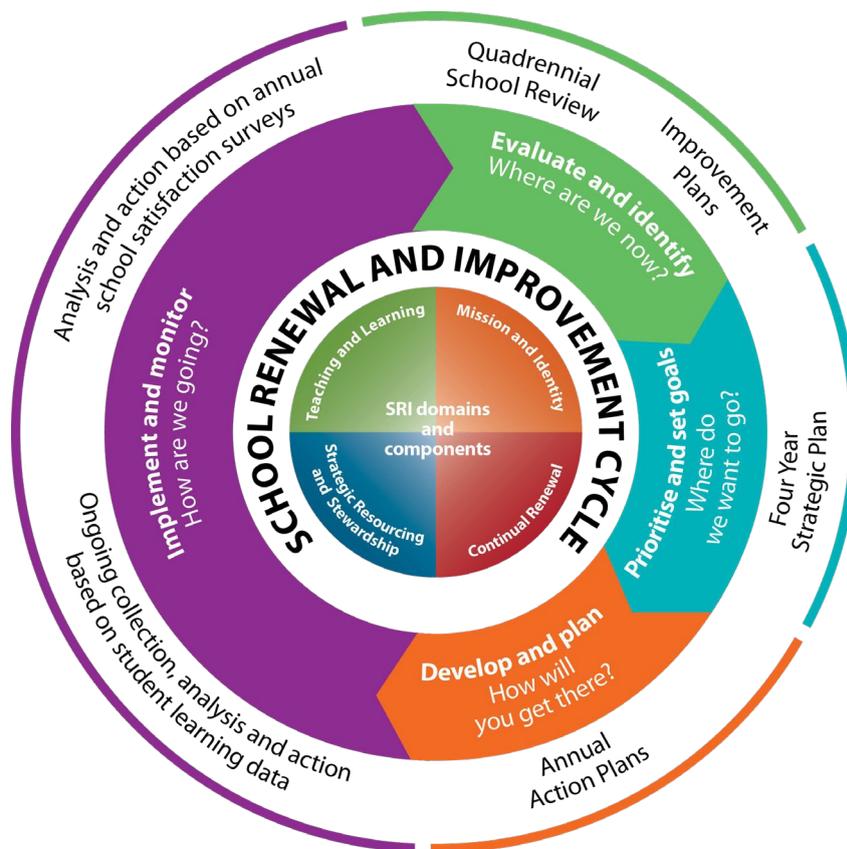


Diocese of Toowoomba
Catholic Schools

St Mary's School, Charleville

TCS Quadrennial school review Full report



August 2019



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.

Leaders of continuously improving organisations bring a learning mindset to the work of their staff. They focus on establishing disciplined processes for developing, testing, and improving core work and programs to build capacity. They invest time and energy in enabling staff to embed these processes into day-to-day work and to create an organisational openness to review and change.

Park, S, Hironaka, S, Carver, P and Nordstrum, L, 2013, *Continuous improvement in education*, Carnegie Foundation, Stanford.

Methodology

The review was conducted from Tuesday, 20 August to Thursday, 22 August 2019

Reviewers

Mr Paul Murphy, Senior Education Leader, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (Chair)
Mrs Terry Carter, Manager: Teaching & Learning, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office
Mrs Genny McNair, Principal: St Finbarr's School, Quilpie

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

- The Principal and the Assistant Principal Religious Education (APRE)
- Fr Peter Doohan, Parish Priest
- Sr Elizabeth O'Keeffe, RSM
- Teaching staff (6), Middle Leader (ML), Teacher Librarian & Learning Support Teacher (LST)
- School Officers including Administration, Cleaner/Tuckshop Convenor, and Teacher Aides (10)
- Parents including Parents and Friends Association (P&F) members (18)
- Robert Geebung — Charleville and Western Areas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health (CWAATSICH) — Social and Preventative Health Manager
- Murweh Shire Councillor
- Student House and School Captains

School Renewal and Improvement (SRI) domains and components

The reference document for the review was the SRI domains and components from the Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) School Renewal and Improvement Framework.



Domain 1 Teaching and learning

- Component 1.1 Students and their learning
- Component 1.2 Curriculum structure and provision
- Component 1.3 Pastoral care and student wellbeing



Domain 2 Mission and identity

- Component 2.1 Religion curriculum
- Component 2.2 Religious life of the school



Domain 3 Continual renewal

- Component 3.1 School improvement culture
- Component 3.2 Community partnerships



Domain 4 Strategic resourcing and stewardship

- Component 4.1 Staff development and wellbeing
- Component 4.2 Use of resources facilities and the learning environment

Prologue

The purposes of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools quadrennial school review are

- a. to engage the school community in a process of self-reflection and continual renewal
- b. to ensure the school review focuses on the quality of teaching and learning
- c. to provide the school community with an opportunity to participate in a thorough reflection on their school's effectiveness
- d. to provide an external panel perspective including findings and improvement strategies to affirm and improve teaching and learning.

The review panel believes that the St Mary's community entered into the school renewal process in a spirit of candour and reflection. The presentation by the school leadership team to the review panel focused on the school's context, priorities and progress and was clear, honest and insightful.

The panel is also appreciative of the extensive interview schedule which included many parents and community members. Important to note is that all interviewees were appreciative of the opportunity to 'have their say' and though many may have had issues they wanted to raise, were also generous in their appreciation of the hard work undertaken by the staff and parent body of the school.

As noted in the report, Charleville is experiencing tough economic and climatic conditions that are impacting on the town's population and access to services. Notwithstanding these current conditions, St Mary's is perceived as providing a caring and supportive educational environment for all students and families.

The improvement strategies identified in this report represent the will of the community as heard by the review panel. The strategies are designed to assist the school to plan and prepare for a sustainable future that provides the best learning opportunities for students and staff.

Finally, while the review process is not a review of the Principal, it must be commented that during the panel's visit, many positive comments were made about the current principal's leadership style and his dedication and commitment to the community of St Mary's.



Domain 1 Teaching and learning

Component 1.1 Students and their learning

Findings

Explicit improvement agenda

Throughout this review, the review panel consistently heard of the deliberate and specific ways in which St Mary's School is using the close examination of student data with consequent planning and implementation of improvement strategies to improve students' learning and achievement. The school is to be commended for its approaches in this area and in the evidence of improvement that is already clear.

The school has an explicit teaching and learning goal of 'all students achieving twelve months growth for twelve months learning in literacy and numeracy.'

Staff work collaboratively to analyse student performance data and to identify student strengths and gaps in learning, using this data to prioritise areas for targeted teaching via the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework. Staff have constructed a 'data wall' on which students have been mapped on to the RTI triangle, clearly identifying their position across different areas. This has been shared with school officers which brings visibility and clarity as to why different students are being supported in different ways and with different time allocations. The school is to be congratulated for its innovative work in this area and the evidence of its impact

is clear when comparison of testing from December 2018 to August 2019 shows more than 12 months growth in a 6 months period for those students with identified needs.

The school has provided additional release time for teachers to meet collaboratively for planning. Currently the school is moving towards a more coherent application of these targeted teaching goals within teacher planning across all classes.

The implementation of the Diocesan-wide Reading Improvement Strategy (RIS) is embedded across the school and its success is evident in the growth in students' reading data. The use of High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS), which form an integral part of the RIS, has been welcomed by teachers who now express a desire to expand their use of HITS.

'There has been so much growth in my class from the Reading Improvement Strategy. Now I want to know how to embed High Impact Teaching Strategies across all areas.'

Teacher

Student support meetings occur each week where teachers can bring a student's portfolio to the student support committee to collaboratively explore ways to improve students' learning and achievement.

School officer meetings are available weekly for any school officer who wishes to discuss goals, clarity around classroom expectations or behaviour management.

Analysis and discussion of data

St Mary's School is engaging deeply and effectively with student data to help inform decisions. There has been a transition from the leadership team studying student data and presenting it to staff, to where staff are now involved with the examination of the data. The school uses a wide variety of data which provides many opportunities for triangulation and checking of reliability. Data sources include:

- RTI data walls
- whole school testing
- RIS assessment and monitoring
- National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) analysis
- P&F feedback
- School opinion surveys (RADII)
- The Behaviour Emotions Thoughts Learning & Social Relationships (BETLS) observation tool for student wellbeing
- Classroom profiling
- Parent/Teacher interviews
- Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)
- weekly student support meetings
- planning meetings
- Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings
- School Officer meetings — as required — opportunity to meet weekly with LST and ML

RIS data collection identifies needs to which there is an immediate response for intervention. Teachers use data to identify areas for growth and target teaching and learning to those areas.

'Now this year, with the RIS being so embedded, we are starting to really explore the data in depth. And this is starting to transition into planning.'

Teacher

Examination of NAPLAN improvement data from 2017 to 2018 shows growth for Year 3 in Reading, Writing and Spelling, and growth for Year 5 in Reading, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy. The leadership team have studied the areas where growth didn't occur and are embedding these into plans for improvement. In 2018 NAPLAN, Year 5 students scored above the state and national mean score in Reading. In all other domains, Year 3 and 5 students scored below the mean. The school is examining this data closely and looking for ways to improve these scores as part of the overall focus on improving student learning and achievement and fulfilling their learning goal of 12 months growth for 12 months learning.

Learning culture

Through the close analysis of student data, adjustments are made through a variety of responses. For example, when examining student data in relation to Writing, the school contracted an external consultant to spend a week in the school specifically to work with teachers and students on ways to improve the teaching and learning of Writing. Further examples of ways in which the school responds to student data include:

- learning goals being set for students
- Targeted Reading Advancement for Targeted Students (RAFTS) and Mini-Lit intervention
- students identified are timetabled for extra support
- release for team planning
- ongoing RTI data collection
- Planning for Personalised Learning (PfPL)
- Wellbeing Education Officer support with teacher profiling, school behaviour plan, behaviour walls referring to STAR values.
 - Strive to achieve
 - Take responsibility
 - Act with kindness
 - Respect everyone
- collaboration with School Guidance Counsellor / School Inclusion Coach
- Education Officer support and leadership support for teachers in planning, coaching and modelling
- walkthroughs

Teachers are comfortable with the leadership team conducting walkthroughs and there is a willingness and an expressed desire to go to the next level of receiving feedback from the walkthroughs and to begin peer observation with feedback.

Improvement strategies

- Continue to explore and strengthen the implementation of High Impact Strategies into classroom teaching.
- Undertake professional learning in the provision of high quality feedback from walkthroughs.
- Strengthen and sharpen teacher feedback from walkthroughs.
- Engage in professional learning about peer observation and feedback.
- Organise further opportunities for peer observation and feedback.

Component 1.2 Curriculum structure and provision

Findings

Systematic curriculum delivery

The Middle Leader coordinates curriculum planning and works with teachers on overall unit planning. The focus of planning recently has been on responding to student data and in the use of Learning Intentions (LI) and Success Criteria (SC) identified as a way to bring clarity to planning. Teachers engage with the

minimum requirements of PfPL processes and speak of the value that they see in using this approach.

These approaches are evidenced by inclusion of LI and SC and elements of PfPL in planning recorded in the Diocesan Learning Profile (DLP). Teachers are to be congratulated for their attempts to embed these elements into their planning. It is clear that the use of both of these approaches is a 'work in progress' and that work needs to continue in supporting teachers in their understanding and use of LI and SC, PfPL and unit planning in general. It is apparent that the DLP, the mandated platform for recording planning and assessment, is not yet well understood or used consistently throughout the school.

Consistency across the school is yet to be achieved in classroom assessment processes which appear to not always align with the curriculum and need more crafting to clarify LI and SC and establish where individual students are in their learning.

At this stage clear links with the learning activities for students are not yet evident across the school — teaching and learning activities are usually a brief script of what the teacher would be doing or is covering. Intentional planning is mixed in most year levels

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Teachers meet regularly as a PLC. Every second PLC is run as a planning meeting for teachers in the lower and upper cohorts to meet with a leadership team member. Teachers also receive release time to engage in a three hour planning block to plan with their cohort teacher.

The alternate PLC, which is not a planning meeting, is targeted to a particular identified need such as moderation of NCCD. The topics for these are planned beforehand so that teachers know the topics ahead of time. Teachers report that they value these meetings. Some note that there are topics which are not always followed up or re-visited and that this can be both disappointing and frustrating, especially when staff are awaiting a result or decision that will impact on teaching and learning. Teachers view the PLCs as an opportunity where they too can contribute to professional discussion and they indicate that they would appreciate opportunities to contribute to the agenda.

School context

'We are not in a deficit situation just because we are in a remote setting.'

Principal

St Mary's has an Index of Community and Social Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 1006 placing it above the national average of 1000. Indigenous students account for over 18% of the student cohort and the school works closely with the Social and Preventative Health Manager from CWAATSICH in supporting students. This support is offered in a variety of ways including the Breakfast Club each Wednesday morning, which is available for all students.

The plan for curriculum delivery is shared with parents/carers through parent information evenings as well as individual teachers sending information through email, and other informal means.

Improvement strategies

- Continue to develop teachers' understanding and use of LI and SC as ways to bring clarity to planning and teaching.
- Continue to build consistent understanding and practice with all teachers around planning and recording of planning in the DLP.
- Continue the roll-out of PfPL as per Diocesan expectations.
- Provide professional development to build staff skills in curriculum planning and development.
- Engage with Education Officers from the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office on ways to support teachers in the use of LI and SC, as well as DLP, PfPL and unit planning.
- Create ways of recording required actions from PLCs to ensure that all actions are followed up. Plot actions on to timelines so that all can see what needs to be actioned and by whom.
- Consider how teachers might be given opportunities to drive or contribute to the agenda for PLCs.

Component 1.3 Pastoral care and student wellbeing

Findings

Student social and emotional wellbeing

‘Everyone feels their children are safe and cared for individually.’	Parent
‘Everyone knows the students so well — they know the students as individuals with different needs.’	Parent
‘The staff are very hands on and do lots of different activities which involve the children.’	Parent
‘The school is very good at acknowledging student achievement and sharing this with the school community — as a parent I appreciate that.’	Parent
‘We are always able to ask questions in class if we need help.’	Student

A safe and nurturing environment is evident within the school. All staff are very supportive of the students and focus on developing self-confidence and resilience in their relationships with others. School officers are invested in making a difference — teachers are good at implementing interventions recommended through PLC meetings with LST.

As a Wellbeing Lighthouse School, classroom profiling and the implementation of the Ten Essential Skills of Classroom Management have been supported across the school and have made an impact on student engagement in learning as evidenced by data collected. Staff articulate that they would value further school-wide processes and programs that promote social and emotional wellbeing.

Parents, staff and students have commented on the excellent behaviour of students at the school. Education in the areas of anti-bullying and cybersafety has been provided through Bullying No Way, Stymie and Queensland Rugby League (QRL) Wellbeing and Education manager, as a proactive measure to ensure a safe environment for the students.

One of the parents is the Adopt-a-Cop for the school and promotes antibullying and safety messages to the school.

Breakfast club is offered one morning per week in conjunction with CWAATSICH liaison officer who also interacts with the students during lunch times and assists principal with attendance and other concerns with Indigenous students.

A number of parents and staff suggested that long day care or after school clubs be offered for the students.

Relationships

‘This school feels like a community – every teacher knows every student. They are very caring and want the best for every child.’	Parent
‘My teacher is very patient when I am having trouble with my work. I am never afraid to ask for help.’	Student

The Principal leads the school in modelling and developing positive and inclusive relationships across the school. He is committed to developing relationships with families, and encouraging family involvement in the school, which has a positive impact on students’ attitudes to their education.

Parents and staff comment on the 'oneness' and collaboration that exist in the school. Everyone is positive, empathetic and affirming in their interactions with students. Partnerships have been formed with individuals and groups in the community (CWAATSICH, National Rugby League (NRL), TCSO) to provide holistic care and support for the students.

Effectiveness of systems and structures

'The Principal keeps parents informed with student behaviour, dealing with issues in a fair manner and follows up with consequences when needed.'

Parent

The expectations of students by teachers are consistent across the classrooms since the implementation of the Ten Essential Skills of Classroom Management. Students say the rules are clear across the school and they know what is expected of them.

There is confidence amongst the school community that the behaviour of the students is very good, and this is particularly evident at school assemblies. Incidents have traditionally been managed through Restorative Justice Practices and the Responsible Thinking Room. The School Student Behaviour Support plan has been developed in 2019. Not all staff or parents are yet familiar with this document. Some staff express a desire for clearer guidelines on the processes involved in managing students when incidents occur and for students to take greater ownership of their behaviour.

School officers comment that they would like to know more about the welfare of some of the students so they are more aware of the difficulties some of the children may be having and how to work best with these children.

Student absences are followed up by administration each morning through SMS messages.

Improvement strategies

- Continue to nourish and strengthen the existing culture of high-quality relationships between staff and students.
- Promote the Student Behaviour Support Plan more strongly to ensure familiarity and consistency of processes across the school particularly for relief and part time staff.
- Investigate the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework to promote school wide processes and programs that promote social and emotional wellbeing.
- Continue to implement and strengthen Wellbeing Lighthouse School initiatives in collaboration with the Education Officer and other Wellbeing Lighthouse schools.



Domain 2 Mission and identity

Component 2.1 Religion curriculum

Findings

Systematic Curriculum Delivery

The Religious Education (RE) curriculum taught at St Mary's is based on the Toowoomba Catholic Schools' (TCS) Religious Education Guidelines which utilise the resources of the Archdiocese of Brisbane Religious Education guidelines. The school Learning Area Program (LAP) identifies the sequence of the RE program throughout the year and informs teacher planning. Some of the recommendations of the LAP review last year are currently being addressed. LI and SC are expected in teacher planning and daily lessons. It is not yet evident that these are being implemented consistently and effectively across the school in RE.

The APRE assists teachers with their planning each term. The RE learning area program is based on Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) units and units already created in the DLP which are adapted to the multiage classes. The APRE shares the teaching of RE as part of the teacher non-contact time. It is evident from speaking with staff that ongoing monitoring is required to ensure consistency in planning and alignment with achievement standards across the classes, as well as continued support and monitoring of the teaching of RE within the school.

The APRE has participated in professional development through attendance at the Los Angeles conference and Leuven Intensive course in Brisbane. Staff indicate this has had a positive impact on the RE curriculum and there is a whole school focus on contextualising biblical stories to help students make links with their present day lives.

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Two teachers enrolled in the Religious Education Accreditation Program (REAP) in 2018 and the Principal is currently enrolled in 2019. All staff participated in professional development created by the APRE earlier this year to develop greater awareness of the Catherine McAuley tradition at St Mary's.

School context

The school currently has an enrolment of 115 students with 53% identifying as Catholic. A number of students have recently completed their sacraments. The APRE identifies the multi-age classes as a challenge in the development and planning of the whole school religious education program.

Improvement strategies

- Strengthen the work that is currently happening in making connection between the Gospel and the daily life of the students through a relevant and engaging RE program.
- Continue to promote and deepen the Catherine McAuley tradition and the history of the school as a basis for the whole school RE program.
- Utilise the TCSO Formation and Identity staff and Education officers in developing more robust whole school RE curriculum, particularly with the multi-age focus.
- Provide support in the development of teachers in their own faith and capacity in planning, teaching and assessment.
- Investigate the possibility of incorporating the Parish Priest and Religious Sister in supporting the faith formation of staff to enhance the RE curriculum in the school.
- Continue monitoring and support of teachers in the implementation of RE through class walkthroughs and collaborative meetings, particularly for graduate teachers.
- Explore staffing or timetable adjustments to enable the teaching of the entire RE curriculum by classroom teachers to ensure depth, quality and cohesion in the teaching.

Component 2.2 Religious life of the school

Findings

Evangelisation and formation

'The school does an amazing job with sacraments, readings, organisation of school liturgies, graduations — very organised.'

Parent

Partnership with the Parish is seen by parents as a strength of the school. Fr Peter is seen to have a great relationship with everyone. 'He has a lovely presence in the school and a great relationship with the kids.'

Parent

The school leadership is active in parish life. The APRE supports and conducts the sacramental preparation program after school for children within the community.

Formation in the Catherine McAuley tradition and the role of the Sisters of Mercy in the history of the school was well received by staff earlier this year. It has become evident through discussions with staff, parents and students that further understanding of this tradition could become enhanced through more regular activities embedding this tradition in the daily life of the school.

Prayer tables containing religious symbolism are included in each classroom with colours matching the liturgical seasons. These symbols are also displayed in the school office. Art works promoting the Catherine McAuley tradition are less evident around the school.

Prayer and worship

All staff indicate that there is a sense of enjoyment, greater student engagement and parent participation in school liturgies and prayer assemblies. This has resulted from sending personal invitations by students to parents to these activities. It can also be attributed to the influence of the APRE in promoting greater engagement following attendance in professional development.

‘My kids come home after liturgy singing the songs and saying how fun it was.’

Parent

‘My children really want us to come to the school liturgies — kids are obviously enjoying it as they want us to come along.’

Parent

Parents have indicated that teachers organise ‘fabulous’ prayer assemblies that the children have a great religious and spiritual sense, and that the ethos of the school underpins the behaviour and working relationships between staff and parents.

Whole school prayer is conducted each Monday morning with prayer assemblies being held each Friday and liturgies each term. Prayer assemblies are planned by the classroom teachers in conjunction with the APRE and encourage student leadership and involvement in the preparation.

Classroom prayer is conducted daily before meals and going home. Feedback has indicated that the reverence and involvement in these prayers could be enhanced through:

- further staff and student formation
- ongoing monitoring
- inclusion of the prayer table or prayer space as a feature of classroom prayer with it being updated according to feast days, special events and topics covered within the RE units.

Discussion was raised about enhancing the celebration of Assumption as the major feast day in the St Mary’s calendar. Timing of this celebration has been difficult due to Catholic Education Week and National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week liturgies.

Social action and justice

Parents have indicated that the school is making students aware of some of the local community issues, such as the impacts of the current drought. There is some understanding that the school does support charities and other causes. This is not always clear to the parents and students who were interviewed.

A number of staff and parents suggest that increased involvement of students in promoting a greater awareness of social justice issues and involvement with local community groups would further enhance students’ sense of community and aid in the re-contextualising of Catholic social teaching.

Improvement strategies

- Plan activities and strategies to re-visit the Catherine McAuley charism to embed this in the life of the school. Ensure students, staff and parents are familiar with this history and tradition.
- Investigate ways to represent this charism visually around the school.
- Develop a liturgical calendar within the RE LAPS and plan a scope of responsibilities for staff organisation and involvement early in the school year. Share the liturgical calendar with parents providing information on class involvement.
- Investigate forming a student social justice committee and continue to develop the student leadership group.
- Promote prayer tables as sacred spaces which are relevant and a focus of classroom prayer.
- Ensure reverence in prayer is maintained in daily class prayer through teacher professional development, clear expectations of daily prayer ritual and monitoring of these.



Domain 3 Continual renewal

Component 3.1 School improvement culture

Findings

‘My children feel happy and safe here. There is a clear awareness of who each student is, the child having their own identity in the school. It is both powerful and reassuring for a parent. Every staff member knows who my child is and how to get in contact with me. And my children know that.’

Parent

Collective teacher efficacy

The school leadership team has established a school annual improvement plan for 2019 which includes a number of improvement priorities including: implementing a school wide spelling approach; in-servicing staff on the traditions; building teachers’ and leaders’ data literacy skills through a RTI process; enhancing student writing performance and strengthening the school’s student support committee process. These priorities are accompanied by a set of smart goals and strategies. Generally, staff can articulate the improvement agenda and are able to explain their role in achieving the outcomes.

The development of a RTI data wall is currently led by the school leadership team. There is an intent to further build the capacity of teachers to own and drive the process to more precisely inform daily classroom practice.

It is envisaged that the collaborative planning process and the PLCs will further refine the notion of targets and links to future student goal setting. There is an unconditional commitment by all staff to improve the wellbeing and quality of learning for all students. Teachers know their students and foster a learning environment that supports all students.

The school has some articulated strategies for improving levels of student achievement, particularly in reading. A number of staff and parents identify the RIS as being beneficial for staff pedagogical development and improved student learning and achievement.

Teaching staff are also complimentary towards the external adviser contracted by the school to support teachers in the development of effective practices in the teaching of writing.

Elements of the current improvement agenda are relatively new. The leadership team is cognisant of the fact that progress will require monitoring and systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs in improving student learning and performance, and to maintain alignment with the Australian Curriculum.

School culture

St Mary's continues to build a culture where all teaching staff are committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching. School leadership has identified that further refinement to the PLC model is required. In particular the scoping out and planning of a clear PLC agenda would provide improved alignment and continuity to the school's improvement agenda. Teachers report that that the 'off week' planning cycle of PLCs is appreciated.

Clearly St Mary's is making improvements in learning and achievement for students, particularly in reading. This improvement provides an opportunity for the school to celebrate this individual and collective success.

Improvement strategies

- Further build teaching capacity to analyse data and ensure that this informs the teaching and learning process
- Communicate to parish, parents, families and students explicit and clear school-wide targets and timelines for school wide improvement
- Systematically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives in producing desired improvements in student learning and performance.
- Develop a clear and shared PLC focus and agenda
- Explore opportunities to celebrate and share teaching and learning success.

Component 3.2 Community partnerships

Findings

'The P&F are a great hands-on, competent group.'

Parent — non-P&F member

'Breakfast Club works so well here. The school is easy to work with, always takes up our offers of interaction as long as it doesn't interfere with learning time which is fine with us. Great to work with helping the Indigenous students.'

Social and Preventative Health Manager, CWAATSICH

Partners

The school's relationship with the Parents and Friends Association (P&F) is very positive and meetings are held monthly. The school is considering moving to the Parent Partnership Forum as a hybrid model that combines P&F and School Board responsibilities into one representative group.

All parents reported positive relationships with the school and are highly satisfied with their children's education. Many parents comment that the leadership team and staff respond in a timely manner should they have any concerns about their child. They report that they appreciate all communications they receive from the school in particular the newsletter, SMS, Facebook, emails and home-school communication apps. Parents suggest that further communication of various teaching and learning processes by used by the school would enhance the partnership between parents and the school.

The school has an excellent relationship with the Social and Preventative Health Manager, CWATSICH. CWATSICH undertakes the Breakfast Club at the school and also supports the school with the support of Indigenous students.

A number of community groups including yoga, exercise dance class and Taekwondo utilise the school hall.

Student learning

The school has an organised weekly '*Rumble and Tumble*' playgroup facilitated by the Religious Sister from the Parish. This group meets on a Thursday morning. Mini-Mary's, a pre prep transition group, operates on a Friday during term 4.

Many parents identify that the school is doing well in the teaching of reading and understand that the school is implementing the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Reading Improvement Strategy (RIS). Parents are not yet totally aware as to what teaching practices the RIS has brought to their child's classroom.

Procedures

School involvement with community service providers is identified by parents and staff as an area where the school could consider increasing involvement. Visits to the aged care facility is an example suggested where the school could focus on developing student service and justice education.

Improvement strategies

- Continue to monitor the efficacy of links with the community to ensure ongoing mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Consider developing a parent brochure that provides an overview of the Reading Improvement strategy.
- Explore opportunities for students to be involved in wider service opportunities within the Charleville community.
- Develop ongoing communication to the school community in relation to current teaching of key practices being implemented by the school.



Domain 4 Strategic resourcing and stewardship

Component 4.1 Staff development and wellbeing

Findings

'Staff morale is good, we are all supportive of one another. We all get along — make an effort.'

Staff member

School culture

The leadership team's report to the panel indicates that school staff are integral to the process of updating the school's Mission and Vision statements. It is intended to construct statements that are contemporary and memorable.

In 2019 a teacher has assumed the role of the Staff Wellbeing Champion for the school. Staff indicate that the inclusion of this informal role at the school has created opportunities for staff celebrations.

School officers are supporting learning in allocated year levels particularly for those requiring specialist support. Additional teaching time is made available to support early intervention based on school priorities such as an oral language intervention program. The leadership team and staff regularly review student performance data and adjust intervention approaches accordingly. School officers are well trained and valued by the teachers. A number of school officers believe it would be beneficial to have a regular, timetabled meeting of school officers with school leadership to allow for even more streamlined and informed provision of school officer services.

Teaching staff identify that the provision of a more coordinated opportunity to plan and co-plan units of work is a priority for them.

Many teachers identify the RE and Religious Life of the school professional learning provided at the commencement of the 2019 school year as being invaluable. Further follow up, in a coordinated way, with this type of formation development of staff is raised by teachers as important to maintain development in this area.

Caring for the individual

The school leadership team has identified the development of a comprehensive and contemporary induction program as a priority. The development of the induction program will be timely as there is an expected change-over of a number of teaching staff in 2020.

Attraction, selection and retention

The panel is aware that the teaching staff at St Mary's goes through a number of changes on a regular basis. Parents, although very supportive of the teachers, suggest that a less impactful turnover of teaching staff would benefit the school. Although many of the vagaries of staff retention in rural areas are out of the hands of the school, it is opportune to review the opportunities the school provides staff to grow their skills and interests thus encouraging staff to stay longer at the school.

Nurture and empowerment

Teachers overwhelmingly identify the opportunity to observe their peers in the classroom and to provide feedback to each other as the next step in developing as collaborative professionals.

Improvement strategies

- Continue the deliberate focus on staff wellbeing such as the informal appointment of a Staff Wellbeing Champion.
- Explore ways to strengthen the capacity of teachers in unit planning, including sourcing support from the Education Officers at TCSO for co-planning opportunities.
- Develop a coordinated program of professional learning for school staff.
- Continue to provide opportunities for school officers to further build their skills and knowledge as part of the teaching and learning team.
- Explore opportunities to conduct regular timetabled meetings with all school officers to provide a forum for information.
- Develop a comprehensive induction program.
- Consider what opportunities are available to strengthen staff capacity based on their interests and skills that may encourage staff to stay longer at the school.
- Develop and embed opportunities for coaching, mentoring, observations and feedback for all teachers led by school leaders.

Component 4.2 Use of resources facilities and the learning environment

Findings

'I don't believe our students want for anything — perhaps a bit of love for the infrastructure — lick of paint here and there and to keep an eye on our street appeal.'

Parent

Many of those interviewed acknowledge that Charleville town and district is currently experiencing a 'lull' or 'difficult times'. All local schools have experienced a loss of enrolments over the last few years. A loss of enrolment for St Mary's equates also to a loss of income to the school as school fee receipts are diminished. The school has a provisional enrolment of 22 Prep students for 2020 which is an excellent vote of confidence for the school's reputation in the community.

Resources

Classrooms are spacious, air-conditioned and well equipped with electronic smartboards. Each classroom is equipped with a Phonic Ear sound field system. The school's student support and intervention program is recognised by many interviewees as being of high quality and achieving good results.

The Prep classroom does not currently contain a large whiteboard for the teacher to model the full writing process to the class.

The school commits considerable funds to employ an external consultant to support staff development in the teaching of writing. Staff speak very favourably in relation to the effectiveness of this professional learning.

A number of parents interviewed identify that further incorporation and integration of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) into the everyday teaching and learning sequences could be a focus area for development.

Facilities

St Mary's is a well-presented school with a reasonable street appeal and is commended for its neatness and tidiness. Work has been undertaken to extend and tidy gardens at the front of the school and to develop and maintain the school oval.

A facilities master plan is being developed and the construction of new student and staff ablution blocks have been identified as a priority.

The 2018 RADII data indicates that parents at St Mary's are dissatisfied to a greater degree than the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Diocesan mean in their response to the question that grounds, facilities and buildings are well maintained.

A consistent theme heard by the review panel members from parents interviewed is the need for an Outside Hours School Care (OHSC) service at the primary schools in Charleville. Given the proximity of the State School to St Mary's, this may be an option for the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office to investigate.

Learning environment

Parents and staff interviewed indicate that there is a general satisfaction with the learning environment at St Mary's.

The inviting and dynamic nature of the school's library environment is consistently identified by those interviewed as a showpiece of the school's learning environment.

A number of parents, who use digital technologies for collaboration, training and professional learning in their personal and professional life, suggest that there may be greater opportunities for students to use online collaboration tools more to broaden their learning experiences.

Improvement strategies

- Provide opportunities for school staff to further develop their information technology capability to enrich curriculum design within the classroom.
- Investigate opportunities to collect school community suggestions, ideas and options to continue to develop the school's physical environment.
- Commence discussions with the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office to investigate the possibility of providing OHSC at St Mary's.
- Explore how online collaboration tools could be used to enhance curriculum offerings particularly for high potential learners.

Conclusion

The review panel congratulates St Mary's for the means in which the school community honoured the School Renewal and Improvement Process. We find much to be commended, and we wish St Mary's every success for the future.