

# **KING'S COLLEGE**

**Otahuhu, Auckland**

**Secondary** (Years 9 to 13, boys until Year 12, and then co-educational – girls 12%)

**Independent, Anglican**

**Roll** 935

**Ethnicity** - Pakeha 73% Maori 5% Pacific 3% Asian 8%

## **History**

The school's Anglican foundation provides it with a clear Christian base upon which to build a broad programme that includes Religious Studies, weekly Chapel Services, a pastoral care programme and community service. Responsibility for this side of school life lies primarily with the Chaplain and the Head of Religious Studies.

There is a beautiful and very impressive chapel which is considered to be "at the heart of the school".

The King's College Religious Studies and Values programme is based on the work of Peter Vardy. This system organises a course into five-strands within which Values sit alongside World Religions, Bible Knowledge, Philosophy of Religion and Stillness and Silence as the primary topics. When Peter Vardy came to New Zealand in 2001 to present his work in a series of seminars, the Head of Religious Studies was sufficiently impressed that the decision was made to use the material as the basis for a course at King's. Since then they have made use of Felicity McCutcheon's work (Australian representative for Peter Vardy) which is based on the movie "The Matrix", an approach to the Vardy course which has proved popular with Years 9 and 10. There is a further book now available written for Year 11 and based on "The Mask" which King's also plans to use.

Parent consultation was not part of the decision to embark on the Vardy programme, nor were parents involved in the creation of the wider values-related activities that the school offers. It seems clear that the overall Christian philosophy of the school has long been accepted and expected by parents. The school's special character is clearly explained at enrolment interviews, and parents are kept up-to-date with day-to-day information through newsletters and other school publications.

## **Systems**

- Years 9, 10 and 11 all have compulsory modules of Religious Studies, taught by the Chaplain and the Head of Religious Studies ( part-time – he teaches another subject as well) and based on the Vardy programme.

- Everyone (including staff) must attend at least one weekly chapel service (boarders attend three times per week). The message in chapel services is, according to the chaplain, “strongly values-oriented” – how we treat one another and how we respond to situations in the world around us.
- The school becomes co-educational after Year 11 and the chaplain perceives a “gap” still exists for those girls who join the school without the background that the boys have had. Chapel attendance and taking part in the school’s community service and pastoral care programmes are the means by which senior students are involved with values.
- Community service has “mushroomed” in recent years. It is seen as a very important part of the philosophy of an all-round education. It is successfully promoted not only as an appropriate means by which students can carry out the Christian command to “Love thy neighbour”, but also as a means by which young people can learn how to care for others and find a more fulfilling focus for their lives than one which focuses entirely on self. At least half of the school at any one time are involved in community service. Years 9 and 10 have assisting with reading at a local primary school as a set part of their religious studies, an activity which is timetabled and therefore takes place during the school day. The rest of the programme is voluntary and takes place after school. Various activities are on offer, including manning the desk at Middlemore Hospital from 4pm to 8 pm, visiting IHC homes and retirement homes, visiting the refugee centre and the local women’s refuge.
- The Voyager programme, loosely based on the Alpha Programme, is a means by which a young person can explore his or her own spirituality. It is voluntary, taking place after school or in the evening, during terms 2 and 3. It functions on four levels, its format is deliberately kept loose and it is well supported. Approximately two hundred students may take part in a given year.
- The Pastoral Care programme includes peer support called “Yerpals”. This initially grew out of an early involvement with the Yellow Ribbon campaign but has been developed to meet the particular needs of King’s College who wanted a wider focus than simply the one of youth suicide. About forty senior students undergo training provided by the school counsellor and the chaplain. They wear a badge and offer themselves as someone to talk to. They are listeners, not counsellors.

## **Results**

- The chaplain is somewhat cautious about making any specific claims about the success of any of the values education in the school. The HOD Religious Education is convinced that the work they do makes a difference “in the spirit of the school”.
- The active involvement of such a significant proportion of students, particularly when the involvement is voluntary, would indicate that the values of care for others and community service are well accepted among the students of King’s College.

## **Key Features**

- Well-known and established programmes (Vardy, Yellow Ribbon) have been taken and tailored to meet the needs of the school and its community.
- Long-established Christian values and traditions are the basis for a modern and practical approach to activities for the young where they learn the value of community awareness and service.
- The roles of Chaplain and HOD Religious Education provide the school with appropriately trained and committed individuals who undertake all responsibility for values. While other staff support the programme as part of the school's special character and there are no difficulties with the time in the school day that is set aside for chapel services or Religious Education classes, other staff members do not have to play an active part.