## EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW PANEL REPORT

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<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>St Joachim’s School, Holland Park</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Christine Ioannides</td>
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<th>School Representative</th>
<th>Amanda Sheridan</th>
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<td>School Representative</td>
<td>Stephanie Sims</td>
<td>Support Teacher Inclusive Education</td>
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### External School Review Panel

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<tr>
<th>Panel Chair</th>
<th>Ian Davis</th>
<th>Senior Strategy and Planning Officer</th>
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<tr>
<td>School’s Area Supervisor</td>
<td>Damien Barker</td>
<td>Area Supervisor, South 3</td>
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<td>External Validator</td>
<td>Deanne Johnston</td>
<td>Dean of Learning and Teaching Iona College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel Member</td>
<td>Andrew Oberthur</td>
<td>Principal Our Lady of the Rosary, Kenmore</td>
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### Panel Visit Date

Wednesday 24th August 2016

* Attached Documentation for NSSA Board

- Five year Schedule for School Cyclical Review
- Validated Internal School Review Records for Components 3.5 (Accountability and Compliance) and 4.5 (School Improvement)
- Evaluative commentary on how school addresses accreditation requirements with evidence of same audited by area supervisor
- Schedule for External Review Day
Section A: School Context

This section includes the panel’s observations on the school’s current context, strengths and associated challenges as it is impacting on review and improvement.

St Joachim’s Primary School is a Catholic co-educational school for students from Prep to Year 6 with an enrolment of 328 students in 2016. The school is located in the inner city suburb of Holland Park and is one of two schools in the Holland Park - Mt Gravatt Catholic Parish. The school is located in close proximity to Villanova College and St Laurence’s College both of which are destination schools for boys at St Joachim’s at the end of Year 4.

It was evident from the panel’s visit that the school has a strong Catholic Identity, reflected in their Catholic enrolment and also in the desire by the leadership team and the community to establish stronger connections with the parish and the deliberate design of the school around the parish church.

The leadership team in their report for the External Review provided extensive information as to the school’s current context. After the panel’s visit and discussion with the community, it is suggested that the following aspects of the school development over the last five years are significant in the deliberations for future directions.

St Joachim’s has experienced significant growth in enrolment over the last 10 years. Enrolments have grown from 91 students in 2006, to 328 students in 2016. This has triggered a major building program particularly in the last 5 years, as well as the revisiting of school routines, collaborative practices, physical spaces and pastoral relationships in the school.

It is also significant that the Holland Park - Mt Gravatt Parish prior to 2014 had a religious sister who administered the Parish and there were only visiting priests for the sacramental life of the Parish. While this was seen as a positive experience by the school, when Fr Joe was appointed as Parish Priest in 2014, there were some adjustments required for the inclusion of the Parish Priest in the life and governance of the school. Fr Joe has worked with current and past principals to enhance connections and relationship with parents, staff and students and the interconnectedness of the school and the Parish. The panel would observe a genuine spirit of cooperation and partnership.

As a result of the enrolment growth, a significant building program has been undertaken by the community, resulting in modern facilities designed around student learning. While this building program has produced great results and is virtually now complete, it has meant significant disruption to school spaces, both internal and external. It has also resulted in focus and energy being on building necessary facilities for students and staff.

The enrolment growth has also resulted in a need to review play spaces for the students. Increased number of students has resulted in more students within the same play space and naturally leads to greater student tension during playtime. The staff have responded to this need, by working with the Parish to investigate ways of utilising available space, and by becoming involved in the development of Positive School Wide Behaviour and Positive Behaviour for Learning.

It is also worthy to note that there has been significant change in the leadership team over the last 12 months and this has been compounded by various leadership team members being seconded into acting roles, either at the school or within the office.

In summary, it would be the observation of the panel that the school has undergone significant change for staff, students, parents and the parish over the last 5 years and this needs considerable reflection for future directions.
Section B: Effectiveness of School Cyclical Review and Impact on Renewal

The panel outlines its views endorsing and/or challenging the school’s views on the effectiveness of school cyclical review, as necessary. The panel does not need to repeat what the school has written.

B1. Effectiveness of School Cyclical Review

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

The panel wishes to affirm the leadership team and staff on their continued engagement with the cyclical review process. The process used for the annual review of components has continued to evolve and move toward a model of deeper engagement of key stakeholders. The panel saw evidence that the current practices are systematic and the use of experienced teachers to lead the review of components when appropriate is to be commended. The discussion with staff regarding the outcomes of the internal reviews indicated that the process used in 2016 has been seen as promoting deeper conversations and further embed an improvement culture.

The panel was able to confirm that staff were involved in the cyclical review process and were involved in the identification of key stakeholders, evidence gathering, deciding on an overall rating and identified areas of achievement and improvement. The panel wishes to endorse the school’s Leadership Team’s observation that this process needs to continue to be embedded in the annual processes of the school so that it can provide maximum benefit.

The school’s leadership team identified the challenge of engaging all staff especially non-teaching staff. While a number of schools identify this challenge, the panel would encourage the school community to continue to find ways of engaging non-teaching staff in the cyclical review process as these staff members expressed to panel members a deep ownership and pride in the school.

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

A variety of tools have been used to gather information from the parents and this has included formal surveys, discussions with the Parents and Friends Association, the Pastoral School Board as well as less formal processes. The value of the local tradition of informal morning teas with parents was recognised by the leadership team and is encouraged by the panel. The parents who met with panel members indicated that they were engaged in cyclical review and expressed the desire to continue this engagement as well as further engagement in other aspects of the school and their children’s learning. All stakeholders were very positive about the social, emotional and learning outcomes of the school and provided a clear message that the school was a good place to learn, work and be involved.

One of the challenges for the future will be to continue to build on the current practice of engaging all stakeholders and using their perspective to make current processes even richer than they are now.

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

The panel was able to identify a clear link between the cyclical review process and the strategic planning of the school. The panel engaged with staff and the leadership team and were able to understand the relationship between the school cyclical review process, the use of data and the challenges of a community that has experienced significant growth. The continuation and further enhancement of the process used for cyclical review in 2016 will provide an opportunity to promote further alignment of strategic planning and staff goals.

The panel noted the challenge of competing demands for agenda items in staff meetings and professional development opportunities. The panel would encourage the leadership team to provide even further opportunities for the staff to provide input into both of these activities. The creation of ‘space’ for staff input will allow for deeper ownership and even further engagement in the continual process of improvement.
B2  Use of student learning outcomes data to inform school decision making and planning for improvement of pedagogy and student learning outcomes

The staff at St Joachim’s are to be congratulated on their engagement with student learning data and the way they have drawn on a number of different assessment tools to provide a deep understanding of students learning growth and to inform future planning. This includes using not only those tools specified by Brisbane Catholic Education but others such as TORCH, SPAT, Waddington and the South Australian Spelling Test.

The panel wishes to commend the way the Curriculum Support Teacher and the Support Teacher Inclusive Education have planned conversations with teachers about how the data can be used to plan learning for all students.

The panel also gained an understanding of the systems the school has used to ensure that the learnings from the analysis of student learning data, not only informed the current teacher’s planning, but also planning for subsequent years. These systems include the preparation of folders at the beginning of each school year providing class and specialist teachers with information about each of their students. This includes learning data, preferred learning styles and strategies that support specific students in their learning. This information is discussed at hand-over meetings which for some students include meetings with the parents throughout the year.

The staff have also commenced their engagement with high yield strategies and are now beginning to engage in more authentic and rigorous discussion on student progress.

The school’s leadership team identified the increased sophistication of the parent body and this view was supported by the panel’s meeting with the parents. The parents indicated a readiness to engage with the learning data of their child and to have a greater understanding of how this data can be used to monitor their child’s progress. Similarly, the non-teaching staff who met with the panel expressed a desire to have a greater understanding of the DELT strategy and the place of data walls in the school’s collective planning for all students.

B3  Impact of Cyclical Review on renewal across the strategic priorities of Catholic schooling

The panel outlines its views endorsing and/or challenging the school’s views on the impact of school cyclical review, as necessary

The panel is able to endorse the school’s External Review Report’s comments in regarding the impact of the school cyclical review process that had been used in the last 5 years and believe the processes initiated in 2016, and further enhancements to these processes will have even greater and deeper impact in the future.

The panel wishes to congratulate the school on its thoroughness and critical approach to the cyclical review process and other improvement processes used by the school.
**Section C: Authentication of Compliance with Accreditation Requirements**

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

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

*Panel Comments are provided below where relevant:*

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

The panel outlines its views endorsing and/or challenging the school's report.

Discussion with the Assistant to the Principal – Religious Education and the Parish Priest indicated that the Religious Education program is seen as an integral part of the overall curriculum of the school. There has been a sustained focus over the last five years to ensure it is aligned with the Archdiocesan program. Pedagogical expectations and the use of the high yield strategies are incorporated into the school's Religious Education Program. Professional Learning in Religious Education has focussed on both the religious dimension and the learning and teaching of RE. There may need to be however, further focus on the theological knowledge and understanding that underpins the Religious Education Program.

The panel was highly impressed with the school's involvement with Brisbane's Common Ground project and how the children and staff have been involved in the discussion of social issues related to homelessness, and have taken real action to contribute to the work of this organisation.

In the school's Cyclical Review Report, the Leadership Team noted the trend of staff and families having a reduced engagement with the liturgical life of the church. It is commendable that the Leadership Team has recognised this but more importantly, taken steps to gently lead staff to engage in liturgy and other forms of prayer. This will be a vital direction of the future.
Section E: School Strategic Directions for Improved Learning
The panel outlines its views endorsing and/or challenging the school’s view of the future directions.

The community of St Joachim’s Catholic School, both past and present has undergone significant change in the last five years. They have experienced almost a threefold growth in enrolment, virtually a complete rebuild of the school and change in leadership positions. The community needs to be congratulated on the management of this change and how it has been seen in such a positive context. This is a significant consideration in the formation of the panel’s commendation and recommendations.

The panel wishes to endorse the future directions as identified by the school and encourage the leadership team to concentrate their energy so as to embed and enhance current practices especially in the area of cyclical review, high yield strategies and effective and expected practices. The future directions noted in the school cyclical report already identify this. Change, renewal and improvement are essential components of Catholic education but require careful management of initiatives at the local level. With significant change in many areas over the last five years, ensuring current practices become ‘business as usual’, is important to consider before starting a whole staff focus on another initiative. The panel supports the school’s engagement with the Leuven Project but would suggest consideration be given to explore other schools’ experiences and the required level of resources and commitment in 2017 before committing to it as a whole school initiative for 2018.

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

The panel members wish to commend the Leadership Team, staff and the community on the management of the change processes over the five years. It was evident through discussion that there was a high level of satisfaction from staff, students and parents.

The school’s engagement with data is highly commendable and the use of a variety of data tools to guide learning was noted by the panel members. The panel would recommend that teachers continue to engage with the BI tool and learning data be shared appropriately, through various communication channels, so as to engage all stakeholders in monitoring, as appropriate, student progress. With the school now having two streams, this communication will need to be consistent in content and frequency.

As stated previously, it is the view of the panel members that the focus for the next few years should be to focus on embedding current practices and ensuring that these become part of the culture of the school. The panel commends the staff for the way they have moved their focus from curriculum centred planning, to students centred planning. While there has been a clear focus on improving student learning, the panel would observe that this has occurred while enhancing the Catholic Identity of the school.

Section G: Panel comments on the conduct of the external review process
The panel comments on the school’s preparation for and engagement with the external review process.

The panel wishes to acknowledge the extensive preparation that the school had undertaken prior to and during the visit. The panel members were given the opportunity to engage with members of the school community and were provided with access to key stakeholders who engaged in an open and honest way. It was also obvious that the leadership team were appreciative of the opportunity to reflect on their journey over the last five years and were appreciative of the panel’s oral feedback on the day.

The documentation provided to the panel was outstanding and provided a clear picture of the school’s desire for improvement in student learning.
Section H: Data made available to the External Review Panel

(i) The following data was provided to the Review Panel:
- School profile data including staff and student demographics, enrolment profile and religious profile data
- Internal School Reviews of Components validated by area supervisor for the last five years
- Relevant school student achievement data drawn from relevant Years 3 and 5 NAPLAN data
- Current School Strategic Renewal Plan
- Annual Action Plans and Annual Reports

(ii) Experiences through which the Review Panel gained understandings of the school and its culture:
- Meeting with the Principal, Teachers and School Representatives, and conversation with them on school improvement through cyclical review (See schedule for the day)
- Meetings with Parents
- Meetings with Teachers
- Meetings with Students
- Meeting with Parish Priest where available
- Learning walks around the school (including visits to learning spaces)

Other experiences as noted:

Panel Chair Signature:

Date: 17/11/2017