



Notre Dame College Review of McAuley Champagnat Program 2016

External Reviewer: Liz Monahan

.....

MCP Review

To implement each recommendation of this MCP Review, a Reference Group responsible for the overall implementation will be formed comprising:

- Peter C (Chair)
- Kath S (Curriculum)
- Selina D (Welfare)
- Una F (Psychologist)
- John C (Principal)
- Susan S (minutes)

Each recommendation will have an Implementation Plan, comprising who is responsible to oversee the implementation and a timeframe re embedding the recommendation.

The person responsible re leading the implementation (first person named) will liaise with Susan S re calling meeting etc.

NB the implementation of these recommendations will be ongoing.

Also I recognize that some of the recommended changes are already occurring.

Notably with 2017 having 4 classes, there has been an impact on electives, academic rigor etc already.

Susan S will circulate minutes of all meetings to all staff at MCP.

After going through each recommendation and then having some time to read and digest the report, I ask any staff who wishes to send me input, thoughts, comments, feedback or questions re the report to do so via email directly to me on

john.cortese@notredame.vic.edu.au by COB on Friday 4th November, 2016.

I will circulate to all MCP staff the collated information.

John Cortese
Principal – Notre Dame College
October 2016

.....

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review is to identify the particular strengths and challenges associated with the McAuley Champagnat Programme at Notre Dame College with a view to making recommendations to the College Leadership Executive and College Board for ongoing improvement and maximizing of student learning and wellbeing outcomes at the campus

Context

The McAuley Champagnat Programme (MCP) was established as a campus of Notre Dame College Shepparton in 2006 in order to meet the needs of students in the Greater Shepparton region at risk of not completing their education and accessing appropriate pathways beyond education. The complex and multiple needs of these students were not being met by other education providers at the time, although in recent years other similar programmes have been established, both in the government system within Shepparton and in the Catholic system across the Sandhurst Diocese.

MCP was founded in the tradition of Catherine McAuley and Marcellin Champagnat whose lives and missions were dedicated to the Gospel imperative of caring for the poor, the disadvantaged and the marginalized, in particular the provision of education for these groups.

MCP students are typically those who have been unable to continue at mainstream schools because of inappropriate behavior, inconsistent attendance or mental health issues such as anxiety. Many have learning difficulties, multiple behavioural problems, are victims of crime, abuse or neglect. Some are in the care of the Department of Health and Human Services or other out of home care and some live independently. Thus they face multiple barriers to education as indicated by 2010 research which showed 43% had more than 11 such barriers. They are often functioning academically well below their chronological age, with low levels of numeracy and literacy. MCP prides itself on being *a programme of second, third, fourth ... chances. We never give up on a child. We always provide hope* (Notre Dame College website). While the student profile varies considerably across time, currently approximately 80% are male and 25% are indigenous.

Methodology and Timeline for the Review

Initial planning for the review commenced in March 2016 with a meeting involving the Notre Dame College Principal, Leadership Executive and the external reviewer. An initial visit to the McAuley Champagnat Programme campus in March was followed by a number of visits and interviews, including those with:

- The Parish Priest who is the Canonical Administrator of the College
- Chair of the Notre Dame College Board
- Notre Dame College Principal
- Notre Dame College Deputy Principals

Director of the McAuley Champagnat Programme
 MCP Welfare Coordinator
 MCP Curriculum Coordinator
 MCP Education Psychologists
 MCP Teaching Staff focus group and individuals
 MCP Welfare Workers
 MCP Director's Personal Assistant
 Focus group of MCP current students
 Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership Principal
 DOXA Bendigo Principal
 Wanganui Park Secondary College Deputy Principal
 Former MCP staff member
 Sandhurst Diocese Director of Catholic Education
 Sandhurst Diocese Education Officer
 Sandhurst Diocese Former Principal Consultant
 Former Notre Dame College Deputy Principal and foundation Director of MCP

Visits to MCP between March and August 2016 included classroom observations and attendance at family days where casual conversations were conducted with parents and carers. Documentation provided by the Director of MCP included the background to the programme, policies, processes, data and copies of MCP yearbooks.

There are two similar schools in the Sandhurst Diocese, Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership and DOXA School Bendigo. Given the unique nature of the McAuley Champagnat Programme and the challenge in development of yardsticks, it was compared with these two settings in a number of aspects.

A report was completed in August 2016 with recommendations to be considered for implementation in 2017 and beyond.

Focus areas for the Review

After initial consultations, the following focus areas for this review were identified:

- Pastoral Effectiveness
- Educational Effectiveness
- Outcomes
- Financial Operation
- Documentation, Policies and Processes
- Staffing and Class Structure
- Partnerships

REVIEW REPORT

1. PASTORAL EFFECTIVENESS

The McAuley Champagnat programme has a strong focus on student wellbeing. It prides itself on the provision of a safe and inclusive environment which offers emotional, social, psychological and physical support for its students. On the Notre Dame College website, it is claimed that *strong boundaries and consistent pastoral care provides a platform for students to learn how to manage their own behaviour and become respectful and happy young people*. This focus is apparent in the daily interactions between staff and students at MCP. It is evident that they establish relationships which are *founded on trust and honesty which allows the student to feel safe and protected*. A process of early intervention to address issues before they become significant is also apparent. Staff are very supportive of each other and present overall as passionate and committed to the programme.

The model of student management used at MCP aims to teach students respect, responsibility, work ethic and appropriate behavior that enables return to mainstream education or readiness for employment. Emphasis is placed on effective communication, impulse control and anger management. There is clarity around rules and responsibilities and the consequences for breaching them. An MCP Daily Update to staff and the Leadership Executive informs them of students for whom these consequences impact on their full or part attendance.

The pastoral support and educational program are facilitated through organization of students into teams of up to ten students, each team having a teacher and a welfare worker. The small group structure is a key component of the programme's success. The welfare worker deals initially with behavioral issues which arise in a classroom, escalating to the welfare co-ordinator, the programme Director or the educational psychologist as required. There does at times appear to be a lack of clarity around roles in this respect and therefore possible duplication of efforts. In particular, some staff believe that the Director is asked to deal with individual students when others should assume that responsibility. It is noted also that the welfare workers and welfare co-ordinator are generally not specifically qualified for this work, although they have undertaken regular inservice training. While passionate, experienced and committed, they do not necessarily have the full range of skills required for these roles which can be confronting at times. It is suggested that the roles of the welfare workers, Welfare Coordinator and Partnerships and Promotions Officer be reviewed with a view to identifying desired skills, experience and responsibilities. Two part time educational psychologists provide professional support as required.

Modern, high quality and clean facilities provide students with a sense of worth. It is impressive that the students take great pride in their surrounds and there is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. The learning environment is peaceful and calm and includes a cafeteria, extensive grounds and a hobby farm.

The *True Colours* celebration at the end of each year, supported in part by fundraising by staff and MCP friends, makes a positive contribution to the self esteem of students as do individual acknowledgements on a regular basis.

Most students in the focus group were open about the challenges they had faced in life which have brought them to MCP and identified strongly with the program and the staff. Students who adapt to the programme remain for periods of time between one and five years, depending on their capacity to transition to employment, training or back to a mainstream school. This situation is similar to that at Borinya. DOXA initially attempted to return students after a short period of intense tuition, but has changed its approach following experience and reflecting on the impact on students, teachers and the dynamics of the group; however, it still views itself as a transitional school where most students would remain for one to two years only. At all three schools, support is given to students during the transition process if and when it occurs. While the stated intention of MCP is to transition students back into mainstream schooling and while this has occurred successfully for a small number of students, anecdotally this has not been the case in most circumstances, although the provision of an effective VCAL program has enabled another viable pathway for some students. MCP staff hold reservations about transition back to mainstream schooling is feasible for most of their students. Secondary college staff expressed concern at the difficulty most students found with the process of readjustment after having the individualized care and support provided at MCP. Students themselves were split between those who wished to see out their secondary education at MCP and those who wished to return to the mainstream. Currently, the decision to attempt transition is activated predominantly by the student. It may be possible for MCP staff to be more proactive in this process. It is accepted however, that for a small number of students this is not a realistic expectation. Although there is a protocol around student transfer from MCP to Knight Street or Year 9 Programme, this does not address return to other mainstream schools, although it is assumed a similar process would apply. It would also be of benefit to have clearer expectations around the timing of return to the mainstream and the necessary preconditions for this to occur. In addition, it is necessary to ensure this protocol is always followed.

The MCP program supports the physical wellbeing of students through facilitation of and transport to medical, dental and other appointments. Regular information and education sessions on health and wellbeing are also conducted. In addition, it provides them with healthy breakfast, morning tea and lunch daily and utilizes meal times to reinforce social skills and appropriate behaviours. It is noted that while Borinya in Wangaratta and DOXA in Bendigo also provide meals, these are considerably simpler and prepared by teachers and aides rather than by dedicated hospitality staff. The current arrangements for transporting students in staff or school cars and dealing with students on an individual basis will need to be reviewed and possibly revised following the implementation of Ministerial Order No 870 Child Safe Standards at Notre Dame.

An individual learning plan (ILP) is developed for each student each term; a meeting is held with parents or carers at the end of term to evaluate progress and develop SMART goals for the coming term, the student not being allowed to return unless this process is completed. The ILPs focus heavily on behavioural outcomes. It is suggested that the evaluation section of the ILP could be expanded upon to provide more detailed records of progress. At present, only a tick or cross for each goal indicates success. While the ILP is available to students and parents, it may be that a detailed evaluation would be for school use only.

Attendance is often used as an indicator of overall student engagement in education. There was no overall attendance figure available for MCP students in 2015. However, from 1 February to 3 May 2016, the average attendance was 64%. While this may appear low, it compares favourably with the 2015 figures for Borinya (58%) and DOXA (61%). It should be noted that any regular attendance is a milestone for some students and in many cases lower levels of attendance have been negotiated with individual students. The level of attendance is one goal identified in each student's ILP.

While there is no formal Religious Education or regular prayer life for MCP students, they participate as appropriate in the opening Mass and other major events with the rest of the college or at times the rest of the Emmaus Campus. Staff are very conscious that they are engaged in the fundamental work of Christianity, continuing the work of Catherine McAuley and Marcellin Champagnat, and prayer is an integral part of staff gatherings. Based on the findings of the Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project, there is discussion at the leadership level around broadening the Christian narrative at MCP as well as at the rest of Notre Dame.

Recommendation #1.1

That greater clarity be developed around the responsibilities of individual staff members when dealing with issues arising from inappropriate student behaviour.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

Peter C Una F Selina D

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

Recommendation #1.2

That the roles of the Curriculum Co-ordinator, Welfare Coordinator and Partnerships and Promotions Officer be reviewed with a view to identifying desired skills, experience and responsibilities.

Implementation Plan:**Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:**

John C

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of 2017

.....

Recommendation #1.3

That policy and documentation be expanded to include the expected length of stay for students at MCP and the necessary preconditions for them to move back to mainstream schooling.

Implementation Plan:**Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:**

Peter C Una F Selina DkATH s

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

Recommendation #1.4

That arrangements for dealing with students on an individual basis, in particular providing transport in private cars, are reviewed and revised in accordance with Ministerial Order No 870 Child Safe Standards as implemented at Notre Dame.

Implementation Plan:**Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:**

Peter C Emma R Karen F

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Term 1, 2017

.....

Recommendation #1.5

That Individual Learning Plans be expanded to include more detail on educational goals and specific information on progress towards achievement of goals.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

Peter C Kath S Kris W

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

Recommendation #1.6

That the findings of the ECSIP project be extended to MCP, particularly in the adoption of the Christian narrative by all staff.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

Peter C Les B Nathan Carroll John C

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

2. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

According to the Notre Dame College website, the McAuley Champagnat Programme *focuses on the holistic development of the students in an effort to gain the maximum education, wellbeing and training outcomes. We tailor educational programmes to meet the individual needs of each student. To do this we draw on a range of Victorian and National programmes including:*

- *the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)*
- *the Certificate in General Education for Adults (CGEA)*
- *Certificate II in Engineering*
- *Certificate II in Hair*

MCP also runs an elective programme with a range of options available to the students.

The focus at MCP is far more on pastoral outcomes than academic outcomes. While not denying the fundamental significance of student wellbeing, particularly for students with such complex needs and histories as those at MCP, maximizing academic potential is vital if students are to successfully make the transition to employment, training or back to a mainstream school. It is also necessary to have accurate measures of academic progress during the time students are at MCP to justify the ongoing existence of the program. Overall, MCP staff have not focused on educational standard as a priority or as a pre condition for return to mainstream education, reasoning that a successful transition is dependent on attendance, work ethic and behavior and that the mainstream school will provide educational support where needed. This is an optimistic view which is not borne out in practice. Schools do not have the resources to provide the necessary level of support and students will not successfully make the transition if they are out of their depth educationally. Some students themselves indicated significant concerns that they are not progressing at a reasonable rate and that they would be well behind other students if they were to return to mainstream education. A number were looking for greater challenge in the classroom.

While the general programme for each student is currently in principle tailored to their needs, there is potential working in small groups to be far more specific about the desired learning outcomes and progress towards their achievement for each student. It is noted that while many students have low levels of literacy and numeracy and accordingly high learning needs, others are reasonably competent and appear at times not to be challenged working in their teams where the whole team may sometimes be engaged in the same activity at the same pace. Research completed by the previous Director in 2010 indicated that 7% of MCP students had an IQ in the average range with a further 25% in the low average range. The remainder were below this.

Teams other than the VCAL team are designed around group dynamics rather than around educational levels. Each team contains students with a wide range of educational abilities, rendering the process of differentiation even more difficult than usual, even given the small class sizes. By contrast, DOXA operate three levels – junior, senior and VCAL. Grouping students according to educational level would possibly facilitate delivery of a more challenging, rigorous and engaging curriculum. It is possible that increased utilization of welfare workers as education aides would also increase the educational support available to individual students.

There is usually a common curriculum theme across the groups in each term e.g. *teenagers and the law* in term two, 2016; however, while there are extensive, excellent resources for a large number of topics, the specific topic outline is not documented and there appears to be significant variation in the content covered by each group, each at times developing curriculum independently based upon their own interests and abilities and the nature of the students in their team.

Clear topic outlines with learning intentions, resources, assessment, etc. were sighted in an individual team, but this does not appear to be the norm or an expectation and while the work of each teacher is generally made available to others, there is no expectation that it be utilized across all teams. The agreed approach is that topics and classroom experiences are selected by each teacher to engage the students in that particular team and that this potentially differs greatly between teams. However, it is arguable that there is as much variation in ability and interest within each team as between them and that the need for engagement does not necessarily mean that a common approach cannot be taken. The classroom experiences of students need to be more closely monitored, documented and aligned for consistency. This is particularly important as students move between groups at the end of the year and may move during the year in some circumstances. The recent introduction of 20 minutes silent reading in each team every morning is recognized as a step forward.

Currently students obtain either a full certificate or certificate of attainment through CGEA at the end of each year. MCP staff are required to present a training and assessment plan to their auspicing body annually. Staff at MCP and Borinya have been supported to map the CGEA on to VELs, but Borinya base their curriculum on VELs while MCP use CGEA. It is questionable whether the CGEA, a competency based and flexible qualification, is the appropriate framework on which to base a curriculum for students in the age range and with the level of skill at MCP. Some teachers also expressed concern about the consistency of expectations between teams in order to achieve a given outcome. With the introduction of the new Victorian Curriculum in 2017, it is timely to reconsider the basis on which courses are developed with the aim of better meeting the learning needs of each student and increasing the rigour and consistency of courses. This will support teachers in assessing the level of each student and moving them to the next level. It is desirable to develop a skills matrix based on the Victorian Curriculum which will facilitate targeted curriculum planning and monitoring the needs of each student. The Education Officer at Catholic Education Sandhurst is available to support the introduction of such an approach. Given the mapping exercise, it would still be possible for students to be awarded CGEA certificates if justified.

There is a need for a consistent approach to testing of students to monitor achievement levels and thus tailor individual learning goals for students. *Compass* testing has been introduced at the three similar settings in the Diocese, but results are only available for fewer than half the MCP students, possibly because of student movement and attendance, but also because not all staff have conducted the testing as agreed. On the positive side, the data which is available generally shows pleasing progress in literacy and numeracy. MCP relies on the Education Officer at the Catholic Education Office for interpretation of the data as teachers are not confident in doing this themselves, which is an inefficient system. The very small number of students who completed NAPLAN in 2013 and 2015 showed generally medium or high growth across all dimensions.

Teachers monitor achievement in Mathematics through *Maths Pathways*, with results indicating that growth for most students in the data (about half the student population) is greater than one year of learning per year, significantly greater than their prior growth. It is noted that most teachers have not advanced significantly through the online professional learning modules available to develop their understanding of the program. Further literacy and numeracy testing on a regular basis (e.g. PAT Maths and PAT English) is desirable in order to monitor student progress. Currently some teachers have developed individual means of tracking students while others are not tracking them at all. This makes common reporting of progress impossible and transfer of information difficult when students move between groups.

'Academic' classes currently commence at 9.15am and run until 12.30pm with a morning tea break. These focus primarily on literacy and numeracy. Under the current organization, students spend each afternoon in elective classes. These are based around student interest and staff interest and expertise. For most electives, there is no documented curriculum and the electives in general do not align to VELs or other educational frameworks. Their main purpose appears to be engagement of students; while they appear to do this successfully, it is arguable that they could achieve this aim while still retaining some academic rigour, as happens with the *Small Business* elective for example, or have less time devoted to them, possibly reducing the number of days per week they occur. This would also call into question whether electives should be taken by school officers as currently occurs. DOXA run a smaller elective program which aligns with VELs.

As indicated above, ILPs focus heavily on behavioural outcomes. While educational goals in literacy and numeracy are specified, these are very general and not readily measured. A skills matrix as suggested above and an agreed model of assessing progress would enable better tracking of academic progress on ILPs.

It is suggested that the role description of the Director be strengthened in respect of their responsibility for learning and teaching. While development of a more rigorous curriculum is the responsibility of the Director of MCP in partnership with the Curriculum Coordinator, extensive support is available from Education Officers at the Sandhurst Catholic Education Office, the Deputy Principal – Learning and Teaching, and Literacy and Numeracy Leaders at the College. Currently each Notre Dame Deputy Principal is at the Emmaus Campus for one half day per week. It is possible that the presence of a Deputy Principal may be more effective in a longer block less frequently, such as one week per term, to allow them to work in greater depth with MCP staff to effect change. Literacy and Numeracy Leaders from Knight Street have some involvement at MCP, but other learning leaders have no connection with the MCP campus. There is a good working relationship between the VCAL programmes at the two campuses.

Recommendation #2.1

That, in conjunction with the pastoral emphasis, a greater focus on learning and teaching with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy be adopted at MCP, led by the Director with support from the Deputy Principals and implemented by all staff. This should include:

- A review of the curriculum based on achievement of specific learning goals and both core and elective areas aligned with the new Victorian Curriculum.
- Consideration of the balance of time between mainstream academic curriculum and electives with a focus on using the available time to achieve more learning outcomes.
- Accessing the service provided by the Education Officer at Catholic Education Office Sandhurst to develop a literacy and numeracy skills matrix for MCP students which can be utilized to design, deliver and monitor the outcomes of their curriculum.
- Development of a more consistent approach to learning and teaching by the teaching teams while still addressing the individual learning goals of each student.
- Specification of clear achievable learning outcomes for each student in their ILP which are evaluated each term and considered when recommending return to mainstream education for students.
- Agreed assessment and recording of levels in literacy and numeracy regularly undertaken with staff held accountable for its completion, so that it is readily possible to evaluate progress made by each student while at MCP.

Implementation Plan:**Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:**

Kris W Kath S Peter C Collette C Patricia F

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

Recommendation #2.2

That the Deputy Principals and Literacy and Numeracy Leaders take a more active role in supporting achievement of the educational outcomes at MCP.

Implementation Plan:**Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:**

Kris W Kath S Peter C Collette C Patricia F Karen F

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

3. OUTCOMES

On the Notre Dame College website it is claimed that at MCP *we are witnessing extraordinary success in seeing youth transform their lives from hopelessness to a future full of potential*. While there are numerous positive anecdotal stories of successful student outcomes from MCP, there is very little objective data available to support a statistical rate of success and significant variation in the figures estimated by key personnel. While it is acknowledged that the very nature of the students who attend MCP makes following their pathways after they leave the school challenging, developing a practice of adding notes to a data base as staff encounter former students would be most worthwhile. In particular, it should be possible to record the immediate destinations of students as they leave, and progress and outcomes of those who transfer to mainstream schooling following their time at MCP. This would give Notre Dame concrete evidence to support the impact they have on young people who attend the programme and thereby attract and retain support for it.

Graduate pathways for 18 students who exited between the end of 2012 and September 2015 were provided, but this is only a small fraction of the student population over this time. Documentation was provided for student outcomes related to CGEA achievement and other pathways accessed in 2014 but not earlier or for 2015. Some case studies of successful students from 2014 and a heartwarming story from the tenth anniversary celebrations of a student whose life was turned around at MCP were included in documentation. Many more *success stories* of return to other schools, work placements or following a career pathway can be found in the annual magazine. This does not however represent systematic collection of data. The above forms of documentation should be maintained and expanded, with a decision taken on the information to be collected and the form in which it will be documented and displayed. The college preference is that such data collection be conducted via *Synergetic* if that is possible.

Recommendation #3.1

That the level attained at MCP and both immediate and long term future pathways of MCP students be tracked and recorded.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

Peter C Karen F Jeff Chmiel Susan S

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

4. FINANCIAL OPERATION

Recurrent funding for MCP has always fallen far short of its operating expenses. The major reason for this is the nature of the programme requires high staff to student ratios, while its students are funded under the same formula as those in mainstream education where the ratios are much lower. The College is concerned that this situation is not sustainable long term.

Specifically, the 2016 budget for MCP predicts a shortfall of approximately \$550,000, after taking into account both State and Federal recurrent funding and income from private sources. This does not take into account services provided by the Notre Dame College infrastructure including maintenance, information technology, accounting, resources and leadership team support. The shortfall is met by the overall budget of Notre Dame College, raising questions of justice to the students in mainstream pathways at the college. In the earlier years of MCP, additional financial support was provided through the Diocese of Sandhurst, but this was never formalized and has now been discontinued. Changes to staffing in 2017 will reduce the deficit to approximately \$350,000.

Similar alternative settings in Victoria which operate as standalone educational facilities, including Borinya and DOXA in the Sandhurst Diocese, are funded by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria on the basis of 'topping up' other sources of income, including recurrent grants, private income and funding for special needs, to in excess of \$26,000 per student per annum. This CECV funding is indexed annually and based on numbers at the August census. If MCP were funded on the same basis, assuming 50 students, it would receive approximately an additional \$300,000 ($\$26,000 \times 50 = \$1,011,000$) significantly reducing the current shortfall. It would appear that MCP is financially disadvantaged through being established as a campus of Notre Dame College. The Sandhurst Diocese has indicated a willingness to engage in conversation around the option of MCP moving to independence of Notre Dame College, with Notre Dame continuing to provide support as a major benefactor. Any such move should be seen in the light of the long tradition of Catholic leaders such as Catherine McAuley growing new foundations from existing ones before supporting them to become independent, a process also being used in the establishment of new secondary schools in Victoria. It has also been suggested that MCP approach the independent State Member of the Legislative Assembly for Shepparton, Suzanna Sheed, and the Federal Member for Murray Damian Drum for support, approach the Marist Brothers and explore the possibility of partnership with DOXA which operates a similar school in Bendigo, although it would appear that the DOXA organization does not make a significant financial contribution to the school.

The *MySchool* website indicates that recurrent income for students at Borinya in 2015 was \$28,585 per capita while at DOXA it was \$31,703, consistent with the discussion in the previous paragraph. For MCP in 2016, assuming an enrolment of 50 students, the budget indicates a required income of \$31,120 per student, which is consistent with the other two settings although does not take into account the considerable additional support provided by Notre Dame College.

As is the case in mainstream schools, MCP is funded on its student numbers at the February census. Students who transfer to MCP from other schools in the course of the year do not attract this funding. MCP invoices these schools to ensure it receives the appropriate proportion of recurrent funding but does not receive any relevant special needs funding as the former schools argue that this has already been allocated to programs at their schools. There appears to be some confusion about this at the schools who are sending students to MCP and it is perhaps worth reintroduction of this discussion.

It is noted that operational spending in 2015 was the lowest in 5 years and at \$77,651 was under the budgeted figure of \$84,000. Nevertheless, there appear to be some areas at MCP where operational savings could be made; for example, a bus is automatically hired on a daily basis when it is only used in the afternoons and not necessarily every day. The amount spent of groceries was noted by some to be relatively high, given that much is donated. Others queried the need for the large number of excursions undertaken. Although savings on operational factors are relatively insignificant when compared with the overall deficit, a regular audit is an effective way of ensuring spending is targeted and appropriate.

Recommendation #4.1

That discussions are initiated with the Diocese of Sandhurst to investigate whether it is possible for MCP students to be funded in the same way as those at independent alternative settings and if not, if it is feasible for MCP to become a standalone educational facility.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

John C Peter C

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

Recommendation #4.2

That discussions are initiated with the schools which send students to MCP in an endeavor to ensure transfer of all funds associated with those students to MCP based on the proportion of the transfer year they spend at MCP.

Implementation Plan:**Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:**

Peter C John C David Smyth

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Sem 1, 2017

.....

Recommendation #4.3

That operational spending at MCP be audited for inefficiencies and possible savings.

Implementation Plan:**Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:**

Peter C John C David Smyth

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

Annually

.....

5. DOCUMENTATION, POLICIES AND PROCESSES

In general terms, the McAuley Champagnat programme follows the policies, procedures and administrative conventions of the rest of Notre Dame College, but it is necessary for it to have an additional set of requirements pertinent to its own unique situation. There has been some development and improvement in this area in recent times, but a lack of clarity still exists in some areas. It is suggested by some that there is a need for more measured planning with standardized practice, clear communication and follow through, avoiding ad hoc decisions which are not shared with all key stakeholders.

Given the transient population, it is particularly necessary to have accurate and updated enrolment and attendance data. This has not been a strength at MCP with at times considerable variation in figures given for enrolment. While some data is available on each student, systematic recording of agreed variables is inconsistent. Some of this documentation has been initiated, but it is incomplete. There is a lack of clarity around when students with extended absences are finally removed from the enrolment base.

There is a particular need for a list of current students and their details which is readily accessible both to MCP staff and to the Leadership Executive. Cumulative documentation was provided for new enrolments and exits in 2013 but not for 2014 or 2015. This data should be maintained and available to all, preferably via *Synergetic* if possible. Where necessary, relevant staff should be trained to store and retrieve data and present it in a way which is easily interpreted.

The processes around enrolment and information gathering about the new student have recently been revised, streamlined and strengthened. Every student meets with the Director and educational psychologist as part of their induction so staff can create tailored strategies to suit the individual and their particular needs. It was considered by some of those interviewed that in the past students were admitted to the programme without sufficient information being available. Some staff expressed concern that at times MCP admitted students whose needs could not be supported as they were too far along the continuum of violence, drug use, and mental health issues. While there is a recently revised documented protocol on transfer to and from MCP and the other two Notre Dame Campuses, and clearly documented enrolment procedures for students from other settings, concern was expressed by some staff that these are not always followed, steps are omitted and not all key personnel included in the conversation. Currently transition back to the mainstream is based on work ethic, attendance and behavior but as indicated earlier, an element of educational achievement should also be included and the criteria for transition made explicit.

There are competing views on the time it should take to enroll a student. The documented process is rigorous and time consuming and if followed will take some weeks; accordingly there are times when MCP staff and staff from the school which is requesting a place find this frustrating and push to accelerate the process. It is essential that each step of the agreed processes be followed despite this pressure and the understandable desire to commence working with the vulnerable student as early as possible.

A further concern has been that at times decisions have been made regarding an individual student without consultation and adequate communication with all staff members who should be involved. Anecdotally, agreed processes are not always followed e.g. in the case of an MCP student accessing VCE classes at Knight Street. This has led to unnecessary confusion and resentment at times. It would seem that the urgency to address a particular situation sometimes overrides the need to complete the necessary steps.

A significant improvement in documentation from the educational psychologists has been noted with the employment of the current staff. Practices around referral of students to the educational psychologists have been tightened in recent times.

There appears at times to be some confusion around who is responsible for some processes or activities among the support staff. It is suggested that more work is required on clarity of individual roles and accountability of staff.

Recommendation #5.1

That a consistent process and format be adopted for recording and publication of MCP data and tracking of students, including student entry and exit, attendance, academic progress and pathways.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

Peter C Karen F Jeff Chmiel Susan S

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

End of Term 1, 2017

.....

Recommendation #5.2

That role statements be reviewed and amended to ensure clarity of responsibilities and accountability.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

Peter C Karen F

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

Ongoing

.....

6. STAFFING AND CLASS STRUCTURE

For semester one 2016, the 47/53 students at MCP were organized into six teams of up to 10 students, each team having a teacher and a welfare worker. One of these teams is for VCAL students, most of whom are off campus on Wednesdays. For semester two, the number of teams has been reduced to five, with one less teacher. The current student enrolment at 10 August 2016 appears to be 47 students, but this figure changes frequently. The additional welfare worker will remain at MCP for the rest of 2016 and in future, four teams will operate. The Director is emphatic that both a teacher and a welfare worker are needed in each team, but is open to the possibility that the number of students in each team may increase. Observations suggest that this could be achieved without significant loss of ability to teach or manage the group.

By way of comparison, Borinya operates largely with two staff per class, while DOXA has one teacher per class with shared welfare staff. It is noted that at MCP the number of students actually present on a given day may be significantly fewer than the number enrolled and also that part of the welfare worker's role is to contact the family or carer of each absent student.

In addition, MCP staffing includes the Programme Director, Welfare Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator (who teaches one of the groups), 2 part-time Educational Psychologists (0.8 FTE in total), the Café Vincent Coordinator (0.8 FTE), Hairdressing trainer (0.2 FTE), Director's Personal Assistant (0.5 FTE), Partnerships and Promotions Officer (0.4 FTE), Receptionist (0.8 FTE). Assuming an enrolment of 50 students, the student to staff ratio in semester two 2016 is 3.0:1. In semester one 2017, assuming 44 students, two fewer welfare workers and one less teacher, it will be 3.4:1. This ratio is highly dependent on student numbers (e.g. with 48 students in semester one 2017, it would increase to 3.8:1). The Director conducts some elective classes and also covers for staff who are absent short term.

In addition to the staff detailed above, each of the four Notre Dame Deputy Principal is at Emmaus Campus including MCP for one half day per week, Faith and Mission trainees are there once a week, St Vincent De Paul provide a part time staff member in the kitchen and a number of volunteers also assist. Business support, ICT, facilities maintenance and cleaning are provided from Knight Street. All student stationery, learning equipment and books are provided by Notre Dame College. The above are not included in the calculations.

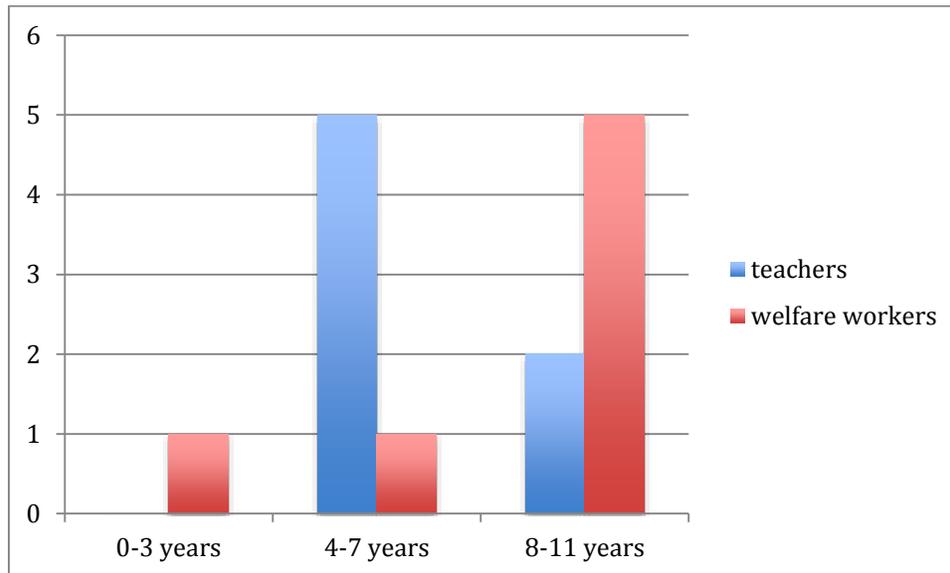
It was noted that at times some staff are underutilized e.g. staff from the VCAL team on the day when students are on work placement may have only one or two students remaining on campus, although they visit the students off campus regularly. They could be more fully utilized in support of other teams.

By comparison DOXA has 51 students working with the principal, 7 teachers (5.8 FTE), 4 wellbeing staff (3.6 FTE) and 3 administration staff (1.6 FTE). This is a ratio of 4.3:1. Borinya has 44 students with the principal (who does some teaching), 5 full time teachers, one part time teacher (0.4 FTE), 2 full time and 3 part time aides (1.4 FTE in total), wellbeing officer, one full time admin and one part time admin (0.2 FTE). This is a ratio of 3.7:1. Anecdotally, Berry Street facility in Shepparton has a student to staff ratio of 3.5:1.

| | MCP (2017) Assuming 44 students | DOXA (2016) | Borinya (2016) | Berry Street (2016) |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Students per staff member | 3.4 | 4.3 | 3.7 | 3.5 |

It is recognized that these numbers do not give the complete picture as the balance of qualified staff and the nature of the roles varies between the schools. It is noted also that at DOXA and Borinya meals are prepared by teachers and welfare workers rather than dedicated staff. The three facilities have approximately the same administration support (1.3 FTE at MCP compared with 1.6 at DOXA and 1.2 at Borinya) although the other two have no equivalent to the Partnerships and Promotions Officer at MCP. However, overall, on the basis of these comparisons and given the support from Knight Street, it would appear that MCP could possibly be effectively run with fewer staff; if there is a commitment to two staff for each team, the need for other roles of other staff associated with the programme should be reviewed and carefully considered or alternatively, the overall staffing model should be re-evaluated. Obviously a reduction in staff numbers would assist to address the financial concerns referred to in section 4.

The chart below represents the length of time teachers (including the Director) and welfare workers (including the Welfare Coordinator) have been at MCP.



It can be seen that there has been relatively little staff turnover in the past 11 years. While there can be great advantages in retention of experienced staff, this can also hinder development and the evolution of new ideas. Ideally there should be a balance between retaining a body of staff who have developed expertise in this setting and inducting new staff with fresh approaches. Extended periods in the one setting can also negatively impact on the career progression of staff, especially when this is not a mainstream school. One advantage of MCP as a campus of Notre Dame is the potential to move staff in and out of the program in a strategic manner.

Recommendation #6.1

That from 2017 onwards, the MCP class structure consist of 4 teams of up to 11 students each, with the movement from 10 to 11 taking place incrementally and carefully monitored for impact.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

Peter C John C

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

Start of 2017



Recommendation #6.2

That the staffing structure for MCP be reviewed and the need for each role evaluated, particularly in the light of any other changes which may be made as a result of this review.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

Peter C John C Karen F

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

Annually (and this recommendation is also related to Recommendations 1.2 and 5.2)



Recommendation #6.3

That consideration be given to rotation of staff between MCP and the other Notre Dame campuses to continue to invigorate the program and support the career progression of staff.

Implementation Plan:

Responsible for leading the implementation of this recommendation:

John C Peter C (plus Leadership Executive)

Timeframe for having the recommendation implemented:

Annually



7. PARTNERSHIPS

MCP partners with numerous Indigenous, community and mental health organisations to assist with student health and wellbeing and provide financial support, resources and personnel to facilitate continuation of the programme.

MCP is affirming of indigenous culture, utilizing appropriate celebrations and acknowledgements. According to MCP publications, *Reconciliation is a natural part of everyday life at MCP which results in students developing a strong sense of identity and pride in their culture and family heritage.* Yorta Yorta and Bangerang Aboriginal Elders and community members are counted in the MCP family. A number of indigenous staff provide good role models for students and valuable links with the indigenous community. Opening the Doors Foundation makes financial support available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative is a source of links for students and access to youth and health programs.

Café Vincent, the commercial kitchen and restaurant at MCP, is strongly supported by the Shepparton St Vincent De Paul group and Shepparton Foodshare through provision of staffing and food, not only to make nutritious meals available for students and staff but also to teach the fundamentals of cooking and food preparation.

Another key supporter of MCP is the Salvation Army's Brayton Youth and Family Services which made available the host site for MCP at its inception and continues to arrange for emergency accommodation and mental health care for students. Other partners provide free medical and dental care, food, work experience for students and other forms of support. Of particular note are the many individuals who volunteer their time on a regular basis to assist in a variety of roles at MCP including mentoring of students.

MCP is strongly endorsed by the local Parish and its Parish Priest who is the Canonical Administrator of Notre Dame College. It has also received unequivocal support from previous Parish Priests. It is seen as a fundamental work of Christianity and *what Catholic education should be all about.* The perceptions of the Parish Priest and the Board Chair are that it is successful in its aims and has excellent outcomes, and is worthy of ongoing support from the College. They expressed concerns about the potential impact of changing the current model under which it operates. They do not believe that parents of mainstream students have any concerns about their fees being used to support MCP and believe that Knight St benefits from the presence of MCP as mainstream teachers do not have to devote time to students who require intensive support.

A key feature of the McAuley Champagnat Programme is the strong partnership established with parents and carers. Families and carers are involved in decision making, planning for students and celebrating success. Staff communicate regularly with family units to promote the best possible outcomes for students. In this way, staff monitor home issues which may impact upon their school experience.

Student Welfare and Discipline meetings are held with students and parents or carers when required to discuss behavioural issues that are preventing the student making progress, and suitable consequences and ways forward are also determined. Families are invited to MCP for activities and shared lunch at the end of each term on Family Day.

There is some sharing of activities and resources with the mainstream year 9 campus which is adjacent to the MCP site.

The Director of the MCP program meets with the principals of the other two similar settings in the Diocese approximately three times per year. Their staff also share professional learning at least annually, the VCAL staff from the three schools work together and joint camps and excursions are regularly held.

The Catholic Education Office Sandhurst Diocese has also supported the program since its inception with resources and financial assistance at times.

These are appropriate and fruitful partnerships which should be maintained and enhanced and where the opportunity arises, extended.