



EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW REPORT

School	St Rita's School, Victoria Point	
Principal	Anne McKenny	
	Name of School Representative	School/Community Role
School Representative	Kevin Billion	APA (Acting)
School Representative	Jessica Hill	APRE (Acting)
School Representative	Susan Maclean	ST:IE
External School Review Panel	Name	Professional Position
Panel Chair	Cathy Jackson	Director School Services North
Validator and Panel Member	Cheryl Hamilton	Principal, Loreto College
School's Area Supervisor	Neville McDonald	Area Supervisor, South Cluster 1
Panel Member	Carol Sayers	Principal, St Agatha's School, Clayfield
Panel Visit Date	Tuesday 9 th June 2015	
* Attached Documentation for NSSA Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five year Schedule for School Cyclical Review • Validated Internal School Review Records for Components 3.5 (Accountability and Compliance) and 4.5 (School Improvement) • Evaluative commentary on how school addresses accreditation requirements with evidence of same audited by area supervisor • Schedule for External Review Day 	

Section A: School Context

St Rita's Primary School, Victoria Point is a co-educational parish primary school with a strong reputation in the community as a school demonstrating a clear Catholic identity and with a comprehensive curriculum program, extra-curricular and student support programs. The welcoming, caring and family-focussed aspects of the school are widely acknowledged. There is a strong and evident culture of inclusivity that is embraced and enacted by leaders, staff, parents and students.

The school is located within the parish site and has immediate access to the Parish church, providing tangible connection between school and parish. The panel noted language used by leaders that is inclusive of the parish community. Parents are active within the school community and School Parent Networks were seen as positive in supporting parent and community engagement. The school draws on its Augustinian Spirituality to inform its mission and work.

The student demographic of the school reflects the local community, with the majority of students being drawn from the immediate area of Victoria Point and Redland Bay. Enrolments are generally stable with a slight reduction in 2105 due to the movement of Year 7 to Secondary. While student enrolment numbers have remained constant, there has been a reduction in those identifying as Catholic from 72% in 2010 to 51% in 2015. Numbers of students identifying as Indigenous and students with disabilities are both slowly increasing.

St Rita's is a calm, purposeful learning environment that is well resourced and focussed on learning progress for all. The school site, building and grounds are well maintained and provide an excellent environment for learning, collaboration and connection.

St Rita's Leadership Team has explicitly and consistently pursued a distinctive and deliberate agenda for school improvement in alignment with BCE Strategic Renewal priorities.

The school enthusiastically embraces opportunities provided by BCEO to support initiatives for improvement. Such initiatives are inclusive of all aspects of the school's operation and include curriculum reform and pedagogical improvement projects, staff formation and leadership development, student wellbeing and behaviour, technology and environmental sustainability. External consultancy has also been used to support staff professional learning and training. Notable among external supports was the engagement of Professor Frank Crowther as a critical friend and mentor for the school leadership team and teaching team.

Through its 3D approach to pedagogical improvement that recognises the integration of authoritative pedagogy, schoolwide pedagogy and the individual pedagogical gifts of each teacher, the school has progressed an agenda of pedagogical reform. St Rita's is now working towards collection, analysis and use of coherent school wide data on student performance and refining school and classroom practices.

There is an evident authenticity to initiatives undertaken and their theoretical/philosophical base. The school-wide approach to sustainability and environment is an example of this. Whether initiatives are educational, environmental or religious, the evidence base is explicit, research identified and outcomes defined.

In 2015, St Rita's has a strong, united and positive culture of learning. The school community recently suffered the tragic loss of a member of the school leadership team and unexpected departure of recently appointed Parish Priest. While these two circumstances have understandably brought about some slowing of momentum, the school community is well placed to continue its mission to deliver optimal learning outcomes in a school environment that clearly demonstrates a Catholic ethos.

Section B: Effectiveness of School Cyclical Review and Impact on Renewal

B1 Effectiveness of School Cyclical Review

B1.1 Staff engagement in cyclical review and the building of a professional review culture at the school

The leadership team have explored a number of strategies in the cycle of review to improve staff engagement and develop the culture for continuous improvement, cognisant of “interest fatigue” in the previous committee approach. There was a perception of spending too much time reviewing and not enough time improving. Utilising technology to collect information efficiently has been successful. The upgrading of SPARROW has also facilitated staff engagement with the internal review processes.

Dedicated staff meetings across the school year are used to facilitate teachers engaging in small group discussion with collation of feedback through paper and technology. The establishment of professional– RI Team, Curriculum Team, eLearning Leaders team, Sustainability team has also supported evaluation and review. Part of the charter for each team is to engage in cyclical review as these members hold a position of authoritative knowledge and play an informative role in future goal setting.

St Rita’s staff participated in the trial of the National School Improvement Tool as an additional opportunity for review of school wide practices in 2012. This included external consultants holding short conversations and undertaking classroom visits.

B1.2 Stakeholder feedback and engagement in review (Parents, students and BCEO consultants)

The External Review Team endorses the school comments in regard to stakeholder feedback. The St Rita’s School Board has Cyclical Review as a standing item on its agenda. The introduction of the 2012 – 2016 Cyclical Review documents and SPARROW are helpful tools to focus the discussion on school achievements and new directions. Students engage in feedback through aspects of School Annual Plan that are relevant and current. For example, the introduction of the 1:1 Computer Program, refurbishment of classroom, Visible Learning, RE Program, Gifted and Talented. External consultants and critical friends are invited to inform review processes. Technology, including the Google Drive strategy was particularly useful to engage wider consultation in 2013 before the introduction of the latest SPARROW. Overall, the quality of stakeholder feedback is high and the scope is concise and relevant.

B1.3 The alignment of cyclical review outcomes with annual school planning, action and school and staff professional learning

There is generally a strong alignment between cyclic review outcomes, school planning and professional learning. The School Representatives were able to share specific examples of impact. The cyclical review processes provide a point in time check in and monitoring for school achievements and provide data to inform future directions. The main input for planning, action and professional learning emanates from the BCE Strategic Renewal Framework Intentions across the Four Priority Areas, current and relevant system initiatives (eg DELT Strategy); and school wide student learning data. The timing of the cyclical review validation at the end of each year coincides with annual school renewal reports and initial discussions for the following year’s Annual School Goals. As such, the various review and improvement processes are well integrated by the leadership team. There is scope, however, to make these connections more explicit particularly for the benefit of staff so they are clear on the purpose of cyclic review and the rationale behind professional learning and school priorities.

B2 Use of student learning outcomes data to inform both school and teacher review, decision making and planning for improvement of student learning and pedagogy

Since 2011, St Rita’s has been working towards a systematic approach to collection of whole school learning data to inform curriculum planning and pedagogy, specifically in the areas of literacy, numeracy, student behaviour and disabilities. Initially beginning with a variety of raw and qualitative data, mostly based on teacher judgment, examination of this data at a whole school level raised questions of consistency and validity. An extensive

consultative and professional learning approach was undertaken to establish Whole School Assessment Practices, which now include Oral Language Checklists; SAPT; PM Benchmark and PROBE, PAT-M & PAT-R; SRS, NAPLAN plus additional diagnostic screening and testing. This data is collated in a central and accessible excel document and is used for whole school planning for professional learning, transparency for allocation of additional support, tracking and monitoring student and school improvement.

The school has a comprehensive Professional Learning program for teachers supported by TL, ST:IE and Leadership team members. In 2015, St Rita's is participating in The Learning Collaborative Project – Putting Faces to the Data and has recently created student data walls. The Learning Collaborative Data has provided a stimulus for collegial conversations which have led to the focus on Review and Respond strategy.

Teachers are actively engaging with the data for their particular cohort of students. The data walls and use of the Business Intelligence tool provide opportunities for staff to consider data across the year levels and take a more longitudinal view of student progress, one that is not limited to a calendar year. While the school leadership team and key staff have this perspective, the panel encourages the team to develop this perspective more broadly with teachers, fostering a more collaborative approach and collective responsibility for the learning and progress of all students across the years of schooling.

B.3 Impact of Cyclical Review on renewal across the strategic priorities of Catholic schooling

The issues and challenges identified in the cyclic review processes inform, and are evident in the setting of goals at both the strategic and planning levels. The school was able to clearly identify a number of key renewal initiatives that illustrate the impact of review. In discussion, the panel is comfortable in validating these examples:

Mission and Religious Education

(Component 1.1) Religious Identity and Culture has been a major contributor to improvement and development. There was previously an identifiable disconnect between parish life and school life. Annual schools goals have focussed on building the parish school relationship through liturgical and community events and shared projects in social justice. The farewell and welcome to a new Parish Priest also contributed to significant development and recognition of the school's spirituality and commitment to enhancing our Catholic identity. Whole staff and students have also engaged more fully in understanding and appreciating the Augustinian charism through professional learning, creating a school song and other St Rita's Day projects.

Learning and Teaching

The standout contributor in this area is (Component 2.5) Learning and Teaching Improvement. Developing a school-wide culture for improvement utilising the systematic collection and analysis of student learning data has been a major achievement in recent years after being identified in 2013 cyclic review as an area requiring whole school focus. Progress in this area has led the school to be well positioned to implement the Learning Collaborative Project from the BCE DELT strategy.

Professional Practice and Collaborative Relationships

Increasing the professional capacity for staff (Component 3.3) stimulated sharper focus on mentoring, coaching, goal setting and feedback for teaching and school officer staff. St Rita's results from the 2014 BCE staff survey indicated a significant growth in this area. There is now a stronger culture for teacher leaders, seamless progression and induction into school leadership roles; positive culture for shared performance development and professional learning plans and development of credible and desirable practices for professional feedback.

Strategic Resourcing

Component 4.2 Learning Environments guided strategic conversations with teachers, students and parent (school board) on the refurbishment of classrooms to reflect contemporary pedagogical practices that the school was aspiring to embed. In particular, the elements relating to design and development, management and resourcing were particularly helpful to challenge thinking on the make-up of classroom furniture in middle primary years. As a result, adjustments to classroom and school environments have been implemented.

Section C: Authentication of Compliance with Accreditation Requirements

In the course of the external review the panel sighted the following documentation and confirms that the school has demonstrated its compliance with accreditation regulations:

-	Evaluative Commentary on how school demonstrates compliance with NSSAB Accreditation Requirements substantiated by an external audit	Yes
-	Evidence of internal review and validation of Components 3.5 (<i>Accountability and Compliance</i>) and 4.5 (<i>School Improvement</i>)	Yes
-	Most recent Annual School Report	Yes
-	Current School Strategic Renewal Plan	Yes
-	Most recent Annual School Action Plan	Yes
-	Most recent school renewal report (achievements against goals)	Yes

Panel Comments are provided below where relevant:

The school also provided:

- Copy of Schoolwide Pedagogy – Know More Do More Be More
- Copy of 3D Approach to School Improvement
- St Rita’s Team Meeting Targeted Projects Term 2 2015

The panel was also able to view other data sources including the school’s current data wall showing literacy attainment for all students across the years of schooling.

Section D: School Report on Learning and Teaching of Religious Education and Religious Life of the School

The External Review Team endorses the well-documented report on the learning and teaching of Religious Education and the Religious Life of the School.

All teaching staff at St Rita's have full or interim accreditation to teach RE in the classroom. A small number of teachers is moving towards full accreditation through pathways such as REAP and ACU Graduate Diploma studies and the school is supporting these teachers by providing connections with BCE personnel and the allocation of time to allow teachers to attend to assessment and criteria tasks. Over and above formal accreditation, the school acknowledges the varying difference in the faith and lived experience of teachers. This poses a challenge in ensuring that there is consistency and alignment in the understanding and language used in the teaching of Religion, interpretation of scripture and engagement in the Catholic Life of the School.

The school ensures that RE is a recognised and valued curriculum area with the same expectations of planning, pedagogy and assessment as the other learning areas. Allocation of resources, digital technologies and professional needs is considered by the Curriculum Team as part of a standing agenda item. Intra and inter school CTJ moderation processes help to ensure that RE learning and teaching is rigorous and high quality. Expectations for semester reporting monitor that Religion comments are reflective of mandated scripture texts and prayers and curriculum expectations.

Professional Development and Learning Plans and teacher goal setting are developed in line with school priority components. The School Wide Pedagogy 3D approach, the DELT initiative, the 3 High Yield Strategies and Visible Learning all contribute to the high expectations around the planning, implementation and achievement within the approved RE Curriculum. As staff members identify areas for development within their learning and teaching, the leadership team and APRE ensure that this encompasses high expectations around the delivery of the approved RE curriculum. The implementation of the school RE Program is monitored through year level team planning to ensure alignment with the use of mandated texts, prayer, background information and pedagogy. The APRE supports these processes.

The Catholic Identity and culture of the school is clear and thoughtfully nurtured. With a growing population of students and families not identifying as Catholic, the school is called to reconsider both its approach to the Religion Curriculum implementation and the nature of the Religious Life of the School to ensure that both are inclusive and educative for all. The Augustinian charism provides a lens through which to explore this challenge of evangelisation and sharing the gospel messages in meaningful and authentic ways.

Emerging issues and challenges have been identified through discussion with the Parish Administrator, Fr Anthony Mellor, and leadership, at staff meetings and in consultation with the parent/parish community. Such dialogue needs to continue as the community diversifies, to ensure that staff and students can clearly see the relevance of the Christian story for their lives and learning.

Section E: School Strategic Directions for Improved Learning

The clear focus for school improvements is centred on student learning outcomes and student wellbeing supported by developing an inspiring school vision that reflects Catholic identity and the Augustinian charism, building a stronger and robust staff collegiality and improving partnerships with parents, parish and local community. The school leadership team have clearly identified future priorities (along with leadership challenges) in four strategic priorities and the panel endorses these directions. All of the areas identified are natural next steps which build on work that has been initiated. In relation to each priority, the panel offers some comments for consideration of the Leadership Team and staff in refining the future directions:

KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTION	PANEL CHALLENGES and CONSIDERATIONS
<p>Mission and Religious Education Validation of School Religion Program and further participation in Enhancing Catholic Identity through Leuven Project</p>	<p>The Leuven project is currently on hold but when returning to this, consider connections with parish including demographic data analysis. The identification of an authentic, relevant, contemporary Catholic identity is a challenge for both school and parish and provides a rich context for building relationships between school and parish communities.</p>
<p>Learning and Teaching Implementation of The Learning Collaborative through establishing and attaining appropriate targets to ensure all students are making progress in Literacy – extending this strategy to Numeracy</p>	<p>The panel commends the focus on achieving literacy targets while remaining faithful to the integrity of the Prep and Early Years program.</p> <p>The establishment of data walls is a great first step in building teacher data literacy, especially teachers’ sense of longitudinal data and school progress over time. There is a challenge to change teachers’ language from <i>my students</i> to <i>our students</i>.</p> <p>Equity and excellence go together, they are not mutually exclusive. The challenge is to ensure all are making expected progress, including capable students.</p> <p>Within the broad aspiration of Implementation of DELT, the school is encouraged to explicitly name the goals for the school in terms of learning strengths and areas for development.</p> <p>Focus on consolidating and embedding the work that is happening after an ambitious change agenda, ensuring that all teachers understand the theory and rationale that underpins desired practice.</p>
<p>Professional Practice and Collaborative Partnerships Aligning the PDPL process with DELT strategy, introducing collaborative goal setting, embedding professional feedback through Learning Walks and Talks</p>	<p>Collaborative Goal-setting provides a context for building collective responsibility for all of “our” students, not just “my class”.</p> <p>Use this to build the collaborative culture and shared ownership and lift professional accountability through being accountable to peers.</p> <p>Consider relaxing formal processes of goal-setting to be more responsive to learning needs in cohort or among staff.</p>
<p>Strategic Resourcing Continue good progress with Sustainable Practices moving on to Reduced Energy Use and maintaining exemplary practice in Waste management. Embedding these practices into curriculum learning.</p>	<p>This is an area of success and should be celebrated and maintained. While embedding these practices into curriculum learning is an ideal, is it feasible within the school’s explicit learning agenda? Where will the leadership and passion come from to take this forward?</p> <p>By its nature, this is a grass-roots initiative. Engage the community in deciding how to take this forward. It may be a perfect context in which to develop student leadership.</p>

Section F: Review Panel Recommendations in relation to future school engagement in respect to review and school improvement:

The panel commends use of professional teams, the evident commitment to reflective practice, and the work of the leadership team towards alignment of significant processes.

The Leadership Team is encouraged to work towards greater transparency and making explicit explanations available to staff in particular so that they understand the theory of action that the priorities and plans are assuming. Teachers would benefit from the inclusion of a “why” statement with the “what” statement in planning.

The panel noticed opportunities to “market” the school a little more by using the human resources of the community. It would be a great first step if the teachers could articulate the school’s learning improvement journey and understood the data that informs this. Current staff and parents are your best resource in this regard, especially if they are all telling the same story.

While affirming the good work being done, there is value in continuing to seek ways to engage staff in all aspects of the cyclic review process, including giving more responsibility to teacher leaders. Providing professional learning to staff in the intelligent use of data to inform teaching practice and to build collective responsibility for the ongoing learning journey of each student will also support this participation.

Finally, the panel would support making opportunities to celebrate the milestones and successes that are already evident and will become more so with the refined use of data and collaborative engagement in the Learning Collaborative work.

Section G: Panel comments on the conduct of the external review process

The panel congratulates the School Community on its preparation for and participation in the External Review processes, cognisant of the very difficult time that immediately preceded this process.

The engagement with a wide range of stakeholders though the day provided the panel with a clear and positive indication of how St Rita’s is working towards learning improvement for each and every child within an authentic Catholic community.

The panel appreciates the open and honest engagement evident in this review and the preparedness of the Leadership Team in particular to engage in robust conversations about the challenges ahead. It is clear that much has been achieved and the School is encouraged to take time to celebrate the successes while planning for a vibrant future.

Section G: Data made available to the External Review Panel

(i) The following data was provided to the Review Panel:

- School profile data including staff and student demographics, enrolment profile and religious profile data
- Internal School Reviews of Components validated by area supervisor for the last five years
- Relevant school student achievement data drawn from relevant Years 3, 5, 7, 9 NAPLAN data, Year 12 QCS data, Year 12 QSA exit data and Year 12 (Next Steps) transition data from the BI tool
- Current School Strategic Renewal Plan
- Annual Action Plans and Annual Reports

(ii) Experiences through which the Review Panel gained understandings of the school and its culture:

- Meeting with the Principal, Teachers and School Representatives, and conversation with them on school improvement through cyclical review (See schedule for the day)
- Meetings with Parents
- Meetings with Teachers
- Meetings with Students
- Meeting with Parish Priest and Parish staff
- Learning walks around the school (including visits to learning spaces)

Other experiences as noted:

- Viewing of data wall

Panel Chair Signature:



Date: 22.07.15