



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ASCOT VALE

School Self-Reflection Report

2012

Prepared by:



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1. Executive Summary

Education in the 21st Century continues to evolve, in response to the ever changing society which we belong to. It is in this context that the school community of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Ascot Vale, identifies itself as an innovative, creative and dynamic place of contemporary learning where all are constantly challenged.

Focussing on the concept of being a Catholic, learning community, St Mary's Primary School has developed educational programmes that; -

- Promote an individual child's physical, academic, emotional, spiritual and intellectual development, ensuring the development of self confidence, self acceptance and self esteem.
- Reflect the Gospel values of tolerance, justice and acceptance of others; - these values being the essence of a Catholic Community identity.
- Engage learners with the implementation of a variety of learning strategies, allowing all to experience and enjoy success.
- Emphasise the importance of Numeracy and Literacy skills.
- Recognise the diversity of today's learning, with an integrated approach to planning curriculum, acknowledging through inquiry the interdependence of knowledge, skills, and understandings.
- Effectively use ICT to enhance the learning environment.
- Communicate a learning partnership between child, family and school.
- Respect an individual's response to learning with processes established for intervention and extension.

With learning being a shared responsibility of all in the community, we are very much an ever improving school.

Major Goals.

Recently the school community reflected on what are the strengths and challenges for St Mary's. Strengths centred on the present high morale within the school and the enthusiasm towards learning. The challenges were; -

Student Challenges Students need to be more empowered in their learning, to set goals and have a purpose for learning. This will encourage them to take risks and be responsible for their own learning.

Teacher Challenge To have a constant awareness of the differentiating curriculum, in the context of the totality of learning from Prep – Six. As well, the continuing respect of individual difference with talents acknowledged needs to be addressed. In refining and streamlining curriculum planning, teachers must further their skills as to how to challenge

children, work collaboratively, trust each other, appreciate expertise and engage themselves and the children in learning.

Leadership Challenge To continue to maintain open communication.

From discussions about our ideal school our major goals for St Mary's are; -

- Ensuring Gospel Values are explicit and active.
- Developing strategies to ensure the concept of Contemporary Learning is effectively implemented.
- Continuing to develop clear communication links between parents and school.
- Implementing structures for strong professional dialogue.
- Continuing the promotion of student/staff and community wellbeing.

Overall, with the consistent developments and the focus on improvement at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, there is no doubt that an exciting and challenging time for our school will continue.

However, with the implementation of various changes in education to reflect societal change, especially the Implementation of the Australian National Curriculum, it is recognised that ongoing awareness and support for all in the school community is necessary.

Our community continues to be committed to these two broad aims.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a Catholic School.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School there is a focus on Effective Learning.

Therefore *"We reach for the Stars."*

2. Methodology

The process used to prepare the Self-Reflection Report was one of consultation and collaborative learning.

The Leadership Team filled in the *Self-Assessment Questionnaire* and the Principal and Deputy Principal met with the Regional CEOM Manager, the Principal Consultant and CEO personnel in order to identify and evaluate the progress made since the last review.

In the year prior to the Review: -

- The Principal gave input at staff meetings on how the new School Improvement Process would be structured.
- To broaden school community involvement in the process, the following surveys were completed for Baseline Data. –
 - Student Attitudes to School Survey
 - Education in Faith - Student Survey
 - Education in Faith - Teacher Survey
 - Parent Opinion Survey
 - Staff Climate Survey
- Meetings with the allocated School Review Principal's Consultant (PC) devised a timeline for the implementation of the Review process.
- Staff meetings were conducted around each sphere, with staff visiting the elements to be considered in each sphere. Evidence of success was identified and celebrated in each sphere, as well as the challenges being noted.
- Other school based Audit tools that could be or had already been implemented to determine needs were identified.
- Workshops on interpreting NAPLAN data were facilitated by the Principal Consultant CEO personnel and conducted at Staff Meetings and a Closure Day.

In the year of the Review; -

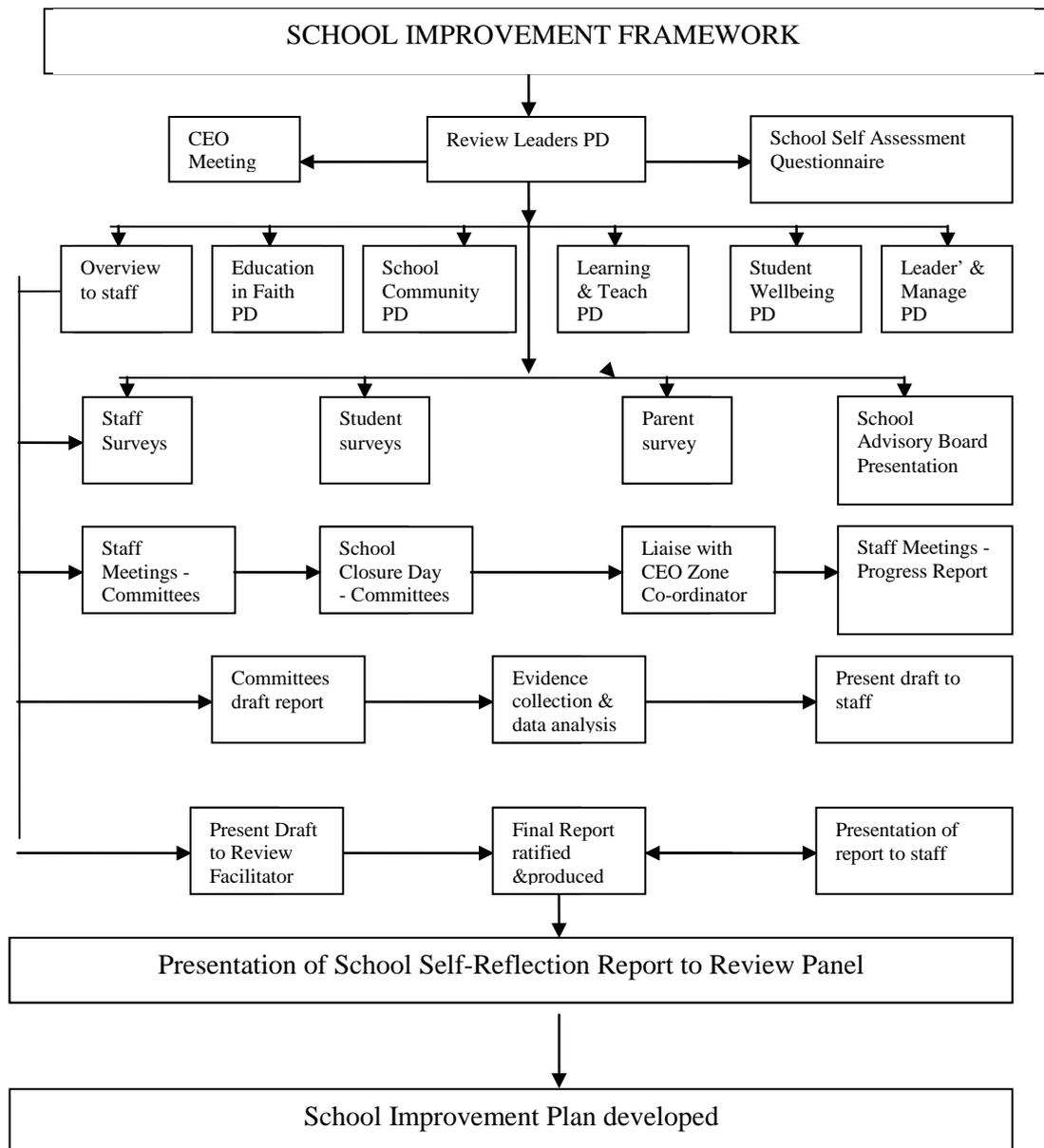
- Staff meetings and one closure day were conducted and led by the Principal and CEO personnel. Included in this process were the requirements of the VRQA Audit.
- The whole staff workshopped the School Improvement Planning Kit (from *Insight SRC*) led by the allocated CEO review Principal Consultant.
- The PC assisted in this process presenting the Insight SRC data to staff over 2 workshop sessions. From an analysis of the data, it was identified what

the school needs to do to continue to improve, in order to build an ideal school.

A whole day was devoted to prioritising, establishing and determining our future action in light of our Vision Statement.

- Members of the Leadership Team and the Review Coordinator met with CEO staff – Anne Killeen (PC), Denise Arnel (RE) and Jenny Rubira (Learning & Teaching) - at various times for support and advice during the process.

Rich dialogue resulted, with a strength of the whole Review Process being the fact that all staff were very actively engaged and eager to contribute, regardless of their position on staff.



Staff School Review Committees

EDUCATION IN FAITH	LEARNING AND TEACHING	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	STUDENT WELL BEING	SCHOOL COMMUNITY
Michael, Teresa, Vanessa, Judy, Sharon, Lisa	Caith, Annie, Chris, Nicola, Faye, Marie, Rita	Anthony, James, Kathryn, Andrew, Nola, Alex	Sandra, Sharyn, Heather, Ann, Melissa, Lauren, Tim.	Dot, Raff, Donna, Rina, Connie, Marisa, Laura

3. School Context

St. Mary's school was opened by the Mercy Sisters in 1913 and next year celebrates one hundred years of meeting the educational needs of the children from the Parish of St Mary's, Ascot Vale.

Our school is one of two Catholic primary schools in the Parish of Ascot Vale, with its sister school being St. Margaret's, Maribyrnong. Both schools are led by the Parish Priest, Fr. Justin Ford.

The majority of students complete their entire primary schooling at St. Mary's with the 2012 enrolment being 356. Demand for placement at St Mary's is high, thus to maintain class sizes at 25/26 children and with limited classroom space, a ceiling is required on enrolments.

St Mary's has a culturally diverse population comprising sixteen nationalities with 20.5% of our students having a language background other than English. 92% of our students are Catholic and 9% non-Catholic. Of the non-Catholic students 62% belong to other Christian faiths, 4% belong to non-Christian faiths (Druze and 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 15 integrated students, who have specific learning needs, chronic health issues or social-emotional needs.

There are a number of students requiring special support due to family issues including divorce, immigration, welfare and separation. From these circumstances emotional problems such as anxiety can arise.

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. 17% of the families at St. Mary's are eligible for the Education Maintenance Allowance.

The current principal is Graham Spence. The Principal is supported by the Leadership Team comprising of the Deputy Principal/Student Wellbeing, REL (Religious Education Leader), P-3 Literacy Coordinator, a Director of Resources, Numeracy Co-ordinator and Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator. This year, the school employs 15 full-time and 12 part-time teachers, 1 fulltime secretary, 2 part-time secretary/school officers, 4 part-time integration/teacher aides, and 2 part-time Canteen Managers. The school has 14 grades comprising 2 classes in each grade level with six of these being job shares. Specialist areas taught are L.O.T.E., I.C.T., Library, Performing Arts and Health/P.E.

A strong sense of community permeates St Mary's School. The importance of community is also apparent in work of the Parish Advisory Board, the Parents' and Friends' Association, Fathers' Association and the School Community Support Groups.

ENROLMENTS OF ST MARY'S SCHOOL								
	Year							
Year Level	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Prep	51	61	51	54	58	40	51	52
Year 1	68	57	58	50	52	60	42	51
Year 2	55	64	58	53	50	46	53	43
Year 3	52	52	58	56	56	52	54	54
Year 4	52	55	52	58	52	54	50	53
Year 5	55	51	55	46	58	51	53	53
Year 6	48	50	49	55	48	57	50	51
Total enrolments	381	390	381	372	374	360	353	357

School Profile

Year Levels:	P-6	Curriculum Type: Primary
Current Enrolments:	356	LBOTE: 30.9% Full Fee Paying Overseas Students: 0%
Teaching Staff:	Total: 27	FTE: 20.6
Non-Teaching Staff:	Total: 3	FTE: 2.2
Diocese:	Archdiocese of Melbourne	
Zone:	North Western	
Parish:	St Mary's, Ascot Vale	
State Electorate:	Essendon/Melbourne	
Federal Electorate:	Melbourne	
Like Schools (Finance) Group:	8	
Like Schools (ORC) Group:		
SES:	109	
Board Name:	St. Mary's Parish Education Advisory Board	
Board Type:	Parish Education Board (Parish & School)	
Board Chairperson:		
No Board Members:	9	

4. Reflection on Performance

A. Education in Faith

i. What did we aim to do in the Education in Faith sphere?

Goal: To further strengthen the Catholic culture of the school community.
To enhance teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Intended Outcomes	Targets
That Education in Faith continues to be a priority for all members of the school community.	Higher scores in the Importance variable of the Education in Faith survey (staff, students and parents) The mean response to the Importance variable in the staff, student and parent surveys will be 4.5.
That all staff are given opportunities to develop their spirituality.	80% of staff will attain appropriate Accreditation.
That students live out gospel values That students will be more engaged in the R.E. programme.	90% of students will respond positively to the R.E. audit tool items relating to the Religious Education programme.
That teachers will be more confident in the implementation, assessment and reporting of Religious Education, reflecting contemporary approaches to teaching and learning.	90% of teachers respond positively to the R.E. audit tool Learning and Teaching Variables (Planning and Pedagogy).

ii. To what extent did we achieve our goals, intended outcomes and targets? What evidence do we have available to support this?

Goal: To further strengthen the Catholic culture of the school community.
To enhance teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Intended Outcome 1:

That Education in Faith continues to be a priority for all members of the school community.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Importance – Parents 82	The mean response in the staff, student and parent surveys will be 4.5.	81	86	84
Importance – Staff 77		78	74	85
Importance – Students 78		75	57	81

Overall, all three cohorts have exceeded the scores achieved in 2008. It should be noted that whilst there was a decline for both staff and students between 2009 and 2010, there has been significant growth in 2011.

Intended Outcome 2:***That all staff are given opportunities to develop their spirituality.***

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Accreditation	80% of staff will attain appropriate Accreditation.			67.9%

In the beginning of 2011, 67.9% of teachers were accredited to teach R.E. By the end of 2012 there will be an increase in this figure as one more teacher will have completed their RE accreditation.

Intended Outcome 3:***That students live out gospel values.******That students will be more engaged in the R.E. programme.***

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Religious Education programme	90% of students will respond positively to the R.E. audit tool.	N/A	N/A	3.8 (average)
Student Behaviour – Staff		N/A	62	70
Student Behaviour – Students		N/A	59	77
Student Behaviour Parents		N/A	62	64

The audit tool completed by students from Grades 4-6 in Term 1 of 2012 returned an average of 3.8. Although this does not indicate a high positive return, there are elements of the audit tool such as *Religious Education challenges me in my thinking* and *I give and receive feedback on my learning in R.E.* that need to be addressed.

The Catholic Culture data indicates that there has been strong growth in the area of student behaviour across all cohorts suggesting that students are living out the Gospel values.

Intended Outcome 4:***That teachers will be more confident in the implementation, assessment and reporting of Religious Education, reflecting contemporary approaches to teaching and learning.***

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Learning and Teaching Variables (Planning and Pedagogy).	90% of teachers respond positively to the R.E. audit tool	N/A	N/A	3.9

The Religious Education Pedagogy audit tool indicates that staff are relatively confident in their understanding of the pedagogy used in Religious Education.

iii. Why were we successful/not successful in our achievements as stated in the SIP for this sphere?

**Goal: To further strengthen the Catholic culture of the school community.
To enhance teaching and learning in Religious Education.**

Intended Outcome 1:

That Education in Faith continues to be a priority for all members of the school community.

The school has experienced success in its goal of assisting members of the community to deepen their understanding and knowledge of the Catholic faith. We acknowledge the strong and supportive presence of the Parish Priest in the school and of the collaborative efforts of the Principal and staff who have worked with him in this area.

Since the last review there has been a greater emphasis on enhancing the Catholic Culture of this school community. Numerous practices have been in place to support this. These have continued to be formalised and improved over time. Improvements include greater engagement of parents in sacramental programmes, more effective communication with parents through the newsletter, the broadening of religious icons and displays throughout the school and students taking an active role in leading the prayer at assemblies. The rich prayer life of this community is evident in all aspects of this school.

We believe that all the factors above have contributed to the achievement of this outcome.

Intended Outcome 2:

That all staff are given opportunities to develop their spirituality.

Whilst the target set was not achieved, we believe that this did not necessarily reflect an accurate measurement for the outcome. There have been many opportunities for staff to develop their spirituality and these include an annual off campus staff spirituality day and dedicated staff meetings each term. Teachers are encouraged to attend professional learning offered externally. Staff pray weekly at staff meetings and the responsibility for leading this is rostered. A weekly parish Mass is attended by most staff, all students and some members of the parent community. The Catholic Culture data indicates that staff, students and parents acknowledge the opportunities provided to develop their spirituality with all scores being in the top 25%.

Intended Outcome 3:

That students live out Gospel values.

The Religious Education programme from Year Prep to 6 is based on the Archdiocesan framework, To Know, Worship and Love. This programme has assisted staff and students to reflect on scripture and it is evident from the data that the students are living out the Gospel values in the way they interact with each other. Students' understanding and reflection on the Gospel values has been heightened by the profile given to Social Justice and positive action taken, often instigated by the students themselves such as Mary's Little Helpers. We believe this is further supported by programmes such as Bounce Back, strategies such as Circle Time and the whole school philosophy of Restorative Practices.

That students will be more engaged in the R.E. programme.

Since the last review, new resources have been purchased to support the R.E. programme and professional learning opportunities have been provided for the junior teachers on Godly Play and the Good Shepherd process. Contemporary tools are used throughout the school to enhance the students' experiences.

Religious Education has been embedded throughout the curriculum allowing students to engage and respond in a more personalised way.

Intended Outcome 4:

That teachers will be more confident in the implementation, assessment and reporting of Religious Education, reflecting contemporary approaches to teaching and learning.

The data suggests that teachers are generally confident in pedagogical knowledge for the teaching of Religious Education. Further development will be provided to enhance teacher capacity to implement a more contemporary approach to the teaching and assessment of religious education.

Timetabled staff meetings and planning have contributed to building teachers' capacity to expand the repertoire of teaching approaches and this will continue to be important in the future.

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

The Education in Faith sphere defines who we are as a Catholic school and underpins all that we do. It provides a focus for the whole school community on its spiritual journey.

This is reflected in our school Vision statement which states, *"At St Mary's, we believe that Jesus and the gospel values are central to our life-long journey in the Catholic faith."* It is further articulated that *"We value and support strong links between students, staff, families and the parish community by nurturing spiritual development."*

Our Vision statement also declares that we are a *"welcoming, inclusive and supportive community that values genuine relationships."*

St Mary's is a prayerful community where individuals and groups celebrate their faith.

Visual representation of our faith is evident in our Catholic icons, prayer spaces and displays. St Mary's has strong links with the Parish Community through classroom visits by the Parish Priest, our weekly and Sunday Masses, sacramental programs, paraliturgies and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Our gospel values are further demonstrated through a wide range of social justice activities and a conscious effort to foster relationships with all members of our school community.

Through curriculum planning we provide opportunities for students to actively live out their faith.

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

That students are more engaged in Religious Education

Possible actions and strategies:

Provide more opportunities for student voice.

Provide opportunities for challenging and engaging the students' thinking.

Ensure planning and teaching of R.E. be integrated across the curriculum.

B. Learning and Teaching

i. What did we aim to do in the Learning and Teaching sphere?

Goal: To create high learning outcomes through improved student engagement

Intended Outcomes	Targets
<p>That Writing outcomes across the school are improved with a particular focus on students in the middle/upper school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That teachers' capacity to use data to recognise and respond more effectively to student needs. • That there is monitoring and support for the lower cohort of students. 	<p>80% of Yr 5 students will be operating at/above the expected VELS level in Writing and Reading. Using NAPLAN assessments, there will be a matched cohort growth of approximately 80 points.</p>
<p>That Reading outcomes are improved, with a particular focus on students in the middle/upper school.</p>	<p>80% of Yr 5 students will be operating at/above the expected VELS level in Writing and Reading Using VELS assessments, there will be a matched cohort growth of at least .9 in Reading and Writing.</p>
<p>That Oral Language and Word Attack skills are improved, particularly in the early years.</p>	<p>80% of students will score 28 in the Record of Oral Language and 50 in the Burt Word by the end of Year 2.</p>
<p>That (Number and Mathematics) Numeracy outcomes for students are improved.</p>	<p>80% of Yr 5 students will be operating at/above the expected VELS level in Number and Mathematics. Using VELS assessments, there will be a matched cohort growth of at least .9 in Numeracy</p>
<p>That students are more engaged in a stimulating learning environment through the use of contemporary tools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That teachers' repertoire of teaching approaches is expanded and developed • That teacher understanding and implementation of Inquiry Learning is expanded and developed. 	<p>Inquiry Audit Tool – revisit – increase the mean score by ... Specifically in How Powerfully is ICT being Used. Stimulating Learning Variable in the Student and Parent surveys will improve to 90/100. Teaching and Learning Variable in the Staff survey will improve to 90/100. Inquiry Audit Tool – revisit – increase the mean score by ... Specifically in Student Engagement.</p>

ii. To what extent did we achieve our goals, intended outcomes and targets? What evidence do we have available to support this?

Goal: To create high learning outcomes through improved student engagement

Intended Outcome 1:

That Writing outcomes across the school are improved, with a particular focus on students in the middle/upper school.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Reading	80% of Yr 5 students will be operating at/above the expected (VELS level) State mean	62	45	62
Writing		70	53	49
NAPLAN Writing	Approximately 80 points	NA	96	42

In viewing the data it is evident that students' reading performance experienced a significant decline in 2010 and regained the former level in 2011. According to the data, Writing has shown a steady decline over time. The Match Cohort Data for 2010 exceeded the Target. However in 2011 this was a decline in the Match Cohort Data. Whilst it is acknowledged that the target has not been met, it should be noted that there was a change in genre in 2011 and the school matched the growth of the State.

Intended Outcome 2:

That Oral Language and Word Attack skills are improved, particularly in the early years.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Record of Oral Language	80% of students will score 28.	94%	79.2%	91%
Burt Word	80% of students will score 50 by the end of Year 2.	67%	82%	72%

Whilst there was a decline in the data for Record of Oral Language in 2010, it is clear that the target has been achieved and for two years it was exceeded. The results for Burt Word demonstrate less consistency. However, the target was achieved in 2010.

Intended Outcome 3:

That (Number and Mathematics) Numeracy outcomes for students are improved.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Numeracy (Number and Mathematics).	80% of Yr 5 students will be operating at/above the expected VELs level	69	47	44
Numeracy	Matched cohort growth of at least .9 or approx. 80 points.	N/A	72	64

The data indicates a gradual decline in performance at Year 5 resulting in the school not reaching its target. Matched cohort data also indicates that the target of 80 points has not been reached.

Intended Outcome 4:

That students are more engaged in a stimulating learning environment through the use of contemporary tools.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Inquiry Based Learning Audit Tool	Increase the mean score "How Powerfully is ICT being Used."	N/A	N/A	3.74
Inquiry Based Learning Audit Tool	Increase the mean score for Student Engagement.	N/A	N/A	3.48

Stimulating Learning – Student	Improve to 90/100.	72	60	80
Stimulating Learning – Parent	Improve to 90/100.	77	76	76

Whilst the data for 2008 is not available for comparison, it is evident that the targets from the Inquiry Based Learning Audit Tool indicate that these areas will continue to be a focus in the next review period.

Although there was a decline in students' perception of Stimulating Learning in 2010, overall there has been significant growth between 2009 and 2011.

Parents' responses have been relatively consistent over time.

iii. Why were we successful/not successful in our achievements as stated in the SIP for this sphere?

Goal: To create high learning outcomes through improved student engagement

Intended Outcome 1:

That Writing outcomes across the school are improved, with a particular focus on students in the middle/upper school.

Since the last review Writing has been a major focus for development. The school was involved in the Leadership for Contemporary Learning Project specifically targeting Writing from Prep to 6. The results of this programme have not been realised to the extent that was initially perceived due to staff changes.

During this time, the Literacy programme from Prep to Year 2 has been consistent in its approach and leadership and the positive results reflect this. Professional Learning Team meetings were consistent, students were well prepared for NAPLAN testing and the area was well resourced.

Conversely, from Years 3 to 6, Professional Learning Teams were less regular in 2010 and several changes in Literacy leadership occurred throughout the four year period. A lack of consistency in the approach taken to the teaching of writing may have impacted on the data at Year 5. It should be noted that the Writing genre for Naplan was changed for 2011 and may have also contributed to the data.

Intended Outcome 2:

That Oral Language and Word Attack skills are improved, particularly in the early years.

Oral language has been a focus in Professional Learning Team meetings and continues to be so. Explicit teaching of oral language is timetabled in the Prep to 2 area. Professional reading and collegial conversations have been undertaken at Professional Learning Team meetings and resources have been increased to support explicit teaching. Whilst the Burt Word target has not been met, when comparing our data with Like Schools and All Schools, our results are much more positive leading us to think that the original target may have been set too high.

Intended Outcome 3:

That (Number and Mathematics) Numeracy outcomes for students are improved.

Throughout the past four years there have been changes in Numeracy leadership across the school. Between 2008 and 2010 Numeracy did not have the same profile as Literacy and as such

Professional Learning Team meetings occurred less often. In 2011 these meetings were timetabled and occurred fortnightly.

The numeracy leader who was appointed in 2011 for one day a week was responsible for overseeing resources, working with students at risk and organizing Professional Learning Team meetings. Currently numeracy planning is not facilitated by the numeracy leader. We believe that all of the above may have resulted in an inconsistent approach across the school and this is reflected in our results.

Intended Outcome 4:

That students are more engaged in a stimulating learning environment through the use of contemporary tools.

The school engaged in the Leadership for Contemporary Learning Project in 2009 and 2010. As previously stated, the results of this programme have not been realised to the extent that was initially perceived due to staff changes.

Interactive Whiteboards were introduced in 2010 and some professional learning was provided for staff. In 2011 iPads were introduced to support the learning and teaching in Year 6. A new computer lab was upgraded in 2011 and the number of computers available for classroom use doubled. Improvements were also made to the infrastructure to support fast and reliable internet access. Flip cameras were purchased in 2009 to support the LCL project and each level shares a digital camera. A specialist teacher provides classes for students in the use of ICT.

Due to a change of leadership, teachers were encouraged to be flexible and plan inquiries based on the perceived interests and needs of the students. We believe the massive growth in student data in 2011 is a culmination of all that has been put in place.

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

At St. Mary's we believe the Learning and Teaching sphere is the key to providing our community with a supportive learning environment where all individuals are able to develop their full potential. A student centred curriculum is designed and implemented to engage learners and prepare them to be contributing members of a contemporary society.

In our vision statement, we clearly articulate that *"We educate children to become life-long learners, actively engaged in a changing world."* Furthermore, we create *"a stimulating environment,"* and *"we implement innovative, consistent teaching and learning practices which cater for individual needs and encourage risk taking."*

The Learning and Teaching sphere is interconnected with all other organisational spheres and is integral to the daily life of our school community. This is evident through the implementation of learning programmes that meet the identified needs of all students. Our planning for inquiry learning, - the use of contemporary tools, - the sequential development of literacy and numeracy practices, - the provision of a rich and diverse curriculum including, Italian, Performing arts, ICT, Library, Physical Education and Sports, - enable learning engagement for all students. We believe in and promote Professional Learning that enables all staff to be skilled in 21st century techniques.

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

That student learning outcomes in numeracy be improved.

That student learning outcomes in writing improve with a focus on Years 4 to 6, especially for those students in the top cohort.

That students are engaged more effectively using contemporary tools.

C. Student Wellbeing

i. What did we aim to do in the Student Wellbeing sphere?

The priority areas for Student Wellbeing were focusing on the development of positive relationships throughout the school community to ensure the wellbeing and safety of each child. The development of common understandings and consistent approaches by reviewing and updating student welfare/ wellbeing policies and guidelines, was a critical component of this goal.

The ongoing development of student leadership is a priority, aimed at enhancing the students' sense of connectedness to the school and to their peers. Student voice via the SRC is also a priority.

Goal: To strengthen Student Wellbeing and positive relationships

Intended Outcomes	Targets
That student safety and classroom behaviour improve.	Student Safety Variable in the Student survey will improve to 90/100. Classroom Behaviour Variable in the Student survey will improve to 80/100.
That students demonstrate an understanding of the core values of the school social skills programme.	Maintain Student Connectedness above 80 and Student Decision Making and Motivation to be in the top 25 % of schools (SRC). Maintain Social Skills (parent survey) in the top 25% of schools.

ii. To what extent did we achieve our goals, intended outcomes and targets? What evidence do we have available to support this?

Goal: To strengthen Student Wellbeing and positive relationships

Intended Outcome 1:

That student safety and classroom behaviour improve.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Student Safety - Student Survey	Improve to 90/100.	82	75	90
Classroom Behaviour – Student Survey	Improve to 80/100.	55	35	48

Pleasingly student safety continues to be an area of strength within our data with the Student Safety variable reaching the target of 90 and being in the top 25% range of schools. Students' perception of classroom misbehaviour whilst improved from 2010, is still an area of concern, falling in the lower end of the 50% range of schools.

Intended Outcome 2:

That students demonstrate an understanding of the core values of the school social skills programme.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Connectedness to Peers– Student Survey	To be above 80.	85	80	88 – in the top 25%
Student Decision Making – Staff Survey	To be in the top 25% of schools	73	62	N/A
Student Motivation – Student Survey		85	75	92 – in the top 25%
Social skills – Parent Survey	To be in the top 25% of schools	81	80	84 - in the top 25%

The student motivation and connectedness targets have both been successful, and are within the top 25% of schools. This data suggests that students are highly motivated to learn and well connected with their peers. Unfortunately, our ability to track staff opinion regarding student decision making is no longer available.

Parents are generally positive about the school environment, particularly that the school is caring, safe and secure and that students are developing good social skills and are highly connected to their peers.

iii. Why were we successful/not successful in our achievements as stated in the SIP for this sphere?

Goal: To strengthen Student Wellbeing and positive relationships

Intended Outcome 1:

That student safety and classroom behaviour improve.

Student Wellbeing has continued to be a priority at St Mary's which is reflected in the high quality of relationships evident in our school. The school and classroom environments are secure and friendly. Staff and students relate positively and parents and visitors are warmly welcomed to the school. Students have a strong belief that teachers listen to them and understand their needs and provide a stimulating learning environment. These two relational factors led to greater student engagement and enhanced academic outcomes. Another contributor to high student connectedness is Student Leadership and the Student Representative Council, where students are given a voice and are able to participate in school decisions and give feedback to the school leadership team.

At St Mary's we provide a safe and happy environment for all students. This belief is strongly endorsed by both students and parents. The physical factors such as new fencing, security systems to enter the school and visitors' log book and name tags all add to the feelings of safety. All staff members are trained in processes and procedures for evacuations and medical emergencies such as asthma and anaphylaxis. St Mary's also employs a school officer who is a fully qualified St John's Ambulance volunteer to attend to ill and injured children throughout the school day.

A strong relationship culture thrives throughout our school community and continues to provide a positive emotional tone in the workplace evidenced by high levels of school, staff and student morale. The implementation of Restorative Practices continues to support our relational culture. This agreed philosophy underpins our behaviour management policy along with a common and consistent approach to discipline. Classroom rules are negotiated with students to ensure

ownership and student voice. The use of common language and strategies such as Circle Time and appropriate consequences assist staff and students to work within a relational framework. The clear documentation of our practices via Behaviour Reflection Sheets and Playground Incident Reports, and the use of Affective Questions enable effective communication between teachers, students and parents. Despite our successes in the Wellbeing Sphere, students view classroom misbehaviour as an area of concern, falling in the lower end of the 50% range of schools. Whilst the reason for this is unclear, we believe it may be due to a number of factors. These include the need for students to be self-regulatory in managing their behaviour and improving students' learning confidence. In addition to this, it should be acknowledged that there have been a number of students with challenging behaviours impacting on the classroom environment.

Intended Outcome 2:

That students demonstrate an understanding of the core values of the school social skills programme.

The development of the Bounce Back Programme from Years Prep to 6, with the explicit teaching of social skills, focuses on building resilience and developing core values. This has contributed to the successes in nurturing and highlighting the social and emotional needs of our students. The visual reminders of a weekly core value and student noticeboard display, together with a weekly section in the newsletter and weekly raffle prize highlights the importance of the programme in the school community.

Social and emotional learning is further targeted through our Integrated Inquiry approach to learning and by the promotion of life skills through the Life Education Van, Fire Education and Civics and Citizenship.

The weekly school assembly is another avenue which encourages and celebrates not only learning, but recognises and rewards positive behaviour and values displayed by students. The buddy programmes in Prep/ Yr 6 and Yr 1/ Yr 5 is another facet of school life that contributes to student connectedness by promoting and developing social skills between year levels.

The holistic approach to Student Wellbeing is overseen by the Student Wellbeing Leader who has recently completed a Masters of Education in this field. Having two staff members with their Masters in this area adds to the strong commitment in supporting students with special needs in our school. The appointment of a school counsellor one day a week to support the students and their families is another example of this commitment. Clearly documented processes are in place for the referral of students with academic, behavioural or emotional needs. These referrals are addressed at Student Welfare meetings and Programme Support Group meetings. Individual Learning Plans are developed to support students with additional needs. Transition procedures are in place to foster communication from year to year and kindergarten to high school. The school provides intervention and extension programmes for students with additional needs and provides teacher aide support for both funded and non-funded students. Specialised programmes such as Fast Forward and ERIK are delivered and further support the Reading Recovery Programme. Since the last review highly able students have been given the opportunity to attend "G.A.T.E.W.A.Y.S." and "Maths Olympiad." Specialised programmes such as "Seasons" continue to be offered to students on a yearly basis.

Above all, we believe that relationships are of paramount importance in all that we do and are key to continued success and improvement in Wellbeing.

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

Relationships and the wellbeing of our school community are central to all that we do at St. Mary's. We strongly believe that every child must feel and be happy, safe and valued. Our commitment to this belief strongly promotes the relational culture throughout our school.

Our vision statement declares that, *'Each child has the right to feel happy, safe and valued as a creative and unique individual, in an environment where self-esteem, respect and resilience are fostered.'* Furthermore, we believe in the value of the individual and this is reflected in our Vision Statement, *'We cater for individual needs and encourage risk-taking.'*

This is supported through the statement, *'We value and support strong links between students, staff, families and the parish community by nurturing spiritual development.'*

This sphere is lived out daily in all of our interactions within the school community and evidenced in our school relational culture. Our common beliefs, language, procedures and programmes support the wellbeing of all.

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

That students are engaged in more purposeful learning

That classroom behaviour improves

D. Leadership and Management

i. What did we aim to do in the Leadership and Management sphere?

**Goal: To strengthen the leadership of the school through enhanced staff engagement.
To update the resources/ master plan/ capital works of the school.**

Intended Outcomes	Targets
That staff feel empowered and are involved in school decision making processes.	Empowerment variable in the staff survey will improve to 90/100.
That staff satisfaction with school feedback and appraisal practices improve. That staff confidence in their professional competence will be enhanced.	Appraisal and Recognition variable in the staff survey will improve to 90/100. Professional Growth variable in the staff survey will improve to 90/100.
That staff perceptions of excessive work demands are reduced whilst maintaining high student outcomes.	Individual Morale variable in the staff survey will improve to 90/100. SRC Staff Climate Excessive workloads Target – from 55% to 40%.
That space in the school is efficiently utilised. That the Master Plan is underway. That contemporary technology is available to all teachers and students.	Furniture and equipment in the school is matched to student needs. Stage 1 of the Master Plan has commenced. A strategic purchasing plan is developed and followed.

ii. To what extent did we achieve our goals, intended outcomes and targets? What evidence do we have available to support this?

**Goal: To strengthen the leadership of the school through enhanced staff engagement.
To update the resources/ master plan/ capital works of the school.**

Intended Outcome 1:

That staff feel empowered and are involved in school decision making processes.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Empowerment	Improve to 90/100.	65	48	79

Whilst the data indicates an initial decline in 2010 there was significant improvement shown in 2011 suggesting that staff is feeling much more empowered to make decisions and therefore moving positively towards achieving the target.

Intended Outcome 2:

***That staff satisfaction with school feedback and appraisal practices improve.
That staff confidence in their professional competence will be enhanced.***

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Appraisal and Recognition	Improve to 90/100.	76	55	75
Professional Growth	Improve to 90/100.	70	61	81

In the areas of Appraisal and Recognition and Professional Growth, the results indicate a decline in perception between 2009 and 2010. This was then followed by a significant increase in 2011 for both variables. These results indicated that staff are receiving more feedback from both the leadership team and their colleagues and are being encouraged and supported to improve their skills, knowledge and performance, and to pursue further training and development.

Intended Outcome 3:

That staff perceptions of excessive work demands are reduced whilst maintaining high student outcomes.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Individual Morale	Improve to 90/100.	72	59	80
Work Demands	From 45 to 60.	47	48	59

The data for Individual Morale experienced a decline in 2010 but has shown strong growth in 2011 resulting in a more positive staff climate.

The area of Work Demands has shown incremental improvement from 2009 to 2011 indicating staff is feeling more positive about managing their work demands.

Intended Outcome 4:

That space in the school is efficiently utilised.

That the Master Plan is underway.

That contemporary technology is available to all teachers and students.

See Question iii (below)

iii. Why were we successful/not successful in our achievements as stated in the SIP for this sphere?

**Goal: To strengthen the leadership of the school through enhanced staff engagement.
To update the resources/ master plan/ capital works of the school.**

Intended Outcome 1:

That staff feel empowered and are involved in school decision making processes.

Since the last review staff perception of Empowerment has fluctuated. However, in 2011 sharp improvement was evident. We believe this may be a result of greater opportunities for staff to contribute to school planning policies, curriculum decision making, reviewing of Staff Handbook and school policies. The school has continued to encourage a range of staff members to take on positions of responsibility such as Year Level Co-ordinators.

In 2009, the leadership and staff explored ways to improve empowerment among all members of staff whilst retaining a strong feeling of teamwork and ownership. This was facilitated through the Leadership for Contemporary Learning Coaching Teams, Professional Learning Team Meetings and co-ordinated year level planning.

The change of leadership in 2011 has impacted positively on decision making processes where all are included and this is reflected in the data.

Intended Outcome 2:

That staff satisfaction with school feedback and appraisal practices improve.

That staff confidence in their professional competence will be enhanced.

Since the last review a more formal Appraisal Process has been implemented. This has allowed for greater staff ownership and resulted in increased staff morale. This included the staff having the opportunity to choose a model of appraisal that they believed was most appropriate. Part of this process involves two separate meetings with the Principal to discuss staff member's professional goals and receive feedback on achievements throughout the year.

Since 2011, the Principal has implemented an open door policy which has encouraged regular discussions to be held throughout the year and allowed for greater feedback. The staff is also encouraged to actively seek professional development opportunities that they deem appropriate to their present situation. Coordinators have continued to facilitate planning which has enabled a greater degree of professional dialogue and collegial feedback.

We believe that all of the above have contributed to the improvement seen in 2011.

Intended Outcome 3:

That staff perceptions of excessive work demands are reduced whilst maintaining high student outcomes.

Since the last review the data shows significant improvement in 2011 for Individual Morale and steady improvement in staff perception of Work Demands. It is believed that this increase is a result of the positive appraisal process that has been implemented, greater input into school decision making and transparency within leadership. Most coordinators are also classroom teachers involved in planning and practical implementation providing greater support. The appreciation shown to all staff by leadership has continued to be expressed through dinners after sacraments and lunches provided at the end of each term.

In addition to this, the individualised planning documents allow staff to have more flexibility. A more streamlined online reporting process has been implemented which has reduced staff workload.

Intended Outcome 4:

That space in the school is efficiently utilised.

That the Master Plan is underway.

That contemporary technology is available to all teachers and students.

Since the last review the school has undergone significant building works as a result of the Building the Education Revolution. This has impacted positively on the use of school facilities.

School space is used for a variety of purposes from day to day such as the Computer Lab which is used for ICT lessons and general classroom use. The school has invested in capital improvements such as artificial grass, computers, iPads, fencing and a new library space.

The Master Plan has been completed and funding of \$2.1 million has been approved in order for implementation. It is anticipated that this will be supported by the introduction of a capital levy applied to each family.

The school is well resourced with a range of contemporary technology that is available and regularly utilised by both staff and students, including teacher laptops, wireless internet, ICT lab, classroom laptops and Interactive Whiteboards in every classroom.

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

Management and leadership is important to St Mary's as we are all leaders in our school community and therefore are able to contribute positively.

This is reflected in our school Vision statement which states, '*St Mary's leadership and management teams value, support and empower all members of the school community.*' It is

further expressed in our vision statement that, '*We are a welcoming, inclusive and supportive community that values genuine relationships.*'

The Management and Leadership Sphere empowers all members of the St Mary's community to be leaders in their own way.

Teachers are encouraged to undertake professional development, take on various teacher leadership positions and to be flexible in their teaching styles and presentation.

Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning. They have the opportunity to be involved in a variety of roles such as the School Representative Council and Year 5/6 leadership positions.

Parents have the opportunity to be involved in a number of parent body groups undertaking various roles in and around the school. They are also encouraged to be actively involved in the students' education.

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

Intended Outcome:

That staff engage more effectively to support professional learning

Possible strategy:

Whole school approach be embedded for all curriculum areas

E. School Community

i. What did we aim to do in the School Community sphere?

Goal: To optimise inclusiveness through the strengthening of partnerships between home, school, parish and the wider community

Intended Outcomes	Targets
That parents are more involved in the decision making processes of the school	Parent Input variable in the Parent survey will improve to 90 on the improvement scale.
That parent satisfaction with reporting is improved	Reporting variable in the Parent survey will improve to 80 on the improvement scale.
That the school is a welcoming environment where opportunities are provided for all to celebrate together That opportunities are provided for teachers students, to liaise with parent bodies	SRC Insight Data – Parent Survey – 75 on the improvement scale. (Approachability) System in place to have ease of access to Police Checks
That learning is linked to the wider community	Pedagogy Reflection tool to be 4 or better – <i>Connection to Community</i>

ii. To what extent did we achieve our goals, intended outcomes and targets? What evidence do we have available to support this?

Throughout the last 4 years St. Mary's School Improvement Plan has focused on meeting the targets listed above.

Early in 2011 the staff looked at the targets across all spheres and decided that they were possibly a little unrealistic. Since they were set, St. Mary's has experienced a change of Leadership and many staff changes. The adjustments are outlined in the 2011 Annual Action Plan.

Goal: To optimise inclusiveness through the strengthening of partnerships between home, school, parish and the wider community

Intended Outcome 1:

That parents are more involved in the decision making processes of the school

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Parent Input – Parent Survey	Improve to 90/100	73	42	53

In analysing the data we have found that:

The variable target for parents to be more involved in the decision making process of the School was to improve to 90. From 2009 to 2010 there was a major decline from 73 to 42. From 2010 to 2011 there was an increase from 42 to 53. Whilst the data indicates that the parents over time varied in their perception of decision making, we believe that there are many other avenues for parent involvement.

Intended Outcome 2:***That parent satisfaction with reporting is improved***

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Reporting – Parent Survey	Improve to 80/100	55	65	52

The variable target for parent satisfaction with reporting was to improve to 80. From 2009 to 2010 there was an increase from 55 to 65. Whilst from 2010 to 2011 there was a decrease to 52. There are many avenues for providing feedback of student learning / reporting to parents at St. Mary's other than the written reports. These will be outlined in Question Three.

Intended Outcome 3:***The school is a welcoming environment where opportunities are provided for all to celebrate together.******That opportunities are provided for teachers and students to liaise with parent bodies.***

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Approachability – Parent survey	To be 75 on the improvement scale	82	72	73

The variable target for the School to be a welcoming environment where opportunities are provided for all to celebrate together was to be 75. From 2009 to 2010 there was a decline from 82 to 72. Whilst from 2010 to 2011 there was a slight increase from 72 to 73.

Intended Outcome 4:***That learning is linked to the wider community***

The variable target for learning to be linked to the wider community was to achieve a score of 4 or better.

Variable	Target	2009	2010	2011
Pedagogy Reflection Tool – Connection to Community	A score of 4 or better	N/A	N/A	3.45

The data reflects that the target has not been met and will remain an area for future development. Whilst the Survey Data may not necessarily reflect overall success in meeting our goal in the Sphere of School Community, i.e. To optimise inclusiveness through the strengthening of partnerships between home, school, parish and the wider community, we have much evidence to substantiate our opinion that we have many structures in place to work towards our main goal in an ongoing way.

iii. Why were we successful/not successful in our achievements as stated in the SIP for this sphere?

Goal: To optimise inclusiveness through the strengthening of partnerships between home, school, parish and the wider community

Intended Outcome 1:***That parents are more involved in the decision making processes of the school.***

Since the last review, parents have had opportunities to provide input regarding some decision making processes via meetings and surveys.

Parents were invited to share their views about the plans for the Building Programme and were surveyed in regard to the Swimming Programme, which was retained upon the results of the survey. A parent group worked on plans to facilitate the extra music programme when the former hall was to be demolished and the new one built. There has been a parent representative on the Parish Advisory Board. Parents have had input in regard to the use of raised funds and the venue for the upcoming School Production.

Changes to parts of the school uniform and the library bags were also made in consultation with the parents. A group of parents initiated the changes in the nature and venue of the Year Six Graduation in consultation with the Principal.

Whilst the data suggests there's been some recent improvement in parent opinion regarding their input, it is believed that more clarification is needed in terms of the possibilities available. It should also be noted that whilst 60 surveys were sent out randomly to parents within the community, only 28 families responded.

Intended Outcome 2:

That parent satisfaction with reporting is improved.

The Data suggests that parent satisfaction with reporting remains a challenge. However, it should be acknowledged that the very small number of parents who responded to the survey were referring solely to the written reports. There is a diverse range of ways in which reporting to parents happens at St. Mary's. Parents have formal Learning Conversations with teachers (formerly called Parent Teacher interviews) timetabled twice yearly, and interpreters are arranged where necessary. Appointments are made whenever parents need to speak with teachers or other school personnel and incidental interactions are also a part of the daily happenings. Students have a "Celebration of Learning" Display folder which is sent home with the written reports twice yearly. Reporting to parents also happens through the weekly Assemblies which are organised and hosted by a different grade each week. The weekly Newsletter and the website, which were totally revamped in 2011, are effective avenues for reporting to parents. Information evenings focusing on various Curriculum areas have provided another opportunity to inform parents and to develop their understanding of the reporting process. These have all been well attended. Some examples are: Yearly Prep Parents' Evening: *Helping with Home Reading*, Sacramental evenings, Cyber safety Information and Restorative Practices Workshop.

Whilst there have been numerous opportunities provided for parents to learn about their child's progress we believe that there is a need to educate parents more fully regarding the interpretation of the reports.

Intended Outcome 3:

The school is a welcoming environment where opportunities are provided for all to celebrate together.

That opportunities are provided for teachers and students to liaise with parent bodies.

St Mary's prides itself on being an inclusive, welcoming and vibrant community. At the beginning of the school year the entrance foyer features a welcome to all new families. Prior to enrolment, Student Leaders meet and greet prospective new families and show them around the school. New students are always welcomed in the Newsletter and at morning/afternoon assemblies. All social events are advertised through the school Newsletter to foster inclusiveness.

There are three main organisations of Parental Involvement who share common goals, work and celebrate together. These are the School Community Support Group, the Parents' and Friends' Association and the Fathers' Association. All parents are invited to be a part of any or all of these organisations. The Classroom Representatives are an effective avenue for communication and they facilitate the opportunities for celebrating at a class level. They organise events for parents such as the Ladies Night Out and events for the children such as the End of Term picnic at the

local park. Parent classroom representatives also organise celebratory gatherings for a specific level including the First Communicants' luncheon and Year Six Graduation Supper/Disco. New Prep students and their families are welcomed via a structured Transition programme. In 2011, the upcoming Prep parents were invited to a cocktail evening which was a great success. Each year we have held a "Welcome to the School Year" picnic for all families in the school yard.

Since the last review, other opportunities to celebrate together have included: Mothers' Day Luncheon, Fathers' Day breakfast, Biggest Morning Tea, Thank you Morning Tea for Parents from the Staff and biennial events, such as the Fiesta, Art Auction, Dinner Dance and the School Production. In 2011 St Mary's students experienced their first Disco, which was a huge success and attended by 300 students. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, we have held an open afternoon during family week and a "Fashions on the Field" Parade during Melbourne Cup week. These events are always well advertised and are generally attended by a large number of parents.

Parents are welcomed into the classrooms to assist with the Literacy Block in the Prep to 2 area. Training sessions are held for parents wishing to assist and parents are supported in the process of acquiring "Working with Children" cards. Student Achievement Awards are acknowledged at the weekly assemblies and awards from the Specialist teachers are advertised in the weekly newsletter. Family celebrations such as births are announced in the school Newsletter as are offers of support to families at times of need.

We believe the parent data reflects the changes that have taken place since the last review and are confident that parent opinion will continue to improve.

Intended Outcome 4:

That learning is linked to the wider community.

Learning has been linked to the wider community via incursions and excursions experienced by all grade levels each year. Excursions and incursions are planned in relation to the specific Inquiry Units, so that students are immersed in authentic experiences that can be specifically followed up in their classrooms and integrated into all Curriculum areas.

Local services are utilised regularly such as the Ascot Vale Leisure Centre, Aberfeldie Sports Track, Union Road Traders and the Ascot Vale Library. Senior students have visited local nursing homes, The Bahay Tuluyan Social Justice Forum and school productions held by local secondary colleges.

All students have had the opportunity to participate in the Victorian Premier's Reading Challenge and The National Ride to School days over the past four years. St Mary's involvement with Bicycle Network's Walking School Bus Scheme is another avenue of linking learning to the wider Community. Presently, there are four routes operating successfully. Through The Walking School Bus students are linking their learning about healthy lifestyles and safety to the wider Community. The number of students in the Walking School Bus has increased over the past three years.

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

The School Community sphere is important in our school because we believe that when students, teachers, parents and members of the wider community work together towards a common goal we achieve success.

This is evident in our vision statement when it states, *“We are a welcoming, inclusive and supportive community that values genuine relationships.”* At St Mary’s we, *“value, support and empower all members of the school community.”*

This sphere is lived out in our community via the organisations of parental involvement, the opportunities to celebrate together, the welcoming environment which we continue to foster and the embracing of the wider community. We acknowledge and celebrate the diverse range of talents and skills in our community. We reach out to and support members of our community and other welfare organisations.

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

That stronger links are forged with the wider community to support student learning.

That parents are more engaged in their children’s learning.

5. Signatures

SIGNED by the Principal _____

Name _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____