



## End of Year Principal Report

(As presented at 2025 ACM)

We commenced 2025 having concluded the school review process, known as the QCESR in 2024. This provided us a deep and honest look at who we are and where we're going. This, together with a range of evidence, including the 2022 School Climate Survey, the 2023 Compliance Review and Governance requirements, our Annual Student Data Analysis, Annual Curriculum Planning, and our Annual School Improvement processes, has shaped our new School Strategic Plan.

Our mission has always been to foster the total development of each individual within a loving community that is wholly committed to the Catholic faith, principles, and ideals lived daily through the Mercy Values

Our vision is to empower students to become courageous, faith-filled, compassionate, and helpful contributors to the community.

Tonight, I want to share how our strategic direction aligns with CECWA's Strategic Initiatives towards 2030 and how we are turning vision into action.

### *Catholic Identity — Faith*

At St Columba's, our Mercy Values are not just words; they are a lived expression of faith for every student and staff member. Through liturgical celebrations across all year levels, staff formation, and Christian service initiatives, we strengthen our Catholic identity and culture every day. Faith is seen, heard, and felt through prayer, service, and community.

### *Education — Wisdom*

We are committed to high-quality, consistent, and inclusive practices that respond to the diverse educational and well-being needs of all students. Every learner deserves the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Our key whole-school actions for the future include:

- A School-Wide Vision for Learning.
- Whole-school curriculum planning to ensure coherence and rigour.
- Evidence-based literacy practices implemented consistently across classrooms.

- The Berry Street Education Model (BSEM), supporting engagement and well-being.
- First Nations perspectives embedded in curriculum, pedagogy, and culture.

### *Community — Compassion & Peace*

We are intentional about nurturing strong, healthy relationships. Programs like URSTRONG equip students with the language and skills to manage friendships and resolve conflict kindly and respectfully. Clear, consistent communication procedures further strengthen trust and collaboration among staff, students, and families.

### *Stewardship — Respect*

Stewardship guides how we sustain growth and accountability. We are implementing well-being frameworks and Professional Learning Communities to build staff capacity, maintain high expectations, and ensure continuous improvement for every learner.

These strategic intents are not simply aspirations, they are actions we live out daily. Together, we are building a school where faith, wisdom, compassion, and respect shape every decision and every interaction.

### 2025 School Improvement Priorities — Progress Update

At the start of this year, I shared three School Improvement priorities for 2025:

1. Tailored liturgical celebrations for our youngest students.
2. Professional learning and teaching conversations—especially in Writing and Spelling.
3. Ongoing implementation of URSTRONG, alongside BSEM strategies such as trauma-informed teaching, body regulation techniques, and relationship-building practices.

### Our Progress

#### **Catholic Identity**

A pivotal step in our School Improvement Plan has been the introduction of tailored liturgical celebrations for our youngest students, recognising the importance of engaging them in the faith journey at an early age. While students in Years 3-6 have had the opportunity to attend Mass with the Parish once a term, our younger students previously did not but needed a personalised, developmentally appropriate way to connect with the Church.

These faith formation experiences not only an enriching experience for the children but also for their families, who attended in large numbers, reinforcing the partnership between home and school in nurturing faith. It's a significant moment of parent

formation, offering an opportunity for families to deepen their own understanding and actively participate in the spiritual education of their children.

We sincerely thank Fr Andrew We've all been blessed by his welcoming spirit, particularly the way he connects with children during his homilies and his gentle guiding presence amongst the community.

### **Learning and Teaching**

In 2025, we implemented Version 9 of the Western Australian Curriculum: English (P-10). We are committed to ongoing improvement annually for Literacy in our School Improvement Plan.

For Spelling, we updated our training on Promoting Literacy Development (PLD Diana Rigg) as this continues to be our consistent whole-school resource.

### **Reading Resources**

A heartfelt thank you to our P&F for their generosity in supporting our English programs this year.

They have supported an injection of reading resources for the students across the school with sets of whole class novels and extra books in the Library to encourage personalised and independent reading for Years 3-6 through the Lexile Program. In addition to funds provided in previous years to junior primary remaining funds have been provided to boost decodable texts, easy chapter books and Hi-Lo (high interest, low readability) for home readers in Pre Primary to Year 2.

### **Assessment Refresh**

With CEWA reducing its own mandated assessment requirements for 2025, we have reviewed our Assessment Schedule ready for a refresh in 2026. Notably Brightpaths for Writing has been reintroduced to collect regular School based data for Writing.

### **Berry Street Education**

As part of our ongoing commitment to trauma-informed education, staff have completed the final two modules of the Berry Street Education Model. Key themes explored included:

- Identifying micro-escalations and supporting students in self- and co-regulation;
- Building relationships through connection before correction and unconditional positive regard;
- Fostering resilience and academic stamina;

- Supporting students in understanding their identity and aspirations. Work is to continue also in this space for 2026.

## **URSTRONG**

We are now in our second year of implementing URSTRONG at St Columba's.

At St Columba's, we believe that speaking up when something doesn't feel right is an act of courage, not "snitching." When students say, "*I'm not okay with this,*" they stand up for themselves and show respect for themselves and for others.

Letting a peer know directly is the most effective way to manage mean-on-purpose behaviour. As URSTRONG teaches, the first and most important step is to tell the person who is being mean that their actions are not okay with you. This gives that person a chance to pause, reflect, and make things right. Our goal is a culture where mistakes are acknowledged and apologies are offered because that's how we grow together.

It also lays a very important foundation for if the mean on purpose behaviour continues and adult intervention is required. Without this important first step, well-meaning adults, can make the situation worse.

Thank you to staff.

After reflecting on this year, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to our staff for the incredible dedication and effort you have shown throughout our school improvement journey in 2025, all while continuing to uphold the excellence that defines St Columba's.

No two years in any role are ever the same, and coping with change whilst teaching up to 32 children can often feel like building a plane while flying it. I especially want to acknowledge Breanna Filocamo and Sarah Lombardo, who stepped into additional leadership responsibilities this year, joining Niall Kehoe, Leesa Vinciullo, and myself in driving key initiatives. I deeply appreciate the steep learning curve you embraced and your willingness to share your classroom expertise widely across our teaching team.

To all our staff, your resilience, creativity, and unwavering commitment have been nothing short of remarkable. Thank you for everything you do to make St Columba's a place of excellence and growth.

Well done on the past 38 weeks! As we enter the final two weeks of the year, may you take time to enjoy the rewards of your hard work, your current class, your colleagues, and the professional learning community you have helped to shape.

Your efforts cannot be acknowledged enough. Thank you for everything you do.

A few words for those staff leaving

Daniella Nardelli, joined our school in Term 2 in the capacity of part time PPW teacher, to fill the position vacated by Mrs Christine Williamson. Daniella, a highly regarded relief teacher, was on parental leave from her substantive position at Maria Goretti Redcliffe and we thank her immensely for her contribution to the students and other staff of the whole Pre Primary Team.

We thank Amy Holloway for the dedication and the care she has shown in her many roles, starting as an OSHC Educator and then moving into the school space as an Education Assistant in Pre-Primary and Kindy. Her warmth, patience, and commitment to supporting our youngest learners have made a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and staff. With hearts filled with love and gratitude, we farewell Amy to focus on her most important role as mum to her beloved son, Miles.

Matthew Hubbard completed eight of his 11 years in Catholic Education at St Columba's. We were glad to be able to support his journey teaching overseas this year. We are thrilled to hear that his time in London has been so enriching. Matt has always brought passion, joy, and care to his work here, and we thank him immensely for the lasting impact his presence has had on our school community.

Fr Andrew couldn't join us tonight but I wanted to make special mention as he is leaving our community. We've all been blessed by his welcoming spirit, particularly the way he connects with children during his homilies and embraces all families at community baptisms. His quieter, gentler side has been a source of comfort and peace whilst his fun side has always shone through with his jokes and singing and dancing at the Parish Karaoke night. We thank him for everything and wish him well in his next chapter at our Lady of the Rosary Parish in Doubleview. We look forward to welcoming our new Parish Priest, Fr Mark Payton.

#### Staff on Leave

Laura Dawson continues to be on parental leave for 2026.

#### Staffing Announcement

To that end I share our current staffing arrangements for 2026. These are as current at the time. We are not expecting any changes however if there are unexpected changes, you will be advised. Regarding EA Special Needs placements, these allocations reflect our starting point for the year. During Term 1, we will review transitions and make any necessary adjustments for Term 2 and subsequent terms.

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Kayleigh Owens to the role of Part Time Year 3 Teacher at St Columba's School, commencing in January 2026. Kayleigh holds a Professional Masters in Primary Education from Hibernia College, Dublin, graduating in 2023. She brings a diverse range of teaching experience, having held short-term contracts and worked as a relief teacher in schools across Sydney and currently

Darwin. Prior to relocating to Australia, Kayleigh taught Year 5 students at St Mary's, an all-girls' school in Cork, Ireland. She has a passion for STEM education and is dedicated to supporting students with special needs. We look forward to welcoming Kayleigh to our school community and to Western Australia.

We are also pleased to announce that Mrs Siobhan Budrovich has been appointed to work alongside Megan Swalski as Pre Primary Teachers for 2026. Siobhan, currently one of our valued relief teachers in the Early Childhood Education area, will be joining us in an official capacity. We warmly welcome Siobhan and look forward to the contributions she will bring to our team. Megan will continue her excellent work in Pre Primary, building on the strong foundation she has established in her first year at St Columba's.

For those on our CSAC & P&F in 2025 I want to express my thanks to you all. Your time, energy, and commitment to St Columba's School make a difference.

You give generously of your time, often behind the scenes, balancing work, family, and other responsibilities all to support our students, staff, and the school's vision. Whether it's through strategic planning, fundraising, uniforms, buildings, financial management, or simply being a sounding board, your contributions help shape the experience of every child who walks through our gates.

To those who are finishing their time on the Council, P&F and Pastoral Care Team this year, Stephanie (CSAC), Davina, Nikki, Courtney, Sarah (P&F) and Philomena (Pastoral Care): thank you. Your legacy is woven into the fabric of our school. You've helped us grow, guided us through challenges, and celebrated our successes.

We farewell you with sincere appreciation and warm wishes for what comes next.

To those parents continuing on our CSAC, P&F and Pastoral Care Team we look forward to working alongside you as we continue to build a school that reflects our Mercy Values. On behalf of the staff, students, and wider school community, thank you for your service, your partnership, and your heart.

In closing, I want to thank our students, who bring energy and courage; our staff, whose expertise and care make the difference every day; our families and our whole community for your ongoing support.

Together, we are faithfully living our mission and moving with purpose towards 2026 and beyond, building a school where faith, wisdom, compassion, respect and peace are not only taught but lived.

In gratitude,

Gina Burns.