



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SCHOOL CYCLIC REVIEW REPORT

School Cyclic Review focuses on the effectiveness of a school's engagement with self-review, the impact of self-review on school improvement and the future directions for the improvement of student outcomes that the school has identified.

School Name	St Brigid's School, Collie
Principal of School	Daniel Graves
Leadership Team	Marcie Collins
Parish Priest	Fr Robert Romano
Board Chair	Rochelle Piavanini
SCR Panel Visit Date	17 & 18 June 2019

School Cyclic Review Panel	Name
Panel Chair	Michael Ciccarelli
School Improvement Advisor	Maureen Tully
Panel Members	Andrea Millar Leon Ridgeway

SCHOOL CYCLIC REVIEW REPORT

1. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT CONTEXT

The school's current context and the School Cyclic Review (SCR) Panel's observations regarding any other challenges that contribute to the school improvement agenda.

St Brigid's School in Collie is a co-educational, Catholic primary school catering for approximately 190 students from Kindergarten to Year Six. The school's Mission is 'to provide the students of Collie and the surrounding areas with the very best educational program, underpinned by Christian values and spiritual development'. The school's values are Service, Respect, Kindness and Learning.

The SES (Socio Economic Status) of St Brigid's School is 91 and it has an ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage) of 1003. In 2018, the school had 10% of students in the top quartile and 35% in the bottom quartile as indicated by the ICSEA data. Between February 2018 and February 2019, enrolment numbers from Kindergarten to Year Six increased by 20 (+11.6%) from 172 to 192. In 2018, student enrolments included 13% from a language background other than English. The school has 11 students with a Health Care Card and 25 students with a Pensioner Concession Card.

The school's main catchment area (based on new enrolments for Kindergarten between 2015 and 2019) is Collie with 98% of student enrolments, followed by Collie Burn and McAlinden with 1% of student enrolments each. The closest schools to St Brigid's School are Amaroo Primary School (0.9kms) and Fairview Primary School (1.0kms). Between 2018 and 2019, enrolments decreased at all nearby primary government schools, while enrolments increased at St Brigid's School.

In 2018, the population in the catchment area was estimated to be 9,143 people and this is forecast to increase by 3% between 2018 and 2023. The main catchment area has an average proportion of Catholics (21.0%), a slightly above average proportion of the population that identify as Aboriginal (3.9%), a significantly lower proportion of the population that were born overseas (11.0%) or speak a language other than English at home (3.2%) compared to the averages for WA. It should also be noted that whilst 6.8% of the primary school-age children in Collie are Aboriginal, there is only one Aboriginal student at St Brigid's School.

The most recent data (2016) states that the Collie Parish had a population of 1,851 Catholics, making up 21.0% of the total population in the area; this is just below the WA average of 21.4%. In 2019, St Brigid's School has 192 students of which 44.3% are Catholic. This is below the WA average of 69.7% Catholic student enrolments at CEWA schools. The ratio of Catholic enrolments has decreased since 2015 in which 55.4% of the 177 students were Catholic.

The SCR Panel notes the following as challenges for St Brigid's School:

- There has been three different Parish Priests in Collie in three years. The recent appointment began in late March; however, this Parish Priest only recently actually began his role.
- Due to many of the St Brigid's School staff having attended the school themselves and living in a small community, change can often be difficult.

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2. 'LOOKING BACK' ON THE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

The SCR Panel's views regarding improvements in outcomes and provision that have taken place over the past 3-5 years with substantiated evidence.

Catholic Identity (Discipleship)

In 2017, the newly formed leadership team at St Brigid's School began the journey of re-visioning the school as it was clearly evident that the existing Mission and Vision statements did not align with the reality of the school. It was also seen that greater alignment between the Strategic Plan, Evangelisation Plan and School Improvement Plan was necessary. As part of this alignment, there was a need to recapture what it means to be a Catholic school and not 'the private school on the hill' that was relatively unresponsive to the needs of the local Collie community.

Following significant consultation, reflection and planning, there was a refocusing on what the community considered important and the development of goals and values, with links to the Presentation Sisters and previous local church leaders, that all stakeholders could embrace and live by. The collaboratively developed goals and values enabled all in the school community to develop a greater understanding of Catholic Identity and how this underpins the life and work of the school. The School Board also developed their understanding of their role in supporting the Catholic Identity of St Brigid's School. Previously, the work of the School Board resulted in some outcomes that did not fully support the expectations of what it is to be a Catholic school.

The practical results of the development of clear and relevant Mission and Vision statements have seen the school move from being seen as somewhat exclusive to being more inclusive. This has led to those who are more marginalised being welcomed into the school by all members of the community. The School Board has supported a number of scholarships and bursaries being offered to Aboriginal students. All those interviewed during the SCR supported this initiative and saw this as bringing positive change to the school's image.

St Brigid's School has worked hard to establish a relationship with the parish. This has been part of the school's focus on 'Walking Together'. With three different Parish Priests in three years, and two priests taking Long Service Leave during this time, developing continuity of parish-school relationships has been challenging. With the appointment of a new Parish Priest at the commencement of 2019, early indicators suggest that the relationship between the school and parish will thrive.

Currently, only a very small number of school families engage with the parish on a regular basis. To enhance the relationship, the school coordinates the training of altar servers, with 35 students currently rostered to serve at weekend Masses. Class Masses, followed by pizza evenings on a Saturday evening once a term, with all parishioners invited, have seen a number of families engage more regularly with the parish. A number of school staff provide a children's liturgy on Sundays, and the principal is a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, undertaking the role of Family Ministry.

St Brigid's School has also had a strong focus on social justice. Activities surrounding this, including raising funds for Caritas, and supporting a sick former student and her family through a 'Blue Day' have been supported by the Year Six Leadership Ministries.

Education (Learning)

Through discussions with the Leadership Team, staff, students and parents, it was evident that there has been a very clear and well-developed focus on teaching and learning at St Brigid's School in the last three years. The school has used a reflective and measured approach, engaging with data as their main driver, to look at whole-school improvement. This has resulted in the development of a whole-school Literacy Plan which outlines expectations of teacher professional practice. The Leadership Team, with the support of the staff, has systematically trialled and introduced new programs and initiatives, including *Prime Maths*, *Talk for Writing* and *Promoting Literacy Development (PLD)* for Spelling. It is apparent that there has been a cohesive and inclusive decision-making approach in place so that all staff have ownership of the new initiatives and are accountable for the part they play in improving student outcomes.

The school is involved in the *Lyn Sharratt Literacy Collective* and has commenced embedding the *14 Parameters of Effective Schools* into the school. The school has established a data wall for Spelling and plans to develop a data wall for Reading in the near future. Being involved in the *Literacy Collective* has given the recently established School Improvement Team (SIT) a deeper understanding of how to use data walls to improve individual student outcomes. Staff participate in Case Management Meetings to provide shared support for student learning across the grades.

To be able to offer students the opportunity to achieve the outcomes outlined in the Design & Technologies and Digital Technologies Curriculum, the Leadership Team, School Board and staff identified that there was a need to upgrade the IT devices in the school. The decision to utilise part of the funding isolated for other school improvement areas, enabled the Year Five and Six students to be given a laptop so the journey of the 1:1 device could begin. The students have ownership of one device, and it is their responsibility to use it responsibly at all times. Future plans include the Year Four students also being involved in the 1:1 laptop program. The school has identified the need to upskill staff and develop their IT knowledge and skills in the use of the Office 365 suite. To support this initiative, a targeted teacher works with students and staff to support the integration of IT across the curriculum.

The transformation of traditional classrooms to contemporary learning environments has involved more than just new furniture. It has encompassed pedagogical approaches, behaviours, agency, engagement, independence, and differentiated learning groups. There is evidence of explicit teaching spaces in each classroom. Strategic and well-planned seating is varied and accommodates the learning needs of the students. The students, staff, and parents recognise that this has had a positive effect on all facets of learning, behaviour and engagement.

St Brigid's School's targeted priority on funding enhances teacher development so that learning outcomes for students are improved. Through restructuring the role of the Assistant Principal to encompass Administration, Instructional Coach and Support Coordinator/Teacher, support is provided for ongoing teacher development. Targeting support for Literacy and

Numeracy has resulted in allocation of Education Assistant support within the classrooms for three to four sessions of supported literacy and one to two lessons of supported numeracy from Years One - Six each week.

Numeracy & Literacy Achievement Standards have been developed. The staff worked collaboratively at a number of targeted Professional Learning Community Meetings (PLCMs) to unpack the WA Curriculum expectations and put them into parent friendly language. This was an effective exercise for staff as it helped them to understand what the curriculum was requiring of them in the various year levels. The purpose in creating these documents was to give parents more information about how their child is progressing and how they could support their child in their learning. Teachers are also using the documents to report against the Numeracy and Literacy Achievement Standards. As these documents are new, the staff will be reviewing these later in the year to see if any changes or adjustments are required. Parent data sources indicated that the school has high expectations of students.

Community (Engagement)

Initial data suggested that the school needed to do significant work in the area of parent and community engagement. In 2017, further research was undertaken by the School Leadership Team, utilising the *Keeping Families Informed Survey*, to confirm the veracity of the assumption. The school community identified three specific areas for action: Communication, Connection and Participation.

Re-engaging with, and promoting the school within the Collie community was essential for the school's future viability; consequently, a Marketing Committee was established. There was a clear understanding that the school's greatest asset was their staff and parent body. To gain the greatest benefit from this support, the school community examined current and new communication strategies with a view towards re-invigorating its engagement with the Collie community. Six strategies were identified, redesigned and implemented to give the greatest impact at the lowest cost. These strategies continue to be fully utilised and accessed by staff, students, parents and the wider Collie community as a vehicle for engagement with and promotion of the school. Parents and staff members indicated that regular, timely and transparent communication with parents has created a high level of trust and collaboration across the school community. The avenues of communicating with the community include Facebook, SEQTA, CONNECT (an app designed by Chameleon Logic), the School Newsletter, SMS (text messaging) to parents, and meetings.

Developing an authentic vision for St Brigid's School, which was relevant to the school community, was an imperative. Collaboration between school leadership, staff, School Board, and the community allowed for the creation of the current School Mission, Vision, Values and Goals. Through discussions with students, it is apparent that these are embedded in the lived experiences of the students.

A number of targeted strategies have been successfully implemented to better engage with the Collie community and the school has actively sought out and engaged with a significant number of support groups, allied agencies and organisations within the local community. Financial sponsorship of the Early Years Playground, engagement with the Friends of Collie River and Collie Shire Flora Rehabilitation (for the Collie River project), and the student's performances at River View aged care facility were highlighted as examples of community

participation. Alignment with the school values of Service, Respect, Kindness, and Learning provides focus for community participation. During the SCR, parents and students commented on the changing perception of the school by the wider Collie community.

Significant support from the School Board led to the offer of Aboriginal scholarships and bursaries; however, no offers were taken up. Further support was gained through access to a Transforming Lives Engagement Officer to enhance the school's endeavours, working to increase engagement with local Elders and community through participation in the development of a native garden featuring local Noongar plant names. The school's commitment and persistence in this area is to be commended.

The school has also taken on a number of environmental initiatives, including Wastewise, Waterwise, various recycling programs, garden projects (including a bush garden with the local Noongar community), worm farms, and composting systems. The school's work in this area received acknowledgment on the ABC promotions for *War on Waste* and St Brigid's School was visited by the Premier of WA in recognition of their work in this area.

Overall, the whole-school community is actively and positively participating in the process of re-envisioning the school within the Collie community. An indicator of success in this area is the increased number of people accessing the promotional materials and spaces the school has created for this purpose. Continued monitoring and expansion of the engagement strategies is critical to the continued growth of the school.

Stewardship (Accountability)

The School Board is diverse and committed. However, the depth of knowledge of the definition in the *Bishops' Mandate* of what makes a school a good Catholic School was not clearly understood by the School Board. The school Leadership Team successfully addressed the issue, clarifying the specific role a Catholic school has in regard to issues of social justice, reaching out to the poor and marginalised, and the development of the whole Christian person. With this new sense of purpose, the whole school leadership group has moved forward to address the needs of the school and community.

In preparation for the development of a new Strategic Plan, in 2017 the school undertook a consultative process with staff, the School Board, and families to understand the current reality and to set the improvement directions for the ensuing years. Following significant consultation, examination of a range of data, policies and school plans, stakeholder discussions and reflection, a new Strategic Plan was developed that aligned processes, policies and plans and set direction for the 2018 - 2020 period. The Strategic Plan became the focus and framework for decision-making and data gathering and assisted in moving forward with the improvement goals for the whole school community.

Enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of the school was the major focus. Through the transparent and consultative approach there is now:

- clarity of purpose, identity, and 'personality' of the school (as identified by a School Board member)
- a high-level of trust and buy-in from staff and parents regarding decisions made at the school

- an effective, collaborative and respectful working relationship between the school leadership and School Board, with a high level of transparency evident

A reflective, strategic and systematic approach to whole-school improvement was achieved by courageous and astute financial management by the School Board and Leadership Team. With the support of the School Board and staff and following extensive engagement and consultation with the parent community, the school introduced composite classes in 2018. Staffing cost savings were reallocated to maintenance, resourcing and refurbishment (painting, carpeting and contemporary furniture) upgrades of the Early Years Playgrounds, technology and development of a Staff Resource Room. The development of the Senior Nature Playground commenced in 2018 and is nearing completion. These refurbishments are assisting with the marketing of St Brigid's School and are drawing attention from the local community.

St Brigid's School had experienced an 18% drop in enrolments over the four years prior to 2018. The marketing strategies adopted have had a significant impact, with the school increasing enrolments by 11% between February 2018 and February 2019. The other four primary schools in the Collie region have had decreasing enrolments. Decisions made to introduce a flat cost of \$80 per year for Kindergarten have doubled Kindergarten enrolments. The 'PlayCafe' each Tuesday is also drawing interest from new families.

A concentrated focus on staff development has included:

- greater focus on teaching and learning at PLCMs with shared accountability and awareness of individual responsibility for whole-school improvement.
- staff Professional Learning aligned with school improvement focus areas and supported by effective PLCMs.
- training and implementation of the Inquiry Based Learning approach in the Early Years.
- an effective Staff Growth and Development Process (mentoring and coaching for teachers who see this as a non-threatening means of supporting their ongoing development).
- Education Assistants meeting with the Principal regarding their work and development and being supported in their work by the Assistant Principal.
- the formation of the School Improvement Team (SIT) to drive whole-school improvement
- the supportive implementation of the *Talk For Writing* program, where all staff received the training prior to its implementation and any new or returning staff receive the training.
- revision of the Staff Handbook resulting in clarity of all school documents, plans and structures. All policies and documents are readily accessible to all staff.
- Early Years staff meeting as a team, which has resulted in considerable improvement towards meeting the requirements of the National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care. Inquiry based and explicit/intentional teaching and development of the physical environment are now evident.
- a change to the Education Assistant role, with greater accountability and involvement in the teaching and learning program.
- a focus on 'a child a day'; this was noted as an effective process in addressing the learning needs of all students in the Early Years Program.

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3. 'LOOKING FORWARD' – THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The SCR Panel outlines its views, endorsing and/or challenging the school's strategic directions.

Catholic Identity (Discipleship)

The appointment of a new Parish Priest in 2019 has afforded St Brigid's School the opportunity to deepen the relationship with the parish and further enhance the Catholic Identity of the school community, whilst also providing opportunities for Evangelisation.

The SCR Panel supports the school's identified goal of focusing on the ongoing faith development of staff. The purpose of this focus is to meet the needs of staff in their own faith journey and the teaching of Religious Education (RE), whilst also fulfilling Accreditation requirements.

Education (Learning)

The SCR Panel supports the school's goal in embedding a whole-school pedagogical approach to ensure effective and consistent teaching and learning occurs across all nine learning areas within the curriculum. The development of a St Brigid's School *Vision for Learning* would provide clarity and sustainability to this work. Active participation in the *Lyn Sharratt Literacy Collective* will ensure ongoing and systematic implementation and evaluation of effective practices across the school and a positive impact upon student learning outcomes, including school based assessments, NAPLAN and the Bishop's Religious Literacy Assessment (BRLA).

In addition to supporting the faith development of staff, the SCR Panel recommends a focus on more targeted teaching of the RE Curriculum, with support for teachers to engage with the new RE Units of Work.

Ongoing support for staff development in the area of ICT will enable more effective integration of technology in the teaching and learning processes and enhance staff communication and collaboration.

Community (Engagement)

Given the existing effective, supportive and collaborative partnership with parents, it is timely that this partnership is enhanced to include a greater engagement with, and focus on, their child's learning journey.

The ongoing monitoring of the school's current engagement strategies in the Collie community and seeking further opportunities to promote St Brigid's School as a school of choice is encouraged. It is through these initiatives that the current enrolment growth can be maintained.

Stewardship (Accountability)

Ongoing monitoring of the school's budget and enrolment trends needs to be maintained with a view to supporting the implementation of the school's Strategic Directions and being responsive to the needs of the wider Collie community.

The successful implementation of the mentoring/coaching process by the Assistant Principal and the high level of trust identified by staff provide an opportunity for the initiative to be expanded to include other key staff as coaches or mentors, thus providing for a distributed leadership model and succession planning to be embedded within the school's structure.

Investigating opportunities for Student Agency, including the creation of a student code of conduct (as outlined on the ChildSafe Framework website), empowering students to have a voice in teacher feedback, and involvement in and ownership of the ongoing development of the whole-school environment is recommended.

Final Statement

The SCR Panel would like to acknowledge and affirm the St Brigid's School community on their work and achievements towards school improvement. There is a sense of pride in the positive and engaged culture that permeates throughout the whole-school community. There is a high level of respect, trust and transparency between all stakeholders. The safe and orderly school environment, where all feel welcomed and involved in the school's life and work, has been achieved through courageous, transparent, committed and strategic leadership. It was very evident to the SCR Panel that the St Brigid's School community is actively engaged with its goals, as stated:

- We walk together
- We are successful learners
- We are the hands and hearts of Jesus
- We are committed to improvement