

School renewal and improvement report

informed by TCS Quadrennial School Review

St Joseph's College, Toowoomba



St Joseph's
College
TOOWOOMBA



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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 and achievement 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 27 to 30 May 2024 by the review team comprising

- Madonna Sleba, Director: Education Services, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office
- Gavin Rick, Senior Education Leader, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office
- Mick Floyd, Manager Learning and Innovation, Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office
- John Coman, External Consultant
- Peter Cuskelly, Principal Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby

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

- College Principal
- 7 Senior Leadership Team members
- 17 Middle Leaders
- 32 Teaching staff
- 21 School Officers
- 71 Students
- 16 Parents

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 school review focuses on the quality of teaching and learning
- 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 four SRI domains from the Framework provide the structure for the review and future planning.

Domain 1 Engaged students, learning

The school is driven by a deep belief that every student can successfully learn. 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 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.

Domain 4 Valuing our people

All staff are valued as the single most influential factor on the success of students at the College. Staff are knowledgeable about college-wide approaches, programs and expectations and supported in practical ways to develop and strengthen capabilities to be the best at what they do. Staff are supported to integrate high impact teaching strategies and personalised learning approaches which enhance student voice, choice and agency in every lesson and classroom. There is a strong sense of confidence and purpose in the way people go about their work and a genuine commitment to the College's Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan (AAP).

School context

Vision

St Joseph's College is an educational community focused on the Spirit of Jesus.

Those who join it experience

- an alive and deepening search for God present-amongst-us in the world
- an expectation that to educate each person to their potential is a journey to self, and from self to the world beyond
- an appreciation that growth, which happens differently for each person, needs space and time to truly bear fruit
- a commitment to the life and energy of this community to enable good to happen.



Mission

Faith education

Christian principles permeate all aspects of college life. St Joseph's College endeavours to create an atmosphere where Christian Spirit and values take precedence, so that students' gifts of faith may be nurtured, internalised and integrated with the culture of our times.

Intellectual goals

St Joseph's College cultivates intellectual values in students and promotes integrity, respect for the truth, openness to reality, and respect for scholarly virtues.

Personal development

We help students grow as individuals uncovering unique gifts and positive self-esteem. This ensures that recognition is given to many aspects of personal growth, so academic achievement is not seen to be the only means of success.

Community orientation

Parents, students and staff of St Joseph's College form a Catholic Christian Community in which they demonstrate care and respect for each other. An awareness of the total human family will be fostered through involvement in the wider community.

School context, history and Catholic identity

Early in 1955, Mr Vince Crowley was concerned at the number of young lads riding bikes across the city to attend St Mary's College. Seven or eight parents attended a meeting called to investigate the possibility of establishing a Catholic boys school on the eastern side of Toowoomba. A raffle to raise funds was organised.

It was discovered that a block of land that had been purchased by Archbishop Quinn of Brisbane in 1879 had been left by will in 1881 "to the Archbishop of Brisbane and his successors for educational and charitable purposes". The property was handed over by Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane to the Toowoomba Cathedral in 1955.

It was unknown at St Patrick's Cathedral that the Church even owned the property until a rates notice was sent there in error. The original property included the whole block of 10 acres bounded by James, Curzon and McKenzie Streets.

In 1955, the Bishop of Toowoomba, Bishop W M Brennan approached the Christian Brothers to establish a community at St Joseph's and an agreement was drawn up with the Provincial for its formation. A community consisting of Brother R B Murphy, Brother W P Morahan and Brother P J Hodgkinson was appointed.

Plans were drawn up in July 1955 for a new school. The site was levelled at a cost of 5000 pounds, 20000 tons of soil were shifted, and a start was made on building in September. The Foundation Stone was laid on 15 December 1955. As the new building was not ready for occupation Brothers Murphy, Morahan and Hodgkinson began teaching in temporary classrooms behind St Patrick's Presbytery on the 6 February 1956. This would begin a long association with the Christian Brothers and St Joseph's.

On the opening day 116 boys attended. The numbers increased to 139 within a month.

The Consolidating Years

Within six years the school population had trebled, and St Joseph's offered primary education from Years 4-7 and a Scholarship, Sub-Junior and Junior class to the boys of Toowoomba.

In 1959, 225 boys were enrolled from Year 4-10. Those wishing to continue their education past junior had to attend St Mary's – this continued for nearly 30 years.

The winds of change

In June 1982, the Christian Brothers were forced to announce their withdrawal from the College due to lack of numbers. At the same time Bishop Kelly announced that St Joseph's would become a Catholic co-educational secondary college.

A new dimension came to St Joseph's with co-education. In 1983, 27 girls commenced studies in Year 8 and that year as with each subsequent year a primary grade was dropped.

In 1984, the first lay administrator took over from the brothers and a new era began. Brother Fogarty, Principal of St Joseph's from 1980-1983, handed over leadership to the first lay principal, Mr. Peter Kenny, in 1984. 1986 saw the first Year 11 class for the college.

For the decades that have followed the college consolidated and gained a reputation in the district for providing an exciting, engaging and relevant Catholic education.

Extract from the College website

Introduction

The review panel is of the view that the findings and suggested improvement strategies in the report below are best read with the following in mind.

The College underwent its first School Renewal and Improvement (SRI) review in 2019. The report from that review is available on the College website and was used in collaborative discussions with staff, students, and parents throughout 2020 developing the College Towards 2024 Strategic Plan. Since that time, the College senior leadership team led a sequence of widely consultative and reflective processes developing several core documents, frameworks, summary placemats and graphics. These provide the basis of common language and understanding throughout the community. They are each in various stages of implementation and embeddedness and inform College expectations of community members. This report refers to the development of these and their implementation in the Domains. They include

- College Strategic Plan
- Faith Formation Framework
- Teaching and Learning Framework
- Professional Learning Framework
- Professional Learning Community
- Professional Learning Teams
- Professional Growth Plans.

They are enfolded, intertwined, and underpinned by The Joey's Way which provides a common language for the values promoted in the college community and the 12 imperatives that need to be fostered in the community through living these values in the daily life of the College.

The graphic below illustrates the relationship between these elements representing the College professional practice. The inspirational quote at the bottom of the graphic from Dylan William characterises the improvement journey of the College since the 2019 SRI review.



Findings and improvements strategies

Domain 1 Engaged students, learning

Focus areas

- assumptions about students' learning capabilities, ranging from those with additional needs or disabilities through to high achievers
- the nature and quality of relationships among the school leadership, staff, students and parents/caregivers
- levels of safety, trust, tolerance, respect and inclusion in the school culture
- the level of collegiality (distinct from congeniality) that is at work in the school culture as it relates to teaching and learning
- the place of academic rigour in student learning and achievement
- the ways in which student and staff wellbeing are addressed
- the value placed on evidence-based practice in pedagogy and behaviour management

Findings

1.1 Know the students and develop expert learners

St Joseph's College has effectively implemented a Teaching and Learning framework which is contextualised and based on the Toowoomba Catholic Schools (TCS) underpinning documents (Teaching & Learning Framework; Assessment, Feedback and Reporting Framework and the Maximising Strategies document). The framework was developed collaboratively with feedback sought from key stakeholders, including students, parents and teachers. At the heart of the St Joseph's College Teaching and Learning Framework is the aim to develop expert learners in pursuit of passion and pathways. This is lived and breathed by all members of the College staff. There is a strong belief amongst staff that every student is capable of learning regardless of their academic ability, linguistic or cultural background. Staff, students, and parents commend the College on their inclusive approach to education. It is evident that positive relationships exist between students and their teachers. Students state that their classrooms are safe, caring, and supportive learning environments.



St Joseph's is a great community. Our teachers care about us, and we can build relationships easily with them. (Student)

Teachers possess an intimate understanding of each student's learning needs. There is a strong belief within the student body that St Joseph's College teachers know where they are in their learning. Teachers use a variety of strategies to differentiate their teaching to meet each student's learning needs. Staff value the professional learning opportunities that exist to deepen their understanding of the diverse needs of the learners in their classes.

The teachers are very aware of our different learning styles and help us out when we don't quite understand what we are learning. (Student)

The learning enhancement team is commended by all members of the College community for the support that they provide to ensure that students with diverse learning needs are successful in their learning. Skills classes are embedded in the timetable to support students who require additional literacy and numeracy support. These lessons are appreciated by the students who attend them.

When attending parent teacher interviews, it was very evident that the teacher knew who my child was, what my child's needs are and was in my child's corner. (Parent)

1.2 Know the curriculum and lead effective teaching

The College has an explicit, coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum across the years of schooling. The review team heard universally from staff, students, and parents that the curriculum offerings of the College are diverse and provide a broad range of pathways for the students. Timetable structures and curriculum offerings are designed based on the passion and pathways of the students rather than operational convenience. When curriculum offerings are not able to be provided by the College, external organisations such as FisherOne, Brisbane School of Distance Education and Riverside are utilised to meet the needs of the students. The College believes that every pathway is valued and every student must leave with a pathway. A very well subscribed School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship program exists which is available to all students from Years 10 to 12. High potential learners are supported on their pathway to university through programs such as Headstart.

There is strong belief that students are well supported to identify and pursue their desired pathways. Students commend the work of the Careers staff and appreciate the plethora of opportunities to explore a variety of future pathways. Information evenings, careers days and access to work experience are seen as strengths of the College by staff, students and parents.

Master unit plans provide a thorough overview of what teachers need to teach and students need to learn. The general capabilities and cross curricular priorities of the Australian Curriculum are embedded in unit plans. A review has commenced to determine the level of rigour of implementation of the capabilities and priorities. The College leadership team invest time in creating teacher clarity in the development of quality assessment. Some Year 7 parents and students indicate that the demands regarding the quantity of assessment items have made the transition from primary school difficult. A review obtaining stakeholder feedback is currently being implemented. A shared responsibility and accountability exist between teachers and the learning enhancement team to ensure Planning for Personalised Learning is evident in teacher planning.

1.3 Use high impact teaching strategies that personalise and connect learning

At St Joseph's College it is evident that high impact teaching strategies are widely employed and play a pivotal role in enhancing student learning and achievement. The College utilises the CANVAS learning management system to create detailed lesson plans inclusive of high impact teaching strategies. Students indicate that they learn best when their teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to engage them in their learning. Teachers set clear learning intentions and success criteria (LISC) which outline what students need to learn and how they will be successful in their learning.

The leadership team places high emphasis on providing a range of professional learning opportunities to enhance the quality of teaching in every classroom. Teachers indicate they value the collaborative approach to professional learning and believe this approach has significantly impacted the positive staff culture at the school. Evidence-based practices and high impact teaching strategies are shared amongst teaching staff at designated faculty meetings, in professional learning teams and at showcase evenings. Showcase evenings provide the opportunity for

individuals to demonstrate to their peers the improvement process they engaged in and celebrate the impact their actions have had on student learning and achievement.

There is a commitment to improving as a learning community. It is lovely to be part of and makes for a good work environment when there is a high level of professionalism.
(Staff member)

Staff indicate that these professional growth opportunities are having an impact on student learning and achievement. It is clear the teachers at St Joseph's College go above and beyond to ensure they continue to evolve and grow as teachers, and this is recognised by parents and student.

I cannot fault the quality of teaching at St Joseph's College. (Parent)

We know the school invests in staff development and there is a big focus on collaboration and problem solving. As a result, the level of engagement of students in their learning has increased. (Student)

Students indicate that they receive quality feedback from their teachers on where they are in their learning and what they need to do to progress and improve. Students are encouraged to seek feedback and indicate to the review team that checkpoints in their assessment assist to keep them on track. Some students indicate that video feedback in conjunction with written feedback on their assessment draft is extremely helpful in progressing their learning. Some parents and students indicate that the timing of checkpoints does not allow sufficient time for feedback to be given and acted upon prior to the next checkpoint being due.

Some teachers recognise that whilst classrooms are calm and engaging, there is a desire to explore strategies that challenge students to reach their personal best.

1.4 An explicit improvement agenda

It is evident that St Joseph's College is viewed as progressive and innovative by all members of the College community. The College leadership team are intentional in the implementation of focus areas that seek to enhance and develop the whole child. This is evident in the College's Annual Action Plan. The College has a strong focus on improving the literacy skills of its students through a multifaceted Literacy Improvement Strategy (LIS). Some improvement strategies include all students in Years 7 – 9 engaging in literacy improvement lessons in English and Humanities, literacy extension classes in Years 8 and 9, and a whole College approach to writing, expressed through the SJC Crafting Writing Process and Everlasting Success Criteria for Writing. The College continues to embed Subject Discipline Literacy (SDL) and prioritises professional learning time for staff to grow their expertise with this initiative. Additional skills classes are embedded in the timetable for students who require further literacy and numeracy support. The College's focus on literacy is having an impact, evidenced through their exceptional NAPLAN results which are celebrated within and beyond the college community.

High expectations exist at St Joseph's College with an explicit approach to supporting students on their learning journey. Academic support is offered in the College library on Thursday afternoons to assist students in achieving their learning goals. Students indicate to the review team that having access to their teachers outside of class time is valuable and assists them in their learning.

1.5 Embedded practices

Teachers implement a tiered approach when creating an engaged learning environment. The College student engagement team are commended for their efforts in promoting the engagement and wellbeing of all students. The College's focus on Relational Pedagogy is a contributing factor in promoting engagement. The College identifies the need to ensure students are meeting the attendance goal of 95%. A variety of strategies are used by the College including the introduction of attendance letters for early intervention. The use of attendance letters, which are data-informed and

sent in Week 4 and Week 8 of each term, have had positive impact in improving the attendance of some students. The implementation of the Ignatius Room is highly valued by all members of the College community. The Ignatius Room is a space for students to reset and reflect and eventually re-engage in learning. Teachers indicate that the use of this room allows them to prioritise learning in their classrooms. It is evident that there are some inconsistencies with the application of the Ignatius Room protocols. While some teaching staff may rarely have cause to use the Ignatius Room, there is a view that it is under-utilised by some staff and over-utilised or utilised too readily by others.

There are varying opinions regarding The Joey's Way (JW) curriculum and how this is embedded within the timetable structure. There is inconsistency in the application of the JW curriculum across the teaching staff. There are varying levels of student engagement and value of the JW lessons. Staff, parents and students encourage a review of the timing and content within the JW curriculum.

1.6 Analysis and discussion of data

The College uses a variety of effective methods to systematically collect student achievement data to inform staff discussions, professional judgements, and implementation of effective strategies for continuous improvement of student learning and achievement.

The academic care program provides a strong process for monitoring and tracking student progress. Academic Care programs exist for students across Years 7 to 12. A significant focus of academic tracking from Year 10 to 12 centres on academic intervention encompassing both curriculum and engagement leaders. The intent of the program is to ensure that students are making informed decisions about their future pathways in Year 10, supported by frequent check-ins through Years 11 and 12 to monitor and maintain their chosen pathways. Review and response meetings occur every fortnight to identify and respond to students requiring academic and/or wellbeing support.

The college sets a range of aspirational and achievable data targets including but not limited to

- 100% of students graduate with a QCE or QCIA
- 100% of students graduate with a pathway
- 90% ATAR above 60
- 28% ATAR above 90
- Show continual growth in all domains from Year 7 to Year 9 NAPLAN.

Data targets are communicated within and beyond the college community and celebrated extensively.

Improvement strategies

- Review the College's curriculum development to ensure all elements of the Australian Curriculum are embedded in unit and lesson planning with rigour.
- Explore strategies that equip teachers with necessary skills to challenge students to aspire to excellence.
- Review the Ignatius Room protocols to ensure consistency of use by all members of the College community.
- Review The Joey's Way curriculum content and the consistency of its implementation across the College.

Domain 2 Being distinctively Catholic

Focus areas

- the ways the school identifies itself as distinctively Catholic
- how the staff, students and parents/caregivers engage with the Catholic story and heritage, and with the school's particular charism
- the ways in which Christian teachings are made relevant to the lives of the students, staff and parents/caregivers
- the way Religious Education engages students to think critically about their spiritual journey, and how it influences their values and beliefs more generally
- the ways in which Religious Education has comparable status with academic subjects in its pedagogy and assessment
- the place of the Catholic principles of hope and service in the culture of the school
- the ways the links between the Catholic tradition, intellectual curiosity, and academic learning are understood in the school.

Findings

2.1 The Joey's Way

Developing what is now a commonly understood and used language at the College, was initiated by collecting stakeholder voices including staff, students, parents, and past students. The four values were developed with Br Damien Price CFC several years ago. A focus group worked to distill this wisdom into twelve actionable imperatives that need to be fostered in living out these values in the College community. This is displayed graphically in every room in the school and externally on building facades.

A member of that focus group who developed The Joey's Way reports:

I was a member of the original focus group that developed The Joey's Way. It is not new, reflecting what has always been implied and understood as best practice at the College. It does, however, provide a common language and understanding and makes it explicit. (Staff member)

The Joey's Way is also displayed in a different format on the steps leading to each of the current administration offices and to the College library.





Each of the imperatives is based on a selected scripture passage and is linked to descriptions of what this looks like in the life of the College for staff and students. These elaborations, as they are called, are linked for students to the personal and social capabilities of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority curriculum documents. For staff they are linked to the Queensland College of Teachers Professional Standards.

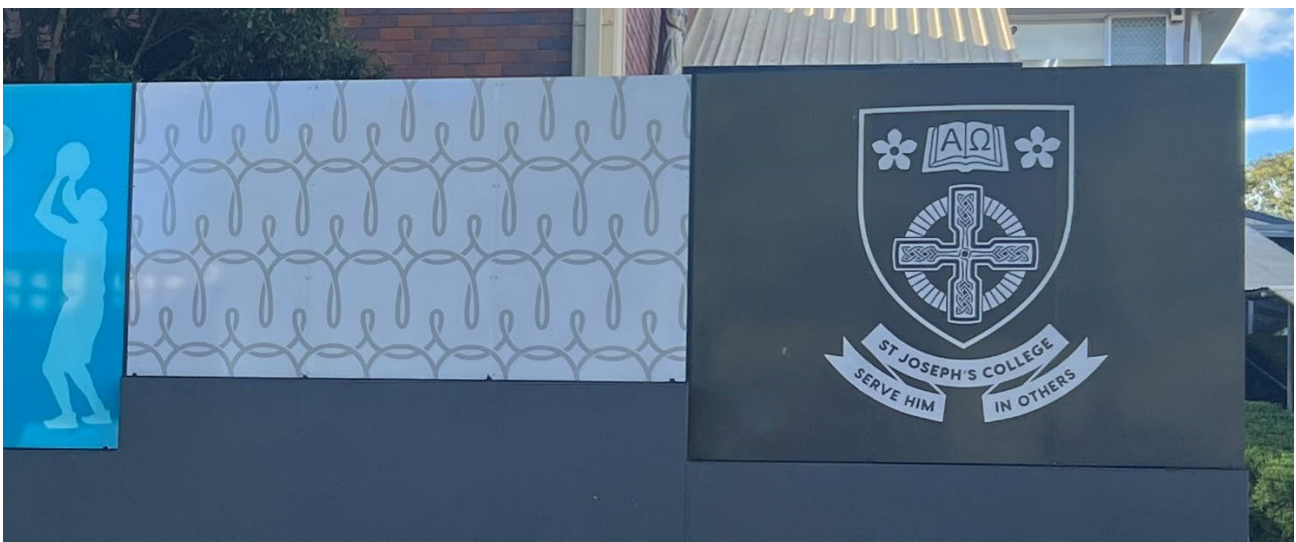
Student understanding of The Joey's Way is developed through formal lessons in the Joey's Way curriculum and through the avenues of prayer and reflection in events such as College assemblies and liturgies including Masses and reflections.

As a result of the thoroughness of the implementation of The Joey's Way, it is clearly embedded in the thinking, language, and everyday life of the College. It provides a distinctive and contemporary recontextualised Catholic identity as a way of living out Catholic faith in the Edmund Rice tradition of the College.

The values of the school are reinforced positively. We feel as if they are often spoken about to get us into the mindset that this is that the school is about. (Student)

2.2 Formation of staff and students in the Jesus Story and the Edmund Rice tradition

The college 2023-2026 Staff Formation Plan is a collaboratively developed document that has as a key element the St Joseph's College (SJC) Formation Cross. The freely flowing symbol focuses on the various aspects of the personal story of the individual in relationship to the broader story of Catholic education, the Edmund Rice (the founder of the Christian Brothers who established the college) tradition or charism and Gospel Spirituality. The four branches of the cross are the Jesus or Gospel Story, The Individual Story, The Ricean Story and the SJC Community Story. The Formation Cross is also incorporated into the Iconography that is displayed on many of the College buildings.



Welcome and greeting visitors is a lived expression of our motto. We now know the stories behind the formation cross. This has led to a deeper level of respect. It also gives you a framework as to how you would live your life. (Student)

The formation of staff is a three-layer process.

1. Experiencing faith as part of the College Catholic community.
2. Shared College professional development on a four-year cycle – designed with a plan for both teaching and non-teaching staff.
3. Personal exploration of formation opportunities – in which staff are encouraged and supported to find their own differentiated learning opportunities.

The intention is to complete the four-year cycle of this plan which has just begun, and then to review it for the next four-year cycle. Planning for the current cycle includes a variety of staff formation and professional learning that is built into staff professional learning and the life of the College. The focus is on developing a deeper understanding of each of the four arms of the formation cross.

Staff had a voice in everything we did in faith formation. This has led to the plan being viewed positively. It has been empowering for many of the staff. Negativity has shifted as staff have been heard and had a say. (Staff member)

Staff new to the College report that the induction program includes professional learning in this area. This is seen as very important in assisting new staff to support the Catholic ethos of the College as described above in the Joey's Way and the SJC Formation Cross.

The consultative and collaborative development of a College student formation plan is planned as the next step in the formation space. Initial scans of what is currently in place for student formation and what linkages need to be explored have informed the scope of the initial conversations to begin this process. Timelines are yet to be established for the development and implementation of this initiative.

2.3 Religious education and teaching practice

The College uses a three-pronged approach to engage with and embed research-based religious teaching practices to engage students in their learning in Religious Education (RE), and that they develop critical thinking skills in this domain. The approaches used are providing quality professional learning for teachers, setting department goals and gathering student voice.

Religious Education unit planning is currently shared by the teaching team with teachers taking responsibility as subject leader for a term. The starting point is to review the previous year's planning and assessment and collaboratively make changes to the unit plan and assessment tasks for the unit. The unit plans are constructed using the SJC unit templates in Teams and linked to Canvas where adjustments and modifications are made as required in the Planning for Personalised Learning process. The APRE then copies the unit plans into the Diocesan Learning Profile (DLP) to meet diocesan requirements. All units are developed from the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Religious Education curriculum and supported by the extensive range of resources provided for use by all schools.

The College was one of the schools in the first cohort that participated in the TCS Illuminate project in 2020. This project supported schools in developing teacher capacity in implementing high impact teaching strategies in the teaching of religion. Teachers of Religious Education welcomed this initiative which aligned with the whole school focus on literacy. The focus now is on building teacher capacity in using research-based high impact teaching strategies for all key learning areas. This is supported by expertise within the college as well as from TCS education officers.

In religious studies we don't just study bible stories, we talk about how we can apply these in our everyday life. We are encouraged to consider how these stories relate to us in our context. (Student)

The RE department seeks feedback from students on their experience as participants in every RE unit to inform future planning. Originally this was gathered electronically through Microsoft Forms. Now it is done by face-to-face conversation with students and higher quality feedback is now being gathered.

2.4 Religious life of the college

2.4.1 Service

It is evident that the college has a rich history of providing opportunities for students and staff to be involved in service, justice, peace, and advocacy projects that critically inquire and explore faith in action for lifetime engagement. At the time of the last SRI review in 2019 five projects were offered by the college.

- Liturgy Groups
- Breakfast Club
- Rosies
- Just Joeys
- Interact

In 2019 these five projects were led, supported, and maintained by two staff members – each in senior or middle leadership positions. In 2024, 20 key staff have taken responsibility for leadership and management of four of the existing projects (the APRE now takes full responsibility for only the Liturgy Groups whose activity is described below) and introduced the following opportunities.

- First Nations Yarning Circle
- Multicultural Voices Group
- Care for Creation
- Vinnies Youth
- Knitting Club
- Anime Club
- Inclusive Club

This expansion of opportunities in service learning, voluntarily provided by staff, reflects the deep levels of understanding and commitment of staff to the college's unique expression of its Catholic identity in an ever-changing world.

2.4.2 Liturgy

The College continues to provide rich and vibrant liturgical celebrations in the Catholic tradition. The yearly schedule is planned and published. Volunteer students from Year 11 and 12 work with the Assistant Principal Religious Education (APRE) to plan and support the whole school liturgy schedule. Fr Ray Crowley currently continues to support the program as presider for the schedule of whole College Masses around the key events in the Catholic liturgical calendar and selected significant events in the College.

Students from Years 11 and 12 volunteer to participate in and contribute to leadership of the liturgical life of the College. Year 11 students in the liturgy group meet weekly, separately from the Year 12 group, with the APRE. They discuss and plan what they wish the focus to be for liturgical celebrations in their senior year, the imagery, and symbols they want to use and the scripture readings that will underpin these celebrations. They aim to provide connection to the reality of the life experience of their fellow students. They develop a written proposal for the year that is then presented by the students to the College leadership team for their consideration, feedback, and final approval. Once that is obtained, they begin preparations to prepare and lead the liturgical celebrations for their senior year.

The Year 12 liturgy group meets once per week to prepare and provide leadership for the college celebrations with the support of the APRE. College Masses are presided over by Fr Ray Crowley, who takes on the messages of these students in his homily. While the Liturgy Group establishes the theme exploration and crafts the reflections, college Masses and liturgies are led by different student groups, including House Groups, Year Levels or specific service or extracurricular groups. Currently, 54 senior students are actively engaged in this ministry. The formal student leadership group includes two students appointed as Mission Leaders who plan an active role in this ministry. The leadership of students in these high-quality, engaging liturgies for students and the wider college community, supported by highly qualified senior staff, provides a model for empowering lay leaders of our Church into the future.

The intention of the College is to expand this model to a junior school liturgy group to develop class and year level liturgies. The vision is to use the Year 12 liturgy group to mentor and support this group, further developing their religious leadership capabilities.

The success of this model raises questions about future sustainability of the liturgical program of the College without Fr Ray, which will happen at some point in time. This will require consultation with the Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office. It is noted that this also impacts on the secondary and P-12 colleges in Toowoomba and their historical, geographical, and pastoral connection with several Toowoomba parishes. It is intended that planning conversations continue with all stakeholders to map the future in this area.

2.4.3 Prayer

Prayer is incorporated into the daily life of the College in many ways. A yearly roster for leading prayer is developed and shared with staff. Subject departments lead prayer in whole of staff meetings. For the Monday staff briefings individual staff members are rostered onto leading the staff prayer. Support is provided by the APRE through personal conversation, provision of resources and advice as well as the existing SJC prayer book.

The morning Joey's Way vertical class group meetings are designed to begin with prayer. Resources are provided to teachers to assist with leading these prayers.

The original community of brothers with Edmund Rice began the use of an invocation as they passed each other in the passages and stair wells of their residence in Waterford in Ireland.

I: Live Jesus in our hearts.

R: Forever

This invocation is at the heart of the Ricean Story and is integral to what is aspired to by the College community today. Some staff use this brief invocation at the end of lessons with their students. There is support from staff in more commonly using this invocation in the daily life of the college.

The religious life of the College is clear and strong. It has been thought through very well. Teaching Religious Education is a great experience. The charism is clear, and the students understand it. (Staff member)

Many opportunities exist for students to be involved in the religious life of the school and in service projects. A lot of thought has been put into how students can access these opportunities. (Student)

2.5 Accreditation to teach

Renewal of Teacher Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school and to teach Religious Education in a Catholic school is scheduled to occur in 2025. The College has begun data collection of how teaching staff will meet these requirements. College-provided staff professional learning, sometimes with the assistance of Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office (TCSO) staff, over the last five-year cycle, provides many times more than the minimum requirements to maintain these accreditations. All teachers are expected to meet the requirements to teach in a Catholic school.

All teachers of Religious Education are expected to meet the minimum requirements to maintain their current accreditation status. A number of the current teachers of RE also have the following formal qualifications to be accredited to teach religion such as Masters of Religious Education (2), Graduate Certificate of Theology (2) or completion of the TCS Cornerstones program (1). All other staff teaching religion will qualify for Provisional Accreditation to teach religion due to the formation opportunities provided by the college. The College provides continual support for these staff in providing quality religious education learning experiences for students. The College continues to explore ways in which to support teachers of RE to obtain the formal qualification to meet all accreditation requirements, and to recruit staff who already have these qualifications.

Improvement strategies

- Review the effectiveness of the Staff Formation Plan on its completion to inform the development of the next Plan.
- Consultatively confirm and then publish the timelines for the development, implementation and embedding of the proposed College Student Formation Plan.
- Explore further the possibility of initiating a junior school student liturgy group, mentored by the Year 12 liturgy group, to develop liturgies for use by classes and year levels.
- Explore further and implement strategies to support existing and aspiring teachers of Religious Education to develop their capabilities.

Domain 3 Using resources wisely

Focus areas

- the ways the school applies its resources (staff, time, expertise, funds, facilities, materials) in identifying and targeting the learning and wellbeing needs of students and staff
- the effectiveness of the policies and practices that are in place to implement this in ways that are responsive to the needs of individuals and groups of students
- the level of transparency that enables clarity about the rationale behind resourcing decisions
- the ways resourcing decisions reflect the schools stated strategic priorities

Findings

3.1 Human resources

St Joseph's College has a well-established culture of professional collaboration, collegiality, and strong support from the leadership team. The roles within the leadership team align with the College's strategic intent.

All staff highlight Professional Learning Teams (PLT) as a defining feature unique to St Joseph's College. This is enabled by allocating time within the college's weekly timetable for staff to gather and engage in professional learning, which is documented in the Annual Action Plan (AAP). Staff speak favourably about the high impact of peer-to-peer learning and feel valued at having this time allocated to them. The showcase events are highly valued and effective in highlighting the knowledge and skills of staff.

We do PLTs better than any other school I have been in, including overseas. It is sacred time, and we want more. (Staff member)

The College's reputation as a place where staff are valued and allocated professional learning time within the week is seen as a strong pillar for the attraction, recruiting and retention of quality staff.

3.2 Physical resources

The College is responding to immediate priorities for improved facilities and buildings, including recently completing several minor projects: the entrance to the school, drop-off and pick-up, and parking, and enhancing the Year 7 area. Students, staff, and parents note the impact of this on street appeal, safety, and functionality.

The leadership team speak of the need for ongoing capital improvements, which are well documented in the Master Plan. The team desires to revisit this after the completion of the Mary Rice extension and reassess areas of priority. The continued momentum of capital improvement is seen as an important feature of St Joseph's College into the future.

Staff speak about the main communal space for them, their staffroom, enabling good levels of collaboration and professional relationship building. Staff who have come from other schools where staffrooms are scattered report that being together helps to strengthen a sense of community and opportunity to ask questions of others.

Maintenance of facilities is a high priority. The unsatisfactory state of student toilets was repeatedly reported by students and staff. The impact of this on students when using them, particularly to change uniforms, is noted. The extension to the Mary Rice building and ongoing maintenance are addressing this and further toilet improvements in other areas is seen as needed. Female staff refer to the inadequate number of female staff toilets.

Stakeholders are looking for increased green spaces for sport and the development of authentic, inclusive spaces that acknowledge the cultural diversity of the College community.

Students and teachers report that the timetabling of learning spaces creates undesirable conditions for optimal learning. They say multiple learning spaces across the week for one subject creates significant challenges for teachers to implement seating plans and the varied layouts of rooms creates inconsistency and is unsettling for students.

It is annoying to go to different classrooms for one subject – it can be embarrassing to walk into the wrong room. (Student)

Accessibility to all areas of the school is a current challenge, and the number of stairs on the site is seen as a challenge for students with disabilities and those with injuries. The College is aware of this and is considering making all areas more accessible.

The ability to upgrade our facilities is our greatest challenge right now. Our Master Plan is driving our future plans. (Staff member)



Work has officially finished for Phase 1 of St Joseph's College's exciting expansion project.

3.3 Financial resources

The College's financial management is tracking at a sustainable level, and the transition of the new funding model, fee concessions, and government funding levels are noted. It is also noted that the fee concession policy is inconsistently applied across the Toowoomba Catholic School (TCS) system, particularly when transitioning from Catholic primary schools, which is impacting the level of income from fees.

The College strives to manage capital expenditure effectively, noting that the self-financing of the new building will be a consideration for further major projects in the coming years. Carrying debt from capital projects is a challenge for the College now and for the future.

Finance staff propose a centralised and streamlined supplier arrangement through TCS Office, including common supplier details.

Resource allocation and purchasing processes are in place and known by staff and are followed.

The leadership team is working towards increasing delegated financial responsibility to middle and program leaders with the intention of providing better stores of teaching resources.

The leadership team develops the College Annual Action Plan (AAP) based on data sets with some input from the Curriculum Leader Team. This is referenced in the Strategic Plan, which has been developed with wide consultation from all stakeholders. The AAP is communicated to the community via the website and school publications.

Improvement strategies

- Campaign to the community and beyond, publicising the great value the College places on teachers and the exceptional support for in-house professional learning and collegial sharing. This is a strong and unique value position in attracting and retaining staff.
- Revise the Master Plan in light of the new building and reassess the major and minor capital projects to bring the site and facilities to a high-quality standard. Toilets would be a focal area.
- Explore ways to improve the teaching, social, and recreational spaces and facilities to be more attractive, comfortable, and conducive to learning and social development.
- Consider timetabling of lessons to provide greater consistency in room allocation.
- Strategically budget for medium and long-term capital projects, including grants and other income sources.
- Review the implementation of the fee concession policy considering TCSO policy.

Domain 4 Valuing our people

Focus areas

- assumptions about the potential influence of staff on students' learning and achievement
- the extent to which staff are knowledgeable about school-wide approaches, programs and expectations
- ways in which staff are supported to develop and strengthen their professional capabilities in integrating high impact teaching strategies and personalised learning approaches which enhance student voice, choice and agency
- levels of confidence and purpose in the way people go about their work
- the extent of genuine commitment to the school's direction as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Findings

4.1 Valuing the profession of teaching

St Joseph's College embraces the culture of continual improvement in the teaching profession. Teachers are committed to their College and strive for personal growth through engagement in the College Professional Learning Community (PLC), Professional Learning Teams (PLT) and Professional Growth Plans (PGP). The consensus is that staff love working at St Joseph's College, strive to improve their own professional practice, and value the College's commitment to their development through the scheduling of time, which allows for high quality professional development and collaborative professional learning.

A lot is going well here... My shift to teaching here at St Joey's has reinvigorated my passion for teaching. (Staff member)

Through the strategic leadership of the College, there is significant progress towards excellence. There is a progressive and aspirational improvement agenda being enacted, and the value and clarity of this agenda are acknowledged. Staff are concerned regarding their ability to balance their focus within these competing agendas, and it is evident from student and staff feedback that this impacts the consistency of teacher practice.

Staff value the quality of organisation and the frequency of communication on a daily basis. It is clear that the organisational management and leadership at the College is a strength.

There have been very few times in the past two years when I haven't known exactly what I'm meant to be doing and how I'm meant to achieve that. (Staff member)

The practice of staff briefing is well valued by all staff. A challenge exists for staff when they miss staff briefing and do not have sufficient time to check briefing minutes before action is required.

St Joseph's College prioritises the attraction and retention of high-quality teaching staff, as well as the ongoing development of all staff. This is highlighted by ASPIRE@SJC; Pathway2Teach; quality induction practices for start of year and rolling induction; and the Early Career Teacher (ECT) Community of Practice. Teachers express a sense of ownership and belonging at the College due to the inclusive and pastoral approach embedded in practice throughout the College.

Staff have also communicated the value they place on the PLC, PLTs and PGP processes and ways of working at the college. It is recognised by teachers that these initiatives are excellent, and the ability to engage with colleagues collaboratively within their hours of duty is highly regarded. The collective growth mindset of staff is admirable and shows great alignment to the strategic agenda. Well communicated roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders would be appreciated by staff seeking support. This includes support and clarity regarding leadership capability development for aspiring leaders.

Parents and community members frequently cite the quality of the staff at St Joseph's College as being a feature of the College. It is evident that teachers genuinely care for the individual students and are proactive in contacting home to communicate care, concern and celebration of success of individuals. This is to be both commended and celebrated as a highly valued practice across the St Joseph's College community.

4.2 Valuing the additional commitments of staff

Staff are committed to providing additional opportunities for students through teaching and learning, as well as additional extra-curricular and co-curricular offerings. The community acknowledges and values these opportunities provided and many articulate this as a key attraction to enrolling their students at St Joseph's College, as there is an understanding that the College provides a wider range and balance of sports and arts activities that are inclusive of all students.

The additional commitments mentioned during the review process are predominantly based upon the arts, sport, camps and academic support. Students engaged in the arts have ample opportunity to access expertise for teaching, training and performance across their areas of interest in spaces specifically designed for this purpose. The community highly values the opportunity to perform through various avenues and the enthusiasm of staff who provide these opportunities.

Students engaged in sport feel included in high quality programs that are both inclusive and founded on a healthy sports culture. Opportunities in volleyball, touch football, rugby league, netball and basketball are greatly appreciated and strongly supported with high quality participation.

The College camp program is targeted, sequential and purposeful. It progresses from My Community - (Year 7), The Resilience Project - My Self (Year 8), The Resilience Project – My Limits (Year 9), My Future - (Year 10 work experience), My Leadership - (Year 11) and My Journey - (Year 12). It is recognised that the camp program is effective and enjoyable for all involved: so much so that students and parents suggest that if further opportunities were to be provided, they would be eager to engage.

Staff volunteer their time and energy to engage in these additional commitments. Historically, there have been senior staff who have committed to these for many years. Some staff are stepping away from volunteering their time in these activities due to the time and energy that they are committing to the current change agenda and their improvement in teaching and learning. Steps are currently being taken by the College to support the teachers involved, including, covering duties with relief staff and providing recognition and appreciation in a public way, as well as through private communication. Staff say that they are more likely to continue engaging in additional commitments if further recognition, value of time, and/or incentives were offered.

4.3 Student Voice and Agency

Students from various year levels offer excellent feedback about their experiences at the college. It is evident that students care deeply about their College and are creative in determining ideas for improvement which will have positive impact on the overall culture of the college. Many students are unaware of ways in which they can give regarding a range of topics on a regular basis.

Students have expressed a capability and willingness to have more agency in leading initiatives at the college. There is a sense of opportunity and progress in the student population that would flourish through enabling further student engagement. When engaged in already existing groups, clubs and student-led initiatives, students have expressed higher likelihood of engagement if the meeting and working times do not coincide with break times.

An example of student voice is the sports uniform, including appropriate changing spaces. A wide array of high-quality suggestions has been made that enable subsidiarity and agency of students.

4.4 Community Engagement

Various stakeholders express great pride in being a valued member of the St Joseph's College community. The communication strategy is seen as highly effective, and parents are very welcoming of the volume of communication they receive, and the quality and clarity of the information included.

The communication from the College is excellent. No parent can have the excuse of not knowing. Social media, newsletter, app, emails - we get it and it is excellent. But it's not just telling us what to do – it's informative, clear, concise and reasoned communication. It's just what we need. (Parent)

The marketing of the College is also very forward-looking. It is apparent that the current communication and marketing strategies are effective in gaining the attention of the wider Toowoomba community and the College's reputation continues to strengthen. There is a perception that there is openness and transparency in the workings of the College, and parents greatly appreciate the communication via various platforms, live feedback regarding student learning, the consultation and communication regarding significant planning and/or projects, awareness and clarity of the Strategic Plan, and the awards and celebration of various successes through digital platforms and College assemblies.

The community feels valued and included in the education of their children. They say that they feel an important part of the life of the College and appreciate the transparency through which the College operates on a daily basis. They know the history of the College, the new story being told through the enactment of the Strategic Plan, and what part they play in the narrative.

Improvement strategies

- Review the current improvement agenda to ensure there is a focus on the sustainability, of some historic processes and practices.
- Quality assure the implementation of the strategic agenda into teacher practice to provide greater consistency in lived experience for students.
- Consider ways in which the College values the commitment of staff to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Develop clear, transparent and well communicated processes for students, staff and parents to provide feedback to the college on an ongoing basis.

Conclusion

Staff, student, and parent engagement with the process of the review in open, transparent, and honest conversation with the review panel is very much appreciated and valued by the panel members. As a result, we are confident that we have heard the story of the College as told through this report.

Staff are acknowledged as thoroughly professional, hardworking, very knowledgeable and skilled, both supportive and collegial, and exceptionally approachable by students and parents. The teacher staffroom is seen as a safe place where no question is too small to ask a colleague. Staff have engaged willingly in professional learning and sharing professional practice.

Since the last SRIP review, the leadership team is leading the College community through the strategic processes described above, particularly to develop and embed shared common language, understandings, processes, frameworks, and operational procedures. The result is a very calm College, significant improvements in student engagement with their learning and a growing very strong reputation of the College in the wider Toowoomba community.

The significant improvements made since the last review in professional learning by staff and student engagement and learning are underpinned by the unique Catholic identity of the College expressed in The Joey's Way and Staff Formation Cross. These are the result of inspired strategic leadership and staff commitment to the processes and programs developed. This has required considerable effort from staff.

The review panel is confident that given what has already been achieved, taking the time to embed these initiatives and implement the improvement strategies from this report, St Joseph's College which is already a very good College, can become even better.