special Character review committee (n=20)

Principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools (n=49)

5.4.1 NZCEO SPECIAL CHARACTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Members of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office [NZCEO] Catholic Special Character review committee have the responsibility "to provide assurance to proprietors and to parents/caregivers that their schools are authentically Catholic" (NZCEO, 2009). Membership of the group comprises delegates of bishops from each of the six dioceses of New Zealand. This includes the six diocesan directors of Catholic education, the Auckland and Wellington Vicars for Education, Special Character and review support officers from three dioceses, reviewers (some of whom are past principals of Catholic schools), the director of the National Centre for Religious Studies responsible to the New Zealand Bishops' Conference for the Religious Education curriculum, and members of NZCEO who are mandated by the New Zealand Bishops to co-ordinate the review and development process.

All members of the committee were invited to participate in this study. These participants provided reference material regarding Special Character and the place of schools in the mission of the Church as they know both Church and civil law regarding Special Character in New Zealand State integrated schools. They have experience in the enhancing and maintaining of Special Character in schools, the observation of how this is carried out in many schools and the responsibility of ensuring that Special Character is supported

and strengthened in all Catholic schools. Members of the review committee are experts in Special Character as the Church and Government vision it, and have an overall picture of how it is expressed in Catholic schools.

5.4.2 Principals of New Zealand Catholic Secondary Schools

There are 49 Catholic secondary schools in New Zealand. The principals of these schools have a range of experience in the role from 38 years to those newly appointed. Their insights are important because they are responsible to the Catholic Church, the Government, and the parents of the school community to maintain and enhance the Special Character of the school.

Table 5.2 presents the possible participants in the study.

Table 5.2: The Possible Participants in the Research

Stakeholders						
Proprietors of NZ Catholic integrated schools	Diocesan Directors of Catholic Education	Vicar of Education Auckland & Wellington	Special Character & review officers Auckland, Palmerston North, Christchurch	Diocesan reviewers of Special Character employed & contracted	Director National Centre of Religious Studies	CEO & Deputy New Zealand Catholic Education Office
	6	2	3	6	1	2
Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools	1-5 years' service	6-10 years' service	11-15 years' service	16-20 years' service	21-25 years' service	26+ years' service
	18	12	9	7	2	1

All possible participants from the two stakeholder groups were invited to participate in the research. To ensure representation across a variety of experiences of Catholic schools principals of the Archdiocese of Wellington (N = 9) were individually invited to volunteer to be in the Principal Focus Group and/or be interviewed. The principals of schools in other dioceses (N= 40) were invited to complete the questionnaire.

5.5 DATA GATHERING STRATEGIES

Data gathering strategies are the methods that a researcher adopts to gain information that will enable them to respond to the research questions. The following data collection strategies are used in this study: focus groups, interviews, and questionnaire.

5.5.1 FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are a design strategy where a moderator leads a small group of individuals in examining how participants think and feel about a topic. Ideally a focus group has from six to twelve participants. Focus groups are used to identify issues and themes (Johnson & Christensen, 2004) by allowing participants to contribute to a combined local perspective of the issues. They enable the researcher to listen for content and emotions thereby learning or confirming meanings constructed by participants (Grudens-Schuck, Allen, & Larson, 2004).

In this study two specific focus groups were conducted. First, an expert focus group where membership is based on the particular expertise of participants regarding the Special Character of Catholic schools in New Zealand. Second, a principal focus group whose membership is taken from the principals of secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Wellington.

Expert focus groups are established in order to gather specialised background information that assists in answering the research questions and the responses of later participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Volunteer participants from the NZCEO Catholic Special Character review committee form the expert focus group for this study. This committee comprises representatives from across the New Zealand Catholic education system who are responsible for providing the framework and expert guidance for diocesan agencies to audit the Special Character of the Catholic schools in their dioceses. Committee members are experienced and knowledgeable about Church and Government's expectations of the Special Character of New

Zealand Catholic schools. They have an overview of the way Special Character is maintained and enhanced in New Zealand Catholic schools and the apparent role of principal leadership in these processes.

The second focus group in this study is made up of volunteer participants from the Archdiocese of Wellington Catholic Secondary School Principals' Association. This focus group brings a variety of experiences of leadership of a Catholic secondary school and provides a broad range and depth of perspectives on both the role of the principal and their experiences in Special Character implementation.

5.5.2 INDIVIDUAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Interviews are a data gathering strategy that provides in-depth information about a single individual, which is comprehensive but isolated (Grudens-Schuck, et al., 2004). An interview presumes that the participant has some insight, understanding, or information that the researcher requires (Partington, 2001). A semi-structured interview is a form of interview where the researcher uses an interview guide as a framework for starting the interview and, from responses made by the participant and their own knowledge and experience, constructs further questions to seek clarity and depth of meaning. The use of set open questions in a semi-structured interview provides opportunities for participants to contribute detailed responses that reflect their constructed meaning. The semi-structured nature also enables a researcher to follow up responses with prompts and probes in order to gain understanding of participants' experiences and actions so that they may place themselves in the shoes of the interviewee (Grudens-Schuck, et al., 2004).

In this study members of the principal focus group are invited to participate in an individual semi-structured interview. The invitation issued at the conclusion of the group interview, and issued to those members of the principal association not present, provides an opportunity for participants to expand their responses and for the researcher to seek clarity and ask additional questions particular to an individual's particular context. Further

perspectives on the Special Character understandings and implementation experiences of principals obtained from these individual interviews contribute to the research.

Individual interviews are conducted at a time mutually agreed to by the participants and the researcher. The participants determine the venue where they would be most comfortable.   Lasting approximately one hour the interview is audio recorded and the researcher also took notes. Participants were allocated a letter in place of their name so that their identity remained confidential. All data are aggregated. The details of how the interviews were to be conducted, and how the data and notes are securely were conveyed to participants in the letter inviting them to participate (see Appendix Biii).

5.5.3 QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaires are a data gathering strategy for collecting information from individual participants (Scheuren, 2004). Researchers use questionnaires to determine thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and intentions of participants. They are exploratory in nature and have the potential to provide rich information (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Using questionnaires data are collected through standardized procedures so that each participant is asked the same question in the same way, thus is produced an overall picture of the experiences of the participants as a group rather than as individuals (Scheuren, 2004).

The advantages of using questionnaires to collect data are: the ability to collect data from a large number of people no matter where they are located (Cresswell, 2002), the absence of interview bias, and the opportunity for participants to reflect on their answers. In this study, every Catholic secondary school principal in New Zealand who had not been invited to participate through interview or focus group was invited to participate in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about principals' understanding and implementation of Special Character. A maximum of only nine interviews could be carried out in this study. The use

of a questionnaire enabled all 49 New Zealand Catholic secondary school principals to choose to participate in the research and contribute to the narrative of how they understand and implement Special Character in their schools.

The disadvantages of questionnaires are that they are reliant on the goodwill and motivation of the participants to complete and return them, and the researcher has no opportunity to seek clarity or prompt participants. Similarly, participants have no mechanism to query the method, purpose or meaning of the questions (Walonick, 2010). To minimize the possibility that this study might be affected these issues the questionnaire was carefully designed and constructed. A questionnaire is well constructed when it directly addresses the research purpose, and when it maximizes response rate by ensuring that it is not overly long and therefore encourages participant completion. The use of information from both focus groups and the interview phases of data gathering also aided the questionnaire design (Walonick, 2010).

Central to the ability of the questionnaire to inform the research purpose are the questions themselves as the types of questions asked determine the information gained. Careful consideration was made to construct questions that were non-threatening, that asked for manageable 'bits' of information, that could accommodate all possible answers, that were not ambiguous to participants, and that made no assumptions nor indicated a preferred answer (Walonick, 2010). To ensure that the questions were well constructed the questionnaire was pilot tested before distribution to participants. This trial on a representative group enabled the researcher to make changes according to feedback (Cresswell, 2002). The pilot test for this study consisted of three recently retired New Zealand Catholic secondary school principals. Although no longer directly involved in Catholic school education they brought the 'eyes' of experience to the questionnaire. Their recent experiences and understanding of the New Zealand Catholic education system enabled them to critique the questionnaire so that it provided 'rich' data to meet the purpose of the study because the questions had been carefully considered. It was

assumed that as respondents participated voluntarily in the research their responses were honest.

The lack of research on Special Character understandings and implementation by principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools influenced the decision to use a questionnaire as a data gathering strategy. As this is the first significant research in this area, a questionnaire administered to all secondary school principals provided significant descriptive data, as well as data specific to the principals' understanding of Special Character. A questionnaire provided an efficient way of collecting data from as many principals as possible on a national scale (See Appendix Cv).

The purpose of this study is to gain understanding into the Special Character understanding and implementation frameworks of Catholic secondary school principals. These experiences occur within an essentially social context and an interpretative theoretical perspective was employed as the lens by which the research questions were addressed. The data gathering strategies of the expert focus group, the principal focus group, and the questionnaire provided a rich mix of material to meet the research purpose. Each data gathering strategy provided material that complemented the material of other strategies enabling a broader understanding to inform the research problem (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

5.5.5 RESEARCHER AS DATA GATHERING STRATEGY

Central to face-to-face data gathering strategies such as interviews and focus groups is the data-gathering role of the researcher. As data gatherer, the researcher both gathers the data and engages with it allowing the narrative to emerge (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003). The narrative emerges because of the awareness of the institutional history and culture held by the researcher. This enables a deeper level of understanding of the participants. Awareness occurs when the researcher appreciates the shorthand used in shared stories and the participants' context. Interviews facilitated by researchers who are

part of the context are based on professional relationships where trust and rapport are already established so that participants are able to share honestly (Edwards, 1999).

There are challenges in the data-gathering role of the researcher. Lack of awareness of personal bias and the influencing of participants' answers by personal attitudes and responses can arise from the position that the researcher has previously established. In this study these challenges are mitigated because the three values of respect, self-determination and confidentiality underpin the research (Edwards, 1999). It needs to be noted that the researcher did not take on the role of Catholic Special Character reviewer for the Diocese of Auckland until some years after the data of this research had been obtained.

The researcher's principal responsibility is to collect and analyse data in order that the narrative emerges. The narrative emerges because of the explicit background the researcher contributes to the data gathering (Merriam, 1998). The explicit background the researcher brings to this study is 25 years involvement in the New Zealand Catholic education system in various roles. The researcher has worked alongside various participants and knew the majority of them but has never held any position of authority over any of the them. Over the years shared work has helped to develop mutual respect between participants and the researcher. This sense of collegiality and collaboration helps the researcher and participants to negotiate the narrative that is shaped by the context of the Catholic education system of New Zealand.

Table 5.3 presents a summary of the participants and the data collection strategies employed.

Table 5.3: Research Participants and Data-gathering Strategies.

Category of Participants	Data Collection Strategies			
	Number of participants experts	Number of participants principal focus group	Individual interviews	Questionnaire
Expert focus group	n=20			
Principal focus group		n=9	n=9	
Other principals of NZ Catholic secondary schools				n=40
TOTAL	20	9	9	40

5.6 ANALYSING THE DATA

Data analysis is the process where data collected is constructed into some form of explanation, understanding and/or interpretation of people and situations within a study. Data analysis requires the thoughtful management of data so that the way participants construct meaning of the world, themselves, and others is understood (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). By examining the content of the data, themes are generated in order that an awareness emerges of why things are as they have been found. This is illustrative of a cycle of noticing what themes the data generate, reflecting on what is generated, and looking at other data including newly collected data. This creates a "sorting and sifting" that responds to the research questions (Lictman, 2006). Therefore, data analysis can be described as a complex process that involves "moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between

inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation"
(Merriam, 1998, p. 178). This process is demonstrated in Figure 5.1.
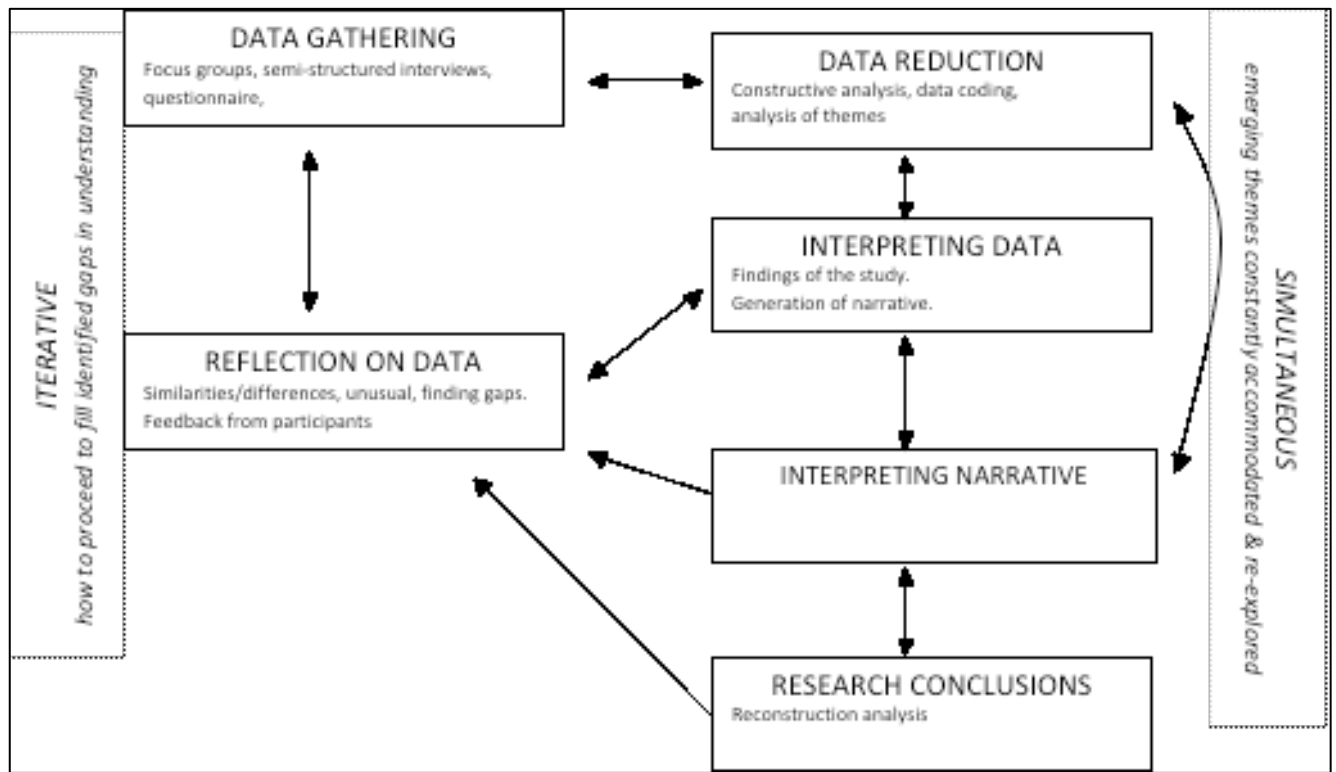
Figure 5.1: The Data Analysis Process

The data analysis process shown in Figure 5.1 demonstrates the importance
of constantly reviewing the research in order to organise, analyse and
interpret data (Lictman, 2006). This process occurs simultaneously and
iteratively (Creswell, 2002) using constant comparative analysis.

Constant comparative data analysis is a strategy of refining blocks of data
through inductive analysis in which relationship between data is established,
analysed and continually refined (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, & Coleman,
2000). By use of coding constant comparative data analysis enables
categories to emerge out of the data rather than categories being imposed on
data. The emergent categories require a continual process of defining and
redefining by specifying and changing the criteria for assigning data
Data is assigned to categories through coding (Dye et al., 2000).

Coding is a first step to analysing interpretative data. Its purpose is to give meaning to the research through relating ideas emergent from the data by gathering and sorting all the material of a case (Richards, 2009). The first stage of coding begins with a large amount of data that is dissected and categorised into a large number of codes which are then clustered and organised into categories and sub-categories (Lictman, 2006).

Codes are derived from source data such as raw interview transcripts. Axial coding follows this open coding. Axial coding is the process of re-examining and refining codes in order that relationships between categories emerge. From axial coding a general response to the research problem emerges (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). Selective coding follows this identification of connections and linkages between categories and is the system that enables the core category to arise. The core category is the one that appears frequently and to which the other categories relate. By using open, axial and selective coding the Special Character, understandings, and implementation experiences of principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools emerges.

Data analysis begins as the research begins, while constant comparative data analysis occurs at all times. As information is gathered from the focus groups themes begin to emerge from open coding of the raw data. Semi-structured interviews provide more data for coding and as the categories emerge similarities, difference and relationships between data become apparent and enable the beginning of the narrative. The telling of the story of the principals' experiences begins to take shape as selective coding is administered in order to create themes. Further constant comparative analysis occurs as the data from the questionnaire is introduced and discussion about Special Character understandings and implementation develops.

5.6.1 SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process and interpretation (Lictman, 2006) of material collected through the research method to systematically bring order and

understanding so that the purpose of the research can be met. This study uses a mixed method approach within case study methodology to examine the perception of Special Character and its implementation by New Zealand Catholic secondary school principals.

Data analysis is complex and interactive as Table 5.3 demonstrates, with the phases of research, the data gathering strategies carried out during each phase and the stages of data analysis occurring throughout this study.

Table 5.4: Summary of Data Gathering Strategies and Analysis

Research Phase		Stages of data gathering and its *analysis*	
Phase 1: Exploratory	Expert focus group	Stage 1:	*Gathering* specialised information from the expert focus group.
		Stage 2:	*Analyse* responses for trends and patterns. - Review principal focus group questions in accordance with findings.
	Principal focus group	Stage 3:	Gathering current practice information from principal focus group.
		Stage 4:	*Analyse* responses for trends, patterns and concepts.
		Stage 5:	Use information and understanding gained in stages 2 and 4 to inform construction of interview questions.
Phase 2	Interviews - volunteer principals	Stage 6:	Individual in-depth interviews with volunteers from principal focus group.
	Trial Representatives	Stage 7:	*Analyse* data collected for; confirmation, challenges and new: trends, patterns and concepts. - Use understandings to critique questionnaire.

		Stage 8:	Give trial questionnaire representatives. Use f*eedback* to finalise questionnaire.
	Questionnaire	Stage 9:	Send questionnaire sent to all New Zealand Catholic secondary school principals outside Archdiocese of Wellington.
		Stage 10:	*Analyse* data gathered in stage 9.
Phase 3: Story Writing	Report Writing	Stage 11:	*Analyse* the analysis made in stages 2,4,7,10,11 to finalise themes and concepts.
		Stage 12:	*Interpret* the *analysis*. Write the story of the experience of understandings and implementation of Special Character of Catholic secondary school principals.

5.7 VERIFICATION

Integral to quality research is that it is valid, reliable, and ethically produced. This is key to all aspects of the research design including the way data are collected, analysed, interpreted, and presented (Merriam, 1998). In case study methodology trustworthiness, rather than reliability and validity, establishes the integrity of the research. Trustworthiness can be provided through procedures such as prolonged engagement with the data, persistent observation of emerging themes, checking of data with sources, triangulation of data, provision of a clear audit trial (Cresswell & Clark, 2007).

In this study, the checking of the quality of the data and the narrative that emerges is made by establishing trails of evidence and making links between the research questions, data analysis and themes drawn from the data. This was achieved by laying an audit trail. The audit trail comprised the unedited transcripts of focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaire answers alongside the relevant researcher's notes (Cresswell & Clark, 2007).

A professional peer checked the coding of raw material for discrepancies and researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

A further validity check was made through triangulation. Triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection to gain a better and clearer understanding of a phenomenon or the particular people and the setting being studied. In this study, triangulation was achieved through the comparison of data obtained from focus groups, individual interviews, and questionnaires (Bassey, 1999).

Member checking where the researcher takes summaries of the emerging narrative back to key participants for feedback was also employed in order to validate the research (Lather, 1993). Another validation step used was the reporting of "discomforting evidence" (Cresswell & Clark, 2007, p. 136). Discomforting evidence is the data that shows divergence and does not fit the dominant emerging themes. This is important to validity because it ensures that the research design is not biased to a pre-determined outcome. How these steps of trustworthiness relate to the research are summarized in Table 5.5 (Bassey, 1999, p. 75).

Table 5.5: Trustworthiness of Data

Collection of data:
Has there been prolonged engagement with data sources?
Has there been persistent observation of emerging issues?
Have raw data been adequately checked with their sources?
Analysis of data:
Has there been sufficient triangulation of raw data leading to analytical statements?
Interpretation of analytical statements:
Has the working hypothesis, or evaluation or emerging story been systematically tested against analytical statements?
Has a critical friend thoroughly tried to challenge the findings?

> **Reporting the research:**
>
> > Is the account of the research sufficiently detailed to give the reader confidence in the finding?
> >
> > Does the case study record provide an adequate audit trail?

A process in establishing this study's trustworthiness was achieved through using the responses to the questions posed in Figure 5.2 to meet the four criteria of validity. The four criteria of validity are credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability. Credibility is derived from the research narrative being believable from the perspective of the research participants. Research that describes the context and assumptions underpinning the study so that a third person can use the results to generalise to new contexts gives the research transferability. Case studies are unique and cannot be replicated because the context is unique. Dependability occurs when the research takes account of this ever-changing context that the research occurs in. When there is a degree of confirmation or corroboration from other studies the research has confirmability (Kumar, 2011; Trochim, 2006).

5.8   ETHICAL ISSUES

This research study follows the ethical protocols established by the Australian Catholic University. Ethics approval was sought from the ACU Research Project Ethics Committee. Approval was gained 17 April, 2012 [19] The participants were volunteers who were guaranteed confidentiality and privacy. All identifying marks have been removed in the report.

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[19] Ethics Approval 2012 35Q (See Appendix A).

5.9 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter describes and examines the research design used to explore New Zealand Catholic secondary school principals' understanding of Special Character and how they implement Special Character in their schools. In order to gain understanding of the research problem, case study was chosen as the research methodology. Focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaire are the data gathering strategies used. The resulting data was analysed through the interpretivism perspective of symbolic interactionism leading to the emergence of a narrative answering the research questions. Table 5.4 provides a general overview of the research design.

Table 5.6: General Overview of Research Design

		Research Phase	Data Gathering Strategies	Source of Data	Analysis of Data	Timeframe
Research Purpose: To explore the infrastructures used by Catholic education authorities, to guarantee the Special Character of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools.						
General Research Question: How do NZ secondary principals understand Special Character and implement it in their schools?		Exploratory	Principal focus group	Semi-structured group interview, questions informed by literature review & researcher experience.	Open coding to dissect data and begin categorising into themes.	Term 2, 2012
			Expert focus group	Semi-structured group interview, questions informed by literature review & information.	Constant comparison analysis, open & axil coding.	Term 2, 2012
		Clarification	Interviews	Interview guide constructed from information gained in exploratory data gathering phase.	Constant comparison coding to refine concepts & re-examine exploratory phase data.	Term 2 2012
			Questionnaire	Questions informed by literature review, previous data gathering strategies i.e. emerging themes and concepts.	Data collated, analysed, verified with constant comparison including information from other data gathering strategies.	End of term 3, 2012

CHAPTER SIX: NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present issues that invite discussion emerging from the exploration of how principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools understand and implement Special Character in their schools. What is reported in this chapter is the researcher's justified consideration of the participants' appreciation of how the principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools understand and implement Special Character in their schools. To explore this problem the research conducted was interpretative. Described as the double hermeneutic (Giddens, 2000) this recognises that the research results are not 'found' but negotiated, or construed by the researcher's engagement with the various perspectives of multiple participants. An appropriate title for this chapter is therefore 'New Understandings' rather than the traditional title 'Research Findings'. The data were collected using focus groups, semi-structured interviews and questionnaire responses.

6.2 THE PARTICIPANTS

Each participant was assured anonymity and confidentiality. The following coding was used to protect the identity of respondents. The expert focus group met on 17 July 2012. Responses from the expert focus group are represented by 'EFG'. Responses from the principal focus group which gathered on 7 June 2012 are represented by 'PFG'. Principals were interviewed during June 2012. Each principal interviewed was represented by 'IP' followed by a distinct letter: for example, 'IPA' denotes a response from principal A's interview. Three of those in this focus group were also interviewed. Three other principals interviewed had not been part of the principal focus group. In total nine principals from the Archdiocese of Wellington participated. Eleven principals from outside the Archdiocese participated through the questionnaire. In total 20 Principals of the 49 participated. Responses from a questionnaire response are denoted 'Q#'

where the symbol '#' indicates a specific questionnaire response. The on-line questionnaire was open from 25 October to 25 November 2012. Invitations were sent to 40 principals to respond to the questionnaire, 11 responded. This is an acceptable 27% response rate (FluidSurveys Team, 2014). In total 20 principals participated in this study. This is a 40% response rate. Table 6.1 presents a summary of the possible and actual research participants.

Table 6.1: The Research Participants

Data-Gathering Strategy	Archdiocese of Wellington (ADW) Principals	NZCEO Catholic Special Character committee	Principals of NZ Catholic Secondary Schools outside ADW	Principals of NZ Catholic Secondary Schools	Total participant numbers
Focus groups	6	11			
Interview	(3 from Focus Group) 3 not part of Focus Group				
Questionnaire			11		
Combined Totals	9	11	11	20	
					31

6.3 STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

The structure employed to present the new understandings uses the research questions generated from the synthesis of the literature as a framework for exploring emergent themes. Table 6.2 illustrates this framework for presenting new understandings.

Table 6.2: Framework for Presenting the New Understandings

Principals' understanding of the term Special Character.	Principal implementation of Special Character.	The Catholic school and Mission.
Gospel based education	Practical manifestations	Understanding the school context
Catholic faith community	Creating a community of faith	
Point of difference	Principal formation	School leadership
Catholic identity	Challenges	Particular concerns

6.4 ANALYSIS OF EMERGENT THEMES: RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Four consistent themes emerged from the data relating to what principals understand by the term 'Special Character'. These were Gospel based education, Catholic faith community, point of difference and Catholic identity. They are summarised in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Datum Codes, Emergent and Synthesised Themes Research Question 1

PARTICIPANTS	CODE	EMERGENT THEMES	SYNTHESISED THEMES
Principal focus group	*more than classroom, social awareness, family/school share values, WWJD?, Gospel central, positive relationships, cross curricular*	*Gospel Values* *Values modelled*	Gospel based education

Principal interviews / questionnaires	place of RE, guiding framework, role modelling, unafraid God talk, Gospel values important, different NZC values, Jesus reason	Christ centred education Values beyond NZ curriculum	Gospel based education
Expert focus group	**relationship with Jesus, witness to Christ, practical examples, policy & practice, public perceptions**	**Special Character is observed**	
Principal focus group	*across school life, disengaged families, relevance, preaching/teaching, caught behaviour, spiritual formation, school as parish, preference*	*Responsibilities of school* *Unchurched families*	
Principal interviews/ questionnaires	being Catholic, way we are, practicing Catholic, S65 Form, Church compliance, order initiative, sacramental preparation, sacramental opportunities, seeing God in all	Church & Special Character School-proprietor relationship Sacramental life	Catholic faith community
Expert focus group	**inclusive, dignity of people, relationships, pride being Catholic, loss Catholic community**	**Relationship school & Church**	
Principal focus group	*handover responsibility, popular schools, lack parent support, preference, like environment, feel difference*	*Popular school choice*	Point of Difference

Principal interviews / questionnaires	need parent induction, perceived better school, parent responsibilities, discipline system, additional principal responsibility, unrealistic expectations on principals	Distinctive principal role Parents & Special Character Integration Act	Point of Difference
Expert focus group	**High level pastoral care, good schools, high profile, good publicity, wanted, ERO,**	**Public view Catholic schools**	
Principal focus group	*being Catholic, cross curricula, staff formation, tension, do things RC way, religious memory, charism, fading influence, religious vs Catholic school*	*Enculturation*	Catholic identity
Principal interviews / questionnaires	faith stuff, guiding attitudes, tagged teachers, challenges to implement, presence religious, support orders, lack of BOT knowledge	Staff & Special Character Role charism BOT & Special Character	
Expert focus group	**critical mass, common good, Integration, role of NZCEO, affirmation, media publicity, brand Catholic**	**School as witness**	

6.4.1 GOSPEL BASED EDUCATION

A consensus emerged that Gospel values are an important component to Special Character. These values are presented to students and wider society as the basis of key relationships between members of the school community, and as the framework by which decisions are made within the school. This framework has at its heart values that can challenge young people because "the trends teenagers embrace rarely are connected to Catholic values" (Q6). Young people challenged to incorporate the values of the school into their own lives may point out that it is not their choice to be at a Catholic school, because the decision was made by their parents (IPB). Parents choose a Catholic school knowing that it has a 'Catholic' Special Character and "buy into it because they want those values for their children" (IPC).

The data confirmed the importance principals gave to their personal ability to "walk the talk and emphasise Gospel values, and in that way 'preach' the Gospel through the example of daily life" (IPA). Principals considered this role-modelling of Gospel values an integral part of their support and maintenance of Special Character.

Special Character is the value system that guides all that a Catholic school does. This value system is derived from the Gospels as distinct from the values presented in the New Zealand Curriculum that each State school is charged to nurture and develop (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2011, p.8). An effort was made to match New Zealand Curriculum values to Gospel values in particular through the Religious Education curriculum documents (NCRS, 2012). Respondents saw this effort as forced "religiousising" of Government expectations to fit a perceived need of the Church community to own values (PFG).

It was noted "Catholics do not have a monopoly on values" (PFG). For values to be a distinguishing feature of the Special Character the practical manifestations need to be distinctively Catholic. This is expressed through a Catholic way of doing things otherwise "we could be looking at good Christian schools not Catholic schools" (PFG).

6.4.2 CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY

The Catholic faith community was broadly recognised as an important aspect of Special Character. Principals understood Special Character as the means by which their school became a community of faith within the Catholic tradition. However, there were contrasting understandings of how being a Catholic faith community is part of Special Character. It was expressed "that Special Character in Catholic schools is going to be a major part of the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand" (IPD). There was an inference by some respondents that the future of the Catholic Church was dependent on Catholic schools because "Special Character and the mission of the Church, well schools are probably the guiding light of what the Church is all about" (PFG). It was also implied by some respondents that the Catholic school was the Church (EFG).

This expression contrasted with an emphasis by other respondents that Special Character enabled schools to express Catholic faith and, participate in the sacramental life and evangelising mission of the Church (IPB). While providing an opportunity for "front line evangelisation" (PFG) this view perceived Catholic schools as being one of the "tools of the Church" (PFG) to reach out to families disconnected from parish life. All respondents expressed recognition that for an increasing number of students "the school is the face of the Church" (EFG).

Principals gave little indication that the Catholic faith community was the arbitrator of what Special Character meant under the *Integration Act* (1975). Neither was it apparent through responses that the local Bishop had a particular role in ensuring that the Special Character of a school was maintained and enhanced. Some principals considered that the Special Character compliance documentation required by Church authorities were burdensome and of little use in maintaining Special Character. "Hierarchy! – the system seems to think forms make it all right, that we will all go dancing into the sunset singing Alleluia. But it's not about faith" (IPA).

A number of principal respondents considered that the issues of buildings and plants were an important feature of the Special Character of a school (IPA). This consideration was expressed as frustration with their particular school's access to common funds to improve school facilities. Such frustration was expressed when questions were asked about the support principals received from diocesan authorities to implement and support Special Character (IPC). Church authorities, even when they administer the funds for school buildings, do not express this responsibility in terms of support for Special Character (EFG).

6.4.3 POINT OF DIFFERENCE

The Government requires that a State integrated school demonstrate that it has a point of difference from other State schools. This difference is called "Special Character" (PSCIA, 1975 # 2,1). Principals viewed Special Character as being the point of difference that identified their school as being unique and demonstrated "what we are on about" (IPE) to the wider community. Principals made little reference to their responsibilities to the Government for maintaining their point of difference. Principal respondents did not name the *Integration Act* in their discussion. There was an almost unanimous expression that the point of difference Catholic schools offered was the ability to "express Christian faith in the Catholic tradition without apology" (Q1).

This distinction reflects the impression principals expressed that Government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education and Education Review Office, "don't understand and don't care" (IPA) about Special Character. The Education Review Office is charged with reporting "on the special Catholic character of the school" (ERO, 2003, p.1) and their reports contain "positive comments about the school's Special Catholic Character" (ERO, 2003, p.5). The impression principals gave was that as long as a school met its legal requirements in teaching and learning, Special Character was acknowledged and passed over by Government review officers (IPD).

This lack of audit from Government authorities contrasted sharply with Catholic authority audits. These were seen as a "helpful process in that it happens every three years and we take up aspects ourselves in our own self-review. I think that gives quite a good framework for thinking about Special Character in school" (IPB). The reviews also provided the National Catholic Education Office with evidence of best practice trends and concerns, with respect to Special Character (EFG).

Furthermore, principals considered the opportunity to be part of the Special Character review team's audit of a school, other than their own, a valuable formation experience. It was "very important and a great help" (IPE). The overall impression from the data is that the point of difference generated by the implementation of Special Character is of less importance to Government education authorities compared with Catholic education authorities. As a consequence, "ERO do not do look at a thing about Special Character… they will leave that up to the diocese" (IPD).

6.4.5 CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Special Character expresses the Catholic identity of a school. This identity is influenced by the charism of the religious congregations involved in the establishment of a particular school. A charism is the "particular flavour of living the Gospel" (IPB) and "gives clear definition of Special Character" (IPC). A concern expressed was that in an effort to be loyal to the charism of a particular founding congregation students were given confused messages regarding faith "we do not have a [named charism] faith but a Catholic faith" (PFG). The linking between the charism of congregations and the mission of Christ within the Church can be lost, there is a danger that the Special Character of the school is not explicitly Catholic but a "watered down version" (PFG). However, overall the Special Character of a school presents a unique expression of a Catholic worldview as embodied by a particular school community. This unique worldview is expressed through a school's

relationships and ways of behaving "it is an all-encompassing concept and the primary reason for being" (Q5).

This uniqueness is the Catholic school's identity. When explaining the implementation of Special Character in the school, principals named a variety of activities that they saw as expressing this Catholic identity (PFG). These included, but were not limited to: the provision of Social Justice activities, regular prayer, Mass and other sacramental occasions, and freedom to talk about God and religion (PFG). Catholic identity is an important consideration when appointing staff (IPD) that would support Special Character as well as at times of staff and student orientation (IPA). The narrative of the principals supported the idea that there was a particular Catholic way of doing things. All schools, State integrated or not, take care to appoint staff that will suit the school culture, and they make efforts to orientate staff and students to their way of doing things. The implication of responses suggested that in a Catholic school this was both more important and better done because of the distinguishable Catholic identity (PFG).

The principal of a Catholic school must meet the responsibilities of the school's Special Character according to the expectations of both the Government and Catholic education authorities. These data indicate that the understandings of the term Special Character held by principals predominantly reflects Church rather than Government expectations. The perception is that Special Character concerns the signs and symbols of being Catholic and doing things the Catholic way to meet Church expectations rather than the need to provide evidence to meet the Special Character obligations of the *Integration Act*. This can be summarised by the response from a principal participant.

> Special Character is the framework around which and on which we hang all that makes us different from state schools. Our Special Character is about being Catholic. It allows us to freely teach, express and live the Gospel values (Q3).

6.5   ANALYSIS OF EMERGENT THEMES: RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Four themes emerged from an analysis of the data around how principals implement Special Character in their schools. The most consistent theme related to how easily principals were able to articulate the practical manifestations of Special Character in their schools. The faith community as an expression of Special Character, the issue of principal formation and the challenges related to implementing Special Character in a Catholic school also emerged as themes. These are summarised in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Datum Codes, Emergent and Synthesised Themes Research Question 2

PARTICIPANTS	CODE	EMERGENT THEMES	SYNTHESISED THEMES
Principal focus group	*how we are,* *outsiders talk about special atmosphere,* *communication with parents,* *public stance,* *website,* *how we make choices,* *written policy,* *social issues,* *RE*	*How things are done* *Policies*	Practical Manifestations
Principal interviews / questionnaires	role modelling, cross curricula, newsletters, influence in policy, assembly, prayer throughout school, Mass, pastoral care, relationships, discipline system	What happens How things happen	
Expert focus group	**relationships,** **family atmosphere,** **success academically,** **images on walls etc.,**	**Concrete things observed by others**	

Principal focus group	*wider than classroom behaviours,* *how others are treated,* *Catholic identity,* *Mass,* *form time,* *staff prayer,* *restorative justice,* *ecumenical*	*Relationships* *Prayer & liturgy* *Involvement of all*	Creating a community of faith
Principal interviews / questionnaires	walking the talk, teachers' role, tagged teachers, offering sacraments, teaching about sacraments, provision of RE, bringing staff onside, explaining what's happening, finding supportive staff	Importance people Tagged teachers Sacramental opportunity	
Expert focus group	**inclusive,** **welcome special needs,** **prepare students sacraments,** **growing SOI,** **preference criteria breadth,** **dignity of individuals,** **retreat provision**	**Evangelisation** **Sacrament of Initiation programmes**	
Principal focus group	*Induction - minimal offered,* *self-sought,* *conferences,* *own expense,* *inequality of provision,* *an added extra,* *academic,* *lack satisfaction,* *spiritual development,* *Catholic mentor,* *tradition*	*Options for leadership study* *Time, money & content issues around formation*	Principal formation

Principal interviews/ questionnaires	experience in CS[20], experience as principal CS, family, self-sought, practising Catholic, MRE/MEdL, retreats, principals' conference & groups, difficulty to manage, time & money issues	Self-directed formation Lack of formation Peer support & formation	
Expert focus group	**importance of induction; local & diocesan, certification, conferences, role NZCEO, professional reading, being in Catholic school, ACU courses, need to understand Special Character**	**Range of formation available**	Principal formation
Principal focus group	*declining numbers /aging clergy, secularism, other things families do, Government/Church/order/ parents/students differing expectations, families handover responsibility for faith, right wing parents, enculturation*	*Range of expectations* *Church -family disengagement*	Challenges
Principal interviews /questionnaires	expectations & systems, money, property issues, parents un-churched, complacency, timetable strain,	Under more than one authority	

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[20] CS Catholic School

Principal interviews /questionnaires	parents support non-compliance, variation in family interest, resentment out of class time, conflict in academic discipline	Excellence requirements in education Competition for students	Challenges
Expert focus group	**loss of Catholic nature, strong Catholic schools, parents' reasons for choosing Catholic school, being Crown entity, openness of preference, academic expectations**	**Range of responsibilities of principal** **Families disinterested in Church**	

6.5.1 PRACTICAL MANIFESTATIONS

A wide range of practical manifestations of Special Character was presented. These were "the tangible ways that tell people what we [the Catholic school] are all about" (Q9). Practical manifestations presented included but were not limited to:

- Prayer as being integral to the life of the school (EFG)
  For example, praying at staff meeting and during pastoral time for five students and a staff member whose photos are on the daily notices (IPB)

- Outreach programmes through Caritas, Young Vinnies, Peer mentoring (EFG)

- Ongoing support for families and communities in times of stress and trouble (EFG).

A number of participants noted that manifestations of Special Character included aspects of school life that were more than "public demonstrations of cultural Catholicism" (EFG). These attitudes and ways of behaving were not easily identified but respondents reported that visitors to the school noticed a difference in behaviour and manner. Respondents attributed these differences to a practical result of implanting and maintaining Special Character.

It was also noted that for Special Character to be evidenced throughout the school all areas of school life had to be immersed in a Catholic worldview including the approach to curriculum content and "developing faith-based activities that enable students to understand, express, lead and engage in their faith" (Q3). Special Character should also influence the way people were treated. "Our young people look at what is going on, not what is written on paper or on a website. They know by 'how I am treated'" (PFG).

An unreflected understanding of the principal's role in supporting Special Character was revealed from some responses. When the question was asked 'How do you as principal implement Special Character in your school?' the majority of respondents concentrated on one off events or actions such as organising a particular Special Character event (IPC), acting in the 'flavour' of the charism/s of the foundation order (IPD) or through what they couldn't get with respect to building requests from Catholic education authorities (IPA). Many of the examples of the implementation and support of Special Character in the day-to-day operation of the school and management policy emerged through responses to other less direct questions.

6.5.2 Creating a Community of Faith

Principals demonstrated that their school was a community of faith within the Catholic tradition, through the policies and structures that incorporated Catholic values and practices into the everyday life of the school. The faith activities of the schools included:

- Mass
- Preparation of students to receive the sacraments of initiation and reconciliation
- School Retreats
- Daily prayer
- Participation in social justice activities.

Principals noted that faith community activities such as retreats could be seen by some staff and families as distractions from the key role of the school-teaching and learning. "There are some [parents] who are not supportive of Catholic values. When it comes to Special Character a note is sent so students do not have to participate" (IPC).

Principals expressed concern about the relationship between local parishes and students because of the diminished engagement of many families with institutional Church. "Significant numbers of preference students are not churched" (IPE). This raised challenges regarding making links between the faith community of the secondary school and local parish and diocesan communities. In urban areas where students are drawn from a number of parish communities across the diocese this was particularly challenging (IPC). Concerns about school and parish often acknowledged that the decreasing number of clergy available to connect with schools in any regular or systematic way resulted in the loss of a link between secondary schools and parishes. "With no priests around school links are hard to establish. There is a growing disconnection between school and the wider Church" (PFG).

Alongside the expression of concerns regarding lack of school-parish contact, frustration was expressed as to how a resolution might be negotiated, particularly given the importance of sacraments to the Catholic faith community and decreasing numbers of priests (IPA).

Further challenges were noted because parents may have chosen a Catholic school for reasons not related to the Catholic nature of the school. Principals noted that this placed stress on the maintenance and enhancement of Special Character because parents might "think Religious Education should not be compulsory as it is not as useful" or consider studying Religious Education takes away subject choice (IPC).

Some principal participants noted that their Special Character leadership was a particular expression of the lay vocation. Acceptance of lay leadership of a school was seen as an expression of the change in the Church's attitude to

the role of the laity resulting from the Second Vatican Council (PFG). Church authorities acknowledged that lay principals had the right, responsibility and ability to lead a Catholic faith community (EFG).

6.5.3 PRINCIPAL FORMATION

A recurring concern concerning principal formation was the appointment of mentors for first-time principals. Principals who had taken up appointment since the instigation of this Government-funded scheme were grateful when their mentor was principal of a Catholic school. Some frustration was expressed if the mentor had not been (IPD). New principals then expressed a need to find another mentor to help with Special Character aspects of the position (PFG). This concern was expressed to the Chief Executive of New Zealand Catholic Education Office so that negotiation with the appropriate Ministry of Education authorities could be sought through the appropriate channels.

The level of support received by principals of schools with a religious congregation as proprietor, at both time of appointment and in an ongoing capacity, varied depending on the congregation. At one end of the scale was full, paid companionship and support to the other end of the passive encouragement to read a particular book (PFG). Principals also expressed concerns that schools that were not founded by a particular congregation had little support outside diocesan initiatives. This lack of support was seen to render such schools as "poor cousins" (PFG).

Some principals expressed a need for professional learning in Special Character that was at more depth than the occasional day course but not as demanding as a full Master's degree (IPE). It was stated that this would make professional learning manageable for those in leadership positions. Time pressure was considered by most respondents to be the greatest barrier to taking up formation experiences, although financial cost was also a deterrent (IPC).

Respondents who had participated in ACU MEdL courses considered that they received minimal input around Catholic leadership or leadership in a Catholic school. They also noted that when such areas are looked at during course work there was little if any engagement with the New Zealand Catholic education system. No reference was made for example to the *Integration Act* (IPE). Some consider these issues to be a deterrent to ongoing study in Special Character (IPE).

Special Character professional learning was predominantly self-selected and principals were proactive in seeking formation opportunities for themselves (IPA). Daily prayer, meditation, spiritual and academic reading, and attendance at Mass were considered important elements of Special Character formation. Of particular value as Special Character formation were the Catholic principals' association meetings and annual conference (PFG). For some principals, these were their only Special Character formation experiences because they "didn't have time to do anything extra, just what I get from local and national Catholic principal gatherings" (Q9). An appreciation of the opportunities to attend Catholic principals' conferences overseas was prominent (IPB).

6.5.4 CHALLENGES

Many challenges existed in implementing Special Character.

> It has become an increasing challenge. At times, it would seem easier to apply for a State school principalship and just give up the struggle. At times, it feels like carrying the world on one's shoulders with not a lot of support *(Q3).*

Principals noted the challenge created by a range of expectations from parents. "Parents like the fruit of Special Character but are not so interested in how they get it" (IPB). Principals observed that at the time of enrolment it was important to make clear the responsibilities of parents concerning the Special Character of the school and ensure that they signed the conditional clause in

the enrolment form (IPE). The conditional clause is a requirement under the *Integration Act.* At the time of enrolment parents/caregivers have to sign an acknowledgement that their child will participate in the "school programme that gives the school its Special Character "(PSCIA, 1975, 5#30). The school programme that gives Catholic schools their Special Character includes attendance at Mass and other liturgies, daily prayer, social justice outreach and Religious Education classes.

The status of Religious Education has improved recently with the provision of nationally-recognised standards as assessment tools. However, some principal participants expressed frustration concerning the dictate of the NZ Catholic Bishops' Conference regarding the amount of time to be timetabled for Religious Education "the timetable is turned upside down to fit RE in. Division sums don't work. I don't think the Bishops understand that" (IPA). An underlying impression was created that there existed a "Dissonance between the school and the church hierarchy in some settings re their relative roles in this post-modern world" (Q5).

A concern was expressed regarding the challenges of appointing candidates to *tagged* positions. Finding candidates who are passionate, active Catholics, willing to take on the witness aspect of *tagged* positions was becoming increasingly difficult. Principals experienced that Catholic candidates for *tagged* positions had little knowledge of Catholic tradition and practices or had a distorted affection for the pre-Vatican II Church (PFG). Reviewers also noted that many *tagged* teachers had little idea that their position was *tagged* and little appreciation of the responsibilities towards Special Character associated with the *tag* (EFG).

Principals reported that some staff resented time taken from teaching and learning for Special Character activities, including the provision of time for the teaching of Religious Education. In order to minimise this challenge principals noted the importance of setting high expectations for Special Character support at the time of interview and appointment of staff. Principals also commented that the level of commitment to Special Character by staff was not

aligned to religious affiliation (IPD). There were teachers who by baptism met the requirements to hold a *tagged* position but disillusionment with the institutional Church made them less supportive (IPE). These and other teachers were not openly against Special Character initiatives but acted in passive aggressive ways that created challenges to those responsible for the maintenance and support of Special Character (IPB). Correspondingly, examples were shared of staff who were not Catholic, in some instances not Christian, who took the responsibility of supporting Special Character very well including reverent participation in liturgy (IPA).

Challenges emerged regarding the relationship of the Catholic school with Church authorities. There was an impression that Church authorities were out of touch with the school as faith community (IPD). Due to this disconnection, it was noted that requests from Church authorities to schools regarding Special Character, including compliance documentation, appeared unrealistically demanding (IPC). There was some suggestion that the current methods of supporting schools to maintain and enhance Special Character were out-dated in methodology and not particularly effective because they were heavily dependent on the personality and expertise of persons appointed to advisory and other positions (IPB).

Although there was a common thread of dissatisfaction with the support structures offered to schools, there were mixed levels of agreement about the expectations placed on schools by Church authorities for Special Character. A strong dissenting voice expressed satisfaction that these high expectations rightly made Catholic schools accountable for Special Character (IPB).

6.6 ANALYSIS OF EMERGENT THEMES: RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Three themes emerged from the data gathered concerning how Catholic education authorities understand the role of the Catholic school in mission: an understanding of the school context within the wider Church community, the importance of leadership of the school, and the particular concerns about

maintaining and enhancing Catholic Special Character in a Government education system. The data revealed the specific challenges that were due to a diversity of understandings within these themes that are summarised in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Datum Codes, Emergent and Synthesised Themes Research Question 3

PARTICIPANT	CODE	EMERGENT THEMES	SYNTHESISED THEMES
Principal focus group	*schools crucial to Ch future, expressed through charism, changing relationship family to Ch, guardians of faith*	*Catholic schools & mission*	Understanding the school context
Principal interviews / questionnaires	changing expectations, changing Ch, school as parish, preference criteria	Special Character & Church authorities	
Expert focus group	**evangelising, sacramental preparation, handing on faith, restorative justice, Christ centred, prayer, educational excellence, reign of God, Catholic world-view, integration of life & faith**	**School part of mission** **Role of Special Character** **Evidence of Special Character**	
Principal focus group	*need for possible principal identification, move from State experience to Catholic system, formation not easily available, organise own formation, mixed support from founding congregations*	*Formation leadership opportunities*	School Leadership

Principal interviews/ questionnaires	Special Character review, decline in family /Ch links fewer religious present, story of integration fading, particular challenges of CS	Role of laity in school leadership	School Leadership
Expert focus group	**principalship as vocation, importance peer support, Catholic principal groups, osmosis of skills, uniqueness of role, succession issues**	**How leadership is understood** **Principal support**	
Principal focus group	*relevance of Ch message, principal as witness, disengaged families, layers of accountability, struggle to form staff*	*School only connection of many families with Church*	Particular concerns
Principal interviews / questionnaires	tagged teachers, common good, bishops lack understanding, family expectations, Church expectations, league tables, teachers Catholic in name only	Support for Special Character	
Expert focus group	**availability of formation, lack of compulsion, ignorance Catholic faith, need of Catholic mentor, understanding Integration**	**Barriers to formation** **Gaps in formation**	

6.6.1 UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Despite the theoretical concept of family-school-parish partnership the school is increasingly becoming the primary contact with the Church for many families. This places schools at the forefront of evangelisation. Such evangelisation requires encouragement and support in what is predominantly a lay led venture (PFG) and "implies that the Catholic school is the passer on of faith" (EFG).

A recent shift in the acceptance of this dynamic by Church authorities was noted. In the past, there had been a perceived reluctance on behalf of the administrators of Catholic education to acknowledge the school as a community of faith. The school was seen as part of the parish or diocese, products of the Church's mission activity. As this understanding had changed to recognize "the primary community of faith has become the school" (Drennan, 2011), so too had the appreciation of the evangelising role of the Catholic school. "Catholic schools are not products of the Church's missionary activity. They are agents, engaged in the satisfying task of forming a new generation of believers, disciples and evangelisers" (Drennan, 2011).

Church authorities expressed a general appreciation that the "evangelical mission of the Church provides curriculum with a Christian worldview across all subjects" (EFG), but there was little evidence in principal responses that Special Character influenced the teaching of subjects besides Religious Education and Health. Most respondents expressed a vague notion that teaching staff needed to implement Special Character (IPD). Only one principal explicitly reflected the tie in between the Church with its missionary activity and what was taught in the classroom. In this instance, departmental reviews were an opportunity for reviewing "how matters of faith are dealt with in a subject" (IPB) because Special Character was about "helping students in their own faith journey… which comes through RE explicitly, but also other subjects that take on a Catholic worldview" (IPB). It was acknowledged that "implementation is hard as there is no Roman Catholic mathematics or PE" (EFG) but the promotion of a Catholic worldview was considered a key rationale for the continuation of Catholic schools (EFG).

This limited articulated appreciation by principals of how a Catholic worldview could be present across the school curriculum exemplified an emerging variance between Church authority understanding of the relationship between the Catholic school and mission, and the understandings expressed by principals. Overall, principal respondents did not articulate an understanding that the school was part of the wider missionary endeavours of the Church. While naming that the school was the face of the Church little connection was

made between being Church for families and being part of the wider community of faith. Responses sometimes presented a strong dualism where there was 'us', the school-Church that was active and alive verses 'them' the Church that was archaic and dying (IPD). Vague notions of mission were seen in responses that emphasised welcome and social justice (PFG). Little formal Church language was used to describe the role of Special Character in engaging the school as part of the local Church.

However, a growing recognition and acceptance of the role of the Catholic school in evangelisation was expressed. Increasingly the wider Church community saw the secondary school as the natural place for sacramental preparation and initiation of older students "The Church without the school system will be without community" (IPC). This required collaboration between schools and the wider Church. Failure to collaborate saw young people leaving Church when they left school. After 13 years of experiencing Catholic community through the school setting young people needed to feel part of and engaged with Church outside of school (PFG). Suggestions were made about the responsibility of Diocesan Youth Ministry structures to provide support and encouragement to school leavers negotiating the movement from school-based Church to parish and diocesan experiences (PFG).

A shift in emphasis was seen from the traditional parish-diocese taking the initiative to evangelise the school community to school communities bringing renewal and new life to parishes (IPD). Emerging ways of this new understanding of the school-parish relationship were seen in such initiatives as the principal contributing to the parish newsletter (Q3), and students as extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist serving in the parish (IPC) as well as Christian service initiatives (IPA). A school's participation in mission provided both information and formation (EFG). It was seen as important that schools provided academic knowledge of what Catholics believe and gave students experiences of Catholic ritual and culture (Q6). Alongside this teaching and catechesis, schools were required to nurture among students a personal relationship with God (IPB) as provided by the prayer life of the school (IPB)

including celebration of Mass (IPE) and other initiatives including retreats (IPD).

6.6.2 School Leadership

Although it was expected that principals be at 'leadership level' of certification, concern was expressed that as people moved into principal positions without an understanding of the Catholic story, and of the history of Catholic education in New Zealand, they had not appreciated the Special Character of the school and struggled to enhance and maintain it (PFG). It is important "that the principal is grounded in the integration of faith and life" (PFG). Catholic schools in New Zealand are State integrated schools and therefore governed by a Board of Trustees of whom less than 50% are directly responsible to the Church as proprietor's appointees. This means Church education authorities can influence the principal appointment process but not determine candidature or final selection. This minimal influence includes a lack of authority to mandate that a candidate hold a particular level of certification in Special Character before appointment (EFG). The only legal requirement concerning Special Character that is mandated is that the candidate for a principal's position be a Catholic who has a "willingness and ability to take part in religious instruction appropriate" to the Special Character of the school (PSCIA, 1975 #65 1a). If the Board of Trustees appointment committee do not consider strength and ability to build up and support Special Character a key competency for an appointee, appointment to a principal position is made because of other strengths (PFG).

Principals expressed concerns about succession. They did not feel enough was being done to support and train future principals of Catholic secondary schools. Although a programme for potential principals existed, there was a reluctance to send members of staff to it. This reluctance was due to a lack of confidence in the capabilities of their staff to take up a Catholic school principalship (PFG). These succession concerns were not universally held. It was also stated by the Expert Focus group that the situation had improved

considerably over the previous five years and that suitable candidates had come forward not only from the Catholic system but also from the wider education sector.

A lack of concurrence also existed in the area of support Catholic principals received for the Special Character aspects of their role. While Church authorities considered that there were "systems in place to support the growth of principals in understanding Special Character" (EFG), principals did not share this belief but suggested that the responsibility for their formation in Special Character fell primarily to themselves (IPA) with some support from congregations (PFG). Some religious congregations undertook this support as proprietors of the school or because they had been involved in the setting up and staffing of the school. It was noted that congregational support for principal formation in Special Character varied according to the congregation (PFG), some of whom offered little or no support other than encouragement (IPE). It was also suggested that due to the unevenness of this support a second-class support system was evolving between schools (IPA) with some totally reliant on provision provided by diocese through diocesan principal meetings and national conferences (Q9).

 A consequence of a perceived lack of formation in spiritual leadership was a growing sense of "disjoint of school and Church, school is people of the Church. Our schools are a daily witness to the Church on the streets in unified identity as Catholic" (EFG). It was an important aspect of the principal's leadership that they serve as role models for the school community in prayer and action "walking the talk" (IPA) witnessing to Gospel values (IPC).

6.6.3 PARTICULAR CONCERNS

The formation of principals in Special Character presented challenges of time and money. Availability of manageable professional learning was limited especially when "Boards of Trustees do not see the need" (PFG) and some

principals "don't know what they don't know" (PFG). Apart from this concern, principals considered that the Boards of Trustees were universally supportive of the Special Character of the school (IPA).

The school's context was immersed in "secularism and its offshoots" (Q6). This presented challenges regarding the delivery of the Christian message in ways that engaged young people (PFG). An important aspect of delivering the Christian message was the provision of a robust Religious Education curriculum. Such a curriculum required well-qualified teachers capable of delivering a high standard teaching and learning programme. The accepted level of qualifications required of teachers of Religious Education was often lower than that required in other disciplines (IPA) as there was difficulty in "finding qualified and able tagged teachers especially teachers of Religious Education" (Q7). The deficiency of the certification in the Religious Education and Special Character process was seen to be that teachers could gain acceptable levels of certification through attendance at *ad-hoc* courses without obtaining the qualification equivalence of other subject experts (IPB). Overall there was a perceived "lack of training for RE teachers. All of my current RE teachers were trained by religious orders" (Q1). Leadership of the Religious Education faculty was also a concern because of a "low pool of applicants" (Q5).

A concern was expressed that there "would be a danger that cultural memory and institutional memory rather than lived experience" had become the mark of Special Character and therefore the distinctiveness of a Catholic education (EFG). This concern centred on the ease at which schools are able to participate in Catholic cultural events including Eucharist without an engagement in meaning or purpose. This could result in a school going no further than doing Catholic stuff without having a Special Character dimension immersed throughout the policies and practice of the school (PFG). It was expressed that the annual form of compliance documentation required by Church authorities, and the structure of the handbook for Catholic Special Character reviews, encouraged this listing of Catholic things done rather than Catholic attitudes held and implemented (IPA).

6.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter identifies a number of new understandings about how principals of Catholic secondary schools understand and implement Special Character. From the presentation of these new understandings there emerged a number of key themes inviting further discussion. Discussion was invited on the themes of Catholic identity (including school-Church relationships), the range of expectations arising from the Special Character of the integrated Catholic school, and the role of principals as Catholic leaders. These understandings emerging from the research questions require synthesis, and further discussion.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION OF NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to explore how principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools understand and implement Special Character in their schools. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the new understandings generated from the research presented in Chapter Six. From an analysis of these new understandings three synthesized issues inviting discussion are identified. While there were many issues generated in the previous chapter these three are unique to this study and not substantially covered in the literature. The three issues for discussion are:

- Multiple expectations concerning the Special Character of the State integrated Catholic school
- Principals as Catholic leaders
- Issues around Catholic identity

Table 7.1 provides an audit from the specific research questions to the new understandings the research generated, and finally the issues inviting discussion.

Table 7.1: Origin of Issues for Discussion

Specific Research Question	New Understandings Origins of issues	Issues for discussion
What do principals understand by the term Special Character?	Gospel based education *6.4.1* Catholic faith community *6.4.2* Point of difference with other state schools *6.4.3* Catholic identity *6.4.4*	Multiple expectations concerning the Special Character of the integrated Catholic school *7.2*

How do principals implement Special Character in their schools?	Practical manifestations _6.5.1_ Creating faith community _6.5.2_ Principal professional learning challenges _6.5.3_	Principals as Catholic leaders 7.3
How do Catholic education authorities understand the role of the Catholic school in mission?	Catholic identity _6.4.4_ Understanding the school role in mission _6.6.1_ School leadership _6.6.2_ Particular concerns _6.6.3_	Issues around Catholic identity _7.4_

Figure 7-1 provides a conceptual framework for the discussion of issues. It illustrates that both Government and Church expect principals to demonstrate how they observe Special Character obligations in their schools. The notion of Catholic identity influences the understanding of Special Character but the meaning of Catholic identity is currently contestable.

ACE = Athentic Catholic Education
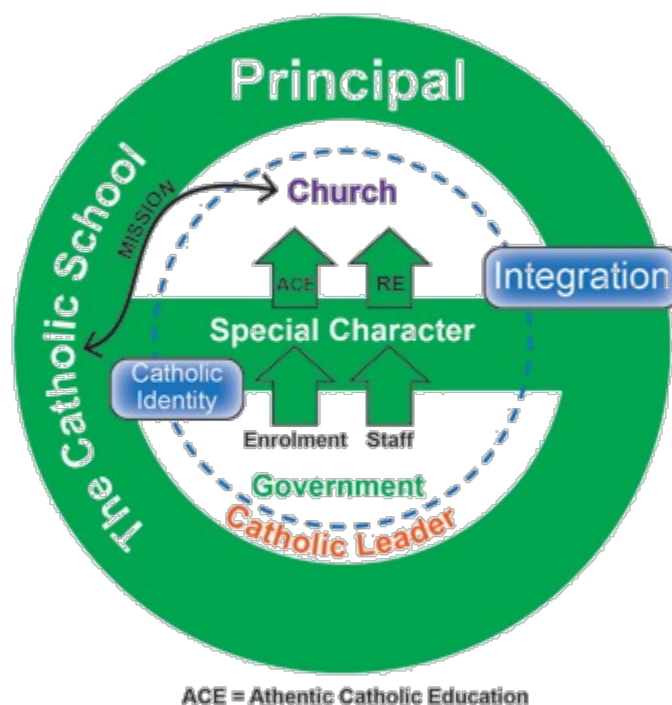
F*igure 7.1: Conceptual Framework for the Discussion of the Issues.*

Each of these issues contributes to the generation of a conceptual narrative, which focusses the discussion of new understandings (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Structure for Discussion of New Understandings

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Multiple expectations concerning the Special Character of the integrated Catholic school

    7.2.1 Government conditions of integration

    7.2.2 Ensuring the provision of authentic Catholic education

    7.2.3 Particular expectations regarding classroom Religious Education

    7.2.4 Conclusion

7.3 Principals as Catholic leaders

    7.3.1 Faith leadership of Catholic schools

    7.3.2 Professional learning for Catholic school leadership

    7.3.3 Principal succession

    7.3.4 Conclusion

7.4 Issues around Catholic identity

    7.4.1 School-Church relationships

    7.4.2 Staff Special Character engagement

    7.4.4 Conclusion

7.5 General conclusion

7.2 MULTIPLE EXPECTATIONS CONCERNING THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE INTEGRATED CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The first issue inviting discussion originates from the first specific research question:

What do principals understand by the term 'Special Character'?

Issue one concerns the multiple expectations regarding the Special Character of the State integrated school. "Principalship of a Catholic school has many layers: regular principal tasks, sport, Catholic expectations, regular academic tasks, Catholic school work, charism, Māori participation – a huge number of balls that we have to juggle" (PFG, 07/06/2012). These varied responsibilities create situations where implementing Special Character "is hard because it means that as principal of a Catholic school I have far greater expectations placed on me than my colleagues in State schools" (Q8, 05/11/2012).

Both the Government and the Church demand expectations from principals of Catholic schools. Moreover, families of students who choose to send their children to Catholic schools and staff who teach in Catholic schools likewise hold expectations concerning the school's Special Character. Clearly then, the importance of Special Character in the school and its role in education is nuanced among the multiple stakeholders. This issue invites discussion.

7.2.1 GOVERNMENT CONDITIONS OF INTEGRATION

The Government expects that principals, as agents of schools' Boards of Trustees responsibly adhere to the conditions of the *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* (1975) [*Integration Act*]. In order to address these conditions, the Government requires the delivery of "education in the framework of a particular general religious or philosophical belief" (PSCIA, 1975, #2.1). Despite this legal requirement, principals believed that Government agencies, including the Education Review Office [ERO], lack understanding regarding the demonstration of their fulfilment of these expectations. ERO observes that Special Character contributes "significantly

to a caring, inclusive and supportive culture" in Catholic schools (ERO, 2003, p.5) but Principals note that ERO "wants the forms, wants us to tick the boxes but wouldn't know what it [Special Character] looks, or feels like. They know they should ask but they don't understand" (IPF, 06/2012). As a consequence of this lack of understanding, ERO reports "are found lacking in analysis of Special Character" (Casinader, 2006, p.2).

The lack of analysis of Special Character by the Government's reporting agency may be attributed to the Government's political agenda. Government agenda is implemented through Acts of Parliament. The *Education Act* (1989) is the primary legislation concerning educational policy. The Government monitors the implementation of this policy through a cycle of school reviews and the scrutinising of student achievement. While the education of the child is the focus of these reviews, "the proprietor has responsibility for the maintenance of the Special Catholic Character" (ERO, 2003, p.2).

The proprietor's legal responsibility for maintaining the Special Character of its schools is a consequence of the Government's conditions for the integration of private schools under the *Integration Act* (1975). All Catholic schools in New Zealand are State integrated. They are responsible for the education of "8.7% of New Zealand's school children" (Crown, 2012, p.1). As State integrated schools, they are funded by the Government "for the teaching and operating costs and for minor maintenance, […] in the same way that it funds all other State schools" (Auditor General, 2014, #5.5). There is a level of political unease regarding this funding. This unease is also reflected overseas where Catholic schooling is significantly funded by Government. Questions are raised regarding the provision of "well conducted education that is not a wasteful duplication of service" (Rymarz, 2017, p.14). Teacher unions in New Zealand have concerns about the duplication of services arising from integration because of a "perceived injustice of diverting scarce educational dollars into 'elite' schools" (Cross, 2008, p.3). A unionist noted that by relaxing the preference criteria "the Special Character is becoming less significant and social status more so. It may be argued that integrated schools are now simply private schools with 100% state funding" (Cross, 2008, p.7).

The level of Government funding for State integrated schools may be contentious but the "parents of thousands of students attending the country's integrated schools disagree. Integrated schools are increasingly popular" (Casinader, 2006, p.1). Their popularity confirms the positive relationship between the Government and proprietors: a relationship that relies "on the 'spirit of integration'. At its core, a belief that all those involved will use the Act for the betterment of all New Zealand schoolchildren" (Sweetman, 2002, p.198). This phenomenon is "a win-win situation. Christian groups can educate their young people with State funding and Government has neither the cost of capital outlay for buildings nor the responsibility for them" (Smith, 2013, p.5). The Government provides this "publicly funded aid on the grounds that it helps children rather than their faith-based school" (Russo, 2015, p. 34). Funding State integrated schools enables the Government to meet its commitment to provide a variety of successful educational choices for families.

Educational 'success' is increasingly "articulated through publicly available results" (McCarthy & Warren, 2012, p.24) which demonstrate that "Catholic schools perform. They sit well above national averages across all levels of NCEA" (Cronin, 2015, p. 53). The Government is able to provide a choice of educationally successful schools through the support of State integrated schools. Understandably, the Government is not interested in becoming engaged with Special Character, so long as such schools are "demonstrably fulfilling legislated educational obligations" (Casinader, 2006, p.2). This primary outcome is the fundamental evidence the Government demands from Catholic schools to demonstrate that Special Character requirements are honoured (PFG, 07/06/2012).

In contrast, the Church believes that Special Character requirements are honoured when the conditions of integration are met. These contrasting views on the relevance and discharge of the conditions help to explain the principals' failure to appreciate their legal obligation under the *Integration Act*. Although principals questioned how various conditions of integration were monitored, and noted the challenges they faced in meeting these conditions,

they framed this in terms of Church expectations rather than legal obligations. Principals find that meeting the expectations concerning the conditions of integration are challenging because of the Church's expectations on how these obligations are discharged. The Church expects Special Character to be discharged in a manner that provides an authentic Catholic education as defined by the Bishops' Conference.

7.2.2 ENSURING THE PROVISION OF AUTHENTIC CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The Church expects obligations under the *Integration Act* (1975) to be discharged in a manner that ensures an educational environment for the provision of authentic Catholic education (Sweetman, 2002). How Catholic education authorities interpret these obligations is the rationale underpinning the second aspect of the expectations concerning Special Character. Meeting the conditions of integration is monitored through the process of attestation. Attestation is understood as answering questions "designed to assist Boards of Trustees and school administrators in determining how well they are complying with their legal obligations in respect of the Special Character dimension of their schools […] to be completed annually and sent to the Proprietor" (NZCEO, 2010, Part 2, p.1). Principals do not consider the process of attestation educationally defensible: "I think we have far too many forms to fill in […] how do they improve faith? We get millions of forms to fill out. Tick the boxes and thank God attestation is now complete" (IPA, 06/2012). Two aspects of attestation of particular concern to principals are: preference of enrolment and *tagged* teaching positions.

7.2.2.1 Preference of Enrolment

Preference of enrolment is a condition of the *Integration Act* (1975), where "parents who have a particular or general philosophical connection with an integrated school shall have preference of enrolment for their children at the school" (PSCIA, 1975, #29). In the New Zealand Catholic education system, the definition of 'preference of enrolment' is determined by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference. In the first instance, a child baptised in the

Catholic Church meets these criteria because "all baptized Christians have a right to an education into the mysteries and practices of the faith" (Fleming, 2015, p 50). Their families are not expected to be worshiping Catholics in order to gain preference.

Another preference of enrolment criteria is established through family relationships where it is inferred that attendance at a Catholic school may lead to the child becoming a candidate for baptism (NZCEO, 2016, p.142). Preference of enrolment offers a specific group of New Zealand parents a wider choice of State schooling. Although it is a relationship with the Catholic Church that guarantees this choice, "school choices are made on relatively superficial observable grounds" (Pearce & Gordon, 2005, p.149). Indeed, "many Catholics today including those associated with Catholic schools, seem more content to retain religious affiliation in a manner that maximizes benefit and reduces cost" (Rymarz, 2010, p.302). A benefit of affiliation with the Catholic Church in New Zealand is preference of enrolment in a Catholic school.

There is a continuum of affiliation between families and the Church. While a large proportion of parents are baptized, and "support the ethos of the school and maintain some type of loose association with the Church" (Rymarz, 2010), they are not necessarily attending weekly worship. There are multiple reasons for this phenomenon. Some "parents have not progressed in their own faith formation" (Schuttoffel, 2013, p.90), other families have "confounding issues with the Church (e.g., married outside the Church)" (Schuttoffel, 2013, p.90). Regardless of their level of affiliation with the Church, families on accepting a place in a Catholic school sign a form stating that they will "actively support [their] child in his/her faith formation and the practices of the Catholic Church" (Catholic Diocese of Auckland, 2012). Part of the rationale for Special Character in a school is to ensure the provision of "support for all parents and caregivers in their children's education and formation in the faith" (NZCBC, 2014, #2). The families authorise the faith formation of their children by the school and acknowledge its role in supporting this initiative.

This is the reality, despite the rhetoric that "the Catholic Church teaches unequivocally that parents are first educators of their children, especially in matters regarding faith and morals. Schools support the ministry of parents but they cannot subsume that ministry" (Sharkey, 2006, p.83). Indeed, principals recognise that for many children faith development does not occur in the home. For "some students no matter what level the preference are unchurched" (PFG, 07/06/2012). This is exemplified, "when I do pre-enrolment I have a crucifix in my office I ask the students if they can tell me about the crucifix. A significant number look blank don't have a clue, maybe they know it's something about Jesus Christ" (PFG, 07/06/2012). Given the broad criteria for preference and the small percentage of Catholics with formal connections to the Church, it is predictable that enrolled children may have limited religious formation as inferred by the use of terms such as 'unchurched'. Parents choose a school that they believe may appropriately serve their child's educational needs.

Clearly then, the primary motivation for school choice may not be reflective of Special Character (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). When families choose a school "religion and religious values are ranked around the mid-level of the list" of issues affecting school choice behind teaching quality and academic performance (Kennedy, Mullholland & Dorman, 2011, p.10). Families may use their preferential enrolment status to choose a 'good' school for their children and "as a result the Catholic school [has] become the centre for faith development of children and not the home" (Suart, 2010, p.24).

New Zealand Catholic education authorities acknowledge this change in dynamic, where "teachers rather than parents have become in many instances the first formators in faith of [our] New Zealand Catholic young" (Drennan, 2011, p.1). However, these same authorities consider that "for most young Catholics the life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ has not happened […]. In this respect, the 'first and foremost' goal of every Catholic educational institution, that of being 'a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth' has not been achieved" (NZCBC, 2014a, #34). Such critique challenges principals, who

have responsibility to honour Special Character obligations: "…how do you measure that faith has grown? That there is a relationship with Jesus?" (PFG, 07/06/2012). Additionally, without the support of families the ability of the school to grow faith is diminished (Darmody, Lyons & Smyth, 2016). Catholic education authorities appear to quantify a student's relationship with Jesus by attendance at Sunday Mass (NZCBC, 2014a). However, "the criterion for judging a Catholic school is not the numbers engaging in Sunday Mass or parish life. 'Success is not one of the names of God'" (McGrath, 2012, p.298). In practice, "many factors influence the extent to which students practise their religion" (Convey, 2015, p. 166). Their experiences of Catholic education are only one influence. Principals indicated that unrealistic expectations were imposed upon them to "produce card carrying Mass attendees" (IPF, 06/2012).

The expectation that schools graduate young people who regularly attend Sunday Mass has become more challenging with the broadening criteria for preference of enrolment. Extending preference to students who 'could' be baptised as a result of being part of the school community implies that schools offer a forum for the preparation of the un-baptised to become baptised.

In the past, schools have been reluctant to offer sacramental programmes because "preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) are the responsibility of the parish" (NZCBC, 2009, p2). If, however, families are not engaged with the parish, sacramental preparation for these young people may not occur there. Provision of sacramental preparation programmes becomes "another layer, another layer gets put on to the school" (IPB, 06/2012).

Sacramental preparation is an aspect of Church life. Principals believe that their schools are "possibly the front line of what the Church is all about" (PFG, 07/06/2012). Other researchers note that increasingly "the school is seen as the 'new' Church" (Coughlan, 2010, p.242). An understanding of school as Church rather than school in relationship with Church, poses challenges to

Catholic education authorities regarding the authenticity of this experience of Church and the delivery of an authentic Catholic education (Sharkey, 2015).

One strategy to ensure authentic Catholic education is the provision of Catholic teachers. A critical number of Catholic staff is a prerequisite to establish enough teachers that not only understand the purpose of Special Character but are also able to implement it (Convey, 2014). In order to guarantee a critical number of Catholic teachers, a New Zealand Catholic school 'tags' teaching positions for which only Catholics may apply. Catholic education authorities expect that Catholics who regularly attend Sunday Mass be appointed to these *tagged* positions. Identifying staff for these positions is becoming increasingly difficult (PFG, 07/06/2012). This phenomenon invites discussion.

7.2.2.2 Tagged Positions

The second aspect regarding the expectations concerning Special Character arising from attestation is *tagged* positions. *Tagged* positions enable a school to appoint an appropriate number of staff that are "faith-filled individuals who have the ability to infuse Catholic values into academic content in addition to being skilled teachers" (Brock & Chatlin, 2008, p.371). The *Integration Act* (1975) requires that "the controlling authority shall designate such other proportion of teaching positions […] as positions of importance carrying a responsibility for religious instruction" (PSCIA, 1975, 65.1C). In order to apply for a *tagged* position, a teacher demonstrates that they are "willing and able to support the Special Character of the school through its religious instruction" (PSCIA, 1975, # 65.1C). If candidates comply with these criteria, they are recognised as 'acceptable'. Catholic education authorities consider that teachers are acceptable if they demonstrate the ability to support the Special Character of the school. In order to demonstrate this ability teachers establish they have qualifications in Religious Education/Theology, were baptised in the Catholic Church and attend Sunday Mass. Less than 22% of Catholics in New Zealand are regular Church attendees (NZCBC, 2013). Subsequently, principals consider "the biggest challenge is finding qualified and able *tagged* teachers" (Q7, 05/11/12). One rationale for the lack of applicants for *tagged*

positions is that "the numbers of educators and teachers who are believers is shrinking" (CCE, 2014, p.14).

Teachers like "millions of adults – and young people as well – do not take religion seriously. It strikes them as archaic and irrelevant, and not worth all the hassle that ensues" (O'Murchu, 2014, p.34).   Even teachers who identify as Catholic may "no longer believe that being a committed Catholic requires attending Mass every week" (Dixon et al., 2007, p.8) because "participation in sacraments will not be a key indicator of Catholic identity" (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017, p3).   These attitudes make many prospective teachers unacceptable for a *tagged* position. The information that accompanies the application form for a *tagged* position describes the role "as a Ministry within the Church.   A Ministry is an office in the Church to which a person is called by the Church community to serve the community" (NZCEO, S65Form, #3.0).   Although there are teachers who believe teaching is Ministry within the Church, the lack of acceptable applicants for *tagged* positions suggests that this is not a widely held belief among Catholic teachers.

A further discouragement to applicants for *tagged* positions is the deficiency of "a career path in Catholic schools for *tagged* teachers" (Q5, 29/10/12) and it is exacerbated by a lack of a clear role description for *tagged* positions. The term 'religious instruction' required in an advertisement for a *tagged* position is defined as "the ability to support the Catholic religious life of the school by many specific actions, and by providing a personal example of what it means to be a Catholic" (NZCEO, S65Form, #4.0).   What Catholic education authorities mean by 'the many specific actions' is unclear. Indeed, "there has been a change in understanding in the minds of many people about what it means to be Catholic and what obligations are intrinsic to Catholic identity" (Dixon et al, 2007, p.50).   Furthermore, every teacher in a New Zealand Catholic school agrees to uphold the Special Character (NZCEO, 2013). If every teacher is responsible for Special Character the purpose and role of *tagged* positions are questionable.

When the *tagged* position is for a teacher of Religious Education, the scarcity of appropriate applicants is increased. Principals noted that identifying "Religious Education teachers with a personal commitment to the faith'" (Q5, 29/10/2016) was particularly challenging. This research indicated that principals faced a number of challenges regarding the requirements of staffing and timetabling of Religious Education. These require further exploration.

7.2.3 PARTICULAR EXPECTATIONS OF CLASSROOM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A third aspect of expectation concerning Special Character is the provision of classroom Religious Education. Provision of classroom Religious Education is a demonstrable difference between Catholic schools and non-integrated State schools (IPE, 06/2016). It offers Catholic schools a "privileged position to pose questions to students about the nature of persons, their relationship to society, and their moral obligation to be good citizens" (Convey, 2015, p.166). The research identified contrasting understandings concerning the status of Religious Education among parents, Catholic education authorities, and principals. In addition, principals encountered challenges in meeting expectations regarding the staffing of Religious Education classes.

7.2.3.1 Tensions Regarding Religious Education

Tensions regarding the provision of Religious Education are explained through exploring how stakeholders perceive the status of Religious Education. Principals indicated that one area of tension arose from the varied opinions regarding the status of Religious Education held by parents (IPA, 06/2012). "Some parents like the values a Catholic school offers but question why the students need to do RE each year" (IPE, 06/2012) especially in Year 13 (IPC, 06/2012). They believed that compulsory Religious Education limits students' subject choices (IPC, 06/2012). Ironically and perhaps "bizarrely the compulsory nature of much of the rest of the curriculum appeared to have been missed" (Conroy, Lundie & Davis, 2013, p.90).

Principals respond to this tension by asserting Religious Education as both a distinguishing feature of Catholic education and a valuable academic

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discipline in its own right (IPC, 06/2012). At the time of student enrolment, principals "make it abundantly clear in the interview with parents what is expected in terms of RE and Special Character" (IPE, 06/2012). Principals concurred that the value of Religious Education to parents and students has been enhanced since the introduction of Achievement Standards in Religious Studies (MOE, 2006). These standards have "raised expectations of RE. It's taken as a serious subject with the ability to use credits for UE and literacy" (IPE, 06/2012). This perceived change in the prestige of Religious Education has reduced the tension concerning the compulsory nature of the subject (PFG, 07/06/2012).

Tension is also identified between some principals and the expectations regarding the provision of Religious Education held by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference [NZCBC]. This tension is a result of an episcopal directive mandating minimum hours a week Religious Education is taught. This tension manifests itself particularly in a school's timetable which is overseen by the principal. Issues concerning timetabling have been identified "as the pressure to improve results year-on-year [...] The need to show good results in secular mainstream subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science meant in practice time allocations for a Catholic mainstream subject such as Religious Education came under pressure" (Grace, 2012, p.443). As a result of this timetabling pressure, some principals believed that it was "not fair for the Bishops to tell us [how to apply] RE hours. The timetable is turned upside down to fit in [to their directives]. Division sums don't work. I don't think Bishops understand this" (IPA, 2012).

Moreover, some principals believe that the mandated hours are not appropriate time allocation to teach the prescribed content of the RE curriculum. As one principal explained: "I agree RE needs to be taught at Year 13 but two hours is enough. I know, I have taught the program, the Bishops haven't" (IPC, 06/2002). However, not all principals agreed that this was a problem: "I think the expectations that the Church places on schools is good. (It) shows the importance of Religious Education and Special Character. I don't understand what other principals are upset about" (IPB,

06/2012). Although there are conflicting responses to the Bishops' expectations regarding the provision of Religious Education, principals concurred that the staffing of Religious Education is a perennial challenge.

7.2.3.2 Teachers of Religious Education

The principal's responsibility to engage qualified teachers of Religious Education is problematic (PFG, 07/06/2012). The challenge arises because "many of our young teachers do not have a lived Church or faith experience and one cannot give what one does not have. One cannot tell or model the story, if one does not know and love the story" (Mulligan, 2006, p.256). Knowledge of the story includes study of Catholicism, its history, its culture, its rites, rituals and beliefs. Although each New Zealand diocese conducts programs of pre-service education in 'Catechetical Studies', relatively few trainees[21] complete this certificate. As a result, "Religious Education is often taught by inadequately prepared, and often non-specialist teachers" (Conroy, et al., 2012, p.311). Consequently, only 35% of Religious Education teachers participating in a New Zealand national survey are qualified to teach Religious Education (TCI, 2015, p.13). Moreover, few RE teachers possess qualifications in RE/Theology equivalent to colleague teachers of other curriculum areas (Wanden, 2010). Regrettably, principals are resigned to this inadequacy: "I always accept less qualification for a teacher of RE than I would from an English or Maths specialist" (Q1, 19/10/12).

This lack of qualified teachers of Religious Education forces schools to access professional learning for their under-skilled RE teachers. Diocesan Catholic schools' offices facilitate these opportunities. Principals express dissatisfaction with this system. First, the standard of the courses "waxes and wanes depending on the quality of the people in the position" (IPB, 06/2012). Second, day courses require substantial financial commitment from the school to cover fees and teacher relief (IPF, 06/2012). A review of how diocesan

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[21] In New Zealand, the term trainee is used for those in pre-service teacher-training programs. People talk about being a trainee teacher, teachers are asked to take trainees for practicums.

offices support the professional learning of RE teachers requires consideration (Specia, 2016a).

Overall, principals considered that both the qualification requirements for teachers of Religious Education and the provision of their professional learning are unsatisfactory and urgently require review (IPA, 06/2012; PFG, 07/06/2012). Both New Zealand principals and their American counterparts consider that "questions related to supervision, evaluation, and the professional development of Catholic school teachers warrants exploration" (Schuttloffel, 2007, p.98).

Consequently, it is not surprising then that New Zealand Catholic education authorities have commissioned research into the qualifications of teachers of Religious Education (TCI, 2015) "with a view to improving the current situation through the provision of easily accessible courses which lead to qualification" (NZCBC, 2014b, p.49). How this TCI research may influence practice and policy regarding professional learning in Religious Education is unclear. Nevertheless, whatever the outcome, there remains an urgency to improve the qualifications of teachers of Religious Education. This need is only one of multiple expectations concerning Special Character that the principal of a Catholic school encounters.

7.2.4 CONCLUSION

Multiple expectations regarding the Special Character of a Catholic school occur because of the contrasting understandings of the purpose of Special Character among stakeholders. The Government is a key stakeholder in New Zealand Catholic education. The Government understands Special Character to be the features of a Catholic school that distinguish it from other State schools. However, "when you look at their [Government] own evaluations, they are more interested in curriculum development and compliance than Special Character" (IPE, 06/2012). The reason for this muted interest in Special Character is a result of the Government's primary objective for

schools. The Government's primary objective for schools is the delivery of quality education. As a consequence, the Government understands Special Character to have an entirely religious agenda and it therefore, cedes responsibility for monitoring Special Character to the Church.

After the Government, the Church is the second major stakeholder in the Catholic School. The Church understands Special Character as the rationale for providing and demonstrating authentic Catholic education. As a result, the Church expects Catholic schools to offer educational quality within an environment where students grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. The irony is that New Zealand Catholic education authorities believe that there is minimal evidence that schools have assisted pupils to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ (NZCBC, 2014, #28). However, Catholic education authorities monitor Special Character by the strategies of Catholic Special Character Review and attestation. Contrary to the rhetoric, school reviews measure Special Character through the collection of evidence that indicators have been met. Not surprisingly, attestation focuses upon legal compliance rather than faith development (IPA, 06/2012). Principals believe such strategies are relatively simplistic initiatives to 'measure' the nuances of Special Character. Moreover, principals believe the attestation strategy is cumbersome in its methodology (PFG, 07/06/2012).

Principals identify the following attestation concerns: preference of enrolment, *tagged* teaching positions and the staffing of Religious Education. Compliance expectations concerning these areas fail to acknowledge the current challenges of Catholic practice. For example, Catholic schools experience maximum enrolment (Cronin, 2015) because parents choose a school that provides their children with education in a caring environment that offers opportunities for academic success. Many of these parents are not 'practising' Catholics. They do not nominate the Special Character of a school as a primary motivation for choosing a particular school for their children's education (Kennedy et al., 2011).

The research identified that the contrasting and conflicting understandings about Special Character held by stakeholders, including families, result in a range of expectations concerning Catholic education. Principals perceive that neither the Government nor Catholic education authorities appreciate the complexity arising from the fact that Catholic schools exist "in a pluralistic Church with widely varying views and an array of religious practices, it is challenging to define what it means to be 'truly Catholic'" (Fuller & Johnson, 2014, p.96). 'Measuring' what it means to be a 'truly Catholic' school relies on external indicators, especially student attendance at Sunday worship (NZCBC, 2014a). Principals reject such simplistic indicators as a basis of 'measuring' Special Character.

Principals are expected to implement Special Character through their leadership role. They are "called to embody the values and vision of the Catholic school through personal witness" (Lavery, 2012, p.37). How Principals fulfil this responsibility invites further research.

7.3 PRINCIPALS AS CATHOLIC LEADERS

Issue two originates from the second specific research question

> How do principals implement Special Character in their school?

Issue two concerns the responsibilities of Catholic school principals as leaders of a Catholic community. "Being a leader in a Catholic school demands additional responsibilities, commitments and pressures that have grown predominantly out of church and community expectations" (O'Brien, 2013, p.170). How the responsibilities of Catholic leadership influence a principal's understanding and implementation of Special Character invites examination.

7.3.1 FAITH LEADERSHIP OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The principal of a Catholic school is responsible for a school where "Christ is the foundation of the whole enterprise" (CCE, 1997, #34). To facilitate this

aspiration, principals of Catholic schools are commissioned with "the task of leading and developing their school as a community of faith" (Lavery, 2012, p.37). Principalship in Catholic schools embraces this role of faith leader. Faith leaders offer guidance, direction, and role modelling (Rieckhoff, 2014). They create "a sense of community and a commitment to social justice reflected in the structures and practices that reflect the values of equity, Catholic tradition, dignity and individual worth" (Robertson, 2013, p.13). Each principal offered evidence indicating that they accepted the responsibilities of faith leadership (IPA, et al, 06/2012).

One responsibility of faith leadership is to model a Christian life. Principals believe they are responsible to "role model Catholic values and commitment to Catholic tradition" (Q7, 05/11/2012). They are required to share their faith with the community (Richardson, 2014, p.68). Principals consider this responsibility an influential and important obligation of their role in supporting Special Character (QSum,2). Ironically, they do not associate meeting this responsibility with the role as faith leader.

Another example of a faith leader's responsibility is nurturing the school's spiritual life. A Catholic school is expected to provide something tangibly different from that offered in the state school: "…opportunities need to be provided for students to develop a personal relationship with Jesus" (Wanden & Birch, 2007, p.862). Principals note the importance of prayer, worship, retreats and other spiritual practices (PFG, 07/06/2012). However, the relationship between these expressions of Special Character implementation and the development of students' relationship with Jesus are not explained. Again, principals failed to connect how the provision of these opportunities relates with their responsibilities of faith leadership.

The failure to associate what principals do to implement Special Character with faith leadership is understandable because the auditing agenda of Special Character is confined to "characteristics that must be visibly and authentically present in any school that calls itself Catholic" (Ozar, 2012, p.8). Furthermore, the inability to appreciate that implementation of Special

Character is associated with the role of faith leader has been established in Australian research where "it has been identified in the context of Catholic schools how neither principals identified as faith leaders, nor those who identify them as such, have a clear understanding of what this means" (Robertson, 2013, p.12).

Principals do not fully appreciate their role as faith leader because they do not claim that they are faith 'experts'. Principals consider faith experts are priests or religious Sisters and Brothers (PFG, 07/06/2012). Principals believe that "some groups in the Catholic school community hold expectations and demands, more appropriate for a religious [Brothers and Sisters] than a lay principal" (d'Arbon, Duignan, Duncan, & Goodwin, 2001, p.11). Despite the reliance on lay persons in leading Catholic schools there is an underlying stance that "no matter how competent" (McDonough, 2016, p.249) lay people might be, they need the supervision of clerics (McDonough, 2016). Principals reject expectations that their leadership encompasses a quasi-clerical or ministerial responsibility, with or without clerical supervision. Principals believe they "are lay people not stand-in religious. We don't have the training and there shouldn't be the expectations" (PFG, 07/06/2012). Moreover, principals believe as lay people they have an authentic leadership role in the Church within school education (PFG, 07/06/2012), where they "perform their Christian service as a baptismal responsibility and not simply as a participation in the mission of the hierarchy" (Bacik, 2004, p.6). As a result, principals understand that their "role as lay people is to carry Special Character forward. It is even more important today because; priests and religious are not involved in the schools. It is crucial" (PFG, 07/06/2012).

Principals correctly identify that the involvement of laity in New Zealand Catholic education is crucial because there are few priests, religious Brothers or Sisters who minister in schools. Catholic education authorities consider "baptized and practising Catholic as a 'genuine occupational requirement' for the post of headteacher/principal in a Catholic school" (Richardson, 2014, p.60) and therefore to maintain the integrity of Catholic education. Principals believe this to be a non-quantifiable requirement asking: "What is the

essence of the Roman Catholic principal? Am I more Catholic than you? Who is to judge?" (PFG, 07/06/2012).

The Board of Trustees (BOTs) assesses the 'religious' practice of applicants for the role of Catholic school principal. In order to make these judgements, BOTs are guided through the S65 Form process "in which [principal applicants'] personal lives, faith commitment and religious practices are placed under scrutiny by Church authorities" (d'Arbon et al, 2001, p.13). However, by default, BOTs of secondary schools become agents of Church authorities in determining candidate acceptability, a responsibility that requires professional and theological formation. Many BOTs are deficient in this formation.

The process of acceptability for principalship seeks to ensure that "the spiritual leader is grounded in knowledge of the history and philosophy of the Catholic Church" (Rieckhoff, 2014, p.27). The Catholic Bishops acknowledge "there are not enough people available with the right formation and qualifications to staff all schools adequately in terms of the Catholic character" (NZCBC, 2014a, #49). The research for this thesis indicates there are multiple concerns regarding the requirements and provision of formation in Special Character for principals (PFG, 07/06/2012).

7.3.2 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP

The principal of a New Zealand Catholic school is required to hold leadership level, Certification in Special Character and receive ongoing professional learning (NZCBC, 2014b). The purpose of Certification in Special Character is to "highlight the importance of the need for all staff in Catholic Schools to gain qualifications and experience appropriate to their role and to continue to develop these so that the Catholic Special Character of the school is maintained and enhanced" (NZCBC, 2014b, p.9; CEC, 1982, #65). Despite the Certification process, formal qualifications in Special Character are not mandatory for principal appointees some of whom hold qualifications incorporating a Special Character emphasis (QSum, 02/12/2012). These

principals report that this formation offered them increased confidence as well as skills and knowledge to nurture and enhance Special Character (IPA & IPC, 06/2012). However, many New Zealand principal responses confirmed United Kingdom research where "the importance of knowing the doctrines and devotions of the Church is acknowledged, but very few participants spoke with any conviction about the need for specific doctrinal teaching" (Richardson, 2014, p.67).

The principals' lack of conviction regarding the need for specific Church teaching is further reflected in the nature of their qualifications around Special Character they hold which focus primarily on management and leadership (Summary of Questionnaire responses, 02/12/2012). While the New Zealand Bishops assume that such qualifications are complemented by formation in "Catholic theology, scripture, Religious Education, spirituality and Catholic Special Character" (NZCBC, 2014b, p.10), the research concludes that principals hold contrasting beliefs concerning this 'Catholic' formation. Two perspectives invite consideration. First, there are principals who consider qualification-based study as formation (IPE, 06/2012). Second, there are principals who believe formation should focus on participating in Catholic parish life, including attendance at Sunday Mass and "listening to a good sermon" (IPD, 06/2012). Although, such spiritual practices are important faith formation observances (Specia, 2016b), this second perspective exemplifies that "much professional learning is informal and incidental" (Timperley, Wilson, Barar & Fung, 2007, p.xxii).

The difficulties in identifying what constitutes professional learning in Special Character are compounded by the challenge of attaining principal professional learning. Research suggests that "travel, staffing and accessibility are barriers to participating in principal professional learning and inhibit the development of principals" (Graham, 2009, p.127). As a result, principals consider "principal development is what we seek out. What we decide to do, which is based on our previous maturity of faith and what we need" (PFG, 07/06/2012). This issue highlights that "professional learning needs are

diverse and specific to the individual principal and their context" (Graham, 2009, p.89).

Principal participants do not believe that all the professional learning in Special Character offered is specific to their context. An example given was the Master in Educational Leadership award offered by The Catholic Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand in partnership with Australian Catholic University. Principals who had participated in this programme were disappointed with the lack of specific New Zealand educational content as well as an appreciation of the local Catholic context (IPE & IPF, 06/2012). They recognise that such programmes are not "offered exclusively for Catholic educators due to the need to be viable in the market-place by also preparing the multitude of public school educators" (Wallace, 2000, p.194). However, principals consider that the programme had deficiencies especially "when (principals) are coming from non-Catholic school background […] they need the vocab of the culture" (PFG, 07/06/2012). It can no longer be presumed that Catholic principals have a knowledge of their faith (Boyle et al., 2016). Deficiency in content is one of the perceived barriers to principals accessing qualification-based professional learning in Special Character. Other barriers include time and financial commitments (IPE, 06/2012). Principals acknowledge, "a need for professional development aimed specifically for leaders and potential leaders working in Catholic education" (Fincham, 2010, p.73) that is effective for "busy Catholic school principals" (Specia, 2016b, p.268). However, few such qualifications that meet these criteria are accessible in New Zealand.

Principal mentoring is accessible to all new principals through a Government-sponsored programme. Principal mentoring is important because the "experiences and influence of a mentor are significant in shaping careers" (Graham 2009, p.116). Mentors provide feedback and support (Morten & Lawler, 2016). All participant principals, who had been part of the mentoring programme considered it "critical that beginning Catholic principals have mentors who are knowledgeable, have experience, and can provide resources and support to meet these specialized and complex needs" (Rieckhoff, 2014, p.37). Those principals for whom the mentor was not

Catholic believe they had missed an opportunity for Special Character professional learning (IPE & IPF, 06/2012).

Special Character professional learning often fails to address principals' formation needs as faith leaders because only "occasionally some spiritual nourishment is provided […] overall it is appalling as it doesn't happen" (PFG, 07/06/2012). This lack of professional learning in spirituality occurs "because the culture in which [principals] work emphasizes managerial abilities (i.e. balancing the budget, good discipline, strong enrolments, etc.), when determining a 'job well done' seeking qualifications in theology, Church history, Catholic Social Teaching, etc. is not a priority" (Wallace, 2000, p.193).

Principals consider their professional learning needs in Special Character are addressed appropriately when they network and share with other Catholic principals (Specia, 2016b). They constantly referred to the value of the support and professional learning obtained by attendance at Catholic Principal Conferences in New Zealand and Australia (PFG, 07/06/2012). However, "it is generally accepted that listening to inspiring speakers or attending one-off workshops rarely changes teacher practice sufficiently to impact on student outcomes" (Timperley et al., 2007, p.xxv).

A further form of professional learning that principals identify as valuable is membership of a Catholic Special Character Review team (IPB, IPC, & IPE, 06/2012). This experience is a positive professional learning opportunity because principals "could see things from the outsiders view and I learnt a great deal about how Special Character operates. It was empowering" (IPE, 06/2012). However, not every diocese adopts this model in its review process.

The research identified that the professional learning in Special Character in New Zealand is 'piecemeal', inaccessible "costly, time-heavy and not necessarily meeting need" (IPE, 06/2012). This conclusion reflects American research that concludes "principals play a vital role in setting the direction for successful schools but existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare and

develop highly qualified candidates is sparse" (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen, 2007, p.4). This observation is an accurate reflection of the New Zealand Catholic education system because of the absence of principal succession plans.

7.3.3 PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION

Clearly then, the New Zealand Catholic education system "honours" principal succession planning in a perfunctory manner. This assertion invites justification. "Succession planning refers to the deliberate creation of a plan and process to address a future succession event" (Bennett, Carpenter & Hill, 2011, p.31). The research reported in this thesis concludes there is little systemic preparation of teachers for the role of principal of a Catholic school. Participants held various opinions in explaining this phenomenon.

Participants whose role is within agencies of the Church are not concerned about the quality or quantity of the pool of applicants because "things are far better than they were five years ago" and "good people are moving over from the state system" (EFG, 19/07/2012). This observation is not shared by principals "…where do aspiring principals come from? I worry about succession" (IPC, 06/2012). Issues concerning principal succession are complex and involve both the absence of deliberate planning to ensure suitable teachers are available, and the reluctance of suitable teachers to apply for leadership positions. These two aspects are interconnected and neither is specific to the Catholic education system nor to the New Zealand context. "There is a school leadership crisis looming globally" (Bennett et al., 2011, p.28).

Principal participants believe the school leadership crisis in New Zealand Catholic education primarily concerns issues of 'acceptability' and the apathy of Catholic education authorities regarding succession. An explanation for the lack of succession planning is that Catholic schools are "still living off the fat of religious, ex-religious and those formed by religious" (PFG, 07/06/2012). In

contrast, Catholic education authorities fail to appreciate "whilst Catholic education benefits from the spiritual capital formed in the past, it is important that this spiritual capital is sustained to nurture future leaders in Catholic schools (Sullivan, Murphy & Fincham, 2015, p.12). A previous strategy for nurturing future Catholic school principals in New Zealand was a course for prospective principals of Catholic schools offered by a private education consultancy. Unfortunately, this programme failed to meet planned expectations, as have many similar programmes offered in the USA (Boyle et al, 2016, p.296). New Zealand principals were reluctant to have staff participate in the offered course offered because the majority of those the organisation considered suitable to participate were "just not cut out to be a principal or though they were Catholic, they were that in name only" (PFG, 07/06/2012).

The lack of a formation programme for aspiring principals is problematic. The New Zealand Catholic education system requires aspiring leaders to demonstrate the capacity to be "leaders who make sure that education is a shared and living mission, who support and organize teachers, who promote mutual encouragement and assistance" (CCE, 2014, p.11). This goal suggests, "particular attention must be devoted to the formation and selection of school heads" (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016, p.139). Given that the Church has minimal influence on the selection of a principal other than determining acceptability criteria, an emphasis on formation is required because of the self-management of State integrated schools. Acceptability is an attempt to provide a robust framework to address "the issue of who is allowed into formal leadership position which is indeed of fundamental importance for education systems" (Huber & Hiltmann, 2010, p.304). In reality, acceptability requires principal applicants to offer evidence that they attend Sunday worship. Yet, "there are a large number of teachers, who are not Catholic or not regularly practising. The result is that only a fraction of the experienced staff in any Catholic staff room is eligible for a leadership role" (Gallagher, 2007, p.263). The lack of staff eligible for leadership positions concerned principals who, "worry about the next principal of my school, where are the next generation of Catholic principals? Will they be acceptable?" (PFG, 07/06/2012).

The acceptability standard for a principal position is complex. This research suggests that those responsible for appointing principals may understandably choose candidates according to criteria other than acceptability. One reason is that appointment committees choose competent leaders, irrespective of their practice of Catholicism. They do not consider the supposed criterion of 'practising' Catholics.

This pragmatic process continues because a Board of Trustee decision may not be challenged. Despite owning the school plant and holding legal responsibility for Special Character, Catholic education authorities do not have access to an appeals' process. The Catholic education system presumes that BOTs follow the guidelines of acceptability. Regrettably the adherence to these guidelines is not mandatory. The only legal safeguard concerning Special Character is the requirement for the principal candidate to be a baptised Catholic. This requirement neither ensures the candidate has the capacity to be a faith leader nor honours the promotion of Special Character.

Principal participants are concerned that future principals may not have the capacity to maintain and enhance Special Character. This concern was expressed by a principal who reflected, "my replacement may have no experience of Catholic culture" (PFG, 07/06/2012). Principals believe that Catholic education authorities are unwilling to acknowledge and address their concerns (PFG, 07/06/2012). The contrasting views regarding the pool of potential principal applicants that meet acceptability standards represent the underlying issues around Catholic identity.

7.3.4 CONCLUSION

Principals are charged with maintaining the Special Character of their schools. "Special Character is a tool for the Church that helps keep the traditions, rites and faith alive" (PFG, 07/06/2012). Catholic schools are "part of the Church" (NZCEO, 2010, p.18) and as their leaders, principals are seen by Catholic education authorities to be faith leaders. In contrast principals are

comfortable explaining how they accept their responsibilities for Special Character but do not necessarily connect these actions to the supposed role of faith leader.

Principals believe there is insufficient support to develop their ability to maintain and enhance Special Character as expected of Catholic leaders. The professional learning offered to them is described as either irrelevant because it fails to address New Zealand Catholic education issues, or inaccessible. Amongst other suggested changes, principals consider that "institutions need to aggressively pursue distance learning options to make specialized leadership preparation more accessible and affordable to today's aspiring [and current] leaders" (T.Cook, 2008, p.17). This observation confirms recent New Zealand research that found on-line learning was a preferred preference for a significant number of those seeking professional learning in Religious Education/Theology (TCI, 2015, p.21).

While Catholic education authorities believe the pool of aspiring leaders is sufficient to address future needs, principals do not. They argue, "…it is imperative that the succession of principals be examined to inform practice, policy, and future research about the ways school systems can manage and plan for the effective succession of school leaders" (Zepeda, Bengston & Parylo, 2012, p.137).

The ability of Catholic education authorities to influence the appointment of principals is limited to its guidelines on acceptability by the self-managing governance of State integrated schools. Acceptability concerns Catholic identity. Throughout the conduct of this research, the clarification of what is understood by the concept of Catholic identity in its contemporary context has been a foundational pursuit. Contestable perspectives of what is essential in Catholic identity and its impact on Special Character in New Zealand Catholic schools requires further research and elaboration.

7.4   Issues Around Catholic Identity

Issue three originates from the third specific research question:

> How do Catholic education authorities understand the role of the
> Catholic school in mission?

Issue three concerns the relationships between the Catholic Church, its schools and the families of the students attending the schools.   Previous consensus concerning how these relationships fulfilled the missionary role of the Church no longer exists. This dissonance is illustrated by the following quotation: "…our churches are empty and our schools are filling" (IPD, 06/2012).

7.4.1 School-Church Relationships

Until relevantly recently, Catholic schools were unified within a parish or cluster of parishes. The families of those attending a local Catholic school attended weekly Mass at the parish church (Denig & Dosen, 2009). This no longer occurs. While families send their children to Catholic schools, their active relationship with parish life has declined. Less than 22% of Catholics attend Sunday worship (Catholic Diocese of Auckland, 2016).   Principal responses to this changing dynamic differ. One perspective is to uphold previous models of family-school-parish relationships "the biggest challenge [in Special Character] is really the connection of students to their local faith community" (IPB, 06/2012).   This perspective reflects the unrealistic expectations of the role of Catholic schools held by New Zealand Catholic Bishops (NZCBC, 2014). Such a perspective fails to acknowledge that the problem lies within the parish. The reality is that the parish no longer attracts family affiliation. This is clearly a parish problem. With respect to mission it is not the school's responsibility to encourage parish participation.   The repercussions concerning this changing dynamic are explained in current Australian research: "…parental church attendance is a stronger predictor of child church attendance than religious attitudes" (Francis, Penny, & Powell, 2016, p.10).   It would seem naïve to conclude that parent rejection of their

Catholic parish affiliation is a problem to be solved by Catholic school principals (Sharkey, 2015).

A few principals responded to the rejection of parish affiliation by seeking to re-establish previous family/school/parish relationships. A second response to the current dynamic is to claim that most students' only experience of the Catholic Church. Indeed, "…the Church can no longer deny that the school is the parish. Yet we are not set up for this. Schools need to be supported as parishes" (PFG, 07/06/2012). This response also reflects a naïve appreciation of the complexity of family-school-parish relationships. Indeed, attempting to provide an 'alternative parish' within the school is offering a simplistic and impractical model of Catholic life. Simplistic, because it presumes that parish, as it existed previously is the only identifying feature of Church. Likewise, accepting school as an alternative parish ignores the developmental dynamic of faith and raises questions because "…if school is parish what happens when the students leave school after year 13?" (PFG, 07/06/2012). In this scenario, if school is Church, graduation from school implies graduation from Church (Sharkey, 2015). The school is not the parish and graduates of Catholic schools negotiate their faith journey with or without involvement in parish life.

Despite divergent responses to the changing family/school/parish relationship principals concur that declining Sunday Mass attendance is the "Bishops problem not a Catholic school problem" (PFG, 07/06/2012). While Catholic schools are popular (Wilson, 2015), Catholic worship is not.   The problem of declining Mass attendance is beyond the capacity of principals, teachers or schools to address.   The reality in New Zealand is that "…despite the extensive resources invested in Catholic schools, they are not arresting the slide away from parish participation and the decline in Catholic culture" (Rossiter, 2013, p.6).

One explanation for declining parish participation suggests that people no longer accept literal interpretations of either Scripture or dogma (Tacey, 2012). In addition, many people are disillusioned with the Church because of

the scandals of sexual and physical abuse by clergy/religious and institutional failures to appropriately address the systems that enabled abuse to occur (O'Murchu, 2014). Moreover, many Catholics have merely drifted away from the institution so that religion and/or religious practices lack relevancy. For all practical purposes, the Catholic Church is of no consequence to their lives (O'Loughlin, 2012). Additionally, even those Catholics who worship regularly choose and pick what they believe, and what influences their behaviour (Rymarz, 2017). Such Catholics have been labelled 'Cafeteria Catholics' (Brennan, 2015).

Labels such as 'Cafeteria Catholics' ignore the complexities of the Church's engagement with contemporary society. Previously, New Zealand was considered a Christian country, at least socially and culturally (King, 2003). This can no longer be entertained. The majority of New Zealanders (42%) fail to identify with any religious affiliation. Overall, less than 50% of New Zealanders identify as Christian (New Zealand Government, 2014). Principals believe that the "Church is in a massive time of flux and change. This is not bad. Schools are places where change is being led" (IPD, 06/2012).

Change is not new to the Church. "Christians are constantly evolving new ways of expressing and sharing faith" (Mackay, 2016, p.38). Catholic schools encourage relevant, youth-friendly liturgy and faith-sharing experiences within the framework of Special Character. Such initiatives demonstrate "how we interact and love so the Gospel becomes tangible" (IPE, 06/2012). These expressions of faith occur in a society that has transitioned from a Christian to a pluralistic society. New Zealanders no longer entertain a Christian cultural worldview (O'Laughlin, 2012).

Promoting a Christian worldview has always been a fundamental premise of Catholic education (CCE, 1998, #14). It is reflected particularly in the efforts of schools "to make sure the kids actually see that it's not about Church in itself, it's a living of the Gospel" (IPB, 06/2012). The living of the Gospel is demonstrated in the outreach of schools through initiatives such as Young Vinnies, Social Justice programmes, care for families (EFG, 19/07/2012).

These initiatives contribute to nurturing a Christian worldview: "…the bottom-line of Catholic schools is to form other-centred men and women who can make a difference in this world" (Martin, 2012, p.49).   Principals believe "Catholic social teaching and living the Gospel" (PFG, 07/06/2012) assists young people to make a difference in their world.

Furthermore, this understanding of living the Gospel reflects the practices of Pope Francis.   In the early years of the 21st century, Catholic authorities taught that the key missionary thrust was to re-engage with non-Mass attending Catholics. This missionary emphasis is called the "New Evangelisation" (John Paul II, 1990, #33).   Ironically the new evangelisation's focus on Catholic identity paralleled a decline in Church engagement with society (Ormerod, 2016).   The election of Pope Francis has altered this emphasis.   For Pope Francis the emphasis is on inclusive mission that embraces everyone including those who choose not to engage with Church (Specia, 2016b). This focus of mission emphasises the primacy of serving all, particularly the marginalised (Francis, 2013, #25).

The research concludes that Catholic secondary schools endeavour to influence young adults who are committed to serving others.   Principal participants (PFG, 07/06/2012, IPA et al., 06/2012) and the expert focus group (10/07/2012) offered numerous examples of Catholic school students and graduates who are serving others.   However, Catholic education authorities question the effectiveness of such initiatives because there is little evidence that they lead to young people's participation in the formal practices and liturgies of Catholicism. New Zealand studies conclude that there is a "problem of young adult non-participation" (Duthie-Jung, 2011, p.135) despite Catholic education that "has inculcated what can be described as a subconscious Catholic perspective" (Duthie-Jung, 2011, p.137). Further, Catholic education authorities determine that "the Catholic school is better placed to counter the influences which dilute faith than any other part of the Church" (NZCBC, 2014a, #37).   This viewpoint fails to consider the complexities of the pluralistic secular society of New Zealand today.   As participants noted "… Bishops just don't get it" (PFG, 07/06/2012). Catholic

schools endeavour to 'get it'. Special Character is the framework for developing a Catholic perspective in a culture that no longer reflects a Christian worldview. Within a pluralistic society, Catholic schools express their Catholic identity beyond teaching Religious Education and providing sacramental experiences. Catholic identity is expressed through the values that inform policy and practice (PFG, 07/06/2012). This practice includes the welcome and support given to families who, while choosing a Catholic school, repudiate regular Church worship (Neidhart & Lamb, 2016).

7.4.2 STAFF SPECIAL CHARACTER ENGAGEMENT

Similar to families' choice of a Catholic school while ignoring Catholic worship, non-believing teachers seek employment in Catholic schools (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). While the *Integration Act* (1975) makes provision for *tagging* a proportion of teaching positions for baptised Catholics (7.2.2.2) all teachers in Catholic schools are expected to support Special Character. In fact, "the Catholic school depends on them [teachers] almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programmes" (Paul VI, 1965a, #8). At appointment to a New Zealand Catholic school, all teaching staff sign a document agreeing to uphold Special Character (NZCEO, 2013, p.93).

During the conduct of this research, a number of challenges emerged regarding staff and Special Character. Principals note "Special Character needs to be revisited and grown - making it upmost in people's minds or it wanes and dies" (IPE, 06/2012). To achieve this, Special Character formation needs to be "a matter of heart not just head" (McGrath, 2012, p 291) yet the emphasis for Catholic education authorities is qualifications (NZCBC, 2014b). Catholic education authorities require Boards of Trustees to prioritise formation in Special Character (NZCEO, 2013). However, Special Character is one of many aspects of education that invites commitments of time and finance. "PD for RE/Special Character takes up a significant portion of our annual PD budget – other learning areas are not so lucky" (IPF, 06/2012). Although formation in Special Character provides staff with the opportunities

to grow in their understanding of Special Character, Catholic identity is so contestable that "the way in which teachers' interpretation of the theological and doctrinal claims of a particular tradition appears sometimes to have little connection to the official explanations of those traditions" (Conroy et al, 2013, p.46). In addition, knowledge-based learning and spiritual growth opportunities, for example, retreats, (IPD & IPE, 06/2012) are not substitutes for individual commitment (IPB & IPE, 06/2012). Teachers may be required to attend professional learning and formation in Special Character but there is no guarantee that this results in a commitment to "participate in the mission by appearing as a witness to faith and helping students develop Catholic belief and values" (Cho, 2012, p.121).

Staff commitment to mission is reflected in their attitudes to the disruption and constrictions in the school timetable resulting from the Special Character of the school. Disruption to the timetable occurs when time is set aside for Special Character activities such as liturgy, retreats and sacramental preparation. Principals reflected that the same level of concern about missing classes is not necessarily expressed when students miss class for sport, cultural, or artistic reasons (IPB, 06/2012). Constraints in the timetable occur because Religious Education is compulsory in all New Zealand Catholic schools. There is no provision for an extension to the teaching day timetable. As a result, it is possible that staff hold views "about the compulsory nature of Religious Education and how organising resources and timetables would be so much more convenient if the compulsory status of the subject was rescinded" (Conroy et al., 2013, p.53). In order to address these valid educational concerns, it is important that all involved in Catholic education understand the complexities of contemporary notions of Catholic identity and its influence on the implementation of Special Character.

7.4.3 CONCLUSION

The Catholic identity of a school is no longer clearly defined (Rossiter, 2013). This is due to the contestable nature of Catholic identity itself. "How Catholic

identity is viewed or conceptualized is highly variable and amorphous, often changing by person, context and time period" (Fuller & Johnson, 2014, p.95). This emerging paradigm of what it means to be Catholic impacts the Catholic school in a variety of ways. Significantly it influences the understanding of family-school-Church relationships because the previous understanding of family-school-parish no longer fits (Neidhart & Lamb, 2016). Attempts have been made to justify a changed reality by suggesting the school become the alternative parish (IPD, 06/2012). This understanding does little to explain the relationship between the Catholic Church and her schools but it merely reinterprets previous understandings.

Both these perspectives create a situation where a Catholic school's Special Character is measurable through the attendance of school-aged children at Sunday Mass. This is inappropriate since "schools have little capacity to influence what families decide to do on a weekend" (Sharkey, 2015, p.19). Rather, a new understanding of how schools form young service-focussed adults is emerging. Principals consider that providing opportunities for students to serve and understand this service as an attribute of being a Catholic school. It is an important aspect of their role in maintaining and enhancing the school's Special Character. This reflects Pope Francis' desire that:

> School can and must be a catalyst, it must be a place of encounter and convergence of the entire educating community, with the sole objective of training and helping to develop mature people who are simple, competent and honest, who know how to love with fidelity, who can live life as a response to God's call, and their future profession as a service to society (Francis, 2013, p.3).

Catholic schools require time to nurture, encourage and teach about service to society. In a competitive education market, this may cause friction unless all staff share a common understanding of Catholic identity and its implications for school structures such as timetables (IPC, 06/2012).

Catholic identity is the product of Special Character.   Principals are responsible for promoting and enhancing Special Character and therefore are responsible for a school's Catholic identity.   Principals acknowledge and accept this responsibility (PFG, 07/06/2012) and are committed to working with the tension of an emerging dynamic of what it means to identify as Catholic.   In many ways, their schools are reflecting this change (EFG, 19/07/2012).   Principals will take heart from Pope Francis who told teachers "Do not be disheartened in the face of the difficulties that the educational challenge presents" (Francis, 2013, p.3).   As a principal participant noted, "Yes, there are challenges. It can be hard to be a Catholic School principal but I still recommend it. We can make a difference to education, forming young people who will make a positive difference because they have had a Catholic education" (IPC, 06/2012).

7.5   RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the new understandings identifies how principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools understand and implement Special Character in their schools. New understandings suggest that principals appreciate Special Character as the difference between a State integrated school and other state schools. Previous research identified that "in spite of the fact that the term [Special Character] is used with great frequency in New Zealand Catholic school documentation, confusion and ambiguity still reigns in many people's minds" (O'Donnell, 2001, p.181).   This research concludes that there is still insufficient clarity concerning the term 'Special Character'. Special Character is often linked to the concept of Catholic identity. However, throughout this research the notion of Catholic identity in its contemporary context is contestable.   This lack of clarity influences how principals in Catholic schools understand and implement their schools' Special Character.

Table 7.3 outlines the conclusions generated from this research.

Table 7.3: Conclusions

Contributions to new knowledge

- New Zealand Catholic schools operate in a pluralistic society where the Christian Worldview no longer prevails. This influences traditional school-family-Church relationships. This lack of clarity influences implementation of Special Character. [*7.2, 7.3, 7.4*]

- 'Special Character' is a term used extensively in New Zealand education yet there is a lack of clarity about what this term means. As a consequence, the expectations Government and Church have for a Catholic school due to Special Character lack consistency. [*7.2, 7.4.1*]

- Principals recognise that the implementation and enhancement of the Special Character of their school is important to both their school identity (Catholic) and purpose (education). [*7.2.1, 7.2.4*]

- Tensions concerning the status of Religious Education in the timetable have been mitigated with the introduction of Achievement Standards in Religious Education. These may be used to assess Religious Education, with credits contributing to a student's national qualification - NCEA. [*7.2.3*]

- Principals are concerned that Catholic education authorities measure Catholic school success by judging a student's personal relationship with Jesus through Mass attendance. [*7.3.1, 7.4.1*]

- Principals fulfil the role of faith leader of a Catholic community but have little appreciation that they do so. [*7.3.1*]

Contributions to Practice

- Principals feel unsupported by Catholic education authorities. [*7.2.4, 7.3.3, 7.4.1*]

- There is inadequate professional learning in Special Character for teachers and Principals. [*7.3.1, 7.4.2*]

- There is a lack of succession planning for Catholic School Principals [*7.3.3]*.

Contributions to Policy

- There is a growing acceptance from the Catholic community, including Church hierarchy, that schools are often the only engagement with Church young people experience. This changes the nature of the expectations placed on schools by Catholic education authorities. [*7.2.2, 7.4.1*]

- Principals of Catholic Schools experience particular challenges in relation to staffing to support the Special Character of their schools. [*7.2.1, 7.2.2.2, 7.3.3, 7.2.4, 7.4.1*]

  i. The availability of acceptable candidates for *tagged* positions.
  ii. The lack of clarity of the role of *tagged* teachers, especially those who do not teach Religious Education
  iii. The provision of suitably qualified teachers of Religious Education.

- Principals experience frustration with the procedures of Special Character attestation. [*7.3.2]*

- The changes in criteria for preference of enrolment have increased the number of families able to establish a connection with the Catholic Church. As a result, many more families in Catholic schools have limited experience of Church, its practices and beliefs. This development influences how Special Character is maintained. Catholic education authorities do not appear to acknowledge this influence and the challenges it presents to schools. [*7.2.2.1, 7.4.1*]

These conclusions are further discussed in Chapter Eight.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to generate the conclusions for this research that explores how principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools understand and implement Special Character. This chapter also demonstrates how the study has made original contributions to scholarship and to educational practice.

8.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is an exploration of the understanding of Special Character held by principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools. It examines their understanding of Special Character, their implementation of Special Character in their schools, and the role of the Catholic school in mission. The conceptual framework synthesises the literature into three main focus areas, namely: the nature and purpose of Special Character, the role of the principal in a Catholic school and principal formation. The research design is focused by the following specific research questions:

1. What do principals understand by the term Special Character?
2. How do principals implement Special Character in their schools?
3. How do Catholic education authorities understand the role of the Catholic school in mission?

An interpretative approach is used in this study. The study adopts a constructionist epistemology because humans create meaning as they interact within a particular context. Therefore, meaning is socially constructed as individuals make sense of their own experience from their particular social and historical perspectives (Crotty, 2003).

The particular focus of this research is the meaning, which is generated through the social interaction of principals and other stakeholders of their school. There is a specific emphasis on principals' social interaction with Catholic educational authorities. These stakeholders and principals construct

meaning through their own experiences. Experiences occur through interactions with a variety of individuals, institutions and contexts. Principals' meaning making is influenced by the cultural, historical and social contexts within which the individual principal operates. This study seeks to understand how principals perceive their world and therefore symbolic interactionism is adopted as the lens to inform the theoretical perspective of this study.

Case study methodology is adopted for this research because it explores the phenomena of principals understanding and implementing of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools. This case study is bounded within the New Zealand Catholic secondary school system. Participation was invited from the principals of all 49 New Zealand Catholic secondary schools, as well as members of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office Catholic Special Character Review Committee.

Data gathering strategies were:

- Focus group interviews (two focus group interviews with 17 participants)
- Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews (6 participants)
- Questionnaire (11 participants).

Participant participation and data collection processes conformed to ethical clearance granted by Australian Catholic University Research Ethics Committee (Reference # 201235Q, Appendix A).

8.3   LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The first limitation of this research is the volunteer nature of participation. Every principal of a New Zealand Catholic secondary school was invited to participate as self-selection could limit the range of participants. The anonymous nature of the survey augments this limitation, as it does not allow a scoping of participants with respect to representative responses. This is mitigated somewhat by the focus group. Although the membership of the

Principal Focus Group was voluntary it did provide responses from principals with a wide range of experience and contexts.

A second limitation is the personal and professional relationship of the researcher to some of the participants. The researcher has never held a position of authority over any of the participants but one of professional support. The researcher is aware of the possible bias and influence this may have on the response of participants. In order to minimise this, along with the professional integrity of the researcher, a survey with unidentified participants was included in the multiple data collection strategies employed.

8.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

This section addresses each of the specific research questions that focus the conduct of this study.

8.4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

The first research question is:

What do principals understand by the term Special Character?

The research generates five new understandings concerning the perceptions of the term 'Special Character'.

The first new understanding is that principals perceive that the Government has minimal interest in Special Character because it is primarily concerned that its educational agenda is realised. Therefore, although the Government understands Special Character as the framework for its relationship with State integrated schools, it is satisfied that Catholic schools meet the conditions of integration because they provide academically successful schools. As a consequence, by default, the Government delegates the monitoring of Special Character to Catholic education authorities. As a result, principals perceive that meeting the conditions of integration is solely a Church compliance issue.

The second new understanding is that Catholic education authorities use the framework of Special Character to ensure the provision of an authentic Catholic education. Two of the means of ascertaining authentic Catholic education are Catholic Special Character Review and attestation. Both of these methods are flawed. The first because it relies on indicator-based assessment, the second because of the repetitive and cumbersome processes required to complete it.

The third new understanding is that Catholic education authorities and principals consider the primary function of the Catholic school is to develop a students' personal relationship with Jesus. The measurement of the success of fulfilling this expectation is contentious. Bishops appear to align a school's success of nourishing relationships with Jesus by graduate Sunday Mass attendance. Principals consider this an unfair criterion.

The fourth new understanding is that there is a divergence of appreciation of the status of Religious Education between principals and the New Zealand Bishops' Conference. There is agreement that Religious Education has an important role in a Catholic school. However, some principals do not feel the Bishops have an understanding of schools that is sufficient for them to mandate aspects of curriculum such as the number of hours allocated to Religious Education classes.

The fifth new understanding is that the status of Religious Education in Catholic secondary schools has significantly improved since the implementation of Achievement Standards in Religious Studies. These standards can be used as an assessment tool for Religious Education with credits gained contributing to a student's national qualifications, including University Entrance.

8.4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

The second research question is:

> How do principals implement Special Character in their schools?

The research generates the following three new understandings.

The first new understanding is that principals are reluctant to be seen as 'faith' experts. They are concerned that they will be expected to carry out their Special Character roles as if they were quasi-religious Sisters or Brothers. Despite this reluctance they willingly, albeit unconsciously, enact the role of faith leader in their school.

The second new understanding is that principal succession planning in the New Zealand Catholic education system is negligible. No prospective Catholic school principal formation exists and minimal effort appears to be made to identify and nurture acceptable candidates. This has particular significance given the negligible authority Catholic education authorities have on the principal appointment process.

A third understanding is that there is a diversity of opinion as to what comprises professional learning in Special Character. This divergence highlights the variety of professional learning needs that exist because of a principal's academic study and previous experience of Catholic education. As principals expressed an overall dissatisfaction with current professional learning, and formation opportunities, their participation in professional learning in Special Character is *ad hoc*.

8.4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

The third research question is:

> How do Catholic education authorities understand the Catholic school's role in mission?

The research generates the following three new understandings.

These three new understandings centre on Catholic identity. Currently the understanding of Catholic identity is contestable. For a myriad of reasons what it means to be a Catholic is variable according to experience, culture and

social influences. This has a significant impact on the shared appreciation of stakeholders regarding the role of the Catholic school in mission. These divergent positions influence the following new understandings.

The first new understanding is that the traditional relationships between family, parish and school no longer exist. Although some principals resolve this by claiming the school is a parish this is problematic. Problematic because it suggests that Church is a club young people belong to for a time, namely the school years. This model also relies on the traditional model of parish: a model that is in transition.

The second new understanding is that principals struggle to fill their *tagged* teaching positions. Only teachers who are 'acceptable' are eligible for appointment to a *tagged* position. According to criteria set by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference an acceptable applicant is a baptised Catholic who can establish regular Sunday Mass attendance. In New Zealand, as in many 'western' countries Mass counts are decreasing for a variety of reasons, many of which are associated with the changing nature of what it means to be Catholic. As a consequence, the number of teachers meeting the criteria of acceptability is falling.

The third new understanding is that principals find it challenging to source acceptable and qualified teachers of Religious Education. As a result principals feel they need to accept a level of academic qualifications for teachers of Religious Education that is lower than for other subjects. This is particularly noticeable for positions in the senior secondary school where Religious Education is assessed to standards on the New Zealand Qualification Framework.

8.5   CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the conclusions generated from this research.

8.5.1 CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEW KNOWLEDGE

There are a number of conclusions generated from this research that contribute new knowledge.

8.5.1.1   The current contestable understanding of Catholic identity impacts Special Character

The first conclusion that generates new knowledge concerns the contestable concept of Catholic identity and its influence on the Catholic school.   The Catholic identity of a school is expressed through its Special Character (Sweetman, 2002; van der Neest & Buchanan, 2014). Principals perceive that some of the expectations placed on them regarding Special Character are unrealistic. These expectations fail to appreciate the challenges presented by the contestable nature of what constitutes the contemporary Catholic identity (Fuller & Johnson, 2014). This is exemplified in the changing relationships within the Catholic community.

Previously, the Catholic community was seen as a three-fold relationship. There were clear links between Catholic families, the Catholic school and the local Catholic parish. Families sent their child to a Catholic school because the Church obliged them to. At any one Catholic school, families lived in close proximity to one other, so the same families attended Sunday Mass together and most likely played sport and socialised together. That this close-knit community-based school survived financially was first due to the generosity of religious [Priests, Brothers and Sisters] who vowed poverty, and later with the addition to staff of a few lay teachers, who often accepted a salary less than that received by their State school colleagues (Sweetman, 2002). Catholic identity was both easy to see and maintain, because each member of the school community was immersed in an identical Catholic culture. Principals and diocesan authorities spent little time talking about the Catholic Special Character of schools because it was assumed.

Today's family/school/parish links are in a very different paradigm. It cannot be presumed that everybody holds the same ideas of what gives him or her Catholic identity. Many families do not feel obliged to send their children to a Catholic school; other families are mobile and so do not send their child to the nearest Catholic school; few families attend weekly Mass and the 'markers' of Catholic family life such as having pictures of saints on the wall, and saying the nightly Rosary are almost non-existent. Christian culture does not permeate family and local society as it once did (Hoverd, Bulbulia, Partow, & Sibley, 2013). This change in family Catholic identity influences a schools' Special Character and principals believe that this new influence is not sufficiently recognised by Catholic educational authorities. This lack of recognition influences the challenges of addressing the Church's expectations concerning Special Character.

Concern regarding Catholic identity and its influence on New Zealand Catholic education reflects issues identified internationally (Mulligan, 2007; Rymarz, 2010; Schuttoffel, 2013; Sharkey, 2015). The contestable nature of Catholic identity is an underpinning issue throughout this research.

8.5.1.2 There are variations in stakeholder understandings of Special Character

This thesis concludes that although there is much rhetoric regarding Special Character, a common understanding of what is meant by the term is absent. The Government understands Special Character as the basis for providing an alternative schooling stream that addresses the needs of a particular set of parents. It is able to offer this because the proprietors of these schools provide the facilities and ensure that the Special Character is upheld. Although the Government's legislation (PSCIA, 1975) indicates that the maintenance of Special Character is important, it is more concerned that schools fulfil their obligations under the Education Act (1989). Therefore, as long as the school provides a demonstrably 'good' education, the Government is prepared to finance its operational costs. Special Character as the Church understands it appears ignored by the Government.

For the proprietors and Catholic education authorities, Special Character is important because it is linked to the Catholic school's authenticity. Special Character enables the Catholic school to teach and practise the beliefs, rites and rituals of the Catholic Church. Without the Government's financial support, the Catholic Church would be incapable of maintaining its school system. Special Character is considered foundational to the viability of the New Zealand Catholic Education system. For the Catholic Education system, Special Character is about viable Catholic education.

As a result of these divergent understandings of Special Character, principals demonstrate an understanding of Special Character as the marker of meeting the expectations of Catholic education authorities. The expectations of the Government concerning Special Character are minimalized. This lack of acknowledgement of the role of Special Character in a Catholic school's relationship with the Government is supported by the experiences of principals have with Government agencies, particularly the Education Review Office. Principals concur that ERO rarely comments on Special Character during their auditing visits. This perception supports the impression that Special Character is only about the relationship of a school with the Church and does not influence school-Government relationships.

This research concludes that there is little overt appreciation of the *Integration Act* (1975) and the particular relationship between Government and proprietors. Principals do not explicitly or implicitly express an understanding that the Act enables Catholic schools to exist by providing "solid legislative safeguards to preserve and enhance the Special Character of schools" while ensuring the financial support that enables "them to not only survive but to flourish" (Lynch, 2002, p.142).

8.5.1.3 Special Character is important to Catholic schools

This thesis concludes that principals recognise that the maintenance and enhancement of the Special Character of their school is important to both their school identity (Catholic) and purpose (education). Principals understand that Special Character enables their schools 'to do things in the Catholic way'.

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This 'Catholic way' helps to provide a framework for creating a 'point of difference' between Catholic secondary schools and local State schools. Special Character presents parents with educational choices for their children.

8.5.1.4 The status of Religious Education as a subject has improved since the introduction of Achievement Standards

The availability of Achievement Standards in Religious Studies as assessment tools has enhanced the status of Religious Education. This is particularly noticeable amongst families and students.

Some families still express concerns that the compulsory nature of Religious Education limits subject choice in the senior school. Since credits in Religious Education may now contribute to University Entrance, this criticism concerning the compulsory nature of the subject has declined. In turn, this has lessened one area of potential stress between students, their families and schools.

8.5.1.5 There are concerns about measuring student success through Sunday Mass attendance

This thesis concludes that principals consider it unrealistic to judge the success of a Catholic school by the number of its pupils (current and past) who attend Sunday worship. Principals recognise the need for Catholic schools to provide opportunities for young people to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ but do not accept that the evaluation of how this is carried out is confined to measuring Church attendance.

Young peoples' absence from Church is the result of a complex range of reasons. One of these factors is the change in Catholic family life. Although on one hand Catholic education documentation (CCE, 1999; Paul VI, 1965) emphasises the role of the family as first educators-in-faith, recent documentation from the New Zealand Bishops (NZCBC, 2014b) confirms principals' belief that sole responsibility for faith formation is relegated to the schools rather than to the traditional partnerships of family-school-parish.

The traditional partnerships of school-family-parish are no longer obvious. When parents do not attend Church their children do not. Schools have no control over family life and have no ability to determine what families do or do not do (or not) on a Sunday (Sharkey, 2015). Even if young people's capacity to hold a Catholic worldview is built while at school, they graduate within a society with a declining religious worldview (Smith, 2013). Given the transitional nature of the Catholic Church today, principals consider that the emphasis on schools producing Sunday worshippers is futile.

8.5.1.6 Principals do not acknowledge their role as faith leader

A further conclusion is that although principals clearly demonstrate that they act as faith leaders, they do not recognise that they carry out this function. This may be a result of the influence of Church documentation implying that lay people exercise their role of faith leadership as a consequence of their association with priests and religious (Hansen, 2013). Further, because they are lay leaders, principals do not consider they need to act as religious and priests. Contributing to the lack of awareness of principals' faith leadership is the inadequacy of spiritual and faith formation opportunities for them. These are minimal because of the current emphasis by Catholic education authorities on gaining qualifications in Special Character. Emphasising the importance of qualifications adds to sidelining of the faith leadership aspect of the principal role.

8.5.2 CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRACTICE

The following conclusions contribute to new practice.

8.5.2.1 Support structures for principals concerning Special Character are inadequate

The research concludes that principals consider their role both isolating and inadequately supported. These considerations arise because principals believe that Catholic education authorities are too removed from the lived experience of Catholic schools and the families they serve. Consequently, they believe diocesan structures fail to meet their needs for Special Character

support and spiritual formation. Two examples illustrate this failure. First, structures fail to reflect the issues arising from a new reality where many families have little engagement with the local Church. Second, expectations on principals do not acknowledge the shift of responsibility for Special Character from religious Brothers and Sisters to lay staff. These examples demonstrate that "fresh responses and more rigorous support for Catholic school leaders" is required (Sullivan et al., 2015, p.2).

Principals expressed gratitude for their individual Bishops and their interest in their schools.   However, "Catholic educational leaders at all levels feel isolated and unsupported" (T.Cook, 2008 p.15).   This reflects the research of Fincham (2010), and Belmonte and Cranston (2009).

8.5.2.2   Issues regarding the adequacy and accessibility of professional learning in Special Character

A further conclusion is that although "effective leadership for Catholic schools presupposes a particular knowledge base and skill set that can only be attained through specialized course work and professional development" (Cook & Darrow, 2008, p.360) principals are generally dissatisfied with the professional learning available in New Zealand.

Although there are opportunities for principals to participate in professional learning in Special Character, they are perceived to lack robustness or accessibility. An example of this was the provision of the Australian Catholic University's Master of Educational Leadership award. Principals who had submitted for this qualification acknowledged it as worthwhile but noted it did not address all that they needed.   Additional opportunities for principal professional learning in Special Character exist but issues of affordability and time commitment continue to minimise participation. Principals inferred that they need opportunity for study that is financially viable, reasonably time-framed, and flexible in delivery.

A helpful professional learning opportunity for new principals in the New Zealand context is the allocation of a principal mentor.   This is particularly

valuable when the mentor is also the principal of a Catholic secondary school. Participants were disappointed when their mentor did not have Catholic secondary school leadership experience. Principal mentoring concentrates on professional support concerning the leadership and management responsibilities of the principal role. Professional support concerning theological and spiritual leadership is delivered through diocesan principal support groups and Catholic principal conferences.

This thesis acknowledges that many principals have insufficient preparation in theological and spiritual leadership, a conclusion reflecting the research of Boyle, Haller and Hunt (2016), Sharkey (2015), TCI (2015) Schuttoffel (2013), and Belmonte and Cranston (2009). Principals do, however, have an unarticulated sense of a vocational commitment "clearly drawing upon a spiritual and religious resource that empowered them and gave them a sustained sense of mission, purpose and hope in their work" (Grace, 2010, p.118).

8.5.2.3 There is a need for succession planning for Catholic School Principals

This thesis further concludes that there is insufficient succession planning for the role of Catholic school principal. Two divergent views on this deficiency are entertained While Catholic education authorities are satisfied that there are sufficient acceptable candidates for principal positions, principals believe there are insufficient acceptable candidates, and insufficient concern regarding succession.

Succession planning provides the framework for professional learning opportunities for teachers with the capacity to be future principals. Given the issues of Catholic identity (7.5.1.1) and the faith-leadership responsibilities of principals (7.5.1.6) this may involve the capabilities to lead a Catholic community.

This thesis acknowledges that succession planning is one of many demands on schools, diocesan offices and national Catholic education authorities.

Implementation of succession could however provide a pool of acceptable candidates with the confidence and capacity to implement and enhance the Special Character of their schools.

8.5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLICY

The following conclusion contributes to new policy.

8.5.3.1   Catholic Schools are the dominant experience of Church for many students

This thesis concludes that there is a growing acceptance from Catholic authorities, that schools are often the only experience of Church that young people encounter. Previously, secondary schools were critiqued for seemingly taking the place of the parish especially when offering sacramental preparation programmes. This critique was supported because it was felt that schools were offering a false sense of a worshiping community since students leave school and therefore Church. Furthermore, this sense of a worshipping community was not aligned to wider parish participation.

Parish participation is considered an indicator of Catholic identity. The dichotomy of the success of Catholic schools academically is that while few Catholics participate in parish life, Catholic schools are burgeoning (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017, p.6).   A growing number of sacramental preparation programmes are being conducted in schools supported by Catholic education authorities. In reality, for a number of Catholic secondary school students the school is the only place where they receive the sacraments. The school provides the only experience of Church for many young people and their families.

Confirmation of school as the experience of Church with which most families engage with came with the intervention of Bishop Charles Drennan at the 2011 Synod on the New Evangelisation: "it is in our schools that the large majority of the baptised and yet to be baptised, encounter for the first time in any systematic way, the person of Jesus Christ, prayer liturgy, and the

sacramental life of the Church. Teachers rather than parents have become in many instances the first formators in faith of our young". This strong statement confirms the lived experience of principals.

8.5.3.2 Maintaining Special Character produces challenging staffing issues

This thesis concludes that principals are challenged within their Special Character role by their responsibilities for staffing. They recognise that ideally a Catholic school is staffed with people knowledgeable and committed to the Catholic faith, but when '*tagged*' positions are advertised it is difficult to identify 'acceptable' candidates. This is because, like the families of Catholic school students, Catholic teachers may be disengaged from Church. In addition, *tagged* positions are failing to influence the Catholic school's Special Character, which all teachers, not just those in *tagged* positions, are required to support. Furthermore, there are no definitive roles and responsibilities of *tagged* positions. Although it is presumed that part of the role of these teachers is to be witness to the Christian message (Specia, 2016a), this is not clearly defined. As a result of this lack of clarity teachers are reluctant to apply for *tagged* positions.

Appreciation of both the individual teacher's responsibility for Special Character and the role of the *tagged* teacher requires professional learning in Special Character but this is not universally available or accessible for staff. Furthermore, staff who have permanent tenure especially those who do not teach Religious Education or hold a *tagged* position, do not always see the necessity of the professional learning expected of them.

8.5.3.3 Special Character attestation reporting is frustrating

Another conclusion of this research concerns the strategies by which Catholic education authorities monitor the Special Character of a school through compliance auditing. Principals accept the need for a school to be accountable to the Church for meeting the requirements for Catholic

education. However, there was a recurring expression of frustration with the manner in which information is generated. Principals complete Government reports through digital forums that are aligned to their student management system but they are not able to use a digital platform for reporting to diocesan authorities.

Furthermore, although the annual compliance audit is designated to the Board of Trustees, the information required presumes principal involvement. Attestation becomes another task that principals are required to carry out.

8.5.3.4 Changes in preference criteria have had an unacknowledged impact on the maintenance of the Special Character

The final conclusion concerns changes in preference criteria. The legislation (PSCIA, 1975) requires that the majority of students attending a Catholic school have a relationship with the Catholic Church. However, enrolment criteria are so imprecise that a broad continuum of Catholic identity exists within the school. These challenge the implementation of Special Character of the school because there is no longer a common understanding between families and schools regarding the implementation of Special Character. The factors that principals perceive contribute to this challenge include families' disengagement from the Church, and the liberal/conservative elements of families' expression and experience of Church.

Catholic parents do not necessarily choose a Catholic school because of its religious nature (Kennedy et al., 2011). Furthermore "today's Catholic schools must prove their validity as viable educational institutions, as well as satisfy the requirements of the Church, while simultaneously responding to Government accountability and Church expectations" (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009, p.296). Church expectations on Catholic schools presume a level of family engagement with Church that is unsubstantiated by the reality principals face. Therefore, how these expectations are monitored and reported invites review.

8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions of this research identify issues emanating from the understanding and implementation of Special Character by principals of New Zealand Catholic secondary schools. The following recommendations respond to these issues.

8.6.1 THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN MISSION

The recommendations concerning the role of the Catholic school in mission are made as a response to Pope Francis' changing concepts of evangelisation. Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI emphasized mission as a 'new evangelization' which aimed to reengage 'lapsed' Catholics to the regular practice of their faith (John Paul II, 1979, #33). The majority in the school community are disengaged Catholics (NZCBC, 2015). Consequently, the new evangelization required school-based faith formation opportunities for students, staff, and parents to reengage in Sunday worship.

In contrast, Pope Francis' understanding of evangelization has a broader, less ecclesial agenda. His focus emphasizes welcome and mercy, being with people in their brokenness without judgment (Francis, 2015). Consequently, evangelization is recognized as a practical expression of what it means to be Christian and as such is not necessarily linked with weekly Mass attendance (Sharkey, 2015).

The following recommendations reflect Pope Francis' understanding of evangelisation.

1. That Catholic education authorities initiate dialogue with stakeholders in New Zealand Catholic school education to clarify what is understood by the term 'Special Character'.

This recommendation is timely because the Government's review of education legislation has absorbed the *Integration Act* (1975) into the *Education Act* (1989).

Clarifying Special Character may assist in the provision of initiatives aiming to:

a. Facilitate the ongoing engagement of young people with the person of Jesus Christ. (*Sections 7.2.2, and **7.4.1**, Conclusions 8.5.1.1, 8.5.1.5, **8.5.3.1** and 8.5.3.4).*

b. Evaluate the impact of the revised criteria for preference of enrolment on the implementation of Special Character. *(Sections 7.2.1, **7.2.2**, 7.2.3, and 7.4.2, Conclusions **8.5.1.1**, 8.5.1.3, 8.5.1.5, 8.5.3.1 and 8.5.3.4).*

c. Review the purpose of *tagged* teaching positions. (*Sections 7.2.1, **7.2.2**, 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.3, and 7.4.2, Conclusions 8.5.1.1, 8.5.1.3, 8.5.1.6, 8.5.2.2, 8.5.2.3, and 8.5.3.2).*

8.6.2 POLICY

The recommendations are:

1. That a systematic evaluation of the support of principals of Catholic secondary schools in New Zealand be conducted, including their requirements for support and guidance in Special Character. *(Sections 7.2.2, 7.3.1, and 7.4.1, Conclusions 8.5.1.1, 8.5.1.5, **8.5.2.1** and 8.5.3.3).*

2. This thesis offers a number of recommendations relating to the provision of professional learning in Special Character. *(Sections 7.3.1, **7.3.2** and 7.4.2, Conclusions 8.5.1.2, 8.5,1.3, 8.5.1.6, **8.5.2.2** and 8.5.3.2).*

They are:

That Catholic education authorities

a. provide theological and spiritual formation in Special Character for principals that enables them to contextualise their principalship. A suggestion given by participants (PFG, 07/06/2012; IPE, 06/2012) is the provision of a course for principals new to Catholic schools similar to *Teachers New to Catholic Schools* offered by Diocesan Schools' Offices. This would cover legal guidance and practical advice on the principal's role of maintaining and enhancing Special Character.

b. continue to build relationships with the Ministry of Education to ensure that a first-time Catholic school principal is allocated a mentor, who is also a Catholic school principal.

The research additionally recommends that the professional learning in Special Character for teachers be further reviewed. Such a review critiques course accessibility - where and when courses are available, and pedagogy for example face-to-face, online learning etc. This recommendation has its rationale in information generated from TCI's survey on the professional learning needs of teachers (TCI, 2015). *(Sections 7.2.2 and **7.2.3**, Conclusions **8.5.3.2**)*

3. That a process of principal succession be implemented nationally. Principals have sufficient credibility to nominate staff who demonstrate capacity and ability for the principal position. Those with recognised potential might then be supported in a variety of ways to build their knowledge and skills across academic and theological domains. While, given the small nature of the New Zealand Catholic education sector, it may not be possible to offer course for potential principals, it is possible to explore suitable personalised preparation programmes. (*Section **7.3.3**, Conclusion **8.5.2.3**)*

4. That attestation processes (See section 7.3.2) be reviewed. An online system that enables the incorporation of information from schools' student management systems may facilitate both accuracy and ease of completion. *(Sections 7.2.1,* and ***7.2.2****, and, Conclusions 8.5.1.1, 8.5.1.2, 8.5.1.3, 8.5.2.1,* **8.5.3.3** *and 8.5.3.4).*

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ETHICS APPROVAL 2012 35Q

Gmail

FW: Ethics application approved!

Res Ethics <Res.Ethics@acu.edu.au> Tue, Apr 17, 2012 at 12:18 PM
To: Denis Mclaughlin <Denis.McLaughlin@acu.edu.au>, Sian Owen <sianrsj@gmail.com>
Cc: Kylie Pashley <Kylie.Pashley@acu.edu.au>

Dear Applicant,

2012 35Q
How do principals of New Zealand Catholic high school perceive special character and implement it in their schools.

The Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee has reviewed the ethics application number 2012 35Q ("How do principals of New Zealand Catholic high school perceive special character and implement it in their schools."). In all future correspondence with the Committee please quote the ACU reference number 2012 35Q.

The Chair of the Expedited Review Panel has considered your application and any subsequent response to queries raised and has granted ethics approval. The approved period of data collection is as shown on the ethics application (23/4/2012 to 17/09/2013).

Please note the following conditions of approval:

1. Any departure from the protocol detailed in your proposal must be reported immediately to the Committee.
2. When you propose a change to an approved protocol, which you consider to be minor, you are required to submit a "Modification Form for Research Projects" form (at http://www.acu.edu.au/162020). Where substantive changes to any approved protocols are proposed, you are required to submit a new application proposal ("New ACU project for ethics approval"), to be consideration by the ACU HREC.
3. You are required to notify the Research Ethics Officer of any serious adverse events or complaints.
4. Under the NHMRC National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Humans (http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e72syn.htm) research ethics committees are responsible for monitoring approved research to ensure continued compliance with ethical standards. You are required to provide a written report on the progress of the approved project annually. The proforma report is available from http://www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/research/for_researchers/research_ethics/ and download 'Progress/Final/Extension Report Form for Research Projects'.
5. The Committee may choose to conduct an interim audit of your research.
6. The decision is subject to ratification at the next available committee meeting. You will only be contacted again in relation to this matter if the Committee raises any additional questions or concerns in regard to the clearance.

You can view your final approved application on Orion:
http://orion.acu.edu.au/rmenet
(Ethics -> Applications -> My Applications -> Application ID : 2012 35Q)

We wish you well in this research project.

Kind regards,

Ethics Officer | Research Services
Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)

THIS IS AN AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED RESEARCHMASTER EMAIL

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS EXPERT FOCUS GROUP

TITLE OF PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education[22]

Dear Participant,

I am a Doctor of Education candidate at Australian Catholic University. The purpose of my thesis is to explore how Special Character is understood and implemented by principals of New Zealand Catholic high schools. As a member of the NZCEO Special Character review committee, you are invited to participate in a focus group concerning how principals of Catholic high schools understand and implement Special Character in their schools. Your experience as a reviewer of Special Character enables you to offer insight into Special Character and how it is implemented in schools.

By participating in the focus group, you will assist in the ongoing understanding of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic high schools and may assist in generating new policy addressing contemporary challenges. Because of the small size of the Catholic education community there is a slight risk that comments you make during the focus group that are directly quoted in the report might be identifiable to you. Every effort will be made to minimise this risk through the removal of identifiable information.

---

[22] At the outset of this research the student researcher was enrolled as a Doctor of Education candidate. On 19 February 2014, the student researcher's application to change candidature from Doctor of Education to Doctor of Philosophy was approved. The data gathering strategies were by this time complete.

The benefit of the research is to contribute to the ongoing understanding of the place and function of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools that and that it may include recommendations regarding the support and formation of principals of Catholic secondary schools.

The focus group takes approximately one hour. It will occur during the Special Character reviewers meeting on Wednesday July 17. I will facilitate the focus group.

The focus group will be audio recorded and I will aslo make response notes also. The identity of respondents will not be recorded. All data will be aggregated. The audiotapes and notes will be securely stored during the course of my study, and destroyed five years after the report's publication.

You are free not to participate without having to justify that decision, and you may withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the focus group at any time without giving a reason.

Details of focus groups are anonymous to those outside the focus group. The responses made during the focus group are confidential to the process and should not be shared outside the focus group. No person is able to identify the author of responses.   The focus group contributes to my doctoral thesis. In this publication or other reports of the research identifying features of the interview are removed.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to my supervisor:
        Assoc. Professor Denis McLaughlin PhD (London)
        Ph: +61 7 3623 7154
        School of Educational Leadership
        Brisbane Campus ACU
        PO Box 456
        Queensland 4014
        Australia
        E-mail: Denis.McLaughlin@acu.edu.au

or myself, the student researcher
        Siân Owen MEd (ACU), MEdLd (ACU)
        Ph: 027 329 3877
        1/31 Hanover St
        Wellington 6012
        E-mail: sianrsj@gmail.com

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that my supervisor or I have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

QLD: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456
Virginia QLD 4014
Australia
Tel: +61 7 3623 7429
Fax: +61 7 3623 7328
E-mail: res.ethics@acu.edu.au

Complaints or concerns are treated in confidence and fully investigated. Participants are informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the *Consent Form*, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Principal Investigator, myself.

When the final report of my research is available I will make contact with you to ascertain if you wish to receive a copy of it.

I am appreciative of any assistance you may provide for this research.

Denis McLaughlin (Supervisor)   Siân Owen (Student Researcher)

denis.mclaughlin@acu.edu.au   sianrsj@gmail.com

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CONSENT FORM

Please return a completed copy to the researcher, Siân Owen and retain a completed copy for your own files

PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of special character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

I .... *(the participant)* have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. I know that

1. My participation in the study is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the study at any stage of the focus group;
3. I can choose not to answer any question and/or not to discuss any topic raised during the focus group;
4. The focus group will be digitally audio-recorded, and handwritten notes will also be taken;
5. Some of my comments may be quoted in the report, although neither my name nor other identifying characteristics will accompany the quotes;
6. The focus group notes and transcripts of the digital recording may be retained in anonymous form in secure storage for the seven years, after which they will be destroyed;
7. The results of the study may be published, but every attempt will be made to preserve participants' anonymity and no names or other identifying characteristics will be published.

Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this focus group of up to one hour.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ……………………………………………………………

SIGNATURE ....   DATE ....

Denis McLaughlin (Supervisor)   Siân Owen (Student Researcher)

DATE……………………………...   DATE……………………………...

Appendix Bii: Information Letter Participants Principal Focus Group

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS FOCUS GROUP

TITLE OF PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

I am a Doctor of Education candidate at Australian Catholic University. The purpose of my thesis is to explore how Special Character is understood and implemented by principals of New Zealand Catholic high schools. As a principal of a New Zealand Catholic secondary school, you are invited to participate in a focus group concerning how principals of Catholic high schools understand and implement Special Character in their schools. Your experience as a principal of a Catholic high school enables you to offer insight into Special Character and how it is implemented in schools.

By participating in the focus group you assist in the ongoing understanding of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic high schools and may assist in generating new policy addressing contemporary challenges. Because of the small size of the Catholic education community there is a slight risk that comments you make during the focus group that are directly quoted in the report might be identifiable to you. Every effort will be made to minimise this risk through the removal of identifiable information.

The benefit of the research is to contribute to the ongoing understanding of the place and function of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools. The resulting document may include recommendations regarding the support and formation of principals of Catholic secondary schools.

The focus group takes approximately one hour. It will be held in the St Bernard's College Board Room at 1.00pm Thursday 7 June 2012. A light lunch will be provided at 12.30pm. I will facilitate the focus group.

You are free not to participate without having to justify that decision, and you may withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the focus group at any time without giving a reason.

The focus group will be audio recorded and I will also make response notes also. The identity of respondents will not be recorded. All data will be aggregated. The audiotapes and notes will be securely stored during the course of my study, and destroyed seven years after the report's publication.

Details of focus groups are anonymous. The responses made during the focus group are confidential to the process and should not be shared outside the focus group. No person is able to identify the author of responses. The focus group contributes to my doctoral thesis. In this publication or other reports of the research identifying features of the interview are removed.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to my supervisor:
Assoc. Professor Denis McLaughlin PhD (London)
Ph: +61 7 3623 7154
School of Educational Leadership
Brisbane Campus ACU
PO Box 456
Queensland 4014
Australia
E-mail: Denis.McLaughlin@acu.edu.au

or to myself, the student researcher
Siân Owen MEd (ACU), MEdLd (ACU)
Ph: 027 329 3877
1/31 Hanover St
Wellington 6012
E-mail: sianrsj@gmail.com

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that my supervisor or I have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

QLD: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456
Virginia QLD 4014
Australia
Tel: +61 7 3623 7429
Fax: +61 7 3623 7328
E-mail: res.ethics@acu.edu.au

Complaints or concerns are treated in confidence and fully investigated. Participants are informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the *Consent Form*, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Principal Investigator, myself.

I am appreciative of any assistance you may provide for this research.

When the final report of my research is available I will make contact with you to ascertain if you wish to receive a copy of it.

Denis McLaughlin (Supervisor)   Siân Owen (Student Researcher)

denis.mclaughlin@acu.edu.au   sianrsj@gmail.com

CONSENT FORM
Please return a completed copy to the researcher Siân Owen, and retain a completed copy for your own files

PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

I .... *(the participant)* have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. I know that
1. My participation in the study is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the study at any stage of the focus group;
3. I can choose not to answer any question and/or not to discuss any topic raised during the focus group;
4. The focus group will be digitally audio-recorded, and handwritten notes will also be taken;
5. Some of my comments may be quoted in the report, although neither my name nor other identifying characteristics will accompany the quotes;
6. The focus group notes and transcripts of the digital recording may be retained in anonymous form in secure storage for the seven years, after which they will be destroyed;
7. The results of the study may be published, but every attempt will be made to preserve participants' anonymity and no names or other identifying characteristics will be published.
8. That confidentiality is expected of all focus group participants.

Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this focus group of up to one hour.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ……………………………………………………

SIGNATURE ....DATE ....

Denis McLaughlin (Supervisor)   Siân Owen (Student Researcher)

DATE………………………..   DATE………………………..

Appendix Biii: Information Letter Participants Interview

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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEW

TITLE OF PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

I am a Doctor of Education candidate at Australian Catholic University. The purpose of my thesis is to explore how Special Character is understood and implemented by principals of New Zealand Catholic high schools. As a principal of a New Zealand Catholic secondary school, you are invited to participate in an interview regarding how you understand and implement Special Character in your school.

By participating in the interview, you assist in the ongoing understanding Special Character in New Zealand Catholic high schools and may assist in generating new policy addressing contemporary challenges. Because of the small size of the Catholic education community there is a slight risk that comments you make during the interview and that are directly quoted in the report might be identifiable to you. Every effort will be made to minimise this risk through the removal of identifiable information.

The benefit of the research is to contribute to the ongoing understanding of the place and function of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic secondary schools and the resulting document may include recommendations regarding the support and formation of principals of Catholic secondary schools.

The interview takes approximately one hour. It will be held at a time mutually agreed to by you and myself as the researcher. I will conduct the interview.

You are free not to participate without having to justify that decision, and you may withdraw, your consent and discontinue participation in the interview at any time without giving a reason.

The interview will be audio recorded and I will also make response notes also. Your identity will not be recorded. All data will be aggregated. The audiotapes and notes will be securely stored during the course of my study and destroyed five years after the report's publication.

Details of interviews are anonymous. The interview contributes to my doctoral thesis. In this publication or other reports of the research identifying features of the interview are removed.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to my supervisor:
      Assoc. Professor Denis McLaughlin PhD (London)
      Ph: +61 7 3623 7154
      School of Educational Leadership
      Brisbane Campus ACU
      PO Box 456
      Queensland 4014
      Australia
      E-mail: Denis.McLaughlin@acu.edu.au

or myself, the student researcher
      Siân Owen MEd (ACU), MEdLd (ACU)
      Ph: 027 329 3877
      1/31 Hanover St
      Wellington 6012
      E-mail: sianrsj@gmail.com

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that my supervisor or I have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

      QLD: Chair, HREC
      C/- Research Services
      Australian Catholic University
      Brisbane Campus
      PO Box 456
      Virginia QLD 4014
      Australia
      Tel: +61 7 3623 7429
      Fax: +61 7 3623 7328
      E-mail: res.ethics@acu.edu.au

Complaints or concerns are treated in confidence and fully investigated. Participants are informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign both copies of the *Consent Form*, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Student Investigator, myself.

I am appreciative of any assistance you may provide for this research.

When the final report of my research is available I will make contact with you to ascertain if you wish to receive a copy of it.

Denis McLaughlin (Supervisor)   Siân Owen (Student Researcher)

denis.mclaughlin@acu.edu.au   sianrsj@gmail.com

CONSENT FORM

Please return a completed copy to the researcher Siân Owen, and retain a completed copy for your own files

PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

I .... *(the participant)* have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. I know that

1. My participation in the study is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the study at any stage;
3. I can choose not to answer any question and/or not to discuss any topic raised during the interview;
4. The interview will be digitally audio-recorded, and handwritten notes will also be taken;
5. Some of my comments may be quoted in the report, although neither my name nor other identifying characteristics will accompany the quotes;
6. The interview notes and transcripts of the digital recording may be retained in anonymous form in secure storage for the seven years, after which they will be destroyed;
7. The results of the study may be published, but every attempt will be made to preserve participants' anonymity and no names or other identifying characteristics will be published.

Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this interview of up to one hour.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ……………………………………………………

SIGNATURE ....DATE ....

Denis McLaughlin (Supervisor)   Siân Owen (Student Researcher)

DATE…………………………..   DATE……………………………

Appendix Biv: Information Participants Questionnaire

(E-MAIL HEADER): Invitation to participate in research

(BODY OF E-MAIL)

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in an online questionnaire to inform the exploration of how principals of Catholic high schools understand and implement Special Character in their schools. The questionnaire takes approximately 30 mins to complete. Your experience as a principal of a Catholic high school with responsibility for Special Character enables you to offer insight into Special Character and how it is implemented in schools.

If you volunteer to participate in the research please follow the hyperlink to the online survey.

By participating in the questionnaire you assist in the ongoing understanding of Special Character in New Zealand Catholic high schools and may assist in generating new policy addressing contemporary challenges. Due to the small size of the Catholic education community there is a slight risk that comments you make in the questionnaire, that are directly quoted in the report might be identifiable to you. Every effort will be made to minimise this risk through the removal of identifiable information.

You are free not to participate without having to justify that decision, and you may withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the questionnaire at any time without giving a reason.

The questionnaire is anonymous. No person is able to identify the author of responses.   The questionnaire contributes to my doctoral thesis.   In this publication or other reports of the research identifying features of the questionnaire are removed.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to my supervisor:
        Assoc. Professor Denis McLaughlin PhD (London)

Ph: +61 7 3623 7154
School of Educational Leadership
Brisbane Campus ACU
PO Box 456
Queensland 4014
Australia
E-mail: Denis.McLaughlin@acu.edu.au
or myself, the student researcher
Siân Owen MEd (ACU), MEdLd (ACU)
Ph: 027 329 3877
1/31 Hanover St
Wellington 6012
E-mail: sianrsj@gmail.com

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that my supervisor or I have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

QLD: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456
Virginia QLD 4014
Australia
Tel: +61 7 3623 7429
Fax: +61 7 3623 7328
E-mail: res.ethics@acu.edu.au

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, please complete the questionnaire.

Denis McLaughlin (Supervisor)   Siân Owen (Student Researcher)

denis.mclaughlin@acu.edu.au   sianrsj@gmail.com

EXPERT FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

Special Character

1. What is your understanding of the purpose of a Catholic school?

2. If you were asked to explain Special Character to someone from outside the Catholic education system what would you say?

3. What is the relationship between Special Character of Catholic schools and the mission of the Catholic Church?

Role of the principal

1. What evidence do you see of principals maintaining and enhancing the Special Character of their schools?

2. What do you see as the biggest challenges to the principal maintaining and enhancing the Special Character of their school?

Principal formation

1. What formation do you think principals require in order to maintain and enhance the Special Character of their schools?

   a. Are there adequate formation opportunities available for principal formation in Special Character?

   b. What do you see as the barriers to principals taking up formation opportunities in Special Character?

   c. What changes if any would you like to see in the formation of principals in Special Character?

2. Why?   ii.   How?

PRINCIPAL FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

Special Character

1. What is your understanding of the relationship between the Special Character of Catholic schools and the mission of the Catholic Church?

2. What are the key aspirations regarding Special Character that you are trying to achieve in your school?

Role of the principal

1. How do you communicate the Catholic identity and mission of your school?

2. What current trends and directions in Catholic school education inform your implementation of Special Character policies?

3. What are the biggest challenges you face with respect to enhancing and maintaining the Special Character of your school?

Principal formation

1. What formation do you think principals require in order to maintain and enhance the Special Character of their schools?

    a. Are there adequate formation opportunities available for principal formation in Special Character?

    b. What do you see as the barriers to principals taking up formation opportunities in Special Character?

    c. What changes if any would you like to see in the formation of principals in Special Character?

        i. Why?   Ii.   How?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of Special Character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

<u>INTERVIEW QUESTION FOR PRINCIPALS</u>

Special Character

1. What is your understanding of the purpose of a Catholic school?
2. If you were asked to explain Special Character to someone from outside the Catholic education system what would you say?
3. How do you implement Special Character in your school?

Role of the principal

1. What do you understand as religious/spiritual leadership?
2. Is religious/spiritual leadership a significant part of your role as principal of a Catholic school?
3. What are the distinctive pressures on principals of Catholic schools?
4. What are the issues presented by the following groups which create possible tension/conflict/obstacles to you in implementing Special Character in your school?
    a. Staff
    b. Parents
    c. Board of Trustee
    d. Catholic Church authorities
    e. Ministry of Education authorities

Principal formation

1. What informs your understanding of Special Character?

2. What challenges your understanding of Special Character?

3. What support do you receive to help in your role of maintaining and enhancing Special Character in your school?

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QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS
TO BE SENT THROUGH POLLDADDY

PROJECT: Principals, their understanding and implementation of special character.

SUPERVISOR: Assoc Professor Denis McLaughlin

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Siân Owen

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education

General Questions

1. Number of years teaching

2. Number of years teaching in a Catholic high school

3. Number of years as principal of a Catholic high school

Special Character

1. If you had to explain what Special Character is what would you say?

2. How much influence do the following have on the ability of a principal to be an effective leader of Special Character?

	Most influential	Very influential	Influential	Of no influence
Strong faith and morals				
Awareness of ministry				
Vision of Catholic schooling				

Ability to inspire				
Servant leadership				
Commitment to social justice				
Valuing of persons and relationships				

3. *In what ways has your understanding of Special Character changed over the years?*

4. *In what ways do you support and maintain Special Character in your school?*

5. *What infrastructures to support and maintain the Special Character of your school are you most proud of?*

Role of the principal

1. *What do you think are the contemporary challenges for Catholic school principals?*

2. *How important do you see the following in your role of Principal of a Catholic school?*

Ability to….	Very important	Quite important	Fairly important	Not important
articulate and model active faith and morals				
lead the community in prayer and worship				
explain the fundamentals of Catholicism				
promote Catholic teaching				

become familiar with contemporary Catholic scholarship on Catholic schools				
communicate Catholic identity and the mission of the school effectively				
recruit, select, and evaluates staff in light of special character				
ensure that Catholic teaching and religious values are infused throughout the educational program				
provide for a high quality religious education program staffed by qualified teachers				
positively influence relationships between the school and wider Church community				
understand the role of schools in supporting the common good of Catholic education				
demonstrate effective stewardship of school resources				
understand the legal relationships between the Church and government through the *Integration Act*				
Other (please state)				
Other (please state)				

3. As Principal of a Catholic school what level of help if do you get from:

	Necessary help	Adequate help	Minimal help	No help	Not Applicable
Staff					
Board of Trustees					
Trust Board (Proprietor Board)					
Parents					
Diocesan schools/Catholic education office					
Diocesan property office					
NZCEO					
Order Proprietor					
Order/s connected to foundation of school					
Local Catholic principals' group					
NZ Catholic principals' conference					
International Catholic conference					
Comment					

Principal formation

- Which, if any, of the following qualifications have you completed?
  - Certificate in Catechetical Studies (or equivalent)
  - Certificate in Leadership in a Catholic School
  - Diploma of Religious Studies (RE)
  - Graduate diploma in Religious Education
  - Masters in Religious Education or Masters in Education(RE)
  - Masters in Educational Leadership
  - Bachelor of Theology
  - Masters of Theology
  - Other qualifications relevant to the support and enhancement of the special character of a Catholic school:
- If you have participated in the first-time principals' course was your mentor the principal of a Catholic secondary school?
- How do you nurture your faith?
- What formation opportunities would help and support your role in enhancing and maintaining the Special Character of your school?

Is there anything else you would like to add about how you perceive and implement Special Character in your school?

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE OF ANALYSIS PROCESS

The following interview extract[23], highlights, coding example, and table of themes show the process that was followed in the analysis of the transcripts of the interviews, and questionnaire responses.

The was read through a number of times to gain an overall sense of the experience, words and phrases of the transcript were highlighted to facilitate the location of responses under the general headings of the specific research questions. Coloured responses were then gathered together, following the process of data analysis in Figure 5.1 (p.110). The transcripts were then reanalysed and from the resulting narrative emergent themes identified. Across all data gathering strategies themes were analysed to identify the synthesised themes and, tables of the codes, emergent themes and synthesised themes were developed (Table 6.3 page 122, Table 6.4 page 130, Table 6.5 page 140). A further analysis of the transcripts was made to confirm that the synthesised themes could be established in the narrative. In turn, these themes generated the origins of the new understandings which informed the specific issues for discussion (Table 7.1, p.148).

RECORD PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW

[General hellos and thanks for participation etc.]

What is Special Character?

It's an atmosphere that you perceive in everything that happens in the school. It's quite difficult to define, you know when its not there. People have common values, some of those values are dragged out slightly but everyone aggrees on common set of

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[23] Parts of the transcript that might identify the participant, their school or proprietor have been removed. Letters have been used to replace the names of people named by the participant.

values that come together comfortably, values are supported. Parents buy into it because they want those values for their children, students see what we expect because of these values. For me Special Character is the set of values defined by Catholicity that come from Jesus that we try very hard to expose in everything we do. It can be seen in relationships staff to staff, staff to students, staff to students. Everybody.

What are some of the things that you think that you are doing really well with respect to Special Character?

Having WWW charism because it gives clear definition of Special Character in special way ... Because we are able to look in depth at what XXX as founder of the … was aiming for, think able to pull out. For me XXX has been a guiding light, relating to XXX, through that relating to XXX relationship with God which I try to bring out in school.

Anything in particular you have implemented with respect to Special Character?

> [A number of initiatives given were too identifiable to be included in this document].

I initiated a Year 9 Day orientation where students are out of timetable, to learn history of school, Charism, who XXX was, picture of wider school. It gives a sense of belonging.

Induction of staff, site historical links of starting school, because by helping staff understand part of big picture in school helps pick up the tradition, aim of school and the values of the school.

Do you find tensions between staff and the implementation of Special Character?

Yes, there are a lot:

Particularly Guidance – I had huge issues around family planning, many deep conversations regarding.

Science – health taught through RE, HRE and new Guidance Counsellor (who totally understands Special Character) work together to ensure sexuality taught with Catholic values. Some staff find that a conflict especially PE don't understand Catholic side of things and want to run away, despite going to courses, they do not understand.

Other conflict with Special Character is: Discipline – suspended student, many staff didn't want back, BOT persuaded student as needing another chance, although they had already had many. A reminder that we always need to give another chance, took special handling because student hurt others and needed to make sure that they did not feel let down that someone that had hurt them was back. Not black and white Special Character.

The other area is with non-Catholic staff who know about our special event days, but a couple may resent that they lose class time for Special Character events.

Do you find parent pressures with respect to implementing Special Character?

Yes, parents who think RE should not be compulsory as not as useful, because not as many parents are strong Catholics as they used to be. Parents of 6 subject class consider with RE not enough choice. When it comes to year 13 some parents think that students shouldn't have to do.

There are some who are not supportive of Catholic values, when it comes to Special character days a note is sent so students not participate. Challenge to what is taught in RE programme by one or two parents who consider RE too liberal.

[Examples that were given are too identifiable to be included in this document]

How do you see your role in religious leadership?

I have to lead by example e.g., I've got to practise what I preach, be seen to go to weekly Mass, lead prayers that are meaningful not everyone's cup of tea, briefing short but some are not truly reflective so lead when my turn to demonstrate what is expected. I talk about religious events that happen in the school and set standards for students, leading assembly, student leaders keen to do, plan liturgy between them and me, prayers are given guidance, otherwise I would be just a figure head.

How do you form/nurture your own Special Character skills?

I read especially about XXX, whose writing is very helpful, reading at Mass very helpful as it makes me read the Bible, lots of chances as not many of us, make a big effort to read the Bible. Taught RE every few years to get back in touch with the programme.

I make sure I attend the annual Catholic principals conference always refreshing, retreat, meet with other Catholic principals, share and hear other principals - Catholic wise. Pray probably not as much as should or would like to.

What support do you get in relation to your Special Character role?

You are joking! No support, very little. Think current BOT Chair trying, we meet weekly - time supportive generally. Proprietors not there unless ask, currently getting less and less, maybe think that I don't need it because I have been doing it a long time. Current proprietor I have to ask for a meeting which gave.

Specific Research Question 3:

How do Catholic education authorities understand the role of the Catholic school in mission?

Reluctantly here, never been invited to join in things. It seems to be a ship without anchor.

Proprietor actually doesn't understand what happens in our schools. They see schools as fountains of the WWW future all going along nicely thank you not realise. They have opportunities for retreat reflection part of religious life, built in to way of life. Nothing offered to us as principals. Lay don't get have to balance with family but occasionally a weekend would be of vast value to principal. Orders could do that. Different for diocesan schools. Just a reflective time go for walk close to God, very therapeutic.

Anything else you would like to contribute regarding the understanding and implementation of Special Character?

Catholic Office – not helpful. I was very shocked to see that at the Catholic convention there was a work shop with KK about … they work with primary schools not secondary it will not work for us. I am scared that my BOT Chair will go. Diocesan Offices are not welcoming.

As Catholic principal of order school I have three Masters to answer to state, diocesan and order. Two extra layers than state school principals deal with.
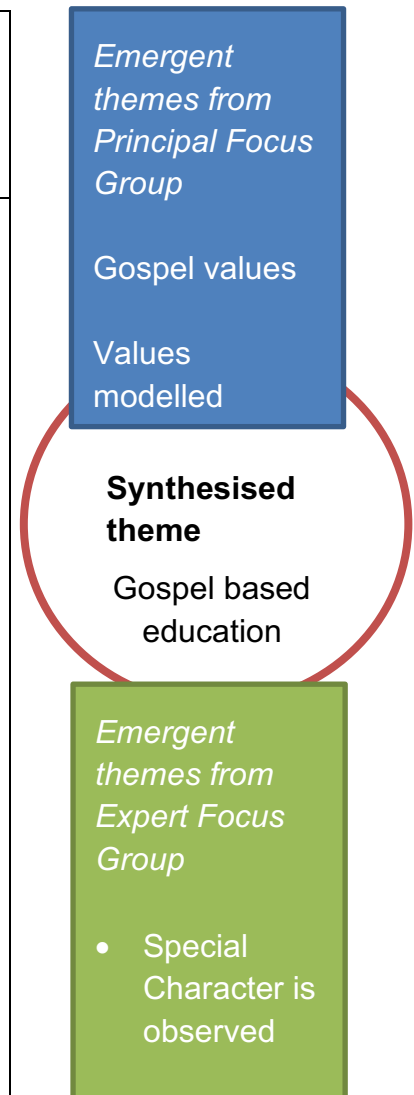
The insistence of three hours RE year 13, when we meet hours overall as per direction of NZCBC. Agree RE needs to be taught year 13, qualifies as subject but two hours is enough to get through the content, is a conflict as many students do go on to study theology at university.

Still recommend being Catholic secondary principal, part of difference. When I go to National principals' conference people are in a hierarchy of certain schools, this doesn't occur the MM

collective which is collegial. But Catholic principal wherever local, Australian, Dublin everyone same ==support== like going home even when don't know anybody and that's ==because of Special Character.==

The following shows an example of the ongoing analysis using those statements highlighted under specific research question 1. The codes arose from comparing and contrasting the highlighted words/phrases across all principal interviews and questionnaires to construct row 2, column 2 of Table 6.3 p.140. Emergent themes were then synthesised to provide the framework for the new understanding the research generated (Table 7.1).

Highlighted words/phrases sample interview transcript	Codes used across data gathering strategies	Emergent themes
• an atmosphere • difficult to define • common values + + + + • Catholicity • Jesus • relationships + + • God + • big picture • another chance • not black & white • weekly Mass • lead prayer • religious events • support • part of difference • reason difference	• guiding framework, • role modelling, • unafraid God talk, • values important, different NZC values, • Jesus reason	Christ-centred education Values beyond NZ Curriculum

Emergent themes from Principal Focus Group

Gospel values

Values modelled

Synthesised theme

Gospel based education

Emergent themes from Expert Focus Group

• Special Character is observed

From the specific research questions the research generated new understandings which invited discussion. Using the above example Gospel-based education was one of the origins of the issue discussed in Chapter 7 concerning the multiple expectations concerning the Special Character of the integrated Catholic school.

APPENDIX E: REPEAL OF THE PSCI ACT (1975)

This thesis refers extensively to the Private Schools Integration Act (1975) [PSCI] often referred to as the *Integration Act*. It is the legislative framework that provides State funding to private schools so that they become State integrated schools with Special Character.

On 19 May, 2017, this Act was repealed by section 159 of the Education (Update) Amendment Act 2017 – 2017 - #20. As a result, the conditions by which State integrated schools are funded and the duties and responsibilities of proprietors, teachers and families have been incorporated into the Education Act (1989) Section 33.

All rights, responsibilities and conditions of integration are maintained as are the definitions of such terms as Special Character.

The repeal of the *Integration Act* received little publicity in New Zealand either from Government or Church agencies. According to the Minister of Education at the time, these amendments sought to "create a student-centred, future-proofed education system that's focussed on lifting the achievement of all young New Zealanders" (Mena, 2017, p.2.). Reporting on the changes focussed on educational pedagogy and policy but made no comment regarding the repeal of the Act nor its incorporation into the Education Act (Mena, 2017). There was a similar lack of reporting from Church agencies including Catholic education authorities for example the New Zealand Catholic Education Office (NZCEO).

On request the researcher received a chart from NZCEO that mapped a comparison of sections of the *Integration Act* (1975) and Part 33 of the Education Act 1989 as inserted on 19 May 2017. The following is an extract from this mapping document.   It presents a selection of articles and comparisons of interest with respect to this study.

COMPARISON OF PSCIA AND PART 33 EDUCATION ACT 1989

Comparison of sections of the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 and Part 33 of the Education Act 1989, inserted on 19 May 2017

Part 33 Education Act	Corresponding section PSCI Act 1975
414 Interpretation Compare: 1975 No 129 s 2	2 Interpretation
415 Part to bind the Crown Compare: 1975 No 129 s 2A	2A Act to bind Crown
Conditional integration	*Part 1 Conditional integration*
416 Preservation of special character of State integrated schools Compare: 1975 No 129 s 3	3 Preservation of special character of an integrated school
417 State integrated schools part of State system Compare: 1975 No 129 s 4	4 Integrated schools subject to certain enactments
Procedure for establishing, disestablishing, merging, and closing State integrated schools	*Part 2 Procedure for establishing, disestablishing, and closing integrated schools*
418 Application to negotiate integration Compare: 1975 No 129 s 5	5 Application to negotiate integration
419 Applications relating to proposed schools Compare: 1975 No 129 s 6	6 Applications relating to proposed schools
420 Negotiation of integration agreements Compare: 1975 No 129 s 6A	6A Negotiation of agreement
421 Integration agreements Compare: 1975 No 129 s 7(1)–(5)	7 Integration agreement Subsections (1) to (5)
422 Other matters that may be included in integration agreements Compare: 1975 No 129 s 7(6)	7 Integration agreement Subsection (6)
423 Integration agreements: machinery matters Compare: 1975 No 129 s 7(7)–(10)	7 Integration agreement Subsections (7) to (10)
424 Effective date of integration agreement Compare: 1975 No 129 s 8	8 Effective date of integration agreement
426 Minister may require information to be provided	New section

Part 33 Education Act	**Corresponding section PSCI Act 1975**
Enrolment, conditions of attendance, and instruction of students at State integrated schools	*Part 5 Provisions relating to the enrolment, conditions of attendance, and instruction of pupils at an integrated school*
441 Free education Compare: 1975 No 129 s 35(1)	35 Free education Subsection (1)
442 Preference of enrolment Compare: 1975 No 129 s 29	29 Preference of enrolment
443 Participation in general school programmes Compare: 1975 No 129 s 30	30 Participation in school programme
445 Religious observances and religious instruction Compare: 1975 No 129 s 32	32 Religious observances and religious instruction
464 Religious instruction: appointments to special positions relating to character of State integrated school Compare: 1975 No 129 s 65(1)	65 Religious instruction Subsection (1)
465 Effect of religious instruction requirements in advertisements Compare: 1975 No 129 s 65(2)	65 Religious instruction Subsection (2)

Appendix F: New Zealand Catholic Secondary Schools

Location, enrolment and proprietor.

P = Proprietor/owner of school
B = Bishop of the Diocese
RI = Religious Institute

Auckland Diocese		
Location	Enrolment	P
Whangarei 1	Co-ed	B
Auckland Urban 16	Co-ed (3) 1 Māori	B
	Co-ed (1)	*RI*
	Girls (3)	B
	Girls (3)	*RI*
	Boys (3)	B
	Boys (3)	*RI*

Wellington Archdiocese		
Location	Enrolment	P
Masterton 1	Co-ed (1)	B
Wellington Urban 7	Co-ed (1)	B
	Girls (3)	*RI*
	Boys (1)	B
	Boys (2)	*RI*
Nelson 1	Co-ed (1)	B

Dunedin Diocese		
Location	Enrolment	P
Oamaru 1	Co-ed (1)	*RI*
Dunedin 1	Co-ed (1)	B
Gore 1	Co-ed (1)	B
Invercargill 1	Co-ed (1)	B

Hamilton Diocese

Location	Enrolment	P
Hamilton 2	Boys (1)	B
	Girls (1)	*RI*
Tauranga 1	Co-ed (1)	B
Rotorua 1	Co-ed (1)	B
Gisborne 1	Co-ed (1)	B

Palmerston North Diocese

Location	Enrolment	P
Palmerston North 1	Co-ed (1)	B
Fielding 1	Boys (1) 1 Māori	*RI*
Whangarei	Co-ed	B
New Plymouth 2	Girls (1)	*RI*
	Boys (1)	*RI*
Napier 2	Girls (2) 1 Māori	*RI*
Hastings 1	Boys	B
Palmerston North 1	Co-ed (1)	B

Christchurch Diocese

Location	Enrolment	P
Greymouth 1	Co-ed (1)	B
Christchurch urban 5	Co-ed (1)	B
	Girls (1)	B
	Girls (1)	*RI*
	Boys (2)	*RI*
Timaru 1	Co-ed	B

APPENDIX G: CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DECLARATION

The declaration of the proprietors of Catholic Schools in New Zealand on the essential characteristics of authentic Catholic school education.

A Catholic School That Provides Catholic Education

"Christ is the foundation of the whole enterprise in a Catholic school" [1].

"A Catholic school is understood to be one which ... is formally acknowledged as Catholic by ecclesiastical authority" [2].

"The formation and education in the Catholic religion provided in any school .... is subject to the authority of the Church" [3].

Catholic school education provides "a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life" [4]. The Special Character of a Catholic school, as defined in the Integration Agreement, provides the framework within which all aspects of education are provided.

The Catholic school recognises and is appropriately sensitive to people within the school community that do not share our Catholic faith.

A Catholic School That Strives for Educational Excellence

Catholic schools "reproduce the characteristic features of a school" [5]. That is to say, the Catholic school provides a curriculum and other features which are not only in keeping with the teaching of the Church, but which are also in accordance with all that is common and desirable in effective schools, including high quality education and sound management systems.

"The formation given in Catholic schools is, in its academic standards, at least as outstanding as that in other schools in the area" [6]. Academic is taken to include all aspects of the curriculum in its broadest sense.

"The Catholic school has as its aim the critical communication of human culture and the total formation of the individual" [7]. Total formation of the individual is understood to mean taking a holistic approach, providing for the fulfilment of personal potential across all

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facets of human life and endeavour. This includes extending the most able students and supporting all those who require it.

Teachers who provide a Catholic school education are recognised and respected as professional people in a vital vocation. They conduct themselves accordingly.

Catholic school authorities support teachers in their continuing professional development, including Religious Education. Teachers take full advantage of that support.

A Catholic School That Contributes to the Church's Mission

The Catholic school does not operate alone but works in partnership with the parish and the wider Church community. It collaborates particularly with parents whom it acknowledges as "the first and foremost educators of their children" [8].

The education provided in a Catholic school "offers an alternative which is in conformity with the wishes of the members of the community of the Church" [9] and "performs an essential and unique service for the Church herself" [10].

"The Catholic school is one of the Church's pastoral instruments" and, as such, is "ever more effective in proclaiming the Gospel and promoting total human formation" [11]. It accepts a responsibility for the spiritual guidance of members of the school community.

"Formation and education in a Catholic school must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine" [12].

The education provided in a New Zealand Catholic school is education with a Special Character as defined in the Integration Agreement for each school.

In helping to fulfil the mission of the Church, Catholic school education includes evangelisation but avoids proselytising [13].

In its teaching and in its practices the Catholic school develops students' ability to critique society and promotes social justice for all,

especially for the poor, regardless of colour, race, creed, sex or socio-economic status, and in accordance with Church teaching.

Teachers and other adults in a Catholic school are models of Christianity for the students or pupils. "It is in this context that the witness of the lay teacher becomes especially important." [14] Students will see in the adult members of the school community Christian attitudes and behaviours which reflect explicitly the example and teaching of Jesus Christ.

A Catholic school education recognises and respects the uniqueness of every individual within the school community as made in the image and likeness of God, while also contributing to the formation of community, especially that community which gathers on the Lord's Day to be nurtured by Word and sacrament.

A Catholic School That Contributes to Society

While recognising each person as a unique individual, a Catholic school also manifests the belief that "the person finds true significance only in relationship with others, encompassing both rights and responsibilities, freedom and accountability, self-fulfilment and self-discipline, self-expression and self-denial" [15].

A Catholic school, in being faithful to its own Special Character, reaches out to and serves the wider community, just as the Church serves the world [16], and establishes positive relationships with its others.

A Catholic school education recognises and affirms all cultures and ethnic groups, especially those represented within the school community.

A New Zealand Catholic school gives practical recognition to the special importance of the Treaty of Waitangi.

A Catholic school regards "education as pre-eminently a personal good which enriches the possessor, while also being a social good which

brings advantages to the whole society" [17], and prepares its students to play a fully constructive role in that society.

A Catholic school teaches its students to "preserve the balance and integrity of the physical world for the Glory of God" [18].

1. "The Catholic School" (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome, 1977), para. 34.
2. "The Code of Canon Law", Can. 803, 1.
3. ibid., Can. 804, 1.
4. "The Catholic School", para. 37
5. "The Catholic School", ibid, para. 25
6. "The Code of Canon Law", Can. 806, 2.
7. "The Catholic School" op. cit. para. 36
8. "Declaration on Christian Education", (The Documents of Vatican II) para. 3
9. "The Catholic School", op. cit., para. 20
10. ibid., para. 15
11. "The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School" (The Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome 1988) para. 31
12. "The Code of Canon Law", Can. 803, 2.
13. "The Catholic School", op. cit., paras. 7 and 19
14. "Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith" (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982) para 32
15. "The Purpose of Education - A Christian Perspective" (Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops of New Zealand, 1992).
16. "Ecclesiam Suam", 1964, passim (Pope Paul VI)
17. "The Purpose of Education - A Christian Perspective", op. cit.
18. ibid
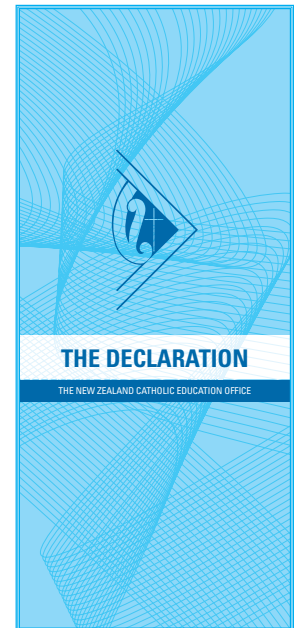
The Declaration is issued by the New Zealand Catholic Education Office on behalf of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference.

This text edition was retrieved October 12, 2017 from http://www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz/pages/about/_declaration.html.

APPENDIX H: METRO MAGAZINE – SCHOOL RESULTS

Metro is a monthly Auckland-based magazine. It features in-depth articles on issues of concern to its readers. July issues are often dedicated to some aspect of education. These are the most widely-read issues with particular interest to those with little education background.

The magazine regularly comments on Catholic education. These comments are usually favourable because they highlight the academic success of local Catholic schools. This success is attributed to a range of factors including the private nature of the school, common values held by parents and even the fact that there is "something in the altar wine" (Wilson, 2012).

McAuley High School is in South Auckland. It is in the lowest socio-economic band of schools (decile one). It is often praised by *Metro* for its ability to produce high-achieving students when compared to schools with a similar decile rank. Some pertinent quotes from July 2015 illustrate the esteem that in which Catholic education is held.

"… Catholic schools know the value of an integrated approach to schooling that engages the whole family".

"There are shared values, shared experiences and frequent regular opportunities for church and school to reinforce it all."

"Catholic schools say 'it is about the faith'".

Catholic schools are popular with parents even if they have little connection to the worshipping community in part because of the 'good press' of such articles. The challenge for Catholic schools is to match the academic achievement to the task of forming missionary disciples (Francis, 2013) when discipleship does not gain credits nor make good secular press stories.