

St. Mary's Primary School

Ascot Vale

Capacity Building

School Self-Reflection Report



Prepared: St Mary's School

May 2008

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St. Mary's strong Catholic culture permeates every aspect of our school life. It is articulated in our Vision Statement and lived out by all members of our school community.

We pride ourselves in having 'Jesus and the Gospel values' at the core of our vision. This enables us to set clear direction and develop a positive climate that fosters strong relationships amongst students, parents and staff. Parent and student survey responses are extremely positive endorsing the direction of the new Leadership Team and supporting the school's Vision. Since the last review there has been significant growth in all 5 Spheres of Schooling.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In the Sphere of Education in Faith, it is apparent that the teaching and living of the Catholic faith is central to our school's purpose. The effectiveness of how Religious Education is approached is shown by our strong commitment to prayer, sacraments and the liturgy. This has been achieved through prayer experiences, the understanding of sacraments and their links to parish life. Under the leadership of our Parish Priest Fr. Jim Clarke, our weekly school/parish mass is integral to the strong Parish/School link which is at the core of our school vision. Parents strongly agree (Insight SRC 82%) that their children have the opportunity to reflect on their faith, pray together, and celebrate liturgies and the sacraments.

The St Mary's community will build onto the strong Catholic Culture that has already been strongly established and continues to be fostered.

LEARNING & TEACHING

Over the last four years a major focus in Learning and Teaching has been to develop 21st Century learners. Central to this has been the development of Literacy, Numeracy and Inquiry-based practices that sets the two areas of 'learning to learn' and 'domain content' as being equally important. Our task has been to develop teacher understandings about the philosophies that underpin these areas through a whole school focus with the aim of coming to a broad agreement about successful pedagogy and practices. We have worked towards developing the learning and teaching strategies, as couched within our understandings, that enable teachers to differentiate the curriculum, in all Domains, to meet both the needs of our students as well as their interests.

In order to achieve this, we have made a strong commitment to providing ongoing, quality professional development, planning support across the domains and relevant resources (particularly in the area of information and communication technologies). The ongoing nature of this support has been crucial to the development and embedding of understandings about Numeracy, Literacy and Inquiry practices for both longstanding and incoming staff.

Our Insight SRC survey supports the consistency of our beliefs about Learning and Teaching as our results indicate that Learning is our school strength. To continue with our task in building teacher efficacy in this area we are committed to the professional support we have already demonstrated to be successful.

STUDENT WELLBEING

A strong commitment to the wellbeing of the whole school has led to a positive, inclusive and safe school environment which is in line with our strong Catholic values and beliefs. Our holistic approach and P-6 practices and programs such as Bounce Back have contributed to students, staff and parents all feeling that St. Mary's is a safe and happy place to live and work. Meeting the needs of each individual and the development of the whole child is a key to this success. We aim to develop the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional needs of the child where **'self esteem, respect and resilience are fostered.'**

Student behaviour at St. Mary's is exemplary where the values of respect and care for one another are demonstrated daily. We acknowledge and celebrate this success as evidenced in our data (Insight SRC Parent & student Survey top 25% of schools – Classroom Behaviour.)

In future school improvement, we will continue to review and update our current student welfare policies to ensure they continue to be effective and relevant to our school community.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

We have a strong community spirit at St. Mary's developed through our positive and proactive partnership with parents and the parish community. In Particular, this can be seen in our daily whole school morning prayer session where we come together to give thanks for the blessings in our lives and ask for help and forgiveness.

Family members are always welcomed at St. Mary's and encouraged to play an integral role in their children's education. We also ensure that Catholic education is accessible, affordable and in particular, inclusive of our families who may suffer from financial hardship.

We provide our students with regular opportunities to reach out to the wider community and help others in need by being involved in various fundraising activities and other community services.

In the future, we aim to maintain the vibrant, dynamic environment we have created together over the past years by continuing to provide opportunities for our parents to be a part of our community.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

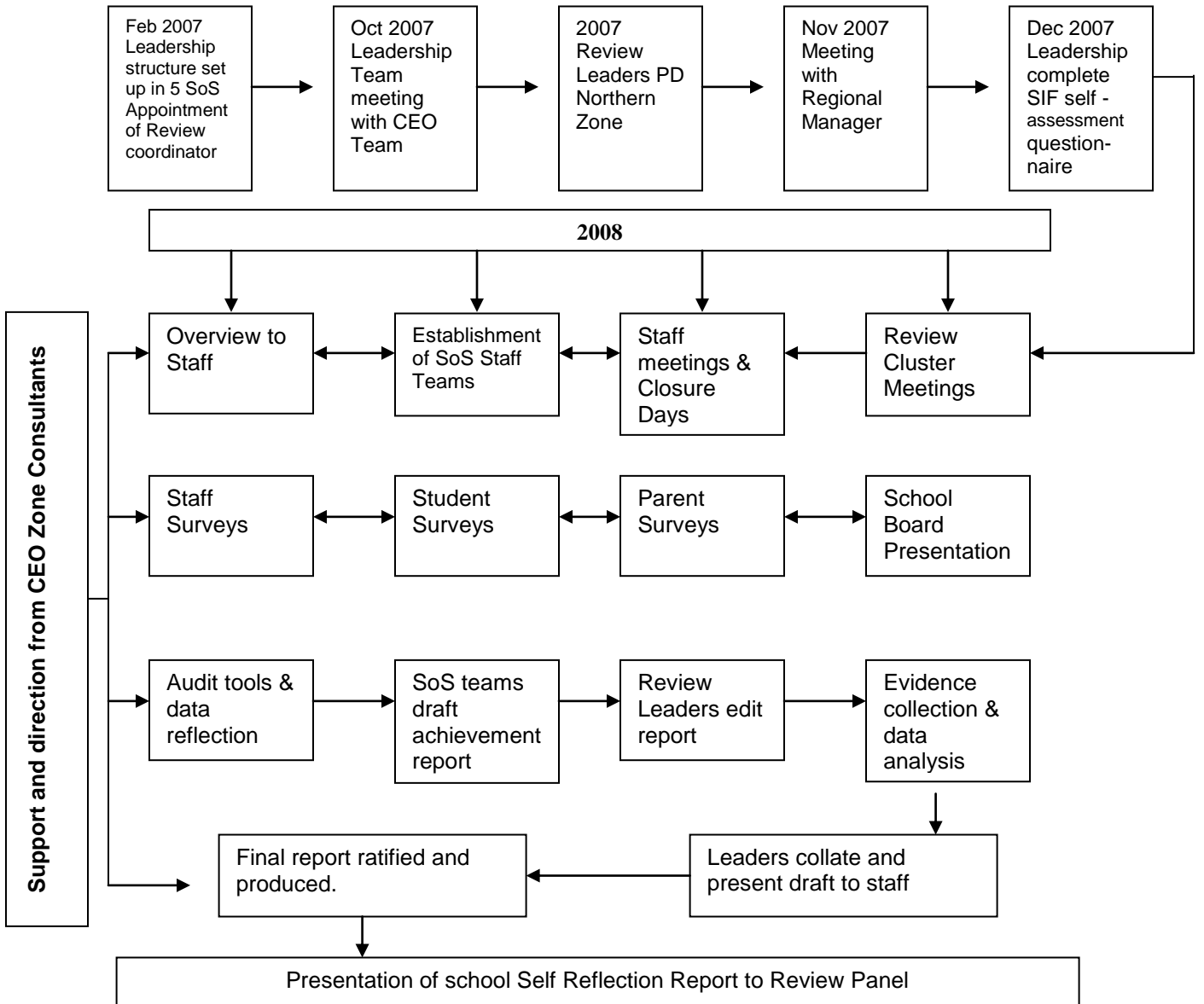
The new Leadership Team aims to successfully implement clear structures and practices in line with the School Vision Statement. A collaborative approach between students, staff and parents endeavours to promote shared decision making across all levels of the school. The congruence between our supportive leadership and role clarity indicates that the new leadership is providing the school with direction and purpose.

Our goal will be to continue to empower all in the school community to contribute to resolving issues, make decisions and therefore develop a sense of shared goals and values.

2. Methodology

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Creation of Vision and Mission statement using Spheres of Schooling structure



Spheres of Schooling Review Committees

Education in Faith	Learning & Teaching	Student Wellbeing	Leadership & Management	School Community
Julieanne Le Noury Marisa Varrese Faye Nardella Janina Zahra Shane Collins	Leanne Stramare Ann Anglin Simone Whitehead Anthony D'Amico Chris Creasey Lisa Smith	Sandra Lind Julie McIntyre Kate Crookshanks Raffaella Librandi Nicole Lindrea	Dan Mogg Judy Keenan Rita Murphy Kathy Blythe Sarah Mogridge	Dot Crowley Rina Zampogna Donna Santomartina Tanya Dickson Elise Fernon

3. School Context

St. Mary's school was opened by the Mercy Sisters in 1913. It is one of two Catholic primary schools in the parish of Ascot Vale with its sister school being St Margaret Mary's, Maribyrnong. Both schools have been led by the parish priest, Fr Jim Clarke since 2002.

St Mary's is close to many services and facilities. It is within walking distance of the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds, the Ascot Vale Public Library, two shopping centres, and sporting and recreation facilities such as Walter St. Reserve, Maribyrnong Park, Aberfeldie Park, Ascot Vale Leisure Centre, Queen's Park and Riverside Golf and Tennis Centre.

The majority of students complete their entire primary schooling at St Mary's with the current enrolment being 376. Since the last review; enrolments have increased by 17 students. Due to a projected increase in residential developments in the area, enrolments are expected to rise to a possible 450 students.

St Mary's has a culturally diverse population comprising sixteen nationalities with 38.2% of our students having a language background other than English. 90 % of our students are Catholic and 10 % non-Catholic. Of the Non-Catholic students, 62 % belong to other Christian faiths, 4 % belong to non-Christian faiths (Druze & Buddhism) and 27 % have no religious affiliation. The majority of students were born in Australia, with twenty-one students being born overseas, of these, sixteen are from non-English speaking backgrounds. In addition, seventy-six children who were born in Australia have parents from non-English speaking backgrounds. After English, the most commonly used language in our school is Vietnamese, followed by Italian, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and Greek. We have 11 integrated students, who have specific learning needs, chronic health issues or social-emotional needs. There are a number students requiring special support due to family issues such as divorce, separation and emotional problems such as anxiety.

The socio-economic background of our families is equally as diverse as the cultural background, ranging from double-income, professional backgrounds to those families who are dependent on government subsidies for housing and income. 19% of the families at St. Mary's, are eligible for the Education Maintenance Allowance.

The current principal is Mr. Daniel Mogg who has led the school since Term 3, 2006. Since that time there has been a complete change of the leadership team with the Deputy Principal, R.E.C and Curriculum Coordinator leaving the school. The Principal is supported by the Leadership Team comprising of the Deputy Principal, REC, P-2 Literacy Coordinator and Learning and Teaching Coordinator. This year, the school employs 14 full-time and 12 part-time teachers, 2 part-time secretary/school officers, 3 part-time integration/teacher aides, 1 full time secretary, 1 part-time maintenance officer and 2 part-time cleaners. The school has 14 grades comprising 2 classes for each grade level with four of these being job shares (0.8/0.2). Specialist areas taught are L.O.T.E., I.C.T., Performing Arts, and Health/ P.E. The teaching staff is predominantly female.

A strong sense of community permeates St Mary's School. As visitors enter through the front foyer, they are welcomed by a bright display of new staff and students as well as a portrait of our patron saint, Mary. The importance of community is also apparent in work of the Parish Education Board, the Parent's Auxiliary and the Father's Association.

4. REFLECTION ON PERFORMANCE

A. EDUCATION IN FAITH

i. What are we aiming to do in Education in Faith?

There is a very strong Catholic Culture at St Mary's that permeates throughout all areas. Over the last four years the major foci in developing Education in Faith have been to;

1. Embed and deepen understanding of the Catholic faith and teaching of Religious Education.
2. Provide the students and staff with a variety of authentic prayer experiences both formal, traditional and spontaneous.
3. Develop a meaningful understanding of the sacraments and their links to parish life.
4. Acknowledge the significance of Catholic icons and symbols.

ii. What have we achieved? How do we know? What evidence have we used?

Over the last four years we have been embedding and deepening the understanding of Catholic faith through the teaching of Religious Education.

Staff have been introduced to the RE Framework and have regular timetabled sessions with the REC to ensure a considered and consistent approach to the planning and teaching of RE in the classroom. Our staff Religious Education Audit Tool surveys indicate that teachers effectively use the Inquiry Process in TKWL (85%), and feel confident to assess (83%) and evaluate (90%) the effectiveness of the RE program. Furthermore, 75% of the staff feels they consistently use learning strategies that support the school's beliefs and understandings about Learning and Teaching.

The SIR data shows that 62% of teachers are accredited to teach RE and 65% accredited to teach in a Catholic school.

To compliment the teaching of Religious Education at St Mary's we have focused on the improvement of the Catholic culture of our school. This has been achieved through prayer experiences, the understanding of sacraments and their links to parish life, and the symbols and icons displayed throughout our school. Parents strongly agree (Insight SRC 82%) that their children have the opportunity to reflect on their faith, pray together, and celebrate liturgies and the sacraments.

Prayer continues to be a high priority at St. Mary's and one of our achievements in this area has been the development and introduction of a St Mary's School Prayer. This is prayed on a regular basis at our morning assemblies. In addition to this, regular opportunities are provided for staff, students, parents and the wider community to be involved in prayerful experiences (both formal and informal) at our school paraliturgies, weekly class masses and staff meetings.

The effectiveness of the prayer experiences at our school is evidenced by the student Religious Education Audit Tool survey which indicates that 100% of students rate the importance of prayer highly. The staff concur with 75% saying in the RE Audit Tool survey that staff prayer and liturgy is important to them.

The Sacraments are a cornerstone to our Catholic culture therefore student, staff and parent education is provided by the school in conjunction with the parish priest. This is highly valued and well attended. In addition to this, the REC has regular meetings with both the Parish Priest and REC from our sister school, St Margaret's, Maribyrnong, to plan and implement important protocols related to the Sacramental Programs. The REC in collaboration with staff members has also developed a Prep to Grade 6 Program within our school to link all of our exemplar units across the grade levels. Data indicates that there has been success in the areas of prayer and sacramental involvement - rated in the top 25% (Insight SRC) The Staff Survey indicates that there are helpful structures in place to support the planning of liturgies. Most of the students strongly agree that liturgy is important.

The importance of religious icons and symbols at St Mary's is highlighted both in our classrooms and around our school. This is evident where our Patron Saint Mary is displayed in our entrance foyer and on our community prayer table in our main corridor. Student work is displayed on our community prayer table and symbols and icons related to the liturgical season are always visible. This flows through to the classroom where colored cloth and ribbon on the classroom prayer table is regularly changed over to represent the liturgical seasons. The value of these symbols is supported by the RE audit tool where 97% of students and 100% of staff state that they agree that spiritual symbols are important.

iii. How is our Catholic Vision embedded in what we achieved?

As Catholic Educators, we aim to have Jesus at the centre of our Learning and Teaching across all areas of the curriculum and in our everyday interactions within school, parish and the community. Our school vision states that ***"Jesus and the gospel values are central to our life long journey in the Catholic faith."*** In Education of Faith at St. Mary's we implement whole school planning that reflects our beliefs and values. In addition to this we ***"nurture spiritual development"*** through school paraliturgies, morning prayer, school prayer and our sacramental programs. ***"We value and support strong links between our school and Parish community"*** through our regular family and weekly class masses. All of our achievements and our ongoing work in this sphere reflect the values we aspire to in our Vision Statement.

iv. What would we like to achieve in the future?

The St Mary's community will build onto the strong Catholic Culture that has already been strongly established and continues to be fostered.

We will strive to provide more effective planning with emphasis on targeted professional development for teachers. Professional development should be complimented by:

- The sharing of innovative ideas between staff
- Role-modeling and mentoring within the peer group
- Allocated Staff Meetings for external PD
- Building up relevant resources and the need to have a consistent purchasing plan to regularly update those resources

In addition to this we aspire to getting all classroom teachers accredited to teach RE in our school.

B. LEARNING AND TEACHING

i. What are we aiming to do in Learning and Teaching?

Over the last four years the major foci in Learning and Teaching have been to develop 21st Century learners with a focus on learning to learn. An emphasis has been placed on developing teaching and learning strategies that skill teachers in differentiating the curriculum to meet the needs of our students. Integral to this has been our commitment to developing a whole-of-school focus with the aim of coming to a broad agreement about successful pedagogy and practices. In order to achieve this, we have made a strong commitment to providing quality professional development, planning support across the domains and quality resources. More specifically, our goals have been to:

1. Improve student literacy outcomes.
2. Improve student numeracy outcomes.
3. Implement the Inquiry process from P-6.
4. Provide staff and students with ICT tools to enable their learning and to enrich the learning environment.

ii. What have we achieved? How do we know? What evidence have we used?

Building staff capacity in the area of Literacy, Numeracy, Inquiry and ICT to improve student outcomes has been a major focus over the last four years. There is a strong belief amongst the staff (Insight SRC 79%) that the school focuses on quality teaching and creates a learning environment that maximises outcomes for students. The development of common pedagogy and practices from P-6 has been targeted through team PD, PLT meetings, internal and external best practice classroom visits, workshops, team teaching, modelling of explicit teaching practices and mentoring.

This has proven to be successful with staff stating that they believe that they have opportunities to learn and develop in their roles (Insight SRC 78) and that there are many opportunities to work together collegially (SRC 80). Displayed in foyers and classrooms are the understandings, Throughlines and learning journeys which also make clear the common understandings that we have developed and seek to permeate throughout the school.

The classroom teachers have the support of curriculum coordinators for planning and programming using VELs, school policy documents and common planning templates. There is strong direction from the Learning & Teaching Coordinator (weekly – Inquiry, P-6), Literacy, 3-6), P-2 Literacy Coordinator (weekly), Maths Coordinator (fortnightly, P-6), and Kath Murdoch - (Inquiry 4 days a year, P-6). The effectiveness of this structure is evidenced in the Insight SRC data that places St Mary's in the top 25% of schools (Range Graph 80) in terms of the extent to which teachers feel there is effective communication in the planning of the curriculum. The Inquiry Audit tool confirms this with the overwhelming majority of teachers stating that they have a moderate to high understanding of how to plan, implement and evaluate engaging Inquiry units, which are student directed and incorporate both content and skills. The majority believe that they develop complex tasks that cater to a variety of students' needs with Senior and Middle teachers believing that they build in components that facilitate the negotiation of actions based on learning. Staff strongly believe that the Inquiry units and Throughlines are inclusive of the VELs.

The positive flow-on effect of this structure is evidenced in the Student Insight SRC data which states that students believe they are both assisted in their learning, and have a positive perception of their own ability (82). Students also assert that learning is interesting, enjoyable and inspiring (76), a concept that supports our commitment to provide authentic drivers in Inquiry such as the school production, healthy canteen menu and sustainability practices in the school.

Further to this, parent perception is that the students are enjoying and wanting to be a part of the learning at St Mary's (Insight SRC data 79). Parents see teachers as being enthusiastic and passionate about their work (Insight SRC 79).

St Mary's commitment to improving student outcomes is evident in the implementation of the CLaSS (P-2), SINE (P-6) models and the whole/part/whole structured Literacy block (P-6). Ongoing monitoring (including Pullout Booklets, anecdotal records and moderation) as well as assessment outlined in the agreed assessment schedule, highlights specific learning needs, informs future teaching and identifies students who require extra assistance. Programs to support these students include Reading Recovery, Year 1/2 Reading Intervention groups, PMP and Mathematics Extension/Intervention groups. The assessment procedures in this area are clear and are supported by the staffs' response to the area of ownership (Insight SRC 59%).

These strategies and practices have clearly impacted on Literacy achievements. AIM Report 7 indicates that students are generally achieving at or above state benchmarks in Reading, Writing and Spelling, with a significant lift in 2007 (with an exception of the Year 3 cohort of girls in Writing in 2006). AIM data also shows that whilst girls are showing growth across literacy and numeracy, they are generally being outperformed by the boys. Staff have observed this as a consistent pattern for a number of years. P-2 CLaSS data shows an upward trend of the number of students achieving CEO benchmarks in Prep and Year 1 and that by the end of Year 2, 92% -95% are at or above State benchmarks and like schools for text levels.

The general trend in Number and Mathematics, as indicated by AIM Report 7, suggests that our students have been underperforming. Our data indicates that from 2005, the Year 3 cohort has improved to be at or above the state benchmark and the Year 5 students have made a significant improvement in 2007.

The goal to provide staff and students with ICT tools and skills has been supported in two ways. Hardware has been provided in the form of an IT lab, the replacement of outdated classroom computers, the purchase of laptops for staff use and various other digital tools. Support in developing skills to use this hardware has been provided through the appointment of an ICT specialist teacher and ICT administrator, whole staff professional development, utilisation of myclasses pages for student learning and staff communication and the development of a Computer Use Policy for staff and students. The Integrated Inquiry Audit Tool reveals however that staff are only using ICT tools from a small to moderate extent.

iii. How is our Catholic Vision embedded in what we achieved?

St Mary's Vision Statement explicitly refers to our commitment to Teaching and Learning. Our vision to **"educate children to become lifelong learners"** who **"actively engage in a changing world"** is cultivated by laying strong foundations in Literacy, Numeracy and Inquiry. This is supported by resourcing in Information Communication Technologies.

Through our comprehensive assessment and monitoring schedule in Literacy and Numeracy, we strive to **"cater for individual needs"**. This identifies the academic needs of all students and provides explicit foci to drive teaching. We endeavour to develop **"innovative, consistent Teaching and Learning practices"** and provide a **"stimulating learning environment"** through our ongoing commitment to providing professional and collegial support.

iv. What would we like to achieve in the future?

The St Mary's plan for the future must continue to build on the strengths identified in the data to date. We would also recommend that we;

- Investigate ways in which to improve Numeracy outcomes.
- Maintain and improve present initiatives in Literacy.
- Explore gender education and learning styles (brain theory).
- Continue to provide opportunities for teachers and students to further develop ICT skills and ways in which to incorporate these as a more effective tool to enhance learning.
- Increase the school and teachers' capacity to use data to recognize and respond more effectively to student needs.
- To continue to build teachers' skills to enable them to expand the repertoire of teaching approaches that stimulate learning and motivate students.
- Collection of school-based data on a central data base.
- Explore strategies to increase student motivation.

C. STUDENT WELLBEING

i. What are we aiming to do in Student Wellbeing?

The wellbeing of all students is paramount within the Catholic Church's mission in education. The staff of St Mary's has been aiming to develop Student Wellbeing by:

1. Developing positive relationships throughout the whole school community.
2. Developing common understandings and beliefs about Student Wellbeing practices and procedures.
3. Catering for the individual needs of all students.
4. Developing student leadership.

ii What have we achieved? How do we know? What evidence have we used?

The staff of St Mary's has been aiming to develop Student Wellbeing in a variety of ways and this is reflected in the high quality of relationships at our school. This is demonstrated in the student Insight SRC survey that shows students feel socially connected to their peers (83%).

Our strong school relationship culture extends across students, parents and teachers and contributes to the positive emotional tone in the workplace (Insight SRC teachers 61%, students 60% and parents 74% - Approachability). A further contributor to high student connectedness to school (Insight SRC 68%) is the establishment of St Mary's Student Leadership Program which provides an opportunity for students to participate in school decision making. This view is supported by the teachers who believe that students can express their views and opinions and participate in school policy and decision making. (Insight SRC 67%).

At St Mary's we provide a safe and happy environment for all students. There is a strong belief amongst our students and parents that students are safe from bullying harassment (SRC data 75%, 97% respectively) which, in turn, reduces student distress (SRC 73%). The results from DEEM 2007 data confirm this idea with staff believing that there is an effective focus on student welfare in the school (62%)

To ensure the physical safety of our students and protection from harassment, St Mary's has an agreed behaviour management policy with a common approach to discipline. This falls within the framework of agreed school rules and student negotiated classroom rules. Staff are confident in the effectiveness of this policy (Insight SRC 73%) and this is further supported by the low levels of student misbehaviour (Insight SRC 78%) and classroom misbehaviour (Insight SRC 66%). This is strongly supported by student and parent responses (Insight SRC 75% and 95%).

At St Mary's we also believe in nurturing the social and emotional needs of our students. The introduction of the Bounce Back program is one way in which we facilitate the development of positive relationships by explicitly teaching social skills and values. The implementation of the Prep/Yr 6 buddies also supports the children's feelings of well being throughout the school. Parents support this view (Insight SRC 75 %) and believe that children are developing effective social skills. Data from the DEEM survey confirms this

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view with 55% of students feeling that they have learned about relationship issues. Social efficacy is further encouraged through our Inquiry approach to learning, where we promote life skills via programs such as Life Education van, Fire Education and Kidz Bodz.

Use of restorative practices such as Circle Time and appropriate consequences further enhance positive student behaviour. The clear documentation of these processes via Behaviour Reflection Sheets, Playground Incident Reports and First aid communication records enable effective communication between teachers, students and parents. Data from the 2007 DEEM survey indicates that 61% of students believe that teachers listen and understand student needs.

St Mary's holistic approach to Student Wellbeing includes a commitment to serving students with special needs and is overseen by an appointed Student Well being Coordinator. In place is a clearly documented Student Welfare referral process, fortnightly Student Welfare meetings, Program Support Group meetings, Individual Learning Plans, a common approach to record keeping for integration/ at risk/ highly able students and transition procedures from year to year. Students identified with special needs are supported by; intervention and extension programs, coordinators, teacher aides and parent helpers. When necessary specialised outside agencies and services are consulted.

St Mary's also has processes in place for dealing with medical emergencies such as asthma and anaphylaxis and we are an accredited Sun Smart school. We also have a School Officer who is a fully trained St John's Ambulance volunteer to attend to ill or injured children at recess and lunch times.

Above all, at St Mary's, we pride ourselves in the fact that Well Being is a shared commitment and responsibility.

iii. How is our Catholic Vision embedded in what we achieved?

St Mary's has a long history of integrating our Vision and Mission statements with both our Education in Faith and Wellbeing. We see these two areas as being inseparable in living the Word. This is reflected in our strong parish and school community links, which is consistent with both the church's mission in education and our vision statement which states "***We are a welcoming, inclusive and supportive community that values genuine relationships.***" and that in our holistic approach to Student wellbeing "***Each child has the right to feel safe, valued as a creative individual in an environment where self-esteem, respect and resilience are fostered.***" We provide the structures, practices and support "***which cater for individual needs***" to foster the development of "***life long learners.***"

iv. What would we like to achieve in the future?

At St Mary's we highly value positive relationships that foster a feeling of well being throughout the whole school community. Hence we will aim to:

- Continue with the whole school approach to student engagement, learning, social skills and behaviour management.

- Review and update current student welfare/ wellbeing, behaviour policies and guidelines.
- Provide students with the opportunity to have input into the school routines and structures through class meetings and student leadership.
- Continue to survey students via DEEM survey to identify improvements and challenges.

D. LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

i. What are we aiming to do in Leadership and Management?

The foci in developing Leadership and Management have been:

1. To develop supportive leadership structures and processes for staff, students and parents, including organizational procedures.
2. To plan, provide and maintain appropriate processes and procedures for resource management.
3. To provide staff with opportunities to participate in professional development.

ii What have we achieved? How do we know? What evidence have we used?

One of our goals in this area has been, “To develop supportive Leadership structures and processes for staff, students and parents, including organizational procedures”.

It is important to note at this point that over the past two years, we have had a complete turnover of our Leadership team and the commencement of 10 new teaching staff. Therefore, as a staff, we felt it crucial to revisit our Vision Statement. Together, we developed a new vision, encompassing the five Spheres of Schooling with a member of the core Leadership Team coordinating one of each of these spheres.

Our Leadership Framework also includes Level Coordinators, a Specialist teachers’ Coordinator and a Numeracy Coordinator. At a student level, our Student Representative Council includes representatives from every grade. The parents are involved in leadership at St Mary’s through the Parent’s Auxiliary and Father’s Association which have elected leaders. We also have a trained Occupational Health and Safety Officer.

There are structures in place to ensure that all of these teams meet with one or two members from the Core Leadership Team on a regular basis. The Principal and Deputy also meet twice a term with the Administration Officers and Teacher/ Integration Aides. Feedback, direction and awareness of career opportunities are facilitated through the Annual Review Meetings process. This is evidenced in the Insight SRC data (71% - ranked close to the top 25% of schools) where staff believe there are formal and informal processes for staff to receive feedback and a strong belief that staff have an opportunity to advance their careers (Insight SRC 87%). Leadership team members also meet with staff, students and parents formally (Parent/Teacher interviews) and incidentally and as the need arises.

All of these structures ensure that there are opportunities for staff, students and parents to contribute to the whole school climate. The Insight SRC data also indicates that Leadership is supportive and there is clarity of roles. These points were ranked in the top part of the middle 50% of schools. Whilst there is a relatively high school morale amongst staff (Insight SRC 61%) and general job satisfaction (Insight SRC 58%) staff feel there are excessive work demands (Insight SRC 34%). Information from the Parent Insight SRC Survey indicates that parents are generally satisfied with the processes in place.

Organizational procedures exist to support the entire school community. These include emergency evacuation procedures, safety procedures such as early/late passes, visitors' book, identification labels, lock-up procedures during the school day and 'Working with Children' checks.

Another of our goals has been to plan, provide and maintain appropriate processes and procedures for resource management. The physical surrounds have improved due to the refurbishment of the junior playground, the installation of a shaded area and Peace Garden in the Senior Yard. The erection of a shed to house the sports equipment made room for a Parent's Auxiliary storeroom. Minor renovations have taken place to relocate the sick bay and set up an office for the Deputy Principal. Every classroom now has adequate heating and cooling systems and all classrooms in the main building have been re-carpeted. The appointment of a part-time Maintenance Officer to deal with repairs and general maintenance, and parent/teacher working bees once a term help to maintain the school and surrounds in a satisfactory order. Coupled with this, two cleaners work on a daily basis to perform ongoing cleaning duties. A centrally located tuckshop with an appointed manager provide a service consisting of healthy foods twice weekly. An architect has been appointed to oversee the development and implementation of a Masterplan for school and Parish resources in the future.

A structure is in place to manage finances. Each coordinator, classroom teacher and other sector has been allocated a budget to manage. In addition to this a large amount of money has been put into ICT, Mathematics and Literacy.

Providing staff with opportunities to participate in professional development has been another goal for the leadership and management of our school. The commitment to professional development spans the whole staff. An expectation of regular team planning and Professional Learning Team meetings provide in-school professional development. Staff are also encouraged and supported to attend other professional development on a on-going basis, eg Reading Recovery, CLaSS Sustaining Phase PD, P-4 Foundation Years PD, Developing Leadership Teams and Network Cluster Meetings specific to key areas and administration. An on-going process is in place to provide teachers with the opportunity to attend PD of personal interest, in line with the School Improvement Framework. All staff were invited to complete a Level 2 First Aide course in 2006, subsidised by school funds. Other PD has been attended by a number of Staff, predominantly in the area of Literacy, ie Writing and Spelling Workshops, facilitated by David Hornsby and Deborah Sukarna.

Professional Growth is ranked near the centre of the middle 50% of schools range, in our recent Insight SRC data however, the data also indicates that there is a significant imbalance between appraisal and recognition (Insight SRC 71%) and professional growth (Insight SRC 50%).

iii. How is our Catholic Vision embedded in what we achieved?

St. Mary's Vision states that our leadership teams, '**value, support and empower all members of the community.**' This is evidenced in the leadership and management practices set up within the school. Staff are represented through various levels of management. Students are represented through the Student Representative Council. Parents are represented through the Parish Advisory Board and the Parents Auxiliary.

The Principal or Deputy Principal attend all of these representative groups' meetings to demonstrate how we genuinely value and support their contribution and seek to work in collaboration so as to **“empower”** all assist in making decisions affecting the education of our children.

iv. What would we like to achieve in the future?

Over the next four years, we aim to maintain and improve upon the structures and processes already in place. Through collaborative leadership and management practices we aim to:

- Address the way in which we manage professional development in line with the School Improvement Plan and targeting staff needs.
- Explore ways in which to address the feeling of excessive work demands whilst maintaining high student outcomes.
- Explore ways to improve empowerment among the staff whilst retaining a strong feeling of teamwork and ownership.
- Develop a staff mentoring program to ensure that support is provided for staff.
- Address parent concern regarding reports and our reporting processes.
- Continue working on preparations for the proposed masterplan.
- Continue raising funds through grants and fundraising.
- Maintain and update resources.

E. SCHOOL COMMUNITY

i. What are we aiming to do in School Community?

Over the past few years, our major goal has been to activate our school vision statement in our everyday functioning to develop school community:

1. To continue to develop strong relationships with the community to further home/school/parish partnerships.
2. To make our students aware of the importance of community building and the value of extending out to the wider community so as to instill in our students an understanding of social justice.

ii What have we achieved? How do we know? What evidence have we used?

One of our goals for School community is ***“to continue to develop strong relationships with the community to further home/school/ parish partnerships”***

The Insight SRC Range Graph reveals that the school is receptive of and understands the views and concerns of the parents (Insight SRC 80). This result is sitting on the cusp of the top 25% and middle 50%. The extent to which parents have an opportunity and/or are encouraged to make a contribution to school planning is ranked above the middle 50% of schools (Insight SRC Range Graph 72). This is also evidenced in our achievements as parents have been given the opportunity to complete surveys regarding swimming programs and school grade structure.

We encourage a strongly supportive parent volunteer group who work in many areas of the school such as, parent helpers in the classroom, uniform shop, canteen helpers etc. We make this very accessible by providing them with assistance to gain their 'Working with Children' check. We also provide flexibility for parents, negotiating with them to select days to work in the classrooms that suit all.

The Parents Auxiliary and Father's Association have organized events to build community morale as well as raise funds for the school. These funds have been used to improve the physical surrounds and the condition of the classrooms. They have also provided resources to assist students in their learning journey.

Parish partnerships are fostered through celebrations such as family masses, sacraments and The Elderly Citizens' Luncheon. We also have a parent representative on the Parish Education Board which further supports this partnership. The Parish community use school resources such as the Legion of Mary who use the staffroom on a regular basis. The Parish and the school community are involved in special campaigns such as collection of food and other goods for those less fortunate.

The second goal is ***to make our students aware of the importance of community building and the value of extending out to the wider community so as to instill in our students an understanding of social justice.*** Our success in this area is evidenced in the SRC Insight student survey that states that students believe that their behaviour is consistent with faith-based values (79). We provide our students with regular opportunities to reach out to the wider community. Recently a number of our students attended a social justice forum where they learnt about the plight of the street children in the Philippines.

These students are now actively involved in raising funds to improve the life of these children. Also all the students have been involved in various fundraising activities which have given them the opportunity to extend out to the wider community and help others in need, eg. mission drives and raising money for charities and campaigns such as 'Shave for a Cure.' Visits to local nursing homes are another way we reach out to the wider community where students are given the opportunity to sing and talk to the elderly.

iii. How is our Catholic Vision embedded in what we achieved?

Our Catholic School Vision states that, '**We value and support strong links between students, staff, families and the Parish Community.**' Many of the achievements we have made reflect this belief. We also state that '**We are a welcoming inclusive and supportive community.**' Much of our work in building school community strongly reflects these values. Over the past years we have developed strong relationships with students, parents, St Mary's Parish and the wider community. Our work in this area has fostered the principles of inclusiveness, acceptance, support, social justice, cooperation, celebration, friendship, global awareness and respect. Each of our achievements directly relates to the values and beliefs which we espouse in our Vision statement.

Each morning the school community prays together. We thank God together for the wonderful joy in our lives and we ask for help and forgiveness. This practice nurtures spiritual development which we believe is important in our School Vision. There are many "REAL" examples of '**Inclusiveness**' in our school where diversity is considered a unique and valued part of the St. Mary's Community.

iv. What would we like to achieve in the future?

We want St. Mary's to keep improving. We want to maintain the vibrant, dynamic environment we have created together over the past years. As we continue to develop School Community, we will aim to have "Gospel Values" at the centre of our every endeavour. Thus, we will aim to continue to develop in School Community by:

- Keeping our entrance foyer bright and welcoming.
- Supporting the Parent's Auxiliary and the Father's Association.
- Reaching out to the Parish community through special events and communication through the Parish Newsletter.
- Supporting parents with acquiring 'Working with Children certificates so that they can continue to be involved through classroom help and other school activities.
- Providing the students with the opportunity to attend special functions, eg Social Justice forums and St Patrick's Day Mass.
- Supporting those in need, both within the school, parish and wider community.
- Working co-operatively with neighbouring schools and pre-schools.
- Continuing to provide as many opportunities as practicable for our community to celebrate together.
- Continuing to provide parent education.
- Accepting and celebrating cultural diversity.
- Fostering inclusiveness.
- Evaluating our performance and striving to improve in our efforts.

5. SIGNATURES

Signed by the principal

Name: Daniel Mogg

Date://