School Improvement Tool

School Review Report

Catholic Education Melbourne

St Jude the Apostle School

Scoresby, Victoria. E 1277

Review date: 14 and 15 August 2019

Principal: Tim McMullen

Reviewers: Boyd Jorgensen ACER Reviewer
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
CEM	Catholic Education Melbourne
DET	Department of Education and Training
KLA	Key Learning Areas
LMS	Learning Management System
LSO	Learning Support Officer
LBOTE	Language background other than English
SIS	Student Improvement Surveys

Foreword to the principal

Thank you and congratulations on your school's decision to engage in a School Improvement Review.

The review is specifically designed to equip principals, boards and staff with the data they need to plot their school's current position against international effective practice and to plan a focused approach to school improvement appropriate to the context of their school.

This report details the key findings of the consultants who conducted the review of your school.

The report provides feedback on the assessments made against each of the nine interrelated domains of effective school practice, gathered through evidence collection and consultation within your school. Summary findings and comments are also provided at the conclusion of each domain assessment.

The review team has also concluded with a set of Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations to assist in future planning and to support school-wide improvement.

We hope you find the information in this report a valuable contribution to assisting with your journey to set goals and develop strategies to improve student learning and foster a culture of excellence in your school.

Professor Geoff N Masters
CEO, ACER

School context

Name of School:			
Year Levels:			
	A. Number	B. Number interviewed	C. Percentage (B/A) x 100
School Leaders	7	7	100%
Permanent teachers*	17	16	94%
Teaching support staff	4	4	100%
Parents	N/A	9	N/A
Students	257	16	N/A
Others	N/A	2	N/A

*A minimum of 85% is recommended

1. An explicit improvement agenda

The school leadership team and/or governing body have established and are driving a strong improvement agenda for the school, grounded in evidence from research and practice and expressed in terms of improvements in measurable student outcomes. Explicit and clear school-wide targets for improvement have been set and communicated to parents and families, teachers and students, with accompanying timelines.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
There is no obvious plan for improving on current achievement levels. School leaders appear to be more focused on day-to-day operational matters than on analysing and understanding school data, setting targets for whole-school improvement or communicating an improvement agenda to the school community. Minimal attention is paid to data and there is very limited communication of school results or of intentions for improvement to parents, families and the wider school community. Expectations for significant school improvement are low and staff tend to 'explain' current achievement levels in terms of students' socioeconomic backgrounds and/or geographical location. There is little evidence that the staff of the school have a shared commitment to improving outcomes for every student, and this appears to be contributing to a culture of underperformance. There is little evidence that the school is looking to external sources to identify evidence-based strategies for improvement.	The principal and other school leaders articulate a shared commitment to improvement, but limited attention has been given to specifying detail or to developing a school-wide approach (e.g., plans for improvement may lack coherence, be short term, or without a whole-school focus). Plans for improvement do not appear to have been clearly communicated, widely implemented or to have impacted significantly on teachers' day-to-day work. Targets for improvement are not specific (e.g., not accompanied by timelines). The school's focus on data is driven more by external requirements (e.g., NAPLAN, My School) than by an internal desire for good information to guide school decision making and to monitor progress. Although there is an expressed commitment to improvement, this is not reflected in a high level of enthusiasm for personal change on the part of staff. The communication of performance data to the school community tends to be sporadic and/or is limited only to information that the school is required to report.	The school has developed an agenda for improvement in partnership with parents and the community and school leaders can describe the improvements they wish to see in student behaviours and outcomes. This agenda is communicated in staff meetings, school newsletters, parent-teacher meetings and on the school website using a variety of formats to suit local needs. The leadership team has analysed school performance data over a number of years and is aware of trends in student achievement levels. Targets for improvement are clear and accompanied by timelines. The school leadership team is clearly committed to finding ways to improve on current student outcomes. This is reflected in an eagerness to learn from research evidence, international experience and from other schools that have achieved significant improvements. There is evidence of a school-wide commitment to every student's success and staff of the school tell stories of significant student improvement.	The school leadership group, including, where appropriate, the governing council, has developed and is driving an explicit and detailed local school improvement agenda. This agenda is expressed in terms of specific improvements sought in student performances, is aligned with national and/or system-wide improvement priorities and includes clear targets with accompanying timelines which are rigorously actioned. The school improvement agenda has been effective in focusing, and to some extent narrowing and sharpening, the whole school's attention on core learning priorities. There is a strong and optimistic commitment by all staff to the school improvement strategy and a clear belief that further improvement is possible. Teachers take responsibility for changes in practice required to achieve school targets and are using data on a regular basis to monitor the effectiveness of their own efforts to meet those targets.

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Domain 1 findings

- St Jude the Apostle School has an established School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2016 – 2018 which identifies goals and intended outcomes. From this, the 2019 Annual Action Plan (AAP) has been developed along with targets to measure improvements in all areas. The AAP is a point of reference from which improvement activities are initiated.

- It is apparent that the leadership team have immersed themselves in the life of St Jude the Apostle School and have developed an understanding of performance data and how this data have changed over time.

- A distributed leadership model has been established and the leadership team meets weekly to review data and discuss strategies to improve student outcomes. There are clear role statements in place to guide the work of the school leadership team.

- The leadership team nominated the improvement agenda as literacy, targeted learning, Catholic social teachings and student wellbeing. The 2019 staff handbook identifies the priority for 2019 as "To develop a school wide culture that promotes learning".

- Staff identified a range of improvement foci, including the Berry St Model, Fountas and Pinnell, student wellbeing, behaviour, social emotional learning, data literacy and reading.

- An explicit and detailed improvement agenda is yet to be documented, although the analysis and understanding of school data trends over several years has led to a focus on student wellbeing, behaviour and reading in response.

- Staff expressed that they are collectively committed to providing a caring, supported faith-based educational environment for every student.

- Staff affirmed their commitment to the improvement process and that they have been getting more actively involved in understanding data and that they are active participants in professional learning and the weekly Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings. Specific targets that drive their work in classrooms have not yet been set.

- There are high levels of collegiality and support amongst staff members evident and they express the desire to improve and expand their professional skills to realise whole school improvement.

- There is a very strong focus on student wellbeing and many parents, teachers and students identified this aspect of school life as being one of the most positive aspects and a fundamental strength of St Jude the Apostle School.

- The school improvement agenda is not yet explicitly communicated to the school community

2. Analysis and discussion of data

A high priority is given to the school-wide analysis and discussion of systematically collected data on student outcomes, including academic, attendance and behavioural outcomes, and student wellbeing. Data analyses consider overall school performance as well as the performances of students from identified priority groups; evidence of improvement/ regression over time; performances in comparison with similar schools; and, in the case of data from standardised tests, measures of growth across the years of school.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
There is very little evidence of school leaders' practical use of school-wide student outcome data. There is either no annual data collection plan for the school or the plan is being implemented in a minimalist fashion. The school makes little or no use of tests beyond those that the school is required to use. Teachers do not systematically analyse test and other data for their classes and teachers make little use of data to reflect on their teaching. The school is unable to demonstrate how data have been used in meetings or with parents to analyse and discuss current achievement levels and strategies for improvement.	School leaders pay close attention to data provided to them about the performance of the school (e.g., NAPLAN results; Year 12 results) and identify areas in which the school is performing relatively poorly or well. Tests (e.g., commercially available reading tests) may be used by some teachers, but generally are not used as part of a whole-school assessment strategy. An ad-hoc approach exists to building staff skills in the analysis, interpretation and use of classroom data. Software may be used for the analysis of school results, including the performances of priority groups, but analyses generally do not extend to studies of improvement or growth. School data are presented to staff in meetings, but presentations tend to be 'for information' rather than a trigger for in-depth discussions of teaching practices and school processes. Information about the school's performance is communicated to the school community but may lack explanation or analysis. There is limited engagement with parents and families around school data.	There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders view reliable and timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the school. There is a documented school plan and timetable for the annual collection of data on student achievement and wellbeing. One or more members of staff have been assigned responsibility for implementing the annual plan, analysing the full range of school data, and summarising, displaying and communicating student outcome data for the school. The school has ensured that appropriate software is available and that at least these assigned staff have been trained to undertake data analyses. Time is set aside (e.g.,, on pupil free days and in staff meetings) for the discussion of data and the implications of data for school policies and classroom practices. These discussions occur at whole-school and team levels. The school can illustrate through case studies, meeting minutes and project plans how data have been used to identify priorities, take action and monitor progress.	The principal and other school leaders clearly articulate their belief that reliable data on student outcomes are crucial to the school's improvement agenda. The school has established and is implementing a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of student achievement and wellbeing data. Test data in literacy, numeracy and science are key elements of this plan. Data are used throughout the school to identify gaps in student learning, to monitor improvement over time and to monitor growth across the years of school. A high priority has been given to professional development aimed at building teachers' and leaders' data literacy skills. Staff conversations and language reflect a sophisticated understanding of student assessment and data concepts (e.g., value-added; growth; improvement; statistical significance). Teachers are given test data for their classes electronically and are provided with, and use, software to analyse, display and communicate data on individual and class performances and progress, including comparisons of pre- and post-test results. Teachers routinely use objective data on student achievement as evidence of successful teaching.

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Domain 2 findings

- The principal and other school leaders at St Jude the Apostle School regard the collection and discussion of reliable, timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the school.

- Leaders and teachers at St Jude the Apostle School collect and analyse a range of data including Running Records, Fountas and Pinnell BAS, SEAPART, ROL, Letter ID, Pat-R Comprehension, Pat-M Maths, Pre-and Post-Testing - Essential Assessment and TORCH.

- St Jude the Apostle School has implemented a schedule for the systematic collection of student data. The schedule demonstrates the importance that the school places in the collection, analysis and use of student data.

- Literacy and numeracy are key elements of the data collection schedule while, as yet, wellbeing data has not been included as a part of this schedule.

- There is not as yet, a whole school data plan documented.

- The leadership team engages in regular analysis and robust discussion of student data, making judgements and decisions about its use, especially in intervention. Staff understanding of, analysis and use of data are emerging and has not, as yet aligned with leadership data literacy.

- Professional development for teachers in data skills is yet to take place in a systematic. manner.

- St Jude the Apostle has engaged with the Catholic Education Melbourne initiated Intervention Framework, which provides a structure for teachers to work to best understand and meet point of need learning of students. This is an ongoing process encompassing identification through accurate data collection and ongoing monitoring of individual students who may require a support adjustment to engage effectively in successful learning.

- Most teachers expressed a willingness and desire to use data more effectively to inform the design and implementation of learning to meet the needs of individual and cohorts of students. Some teachers said that they wanted to understand better how to extend high achieving students.

- In 2019 SPA has been purchased as the school digital data platform. Staff familiarity with and use of the platform is developing. All existing compatible data is stored in SPA with some assessment results remaining in the school Google drive.

- The school is working to personalize student data and improve teachers' capabilities in using data effectively through the establishment of a central data wall for literacy. Teachers expressed a desire to participate in the co-construction of the data wall

3. A culture that promotes learning

The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. 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.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
Behavioural problems, disengagement and non- attendance are issues for a significant proportion of students. In a number of classrooms students are clearly not engaged in productive learning activities. The school may have policies and agreed procedures relating to student behaviour, but these appear to have had little impact in practice. Much of the time of school leaders and teachers is taken up dealing with inappropriate behaviour. Interactions between parents, staff and students are not always productive and respectful. Staff tend not to value or engage parents as partners in student learning. Some teachers appear to work in isolation from colleagues. Staff morale is low and staff turnover is high.	Classrooms are generally orderly, although some more so than others. Non-attendance is an issue for a small minority of students. However, many other students appear to be minimally engaged in productive learning activities. The school effectively implements its policies, for example, by ensuring that disruptive behaviour, bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly. The school has clear expectations for how students should behave and interact with one another, and in the main, relationships are caring and respectful. Some staff time is taken up dealing with behaviour problems. Most parents take an obvious interest in their children's learning. Engagement is primarily through regularly scheduled parent-teacher interviews. Staff morale is satisfactory.	The 'tone' of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to purposeful, successful learning. There are very few obvious behavioural, attendance or engagement problems and behaviour management takes up very little, if any, time of school leaders and classroom teachers. There is a strong focus on quality learning and on the creation of a culture in which all students are expected to learn successfully, in their own ways and at their own pace. Individual talents are valued. Class 'busy work' is kept to a minimum, and an attempt is made to ensure that all students are engaged in challenging, meaningful learning. Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents interact and in the language they use in both formal and informal settings. Parents and families are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school and are welcomed as partners in their children's learning. There are agreed guidelines on such matters as greeting visitors, taking messages, and responding to queries promptly and respectfully. Staff morale is generally high.	The school ethos is built around high expectations and a commitment to excellence. There is an expectation that every student will learn and achieve positive outcomes. Classrooms are calm but busy and interruptions to teaching time are kept to a minimum. There are no obvious behavioural problems, very high rates of school attendance and engagement, and staff morale is sustained at a high level. There is a happy, optimistic feel to the school. High levels of trust are apparent across the school community. Interactions are focused on the learning and wellbeing of students and on continually improving the school's ability to meet the needs of all students. Parents and families are valued as partners in student learning, and parents, school leaders and teachers work together in mutually supportive ways. There is a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school. A strong collegial culture has been established. Teachers have an overt and shared commitment to the improvement of teaching and an openness to critique by colleagues. This is reflected in the fact that teachers regularly invite leaders and colleagues to visit their classrooms to observe their teaching.

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Domain 3 findings

- St Jude the Apostle School is consistently acknowledged by staff, parents and students as having a welcoming, inclusive and community minded culture. Positive and caring relationships are in evidence across the school. Students report high levels of satisfaction with their feelings of safety and wellbeing. Teachers are committed to positive learning outcomes for students.

- School leaders and staff are proud of their work, staff morale is generally high and staff enthusiasm is generally high. Many staff identified that their relationships with leadership would benefit from enhanced communications.

- At St Jude the Apostle wellbeing and social emotional learning are recognised as fundamental underpinnings to learning. Students consistently report that teachers care for them and support them in their wellbeing development.

- The school has engaged with several targeted programs that focus on resilience and respectful, equitable relationships and has used Pat-Wellbeing data to try to ensure that classroom programs are aligned and responsive to individual needs.

- St Jude the Apostle participates in the Resilience Project which aims to develop resilience and improve mental health by inspiring students, empowering teachers, engaging parents through three key themes of gratitude, empathy and mindfulness.

- The Respectful Relationships program prepares students to face challenges by developing problem-solving skills and building empathy, resilience and confidence.

- The Berry Street Model has been instrumental in enhancing teacher knowledge and providing a range of strategies for supporting their own wellbeing and student wellbeing. The daily morning welcome circles have been implemented as a direct result of this.

- Over the past three years, the school has worked intensively on developing a coherent and effective school wide behaviour policy. Staff and students identified that there is a clear process for dealing with misbehaviour and students also readily identified that their classroom and school rules emanated from the fundamental expectations to "Be Your Best Self – Serve the Lord With Joy" – to be respectful, safe and responsible and to be a GEM (gratitude, empathy and mindfulness).

- In 2019 Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) has been introduced to very high levels of engagement by staff, appreciation from students and support from parents.

- Students demonstrate a keen sense of social justice and students in years 5 and 6 are actively involved as Fire Carriers and in the Mini Vinnies program.

- Year 6 students all play a leadership role in the school assisting with and leading a range of school community activities and along with year5 students, are buddies to the prep students, while year 3 and 4 students buddy with years 1 and 2.

4. Targeted use of school resources

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.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
The improvement of student outcomes does not appear to be the driving consideration in the allocation of school resources (e.g.,, the use of discretionary school funds).

There is very little, if any, systematic testing of students to identify individual learning needs.

The school does not always make best use of available staff expertise.

School leaders have developed very few, if any, school-wide policies or programs to address individual needs, which are left to classroom teachers.

School learning spaces tend to be used traditionally, with limited flexibility to support different kinds of learners and learning. | The school uses its human and physical resources to address the needs of students, although this may not be preceded by a systematic analysis of those needs.

Specialist diagnostic testing is organised for a small number of students with special needs, but teachers do not routinely administer tests to better understand specific learning difficulties (e.g.,, problems in learning to read) or individual learning needs (e.g.,, LBOTE, gifted).

There are very few school-wide programs or policies designed to address the learning needs of particular student groups (e.g., gifted students, students with disabilities, students for whom English is a second language). School leaders encourage teachers to address individual learning needs in classrooms, but there are very few agreed school-wide strategies for doing this.

Physical learning spaces are used creatively, and technology is accessible to the majority of staff and students. | The principal and other school leaders have introduced programs and strategies to identify and address the needs of students in the school and are sourcing and applying available resources to meet those needs.

The school has developed processes (e.g.,, systematic testing and assessment) for identifying student learning needs, although there may not always be good school records of student achievement and progress.

Programs to meet individual learning needs (e.g.,, programs for gifted students, students with learning difficulties, students for whom English is a second language, Indigenous students, and refugees) are prioritised, where possible, in the school budget.

Physical spaces and technology are used effectively to maximise student learning. Learning spaces are organised for whole group work, small group work and individual work. | The principal and other school leaders have given a very high priority to understanding and addressing the learning needs of all students in the school. This is reflected in the implementation of systematic strategies for identifying student needs and the development of creative school-wide solutions for addressing those needs.

A school-wide process has been established for identifying specific student learning needs. This process includes systematic testing to establish learning gaps and special needs. School records of individual student needs, achievements and progress are maintained centrally and shared across year levels.

A range of initiatives (e.g., across- class and across-grade groupings for literacy and numeracy; the sharing of specialist teachers with neighbouring schools, if they exist) is being implemented to make more effective use of available resources to enhance teaching and learning. The school deploys staff in ways that make best use of their expertise (e.g., specialist reading/science teachers). |

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Domain 4 findings

- The principal and school leaders place a high priority on understanding and addressing the learning and wellbeing needs of all students enrolled at St Jude the Apostle Primary School.

- There are 65 students identified through the National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) and all students have either a personalized learning plan (PLPs) or SMART Goal. Parent support group meetings are held for every student who has a PLP

- The school's involvement in the Intervention Framework project has enabled leaders to support teachers in identifying students with diverse learning needs and to provide a structure for teachers to better understand and enable point of need learning for students.

- Digital devices are available to all classes across the school with over 170 iPads of varying ages placed in classrooms according to learning needs and each year level has access to a class set of chrome books.

- Through the Learning Extension and Achievement Program (LEAP) the learning diversity team identifies students for targeted intervention and three learning diversity teachers provide specific learning support for students. This entails small group withdrawals for a five week cycle.

- The school has a dedicated team of four Learning Support Officers (LSO's) who are timetabled and allocated across the school according to the identified need. They are held in high regard by teachers as a valuable classroom resource.

- There has been a heavy investment in Fountas and Pinnell resources to support the school focus on reading and in wellbeing and social emotional learning programs and professional development to support the school focus on wellbeing..

- The school has the services of a speech pathologist and occupational therapist and is currently seeking the services of a suitable counsellor .

- St Jude the Apostle school has recognised the importance of providing a STEM program and have employed two specialist teachers and also developed a dedicated learning space for this program along with digital technology access.

- The school has developed a Master Plan and has allocated considerable resources to provide for ongoing improvements to ensure attractive learning areas. A recent innovation has been the development of The Well, a hub for wellbeing activities.

- The Parents' and Friends' Association (PFA) works in partnership with the school and contributes to its resourcing.

5. An expert teaching team

The school has found ways to build a school-wide, professional team of highly able teachers, including teachers who take an active leadership role beyond the classroom. Strong procedures are in place to encourage a school-wide, shared responsibility for student learning and success, and to encourage the development of a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes classroom-based learning, mentoring and coaching arrangements.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
The development of a professional school-wide team does not appear to be a driving consideration of the principal or other school leaders (e.g., no reference is made to the National Professional Standards for Teachers, there are no mentoring arrangements in place, teachers work largely in isolation from one another 'behind closed doors'). There is little evidence that school leaders are proactive in the recruitment and retention of staff. There is little sense of a whole-school coordinated approach to professional learning and a low priority is given to enhancing staff performance.	The school undertakes professional learning activities, although these may not always focus on the development of knowledge and skills required to improve student learning and there may not be a coherent, documented learning plan. The principal and leadership team are seen as supportive of, but not generally involved in, the day-to-day practice and learning of teachers. Teachers are open to constructive feedback and provide feedback to colleagues, although there may not be formal mentoring or coaching arrangements in place. The school is implementing a formal process for conducting professional discussions with staff. The school's professional learning agenda is made explicit to staff at induction, and in staff handbooks. Where it is necessary to manage unsatisfactory staff performance, this is done professionally and effectively, and in accordance with agreed guidelines.	There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders see the development of staff into an expert and coherent school-wide teaching team as central to improving outcomes for all students. There is a documented professional learning plan and the school has arrangements in place for mentoring and coaching. Teachers visit each other's classrooms and welcome opportunities to have principals and other school leaders observe and discuss their work with them. Attention is paid to strengths and weaknesses in the school-wide team, with strategies in place to recruit staff with particular expertise, to train staff to address particular needs, and to support staff who find it difficult to commit to the school's improvement agenda. The school provides opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.	The teaching staff of the school are experts in the fields in which they teach and have very high levels of pedagogical knowledge and skill, including expert knowledge of evidence-based teaching strategies. Teachers and school leaders take personal and collective responsibility for improving student learning and wellbeing, working together and learning from each other's practices. The sharing and showcasing of best practice are common. In team meetings there is an emphasis on the joint analysis of student work and on teaching strategies for improving student learning. Teachers collaboratively plan, deliver and review the effectiveness of lessons. School leaders place a very high priority on the ongoing professional learning of all staff and on the development of a school-wide, self-reflective culture focused on improving classroom teaching. School leaders participate in professional learning activities, learning alongside teachers, and the school supports teachers to continue formal study and celebrates professional success.

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Domain 5 findings

- The principal and other leaders at St. Jude the Apostle School provide a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers which are usually aligned to the school improvement agenda and the professional goals of teachers.

- There is an established planning process place where staff develop personal learning goals early in the school year a Customized Individual Learning Plan (CILP). The annual review process (ARM) is also in place. Staff expressed varying levels of commitment to and engagement with the process and goals identified and they confirmed that approval to participate in professional learning is linked to their plan. These goals are also, not always aligned with school improvement priorities

- Many staff identified that they found the one-on-one conversations with the Principal in the CILP and ARM processes to be very positive, supportive and beneficial.

- Professional Learning Team (PLT's) meetings are held regularly and facilitated by the curriculum leaders. The school has a detailed schedule of the topics to be explored for the term which align with the AAP. There is not as yet, a school Professional Learning Plan in place.

- Teachers are very supportive of the case management process and identify that it is improving their data literacy, their capabilities in addressing specific needs of identified students and has contributed to an improvement in and growing climate of collaboration.

- There are as yet, no arrangements for coaching, for teachers to visit each other's classrooms or for school leaders to observe and discuss teachers' work with them. Most teachers reported that they were supportive of and would welcome such arrangements and some referenced the positive experience associated with the peer observations that took place last year.

- The school is well served by many highly dedicated and professional staff at all levels and is also committed to attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing the best possible teachers and school leaders.

- There is an established staff induction handbook and the Principal oversees the induction program for new staff . Mentoring arrangements are in place for beginning teachers in accordance with Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) policy. The principal also facilitates an Early Careers Program for beginning teachers.

- The four LSOs report that their capacity to support teachers and to contribute to improved student learning outcomes would be improved by enhanced communications with members of the leadership team. They also identify that their capabilities are improved when they are involved in professional development about programs and teaching strategies being implemented in classrooms.

6. Systematic curriculum delivery

The school has a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded, and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has been developed with reference to the Australian Curriculum or other approved curriculum and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. This plan is shared with parents and families.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
School leaders and teachers have limited familiarity with national or system- wide curriculum documents.	The school has a documented plan for curriculum delivery that includes year level and term plans, but the progression of learning from year to year is not always obvious and the relationship between the pieces of the plan (the year, term and unit plans) would benefit from further clarification.	The school's curriculum delivery plan identifies curriculum, teaching and learning priorities and requirements. The curriculum delivery plan reflects a shared vision (by the school's governing body, principal, school leadership team, and teachers) for the school, and provides a context for delivering the curriculum as detailed in the Australian or other approved curriculum and, where relevant, system curriculum documents.	The school has a clearly documented whole- school plan for curriculum delivery. This plan is aligned with the Australian or other approved curriculum and, where appropriate, system curriculum documents. The plan makes explicit what (and when) teachers should teach and students should learn. The curriculum delivery plan is being implemented throughout the school and is shared with parents and the wider community.
The school may have a documented plan for curriculum delivery but there is little evidence that the whole- school plan drives the lesson plans of individual teachers.	School leaders talk about embedding fundamental cross-curricular skills such as literacy, numeracy and higher order thinking within all subjects, but there is little evidence that school- wide strategies are in place to drive a consistent approach. Literacy tends to be seen as the responsibility of English teachers and numeracy, the responsibility of mathematics teachers.	The school curriculum plan and curriculum delivery (including the time allocated to particular learning) balance requirements to address all learning areas, to give priority to English, mathematics and science, and to embed the fundamental skills of literacy, numeracy and higher order thinking in all school subjects.	A strong alignment has been achieved between the overall curriculum delivery plan, term and unit plans, classroom teaching and the regular assessment of student progress in relation to curriculum expectations. Considerable attention has been given to ensuring 'vertical' alignment of the curriculum so that there is continuity and progression of learning across the years of school, with teaching in each year building on to and extending learning in previous years. General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are understood, valued and used as active learning streams for all students.
The enacted school curriculum is not seen as a central concern of all teachers (e.g., it is not a regular topic of conversation, a focus for assessment design or a framework against which student learning is reported).	Discussions about curriculum delivery tend to be sporadic and reactive with a year level focus rather than being driven by a leadership team with a whole-school approach.	The school leadership team ensures that the enacted curriculum remains a focus for discussion among, and collaboration between, teachers and that the curriculum plan is the reference against which flexible delivery is designed, assessment tasks are developed, and student learning is reported. Curriculum delivery is designed to meet the needs of the range of students within each year level as well as those with disabilities and other particular need.	A high priority in curriculum planning is given to the progressive development of students' deep understandings of concepts, principles and big ideas within learning areas, as well as to the ongoing development of cross-curricular skills and attributes, including teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, and the evaluation of information and evidence.

The school places a priority on making the curriculum locally relevant and accessible to all students and values and builds on to students' existing knowledge and varying backgrounds. |

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Domain 6 findings

- The school has documented the delivery of the Victorian Curriculum which includes a teaching and learning statement; policies for each learning area; a scope and sequence for units to be covered across Foundation to year 6 arranged in a two year cycle; a yearly overview for each learning area and term overviews for each year level.

- The school is developing a more consistent approach to the delivery and monitoring of the enacted curriculum across all levels.

- The school engages in an inquiry based delivery model for learning which is integrated with Catholic social teachings. These faith based inquiry Units (FBI) encompass the Catholic social teachings, the general capabilities and cross curricular priorities. Some teachers and students identified that they were yet to explicitly make the connection between the faith based learning and the previously implemented religious education program.

- Some teachers expressed a desire to be more involved the planning of school wide curriculum documents identifying that they were as yet to feel confident that they had a firm understanding of the curriculum and curriculum delivery expectations.

- The school is working towards developing higher order thinking skills within the curriculum delivery to enable students to deepen their learning.

- The teaching and learning leaders demonstrated professionalism, expertise and enthusiasm in their endeavours to ensure systemic curriculum delivery.

- There are regular occasions for students to practice and celebrate their faith. Students plan two class Masses a year, they attend the Masses for their level and attend seven school Masses a year. Students participate in morning prayer each day, a rich sacramental program and thus are well supported in the opportunity to transform their faith into action.

- Visual Arts has been added to the school curriculum program in 2019 and provided to every class for 40 minutes per week. Students also have the opportunity to have their work displayed to the community in a forthcoming Art Show.

- Parents receive a term overview four times a year outlining what is being taught in all learning areas and also, key term dates.

7. Differentiated learning and teaching

The school places a high priority on ensuring that, in their day-to-day teaching, classroom teachers identify and address the learning needs of individual students, including high-achieving students. Teachers are encouraged and supported to monitor closely the progress of individuals, identify learning difficulties and tailor classroom activities to levels of readiness and need.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
School leaders do not place a high priority on teachers identifying and addressing individual learning needs, but are more focused on ensuring that all teachers are teaching the core year level curriculum. Little or no classroom use is made of assessment instruments to establish starting points for teaching. Assessments tend to be used only to establish summatively how much of the taught content students have learnt. Teachers tend to teach to the middle of the class, with the expectation that some students will not master the content, and finding ways to occupy more able students who finish work early. Reports to parents tend to be summative reports of how students have performed, with little guidance on what parents might do to assist in their children's learning.	School leaders are committed to success for all, but do not drive a strong classroom agenda to assess and identify individual learning needs or to differentiate teaching according to students' needs. Some use is made of assessment instruments to identify individual strengths and weaknesses and starting points for teaching, but this appears to be at the initiative of individual teachers rather than a school-wide expectation. Some use is made of differentiated teaching (e.g., differentiated reading groups in the early primary years), but in most classes teachers teach the same curriculum to all students with similar levels of individual support. Regular assessments of student learning are undertaken, but these often are summative and disconnected (e.g., relating to different topics) rather than exploring long-term progress in students' knowledge, skills and understandings over time. Reports to parents generally do not show progress or provide guidance to parents on actions they might take.	School leaders explicitly encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to student needs and readiness. This includes the systematic use of assessment instruments (standardised assessment tasks and teacher developed assessment tools) to establish where individuals are in their learning and to identify skill gaps and misunderstandings. Teachers also are encouraged to respond to differences in cultural knowledge and experiences and to cater for individual differences by offering multiple means of representation, engagement and expression. Planning shows how the different needs of students are addressed, and how multiple opportunities to learn are provided, including multiple pathways for transition to external studies (e.g., apprenticeships) for students in Years 10-12. Students' workbooks also illustrate differentiated tasks and feedback. Reports to parents show progress over time and include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.	The school leadership team actively promotes the use of differentiated teaching as a strategy for ensuring that every student is engaged and learning successfully. It is recognised throughout the school that some students require significant adjustments to their learning programs (e.g., accelerated programs, special support) if they are to be optimally engaged and challenged, and individual learning plans have been developed for those students requiring them. Differentiation is a priority of the school and a feature of every teacher's practice. Regular data on the achievements, progress, strengths and weaknesses of individual students are used in all classrooms to make judgements about individual needs, to identify appropriate starting points for teaching and to personalise teaching and learning activities. Reports to parents and carers include details of how learning opportunities have been tailored to individual needs and of the progress individuals have made.

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Domain 7 findings

- School leaders at St Jude the Apostle school articulate a strong commitment to differentiated teaching and learning and explicitly encourage teachers in planning the tailoring of their teaching to student needs and readiness.

- The school's data schedule and the increasing use of pre and post testing, BAS, PAT-R and PAT-M in literacy and numeracy provides a foundation for tailoring their teaching to student needs and readiness. The understanding of and capabilities of teachers in data analysis and use for differentiating teaching practice to improve student learning outcomes is not yet consistently evident across the school.

- Reading groups and mathematics groups are employed as a differentiation strategy in many classrooms. The use of data to determine groups, flexibility of groupings and responsiveness to individual needs within groupings varies considerably across classrooms.

- The Intervention Framework now provides the foundation for providing services and intervention for students, with the school focusing on the introduction of tier 1 in 2018 and 2019 to focus on universal prevention school-wide and classroom systems for all students, staff and settings and has now moved into tier 2 where there are targeted interventions in small groups for students at-risk socially and emotionally, behaviourally and academically. Many students who have adjustments made will have a SMART Goal.

- Student targeted for intensive interventions may have small group OT and ST sessions and/or individual and small group mixed martial arts, Peaceful Kids and music sessions.

- LEAP has been introduced with a focus on improving growth for specific students. The learning diversity team analyses data and selects students who are withdrawn twice a week for a five-week cycle. Many teachers said that they would like to be consulted in the selection process of students for LEAP and also to receive feedback on students' growth whilst withdrawn from their classes.

- Teachers acknowledge that extending and challenging higher performing students and catering for the needs of gifted and talented students is an area requiring further development of their understanding and skills.

- Reporting to parents provides explicit information about progress against the achievement standards. The reporting process is supported by parents attending student-led conferences in June each year.

8. Effective pedagogical practices

The school principal and other school leaders recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning throughout the school. They take a strong leadership role, encouraging the use of research-based teaching practices in all classrooms to ensure that every student is engaged, challenged and learning successfully. All teachers understand and use effective teaching methods–including explicit instruction–to maximise student learning.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
School leaders do not appear to have strong views on the characteristics of highly effective teaching. There is little evidence that they are driving an agenda to change or enhance teaching practices across the school. The principal and other school leaders spend very little time on issues related to teaching. Questions of pedagogy appear to be viewed solely as the responsibility of teachers. There is little obvious school-wide discussion or consideration of highly effective teaching methods. There may be a lack of explicitness about what students are expected to know and be able to do as a result of classroom activities, very little explicit teaching, limited attention to individual learning needs, or low expectations on the part of teachers that all students in the room will master the content of lessons. Classroom activities frequently have the appearance of 'busy work'.	School leaders are explicit about their desire to see effective teaching occurring throughout the school, but are less clear about what this might look like. They do not appear to be driving a strong agenda to improve and/ or enhance teaching practices across the school, except perhaps indirectly through a focus on school results and targets. School leaders take a close interest in the school's literacy and numeracy results, but generally do not engage in discussions with staff about effective teaching strategies. Discussions of specific teaching practices are rare and generally occur only in the context of concerns about a teacher's performance. There is some clarity about what students are expected to learn, but a lack of balance in teaching methods (e.g., over-reliance on whole-group teaching or very little explicit teaching).	School leaders are committed to continuous improvement in teaching practices throughout the school and expect team leaders and teachers to identify ways of doing this, although the principal and other senior leaders may not themselves have clear positions on the kinds of teaching they wish to see occurring across the school or be 'hands on' in driving improved teaching practices. There is a particular focus on improved teaching methods in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and professional learning activities are focused on building teachers' understandings of highly effective teaching strategies in these areas. Clarity about what students are expected to learn and be able to do, high expectations of every student's learning, explicit teaching of skills and content, individualised attention as required, and timely feedback to guide student action are key elements of the school's push for improved teaching and learning.	The principal and other school leaders have accepted personal responsibility for driving improvements in teaching throughout the school. They demonstrate a strong conviction that improved teaching is the key to improved student learning and have clear and well-known positions on the kinds of teaching that they wish to see occurring. All teachers and leaders are committed to identifying, understanding and implementing better teaching methods, and a high priority is given to evidence-based teaching strategies (strategies that have been demonstrated through research and practice to be highly effective). School leaders spend time working with teachers to improve their teaching practices, including modelling, evaluating and providing feedback on classroom teaching.

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Domain 8 findings

- St. Jude the Apostle demonstrates a strong commitment to improvement in practice by all staff. There is an expectation from the leadership team that staff members consciously work to create welcoming environments in their classrooms conducive to learning and student wellbeing and to build positive relationships with students that produce mutual trust and respect.

- Teachers identified a range of pedagogical practices in their classrooms. There is not yet clarity around the evidence based pedagogy that should be consistently implemented in every classroom.

- The leadership have encouraged teachers to familiarise with the Highly Effective Teaching Strategies (HITS) in order to adjust their teaching in line with student needs.

- Learning intentions and success criteria are employed to varying degrees of efficacy and veracity across the school.

- Students were able to articulate their understandings of the value of the use of Learning Intentions but were unclear about the use of Success Criteria.

- There are some common understandings of practice around the provision of literacy across the school with the recent uptake of the Fountas and Pinnell reading program.

- Classroom teachers have access to external and internal professional learning opportunities to support their growth and development. Some staff said that they would benefit from networking more with others teaching in the same field to exchange ideas and build their repertoire of skills.

- At the beginning of each term there are student wellbeing weeks (SWELL) which are fundamental to relationships, wellbeing and expectations being set up for term. This is also when there is explicit teaching of the PBL focus for the term.

9. School-community partnerships

The school actively seeks ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with parents and families, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations. Parents and families are recognised as integral members of the school community and partners in their children's education. Partnerships are strategically established to address identified student needs and operate by providing access to experiences, support and intellectual and/or physical resources not available within the school. All partners are committed to the common purposes and goals of partnership activities. Procedures are in place to ensure effective communications and to monitor and evaluate the intended impacts of the school's partnerships.

Low	Medium	High	Outstanding
There is no evidence of planned, deliberate partnerships with other institutions or organisations. Contacts with families, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations, when they occur, are limited to isolated events. Although references may be made to 'partnerships', these partnerships are not based on collaboratively planned programs of activities with clear goals, roles and responsibilities.	The school has external 'partnerships', but rather than being built around a coherent, jointly planned program of activities to improve outcomes for students, these 'partnerships' tend to be mutually convenient arrangements (e.g.,, exchanges of expertise or the sharing of facilities between institutions or organisations). Such 'partnerships' often are established by individual members of staff and have limited whole-school support or engagement. The student needs that partnerships are designed to address may not be made explicit and, rather than being carefully planned, individual partnerships tend to be opportunistic in nature. Communications between partners are largely unplanned and infrequent. No plans exist to systematically review the effectiveness of partnerships, which typically are very dependent on the efforts of a small number of individuals and so have limited sustainability.	The school has established one or more partnerships with families, local businesses and/or community organisations with the express purpose of improving outcomes for students. Partnerships have generally been initiated by the senior leadership team and have their support. Each partnership brings staff and students of the school together with external partners such as families, other education or training institutions, local businesses and/or community organisations. All partners have a high level of understanding of, and commitment to, the purposes of the partnership and clear objectives have been set, expressed in terms of improved outcomes for students. Attention has been given to communication and to the sharing of experiences within the partnership; however, there may be no formal plan for reviewing the partnership's outcomes and effectiveness. There is evidence that the school's partnerships are being implemented as intended. However, there may be limited evidence of improved student outcomes as a result of partnership activities – possibly because there has been insufficient time for them to demonstrate an effect.	The school leadership team makes deliberate and strategic use of partnerships with families, local businesses and community organisations to access intellectual, physical and/or other resources not available within the school for the purposes of improving student outcomes. There is a range of currently operating partnerships, each carefully planned and designed to enhance student outcomes (for example, to broaden student knowledge, build new skills, develop more positive attitudes, increase engagement levels, create applied learning opportunities for students, or facilitate successful transitions to work or further education or training). Each partnership has been established in response to an identified need. Considerable effort has been put into understanding students' needs, identifying appropriate partners to address those needs, planning the details of partnership programs and clarifying partner roles and responsibilities. Careful consideration has been given to the benefits of the partnership to each participating partner. Explicit processes are in place to ensure ongoing and effective communication – sometimes across networks of partners – and there are documented plans for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of each partnership. The school's partnerships are being successfully implemented and appear to be adequately resourced and sustainable. There is clear evidence that partnerships are having their intended impact.

Domain 9 findings

- St Jude the Apostle School engages in a range of partnerships to enhance and provide additional learning opportunities for students and to build stronger relationships with parents and community.

- A partnership with the parish is evident. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school. The relationship has been enhanced by the co-location of the school and St Jude's parish church on the same site and students attend Mass regularly. The school also works closely with the Catechist team and the parish liturgy team. Parents expressed support for the Catholic Identity of the school.

- Parents are regarded as integral partners with the school and play an important role in the life of the school through volunteering in classrooms, an active School Advisory Committee (SAC) and Parents' and Friends Association. (P&F)

- Representatives of the SAC and P&F feel that they are consulted and expressed a high level of trust and confidence in the principal and other school leaders.

- Parents interviewed expressed satisfaction with the responsiveness of classroom teachers and would welcome more regular communication from some teachers about their children's learning. They cited SeeSaw as an example of irregular communication where some parents received frequent updates while others didn't.

- The school administration officers play an important role in developing family school partnerships.

- An extensive range of partnerships has been implemented in support of student learning and wellbeing outcomes. These include the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Have a Ball Foundation, Dolphin Research Institute, Caritas Australia, St Vincent de Paul Society, The Resilience Project, Knox Disability Services and GRIP Student Leadership Australia.

- The school has also established good relationships with local members of parliament, there is a professional relationship between the leadership at Holy Trinity School and St Jude the Apostle School and a student leadership project for students in years 3 to 5 operates with Emmaus College.

Commendations

St Jude the Apostle School is to be commended for:-

- The strong focus on student wellbeing and the recognition by parents, teachers and students that wellbeing is one of the most positive aspects and a fundamental strength of the school.

- The recognition of wellbeing and social emotional learning as fundamental underpinnings to learning

- The welcoming, inclusive and community minded culture and the positive and caring relationships that are in evidence across the school.

- Students levels of satisfaction with their feelings of safety and wellbeing.

- The introduction of Positive Behaviour for Learning and level of engagement from the school community.

- The establishment of The Well as hub for wellbeing activities.

- The extensive range of partnerships, especially in support of student wellbeing.

Affirmations

St Jude the Apostle school is to be affirmed for:-

- The high levels of collegiality and support amongst staff members,
- Staff commitment to providing a caring, supported faith-based educational environment for every student.
- The foundations in place for the establishment of a culture of data literacy.
- The implementation of a schedule for the collection of a comprehensive range of data.
- The keen sense of social justice demonstrated by students.
- The role that all year 6 students play as leaders.
- The buddy program.
- The engagement with the Resilience Project, Respectful Relationships and Berry St Model.
- The development of clear behaviour expectations - to be respectful, safe and responsible and to be a GEM
- The investment in Fountas and Pinnell resources to support the school focus on reading.
- The Learning Extension and Intervention Program (LEAP)
- The targeting of resources to support improvement priorities.
- The enhancements to the school facilities.
- The role of case management in promoting teacher collaboration.
- The Early Careers group supporting beginning teachers.
- The opportunities the students have to transform their faith into action.
- The wellbeing weeks at the start of each term.
- The role that school administration officers play in building family school partnerships.
- The active role that the SAC and P&F play in the school.
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Recommendations

- Collaboratively and systematically review student data to identify areas of learning and wellbeing that should be improved, forming the school's narrow and sharp explicit improvement agenda. In conjunction with teachers, set clear targets and timelines for all students. Implement processes of support and accountability to ensure that teachers take responsibility for the changes in practice required to achieve the targets. Communicate the agenda to students and parents.

- Develop a data plan that includes the use of a variety of assessment tools and practices for student achievement and wellbeing and stipulates clearly the schedule of data collection as well as responsibility for analysis, use and monitoring of improvement/ regression. Increasing the data literacy for school leaders and all teachers should be an integral component of this plan.

- Create and implement a whole of school Professional Learning Plan that takes account of all modes of professional learning opportunities, especially those within the school. Develop a comprehensive and systematic approach to the observation, feedback, mentoring and coaching of staff that includes protocols for coaching, observation and feedback conversations to ensure that there is a focus on reflection of practice, the cultivation of strong professional growth and consistency of classroom practice.

- Continue to develop a whole of school curriculum plan that achieves a strong alignment between the overall scope and sequence, unit plans, classroom teaching and the assessment of student progress and which expresses a shared community vision of the community for the school. Ensure that planning processes and documentation provide a foundation for consistency of teaching practice.

- Refine and embed a shared understanding of differentiation ensuring that it is a key feature of classroom practice, characterised by the regular use of data to determine needs of individual students. Ensure these adjustments are consistently documented in planning. Evaluate the effectiveness of the differentiation strategies. Make sure that particular attention is paid to the needs and growth of high achieving students to provide them with the opportunity to reach their full potential.

- Develop an explicit and agreed position on the research-based teaching practices that need to be evident in every classroom, including digital pedagogies. Support teachers in their understanding and implementation of these effective teaching methods and ensure that there is consistency of practice evident in every classroom, every day.

Further details

Information about the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) is available at:

www.acer.org/au/school-improvement/improvement-tools/national-school-improvement-tool