Diocese of Toowoomba
Catholic Schools

St Joseph's School STANTHORPE

Quadrennial school review
July 2018

Foreword

Although much has been written about school reform in past decades — national reports, studies, descriptions of findings — insufficient attention has been given to the important relationships among the adults within the school, and to a consideration of how the abundant untapped energy, inventiveness and idealism within the school might be encouraged.

(Roland Barth, Harvard Graduate School of Education)

The philosophical approach to the review is based on Appreciative Inquiry, a well-established approach used by organisations varying from international corporations to not-for-profit social organisations. Appreciative Inquiry begins with the assumption that there are good things happening in the organisation and identifying these. It then moves to what people see as areas needing attention, improvement or change. The key principle is that these are placed in the context of what the organisation does well, so it moves beyond a problem-solving agenda to an improvement agenda.

Appreciative Inquiry aims to bring ownership to the school. The review team hears 'the story' of the School through its stakeholders, and this informs the key findings and improvement strategies that the review team has recommended. Exactly how the School addresses the key findings and improvement strategies is left for the school to determine, but it is mandatory for the school to address them over the following four years.

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Methodology

The review was conducted from Monday 23rd to Wednesday 25th July 2018

Reviewers

John Coman, Senior Education Leader, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office, Chair
Jim Midgley, Director Teaching and Learning, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office
Kort Goodman, Principal, Assumption College Warwick
Norm Hunter, External Reviewer, Brisbane

The review consisted of structured interviews of the following school community members:

- The Principal and all members of the College Leadership Team
- Fr. Brian Connolly, Parish Priest
- 25 teaching staff including middle leaders
- 13 School Officers including Principal's Assistant, Bursar, Administration, Groundsman, Counsellor and Teacher Aides.
- 8 parents including Board and P&F members
- 26 students from Year 5-12

School Renewal and Improvement

The reference documents for the review were the July 2018 drafts of the 'School Renewal and Improvement Framework and School Renewal and Improvement Procedure'.

Domain 1: Mission and Identity

1.1   Religion Curriculum

1.2   Religious Life of the School

Domain 2: Teaching and Learning

2.1   Students and their Learning

2.2   Curriculum Structure and Provision

2.3   Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

Domain 3: Continual Renewal

3.1   School Improvement Culture

3.2   Community Partnerships

Domain 4: Sustainable Resourcing and Stewardship

4.1   Staff Development and Wellbeing

4.2   Use of Resources Facilities and the Learning Environment

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Prologue

The review team thanks the St Joseph's School community for the open and trusting way in which they have approached this quadrennial School Renewal and Improvement review. The review team experienced an openness and trust across the school, with people speaking frankly about where they see the school's strengths and areas for improvement. We believe we have received an in-depth and accurate portrait of the school.

The review team found many strengths, particularly in the consistently high academic achievements of the school's students over many years. At the same time, it is clear that these achievements are not necessarily recognised in the town or acknowledged by parents. The school has a strong story to tell, and it is timely to refine and present it to the school community and to the wider community in a consistent and enthusiastic manner.

Among the affirming messages that emerge in this report are the way a coherent teaching and learning framework is evolving under the Visible Learning principles, the way teachers are differentiating their approaches to meet varying student capabilities and needs, the advantages to students of a coherent P-12 education, the educative and personal way in which the Catholic ethos is presented to students, the sense of community among adults and students, and in particular the academic achievements and success pathways for the future that the school is achieving for its students.

Among the main areas the school community sees for improvement are the need for further coherence between primary and secondary, a need to confront and correct misunderstandings about the school in the town community, and the need for the school leadership team to ensure that they are, and are seen to be, publicly supportive of one another and consistently implementing decisions that have been taken.

The review team hopes that this report is empowering for the school, and wishes the school community well as it moves through this important phase in its life.

Domain 1: Mission and Identity

1.1   Religion curriculum

Findings

Systematic curriculum delivery

Religious Education (RE) is seen as an academic subject including Religion and Ethics. With the support of Mission and Identity staff from Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO), the P-12 RE curriculum has been reviewed and developed in consultation with teachers within the school during 2017. The program is drawn from the Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) Religion Curriculum P-12, with units of work for each year level P-10 available on the Diocesan Learning Profile (DLP), including scope and sequence and supporting resources and prayers to be used.

Teachers report that the school has a well-developed and engaging RE program that allows some flexibility for teachers to cater for the needs of the students. The responses of staff to the school satisfaction survey (RADII) report are well above Diocesan mean responses to positive student engagement in the RE program for the last three years, with 100% of staff responding positively in 2017. Similarly, primary student responses to liking RE are well above Diocesan means.

Professional learning community

Teachers report that they are supported by the Assistant Principal Religious Education (APRE) and have access to and engage in relevant professional development to gain the relevant knowledge and skills to teach RE in Catholic schools.

Teachers are encouraged to participate in professional learning to gain their accreditation to teach RE as required by TCS. In 2017 three teachers participated in the TCS provided program and another teacher will participate in 2019. Encouraged by the APRE, 70% of the 16 teachers have gained this accreditation. Four are new to the school or new to teaching RE this year. Teachers are also encouraged to participate in professional learning opportunities as they arise.

School context

Students indicate that for the most part they find the content of the RE program engaging. Some students report that they find the content difficult due to not having a Catholic background. In most instances the students report that this difficulty is overcome by having teachers who clarify the requirements of assessment tasks.

Under the recent review of the provision of RE in senior schooling in the new Queensland Certificate of Education system, the school has adopted the TCS policy. *The Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority (QCAA) senior subject Study of Religion (SOR) is an optional subject for senior school students from 2019 onwards.* All students will continue to study Religion and Ethics in a flexible delivery mode (praxis approach). It is expected that Year 12 students will have completed requirements in Year 11 and will not have a mandated religion subject in Year 12.

Improvement strategies

- Continue to refine the Religion Curriculum to ensure that it is accessible and relevant to students, particularly in relation to Year 7 where a disparity of prior knowledge appears to exist.

- Communicate to students and parents that from 2019 Study of Religion will no longer be a compulsory subject in Years 11 and 12.

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1.2 Religious life of the school

"Everyone at this school proudly displays the Mercy values" – (Stated by a long-term staff member)

Findings

Religious identity and culture

It is evident that there are strong links to the life of St Joseph's parish. The school uses parish facilities for prayer and meetings, Fr Brian celebrates liturgies and Masses with the school community and the school joins with the parish for significant celebrations such as Catholic Education Week. The Principal and school staff support parish activities including the program of preparation of students to receive the sacraments.

All staff participated in a formation program at the Mercy Centre in Brisbane in 2012. Following that there was considerable clarification of the application of Mercy charism and values to the educational story and badging of the school.

Strong links to the Mercy charism and rich history of the school have been articulated. The resulting documentation that details these links and the associated resources that are used in staff and student formation bring a depth of understanding to the Mercy values. These are displayed in some areas of the school and have become underpinnings of policy, procedure and decision making. *Various art works, signage such as building names, short term notices and displays, as well as the Mercy cross give visual reminders of these strong connections in some areas of the school. This is currently not evident in the wider outdoor environment of the school.*

This work continues to be alive and added to each year. The APRE has developed resources to assist staff new to the school to understand this tradition and the Mercy values that underpin the life of the school. Once refurbishments of the Mercy Centre are complete, the school plans to revisit the Mercy Centre for further teacher formation in the Mercy charism and values. This is a continuing element of the school strategic plan and annual action plans.

Staff, students and parents all value and articulate the welcoming and inclusive nature of the school community, where care for each other is experienced. This is an expression of the fundamental Catholic belief that all are created in the image and likeness of an unconditionally loving God. This is expressed in an openness of staff and students that leads to *"everyone being treated the same"* and "*teachers who are kind and helpful"* - (said by students).

Staff members and students report that the ethos and charism of the school are well integrated into the life of the school. Former and current students and staff members refer to the Catholic identity of the school as *"being who we are"*.

Evangelisation and formation

The school has developed a retreat and camp program that is well received by students. The program engages students pastorally and spiritually, inviting individuals and groups to deepen their own sense of the sacred.

A number of planned excursions and camps occur during the year. *Parents indicate that they would appreciate 4 to 6 weeks warning of these. The Bursar sees this as desirable also, as it would give her time to follow up payment from parents who have yet to pay as the timing of the event gets close.*

Prayer and worship

The development of "Guidelines to Prayer in the Classroom and Assembly" has been a very significant project in response to an identified need. This resource provides a scope and sequence for the teaching of prayer

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in religious education as well as being a very significant resource for professional learning in this aspect of the life of the school.

The celebration of faith and life are evidenced by participation in class and staff prayer, school liturgies and Masses, and these are important parts of the Catholic life of the school.

Social action and justice

Faith in Action is a well-developed school-based strategy for educating students in this aspect of Catholic social justice teaching. It is practically grounded in activities particular to each year level that are undertaken in the school and local community. It is supported by the special projects undertaken by the school captains and prefects to lead the student body with the assistance of the year 12 cohort in very practical and creative ways of demonstrating the Mercy values in action. It is a wonderful expression of servant leadership.

Students indicate that they are unsure which of the Mercy values each prefect has selected for their Faith in Action project.

Improvement strategies

- Continue to deepen and embed Mercy values in the life of the school.

- Investigate ways to represent the Mercy charism and values visually around the external environment of the school.

- Ensure that school student leaders are given more opportunity to explain and lead their project with the student body.

- Ensure that dates and requirements for excursions and camps are communicated to parents 4 to 6 weeks before the event.

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Domain 2: Teaching and Learning

2.1 Students and their learning

Findings

Explicit improvement agenda

It is evident that the school leadership team has made a significant effort to understand the trends in student achievement levels over time. In response to these trends explicit targets have been set and strategies have been put in place to improve student learning.

The commitment to students and their learning is central to the St Joseph's culture, and it is clear that significant effort goes into ensuring that students are at the centre of all decisions.

Students are beginning to understand and are able to articulate the dispositions required of an effective learner at St Joseph's.

There is a healthy balance between beginning, proficient and lead teachers.

Agreed and shared belief statements about learning, learners and teaching are implicit rather than explicitly stated.

Collective teacher efficacy is topical and conversations are emerging in the leadership team on how to nurture these conditions and move them into practice.

Positive student teacher relationships are consistently acknowledged as a strength by the community.

The most recent NAPLAN data are for 2017.

- 2017 NAPLAN data show all domains in year 9 above and well above State and National mean scale scores.

- 2017 NAPLAN data show all domains in year 7 above and well above State and National mean scale scores except for reading.

- 2017 Years 5 and 9 have recorded 2 continuous years of improvement in all NAPLAN domains.

- In 2017, Year 5 students' mean scale scores totalled 2424. This placed them as the top performing school in the State for schools with an Index of Community Socio-Economic Advantage (ICSEA) score of 1015. On this score they were placed 294 out of the 1028 schools in the State. The next closest school to St Joseph's was Oxenford SS who scored 2350 and were placed 557.

The most recent Year 12 data are also for 2017.

- In 2017, 17% of OP eligible students at St Joseph's achieved an OP of 1-5. This ranked them just outside the top 200 schools in the State and equal with Cathedral College Rockhampton at the top of all schools in the State on this ICSEA score (1015). The ICSEA score is calculated by My School as a means of comparing similar schools. This is another very significant achievement.

- 100% of OP eligible students in Year 12 received first round Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) offers, placing every one of them on a pathway to their future studies and work,

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- 100% of Year 12 student achieved a qualification including a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE),

- 94% of OP eligible students achieved an OP 1-15.

The school is to be commended on these outstanding achievements for their students, which give the school a Tracking and Academic Management Index (TAMI) of 394 out of a possible 400, placing them in the very top achievement levels in the State for Year 12.

Further, St Joseph's has consistently scored higher on this index than any other high schools in the area since 2008, except in 2016, where both St Joseph's and Stanthorpe State High scored a very creditable 383. Four times since 2008 St Joseph's has achieved a TAMI score of 380 or higher which is the target Diocesan schools aim to achieve.

In both 2015 and 2016 St Joseph's Year 12 data were exceptional, with 100% of Overall Position (OP) eligible students receiving an OP between 1-15, the highest in the Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) cohort. In 2017, in Year 12 78% of OP eligible students were in the OP 1-15 range.

It is noted that in 2017, 75% of Senior students at St Joseph's took an OP pathway, compared to 27% of senior students at the local state high school.

In the eleven years since 2008, 100% of Year 12 students have achieved the QCE twice, 100% of year 12 students have gained qualifications six times, 100% of OP eligible students have achieved an OP 1-15 three times, and 100% of OP eligible students have received first round QTAC offers eight times.

The statistics above amount to a clear and very encouraging story: in both NAPLAN and Year 12 results the students at St Joseph's School Stanthorpe consistently achieve academic results that are well above other primary and secondary schools in the area.

Analysis and discussion of data

The school has collected a wide range of student data and conducted comparative analysis between NAPLAN and school results to identify trends and areas for intervention. There is an intention to share the individual results with the students to improve student achievement and provide transparency and rationale for the data collection.
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These data are displayed on data walls with set school and diocesan target levels. The data walls and the visits by Dr Judy Smeed have instigated conversations between staff members regarding student learning and achievement.

It is evident that the school leadership team has made a major effort to understand the trends in student achievement levels over time. In response to these trends explicit targets have been set and strategies have been put in place to monitor and improve student learning.

These data represent a continuing high improvement trend over the past five years, which is not emulated in many other schools. Students and parents and some staff seem unaware of the significant academic achievements produced by this school over a sustained period.

The senior students indicate that the Queensland Core Skills Test (QCST) practice is having an impact and students are feeling more comfortable and confident with their preparation for the QCS test.

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Learning culture

The teachers have engaged with the Lighthouse Visible Learning Project (LVLP) and the Diocesan Reading Improvement Strategy (RIS) and express support for the programs. Teachers say they are confident that these initiatives will lead to improved learning and achievements for students.

Students are well versed in understanding the principles of Visible Learning that have been introduced in both the senior and junior secondary school and in primary. They indicate that Visible Learning teaching strategies are being implemented across the school, and teachers and students are able to use the relevant language with confidence.

Teachers report that students are "great to teach" and that relationships between teachers and students are generally very good.

Middle Leaders express the view that the student cohort will develop greater rigour and depth in learning when they have clarity around, and can articulate, what an effective learner at St Joseph's looks like. Based on interviews during the review, students generally appear to believe that only results determine an effective learner. *Teachers convey that the dispositions of an effective learner need to be unpacked further with students.*

Students are being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. It is not yet evident that this disposition is understood by students to be part of what it means to be an effective St Joseph's learner. It is intended that this will be developed further as the Visible Learning Project progresses.

Middle leaders convey that they would value the opportunity to explore the leadership aspects of their role in their faculties rather than only having time for management and accountability.

Primary school teachers report a developing collegial agenda among staff.

The new QCE and ATAR system is being prepared for. Secondary teachers express concern that it is in danger of being lost as a priority among other initiatives.

The students are well versed in understanding the principles of teacher clarity in Visible Learning (Learning Intentions and Success Criteria) in the primary school as well as both the senior and junior secondary schools. They indicate that Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are being implemented across the school, with some gaps in uptake by teachers in senior schooling. Students have conveyed that they believe when teachers discuss and display Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, lessons are far more effective than when this is not done. This practice, integral to Visible Learning, appears to be now embedded across the school in the expectations of students.

A number of students indicate that their teachers provide good and timely feedback, summed up by a student who said, "They want you to give it your best shot and do your best work…". It is not evident that this is consistent across all classes.

Planning for Personalised Learning (PfPL) and the associated templates are being used effectively across the school. Given the complexities of the secondary environment, the adoption of the template in a short period of time is a significant achievement. The review team has observed quality differentiation in teaching strategies for all students.

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Parents discuss and compare the differences between St Joseph's Secondary Campus and other schools in the area. There is a current practice of some students moving to the local state high school after primary or during secondary that appears in danger of growing. Parents appear to have a 'wait and see' attitude in terms of when and whether to move. A primary teacher describes parents as 'aspirational for their children', loyal to St Joseph's but at the same time making judgements about what they think will best benefit their children's future.

A number of parents suggest that fewer electives and subject offerings at St Joseph's are one of the reasons for this. Parents and students appear unaware that educational research does not show a link between breadth of subject choices and students' academic achievement, while it does show a link between quality teaching and a culture of community. *These same parents and students do not appear aware of the consistently superior achievements of the St Joseph's students over many years compared to other primary and secondary schools in the area.*

Another reason offered by parents is what they see as a constant staff turnover at St Joseph's, especially in the Principal role.

Students highlight that they are well supported and that students with additional needs are very well catered for. Non-OP students have suggested that there is an apparent though probably unintentional bias towards the OP students in regard to care and effort provided to support them through the academic interview and course selection process.

Improvement strategies

- Collaboratively develop written and shared belief statements about learning, learners and teaching at St Joseph's that are known, and inform practice across the whole school.

- Begin the process of teachers and students engaging to identify and articulate what it means to be an 'effective learner' at St Joseph's.

- Implement strategies to nurture the conditions of Collective Teacher Efficacy so as to move them into practice. (TCS is available to assist the school in this).

- Publicly and frequently celebrate the impressive whole school academic achievement trends. Students and parents need to be regularly informed of academic achievements, so that they are celebrated and well known throughout the school and the wider Stanthorpe community.

- Continue to embed Visible learning (VL) pedagogy. It is clear to the review team that it is well received and highly valued by students. The teacher clarity dimensions of VL, that is, Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, are now embedded, and need to be expectations that all teachers have of one another.

- Continue to strengthen the quality of feedback to students in the context of Visible Learning, so that they experience a consistently high standard of feedback across the school.

- Seek feedback from secondary teachers about their level of familiarity and sense of assurance about expectations for 2019 around the dual OP and ATAR cohorts. (TCS will support the school to provide time to complete programs and assessment requirements and ensure clarity exists between teachers, students and parents about what will be offered and how this will be managed.)

- Develop clear and concise expectations about the frequency and quality of communication with parents around unit content, assessments, and progress.

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- Ensure that parents are informed of the proven value and significance of the variety of pathways towards continued learning and to course work that St Joseph's provides.

- Inform parents and students of the lack of correlation in research between breadth of subject offerings and academic achievement.

- Include Non-OP students in the academic interview process in order to ensure that they feel as valued as the students pursuing more academic courses.

2.2   Curriculum structure and provision
Findings

Systematic curriculum delivery

A primary curriculum plan is in place, supervised by the Assistant Principal Primary to ensure gaps in the curriculum are addressed. Learning area profiles (LAP) appear to be out of date in terms of current class year level compositions. The scope and sequence of who teaches what and when is not clear at this stage.

A coherent sequential curriculum plan for P-12 is not yet evident.

Roles and responsibilities of the leadership team are not clear to all teachers. This is creating some confusion especially regarding Primary and Secondary support responsibilities. A new staffing schedule for P-12 schools will be in effect from 2019. This provides an opportune time to review and address these concerns.

The school has provided support for teachers to receive professional learning around the new QCE/ATAR system for senior students beginning in 2019, and for staff to engage with the planning and resourcing implications of the new syllabi and the demands of external assessment.

Students and teachers indicate that recently there has been a greater focus on School-Based Apprenticeships (SBA) and Traineeships opportunities, and greater numbers, approximately 50% of senior students, have taken up this option in 2017. Teachers felt that this is a response to losing students to the local state high in that students can undertake SBA/Traineeships in areas such as agriculture and hospitality, and remain at St Joseph's. This is in tune with community expectations and supported by the school's leadership team and middle Leaders.

There has been significant chopping and changing in elective offerings being driven by parent and student interests. Concerns are being expressed that these do not always link with senior pathways and result in a perception of incoherence in the school's P-12 curriculum, as well as at times unrealistic expectations of teachers to cover subjects in which they feel ill-prepared.

Evidenced based teaching practices are becoming embedded. Through the Reading Improvement Strategy and Visible Learning initiatives, teachers are engaging with proven high impact strategies and are stating they see the positive impact of these in student growth and achievement.

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

School leaders have created opportunities for staff to work collaboratively. These include campus and curriculum meetings introduced at the end of 2016 in secondary, primary shared planning times and meetings, and focused peer observation and feedback. Research indicates that when conducted professionally, these practices have a positive impact on student learning and achievement.

School context

Students indicate that teachers try to involve them as much as they can in practical ways in class. They convey that teachers provide challenging and accessible lessons and where possible link the curriculum to local issues and industries.

Parents report that students who leave St Joseph's are embraced by the local state high school. They believe the state high school goes above and beyond in their individual support for students who transfer across. Some parents are making comparisons not just with the two secondary subject offerings, but also a perceived difference in the regularity and tone of communication from the school to the parents.

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Due to an apparent decision made some years ago, historically parents have believed that their children would not be welcomed back if they left St Joseph's for another secondary school, but then decided they had made the wrong decision. This is no longer the case, and the school leadership has made clear that the door is always open for students who leave and then decide they want to return to St Joseph's.

Improvement strategies:

- Collaboratively decide on a coherent set of curriculum offerings from Years 7 to 10. Ensure that where possible this coherence continues through to Years 11 and 12. Having established coherence in curriculum offerings from Year 7 through to the senior years, focus on building the strength of these offerings in terms of teacher recruitment and resourcing. 'What we are going to be known for?' - (a middle leader)

- Promote and celebrate the academic success in this school. A rich history of high achievement appears generally unknown by current students and parents. This would counter the misinformed anecdotal reports that it is the local state high school that produces the higher achieving academic students.

- Continue to investigate reasons for the departure of students from year 6 and later who move to the state high school, and articulate the new narrative relating to students who leave. Ensure parents are aware that the door is always open to those who may wish to return.

- Continue to identify and articulate the points of difference that promote the positive aspects of St Joseph's, both in academic achievement and in the human, social and spiritual development of the students.

- Primary and secondary staff act to consistently advocate the proven strengths of secondary education at St Joseph's.

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2.3   Pastoral care and student wellbeing
Findings

Student social and emotional wellbeing

It is evident that a priority is given to developing a safe and nurturing environment for students. Students report that the teachers generally go out of their way to come to know them individually and provide the individual attention that can be given to students in a small school. Parents also have generally conveyed to the review team that they agree with this view.

This sense of the school as a community is consistently conveyed to the review team as one of the positive features of St Joseph's that influences parental decisions about enrolment of their children at the school. It is also evident that there is a well-integrated focus on developing the 'whole person', including the spiritual dimension of young people's lives.

Staff indicate that the community highly values the safety of students and acceptance of each student as an individual. This contributes to an overall development of inclusion, resilience and wellbeing.

Based on the review team's observation, the students display an open, friendly, welcoming disposition and speak of the school with pride and a sense of belonging.

It is important to note that educational research, including that of Visible Learning, suggests that the characteristics displayed above, when combined with strong teaching practice, are likely to positively influence student academic learning and achievement.

Relationships

Relationships between staff and students are well developed. This has been advanced through the introduction of lunch time academic help and activities. These have been well received by the students and they feel cared for and believe that the teachers know them well, including their strengths and weaknesses.

Recently there has been an increase in the number of combined activities that involve the whole P-12 school. Students and parents express appreciation for this, and it appears to be having a positive effect on the two campuses coming closer together rather than seen as two separate schools.

Students report that the school provides an environment where all are welcomed and treated equally. They also report that teachers are conscious of the wellbeing of each student and that they try to assist students to succeed in their learning and participation in school life. In doing so they cater for different types of students making the experience inclusive for all students.

Student leaders report that bullying rarely occurs at the school. They state that when it has occurred it has been quickly and effectively addressed by the school leadership and staff.

These underpinning features of high quality relationships are evidenced by the daily positive interactions between students and staff observed by the review team. As a result, Fr Brian reports that students generally go home happy each day.

Effectiveness of systems and structures

Systems and expectations in relation to behaviour management are documented and currently under review. These do not appear to be consistently understood by all staff and parents. A number of teachers report that problematic behaviour by a small number of Year 7 and Year 9 students which has been causing concern and frustration, is currently being addressed and will need continuing attention.

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A working party consisting of the Leadership Team and the secondary pastoral middle leader, has been collaboratively working on the development of a new school behaviour support plan based on the Toowoomba Catholic Schools guidelines document. The finalisation and implementation of this document can provide clarity around roles, responsibilities, consequences and consistent expectations for the school community that will be of significant benefit.

This year the secondary pastoral care program has been reviewed and resourced with 'The Learning Curve' Education well-being journals that are used with the Years 7&8 classes and the Years 9&10 classes. A suggested scope and sequence has been developed to guide teacher planning and student learning. The program is based on positive education principles where students examine their strengths and build resilience. The language and concepts of the growth mindset are built into the program. While in its early stages of implementation, staff and students speak very positively of the program and the quality of the resources. The school is investigating the student diaries produced by the same company that includes these resources for possible implementation in 2019.

Improvement strategies

- Continue to nourish the existing culture of high quality relationships between staff and students. Whenever possible, link this community ethos with research about student academic learning and achievement.

- Publish and implement, with appropriate professional learning, the new student behaviour support plan ensuring that the roles, responsibilities, processes and expectations are widely known and consistently understood by staff, students and parents. Monitor the new system to ensure that all staff are equipped to implement the system consistently.

- Continue to implement the pastoral care programs with a focus on positive education through the growth mindset and strengths-based education as underpinning philosophies, so that these becomes embedded in the daily life of the school.

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Domain 3: Continual renewal

3.1 School improvement culture

Findings

Collective teacher efficacy

The leadership team has instigated a range of strategies to assist staff in the development of their understanding of how students learn. *Cross campus classroom visits and shared learning are greatly appreciated by teachers. Observing how Visible Learning is being implemented across year levels is both appreciated by teachers and seen by them as valuable.*

The implementation of the diocesan initiatives of the Reading Improvement Strategy, Visible Learning Lighthouse School Project and the Planning for Personalised Learning collectively have engaged staff in considerable reflection and professional learning at both diocesan and school levels. These processes are developing a shared common language about effective teaching and learning practices across the school, including by the students. These are already impacting positively on the development of collective teacher efficacy, the implementation of high yield teaching strategies and hence improved student learning and achievement.

The school-wide curriculum planning guidelines have been published and are in the early stage of development. It is expected that this will continue to ensure that quality planning and differentiation are in place to meet individual student learning needs, including those with additional learning needs.

School officers indicate that they receive excellent guidance, support, training and resources from the leadership team and teachers to carry out their roles.

School culture

Staff express appreciation that the leadership team support them personally and professionally. *At the same time,* there *is a perception among some staff and parents that the leadership team are not always united in the implementation of decisions.*

All teachers are engaged in a teacher performance and development program which has been introduced recently. *The Educator Impact (EI) program is an online professional development tool for educators which begins with the selection of a competency for each teacher to focus on as an area for their own professional growth.* Teachers set developmental goals in relation to the selected competency and are provided with online professional learning materials related to the competency they have selected to improve on.

Teachers work through the EI process collaboratively with other teachers from the school who have set goals on the same competency. Through peer observations and feedback teachers report on their achievement of these goals. The process involves not only peer feedback but student feedback. The school is provided with school-wide data about the program which is useful strategically to the individual teacher and leadership team. This is a significant and creative initiative which is unique in the diocese at this time. This innovative program highlights a culture of continuous improvement, collegiality, and a focus on student learning through developing collective teacher efficacy.

The school is very proactive and supportive of staff professional development applications and practices beyond the EI initiative.

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Improvement strategies

- Ensure that in public all members of the Leadership Team speak with one voice in mutual support of each other, and act consistently in the implementation of decisions once these are made.

- Continue to engage staff in cross-curriculum peer observation visits and participation in the performance and development program. Investigate the most suitable times to conduct these.

- Continue to support teachers in the implementation of the Reading Improvement Strategy, Planning for Personalised Learning and Visible Learning.

- Continue the implementation of the Educator Impact program for collegial goal setting and continuing improvement.

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3.2 Community partnerships

Findings

Partners

In interviews with the review team, parents and staff consistently refer to the community ethos of St Joseph's, describing it as supportive, welcoming and caring.

Parents are seen by the school as the main community partners in the students' education. Teachers generally express appreciation for the attitude of parents to their children's learning, and parents generally express praise for the quality of teaching and learning in the school, the care extended to their children, and the approachability of staff, including the leadership team. Many parents express appreciation at the Principal's approachability and welcoming manner.

The school is well supported by the School Board and the Parents and Friends Association. P&F members express pride at some of the resourcing they have been able to provide through fundraising.

It is evident that there are strong links to the life of St Joseph's parish. The school uses parish facilities for prayer and meetings, Fr Brian celebrates liturgies and Masses with the school community and the school joins with the parish for significant celebrations such as Catholic Education Week. The Principal and school staff support parish activities including the program of preparation of students to receive the sacraments.

The school has a strong presence in the community and is well promoted through local newspaper and community activities such as, the Apple and Grape Festival, Catholic Education Week promotions and eisteddfod participation.

Students are involved in a number of community activities beyond the school. Most are service activities involving 'Little Vinnies', Catholic Mission, Caritas, Villa Carramar, Meals on Wheels, Endeavour Centre, Stanthorpe Men's Shed, Leukemia Foundation, Bluecare, Veteran's Care Association, Orange Sky Laundry, Swags for the Homeless, Lifeflight, Granite Belt Support Services, Community Development Services and Stanthorpe Hospital.

Student learning

Community involvement is providing students with learning experiences they are not able to experience at school, particularly the value of serving others.

The school has established community support services for students which include paediatrics, occupational therapy and speech pathology. Links have been established with Child and Youth Mental Health, Head Space, and Granite Belt Support Services. Where possible the school supports parents who cannot afford support from paid services.

Community partnerships are resourced and included in annual budgeting.

The school aims to make these community links sustainable, and a natural part of the culture of the school.

Procedures

The value of the community activities for the students is monitored each year.

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Improvement strategies

- Continue to seek community activities for students that provide learnings they cannot experience at school.

Domain 4: Sustainable resourcing and stewardship

4.1 Staff development and wellbeing

Findings

School Culture

Teachers and support staff make clear that they support the values and beliefs that underpin the life of the school. The Catholic ethos is strongly supported, and staff indicate that it is acted out in ways that students appreciate and value.

Staff generally express appreciation for the support they receive from the leadership team, often referring to the 'open door' policy. Teachers and school officers say that they feel valued in words and actions and the school leadership team are seen as proactive in looking for ways to help staff and sensibly manage the demands of the role.

Some staff refer to the dedication and commitment of their colleagues, in particular the many hours they put in. Some concern was expressed that it is important to keep track of the expectations for teachers as new initiatives are introduced, and to ensure that their workloads are reasonable and not causing imbalance in their work and personal lives.

Professional development is made available for teachers, aligned with the school's stated priorities.

Caring for the individual

Many teachers state that the level of support that staff offer to one another, and from the leadership team, is of a high order, both professionally and personally.

Staff indicate that they are working in areas of the school that largely match their talents and interests.

Workplace health and safety protocols to ensure a safe environment are documented. *There is some questioning by a small number of staff about the effectiveness of these policies in implementation.*

Internal and external communication systems are viewed by staff and parents in mixed ways. Some indicate gaps in communication between primary and secondary, while parents offer varied views on the effectiveness of the communications they receive.

A significant number of parents indicate that they would appreciate informal communication from teachers about their children's progress during the term if some action by the parents at home could benefit the students' learning or behaviour at school.

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Attraction, selection and retention

A staff induction program is in place and is clearly documented. Staff consistently speak of the welcoming they received and express their appreciation of the way colleagues helped them settle. *Staff who have recently joined the school give varying accounts of the formal induction they received, with a number saying it was brief, and they would have appreciated some follow-up after the initial induction.*

Nurture and Empowerment

Goal setting processes are in place using the Educator Impact (EI) for Teachers Development Goals Report to record individual teachers' goals for the term. This is published so staff can view their colleagues' goals. Teachers' goals are set by discussion with a member of the leadership team.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are widely used in classes across the school. *Senior students indicate that the laptops are very slow, and it can take 10 minutes for a student to log in before any work can take place.*

An agreed coherent approach to the use of ICT in classroom teaching and learning is not yet in place.

Staff work collaboratively both formally and informally in designing lessons and assessment. Teachers are also engaged in focused peer observation. *Some staff would like more opportunities to engage in this form of collegial professional development, linking it to the principles of Visible Learning.*

Improvement strategies

- Ensure that as new initiatives are introduced, the pace of their introduction is such that it does not place unreasonable pressure on staff work and home life balance.

- Continue to seek ways to acknowledge the efforts of staff and provide additional time and support to teaching staff to undertake their roles and maintain a work life balance.

- Review the implementation of Workplace Health and Safety protocols to ensure that St Joseph's is a safe environment for adults and young people.

- Review the effectiveness of internal and external communication as experienced by staff and parents.

- Investigate ways for teachers to communicate informally with parents during the term to celebrate a student's achievement, or when a timely parental intervention may enhance a student's learning or behaviour.

- Review the school's induction process to ensure a consistently effective formal induction with follow-up is experienced by all incoming staff.

- Begin a collaborative process to decide on a consistent approach to the use of ICTs by teachers in student learning across primary and secondary.

- Review the effectiveness of the current laptops for classroom use.

- Seek ways to facilitate further opportunities for teachers to engage in collegial work such as focused peer observation, linking it to the school's work in Visible Learning.

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4.2   Use of resources, facilities and the learning environment

Findings

Resources

The school has effective processes in place to identify and respond to diverse student needs, strategically allocating human and physical resources to these needs. *The Bursar indicates that once departmental budgets are set, it is necessary not to exceed them except in important unforeseen circumstances, for which it may be possible to extend the budget for that purpose by negotiation.*

School-wide processes are in place to support students with special needs and needing additional support. The Learning Support Teachers advise class teachers and teacher aides on how best to work with these students in class.

A number of teachers indicate that they provide enrichment and extension learning for highly motivated and high achieving students. *It is not evident that this is a policy that is practised by all teachers across the school.*

Teachers say that they are generally well resourced. *Teachers in upper primary indicate that they would appreciate a small amount of teacher aide time each week. One upper primary teacher suggests that even an allocation of one and a half hours a week of teacher aide time would make a significant difference to student learning.*

ICT resourcing is provided for classroom learning in ways that are seen as generally equitable.

The two campus libraries have been combined into a single library, located on the primary campus. The intention is to physically link primary and secondary facilities. *Library staff offer the observation that the library is now used by fewer secondary students than under the previous arrangement.*

Facilities

The school's physical environment and resources are conducive to learning and recreational play. Year 5 students suggest attention to the bottom oval where a muddy patch can be dangerous after rain. Year 12 students suggest that the school investigate ways in which greater participation levels could be achieved in the Athletics Carnival. They suggested widening the range of activities or sports included in the program.

It is evident that the school master plan is under review and there are intentions to look at improving the manual arts space, art room, STEM and robotics space, music space, shade and outdoor areas, play areas and improved learning support space spaces.

Learning environment

The school uses technology extensively in the curriculum. All students have access to a device. All secondary students are part of a one-to-one laptop program. Teachers undertake professional development in the use of ICT within the curriculum. They work collaboratively in teams to share knowledge and apply those learned skills to development engaging curriculum. Examples include the use of "Turn It In" for submission of assessment and applications such as "Kahoot" and "Quizlet" to test learning.

The school uses a diverse range of digital resources for planning and learning. This occurs in all subject areas. The school is currently planning for the implementation of a Student Intranet and is introducing a Learning Management System in 2019. These two systems will make digital resources more readily available to students.

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Improvement strategies

- Middle Leaders should make every effort to work within their departmental annual budget.

- Ensure that high achieving and highly motivated students are offered enrichment and extension activities as regular classroom practice.

- Investigate ways to provide teacher aide time in upper primary.

- Investigate the possible reasons for the decrease in use of the library by secondary students.

- Investigate ways to increase participation by students in the Athletics Carnival by including a wider range of activities.

- Begin a collaborative process to develop a common approach to the use of ICTs in class across the school.

Conclusion

The review team believes St Joseph's has much to offer its students and parents. In particular, it is highlighted and acknowledged that its students consistently have the highest performing academic achievements of any primary or secondary school in the area over many years, and a coherent P-12 education is being steadily put in place.

The initiatives currently taking place regarding teaching and learning, combined with the strong community ethos reported by all members of the school community, are a potentially powerful combination. This special combination sees the school well-placed for the years ahead. It is important that this is now combined into a coherent and consistent narrative that is presented to the school community and the wider community.

With continuing academic achievement by students, a well-articulated story, a supportive staff, and a coherent leadership team speaking and acting with one voice, the review team sees St Joseph's as well-placed for a strong future.

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