



CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
MELBOURNE

Horizons
of Hope

FOUNDATION STATEMENT:

Curriculum

in a Catholic School

What is Curriculum?

According to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2015), the school curriculum is a statement of the purpose of schooling. It defines what it is that all students have the opportunity to learn as a result of their schooling, set out as a series of learning progressions. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills that are required by all students for lifelong learning, social development, and active and informed citizenship.

'Curriculum' encompasses intended, enacted, experienced, assessed and achieved elements. Each of these elements is responsive (Queensland Government, Department of Education and Training 2009) to the others providing students with multiple opportunities for enriched and diverse learning pathways. All learners are entitled to a quality curriculum, enabled by formal curriculum frameworks.

Curriculum design meaningfully and purposefully interprets formal curricula to suit the learner and their local context. The learning community in a Catholic school is given the opportunity to critically engage in a dialogue with the tradition and the world, while making sense of and taking control of their lives.



Stewardship

Stewardship means leadership. Each tree is the leader of their own season – winter, summer and spring. Summer – positive, bright, strong leader. Winter – makes it through difficult times. Spring – new, inexperienced but calm leader. (Martina, Issac and Aaron, Year 9)

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A key aspect of curriculum design in a Catholic school is to challenge learners to explore and consider deep questions, and big ideas.

How is Curriculum enacted in a Catholic school?

Curriculum in a Catholic school is illuminated by Catholic faith with the formation of, and reverence for the learner at its centre. Learning experiences are designed to help learners develop their knowledge, skills and understandings in all learning areas. It is within this context that all learners are entitled to access a quality curriculum where they have a feeling of connectedness and belonging, of being known and valued, and listened to.

In a Catholic school, curriculum is enriched by the values, beliefs, perspectives and experiences of each member of the learning community when they engage actively with Catholic understandings of the human person. This orientation towards the person means that the process of curriculum design is shared with students, creating within them a sense of ownership and self-efficacy as learners. The learning community fosters the conditions for students to have a voice in the designing process, allowing them to make decisions about what they need to know and when.

Curriculum in a Catholic school responds to the needs of the local community. It is through a meaningful and purposeful interpretation of formal curriculum that educators can respond to the learning narrative of their students. At their best, educators have a strong knowledge of the curriculum, a clear understanding of the pedagogical choices that will ensure learning is effective for each student, and closely monitor student progress against curriculum achievement standards. The learning community works together to search and make clear the connections between the curriculum, the world of the learner and the Catholic tradition.

A key aspect of curriculum design in a Catholic school is to challenge learners to explore and consider deep questions, and big ideas. These questions centre around key issues, enabling learners to interpret and make meaning of their lives, the world and their social contexts as well as their religious traditions, responding with openness and empathy to others. This integration of life, culture and faith, in today's globalised context is understood to be at the heart of the meaning-making process.

In designing and enacting a curriculum grounded in Catholic beliefs and values, there are a number of key elements to consider.



Learning Narratives

Learners are at the centre of all curriculum design within the learning community, where everyone's story is embraced. Teaching is shaped by the individual backgrounds and histories; and by learners' unique talents and needs. Educators know their learners and work to identify and uncover different interpretations on issues within the worlds of the learners, and use these as 'engines' to drive the design of learning experiences.

Learners develop and grow in their core skills and knowledge and are inspired by a love for learning throughout their lives. Curriculum design in a Catholic school is therefore designed not only for the formal arrangements which lead to successful learning, 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.

Standards

It is through a meaningful and purposeful interpretation of formal curricula that the learning community can respond to the needs of the learner. The Australian Curriculum – through the lens of the Victorian Curriculum, the RE Curriculum Framework (Catholic Education Melbourne 2016), and other frameworks – provides the learning community with an informed understanding of the curriculum content that should be taught and the achievement standards learners should attain as they progress through school. The learning community works



together to search and make clear the connections between what is relevant to their world and the Catholic tradition while remaining accountable to the curriculum standards. This means that learners emerge from a Catholic school with not just a mastery of core knowledge and skills, but also a worldview that is informed by Catholic beliefs and values.

... re-structure students' learning of curricular content (such as national curriculum goals or standards) in more challenging and engaging ways made possible by digital tools and resources. (Fullan & Langworthy 2014, p. 22)

Connectivity

Curriculum in a Catholic school enables learners to connect their learning across curriculum areas and between people and spaces. Curriculum design in a Catholic school positions learning as connected rather than as discrete, isolated elements. It connects big ideas, concepts and thinking across religious, social, cultural, linguistic, historical, political and ethical influences to ensure that learners

flourish within the contemporary context. Learning experiences are designed to enable students to explore issues, questions and problems in ways that are meaningful, strongly engaged with Catholic beliefs, and related to the real world. The learning community embraces technology that empowers learners to actively engage with knowledge and others, building new knowledge to inform how we live and interact in the world.

Pedagogy

Pedagogical expertise enables Catholic educators to shape a local curriculum that will maximise the growth of every learner. The pedagogical choices of educators honour students' critical and creative thinking within the curriculum – their search for truth, and their continuous imagining and reimagining of themselves and the world around them. Through a deep knowledge and a meaningful interpretation of formal curriculum, the learning

community in a Catholic school makes discerning pedagogical choices. Through these choices, the learning community seeks to develop deep learning, focusing not only on the key 21st century skills of collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity (Partnership for 21st Century Learning undated) and citizenship (Fullan & Langworthy 2013) but also on creating animated learners, inspired by the Gospel and led by the Holy Spirit to act for justice and the common good.

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Assessment

Assessment is an integral component of curriculum design in a Catholic school, whereby the unique dignity of each learner is respected through assessment opportunities that are relevant, timely and rigorous, aligned to the curriculum, and responsive to evidence of student achievement and growth. Learners grow in their identities, constantly shaping and reshaping themselves as their views and learning alter in dialogue with others and the Catholic tradition. They are partners in uncovering where they are at in their learning, their progress and where they need to go next along their learning continuum. All in the learning community work together to uncover the narrative of each learner and their progress and use this in the design of the curriculum.

Learning Progression

Curriculum design in a Catholic school embraces multiple entry points for learners, which enable them to work through the progression of learning at their own pace. Learners are supported to identify pathways that best meet their learning needs. They are supported to engage in a broad range of learning experiences both within and beyond the classroom.

Inclusivity

Catholic schools are committed to fostering a culture of inclusive practice. An inclusive curriculum is respectful and responsive to its community and the diversity of its learners. The learning community works together to design learning experiences that enable learners to experience a transformation, entering the world with a sense of hope, purpose and dignity.

Learning Partnerships

Living and learning creatively in communities helps everyone to understand what it means to be truly human within a Catholic worldview. Curriculum design in a Catholic school provides opportunities for the learning community to actively engage in collaborative, socially connected and relevant learning. With community partners, entrepreneurial educators design curriculum that moves learners beyond the boundaries of the traditional school. The design, at its best, engages families and local and global communities to support, extend and challenge learning.

Accountability

Curriculum design in a Catholic school is accountable in the first instance to its learners, ensuring all learners experience success. The design is mindful of the aspirations of families and the Church in designing meaningful encounters with the Catholic tradition. Schools use formal curriculum frameworks and are accountable to federal and state governments to ensure that the mandated knowledge and skills are being taught and learned.

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Aurora Borealis

The Aurora Borealis background was painted after observing the colours from numerous pictures of aurora on a canvas. We focused on the flowing motion of aurora to gain a dynamic effect in vibrant colours using a dry brush technique. The silhouette of trees and white stars were then added to the foreground.

[Prapakul, Year 5]



Why is Curriculum in a Catholic school important given the Vision and Context?

When the learning community encounters the learner with reverence, learning is viewed as a journey across the intellectual, physical, spiritual, social and emotional realms. In a Catholic school learners are animated to seek meaning and explore questions about the world around them. Helping students and teachers to 'put life together' meaningfully in the context of an ongoing engagement with Catholic faith is the privilege of Catholic educators and the great contribution they make to the learning of their students.

RESPONDING TO THE HORIZON OF HOPE VISION

Honouring sacred dignity

Each school recognises the sacred dignity of each person and responds to it through the design of a curriculum which demonstrates the understanding, valuing and knowing of each learner in the community.

Learning together

Curriculum in a Catholic school reflects a Catholic understanding of the human person which recognises that humans are relational beings, as people in community.

Ensuring the highest standards through evidence

Curriculum in a Catholic school is personalised, differentiated and scaffolded using the best data available to ensure that each learner maximises their progress across a range of learning areas and appreciates their talents and worth.

Searching for beauty and truth

Curriculum in a Catholic school provides opportunities for students to develop a great sense of curiosity and wonder about the world, to search for beauty and truth, to critique, inquire, and re-imagine themselves and the world and their place within it.



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RESPONDING TO THE HORIZON OF HOPE CONTEXT

Secularisation

Within an increasingly secular context, curriculum in a Catholic school demands that the integration of faith, life and culture becomes more intentional and specific. In a secularised environment, curriculum in a Catholic school explicitly engages students with the Catholic tradition in ways that are meaningful and life-giving.

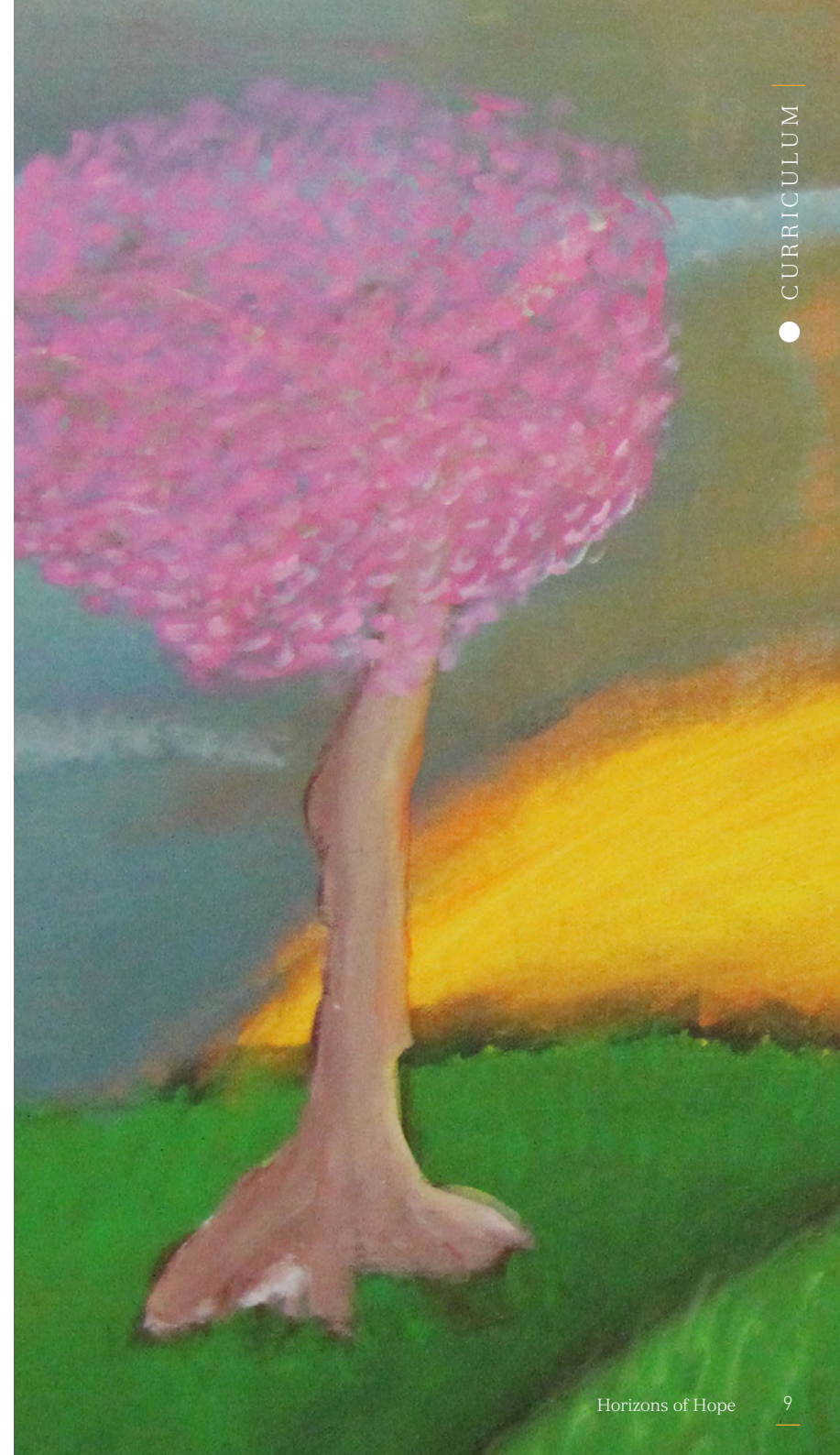
Globalisation

Curriculum in a Catholic school equips our learners for a globalising, changing world. The digital revolution is transforming the way children and young people play, access information, communicate with each other and learn across conventional boundaries. Curriculum in a Catholic school connects people, places, and disciplines to develop creative problem-solvers who are culturally aware, flexible and versatile in new environments.

Pluralisation

Diversity and difference characterise the modern world, and curriculum in a Catholic school befriends this difference to deepen understandings of self, others, God and the whole of creation. Curriculum in a Catholic school enables students to become aware of, and embrace, the plural voices in society and among the students. It draws deeply from the treasures of the Catholic tradition within this diversity, offering direction, meaning and supporting students to grow in religious self-understanding.

In a Catholic school learners are animated to seek meaning and explore questions about the world around them.



Resources

What resources are available to support Curriculum in a Catholic school?

- Curriculum Renewal in a Catholic School – Design elements resources (Catholic Education Melbourne 2015)
 - A series of resources to assist Catholic educators in designing holistic curriculum in Catholic schools.
- AusVELS in Catholic Schools portal (Catholic Education Melbourne 2016)
 - A portal for all things about curriculum integration, including resources, communications and examples of practice.
- Navigating the Intersections project
 - A professional learning inquiry which focuses on learning design in a Catholic context.
- Science – Enabling Learners Strategy (Catholic Education Office Melbourne 2014)
 - An outline of the directions and support for science education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.
- Languages – Finding your Voice Strategy (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd 2014)
 - An outline of the directions and support for languages education in Victorian Catholic schools.
- Education for Sustainability in the Archdiocese of Melbourne (Catholic Education Office Melbourne 2013)
 - A resource document for curriculum planning in sustainability, spirituality and the Catholic Faith tradition.
- Learning Hermeneutically Indicators (Catholic Education Office Melbourne 2012)
 - A resource document which assists Catholic educators to unpack what it means to learn hermeneutically.

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Stewardship
Martina, Issac, Aaron, Year 9
Catholic Regional College, Caroline Springs



Aurora Borealis
Prapakul, Year 5
St Andrew's Primary School,
Clayton South



What heaven looks like
Matthew, Year 1/2
St Anthony's Primary School,
Alphington

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