



■ A LEARNING AND TEACHING FRAMEWORK FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

FRAMEWORK

A Learning and Teaching Framework for the Archdiocese of Melbourne



FOREWORD

Amid the challenges of the present, the single greatest invitation is one to ensure the Catholic nature of our schools, faithfulness to Catholic teaching and philosophy, as the gift which we offer to the young people of tomorrow so that they can be in love with Jesus Christ, strong and faithful in their living of the faith and through the development of their professional skills can bring to the world in which we live a vision of that purpose for which the Creator intended.

Archbishop Denis Hart DD
Archbishop of Melbourne

The central educative and ecclesial vision of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) is expressed in ***One Body Many Parts***. The vision contains four aims on which all the endeavours of the CEOM and its work with school and parish communities is focused. They are:

- Aim 1: To live life within the Christian Tradition
- Aim 2: To make schools accessible to all Catholic families
- Aim 3: To strengthen educational communities
- Aim 4: To ensure high achievement for all.

In recent years this vision has also driven the philosophy and work of the ***School Improvement Framework***. This framework has been a key policy initiative in school reform and improvement on a systemic level.

The CEOM is now at a point where a framework for learning and teaching is being made available for schools to help implement the vision for Catholic Education that is contained in ***One Body Many Parts*** and the ***School Improvement Framework***.

Learning Centred Schools: A Sacred Landscape has been designed to support schools in their collaborative pursuit of excellence in learning and teaching within the central vision of Catholic education. It has been developed in consultation with school communities.

Why a ***Sacred Landscape***? Common to all the major religions of the world is the concept of sacred spaces and landscapes. These spaces and landscapes are places where there is the opportunity for God and the human family to meet. Catholic schools provide such opportunities, when the individual encounters God through the breadth of the educational life of the school. Indeed schools are places where we ‘stand on holy ground’ (Exodus3:5), where individuals enter a sacred landscape.

It is my hope that this new learning and teaching document will provide an overarching framework in which school communities can engage in dialogue and debate about the distinctive nature of learning and teaching within the Catholic tradition.

Drawing on a broad range of research, ***Learning Centred Schools: A Sacred Landscape*** provides a comprehensive response to the contemporary challenges of learning and teaching in the Catholic school. It describes the distinctive characteristics and challenges of contemporary learning and teaching environments, identifies emerging issues and priorities and details actions to support schools in successfully crafting their response.

The Catholic Education Office Melbourne continues to work in close collaboration with the Australian and Victorian Governments to realise our shared educational goals as expressed in the ***Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008)*** and the ***Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD, 2008)***.

Learning Centred Schools: A Sacred Landscape is the common ground on which the work of the Catholic Education Office Melbourne and partnerships with school communities can take place. It seeks to bring together faith and education. It provides a framework for the strategic alignment of policies and initiatives of the CEOM and school communities in the context of Catholic education.



Stephen Elder
Director
Catholic Education Office Melbourne

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
One Body – Many Parts: Strategy Plan 2008 - 2010	3
The Distinctive Nature of Learning and Teaching in the Catholic School	4
Contemporary Learning for the 21 st Century	6
Contemporary Curriculum and Pedagogy in the Catholic School	7
Leadership for Learning	8
Curriculum by Design	9
Transforming Pedagogy	10
Assessment for Learning and Teaching	11
Learning Environments	12
Bibliography	14

INTRODUCTION

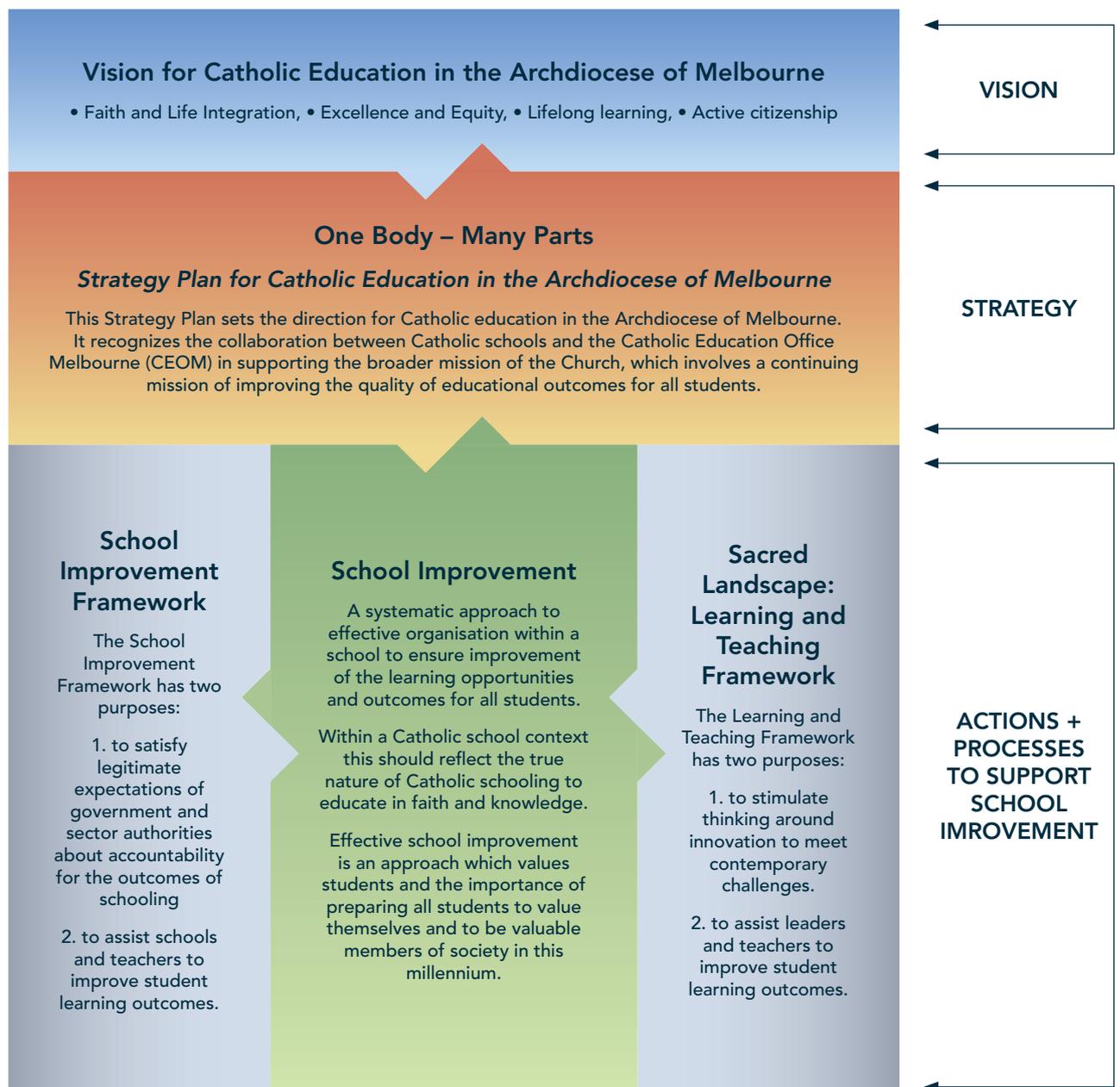
To realise the vision for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne school communities are challenged to continually focus their energy and desire for innovation on school improvement strategies which directly affect learning and student achievement.

There is no doubt that managing school change and improvement is a complex task. Therefore, the continuing mission of improving the quality of educational outcomes for all students must be a collaborative effort between the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) and the Catholic school communities that it serves.

Learning Centred Schools, A Sacred Landscape: Learning and Teaching Framework & Strategy 2009- 2013 details the strategic alignment of a broad range of CEOM policies and capacity building initiatives to support school improvement for achieving high standards in student learning, innovation and best practice in teaching.

Equipped with this knowledge, together both the CEOM and school communities can collaboratively engage in the work of building sustainable models of contemporary learning and teaching, preparing all students to value themselves and to be valuable members of society in this millennium.

The characteristics of contemporary learning in a Catholic school described within this framework will assist all leaders of school improvement connect their school's improvement goals to the broader mission of providing high-quality learning for all students in the Archdiocese.



Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne finds its home within the broader mission of the Church. *One Body – Many Parts* was inspired by St Paul’s letter to the early Christian community at Corinth imploring them to work together, acknowledging the different gifts each one brings to the life of the community. The Catholic education sector is made up of many diverse communities and *One Body – Many Parts* is a call for us to work in unison so that all may enjoy the fullness of life.

The vision for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne is to ensure that students who attend Catholic schools:

Faith and Life integration

Integrate their faith and life through the development of the whole person (spiritually, intellectually, morally, physically, socially and emotionally)

Excellence and Equity

Are encouraged to strive for excellence by making the best possible use of all their talents and abilities

Lifelong learning

Acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for successful transition to further education, training or employment and the strong foundations needed for lifelong learning

Active citizenship

Are prepared for their present and future lives as independent persons, citizens, parents, workers, learners and members of the Catholic Church and empowered to contribute to the common good of society

The aims outlined in *One Body – Many Parts* invite the Catholic education sector to continually improve its capacity:

1 To live life within the Catholic tradition

Goals

- To strengthen leadership in faith in Catholic educational communities
- To reflect a strong Catholic perspective across the curriculum
- To strengthen religious attitudes and values in the lives of students.

2 To make schools accessible to all Catholic families

Goals

- To raise the level of knowledge about the distinctive nature of Catholic schools so that Catholic families see them as schools of first choice
- To align the enrolment of Catholic students with the range of socio-economic status (SES) represented within the Catholic community
- To ensure that Catholic schools are resourced to meet the needs of the Catholic community in line with national and state government goals and targets.

3 To strengthen educational communities

Goals

- To ensure a strong professional culture is evident within Catholic educational communities
- To strengthen the leadership, management effectiveness and accountability of educational communities
- To build capacity in the wider community so that students are supported and optimal learning is achieved
- To ensure programs and services are inclusive of all students
- To strengthen student participation within the wider community.

4 To ensure high achievement for all

Goals

- To strengthen religious education programs Prep to Year 12 to improve student engagement and learning outcomes
- To achieve continued improvement in overall student performance from Prep to Year 12
- To ensure targeted populations achieve agreed benchmarks.

The Distinctive Nature of Learning and Teaching in the Catholic School

A Catholic school cannot be a factory for the learning of various skills and competencies designed to fill the echelons of business and industry. Nor is it for “clients “and “consumers” in a competitive marketplace that values academic achievement. Education is not a commodity, even if Catholic schools equip their graduates with enviable skills. Rather, the Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons.

(Miller, 2006, p.24)

The Gospel and person of Jesus Christ is the reference point and inspiration for every aspect of Catholic schooling. It’s a process that seeks to introduce the learner to “a spiritual horizon broad enough to encompass the most profound human values. Values found in the light of Jesus Christ who in his fullness, assumes all human values”.

(Cf. Cardinal Poupard : Pontifical Council for Culture, May 2001)

The Catholic school is a sacred landscape where faith and knowledge are in dialogue. In this holy place, the formation of the religious and cultural identities of the learners is enacted. They become free and responsible, capable of living a spiritual life in dialogue with God, and capable of engaging with the Australian culture and society. They are empowered to shape and enrich this world with direction, meaning, purpose and hope derived from their encounter with the life and teachings of Jesus.

The learning and teaching process is a graced territory where learner are seen as “autonomous (able to stand on their own feet), connected (with self, society, God and Church)”¹ and with a transcendent orientation (with a spiritual identity – acting with integrity, from the best possible self). Personhood is at the heart of the learning and teaching process, as the person of each individual being, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching.

This is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic School

(Pope John Paul 11, 1991)

As learners carry diverse experiences, contexts and narratives into the educative process, so there is often a confrontation of one’s story with the interpretation of meaning according to the Catholic tradition. This learning by encounter, in the presence of others, with difference, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, enables human and religious growth. The Gospel witness is incarnated in the believing teacher with his/her synthesis of Catholic faith. The teacher engages with and sometimes confronts learners and their life experiences assisting them in the name of truth, to grow in an understanding of themselves and their world in the light of the Catholic tradition. There is a communal search in the school for truth, beauty and goodness, recognising always that the full encounter with Truth lies in the future beyond the horizons of every world-view. This process is formative as it integrates faith, life and culture and is educative as it develops knowledge, skills, values and behaviours.

For the Catholic school, there is the challenge to develop approaches to curriculum and pedagogy that invite and support students to discover God’s presence in their daily lives; that challenge students to understand who they are, and to interpret and make sense of the world in which they live through a world-view, found in scriptures, in the traditions of the Catholic Community, its stories, its worship, its experiences and its teachings. Learning experiences in this context are designed for ongoing transformation as a way of creating meaning in life, of developing human potential, and of liberating and empowering individuals to be responsible for their own lives and contribute to the Australian society.

1 T. D’Orsa, “Catholic education engaging Australian society and culture, p33 in Duncan, D. and Riley, D. (eds) *Leadership in Catholic Education: hope for the future*, Sydney: Harper Collins, 2002. D’Orsa is drawing on Starratt’s ideas about educational leadership and learning being a moral activity.

Amid the challenges of the present, the single greatest invitation is one to ensure the Catholic nature of our schools, faithfulness to Catholic teaching and philosophy, as the gift which we offer to the young people of tomorrow so that they can be in love with Jesus Christ, strong and faithful in their living of the faith and through the development of their professional skills can bring to the world in which we live a vision of that purpose for which the Creator intended.

(Archbishop Denis Hart DD, 2007)

The formation of the learner occurs within an evolving globalised world characterised by rapid technological and social change within multicultural and multi-faith societies. The educative purpose of the Catholic school in this context is to form a learner:

... who is able to inquire about everything and everyone positively and with an open mind, inspired by a profound sense of humanity and by a connection with old and new stories, that can open alternative worlds that can grant... the Reign of God (Pollefeyt, 2006)

This challenges Catholic schools to develop a curriculum and approaches to learning that are reflective and inclusive, that develop interpretative abilities, that 'sit' with difference and plurality, that support and challenge learners to ask 'why', and to discover, experience and live with the good news of Jesus Christ.

KEY MESSAGES

The Catholic School is a sacred landscape where education is the mission of the Church that:

- is founded on Jesus Christ and is committed to the Christian vision of the dignity and potential of each human person
- is inspired by Christian hope that gives value and meaning to life
- through dialogue integration with faith, culture and life is sought
- honours God's word fully expressed in Jesus Christ, while respecting difference in the plurality of interpretations and experiences
- develops the interpretative abilities of the learner to discover God's presence and action in daily living and invites a celebration of that encounter
- cultivates a continuous search for truth and for understanding through a critical participation in society
- is permeated with the spirit of God and supported by the witness of the community in solidarity with all people
- is aware that the search for truth is ongoing and that the full encounter with truth lies behind the horizon of all world-views.

Contemporary Learning for the 21st Century

Continuous learning with clear purpose and connection to the real world is critical to developing the capabilities, dispositions and literacies required to live full lives in diverse communities and deal with issues and change in the twenty-first century.

(Contemporary Learning [LIOW] and The Treasure Within)

We live in world of fast and constant change, marked by rapid developments in science and technology, and where human activity and intervention are affecting our environment. Our society is characterised by global interdependency and population diversity and mobility, and we increasingly are confronted by complex social and environmental issues we cannot avoid. As communities become increasingly multicultural and multi-religious a greater understanding of, and respect for diverse ways of living is required. The rate of technological and social change requires new ways of learning that equip students to be lifelong learners and persons better adapted to the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Increasingly, value is placed on the ability to innovate and create new knowledge. In a learning centred school, learning is differentiated, interactive and co-created. Learners are supported to construct deep understanding. Building upon their existing experiential knowledge, learners make connections to new knowledge and new ways of knowing: conceptualising, theorising, reflecting and analysing. They engage in an interdisciplinary process of learning, with deep engagement in the core disciplines of contemporary knowledge, reflection on what and how they learn, and application of this learning in new and different contexts. Newly acquired knowledge is applied to demonstrate deep understanding of discipline knowledge and creative use of appropriate modes of communication.

The ability to engage in multimodal communication through appropriate and ethical use of existing and emerging technologies, supports the development of powerful ways of thinking and constructing new knowledge. In a learning centred school, students have access to technologies that enrich the learning process enabling new ways of working individually and in collaboration with others. Learners communicate and collaborate beyond the traditional boundaries of the school developing relationships in ways not previously possible. Through connecting with others, learners have opportunities to engage with different cultural contexts and a range of different perspectives, and build new knowledge and understandings through local and global partnerships.

Contemporary learning is personalised. It requires learning and teaching strategies that develop the competence and confidence of each and every learner. It is characterised by a strong focus on standards and the setting of high expectations for all learners. Contemporary learning requires high quality teaching that is responsive to the different ways in which students achieve their best. A commitment to overcome obstacles to learning, whether for individuals or cohorts of learners, means the best possible conditions for learning are promoted. Learning centred schools raise achievement by drawing upon clear evidence to identify where learners are at in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. Interventions for learners who are underachieving at any level are designed to accelerate a student's learning beyond what she or he can do alone. The best progress for all learners is thereby ensured.

KEY MESSAGES

In a Catholic school contemporary learning:

- is underpinned by the expectation that all students will succeed and ensures the best progress of all learners
- enables students to develop deep understandings about the world and how it works and to operate effectively in that world
- builds capacity for lifelong learning
- engages students in multiple perspectives, valuing and responding to diversity and difference
- ensures a personalised response to the learning needs of each student
- focuses on creating flexible learning opportunities in which learning is differentiated in response to different learning styles and is co-constructed
- engages learners in creating new knowledge and understanding by thinking and working creatively, exploring and experimenting, planning and reflecting, and communicating and collaborating
- builds relationships within and beyond the classroom to create learning opportunities in diverse environments
- involves the appropriate and ethical use of contemporary technologies and resources that enable and transform learning.

Contemporary Curriculum and Pedagogy in the Catholic School

The curriculum in the Catholic school expresses the educative vision of the Catholic Church in body, and uses in every school the texts of *To Know, Worship and Love*. It expresses the educative vision of the school community and an authentic understanding of Christ and his teaching. Within secular educational and social contexts the Catholic school seeks to bring into harmony faith, culture and life. The curriculum of the Catholic school is designed to demonstrate the value it holds for the dignity of the human person, a preferred culture of community and its commitment to social justice and service for the common good.

In a general sense, the contemporary view of learning is that students construct new knowledge and understandings on what they already know and believe. The task of the teacher is to extend students to move from what they currently know and can do independently to higher levels of functioning. The curriculum in the Catholic school therefore combines Catholic values and a transformative view of learning and teaching. Learning experiences are designed to help students develop their knowledge, skills and understandings in all learning domains.

The student is at the centre of all curriculum arrangements and interactions within the learning community. The school offers a core curriculum, underpinned by high expectations of achievement, to which all students are entitled, realised through the transformative pedagogies of teachers. The relevant knowledge, skills, behaviours and habits of mind are clearly articulated and aligned with the requirements of the educational jurisdiction.

In a learning centred school the curriculum also takes account of the local context and the demands of contemporary learning, and clearly defines developmentally appropriate, authentic and rigorous standards for students to achieve. The learning and teaching programs that constitute the formal curriculum are coherently structured, yet flexible in their implementation and responsive to change. The curriculum is designed to enable students to choose preferred pathways to future learning and to the world of work. Enrichment activities offered within and beyond the school enable students to pursue their own interests and strengths and connect to the wider community.

Teachers' respect for the dignity of the individual guides their practice. They know their students and how they learn. They are skilled in deploying resources and in using differentiated strategies that challenge and motivate all students to achieve their best and experience success. They use evidence-based approaches to assessment to guide learning and inform their teaching, and help students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and growth.

In a learning centred school teachers engage in collaborative exploration and ongoing professional learning guided by relevant school-based experience and contemporary educational research. Opportunities are provided for personalised and transformative learning for all teachers in the school.

KEY MESSAGES

In a Catholic school the curriculum and pedagogic practice are designed to:

- be faithful to the mission, the traditions and values of the Catholic school and are centred on relationships within the learning community
- reflect what is valued and important by specifying the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours in a core curriculum accessible to all students
- provide choice for students to pursue their interests and flexible pathways to future studies and work
- recognise and value the rich and diverse experiences, perspectives and interests of the learner
- extend students to higher levels of knowledge, understanding and functioning
- enable teachers to develop professionally individually and as a staff.

Leadership for Learning

Exercising leadership in a school primarily entails mobilising and energising others, with the aim of improving learning and teaching.

(Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (2005), *Leadership in Catholic Schools: Development Framework and Standards of Practice*, CECV, Melbourne)

Leadership for learning is characterised by the clear moral and educative purpose of making schools work better for all of their students. Effective school leaders clearly articulate the distinctive mission and strategic directions of the school, and work with others to achieve them. Effective educational leadership therefore entails inspiring and engaging members of the school community in developing a shared vision and developing people through a mix of modelling and individualised support. It values learning and the human person, and places the quality of learning and teaching at the centre of decision making.

In learning centred schools leaders challenge, motivate, encourage and nurture. They provide opportunities for colleagues to initiate and demonstrate leadership in learning and teaching in a range of contexts. Leaders engender a strong culture of performance and development aligned with the vision and strategic direction that the school and jurisdiction have for learning and teaching. Such leaders demonstrate a high level of professional knowledge. They are expert in leading teams of teachers to actively and collaboratively reflect on and improve their practice.

Leadership for learning is supported by the exercise of organisational leadership and the ability to embrace and manage change. Educational leaders foster the development of positive learning environments and the strong teacher-student relationships that underpin effective learning and teaching in schools. They recognise that the attributes and capabilities of teachers and leaders influence the quality of their students' learning and support teachers to improve their skills.

Leadership for learning flourishes in professional learning communities in which diversity is valued, and active and purposeful professional learning is expected of all. Accountability to students, parents and education authorities, based on evidence of achievements and results, is ensured and used to inform further improvement in the school. Effective professional learning communities are responsive to increasingly complex changes in education and society and seek innovative and sustainable ways of doing a better job. Leaders build strong connections in and between their school and local communities. Leadership for learning entails collaboration with the wider teaching profession, organisations, networks and government agencies to strengthen and enrich learning and teaching opportunities for all members of the school community.

KEY MESSAGES

In a Learning Centred School leaders:

- are guided by Catholic moral, professional and ethical principles
- enact school policies which clearly articulate the shared vision and strategic direction for learning and teaching in the Catholic context and ensure the alignment of school policies and practices with system requirements
- plan strategically for continuing school improvement and manage change effectively
- build a collaborative learning culture in which leadership for learning can be exercised by individuals and teams in a variety of ways
- ensure that curriculum planning, teaching practices and professional learning programs are designed to improve student learning
- design organisational structures, procedures and resources that support high quality learning and teaching
- ensure quality assurance and accountability procedures are designed to develop a strong culture of performance and development
- develop collaborative partnerships, within and beyond the school community, to strengthen learning and teaching opportunities.

Curriculum by Design

In a Catholic school the curriculum expresses the educative vision of the school community and an authentic understanding of Christ and His teaching. The curriculum is designed to ensure that all students gain the knowledge, skills and habits of mind required for success in a globalised, 21st century society and economy. This includes not only the core disciplines of English, Mathematics and Science which are increasingly sought by employers globally and are a key source of technological innovation and growth, but also a range of skills that enable people to perform effectively in the workplace and contribute as members of their communities (e.g., innovation, collaboration, problem solving, self direction, and a capacity to relate to others in different cultural contexts and to manage change). This suggests a difficult balance must be forged in the perennial challenge between curriculum breadth and depth.

At its simplest, curriculum refers to the school's documented framework for learning and teaching that is the outcome of a collective process of deliberation by stakeholders, each bringing their values, beliefs, perspectives and experiences to bear. This framework sets out the school's educational objectives, the content and organisation of the programs and activities provided together with the supporting actions and resources for its implementation.

When the student is the focus of design, however, curriculum means much more. It encompasses the totality of student experience – not only the formal, planned experiences and organisational arrangements designed to improve outcomes of learning in different sites and in different groupings, but also the informal elements of the curriculum; what students bring to the learning situation from their own lives and what occurs spontaneously regardless of what is planned. A curriculum that consciously and intentionally takes account of, and provides for diversity and difference among students, and engenders connection, attachment and engagement is essential for personalised learning to occur.

An effective curriculum is coherently structured to enable students to gain deeper levels of knowledge, skills and understanding as they progress through school. The core curriculum comprises programs and activities designed to integrate essential knowledge, skills and behaviours across broad disciplines and areas of personal and interdisciplinary learning in authentic contexts.

These are sequenced to allow for different stages of learning and different rates of development. Choice within and beyond the core is provided by including elements that are constructed with the involvement of the learner. The total curriculum provides opportunities for students to achieve the essential learning standards.

An effective curriculum is designed to be flexible. It is responsive to internal and external challenges, provides for intervention and enrichment to meet identified needs and interests and makes strong connections beyond the immediate community. It can accommodate new ways of learning emerging from research and the opportunities that contemporary tools afford. It also provides flexible pathways to future learning and the world of work where students' achievements are recognised and recorded over time.

An effective curriculum is subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure it meets community expectations and needs and continually improves.

KEY MESSAGES

In a Learning Centred School the curriculum is designed:

- to express the educative vision of the Catholic Church and the school community and an authentic understanding of Christ and his teaching
- to ensure that students gain the knowledge, skills, understandings and dispositions required to succeed in, and contribute to a modern, globalised world
- to interweave the domain of Religious Education and those of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards to provide a range of rich and authentic contexts that support personalised learning
- to provide authentic and developmentally appropriate programs and activities (core, intervention and enriching) that enable students to achieve high quality learning outcomes in different sites and in different groupings
- to be flexible and responsive to the individual learning needs of students and the diversity, aspirations and expectations of the school community
- to provide multiple pathways to future learning that meet the needs of individuals and cohorts of students
- to leverage the learning opportunities afforded by local community partnerships and connections to wider global networks through the world wide web.

Transforming Pedagogy

Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of (humankind's) most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings. The personal relations between the teachers and the students, therefore, assume an enormous importance and are not limited simply to giving and taking....it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose.

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium. n.19

Teachers' work is extraordinarily complex. The Catholic school is operating in a secular society where changing social, economic and political conditions and greater cultural diversity have increased the expectations placed on schools and teachers. Parents, guardians, carers, local communities, employers and government agencies look to schools to ensure the current and future wellbeing of all young people. Increased accountability by education jurisdictions has added another dimension to teachers' work.

In a learning centred school teachers have a deep professional knowledge, an evident enthusiasm for their work and a strong belief that all students can learn. The learning experiences they develop and provide are aligned to the jurisdiction's and school's curriculum and achievement standards and designed to inspire and motivate students and nurture a love of learning.

Research over recent years has clearly demonstrated that there is greater variation in the quality of teaching within schools than between schools. The challenge, therefore, is try to ensure that all teachers in the school more regularly behave and perform like the best teachers in the school. There is much that is known in this context about teaching practices that make a significant difference to the quality of student learning. More specifically, the most effective teachers:

- *have high expectations, expect students to put effort into their learning and are committed to every student's success regardless of their background*
- *know their students well and set clear and appropriate learning goals*
- *maximise each student's engaged learning time by making each and every lesson count and emphasising that learning and teaching is the purpose of the lesson*
- *develop quality relationships with students by establishing a safe, supportive, challenging and optimistic learning environment where all students are accepted, respected and valued at all times*
- *structure and pace teaching and classes to match the personal learning needs of all students to assist them to move from where they are now to higher levels of competence*
- *adopt a repertoire of techniques appropriate to the material to be learned and the level and learning styles of the students to make learning challenging, enjoyable, vivid and real, including the use of contemporary tools that have been demonstrated to engage students in more effective learning in and outside of school*
- *constantly monitor students' learning to determine strategies for further improvement and growth and provide feedback which recognises what the student has achieved*
- *support students to take increased responsibility for the management of their own learning and monitor learning themselves.*

Accomplished teachers are also reflective practitioners who examine their practice against professional standards and relevant educational research. Through targeted and ongoing professional learning, teachers maintain the currency of their content knowledge of the subject they teach, the pedagogical knowledge of teaching as a whole and the pedagogical content knowledge of how to teach the concepts in their particular subject. They work together to make connections for students across the curriculum in a coordinated way, share their practice with their peers and others, and initiate/support actions that contribute to a positive culture of learning in the school and wider professional community.

KEY MESSAGES

In a Learning Centred School teachers:

- ensure the distinctive mission of the Catholic school is evident in their practice
- have high expectations of students and a belief that all students can learn
- adopt a proven repertoire of teaching strategies to support personalised learning and generate high quality student learning outcomes
- Contextualise learning and make connections across areas of learning
- know their students well and build strong relationships with students, parents, guardians, carers and the wider community
- use current and emerging technologies to build student engagement and help students develop their overall knowledge and skills
- strive to improve their professional subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, and collaborate with colleagues to support professional learning in and beyond the school.

Assessment for Learning and Teaching

The quality of student performance is closely related to the quality of learning activities that students undertake. Generating higher quality learning outcomes depends on providing students with challenging and thoughtful learning experiences which enable them to demonstrate effectively what they have learned. This involves careful planning, a strong sense of what outcomes will be assessed and development of the criteria used for assessment.

Assessment which provides information on students' progress and the effectiveness of teaching programs is integral to the learning and teaching process. In a learning centred school, assessment focuses on student learning and how it can be improved. It therefore requires a mix of summative assessment of learning to determine what the student has achieved, formative assessment, to pinpoint what the student needs to do to improve and ongoing assessment which focuses on teacher feedback alongside student reflection and self-assessment.

Assessment is a constructive process used to make judgments about progress, but primarily designed to help the student learn more effectively and the teacher to contribute to student learning. It provides students with an opportunity to display the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes they have developed and motivates them by recognising what they have accomplished. When it then is shared between teachers, assessment also contributes to better understanding of each student's development over time, and how best to ensure that individuals will improve.

The key characteristics of good assessment according to educational research are:

- *its primary purpose is to improve student performance*
- *it reflects the fact that learning is a complex process that is multi-dimensional, integrated and revealed in student performance over time*
- *it should be an integral component of course design and not an add-on*
- *it is based on clear and explicit statements of purpose and goals for the course, the standards which students are expected to achieve and the criteria against which success is measured*
- *The purpose for the assessment should be clear and appropriate for the learning outcome.*
- *a variety of assessment measures is used to reflect the types of information that is sought*
- *the instruments and processes chosen directly measure what they are intended to measure, and allow for moderation between teachers to enhance objectivity and contribute to a shared understanding of the judgments that are made*
- *the attention to knowing what students achieve is balanced by knowing about their experiences along the way.*
- *it involves a linked series of activities undertaken over time, rather than a single episode, so that progress is monitored towards the intended course goals and standards*
- *it involves feedback and reflection to contribute towards improvement.*

Assessment provides the evidence that can be used for reporting to various audiences and for future planning of the school curriculum. Students, parents and the community expect credible reporting on what students know and can do, along with clear advice on how they can improve. Parents, in particular, want to know how far their child has progressed during the year, relative to where he or she was at the start of the year. They also want to know if their child is at the standard expected for students of their age. This provides the context for specific advice to the student and the parent about what they, with the support of the teacher, can do to improve performance. Involving parents and others in the process of reporting students' progress can provide important feedback to teachers, strengthen teacher-parent relationships and contribute to meeting the learning needs of the student and the educational purpose of the school.

KEY MESSAGES

In a Learning Centred School assessment is characterised by:

- a belief that assessment is primarily about improving student learning outcomes.
- a mix of summative and formative assessment that is used to inform learning and teaching
- multiple sources of evidence, collected over time, which are used to monitor and make judgments about student progress and inform decisions about teaching
- rich and authentic, learning activities and assessments that provide clear criteria and enable students to demonstrate what they have learned.
- teachers engaging in processes that ensure a shared understanding and consistency of judgment about learning standards
- procedures and processes for reporting student progress that take into account the different audiences and purposes of reporting and provide opportunities for consultation and feedback.

Learning Environments

Changes associated with the development of a global, knowledge-based world, together with a growing understanding of how people learn, have shifted the focus of education from merely gaining and replicating knowledge, to developing learners who can transfer and apply their knowledge within and beyond the classroom. The conditions for learning must be conducive to this and need to be intentionally and strategically planned if the quality of learning is to be improved.

Students are most likely to learn in an environment that is safe, orderly and positive, and where mutual respect and trusting relationships allow both students and teachers to take risks and learn from their mistakes. When students experience such an environment and feel their teachers know them well, they develop the attachment and sense of belonging that underpins successful learning at school. They are more motivated to learn, able to take responsibility for their own learning, and hence more open to new ways of learning that can be personalised to meet their needs.

Engaging, adaptable spaces energise students, teachers and the community. Well-designed learning spaces inspire creative, productive and efficient learning.

(MCEETYA 2008)

Learning centred schools ensure that all available resources are directed towards maximising the potential of all learners. The school's built environment makes adequate provision of space for general education, collaboration and specialised services, and is conducive to generating quality learning outcomes. Space and time are used in diverse and flexible ways to support learning. These material resources are supplemented by the diverse interests, capacities and experiences the students themselves bring to school, and the intellectual, cultural and social resources the community can provide. Planned and spontaneous interactions with peers, community members, teachers and family members then can further increase opportunities to gain diverse perspectives and learn from each others' skills and experiences.

New technologies play a particularly important role in a learning centred school enabling learning to occur beyond the boundaries of the school and the conventional school day. Young people's familiarity with modern technology, and their engagement in social networking through the Internet is captured to engage them in curriculum-based learning and networking that extends around the world. Contemporary learning assumes that students and teachers have continual access to a range of technologies that support interactive learning and to digital content that is directly relevant to the curriculum. Creating an ICT rich learning environment requires educators to consider designing new and flexible spaces for learning.

KEY MESSAGES

In a Learning Centred School, learning environments:

- are safe, flexible, inclusive and foster collaboration and creativity
- are intentionally and strategically planned to enable learners to gain and apply deep knowledge and skills
- engender a climate of mutual respect, trust and responsibility
- help students to develop a sense of belonging and attachment to school
- ensure that facilities reflect the educational vision of the school and support the learning and teaching methodologies that are used
- use space and time effectively and draw on the full range of learning resources available to the school
- strengthen a culture of community within and beyond the school
- seize the opportunities that modern technology affords to improve each student's learning and ensure their personal learning needs are met.

...school communities are challenged to continually focus their energy and desire for innovation on school improvement strategies which directly affect learning and student achievement...



- Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment (2007). Assessment for Learning, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.aaia.org.uk/assessment.htm>>
- Australian Government Dept of Education Science and Training (2003). National Safe Schools Framework Implementation Manual
- Blum, W.M. & Heather P. Libbey, H. P. (2004). Executive summary: *Journal of School Health*, 74 (7), 231-32.
- Bransford, J D, Brown A L.& Cocking R R.(eds) (1999). *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*. National Academy of Sciences. Accessed 9 September 2008 <<http://books.nap.edu/html/howpeople1/index.html>>
- Catalano, R.F, Haggerty, K P., Oesterle, S., Fleming, C. B. & Hawkins J. D. (2004). The Importance of Bonding to School for Healthy Development: Findings from the Social Development Research Group. *Journal of School Health* 74(7), 252-261.
- Catholic Church Congregation For Catholic Education (1998). *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* Boston: Pauline Books & Media
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (2007). A Guide to available Assessment and Reporting Resources, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://admin.ceo.melb.catholic.edu.au/User/vels/curriculum/resources.asp>>
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (2007). Guidelines for Curriculum in the Catholic School (1994), accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://web.cecv.vic.catholic.edu.au/frameset.htm?page=policies>>
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (2005). Leadership in Catholic Schools: Development Framework and Standards of Practice, accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://web.cecv.vic.catholic.edu.au/frameset.htm?page=publications>>
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (2007). Policy 1.15: Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting for Catholic Schools P-12 (1994), accessed on 23 March 2007 <<http://web.cecv.vic.catholic.edu.au/frameset.htm?page=policies>>
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (2007). Policy 1.15C: Guidelines for reporting student outcomes in the Catholic School, accessed September 2008 <<http://web.cecv.vic.catholic.edu.au/frameset.htm?page=policies>>
- Catholic Education Office of Melbourne (2007). Religious Education Curriculum Framework, accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://admin.ceo.melb.catholic.edu.au/User/re/content.asp#Learning>>
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2003). Safe and sound. An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs. (Illinois Education), accessed 9 September 2008 from <<http://www.casel.org/pub/safeandsound.php>>
- Curriculum Corporation (2006). Assessment for learning, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/assessment/aboutproj.asp>> <<http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/assessment/links.asp>>
- Delors, J (1996). *Learning, the treasure within: Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century*. Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing.
- DEMOS (2006). Digital curriculum, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.demos.co.uk/projects/digitalcurriculumproject/themes/~education>>
- Department of Education, Science and Training Australia (2005). Asia Education Foundation, accessed on 8 September 2008 <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/index_flash.htm>
- Department of Education, Science and Training Australia (2006). National Statement for Engaging Young Australians with Asia in Australian Schools, accessed on 8 September 2008 <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/public_html/aef_statement.htm>
- Department of Education, Science and Training Australia (2005). What Works: The Works Program Improving outcomes for Indigenous students, accessed on 8 September 2008 <<http://www.whatworks.edu.au>>
- Department for Education and Skills United Kingdom (2007). Personalised learning (five components), accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning/five/>>
- Department for Education and Skills United Kingdom (2007). Thinking Skills in Primary Classrooms, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/thinkingskills/?view=Site+Map&branchid=559000>>Department of Education and Training New South Wales (2002). Productive pedagogy, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/inform/yr2002/mar/pedagogy.htm>>
- Department of Education and Training Western Australia (2004). Professional Standards for School Leaders, accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/lc/>>
- Department of Education and Training Western Australia (2004). The Leadership Framework (diagram), accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/educators.asp>>

- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Blueprint for Government Schools: Assessment and Reporting, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/assessment.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Blueprint for Government Schools, Principles of Learning and Teaching, accessed 9 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/teachingprinciples/default.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Community Partnerships, accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint1/fs1.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Continuous monitoring – Whole school level, accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/curriculum/preptoyear10/guidelines/default.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Curriculum Planning Guidelines, accessed on 08 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint1/fs1.htm#1>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Educative Purpose – Whole school level, accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/curriculum/preptoyear10/guidelines/phase1/ws/default.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Effective Schools, accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint1/>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Engagement and Wellbeing, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.edu.au/blueprint/fs1/guidelines/phase1/WS/engageWS.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Koorie Education, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/news/newsalerts/indigenoustrat.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT), accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/teachingprinciples/principles/default.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Professional leadership, accessed on 5 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint1/fs3.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Program for Students with Disabilities, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/wellbeing/disability/default.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Purposeful Teaching, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint1/es/teaching.htm>>
- Department of Education Victoria (2006). Reporting advice, accessed September 2008 <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/studentreports/default.htm>>
- Distance Education UK Project Report (1998). Learning in the Next Millennium - Knowledge Transactions on the Internet. Yannis Karaliotas accessed 9 September 2008 <<http://users.otenet.gr/~kar1125/iaction.htm>>
- D’Orsa, T (2002). Catholic education: Engaging Australian society and culture. In D.Duncan, and D. Riley, (Eds.), *Leadership in Catholic Education*, (p 33). Sydney: Harper Collins.
- Elmore, R. (2002). Bridging the Gap Between Standards and Achievement, the Imperative for Professional Development in Education, Albert Shanker Institute, accessed September 2008 <http://www.shankerinstitute.org/Downloads/Bridging_Gap.pdf>
- eSchool News (2007). 21st Century Learning Environments, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.eschoolnews.org/resources/reports/21stcenturylearning/>>
- Fredericks, J.A., Blumfield, P.C., & Paris, A.H. (2004). Student engagement: potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59-109.
- Hawkins, J. & Catalano, R. (1992). *Communities that care: Action for drug abuse prevention*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hill, P (2001). *What principals should know about learning and teaching*. IARTV, Jolimont Victoria.
- Ingvanson, L & Meiers, M (2005). Investigating the links between teacher professional development and student learning outcomes, A project funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program, accessed September 2008 <http://www.dest.gov.au/common_topics/publications_resources/All_Publications_AtoZ.htm>
- Leadbeater, C (2006). *The shape of things to come: Education 2020* Centre for Strategic Education Seminar Series No 154, May
- MCEETYA, (2008). *Learning in an Online World: Learning Spaces Framework*. Canberra: Curriculum Corporation.
- MCEETYA, (2008). *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. Canberra: Curriculum Corporation.

- Miller CSB, Archbishop J. Michael (2006). *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*. Strathfield, Australia: St Paul Publications.
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. (2006). *Australian Directions in Indigenous Education 2005-2008*, accessed on 9 September 2008
<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/_resources/Australian_Directions_in_Indigenous_Education_2005-2008.pdf>
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. (2006). *The Statements of Learning*, accessed on 9 September 2008
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. (2006). *Contemporary learning: learning in an Online World*, accessed on 9 September 2008 <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/verve/_resources/Contemp_Learning_Final.pdf>
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (1999). *The Adelaide declaration on national goals for the schooling in the twenty-first century*, accessed September 2008.
<<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/default.asp?id=11576>>
- Morris, E & Beare, H (2006). *Directions for Schooling in the 21st Century: Two Perspectives*, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne North Central Regional Educational Library 1995, *Rethinking Assessment and its role in supporting educational reform*, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/assment/as700.htm>>
- Oblinger, D G (ed) (2006). *Learning Spaces* accessed 9 September 2008
<<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/PUB7102a.pdf>>
- Osterman, K.F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70, 323-367.
- Pollefeyt, D. (2006). *Towards a Contemporary Identity for the Catholic School*, presented to Catholic principals and parish priests, Flemington, 5 September 2006.
- Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2006). *Assessment for learning checklist*, accessed on 9 September 2008
<http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_4338.aspx>
- Seltzer, K & Bentley, T (1999). *The Creative Age: Knowledge and skills for the new economy*, accessed September 2008
<<http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/creativeage>>
- Silcox, S & MacNeill, N (2005). 'Catalytic teachers' roles in pedagogic change', *Curriculum Leadership: an electronic journal for leaders in education*, accessed on 9 September 2008 <<http://cmslive.curriculum.edu.au/leader/default.asp?id=16390>>
- Specialist Schools Trust (2004). *International Networking for Educational Transformation*, accessed on 5 September 2008, accessed on 23 March 2007 <<http://www.sst-net.com.au/>>
- University of Leicester (1999). *School Effectiveness*, accessed on 23 March 2007
<<http://www.le.ac.uk/education/ESI/doc1f.html>>
- University of Sydney (2007). *Teaching and Leading for Quality Australian Schools*. Teaching Australia. NSW
- Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (2006). *Assessment maps*, accessed on 9 September 2008
<<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/maps/index.html>>
- Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (2006). *Assessment principles*, accessed on 9 September 2008
<<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/assessprinciples.html>>
- Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (2006). *Prep to year 10 Curriculum and Standards*, accessed on 9 September 2008
<<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/essential/index.html>>
- Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (2006). *Stages of learning*, accessed on 9 September 2008
<<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/stages/index.html>>
- Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (2006). *Students with Disabilities Guidelines*, accessed on 9 September 2008
<<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/support/disability.html>>
- Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (2006). *Teacher support materials*, accessed on 9 September 2008
<<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/links/teachsuppmat.html#stdpp>>

The Gospel and person of Jesus Christ
is the reference point and inspiration
for every aspect of Catholic schooling...

Cf. Cardinal Poupard

