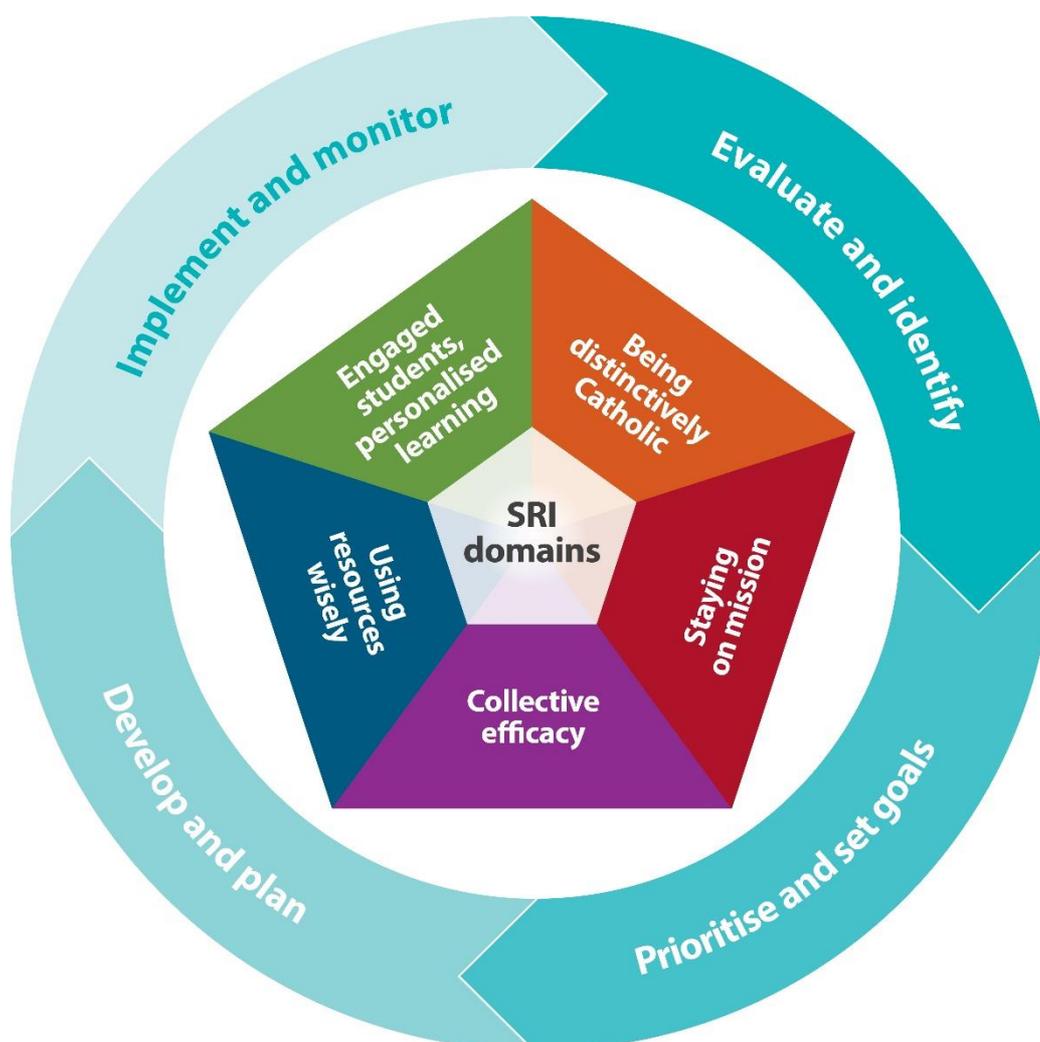


School renewal and improvement report

informed by TCS Quadrennial School Review

Sacred Heart School, Cunnamulla



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Introduction

The School Renewal and Improvement framework describes Toowoomba Catholic Schools' (TCS) commitment and approach to progressive, incremental improvement. The framework describes a four-year cycle during which each school community examines its current achievements and performance, consults widely about its aspirations, establishes priorities for the foreseeable future and undertakes regular checks to monitor progress.

To assist the community in this cycle each school undertakes a quadrennial school review, based on the Catholic traditions of renewal and subsidiarity. This review is facilitated by the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office and provides reliable, up-to-date and timely information to the community to inform strategic planning. The quadrennial school review is one source of data available to the school community to monitor progress and set goals for the future.

The strategic planning process rightly sits with each local school community, which operates within the broader system of Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS). Local school strategic planning is complementary to the TCS Strategic Plan. This connection ensures that each school contributes to, and benefits from, the larger system.

This four-year cycle has been the catalyst for significant growth and improvement in staff knowledge and expertise and student learning outcomes in all schools. It is another indicator of the mature and focused professional learning culture which is a feature of Toowoomba Catholic Schools.

Dr Pat Coughlan
Executive Director: Catholic Schools
Diocese of Toowoomba

Methodology

The quadrennial school review was conducted on 23-27 May 2022 by the review team comprising

- Jim Midgley, Director: Education Services
- Marty Savage, Senior Education Leader
- Casey Robinson, Principal St Maria Goretti School, Inglewood

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

- Polly Goodman, Principal/Assistant Principal Religious Education
- Cara Haig, Middle Leader/Learning Support Teacher/Deputiser
- all teaching staff
- all non-teaching staff
- students
- parents
- parish priest

Purposes

The purposes of the Toowoomba Catholic Schools quadrennial school review are

- a. to engage the school community in a process of self-reflection and continual renewal
- b. to ensure the core business of teaching and learning remain front and centre of the school's activities
- c. to provide the school community with an opportunity to participate in a thorough reflection on their school's effectiveness
- d. to provide an external team perspective including findings and improvement strategies to affirm and improve teaching and learning.

School Renewal and Improvement (SRI) domains and components

The reference document for the review is the Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) School Renewal and Improvement Framework. The five SRI domains from the Framework provide the structure for the review and future planning.

Domain 1 Engaged students, personalised learning

The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders and parents are treated as partners in the promotion of student learning and wellbeing. The school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour. There is a focus on evidence-based practice.

Domain 2 Being distinctively Catholic

The school explicitly operates as a Catholic school, with a distinctive Catholic identity. Staff, students, and parents/carers share in the narrative and charism which encompass the school and so education about its ongoing story involves all in the school's community. In collaboration and partnership with families and parishes, the school prepares young people to live as Christians in the world. The Catholic Identity of the school enables it to be an instrument of the evangelising mission of the Church. There is an expectation that Religious Education will engage students in thinking about their own spiritual development. The Catholic tradition of valuing academic learning is clearly present in the school, including in Religious Education, which is taught with similar rigour to all other subjects.

Domain 3 Staying on mission

The school leadership team have established and are driving a strong improvement agenda for the school, grounded in evidence from research and practice and expressed in both qualitative and quantitative measures of improvements in student achievement and behaviour. Explicit and clear school-wide targets for improvement have been set and communicated to parents and families, teachers and students, with accompanying timelines.

Domain 4 Collective efficacy

The school is led in a direction that develops and grows collective efficacy, based on the collective self-perception that teachers in a school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities. This is evident in attributes that convey high expectations to students and foster learner autonomy. Staff are supported in building collegiality and trying new approaches based on effective practices, setting challenging goals for students and working collaboratively in attending closely to the needs of students who require extra assistance.

Domain 5 Using resources wisely

The school applies its resources (staff, time, expertise, funds, facilities, materials) in a targeted manner to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of all students. It has school-wide policies, practices and programs in place to assist in identifying and addressing student needs. Flexible structures and processes enable the school to respond appropriately to the needs of individual learners.

School context

Motto and crest

The Sacred Heart Parish School's motto is "Become Who You Are"



Vision

With dignity and pride, resilience and responsibility, in the Mercy Tradition we at Sacred Heart welcome and serve others.

Mission

Sacred Heart Primary School community lives the Gospel values of care, respect and compassion for all. Christian spirit and values permeate all areas of learning and school life and define the culture of the school. We aspire to be a living faith community together with the Parish, parents and other community members.

Our school acknowledges parents as the first educators and we work with home and community to support the needs of individuals. Sacred Heart Primary School endeavours to provide relevant learning experiences and respond to the needs of the broader community of which it remains an integral part.

School context, history and Catholic identity

Sacred Heart Primary School has been educating the children of Cunnamulla since 1915. They believe a family's experience of the school will be one of fun, where a child will engage in learning in a welcoming and caring community. Leveraging the unique gifts and talents of teachers and staff, they focus on 'care, consistency and curriculum' to create and sustain the best possible learning environment for children. They deliver a full Australian Curriculum and ensure that students have access to the same educational opportunities as their big city counterparts.

There is a student-centric, 'no excuses' learning culture in every classroom with clear schoolwide behaviour management and expectations in place. They have a simple and distinct goal for every student - a year's growth or more for a year's learning. To achieve this, they work with students to practise the Sacred Heart learning dispositions called Habits of the Mind.

These are curiosity, persistence, communication, making connections and independence. As a Catholic community, the Gospel values are lived daily and guided by the Habits of the Heart - belonging, compassion, courage, service and excellence.

School prayer

Dear Lord

Bless our school,

So that working and playing together,

We may be like Jesus in words and actions.

Lord of the loving heart,

May our hearts be loving too.

Lord of the gentle hands,

May our hands be gentle too.

We ask this through Jesus our teacher.

Amen.

Current school context

- 64 Students
- 5 Classrooms (usually 4 multi-aged classrooms)
- 5 Classroom Teachers
- 2 School Officers
- 52% Indigenous students
- 48% EALD assist students
- 35% NCCD students (4 sub, 18 sup)
- 6 SWD students
 - 5 HI
 - 1 ASD
- 33% Baptised Catholics

Findings and improvement strategies

Domain 1 Engaged students, personalised learning

1.1 Know the students and develop expert learners

1.2 Know the curriculum and lead effective teaching

1.3 Use high impact teaching strategies that personalise and connect learning

Findings

“The greatest possible act of social justice is to provide a quality education” (Professor David Woods, 2017). Sacred Heart Primary School Cunnamulla provides this greatest act of social justice in exceptional ways and to the highest level. There is a positive culture in this school that is second to none. This culture is grown consciously and transparently by the school leadership and is embraced willingly by staff, parents, and students. It is the ‘secret sauce’ behind the success of this school.

The culture in this school is amazing. Relationships between my colleagues, leadership team and students are outstanding. I’ve not experienced anything like it before. This level of social capital is what all schools should be trying to emulate.
(Staff member)

This school community knows its students; they deliver what matters. They challenge the norm, and they find solutions. They expect greatness in each other and have high expectations for their students. The leadership team lead by example and set clear well-supported expectations. They seek and provide feedback which is a whole school expectation. The leadership team empower teachers to grow their capacity. They continually develop and learn themselves, and they model this expectation for staff and students.

As a staff we really value differences in our students, whatever they bring to their learning. As a staff we understand where they come from, and we value that. That’s where we start.
(Staff member)

This domain, Engaged Students, Personalised Learning, is the hallmark of this inspirational, rural and remote school.

1.1 Know the students and develop expert learners

At the center of what is an exceptional teacher induction process in this school, is the clear expectation of quality relationships between teacher and student. The leadership team is explicit in their expectation that good learning, teaching and positive student engagement come from positive relationships. Learning and teaching in this school are responsive to the needs and interests of students. Planning for Personalised Learning (PfPL) is also a strong focus at Sacred Heart. An example of this responsiveness to the individual can be found in the transition process from Kindy to Prep.

Before my youngest child started in Prep this year, the teachers knew all about her. She was talking about this place as her school months before her final months in kindy. She knew all the teachers before day one and most importantly, they knew her. She could not have had a better start to schooling. (Parent)

The Prep enrolment process begins long before the start of the school year. The transition process has been a recent focus with a new kindergarten to school transition framework guiding the process. Under this framework, new Prep students commence with a pre-existing relationship with teachers and the community. A child's interests, abilities and learning needs are known through this process and are the focus throughout the transition. Key staff spend time building relationships and gathering student information to ensure the transition to school is a smooth and positive one. Kindergarten teachers and parents spend time sharing student information before the commencement of the school year. This allows continued support to remain in place to assist student learning. When children start school on day one, their needs, capabilities and interests are already known and often on display, gathered through these transition activities.

From 2018 to 2021 the Sacred Heart early years cohort have had a significant increase in percentages assessed as 'on track' in the Australian Early Years Development Census (AEDC) with 90 % judged to be on track in the health and wellbeing domain. With 70-80% on track in the domains of social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication and general knowledge. (Staff member)

Developing expert learners is being done very successfully in this school. The progress in this area under the current leadership is astounding. They have developed the students' understanding of learning and have expanded their strategies for thinking about learning. They teach and name strategies for thinking. Teachers have spent considerable time developing the Habits of the Mind to teach students the learning dispositions they need in order to become expert learners. They identified the need for this as the students previously had very little resilience or persistence and when academic tasks became hard, staff would often see outbursts in behaviour problems. The introduction of Habits of the Mind has provided students with a clear scaffold of how to become good learners. Alongside this they have also introduced the concept of the Learning Pit. Whole school and class lessons are presented so that all students know that learning is a process that requires effort and focus.

What I like most about this school is my teacher. I can tell she likes me, and I like her. I think when teachers love their students and students love their teacher, learning is much easier. (Student)

Habits of the Heart and Habits of the Mind go together. How you feel often affects how you think and learn. For good learning, the heart and the mind work best together. (Student)

1.2 Know the curriculum and lead effective teaching

The school has a set of critical questions which also help their teachers to know the curriculum and effectively teach it.

1. What do we want our students to learn?
2. How are we going to teach it?
3. How do we know if they have learnt it?
4. What do we do if they haven't learnt it?
5. What do we do if they already know this?

Teachers continually think about what they want their students to learn. This is then followed by a process for creating learning intentions and success criteria from the curriculum. The teachers map out yearly overviews and then write units of work that address the critical questions. This is then uploaded to the Diocesan Learning Profile (DLP). The review team recognises that teachers in this school work hard to ensure the curriculum is presented in a fun and engaging way, and this was very evident in classroom walk-throughs and observations. The review team observed all classes in action and were impressed by the level of engagement in learning. Student familiarity with and use of thinking strategies and how to apply them are consistent across the school. The consistency of teacher language across the school shows little variance. Students state that they find moving between year levels easy from the point of view of teacher expectations and pedagogy. This is achieved through a series of non-negotiables.

- Reading and writing, including spelling, are explicitly taught using 'think aloud' in reading and writing.
- Modelled, shared, guided and independent reading occur daily.
- Learning intentions and success criteria are used in reading, writing and spelling, and are at all times visible to the students in the classroom.
- Learning intentions and success criteria are used in teacher weekly planning.
- 'Think partners' is used as a strategy to promote classroom thinking.
- Checks for understanding are built into all lessons.

The review team observed all students engaged in their learning. There was a noticeable absence of behaviour issues or distracted students. The individual goal setting, the use of learning intentions and success criteria, the quality lesson preparation, clarity of classroom expectations, visible measures of student progress, exemplars in rooms, the absence of excessive teacher talk are consistent across the classrooms and contribute to a well-defined and highly effective learning culture.

Gathering student voice has also become a vital element which drives the Sacred Heart learning agenda. Student voice has been determined to be the most efficient way to judge what students know as opposed to what teachers *think* the students know. Their involvement in the Ignite Learning project has supported staff in learning how to use student voice data to create impact cycles, which guide their next steps for learning. The impact cycles have transferred across many Key Learning Areas and are now an embedded practice used to set goals and drive the learning journey. Their current impact cycle is around feedback. Teachers work collaboratively with Education Officers (EOs) to help them drive their impact cycles. The EOs are recognised as key stakeholders in helping the leadership team and teaching staff learn new information to build understanding, purpose, and capacity, to improve their students' ability to learn. Staff and leadership were keen to recognise the work of EOs in panel discussions.

The support we get from our project leaders, the EO from the Office, is exceptional. I have learned a lot from Sue (Reading Improvement Strategy), Cath (Ignite Learning) and Lisa (Illuminate). They have contributed to my growing self-efficacy. There are no excuses not to grow professionally out here. The EOs are often here or readily contactable. They are very relational and extremely supportive. I am always amazed at their expertise in their fields. We feel as included in the system support agenda as much as any teacher in Toowoomba. (Staff member)

The review team was presented with a plethora of data demonstrating the effectiveness of the school wide pedagogical approaches over the last four years. In 2021 there has been a 34% improvement across the school in PAT R data reading at national expected level. There has been a considerable 'closing of the gap' in the National Assessment Program Literacy And Numeracy

(NAPLAN) with schools across Australia with similar Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) ratings. All NAPLAN areas are showing remarkable growth. Reading improvement data has increased across all year levels with significant increase in the percentage of students at expected levels.

This success has been accomplished with a relatively inexperienced teaching staff, and this makes the rate and quality of improvement in student learning even more remarkable. The review team is unanimous in their conclusion that this is a remarkably talented group of professional teachers. All of the early career teachers comment on the tremendous start and support they have received in their teaching careers. All parents interviewed speak very highly of their children's teachers. Survey data indicate overwhelming support and satisfaction for the quality of teaching.

There is no sense of the luck of the draw or thinking it's our turn to have an average teacher. The last few years, all teachers here have been passionate, committed, and professional. They are exceptional teachers, each and every one of them. We hope we have the benefit of keeping them here a few years longer! (Parent)

It is very obvious that the teachers here work very hard. (Student)

The leadership team are to be commended not only for setting these high expectations but also on their processes, procedures and routines for supporting and modelling what excellent teaching looks like. The leadership team have brought the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Teaching and Learning Framework to life in this school. They model how teachers should get to know their students and their needs, they have clear processes to support teachers in planning and pedagogy (non-negotiables), they ensure teachers know the curriculum and most importantly, how to teach it.

1.2 Use high impact teaching strategies that personalise and connect learning

To assist with their teaching consistency and school-wide approaches, the school has a set of non-negotiables which ensures high quality pedagogy. Included in these non-negotiables are high impact strategies such as the gradual release of responsibility, use of learning intentions and success criteria, turn and talk, checks for understanding, and inclusion of the Habits of the Mind.

The Habits of the Mind and the Habits of the Heart are well embedded in school life and student mindsets. The documenting of these core values and philosophy is exceptional. Students know what each disposition looks like, sounds like, feels like. The review team is impressed by the ownership and the level of embeddedness of these dispositions. They are not just a nice poster hanging on the walls, they are dispositions and mindsets that are truly alive in this school, and are central to how the Sacred Heart community does things.

I watched my daughter challenge a student new to the school about his behaviour. She just said, 'We don't do that kind of thing around here'. The kids teach the new kids; it's amazing to witness the confidence that they have in doing this. (Parent)

There is a whole school approach to tracking and monitoring student learning. This is led by the Principal and Middle Leader (ML). Regular and ongoing analysis of data means that teachers are able to set goals for individual students, groups and whole classes, to ensure they have clarity around what it is they need to learn. Updating and use of the Planning for Personal Learning (PfPL) overview records current adjustments for student learning. A refined reading assistance for targeted students (RAFTS) program conducted by very capable school officers ensures that students receive the necessary follow-up intervention to help improve results.

There is a growing sense of a whole school understanding of the practices of assessment of learning. Consistency of teacher judgement is achieved through an ongoing cycle of professional conversations with the Middle Leader and Principal. Students comfortably ask teachers for feedback. Reporting is collaboratively accomplished with processes for designing student progress comments. There is consistency around judgements and reporting comments. The social aspects of school life are aligned with the Habits of the Heart values.

Improvement strategies

- Consider sharing the teacher induction processes used by the Sacred Heart leadership team with the TCSO Principal Leadership group. (The review team have never heard such glowing reports from teachers about the quality of induction experienced in a school).
- Consider sharing the process and resources for the Habits of the Heart and Habits of the Mind dispositions with Principal peers. (Rarely have the review team members seen such an impact in such a short time).
- Focus on the development of assessment capable learners, and proceed with plans to move to formative feedback. (This will be the next focus in future school improvement agendas from a system perspective, and this school could take a leading role in growing these capabilities in students and teachers).
- Prioritise the development of the Impact Cycle approach to improvement, ensuring regular revisiting of learners, learning and feedback. (Include upskilling of new staff as required).

Domain 2 Being distinctively Catholic

2.1 Religious education and pedagogical practices

2.2 Religious life of the school and the integration of faith, life, teaching and culture

Findings

2.1 Religious education and pedagogical practices

Sacred Heart Primary School is currently a Tier 1 Illuminate school and the school's religious education (RE) planning and implementation are treated with the same academic rigour as all other formal learning areas. The Education Officer works closely with the teachers to unpack scripture, contextualise it for students, and supports teachers to use high impact teaching and assessment strategies to promote student engagement. The classroom teachers eagerly participate in impact cycles to respond to the needs of their learners in Religious Education, based on student voice and supported by the Principal/Assistant Principal Religious Education (APRE) and Education Officer.

Teacher planning documents clearly show that Religious Education is taught across the week for 2.5 hours in each class. As part of the Illuminate project, it has been identified that the scope and sequence in the Diocesan Learning Profile (DLP) needs to be updated to reflect the changes to the RE curriculum. The School Learning Framework gives detail of specific aspects of the religious life of the school such as the Habits of the Heart awards that are presented regularly on school assemblies, and the regular celebration of liturgy.

Teacher feedback indicates a preference for developing the skills and confidence in teaching prayer in RE. This is an identified focus for the Illuminate project in 2022. Teachers speak about looking forward to the professional learning they will gain by continued participation in the Illuminate project to develop their role as an effective teacher of religion.

2.2 Religious life of the school and the integration of faith, life, teaching and culture

Sacred Heart School Cunnamulla is a Catholic co-educational primary school founded by the Sisters of Mercy. There is a strong commitment to an inclusive Catholic community, acknowledging and celebrating the diversity of all students. Staff, parents and students speak positively about the culture of the school, where each person is well cared for and well known. The ongoing partnership between the school and parish continues, and this partnership is strongly valued by the parish priest.

Children respect and live religious values at this school through the Habits of the Heart. (Staff member)

The importance and relevance of Sacred Heart's charism and traditions are clear. The school celebrates feast days relevant to Sacred Heart, and the Assistant Principal Religious Education (APRE) has developed a liturgical calendar for the school year. The Habits of the Heart align with the values of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy and are clearly embedded in the culture of the school. The APRE has developed Mercy units of work which are taught at the beginning of each school year to ensure that students and teachers know and understand the school charism and history. The leadership team and staff identify that the school would benefit from Mercy iconography and visual displays around the school to further contribute to promoting the school's charism.

Prayer tables containing religious symbols are included in each classroom with colours matching the liturgical seasons. These symbols are also displayed in the school office. Prayer has been a major focus at Sacred Heart as part of the Illuminate Tier 1 project. Each classroom actively engages in classroom prayer, and this is valued by teachers and students. Students comment on the regular presence of prayer in their classrooms.

Retreats are organised by the school leadership team and Education Officer, and are held regularly using local venues, landmarks, and areas of spiritual significance to support the spiritual development of staff and these retreats are valued by staff.

Improvement strategies

- Work with the Education Officer to ensure that the school's scope and sequence for Religious Education in the Diocesan Learning Profile reflect the changes in the curriculum.
- Explore ways to develop teacher knowledge and understanding of teaching prayer through coaching and modelling by the leadership team and Mission and Identity Education Officer.
- Investigate opportunities to obtain contemporary iconography to promote the charism of the school.

Domain 3 Staying on mission

3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

3.3 School and community partnerships

Findings

3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

The most recent school opinion data from Research Australia Development & Innovation Institute (RADII) 31 August 2021 shows the following staff responses to questions related to school improvement culture.

- staff take responsibility for promoting a positive and effective work environment 100%
- the school takes staff opinion seriously 92%
- leaders at this school are purposeful, focused and present 100%
- parents are kept well-informed about the activities of the school and its students 100%
- the school has a strong positive profile in its community 100%
- leadership at this school is collaborative and seeks input on key issues 100%
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is consistently acknowledged and celebrated 100%
- professional learning is targeted at specific, evidence-identified needs to meet improvement targets 100%
- the student behaviour support programs are effectively implemented across the whole school 100%
- staff work collaboratively and support each other to achieve high quality outcomes for students 100%
- whole school professional learning takes account of the learning priorities in the school's strategic renewal plan 100%

All staff feel well supported by Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office staff, and continue to seek and welcome this support as required. The recent engagement and support from Education Officers across the Reading Improvement Strategy, Ignite Learning, Illuminate Religious Education and Inclusive Education support team specialists is well received by teaching staff. This has been an intentional strategy implemented and facilitated by the school leadership given the many early career teachers working at Sacred Heart.

Services provided by office staff continue to be recognised and appreciated by administrative staff and school leadership. The leadership team has collaboratively worked with their Senior Education Leader and staff to develop and refine the Annual Action Plan goals to incorporate fewer priorities to allow for greater and deeper impact and achievement. This approach has been very impactful in sharpening the focus. This has supported the identified growth in teaching and learning across all classes working towards a consistent and effective whole school approach.

There is unanimous acknowledgement from parents and staff that a strong and positive culture exists across Sacred Heart. This is evident through well-established staff collective efficacy where all staff are valued and share a common moral purpose and agreements on whole school approaches. These open and collaborative discussions contribute to building greater shared responsibility and teacher capacity and growth. All staff say they value the Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings and the opportunity to regularly check in on their own individual goals with the leadership team. Staff acknowledge that these

discussions, curriculum planning and the analysis of student achievement data, have greatly contributed to improving curriculum clarity and awareness of effective and expected teaching practices. Staff and parents acknowledge that progress of student achievement is effectively monitored, using qualitative and quantitative data and initiatives and programs including Ignite Learning and Illuminate RE, are systematically evaluated for their effectiveness in producing desired improvements in student learning and achievement.

Learnings from the Ignite Learning project have also begun to drive the improvement agenda in a slightly different way. There has been a deliberate focus from school leadership to shift attention to student voice to establish what the students know. Similarly, the leadership team have listened carefully to teacher voice to make sure they receive the professional development they need. Listening to student and teacher voice has allowed the leadership team to undertake impact cycles that directly address the areas of specific need. Students confidently articulate the purpose and practicality of the Habits of the Mind and Habits of the Heart, and apply them to school life.

Habits of the Heart is about respecting others and making people feel like they belong, and Habits of the Mind is about our learning and having courage to push ourselves to improve and achieve high levels. (Student)

The Ignite Learning progression mapping completed at the end of the first year in the project has also provided information to help guide the improvement agenda. Conversations with the students indicate that the core values of Habits of the Heart (being a good person) and Habits of the Mind (being a good learner) are well embedded across the school, and that a shared understanding and language exist.

3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

Deliberate collection of staff and student voice to establish what is currently working well and assist with targeting future directions occurs. Through videos of students, thinking routines and goal setting, the leadership team have made a very clear and shared explicit improvement agenda for the school. Learning growth data has also reflected positive improvement over the last three years and continues to experience an upward trend.

The focus on the core values of Habits of the Heart and Habits of the Mind has lessened the need for extrinsic rewards. The values have become the driver of significant improvement in student engagement. This shared focus across all staff on student engagement has witnessed the improvement in growth of student learning and achievement, and the decrease in student behaviour issues in classrooms.

Staff and parent voice acknowledge the significant improvement in student behaviour. It is notable that during the student and parent interviews bullying was never raised as a concern. Students interviewed also indicate an observable improvement in behaviour in class, and a desire for further support during break times with social situations.

3.3 School and community partnerships

The school embraces and embeds the sense of community evidenced by the positive relationships between families, parish and school. The sense of community includes service to the community as well as drawing from it. The intentional engagement with families and the local kindergarten is an example of this. The leadership team have created a Transition to school framework for Sacred Heart to support Kindergarten students (Pre-school age) to transition to school. Parents and staff recognise the importance and positive impact this

approach has in promoting Sacred Heart and supporting students' needs, and the positive influence such an approach has on those students transitioning into Prep.

Sacred Heart continues to maintain strong involvement with Allied Health Services (Vital Health, QLD Health, Bush Kids, CACH, Hearing) to ensure the students receive the best support possible. Other strong relationships with community organisations including Deadly choices, Strong Families Strong Communities, inter-agencies, KEYS, Blue Edge, Police, CSS and the Town Library. The school is involved in many community events and celebrations such as ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and the Local Show.

Some parents feel there are further opportunities for the school to be promoted in the community for the many successes and achievements experienced to make it the school of choice for primary education. Parents state that communication is consistent, accessible and that there is little excuse for not knowing what is happening.

Improvement strategies

- Investigate ways to provide support to students to build their capacity to effectively and positively problem solve in social situations.
- Consider engaging with the TCS marketing team to support with innovative ways to market the school in the community.

Domain 4 Collective efficacy

4.1 Goal consensus

4.2 Empowerment

4.3 Supportive leadership

4.4 Cohesive staff knowledge

4.5 Embedded practices

Findings

Collective efficacy is considered extremely important at Sacred Heart. This is a community with many possible excuses for below average performance, but collective teacher efficacy certainly negates these inhibiting factors. The ICSEA socio-economic rating is clearly trumped by collective teacher efficacy. They have overcome postcode, isolation, demographics, special needs, and equity issues to truly impact positively on students' learning and achievement. This leadership team knows how to nurture collective efficacy.

We are united in our belief that we can achieve great outcomes for our students, and we have high expectations of them and ourselves. (Staff member)

The Principal's involvement in system processes for recruitment is commendable. Her involvement in the graduate interview process and university visits and promotional tours has been highly effective. The Principal is a strong supporter for recruitment of graduate teachers in an increasingly difficult attraction and recruiting climate. For the first time in a long time, teachers have agreed to stay for longer term teaching contracts. This is greatly appreciated by parents and students who support retention of good teachers as a major focus..

4.1 Goal consensus

The school has clear goals set out in their Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan (AAP). Staff contribute to the AAP goals where appropriate and the AAP is always shared with staff and revisited throughout the year to ensure the school remains on track. There is a very apparent whole school commitment to high expectations for students and staff. This is evidenced by the Habits of the Heart and Habits of the Mind working together to embed the school culture. Staff are engaged in implementing the AAP and Strategic Plan. They are engaged in relevant consultative processes, and policy and procedure development at the right time in the formulation of these decisions. There is a strong level of engagement by staff in their professional learning goal setting and follow up.

4.2 Empowerment

The school leadership team are available to support staff in all areas of school and community life. They are happy to model and co-teach in classes, assist with planning, provide feedback, and also provide support for personal matters. The school invests in the *Beyond the Classroom* consultancy. It can be very daunting for some teachers to leave family supports behind and move to a new and unfamiliar environment. The leadership team is actively addressing this deficit in attracting teachers to Cunnamulla. This is well supported and resourced by the leadership team.

Staff appear to utilise a reciprocal obligation approach. They seem comfortable approaching each other for ideas and suggestions. They respect each other's contributions to discussions and Professional Learning Community conversations and decisions. Experienced teachers learn from inexperienced teachers, and it is reciprocated.

4.4 Cohesive staff knowledge

Consistency of beliefs, practices and expectations across the school is very obvious. There is little variance between classrooms on these key beliefs and strategies. There is a strong awareness of the school's values, mission, and vision. There is a strong culture of mutual respect and collegial professional relationships that clearly have created a highly supportive staff environment. Sacred Heart staff have a cohesive knowledge of the effective pedagogy and practices required across all subject areas. The staff work hard to build a thorough curriculum knowledge. Staff also work hard to improve their professional craft while building strong relationships with students, which is essential for success in this school. The school has planning expectations and guidelines to assist staff in this area.

There are well established processes in place to encourage intercultural understanding within the school community. Awareness, knowledge, and education to appreciate all cultures, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, are integrated into the curriculum. Some parents have asked for more information on how indigenous cultures are to be integrated into the new Version 9 curriculum.

4.5 Embedded practices

There are agreed non-negotiable expectations for inclusion in classroom practice such as the use of gradual release of responsibility, learning intentions and success criteria, turn and talk, self-questioning and feedback. There is a culture of open classrooms and trust amongst staff.

Wellbeing activities provide opportunities for fun, laughter, relaxation, and support for staff. Staff enjoy spending time together in a variety of ways. Playing Pool Pony Polo in the local swimming pool, Human Hungry Hippos, Op Shop 'till you drop, painting parties and taking a dip in the Bore Baths at Eulo have all provided valuable wellbeing time for staff, which assists collective teacher efficacy. That there is a high level of social capital in this school, is undeniable.

Improvement strategies

- Follow through on plans to design bespoke professional learning suited to the needs and abilities of individual teachers.
- Expand on *Beyond the Classroom* consultancy support to address more than the wellbeing agenda.
- Consider how all parents can be informed of the changes in the new Version 9 curriculum in this culturally diverse community.
- Engage with parents and carers on ways to integrate indigenous cultures in the new curriculum.

Domain 5 Using resources wisely

5.1 Human resources

5.2 Physical resources

5.3 Financial resources

Findings

5.1 Human resources

It is clear to the review team that Sacred Heart is a well-resourced school that supports the work of the teachers and support staff to maximise student learning and achievement. The needs of the school reflect school officer recruitment and placement of teaching staff. School officers are allocated to in-class support as well as intervention such as Guided Reading follow up, Phonics to Spelling groups, Role Audience Format Topic (RAFT) groups and speech language pathologist support.

The Principal is proactive and a strong advocate for recruitment of quality people in rural and remote areas. She was included in the interview panel for graduate teachers and supported the transition of university education students into the Toowoomba Catholic Schools system.

The leadership team have developed a comprehensive induction program at Sacred Heart with a prioritised professional development agenda and differentiation of professional learning. The panel believe that Sacred Heart is leading the way in the beginning teacher induction processes specific to rural and remote settings.

The commitment to and support for first year teachers is extraordinary.

(Staff member)

Additional specialist teachers have been recruited to deliver Information Technologies and General Capabilities, and additional specialist support (including Australian Sign Language - Auslan).

To support the effective delivery of the school's professional learning agenda, the leadership team access support staff from Toowoomba Catholic Schools and some external consultants. Teachers comment on the benefits of the *Beyond the Classroom* mentoring program and believe that this external support has supported their growth as beginning teachers.

It is evident from the many voices heard that Sacred Heart Primary School in its current state is an extremely positive place to work. The leadership team have committed to an ongoing improvement agenda that has created a strong culture of learning in students and staff. Parents and staff are eager to support the sustainability of this culture into the future.

5.2 Physical resources

Sacred Heart presents as a welcoming, neat, and tidy school with expansive grounds. Many of the interviewees comment on the aesthetics of the school grounds and the improvement to the facilities in recent years, including the purchase of new classroom furniture, painting work, and the construction of new buildings.

The school is doing a great job maintaining facilities and upgrades. It is tidy, modern, and feels welcoming. (Parent)

Parents and staff believe that the school is well resourced and gives a priority to resourcing initiatives aimed at improving student learning and achievement.

The new facilities are a modern addition to Sacred Heart and many interviewees comment on how this has lifted the appeal of the school significantly. The library is a very attractive learning space and gives plenty of opportunity for staff and student collaboration. Meeting rooms in the library building are utilised not only by the school for break-out rooms and small group learning, but by allied health professionals and other visiting support staff. Resources in the library and teacher resource centre are continually updated to ensure that Sacred Heart staff and students have access to quality teaching and learning materials to reflect the agenda for teaching and learning.

Students comment on how they are very appreciative to have access to digital technologies such as laptops and iPads to support their learning. The school has an Information & Communication Technology (ICT) and eLearning strategic plan to ensure that the school is well resourced in this area.

We love our technology lessons. We have plenty of updated laptops and iPads. It is an advantage for the students. (Student)

It is widely agreed that these investments have contributed to the school being a modern and highly effective place for teaching and learning to occur.

5.3 Financial resources

The school's annual budget reflects the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan. The Principal works with the Toowoomba Catholic Schools accountant to ensure financial viability is maintained and this support is greatly appreciated.

The Parent Partnership Forum (PPF) works in a productive partnership with the Principal and the community to promote the interests of the school. Parents express a desire to increase enrolments to build capacity for more resourcing and staffing. They are involved in a variety of school activities including fundraising, school functions and tuckshop. The tuckshop is an important service for the school which relies on volunteers from within the school community. Parents acknowledge that it is in danger of becoming unsustainable given the lack of volunteers. The PPF apply for grants and financially contribute to the overall running of the school as much as possible.

Improvement strategies

- Collaboratively formalise a planned approach with key stakeholders from the school community and TCSO, to ensure that there is an ongoing commitment to recruitment and a quality professional learning agenda into the future.
- Consider ways parents can play a role and contribute to retention of quality teachers in the community.

Conclusion

Since the previous SRIP in 2018, the growth and development in this school should not be understated. At the risk of hyperbole, the growth and success are nothing short of exemplary. This school has moved from average to exemplary in a short time. It is apparent to the review team that the secret to success here is outstanding leadership and the focus on building collective teacher efficacy. It is impressive to witness such engagement in learning. It is also impressive to hear students being able to describe how they do things and what they expect of each other, in such confident and concise language.

The leadership team should be congratulated on the methodical way they have led this improvement journey. The growth is nothing short of astounding. Collective teacher efficacy, high expectations, non-negotiables and agreed ways of working, have led to engaged students. Teachers who love their students and students who love their teachers has led to a level of student engagement rarely seen to this degree. They are the hallmarks of this inspirational, rural and remote school.

Congratulations to the Principal, staff and community. This is a highly effective Catholic school.