



Strong Catholic Identity

Position Statement

A Statement on the Position of BCE in Strengthening Catholic Identity

Purpose

Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) contributes to the Church's educational ministry animated by a Catholic world-view of the individual and community centred on the human person and the Gospel vision of Jesus Christ.

The living expression of this world-view shapes the Catholic identity of our schools and offices. In the midst of a rapidly changing cultural, ecclesial and educational landscape, BCE is committed to ensuring a vital and tangible Catholic identity is reflected across every aspect of our system.

The purpose of this Position Statement is to outline the strategic position embraced by BCE for the strengthening of its Catholic identity into the future.

Brisbane Catholic Education defines Catholic identity as the way in which the Gospel of Jesus is given living expression throughout each school and office community. A contemporary Catholic Identity is borne of the encounter between faith, life and culture. It deeply permeates structures, processes, relationships and the learning and teaching context in a way that offers all students lifelong meaning and purpose.

Position

BCE adopts a re-contextualised understanding of Catholic Identity.

This is defined by engagement with secular and pluralist contexts and articulation of a holistic Catholic identity within those contexts. The two key drivers in re-contextualisation are dialogue with plurality and a symbolic understanding of religion. (Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2010).

The re-contextualist position ensures that the Catholic Christian tradition is clearly visible in the contemporary context, fusing the old with the new.

This engagement echoes the call and ministry of Pope Francis: that as Brisbane Catholic Education we understand the changing realities of our world and respond to the multi-cultural and multi-religious dimensions of the society in which we find ourselves (CCE April 7 2014).

Our schools prepare our students for life in a contemporary society: a life that is able to make meaning and shape purpose through the lens of a Catholic worldview which re-interprets Catholic faith in contemporary times. This re-contextualising perspective underpins, permeates and animates every aspect of the vision and practice, life and work of Brisbane Catholic Education.

In accordance with this position, all facets of life in the school and office are Christ-centred, student focussed communities of learning that nurture and are animated by:

- ***A culture of dialogue:***
Choosing to explicitly emphasise our Catholic inspiration in authentic dialogue with other world-views in the broader culture.
- ***A contemporary theology of mission:***
Understanding that we are part of the wider "participation in God's existence in the world." This is a "single but complex reality," of proclamation and witness; commitment to justice, reconciliation and peace and the integrity of creation.
- ***A post-critical belief system:***
Moving beyond relativism and literalism to embrace symbolic religious imagination and critical thinking in a continuous re-interpretation of faith.

Each BCE School and Office community will re-new focus on the following areas:
Mission; Formation; Curriculum; Culture.



Scope

This Position Statement applies to all in Brisbane Catholic Education.

Each school and office community will use this position statement to frame goals and initiatives in their strategic planning with alignment and a clear line of sight between the overall system perspective and the unique context and needs of the school.

Goals

- That a re-contextualist perspective permeates all structures, processes, learning and teaching initiatives in school and office communities.
- That all BCE leaders are formed to animate a Catholic world-view.
- That a contemporary Catholic world-view is identifiable in learning and teaching, in the formation of staff and students, in the culture of all communities and in the articulation and lived-out mission of Brisbane Catholic Education.
- That the rich diversity of Catholic expression in our school communities is sustained and supported in ways that invite innovative and creative engagement.

- Bevans, S. (2009). The Mission has a Church, the Mission has ministers. In *Compass* (3) 1-14.
- D'Orsa, J. & D'Orsa, T. (2013). *Leading for mission: Integrating life, culture and faith in Catholic education*. Mulgrave: Vaughan Publishing.
- Groome, T. (2002). *What makes us Catholic?* San Francisco: Harper.
- Pollefeyt, D., & Bouwens, J., Framing the identity of Catholic schools. Empirical methodology for quantitative research of the Catholic identity of an education institute, *International Studies in Catholic Education* 2-2 (2010) 193-211.
- The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (1997). *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium*.
- The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014). *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion (Instrumentum laboris)*.

The Catholic school should put Christ at the centre of everything it does by integrating Jesus' teachings, the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of learning, teaching and the total experience of school life.[9]