

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT 2011

ST ITA'S SCHOOL BOARD

SCHOOL CYCLICAL REVIEW

A major sign of a healthy and developing school community is its capacity to renew itself. Such renewal involves critical reflection by the community on its essential purpose as it encounters constant change and new challenges, a review and validation of the authenticity of its current practice and a commitment to continuous improvement. As part of this process of school renewal we entered into the fourth year of our current renewal cycle and reflected on the following components of the Internal School Review Instrument: *Social Action and Justice, Learning and Teaching, Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Professional Practice, Planning and Reporting and Accountability*. Focused reflection by the staff on each component identified areas of strength and areas for development which will inform our school's annual goal setting for 2012 within our Strategic Renewal Plan. This year St Ita's engaged in an external school review process the purpose of which is to address the Non-State School Accreditation compliance requirements in an integrated manner, provide data to inform Archdiocesan, State and Commonwealth reporting requirements and inform strategic planning. The review panel consisted of an external educational consultant, BCE Area Supervisor, Principal from another school, Parish Priest, members of the teaching and support staff, and representatives of the School Board and Parents and Friends Association. The panel engaged in dialogue about the school's strategies for engaging with the internal school review process and the school's strategic directions for further improvement to student learning. The panel chair provided a report commending the high order of community engagement in the internal review process and the strong alignment with initiatives that are leading to improvement in the educational life and culture of the school. The External School Review Report can be viewed in its entirety on the school website www.stitasduttonpark.qld.edu.au

DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Major building projects were completed this year with grants provided by the Building the Education Revolution (BER) Program and State Government funding. The school also contributed through an ADF loan of \$400 000. These facilities include a Library, Learning Support Centre, four classrooms, undercover outdoor play facility and amenities block. An early years' playground has also been constructed with school funds and a P&F contribution. The pool plant equipment received a much needed upgrade with new filters and pump ensuring that our pool facility will be easily maintained in the long term. These facilities provide state of the art learning areas for our students. The physical environment of our school is developing to align with the quality learning experiences enjoyed by our community.

As one project finishes we commence another. With funding from the State Government and a school contribution we are embarking on the building of a new administration block, uniform shop, multipurpose rooms and student amenities. The demolition of the current Administration building and the commencement of the new building is due to start at the beginning of 2012.

CURRICULUM

This year there has been a curriculum emphasis on familiarization of the new Australian Curriculum. Education Officers from BCE have worked closely with our teaching staff to plan units of work using the English and History curriculum documents. This support will continue in 2012 and we will also begin using the new Mathematics curriculum. Science has been a focused priority this year with all classes from P-7 using the Primary Connections Program which aligns with the new Science Curriculum.

A performing arts teacher was employed this year and the students have developed their creative talents through this program with some outstanding performances at our school concert. The Arts Program at St Ita's is growing and this year the music, visual arts and performing arts teachers worked closely together to produce an exceptional showcase of student talent in the creative arts.

The teaching staff has continued to work on developing a *Vision for Learning* at St Ita's that identifies the aspirations for learners in our community, that clearly enunciates the goals and standards relating to student learning, is informed by current research on learning and is beneficial to students through the provision of high quality learning experiences and aligns strongly with our current Vision and Mission, policies and practices. This desire for continuous professional learning and reflection is an indicator of the professionalism and strong commitment that our teachers have to the students as learners at St Ita's. Professional Learning Days have been used to work with an Education Officer Curriculum from Brisbane Catholic Education to develop our *Vision for Learning*. It is envisaged that this document will be available for discussion and feedback early in 2012 and will identify current practices and inform future needs for professional learning to improve student outcomes.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This year began with the heartbreaking devastation of the loss of homes and businesses for a number of our families. It also demonstrated the compassion and generosity of our community as we sent out a call for assistance. The response from our parents and staff was evidence of the wonderful spirit of care for others that we hoped was embedded in our school ethos. This was proven to be true through the action of giving of meals, cash, furniture, clothing and offers of assistance to rebuild. Through adversity it is said that communities become stronger and this certainly was evidenced at St Ita's.

In partnership with the Brisbane City Council the Active School Travel Program was implemented this year. The purpose of this program is to encourage families to park some distance from the school and walk to school easing traffic congestion around the school and encouraging families to become more physically active. The program has been very successful with up to 75% less traffic on designated walking days. Parents have committed to this program with a number volunteering to walk with students from designated walking stations.

This was the year of the school fete. The St Ita's Summertime Fete was a resounding success on many levels. It brought the community together in a spirit of harmony and cooperation. The weather was perfect and the hard work and wonderful organizational skills of the Fete committee and convenors ensured that the day went smoothly. This event was not only a financial success but also showcased our wonderful community working together in support of our students.

CONCLUSION

I acknowledge the continued support and commitment of the St Ita's community who contribute in so many ways through the various P&F fundraising and social events. It is a privilege to be part of this community and I thank sincerely the members of the School Board for the support that you have graciously bestowed on me and for your wisdom as we work together in partnership to make just decisions to not only move our school forward but also to retain and nurture those values that are an important part of the culture of our school.