



**Catholic Education
Archdiocese of Brisbane**

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EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW REPORT

<i>School Name</i>	St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Laidley	
<i>Principal of School</i>	Mr Nathan Haley	
	Name of School Representative	School/Community Role
<i>School Representative</i>	Tracy Gaddes	APRE
<i>School Representative</i>	Donna Cutler	Curriculum Support Teacher
<i>School Representative</i>	Suzanne Venema, Donna Cutler, Jackie Howie	Teachers in focus group
<i>School Representative</i>	Mollie Haley, Mark Newton, Christine Wilkes	Parent representatives in focus group
<i>School Representative</i>	Sample of students from Yrs 5-7	Student Representative Council

<i>External School Review Panel</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Professional Position</i>
<i>Panel Chair</i>	Helen Royan	Area Supervisor
<i>School's Area Supervisor</i>	Paul Allen	Area Supervisor
<i>Panel Member</i>	Tim Stinson	Principal St Mary's Primary School Beaudesert

<i>Panel Visit Date</i>	Wednesday 9 June 2010
<i>Attached Documentation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Validated Internal School Review Records for Components 8.1 and 8.2 and audit of evidence template for Component 8.2 Accountability ▪ Schedule for visit ▪ Annual school reports, 2008, 2009

Section A: St Mary's Primary School, Laidley - School Context:

The documentation for the panel provided a very clear contextualisation of the school.

St Mary's School is open, welcoming and inviting. It is situated in a highly rural area and draws enrolment from a wide catchment area. In recent years there has been a steady increase in enrolments reflecting the general population growth in the Lockyer Valley. It is a physically attractive school that is well maintained and has a high commitment to ecological sustainability.

This school is well regarded and valued in the local community as evidenced in the valuable community links that continue to be developed and strengthened through the school's presence at and involvement in community events. Of particular note is the clear and effective engagement between the parish and the school community with active involvement and support of the parish priest in the life of the school. School families come from a range of Christian traditions, with many actively practicing in their own faith communities as worshippers at weekend services. This challenges the school to provide a curriculum that is authentically Catholic while addressing the ecumenical nature of its community. The school is the school of choice for families seeking a primary Christian education. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and are an integral part of school life. Parents have a traditional view of schooling and this provides a challenge when considering class composition. Student leaders are articulate, actively involved in the life of the school and provide strong student voice.

The school has a strong learning and teaching focus that is named and pursued. The school is perceived as expecting and achieving high academic standards while caring pastorally for its students exceptionally well. The focus on ICLTs have positioned the school well for the introduction of Australian curriculum as have the development of a professional learning community, a focus on using data to further enhance student achievement and a willingness to respond quickly and effectively to implement strategies to improve student outcomes.

Section B: Engaging the school community with internal school review

The panel were impressed by the renewal and review journey at St Mary's and would endorse and emphasise the following aspects of the processes:-

Panel members agreed that the whole school community engaged significantly with internal review and remained faithful to the process. The reports provided were concise, well documented and based on evidence.

The processes utilised by the internal review teams evidenced strong leadership that was distributed to other members of the school community. This distributive leadership model ensured thorough engagement and robust conversations. This shared leadership was valued by staff members. In talking with school representatives it became clear that School Renewal and Review are not merely mandatory administrative procedures but rather genuine opportunities for reflection, celebration and growth. The school has also exhibited a dynamic approach to review with this being evidenced in their preparedness to act on and engage with learnings that emerged through the discernment process and professional dialogue.

The School Renewal Dinner was an innovative and creative response to the challenge of gaining authentic parent participation in the process and clearly overcame a reluctance to complete surveys. The success of this initiative can be built on for future reviews as it provided a highly valued stimulus for conversation.

It was felt there was a considered and confident approach to reviewing and rating components and that the process engendered deep reflection and generated energy. Staff members feel that the renewal and review processes are embedded within their professional community and that while this has provided connections for the school as a whole it has also contributed, in conjunction with BCE frameworks, to inform goal setting at individual teacher level.

Teachers believe that the processes used have ensured that they are better informed generally and more readily understand processes that make the school effective.

The panel applauds the development of a tracking system to ensure that strategies identified for improvement remain in focus until completed or superseded.

Section C Use of aggregate data on Student Outcomes

There is evidence of extensive use of data to inform directions at the school. This included

- Use of NAPLAN results to identify potential curriculum gaps and to inform professional learning for staff
- Use of Who's Coming to School data to profile the school community

The school has engaged a number of external consultants from BCE to support their endeavours. These included

- Mark Snartt and Cath Grealy to assist in analysing data,
- Education officers in ICT to assist with planning and teacher professional learning

The school has responded to the issues raised in data in a considered and well measured manner. Some changes to practice have included significant investment in infrastructure and provision of computers and an increased emphasis on use of ICT within the classroom. This will stand the school in good stead as we move towards the proposed national curriculum. As a result of data analysis there is a strong sense of shared responsibility for improved learning outcomes with authentic and targeted engagement across the whole community.

Section D School strategic directions for improved learning

In endorsing the areas for strategic development that the school has identified the panel would suggest the consideration of the following to inform future renewal planning.

The panel endorses the school's intention to

- Strive to further define its religious identity and Mercy heritage and to explicitly articulate this within the community. The centenary celebrations will offer the ideal vehicle for this.
- Explore creative responses to community and student needs when developing the schools' National partnerships plans for 2011-2014.
- Seek to further embed ICLTs in and across the curriculum as we move towards Australian curriculum. Further to this the panel encourages the school to consider engagement of staff with CTC tool to identify levels of competency in ICT and to explore targeted opportunities to further develop ICLT skills through Atomic Learning.
- Maintain its strong commitment to professional learning through the development of professional learning teams with emphasis on strengthening and improving pedagogy.
- Continue to find innovative ways to meet the challenge of identifying and engaging staff with expertise in specialist areas to support the co- and extra-curricular activities of the school.
- Continue to provide opportunities for parents to develop understanding and to increase their ability to support their child's learning at home.
- Explore the potential of the school to grow and to reassure parents that the existing high levels of pastoral care can be maintained within any plans for expansion.

Section E:

A: Further Considerations

Panel members commend the initiative of providing sound field systems in all classrooms as this enhances the ability of all students to more ably access learning in the classroom.

The panel encourages school leadership to continue the positive conversations in regard to renewal and review processes and to continue to seek innovative and creative ways to engage community members in authentic dialogue. The aspiration to further develop ways to gain student voice in renewal processes is applauded.

B: Panel comments on the conduct of external review process

The panel expresses its thanks for the warm welcome afforded as well as the organisation of the day in preparing appropriate documentation and facilitating the visit to the school. The panel commends the school for the thoroughness of the information provided. It was well synthesised and provided a clear snapshot of the school and indicated the school's vision for the future.

The panel would like to congratulate the school for the participation of community members in presenting information about the school in such a comprehensive and enthusiastic manner. The panel appreciated the openness and honesty in reflection and review and the alignment and congruency between documentation, the presentations and the evidence gained from engagement through school walks.

Section F

Data made available to the External Review Panel

The following data was provided to the Validation Panel

- ✓ School Profile including demographic and religious profile data and future facilities planning
- ✓ Internal School Reviews of Components validated by area supervisor
- ✓ School student achievement data externally certified (Years 3, 5 & 7 NAPLAN data)
- ✓ Current School *Strategic Renewal Plan*
- ✓ *Annual Action Plans and Annual Reports*

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

- ✓ Meeting with the Principal and School Representatives, and listening to their articulation of the learning improvement journey
- ✓ Interviews with key staff and observational visits by panel members to view school improvement strategies in action
- ✓ Meeting with school student leaders
- ✓ Meeting with Parent Representatives
- ✓ Viewing of school site and facilities

External Review Panel Chair Signature

Helen Ryan

Date

15 July 2010