Leadership for school improvement

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LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Submitted by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Education

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP AND SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person’s work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committee.

Signed:
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My appreciation is extended to the principals and teachers who were involved in this study. Their experiences and insights have allowed me to develop a model of leadership for school improvement which I hope will make an impact on leadership practices and effective improvement in schools.

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ABSTRACT

This study has emerged from an international interest and movement towards school improvement. The process of school improvement concerns itself with the concepts of change and accountability within school systems as well as the impact of leadership within these processes. The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of leadership on school improvement in Catholic secondary schools. Specifically, it addresses how leadership was seen to influence both school improvement and the understandings of leadership of people involved in school improvement within Catholic secondary schools in Sydney.

The research asked the question: How does leadership influence school improvement? It explored an understanding of the views, experiences and perspectives of teachers, middle managers and executive regarding the influence of leadership practices on school improvement within secondary schools. With this aim in mind the epistemological framework of constructionism was adopted using the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism and case study methodology. The case study approach was chosen as it allowed an understanding of the phenomenon of leadership experienced by the participants within school improvement. Multiple data collection methods of survey, semi-structured interviews and documents analysis were employed to allow the researcher to look into and detail the complex and multifaceted interactions of the teachers, middle managers and executive to gain an understanding of how these participants experienced leadership and how it impacted on their role, responsibilities, and sense of ownership of school improvement.

This research has shown that certain elements of leadership play a vital role in influencing change for school improvement. A proposed model for school improvement was found that focuses on seven elements of leadership that influence school improvement: establishing a core team to lead the process, identifying a clear vision and strategic direction, priority given to shared leadership which is enhanced by a collaborative approach, commitment and alignment of values, developing a strong learning culture that focuses on continual improvement and support through reflection and evaluation of improvement processes. These elements, when combined, provide a fertile environment in which principals and teachers can take collective responsibility for change to improve schools. Further it recognises that leadership between principals and teachers needs to be shared as both have roles and expertise that can influence change for school improvement.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study has emerged from an international interest and movement towards school improvement. The process of school improvement concerns itself with the concepts of change and accountability within school systems. Other areas of research have focussed on the impact of leadership within these processes and on student outcomes as an area of importance. This study will attempt to address these questions of the effect of leadership within a change process of school improvement in Australian secondary schools. Specifically, this study will address how leadership was seen to influence both school improvement and the understandings of leadership of people involved in school improvement within Catholic secondary schools in Sydney.

This concern and the review of literature in these areas pointed towards two major themes within the research: change and school improvement, and leadership, both general and educational. These themes then generated an overarching research question which was:

How does leadership influence school improvement?

Specifically, these themes also highlighted three sub-questions:

1. What were the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process?

2. To what extent did leadership, within these elements, contribute to the school improvement process?

3. How do the experiences of leadership of participants involved in school improvement reflect the different leadership approaches identified in the literature?

This case study involves five secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney which have implemented a school improvement process called IDEAS (Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in School) over differing time periods. IDEAS is a school revitalization process that regards the work and professionalism of teachers very highly (Andrews et al., 2004).
1.1 THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1.1 Personal Context
The researcher is a Principal in a Catholic systemic school in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. She has taught in Catholic secondary schools in New South Wales and Queensland for the past twenty-nine years and during that time has completed two Masters Degrees: Master of Arts in Theological Studies and Master of Educational Leadership. The researcher has been in senior leadership positions for the past fourteen years and her current position is Principal. As the Principal of a school she has the responsibility, with the College Executive, of developing and implementing a Strategic Improvement Plan. The researcher values a collaborative approach to strategic planning and the importance of developing a process to implement improvement in a school environment.

The researcher has had the privilege of working with a variety of colleagues with a diverse range of leadership styles and experiences. In each school environment she has experienced the expectation that schools would continually look for ways to improve and she has observed the important role each staff member plays in contributing to this. Throughout her years as an educator the researcher has become increasingly interested in the role leadership plays in guiding and influencing improvement in schools and how different leadership approaches and behaviours influence school improvement.

1.1.2 The International Context
Within the international context, research by Fullan (2009b) indicates that there has been a deliberate attempt by many countries to implement whole school reform to improve student achievement. He defines school reform as “deliberate policy and strategy attempts to change the system as a whole” and as a system he includes “government and all its schools” (p. 102). He states that within whole school reform the importance of leadership is paramount and it is essential that, quality teachers, and also leaders and teachers working together have a broad directional vision and a focus on student learning and achievement. Additional research (Crowther, 2010a; Fullan, 2008, 2006, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2009) shows that these factors have been at the centre of leadership development and school improvement over the past decade. Research by Hattie (2009) identifies two school-related factors, classroom instruction followed by school leadership as the most significant influences on student learning. Further research (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Fullan, 2009b) has suggested it is the role and responsibility of those in leadership to continually change to meet the developing
needs of learners. For the purposes of this research both leadership and school improvement have been defined from a fairly broad perspective.

School improvement refers to “planned educational change that enhances student learning outcomes as well as a school’s capacity for managing change” and emphasises that management refers to “processes and activities that have been carried out in schools in order to achieve change/improvement” (Creemers, Stoll, & Reezigt, 2007, p. 826). In comparison to the school reform definition stated above, school improvement is at a school level so would be considered as an element within school reform, which is change at a system level. Leadership is defined as having two functions: “providing direction and exercising influence…to achieve shared goals” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 2).

In many countries government and system accountability dominates the education reform agenda (Fullan, 2009b). Those who work in schools suggest that currently “schools are under siege with new programs and enhanced accountability expectations” (Aitken et al., 2008). Other research (Crowther, 2011; Fullan, 2006) suggests that schools look for different models of school improvement to fulfil accountability requirements and to enhance student learning. This research also suggests that the approach or way in which an organisation is led can have an impact on the commitment and involvement of staff and the sustainability of the improvement. Leaders need to “work to develop and support people to do their best, and work to redesign their organisations to improve effectiveness” (Wahlstrom, Seashore Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, 2010, p. 7). Crowther (2011) and Fullan (2006) have also suggested that successful school improvement is dependent on teachers believing that they can make a positive contribution to the students they teach and the relationship between teachers and leaders can impact on this belief. This research will investigate this contribution and relationship in the context of how leadership and leadership behaviours impact on school improvement.

1.1.3 The National Context
School review and improvement has been a focus for the Australian Government for the past couple of decades. This has been particularly so in the last couple of years where we have seen an increased commitment to ensure that students all have access to quality education. This has been measured through benchmarking and national standards, particularly in the area of literacy and numeracy (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). In 1989, the ‘Hobart Declaration on Schooling’ (Jones, 2008, p. 167) introduced annual national reporting in an
attempt to develop in students the essential skills of literacy and numeracy. In 1999, the ‘Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century’ introduced benchmark standards of proficiency for students in literacy and numeracy. In 2008 the ‘National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians’ continued these benchmarks and required greater accountability and transparency from schools (Cuttance, 2005; Jones, 2008). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), a government body set up since 2008, monitors school effectiveness. It rates and compares schools of similar socio-economic backgrounds and student achievement levels in literacy and numeracy (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2010).

In 2009, the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership was set up between government and education sectors to provide infrastructures and practices to ensure continued improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). This accountability of government policy on standards and reporting often means that leaders are challenged to maintain a balance between meeting the external expectations and requirements of government and supporting authentic learning in their schools. Within this context educators continually looked at processes and strategies to seek improvement, with governments financially supporting these initiatives.

Research of the past couple of years has looked at different models of school improvement from the Leaders Transforming Learners and Learning Framework (LTLL) (Bezzina & Burford, 2010), Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in School (IDEAS) (Crowther, 2010a, 2011) and National Government Partnerships (The NSW Smarter Schools National Partnerships, 2010). These reform models provide schools with the opportunity to introduce initiatives and processes for school improvement. The models show a direct correlation between the leadership of the process and the strategies required to implement the improvement.

The most successful schools were those that used restructuring tools to help them function as professional communities. That is, they found a way to channel staff and student efforts towards a clear, commonly shared purpose for student learning; they created opportunities for teachers to collaborate and help one another achieve the purpose; and teachers in these schools took collective-not just individual responsibility for student learning. Schools with strong professional communities were better able to offer authentic pedagogy and were more effective in promoting student achievement (Crowther, 1996, p. 311).
This recognises the changed role of teachers in improvement processes used in schools and suggests a more collaborative and cooperative approach is necessary to direct and support student learning. This study investigates the perceptions of teachers and leaders about the influence of leadership and their observations of leadership within a school improvement process to effect change. The teachers and administrators in this research are part of the Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney, New South Wales.

1.1.4 The Sydney Archdiocesan Context
This research is situated in the Sydney Archdiocesan system of schools which consists of 150 parish primary and regional secondary schools. The system has consistently been committed to school improvement and provided support for processes of improvement over the past twenty years. It has a current Strategic Improvement Plan “Building on Strength” which, “proposes a clear plan for addressing the learning needs of all students within a vibrant Catholic culture and the evangelizing mission of the church” (Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Education Office, 2010, p. 5).

As part of this system schools are required and have a responsibility, within their own context, to continually seek improvement. To support this process the Catholic Education Office has a School Strategic Leadership and Management Framework (Appendix 1, p. 310) which has linked processes for quality, improvement and accountability and provides “a structure for Principals to lead their school communities in creating a culture of continuous improvement with students as the focus.” (Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Education Office, 2012, p. 6)

Within this framework there are a variety of self-review and school review processes to support the identified link between leadership and school improvement. As part of this framework leadership development and an annual self-review of setting goals and personal improvement has been implemented in a process called Personal Performance Planning and Review (PPPR). It requires all staff within the organisation to set yearly goals for improvement and development. The Archdiocesan system recognises that the development of leaders is an important part of building the capacity of their organisation.

The framework also requires schools to undertake a process of school review, every five years, called ‘Cyclic Review’ which “is an opportunity for the school as a self-reviewing, self-improving effective Catholic school to review its learning improvement journey and to be supported and challenged in this activity with a Review Team” (Sydney Archdiocesan
Catholic Education Office, 2010, 17). The Review Team spends time at the school speaking with staff, students and parents and validating the information presented by the Principal and the Executive Team. Following this review of the school, they provide some recommendations to the Principal and the Executive Team for school improvement. It is expected that these recommendations are taken forward in the School Strategic Improvement Plan.

One of the school improvement processes used within the Archdiocese of Sydney is IDEAS. Since 2006, it has been used within both primary schools and secondary schools, with proven success. It is the school improvement process used for the purpose of this study.

1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM DEFINED

This research problem is concerned with leadership’s impact on school improvement processes in secondary schools. Leadership, as defined previously, refers to a concept that influences an organisation towards its shared goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). It also influences school improvement as a planned change process that requires leadership capacity to enhance student learning outcomes (Creemers et al., 2007). Within this context some authors suggest that school improvement is a school-wide responsibility (Andrews & Crowther, 2006; Fullan, 2005), not just the responsibility of those in the top leadership positions (Duignan & Cannon, 2011; Starratt, 1996), and that all staff have a role to play in the improvement process. Whilst there is a body of literature that suggests that different leadership approaches that are more distributive and participative in nature may work more successfully in effecting school improvement (Duignan & Bezzina, 2006; Harris, 2009). The problem is that we do not know which elements of these different approaches to leadership work best in schools (Duignan & Cannon, 2011) or how those who work in schools perceive leadership and its influence to effect change. Hence, this study aims to investigate the influence of leadership and the understandings of participants regarding leadership and its impact on school improvement within secondary schools. It was from within this context that the purpose of the research was developed.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of leadership on school improvement in Catholic secondary schools.
1.4 OVERALL RESEARCH QUESTION
The overall research question for this study is: How does leadership influence school improvement?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH
This study acknowledges the research that already exists regarding leadership models and successful models of school improvement. However, we have an incomplete picture of the effectiveness of these models and the different leadership approaches that have led to the success of school improvement. There has also been some research done specifically on the IDEAS projects in schools. This study will add to that body of knowledge and extend it by addressing issues of how the experience of school improvement changes peoples’ understandings and attitudes to leadership.

Within the Archdiocese of Sydney, one section of the current Strategic Improvement Plan (Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Education Office, 2010) focuses on leadership development. This is an area of concern and resourcing, so more information is needed. This study will provide insights into particular leadership behaviours that impact on school improvement and may contribute to and influence the models of leadership development systems used in the future.

Other recent research (Duignan & Cannon, 2011) suggests that different leadership models are needed in schools to sustain, recruit and retain leadership in schools, especially in the role of principal, and suggested different models that could be used in schools. This study will involve identifying successful leadership approaches and the insights gathered, regarding leadership, may help to support the alternative leadership models suggested by Duignan and Cannon (2011). It may also identify additional models to be tried in schools.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND MAJOR THEMES

2.0 INTRODUCTION
This chapter will provide a review of the scholarly literature relevant to the central research question of this study. The central research question explores how leadership influences school improvement. Therefore, the literature review focuses on two themes: Leadership and School Improvement.

The first theme examines the literature regarding leadership under two sub-themes: General and Educational. Although the overall research question explores the influence of leadership in a school context, an investigation into leadership under these two themes, of General and Educational, provided a range of both generic and specific elements of leadership that effected change and had importance for this study. General leadership examines the literature on the evolution of leadership and different leadership approaches utilised in a variety of organisational settings. These settings look at leadership approaches that overlap both general and educational organisations. Educational leadership examines the literature about leadership approaches used specifically in an educational setting. Investigating both general and educational leadership ensures a variety of leadership approaches are reviewed to determine which elements of leadership have influenced change and improvement in an organisation.

The second theme of School Improvement examines the literature under four sub-headings:

1. Organisational learning;
2. History of School Reform;
3. School Improvement Models;

Organisational learning will provide a general view of change, and the processes organisations engage in for improvement. The History of School Reform looks at the history of educational improvement over three tiers: school community, school region/district and State to situate school improvement. The third sub-theme School Improvement Models investigates different models of school improvement, while the fourth sub-theme examines change theory and uses three significant models of change to help identify elements that are needed for successful change and improvement.
2.1 THEME 1: LEADERSHIP

The review of leadership literature is broken into two sub-themes: General leadership and Educational leadership. The first sub-theme, General leadership, explores the context of leadership and its evolution from an historical perspective, exploring the principle of subsidiarity and management. It then investigates a range of different leadership approaches that have been employed in different organisational settings. These leadership approaches evident in the literature are: Transformational, Servant, Distributive, Ethical and moral, and Authentic leadership (Greenleaf, 1970; Bass, 1985; Starratt, 1996; Gronn, 2002; Duignan, 2009).

2.1.1 General Leadership

2.1.1.1 Subsidiarity

From an historical perspective, the first section to be addressed in the literature is that of subsidiarity. Early conceptions of devolved leadership were discussed in 1891 when Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (Pope Leo XIII, 1891), addressed the issues of the working class and their basic rights and responsibilities. His primary concern was that the working class was supported and that decisions regarding working conditions were made by those who are affected most closely by the decisions. Hence, decisions should be made by workers at the local level and not by those outside the working environment. This concept is what Bosnich (1996) calls ‘subsidiarity’ and involves the principle that leaders and followers have a responsibility and the right to make decisions that directly affect their working environment. By denying these rights, organisations take away “flexibility” and “human energies” from their workers and this leads to a “top-down” model of leadership (Bosnich, 1996, p. 1).

The principle of subsidiarity has also been more recently endorsed by Starratt (1996) who suggested four elements that are required for this devolved leadership to work – ‘trust, knowledge of what the task is, the capacity to carry out the task and a sense of the whole’ (p. 124). If any one element is missing, then this concept will not work. It is important that within any organisation people do not work in isolation, that they understand they are part of a larger whole and “that they have responsibilities, not simply to do their specific task, but to the working of the larger community and its variety of tasks” (Starratt, 1996, p. 127). By taking all these elements into consideration an alignment of processes will ensure some decisions can be made at the local level and broader, strategic decisions can be made at higher levels.
Deliberate planning and decision-making that envisages a desired future for the school supports leadership behaviours that foster strategic thinking and planning (Goldman, 2012). To be able to look more broadly at the vision and direction for the good of the whole organisation and enable the workers to consider this broad vision in their decisions is what leadership is all about (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Starratt, 1996). The role of the teacher in decision-making and how leadership is devolved will assist in informing the specific focus of this research.

2.1.1.2 Management

The next section in the literature on development of leadership is management. This identifies ways in which leaders try to manage the variety of people with whom they worked. Sergiovanni (1987) suggests that leadership was about both management and administration. He looked at influencing people taking into account their needs and desire for individual expression and accomplishment. Various theorists developed frameworks identifying these levels of needs. For example, Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs – deficiency needs, including psychological, safety, love, esteem and being needs, such as self-actualisation. Others, for example, Herzberg defined what he called the two-factor theory, hygiene factors and motivator factors. These outlined differing causes for job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Carson, 2005; Herzberg, Mausner, & Bloch Synderman, 2009). In his research Herzberg concluded that certain job factors, referred to as “hygiene” factors, were found to contribute to job dissatisfaction but not satisfaction, and to be related to reduced, but not increased, performance. It was found that if these factors are not attended to poor work hygiene will exist, with corresponding feelings of job dissatisfaction and poor performance (Sergiovanni, 2009, p. 328). As such, Herzberg’s hygiene factors seem to equate with Maslow’s deficiency needs, which similarly must be met before a person can experience individual expression and accomplishment (self-actualisation). This has implications for this study in recognising workers’ satisfaction and engagement levels and how leaders have motivated them to be involved in school improvement.

Within these traditional management structures, McGregor (1960), describes two theories: Theory X & Theory Y, which outlines assumptions by managers about workers and how they are supervised. In Theory X, it is predominately believed that workers have an natural disposition to dislike work and therefore, will avoid wherever possible; they prefer to be directed, dislike responsibility and lack ambition. In contrast, Theory Y managers believe workers have a natural desire to work, exhibit self-direction, take responsibility, can use their
imagination, creativity and ingenuity to solve problems and have untapped intellectual potential (McGregor, 1960). These assumptions are closely related to what Herzberg calls “motivator factors” (Carson, 2005, p. 456) which affect job satisfaction. When workers feel a sense of “achievement, recognition, advancement and growth” (Carson, 2005, p. 456) they experience greater fulfilment from their job and as a consequence, increase their productivity. Similarly they are related to Maslow’s being needs in which followers feel a sense of achievement and accomplishment. These theories provide a background for the development of leadership and provide a foundation for more current research into the development of different leadership styles.

A summary of the key characteristics of good leadership, expressed in these theories, outlines the importance of developing a relationship with workers where they feel a sense of trust, satisfaction in their work, responsibility to work as a member of a team and that they feel part of the decision-making that affects them in the organisation. These characteristics have importance for this study as leadership behaviours that influence workers’ satisfaction, participation and ability to take responsibility for the work of the organisation are relevant to the development of good leadership.

The following section examines some of this literature and the leadership approaches that have focused on the key characteristics outlined above, and as such special consideration in this area will be the work of Macgregor Burns (1978), Bennis and Nanus (1985), Harris (2008), Starratt (2004), and Duignan (2009). The remainder of the theme looks at different approaches to leadership within a range of organisations, both general and educational, and how this affects the workers of the organisation. It also examines how people own and become motivated in their work. Each leadership approach is viewed using three areas derived from the focus of the study:

1. ‘Focus of Leadership’ which is the central focus of the research question;
2. ‘Effect on Participants’ as the study focuses on school personnel’s experience of leadership of school improvement; and
3. ‘Contextual Considerations’ because context is an integral part of school improvement (Elmore, 2007; Fullan, 2006; Smith, Montagno & Kuzmenko, 2004). These three areas are used for the examination of each of the leadership approaches.
The leadership approaches outlined are: Transformational, Servant, Distributive, Ethical and Moral, and Authentic. They are relevant for this research on leadership for school improvement as they have elements that support the leadership and engagement of workers in ways that effect change in a variety of organisations. These elements support the purpose and research question for this study and are explored in the following sections of this theme of Leadership.

2.1.1.3 Transformational leadership
Transformational leadership focuses on leadership that shifts from the motivational factors that influence the reasons people work, to a collective desire to work for the good of the organisation. Through inspiration and motivation followers are empowered to aspire to a vision of the organisation which is above their own. This approach to leadership identifies specific leadership behaviours that have influenced the engagement of followers in the organisation and it forms part of the investigation for this study.

2.1.1.3.1 Focus of Leadership
As understanding of the study of leadership has evolved, there have been many factors which have influenced approaches towards its use. This is described by Macgregor Burns (1978) as a relationship between the leader and the follower, a relationship of “power”, that “involves the intention and purpose of both the power holder and the power recipient” (p. 12). Macgregor Burns (1978) sees this relationship as “collective” (p. 12), not just the behaviour of one person. From his research he found that, within relationships, the power and the intent can come from either party in their quest to satisfy their wants and desires for the good of the organisation. He sees the central function of leadership and power as “achieving purpose” (p. 18) and that the distinction between leadership and power is the way this purpose is achieved. These ideas of Macgregor Burns reflect earlier broad characteristics identified by Herzberg’s “motivator factors” where workers achieve job satisfaction when they feel a sense of achievement and purpose in their work. These factors are crucial for this study as the satisfaction workers feel has consequences for their involvement and engagement in school improvement. Within this context the Effect on Participants also needs to be considered.
2.1.1.3.2 Effect on Participants

Within McGregor Burns’s research he further investigated leadership which moved from transactional leadership to leadership which is transformational. This work highlighted the difference between these two approaches and that transformational leadership was “more complex and more powerful” (Sashkin, 2004, p. 173), moving from leadership that was of a supervisory and management role to a role that inspired participants to work for the good of the organisation. McGregor Burns’s work provided the springboard for further research in this area.

Consequently subsequent research set about contrasting the different approaches to transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, 1990, 1997). The findings of Bass’s (1985) research suggested that transactional leadership involves leaders engaging in a transaction with their participants; they clarify roles and tasks and only intervene when things go wrong. If participants do what is expected they are rewarded, if they do not, punishment is imposed. Transformational leadership, however, works largely on inspiration; leaders develop trust and confidence in their participants; they encourage participants to do more than they first expected and they motivate participants to move beyond their self interest for the good of the group (Bass, 1985). This idea reflects the earlier work of Starratt (1996) who, within the principle of subsidiarity, described the importance of participants being part of a “larger whole” (p. 127) and not working in isolation. These leadership characteristics of developing trust and confidence and motivating participants to work as part of a larger organisation are significant and will help to inform the specific focus of this research.

Bass (1997) developed an assessment tool to measure dimensions of both transactional and transformational leadership - the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). However, its main focus is on transformational leadership. He identified four behaviours that he considered were key elements of transformational leadership:

1. individualised consideration and care for participants;
2. inspirational motivation and encouragement to achieve the vision;
3. intellectual stimulation and challenge to be innovative and creative; and
4. idealised influence as a role model (Bass, 1997).
The MLO questionnaire statements were divided into these four interrelated components. From the research he conducted in industrial and military organisations he found that when leaders engage in transformational leadership, participants are changed by them. They perform well above their expected level and they become committed participants with a desire to improve the organisation for the good of the whole group not themselves (p. 133). Further research by Whelan (2000) in his study of the relationship between principals and consultants in the Catholic Education system in New South Wales and their subsequent influence on the outcomes of the Catholic schools supported this view. He found that one of the key elements of transformational leadership is the development of a trusting, caring relationship between leaders and participants and that this relationship is at the “heart” of leadership (p. 180). This relationship between leaders and participants also has implications for this study.

Researchers, such as Sarros and Santora (2001), followed Bass’s work, using his identified leadership behaviours and characteristics and developed them further, creating their own assessment instruments. In their study on transformational leadership they found that transformational leaders raised the consciousness level of their participants by “appealing to higher ideals and values such as liberty, justice, peace and equality” (Sarros & Santora, 2001, p. 385). The executives in this study found that leadership is a fine balance between nurturing and caring for their participants and setting high standards both for themselves and meeting the goals of their organisations. They found that leaders needed to have compassion, good interpersonal skills and consistently act in a transparent and ethical way. In summary, the findings supported Bass’s model, with executives believing that the four key behaviours of transformational leadership were fundamental to ensuring improvement and success in an organisation. These key behaviours are considered as part of the research for this study to investigate the effects of different leadership models for ownership and commitment and their influence on leadership for school improvement.

A later study supported the behaviours and concepts of transformational leadership found by Bass (1997) and Sarros and Santora’s (2001). The study of eight private organisations in different industries in Turkey found that team members felt empowered by leaders who showed transformational characteristics (Ozaralli, 2003). They felt that through transformational leadership they were inspired by a common vision and were motivated to work more effectively as a team towards this vision. The commitment to a vision and goals has consequences for how participants may contribute to a school improvement process for
this study. The next element in the consideration of the model is the notion of the context in which they operate.

2.1.1.3.3 Contextual Considerations

Further research by Bennis and Nanus (1985) found that transformational leaders determine the best situational context for success of the organisation and set about creating that context rather than adapting their leadership style to the situation that exists. Transformational leaders were identified as people who can shape and elevate the motives and goals of participants and who “achieve significant change that reflects the community of interests of both leaders and participants; indeed it frees up and pools the collective energies in pursuit of a common goal” within this context (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 127). Three central behaviours were identified that are important between transformational leaders and their participants and were similar to the behaviours described by Bass: communication, developing a climate of trust, and creating empowering opportunities. Their research also made an extra distinction from other research at the time by going beyond a strictly behavioural approach and suggesting that the behaviours were not only to motivate participants to perform at higher levels but to create organisational systems (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Other researchers also acknowledge this and refer to this situational context as the ‘culture’ of the organisation (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Sashkin, 2004; and Schein, 2010). These studies centred on the importance of leaders fostering cultures of shared values, cooperation and collaboration within the organisation. This idea reflects the earlier work of Whelan (2000) whose study within the Catholic Education system in New South Wales described the importance of building collaborative relationships that focus on a shared value system. In support of this concept of building a culture within an organisation, research found that transformational organisations have a culture based on “integrity, openness and transparency, and a genuine valuing of others” (Alban-Metcalfe, Alimo-Metcalfe & Burnett, 2006, p. 68). Within this context organisations were in a better position to cope with change and were able to shape and develop their organisations for the future. Within this research, the culture of the schools, their core values and the way they are understood has significance because they are such central features for leadership in these schools.

In summary, the literature suggests that transformational leadership involves engaging participants at all levels of the organisation in developing and achieving a shared vision and this style of leadership is primarily based on providing inspiration as a leader. Transformational leaders develop trust and confidence in their participants; they encourage...
participants to do more than they first expected and they motivate participants to move beyond their self interest for the good of the group. This review of the research suggests that the characteristics of transformational leadership are necessary for leaders to be able to devolve and share leadership within their organisation for the good of the organisation. This helps to inform the specific focus for this study as follower motivation, building relationships and a team that works towards a common goal is relevant to school improvement.

The next section of this review looks at another approach to leadership - servant leadership. This model of leadership, in which leaders delegate within an organisation to share responsibility, encourage a sense of belonging and build community, has shown some success in school improvement and, for comparison, has some characteristics similar to transformational leadership. Particular elements of this style of leadership provide further insights into effective models of school improvement within the research.

2.1.1.4 Servant leadership

Servant leadership has many characteristics similar to transformational leadership and is becoming increasingly popular (Russell & Stone, 2002; Stone et al., 2003). However, the research in this area is much more limited. The Focus of Leadership moves away from the transformational leadership approach, which highlights the relationship between the leader and participants, to a focus on service and the needs of others. The literature associated with this approach is reviewed in the following section.

2.1.1.4.1 Focus of Leadership

The phrase “Servant Leadership” was initially muted by Greenleaf in 1970 in his essay *The Servant as Leader*. In that essay, he said: "The servant-leader *is* servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*” (Andersen, 2009, p. 5). Greenleaf’s philosophy of servant leadership encourages the belief that the leader’s first thought and motivation is to serve and make sure that other people’s needs are being met before their own (Joseph & Winston, 2005). Boyum (2008) supports Greenleaf’s definition and defines servant leadership as “an innate value and desire to serve, willingness to act on the desire to serve, and trust from those led” (p. 2). It is this desire and focus on people that makes servant leadership distinct from the organisational focus of transformational leadership. Research to date has used the writings of Greenleaf and identified particular attributes of servant leadership. Russell and Stone (2002, p.147) identify nine functional attributes of servant leadership: vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of
others and empowerment. Laub (1999) proposed six discrete elements: valuing people, developing people, building community, showing authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership (Humphreys, 2005, p. 1414) and Daft (1999) outlined four main characteristics: service before self, listening as a means of affirmation, creating trust and nourishing followers to become whole (Humphreys, 2005, p. 1414). It can be seen that many of these attributes are common among these researchers as well as overlapping with some of the characteristics of a transformational leader. These include creating trust among followers and developing and caring for the person. Research by Russell and Stone (2002) suggests that these attributes provide the basis for a model of servant leadership. However, researchers indicate a need to further refine the characteristics and also analyse the impact of servant leadership on organisations. These characteristics may have benefits later for this research, when investigating the experience of leaders in attempting to grow leadership in others within a school, as the focus of service, care and trust may be relevant to building and developing processes for school improvement.

2.1.1.4.2 Effects on Participants

Both transformational and servant leadership models emphasise “the importance of appreciating and valuing people, listening, mentoring or teaching, and empowering followers” (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2003, p. 354). They both place emphasis on what Bass (1997, p. 134) called ‘individualised consideration’ and the appreciation of the followers within an organisation. It is this emphasis that Moran (2005) alludes to in his definition of servant leadership:

Leadership that promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organisation and those served by the organisation (p. 18).

Moran (2005) researched the characteristics of servant leadership and the effect on participants using Laub’s survey instrument, an instrument that has been widely used in the current servant leadership research (Joseph & Winston, 2005). Laub’s ‘Organisational Leadership Assessment’ (OLA) instrument allows researchers to access the perceptions of all stakeholders regarding the presence of servant-leader characteristics in their organisation. From Moran’s (2005) research surveying the staff in 23 schools, it was found that among employees there were high levels of job satisfaction, they felt valued, they appreciated the
opportunities to further develop as professionals and people and they were committed to building a strong sense of community. He found that these characteristics of servant leadership and their focus on the participants is what motivates and develops the workers to thrive and grow which ultimately benefits the organisation in which they work. The fact that Moran’s research was conducted in a school setting may be a particularly significant finding for school improvement for this study.

2.1.1.4.3 Contextual Considerations

Both transformational and servant leadership operate out of deeply held values (Humphreys, 2005; Russell, 2001). These values affect how leaders and participants relate to each other and the way they work within their organisations. This has elements of moral leadership that are discussed later. Russell (2001) defines values as “core beliefs – the underlying thoughts that stimulate human behaviour” (p. 76) and breaks values into two distinct areas: personal values and organisational values. Russell’s (2001) research concluded that sound leadership practices can only come after leaders firstly examine their own personal belief systems and then that of their organisations. It is this personal belief system that drives the servant leader and distinguishes servant leadership from other approaches. The leaders’ personal beliefs and their desire to act from this premise and serve the needs of their workers is what motivates them to lead (Russell, 2001). Both transformational and servant leadership place a high priority on building a culture based on these values and setting high expectations for those who work within their organisations. Servant leadership positions this within a “relational context” (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2003, p. 355) rather than the ‘situational context’ of transformational leadership described earlier.

Earlier research found differences between servant leadership and transformational leadership. Firstly, servant leadership requires leaders to “become responsible for more than simply achieving organisational goals” and secondly, “it gives directionality to the moral dimension” (Graham, 1991, p. 110). This is consistent with Moran’s (2005) research which showed the emphasis on the participant not the organisation. It further suggests that it is the context of the leader and participants’ relationship that may determine which leadership approach is best suited to different situations and can affect the leadership style chosen in an organisation. Other research suggests that contextual conditions might mediate the effectiveness of the different approaches and that servant leadership works best in a more stable environment, whereas transformational leadership is best when change in an organisation is essential (Smith, Montagno & Kuzmenko, 2004). Further investigation between transformational and servant
leadership approaches found that the difference is the focus on the leader (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2003). It suggested that the leaders capacity to shift the primary focus of their leadership from the organisation to the participants is the feature which best distinguishes servant leadership.

In summary, the review of the research suggests that servant leadership provides a leadership approach that is service orientated and is a means of bringing about change in an organisation. As a leadership approach, it primarily focuses on the worker and the characteristics of appreciating and valuing others. It also operates from a high values base and builds a culture of trust and integrity, and attempts to empower others to better themselves and share in the leadership experiences to improve an organisation. As such it provides another approach that encourages participants’ engagement in the organisation to support the common good. This has importance for this research and can provide insights into how a service approach of leadership can support school improvement. The next section of this review examines another approach to leadership, that of distributive leadership which supports a more shared and participatory approach to leadership.

2.1.1.5 Distributed leadership
In this model of leadership, the Focus of Leadership is different from the previous models and shifts to a style of leadership that is shared and experienced by many across the organisation.

2.1.1.5.1 Focus of Leadership
Research suggests that there has been recent interest and investigation into the notion of distributive leadership (Gronn, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2008; Edwards, 2011; and Spillane, 2012; Harris, 2008, 2013; Elmore Forman, Stosich & Bocala, 2014). This approach to leadership was first thought to be used by Gibb, an Australian psychologist, in the mid-fifties. However further intense investigation has been conducted more recently by Gronn (2006) whose work derives from Locke’s (2002) “integrated model” of distributed leadership. Gronn (2006) further refines Locke’s (2002) work and defines distributive leadership in two ways: aggregated/additive or holistic. An aggregated approach is when leadership is experienced by a number of people at different times to complete a variety of tasks and a holistic approach refers to leadership that is experienced as a “close working partnership” (Gronn, 2006, p. 5) and has high levels of interdependence. This approach to leadership acknowledges that there are vertical and hierarchical levels of leadership in any successful organisation. It recognises the expertise of participants within the organisation and distributes the leadership across the
organisation in an effort to maximize these skills (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008; Harris 2008; and Spillane 2012). The leadership within the organisation is therefore experienced by many of the participants. Within this shared experience Harris (2013) advocates that the primary concern of distributed leadership is the exchanges and dynamics of leadership practice rather than a fixation with formal leadership roles. Pearce, Wasenaar and Manz (2014) add that leaders in formal positions act as role models in a shared leadership approach. The encouragement of staff to take up leadership positions, at the time of need, by the recognised leader is what Pearce et al (2014) call shared responsible leadership. Through this approach improvement is planned by those in formal leadership positions to engage other staff to support improvement in schools. This notion of shared leadership may have implications for participation and leadership of school improvement for this study.

2.1.1.5.2 Effects on Participants

Leadership can be distributed and shared within formal positions within an organisation, in both “positional leadership”, and in informal situations, “informal leadership”, which develop from the expertise needed for a task (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001, p. 25). This notion of distributive leadership has growing appeal in the contemporary world of today because it acknowledges the diverse strengths of individuals within organisations (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2008 and Spillane, 2012). Organisations are taking advantage and capitalizing on this range of skills within their participants and operating within a distributed leadership approach for the benefit of meeting the goals of the organisation. Organisations are moving away from an approach of “visionary leadership champions” (Gronn, 2002, p. 17), in which one person controls the leadership. Botha and Triegaardt (2015) agree with Gronn (2002) further suggesting that by sharing the leadership the organisation generates a larger group of staff who are not only used for their expertise but are also more experienced and confident in managing change and improvement. Spillane (2012) acknowledges that a distributive leadership approach “moves beyond the Superman and Wonder Woman view of school leadership” (p. 2). Research by Gronn (2002) suggests that distributive leadership widens “the net of intelligence and organisational resourcefulness” (p. 37) and takes advantage of the resources and skills of many. Lumby (2013) suggests that through distributed leadership staff are empowered and gain power. This power is perceived as given by others in formal leadership roles or gained as a result of voluntary efforts to support the organisation. Either way, staff skills and expertise are used and acknowledged. Jones, Harvey, Lefoe & Ryland (2014) add to this and suggests from their research that the power of distributive research really relies on the endorsement and support of those in formal leadership roles. It is this link
between those in formal positions and those who are not, as well as, how the leadership capacity of those outside formal roles are used and acknowledged that can impact on improvement and change. This has consequences for this study and may provide insights into how school improvement processes can harness the skills and expertise of many participants in the leadership of the process.

Research into distributed leadership is still limited and requires much more investigation. Additionally, further research is needed to investigate how leaders’ practices relate to one another (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2001). Harris (2008), in support, proposes that within the existing literature, the idea of distributed leadership overlaps with other leadership approaches such as, shared, collaborative, democratic and participative. Similar to Locke (2002), Harris (2008) acknowledges that there are different leadership structures in the distributive approach. However, she defines these as ‘lateral’ rather than Locke’s (2002) vertical and hierarchical suggestion. Harris (2008) defines distributive leadership as:

a form of lateral leadership where the practice of leadership is shared amongst organisational members. Here organisational influence and decision-making is governed by the interaction of individuals rather than individual direction (p. 174).

More recent research by Harris (2013) suggests that if distributed leadership is to impact on members of an organisation it must be linked to their practice. In this contemporary networked world this is characterised by interactions, collaboration and structures that build the collective capacity of the members of the organisation.

2.1.1.5.3 Contextual Considerations
Consistent with Gronn (2002), Harris (2008, 2013) indicates that within this approach, individuals work very closely together in a more collaborative style. Leadership moves and changes the culture and working relationship from “person solo” to “person plus” (p. 183). This approach sees a change in organisational structures to maximize the interactions between individuals and teams. In support of Gronn (2002) and Harris (2008, 2013), research conducted in the health care industry found that distributive leadership supported a collaborative leadership style and, through this style of leadership, the health care organisations were able to build capacity and focus on patient safety (Greenfield, Braithwaite, Pawsey, Johnson, & Robinson, 2009). The research showed that partnerships were strengthened and, by distributing the leadership within the organisation, others were
empowered to take on the responsibility for patient care and safety. This empowerment of staff supports the research of Lumby (2013) who also found that in schools using the expertise of staff encouraged them to take on responsibility for improvement. This empowerment may have benefits for this research, when investigating how leaders attempt to engage all participants in school improvement, as a whole school process.

More recent research into distributed leadership refined Gronn’s (2002) model and proposed four areas of distributive leadership, describing it in terms of alignment and misalignment: Planful alignment, that which has been given prior, thoughtful consideration; spontaneous alignment, where tasks or responsibilities are allocated with minimal or no planning; spontaneous misalignment, this reflects spontaneous alignment but the outcome is misaligned; and anarchic misalignment, where several or many organisational leaders reject the influence of others (Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon & Yashkina, 2007). Leithwood et al’s (2007) research was conducted in a large urban/suburban district in southern Ontario with a sample of eight elementary and secondary schools. The findings from this study found that planful and spontaneous patterns of alignment can be the precursor of outstanding potential to effect short-term positive organisational change and that planful alignment would most likely contribute significantly to long-term organisational productivity. In contrast, spontaneous misalignment and anarchic misalignment have adverse effects on both short and long-term organisational change. Leithwood et al (2007) also found that different leadership approaches can influence the capacity of an organisation to develop and grow. This leadership approach works best in an environment that values the contribution and expertise of participants. When these skills are acknowledged and with careful planning and development, positive and sustainable change can occur within an organisation. Further research by Elmore Forman, Stosich and Bocala (2014) found that this expertise is best recognised when the teacher is acknowledged as the expert in the classroom and the principal as the overall agent of change. This combination is then most effective when there is dynamic, ongoing collaboration and decision-making regarding classroom practice and student learning between principals and teachers. These insights are significant for this study in investigating successful leadership practices for school improvement.

In summary, distributive leadership provides the potential for leadership to be experienced by many participants across an organisation. It can be used to focus on the expertise of particular people and align this with the task to be completed. Thus it can provide an organisation with a broader range of skills, competencies and resources to develop its leadership capacity. It
favours a collaborative approach to leadership where those in formal and informal leadership roles are both part of decision-making processes and values the contribution that participants can make to the organisation. This approach to leadership may be particularly relevant to this study as schools are generally staffed by well qualified people, who have significant contributions to offer. Therefore, distributed leadership may provide elements of successful leadership that may contribute to school improvement.

The next section of this review looks at approaches to leadership that focus on the way leaders show integrity and honesty in the way they lead an organisation. Like distributive leadership, it proposes a collaborative style and is known as ethical and moral leadership. It may suggest ways that support and encourage participants to take responsibility and ownership for the improvement process for students in schools and may inform elements of this research.

2.1.1.6 Ethical and Moral leadership
The Focus of Leadership in this model particularly concentrates on a style that is committed to shared values within an ethical code of behaviour. It is of particular interest in the case of Catholic schools, such as those that are the subjects of this study.

2.1.1.6.1 Focus of Leadership
Ethical and moral leadership is defined by its focus on leading an organisation that is “humanly fulfilling and socially responsible” (Starratt, 2004, p. 3). Starratt (2004) suggests that leading in an ethical and moral way is often characterized as the same. Shields (2014) agrees that they are often thought of as the same and suggests that it is not necessary to focus on the nuances but focus on the moral principles found in each definition by determining what is right or wrong in any given situation.

Ethical leadership is vital to the integrity and honesty of any person and the organisation which they lead and guide. It is expected that leaders will act morally and show virtues of doing good, honoring others, taking positive stands and behaving in ways that are not in their own self-interests (Branson, 2014). Sherry (2007) describes ethical leadership as twofold and says that both values and ethics are part of ethical leadership. Her (Sherry, 2007) research found that it was important for a leader to demonstrate by word and action their commitment to shared values within an ethical code of behaviour. This ethical leadership provided an environment were workers adopted similar behaviours taking responsibility for their own ethical stance as well as assuming shared responsibility for the ethics of the whole
organisation. Ethics is defined by Starratt (2004) as “the underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles, and values that support a moral way of life” (p. 5). This approach to leadership allows further research into the relationships between leaders and participants and how this affects the working environment within an organisation. Such an approach may provide insights for this study.

2.1.1.6.2 Effects on participants

Within the literature there are four models of ethical leadership (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2010, 2001; Starratt, 1996), the ethics of justice, critique, care and profession. The ethic of justice is described by Starratt (1996) as twofold. Firstly, it recognises the importance of the individual and that social relationships are “governed by self-interest” (p. 162). The individuals are prepared to give up some of their rights for their obligation to the group as a whole or to social justice. Secondly, individuals see that justice emerges from “communal understandings” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p. 11), where their behaviour is related to how they live within the community and for the common good of the group. The ethic of critique seeks to challenge the status quo and asks that individuals question inconsistencies in the workplace. It asks individuals to accept their social responsibility to support and take into consideration all groups, cultures and situations when making decisions. The ethic of care presents a different way of making moral decisions. It sees the importance of relationships and connections rather than a more hierarchical approach of leadership that makes decisions using a businesslike approach of following rules, policies and procedures. It requires leaders to “consider multiple voices in the decision-making process” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p. 17) and values the “integrity of human relationships” (Starratt, 1996, p. 163). This idea reflects the earlier work of Stone et al. (2003), on servant leadership. They described the importance of building relationships and placing a high priority on personal values of integrity and setting high expectations for those who work within their organisations. The ethics of justice, critique and care were proposed by Starratt (1996) to be complementary and that “each needs the strong convictions of the other” (p. 164) to provide a sound and powerful framework of ethical leadership.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2010, 2001) agree with Starratt (1996). However, they add that, within an educational setting, leaders also must take into consideration the context and unique professional code of behaviour that is required. They developed a framework to illustrate the ethic of the profession. They consider it to be dynamic and multidimensional and take into account the unique dimension of students, in the educational setting. It places students at the
centre of the paradigm and that all decisions revolve around their best interests. Further research (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007) proposes a “Best Interests” model that may serve as a guide for making ethical decisions in the best interests of students. It consists of three elements: rights, responsibility and respect. This involves school leaders taking into account student voice, active inquiry and self-reflection when making decisions in the best interest of students (p. 216). Other research conducted by Pettit (2009) on the moral implications of analysing and using student data from external testing developed a “‘Professional Purpose’ framework” which supports the “Best Interests” model. He found that the leadership given to the analysis of student data from external testing and the implementation of strategies for student improvement had moral implications for leaders in schools.

Further research in ethical leadership suggests that leaders have the potential to influence workers’ job satisfaction and, in turn, their commitment to the organisation through their personal actions and interpersonal relationships. In a study conducted by Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts and Chonko (2009) it was found that managers and leaders who engaged in ethical leadership behaviour “acted as virtuous agents in promoting an ethical climate” (p. 158). Through their personal actions and interpersonal relationships and the advocacy of this type of behaviour to staff through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making, they positively influenced staff job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. This supports the earlier work of Herzberg et al. (2009) within the theme of leadership which described how certain job factors can influence workers’ satisfaction in their work environment.

These aspects of ethical and moral leadership are important to this study, which is undertaken in an educational setting, as the values of participants affect the importance they place on their decisions regarding school improvement.

2.1.1.6.3 Contextual Considerations
In any organisation it is the leader who sets the tone and expected behaviour of other individuals. They build honest and open relationships and are often consulted by their participants regarding ethical questions as they are seen as just and honest people. Through this, leaders are in a position to influence work practices and behaviours of their colleagues. Research in ethical workplaces found that individuals felt “obligated to return beneficial behaviours when they believe another has been good and fair to them” and they felt “indebted to ethical leaders because of their trustworthy and fair nature” (Brown & Mitchell, 2010,
This research also concluded that employees felt improved “job satisfaction, organisational commitment, willingness to report problems to supervisors, willingness to put in extra effort on the job and voice behaviour” (p. 586). This approach to leadership is important within any change process in an organisation to ensure high standards are kept and that decisions are made in a responsible ethical way. This has implications for this study as the behaviours of ethical and moral leadership has consequences on the way staff feel and act towards the leadership of school improvement.

In summary, ethical and moral leadership, like the other forms of leadership presented previously, supports and promotes the characteristics that build relationships in organisations for the good of the organisation. It also adds a further dimension that requires participants to commit to and take responsibility for “social obligations and righteous causes and being considerate of the moral implications for their actions for both self and others” (Burford, 2011, p. 13). Each of these elements are important for this study as it shows how leaders and participants need to take ownership and responsibility for their role in the improvement of an organisation. For the purpose of this study this may inform the responsibility required of participants within school improvement.

Another leadership approach that is closely related to ethical and moral leadership is authentic leadership and it is the focus of the next section of this review. Again, the use of the three elements of focus of leadership, effect on participants and contextual considerations provides a basis for comparison with the previous approaches presented.

2.1.1.7 Authentic leadership

Within authentic leadership the focus is similar to ethical and moral leadership in that it deals with relationships that are genuine. Its particular focus on the building of relationships with people is important for this study as it is set in a school environment and looks at the relationships between staff within the leadership of the school.

2.1.1.7.1 Focus of Leadership

Authentic leadership is closely connected to ethical and moral leadership so much so that Starratt (2004) suggests it provides the foundation for ethical and moral leadership. Authentic leaders deal with people (Duignan, 2002), take responsibility for their moral obligation to be oneself (Starratt, 2004) and see trust as the most important value between the leader and workers (Evans, 1996). Research suggests that authentic leaders possess two important
characteristics: integrity and savvy (Evans, 1996). The value of integrity outlines their commitment to their role and means they “preach what they believe and practice what they preach” (Evans, 1996, p. 184). Being savvy encompasses their “practical competence” (Evans, 1996, p. 184). It includes qualities such as intelligence, common sense, experience, courage and a general observation of how they “handle things” (Evans, 1996, p. 184). These two characteristics provide the focus of the leadership as authentic leaders deal with people. It is the way they consistently show themselves and their own personal ethics that proves their ‘authenticity’ to their participants (Evans, 1996). In dealing with people it is important to investigate what effect this style of leadership has on participants. The authenticity of leaders will be important for this study as it may affect the way they behave toward others and the relationships they develop.

2.1.1.7.2 Effects on Participants

Leaders have a responsibility to act for the good of others (Starratt, 2004). Three key principles have been identified by what is called the “ethic of authenticity”. Firstly, we have a moral obligation to “bring one’s unique possibilities into realization” (Starratt, 2004, p. 80); secondly, authenticity is relational and requires the engagement between people and thirdly, that we have the freedom to enter into and be ourselves within these relationships. This is supported by later research that suggests that leaders and workers are compelled to engage with the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ for the good of the organisation (Duignan and Bezzina, 2006, p. 7). This style of leadership requires leaders to be given the freedom to be themselves at the same time allowing the freedom for others to be themselves. This mutuality allows freedom within the bounds of the interests of all stakeholders (Starratt, 2004). By taking all persons into consideration each person is respected and the community or society benefits as a whole. Further research also connects the relationship between authentic leadership and workers’ job satisfaction and recognises that authentic leaders play an important role in impacting on the positivity of participants in their work (Peterson, Walumbwa, Avolio, & Hannah, 2012). This study found that authentic leaders, in the extreme settings such as police and military organisations, can positively impact on participants’ emotions, and job performance and satisfaction through four related dimensions: internalised moral perspective, self-awareness, relational transparency, and balancing processes. The study acknowledges that among the four authentic leadership dimensions, it is authenticity that sits at the centre even though the four dimensions overlap. This also supports the earlier work of Herzberg et al. (2009) within the theme of leadership which described how certain job factors can influence participants’ satisfaction in their work environment. For this study these qualities of authentic leadership
may be particularly significant in developing relationships that can support the leadership of school improvement.

2.1.1.7.3 Contextual Considerations

Those who hold leadership positions must develop relationships based on “integrity, trust and respect for the dignity and worth of others” (Duignan, 2009, p. 4) if they expect to influence participants to engage with them in developing and improving the organisation in which they work. Other literature (Duignan, 2006; Halpern & Lubar, 2004; Starratt, 2004) suggests that these relationships must be authentic and to be authentic requires a sense of presence. This presence can be in two forms: physical and spiritual and means that we can be physically present to others as well as valuing their dignity and worth. This is consistent with the ideas of Starratt (2004) who suggests that by being attentive to others, “our presence can bring out the very best in ourselves as well as in others” (p. 91). Aligned with this, Halpern and Lubar (2004) developed a model of leadership presence, the PRES model, which outlines four closely aligned, sequential yet integrated elements whereby:

1. P stands for Being present and flexible to handle the unexpected;
2. R stands for Reaching Out and building relationships;
3. E stands for Expressiveness and non-verbal communication; and
4. S stands for Self-knowing and the ability to accept yourself.

Within this context it is the importance of taking time to build these relationships between leaders and participants that will benefit the organisation in the long run. These elements are important for this research as the way leaders have been ‘present’ to participants and built relationships may provide successful leadership behaviours that may contribute to school improvement.

Authentic leadership can sometimes be likened to transformational leadership or servant leadership as discussed earlier. All these leadership approaches place an emphasis on integrity, trust, and courage. However, authentic leaders are not necessarily transformational or servant leaders. The key differences in each approach suggest that authentic leaders do not necessarily actively or proactively focus on developing participants into leaders as transformational leaders do. Authentic leaders may have a positive impact but it is not their main focus. Within servant leadership there is not an explicit recognition of the mediating role of the participants’
self-awareness and regulation or an emphasis on sustainability and actual performance. Literature suggests that more research is needed in this area (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

In summary, the leadership approaches explored in this section are not just found in educational settings but from settings within a variety of organisations. The elements of leadership identified provide a way of being present to others and, for those in leadership, a way of influencing others to take on their responsibility for improvement within the organisation for which they work. These elements are important to this study as they outline specific approaches which would suggest ways in which leadership can be devolved in organisations for the benefit of the organisation. Consequently, it therefore informs the research for this study.

Within the five leadership models presented, a summary of each model showing the Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations is provided in Table 2.1 on the following page:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Leadership</th>
<th>Effect on participants</th>
<th>Contextual Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformational leadership</strong></td>
<td>The relationship between the leader and participants is one of collective ‘power’. The focus is on the organisation.</td>
<td>Inspires and motivates participants toward a common vision and to work for the good of the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Servant Leadership</strong></td>
<td>The focus is on service and the needs of others.</td>
<td>Participants feel valued, appreciated and are therefore committed to building a strong sense of community. Voice for everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distributive Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Leadership is experienced by many across the organisation.</td>
<td>Focuses on the expertise of participants and aligns expertise with the task to be completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethical &amp; Moral Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Focuses on integrity and honesty and a commitment to shared values within an ethical code of behaviour. Focus on history.</td>
<td>Requires participants to strive for justice and commit to and take responsibility for their social obligation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authentic Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Leaders show integrity and savvy in the way they consistently deal with people.</td>
<td>Requires leaders and participants to engage in an authentic relationship for the benefit of the organisation and provides the freedom for this to occur.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.1: General Leadership*
This summary outlines many elements that promote the relationship between a leader and participants and provides an insight into successful leadership approaches that could contribute to school improvement. It suggests, through these approaches, ways to enhance and engage all people in an organisation so that they might take ownership and responsibility for their role in school improvement. These elements have relevance for this research and form part of and adds to the research for this study. The second sub-theme within the Leadership theme is Educational leadership and it is explored in the next section of this thesis.

2.1.2 Educational Leadership
The context of this study, being a school, demands a review of the literature on educational leadership. This study is set in a school so this section deals with the significant research and literature from educational leadership. Much of this literature focuses on the explicit roles of the Principal and the role of the teacher in schools. In a school, the role of the Principal has traditionally been one that has been “characterized by a centrist perspective,… viewed as the centre of school decision-making, authority and action” (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson & Hann, 2002, p. 50). Research today has moved away from this hierarchical structure and has found that, when principals and teachers work in partnership together, there are greater benefits for student learning. Elmore et al (2014) suggest that in the current climate of leadership for school improvement there is an emphasis on “performance based accountability” (p. 4) and therefore, much student performance data. This provides leaders with a wealth of data on student performance to make decisions for improvement. From their research, they found that there is very useful literature regarding the role and characteristics of effective leaders. However, there is a lack of information and guidelines for leaders regarding successful leadership practices that support sustainable improvement in schools particularly linked to improved student learning outcomes. This recognises the importance of the roles of both the principal and teacher to support improvement to student learning. Other research also suggests there is a shift in the role and expectation for teachers to take on leadership roles in schools to support a collective responsibility for improvement (Crowther, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). The literature researching different leadership approaches used in schools that support the roles of principal and teacher as leaders forms the basis of the second sub-theme. These leadership approaches are: Educative, Parallel, Teacher and Co-principal. They are outlined in the following sections.
2.1.2.1 Educative leadership

The prime reason for the existence of schools is for the education of students. It is important that this education is an authentic and transformative experience for students (Bezzina & Burford, 2014; 2010; Starratt, 2004). Within the literature, the style of leadership that has the capacity to influence others in order to provide this experience and enhance student learning is known as ‘educative leadership’ (Bezzina & Burford, 2014; 2010). It is concerned about “right and wrong, justice and injustice, truth, aesthetics and the negotiation of practical ideals in education” (Duignan & Macpherson, 1993, p. 4). Educative Leadership is important for this study as it is a leadership approach that has the capacity to influence others to improve the learning environment for students and may inform elements of successful school improvement.

Duignan and Macpherson (1993), conducted research, known as the Educative Leadership Project (ELP), to investigate what type of leadership is most effective in responding to the challenge of remaining authentic while managing the complex demands of accountability in education. The project explored the relationship between the practical and theory components of educative leadership and used both academic specialists and exemplary practitioners as part of the process. The research of Duignan and Macpherson (1993) resulted in the development of a model for educative leadership that consists of three realms: “the realm of things (the practical realities of performance, resources, and consequences); the realm of ideas (what is right and significant in a particular context) and the realm of people (the realignment of meanings given to social reality and the legitimisation of changed professional practices)” (p. 25). The model suggested that for a leader to maintain a wholistic approach to educative leadership they needed to “create, maintain, and develop links between the three realms” (Duignan & Macpherson, 1993, p. 25).

Following this research, Bezzina and Burford (2010; 2014), developed a Leaders Transforming Learners and Learning (LTLL) framework (Appendix 2, p. 317) that linked leadership and learning. This model of school improvement will be explored as a model of school improvement in the next theme of this review. Bezzina and Burford (2006) conducted a pilot project in nine schools (five primary and four secondary) and a second phase of eleven schools (six primary and five secondary) between 2005-2008. The project used leadership and learning behaviours, based on a shared moral purpose, to investigate their influence on student learning. The elements of educative leadership described by Burford and Bezzina (2006) are leadership for collegiality, professional learning, sustainability, building culture
and community, and change through evidence-based processes. The framework supports the notion of educative leadership and uses the elements of ethical and authentic leadership that were discussed in the first section of this theme. These elements describe the obligation of leaders and participants to engage in authentic relationships within the school setting. Bezzina (2007) describes this obligation as unethical if it does not support and provide for the needs of “the students’ life or world” (p. 62). The elements of the framework include: values and ethics, educative leadership, authentic leadership, teacher as leader and the transformed learner. The framework highlights leadership practices which emphasise sharing, as a key dimension of this professional learning program which supports teachers. The research used a variety of data sources including a pre-intervention reflective instrument, focus group interviews, journals and web-based discussions with participating teachers and principals. The research concluded that the framework provided a guideline for reflection and action by teachers. It acknowledged the importance of collaboration as an element of leadership and recognised the benefits of a shared language supporting the model and its use in schools. It gave support to the notion of shared and distributive leadership as a way of enhancing student learning but acknowledged that this style of leadership and its understanding was different within the different schools that took part in the research. Both the ELP and LTLL models emphasised the importance of a shared and integrated approach to leadership. They shared the importance of building a culture of collaboration and sense of community and providing authentic learning experiences to enhance teaching and learning. These characteristics of leadership are important for this study as they may inform successful leadership behaviours that support school improvement.

In summary, the focus of educative leadership is students and their learning. In support of this schools face the challenge of providing an engaging teaching and learning environment in which students can learn, while also fulfilling the demands of compliance from systems and governments. The role of the educative leader is to respond to this challenge with flexibility and versatility while maintaining an ethical and authentic environment. These elements are important for this study as within a school environment they may inform the required leadership qualities necessary to lead school improvement.

The next model of leadership that has been used in schools is, parallel leadership and, through research, this approach may inform and present elements of distributive leadership that have had a positive influence in schools.
2.1.2.2 Parallel leadership

The concept of parallel leadership is defined by Crowther (2010b) as “a process whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build and sustain enhanced school capacity” (p. 36). The research into parallel leadership (Crowther 2010a, 2010b; Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009; Andrews and Lewis, 2004) has identified four characteristics that are essential for the promotion of parallel leadership: “mutual trust, shared purpose, allowance for individual expression and a commitment to sustainable school success” (p. 54). The first characteristic, mutual trust, creates an environment where principals and teachers recognise each other’s gifts and each person “accepts the responsibilities and expertise that are associated with the role of the other” (Andrews & Lewis, 2004, p. 7). When principals and teachers feel respected they are comfortable to share ideas as a member of the community. This characteristic reflects earlier broad characteristics identified by Gronn (2006) within distributive leadership, where organisations acknowledge and value the diverse strengths of individuals to support the needs of the organisation. Crowther et al. (2002) found where trust is “nurtured, practiced and valued” (p. 55), teachers share in the collective responsibility and ownership for student achievement. When this form of parallel leadership is working successfully, both the principal and teachers feel that their contribution, specifically the principal as the strategic leader and the teacher as a pedagogical leader, is respected and equally important. The characteristic of mutual trust is important for this study as it can strengthen the relationship between the principal and the teacher that is relevant for leadership development and supports school improvement.

A sense of shared purpose is the second characteristic of parallel leadership and it recognises the importance of having a clearly stated school vision that is aligned with school-wide approaches to teaching and learning. When the principal and teacher work in partnership toward this shared vision and alignment, parallel leadership works most effectively. This reflects the earlier work of Macgregor Burns (1978) who acknowledged within transformational leadership that the relationship between the leader and participants is a collective one and not just one-sided. Consistent with these ideas, Crowther et al. (2009) observed increased dialogue within the school community to develop the school’s vision and a real sense of ownership of that vision. The collaboration that the process facilitated ensured that, through the positive relationships that had been built, there was an ongoing commitment to the school’s vision. This has importance for this study as a shared vision and moral purpose is relevant to school improvement.
Allowance for individual expression is the third characteristic of parallel leadership. This notion recognises that teachers need encouragement to succeed as individuals with their own capabilities and aspirations. They will bring these qualities to the professional conversations and dialogue to share with colleagues. It does not mean they work in isolation, separate to what is happening in the rest of the community. Crowther et al.’s (2009) work still aligns with the school vision and purpose and by allowing teachers to express their leadership and lead projects and initiatives in their own way, teachers feel a real sense of worth for whom they are and what they can contribute. The relationship between the principal and teacher leader is then enhanced and results in further school improvement. This idea supports the work of Maslow and Herzberg (Carson, 2005; Herzberg et al., 2009) who identified human needs that must be met for individuals to feel a sense of achievement and accomplishment. Valuing the skills and expertise of teachers builds confidence, commitment and an ownership of their role in school improvement which is significant for this study.

The fourth characteristic of parallel leadership is a commitment to sustainable school success. This characteristic is a relatively new inclusion in the definition of parallel leadership following continued research in this area by Crowther et al. (2010a). It recognises that, if school improvement is to be sustained and not a ‘one off fix’ for a particular problem, both principal and teacher leadership must work in partnership and be acknowledged for the individual and shared roles that they play in school improvement (Fullan, 2014). This characteristic is also likened to the characteristics expressed by Gronn (2002) within the distributive leadership approach. It describes how organisations take advantage of the particular skills and expertise of individuals to support the goals of the organisation for long term sustainability. The concept of sustainability has relevance for this study because of its relationship to school improvement and the importance of embedding and maintaining the improvement in the school.

Within parallel leadership and following the definition by Crowther (2010) presented earlier, this style of leadership focuses on the dual role of the principal and the teacher. They work collectively, within their area of expertise, “to build and sustain enhanced school capacity” (p. 36). Parallel leadership acknowledges that each type of leadership - principal and teacher, is equivalent but that they each have different roles. The second distinction recognises that schools of today are learning organisations and there is an undeniable connection between school-based leadership and improved educational achievement (Andrews & Lewis, 2004). The concept of parallel leadership presented by Crowther et al. (2009) has been used in
schools within the school improvement model of IDEAS. This will be examined as a school improvement model in the next theme of this literature review. Recent research (Andrews et al., 2004), using the IDEAS school improvement model, involving 22 schools in three Victorian regions in 2004-2008 found that many school staff considered that their schools had improved; that they had the capacity to sustain and extend their achievements over time; and that the concepts of parallel leadership and teacher leadership were strongly endorsed as roles within schools that would create vibrant workplaces for enhanced student learning.

In summary, parallel leadership involves a partnership between the principal and the teacher. They both use their expertise and work together to support the learning environment for students. The four characteristics identified as essential for parallel leadership to work: mutual trust, shared purpose, allowance for individual expression, and commitment to sustainable school success, provide links to other models of leadership. They also provide elements of successful leadership and its delegation that have contributed to school improvement. All of which are important to the direction of this study.

Within both educative and parallel leadership the concept of teacher leadership has been identified. Teacher leadership is not a leadership approach like the other approaches that have been presented. However, it does inform the other approaches and is a form of distributive leadership that can inform the research for this study. It is explored in the next section of this thesis.

### 2.1.2.3 Teacher leadership

Teacher leadership further distinguishes the role of the principal and teacher in school leadership. In a study of teacher leadership in the United Kingdom, teacher leadership is defined by Muijs and Harris (2006) in two ways. Firstly, and most commonly, as formal leadership that has management and pedagogical responsibilities i.e. head of department, subject coordinator, key stage coordinator and secondly, through informal leadership roles which can include: coaching, mentoring, and leading action research. The second definition opens up “the possibility of all teachers becoming leaders at various times” (p. 962) and suggests that teachers may choose to lead at different times and in different ways depending on their skills, circumstances and expertise. They indicate in their research that this ‘informal’ style of teacher leadership has the potential for “collaborative forms of working amongst teachers” (p. 962) and thus the potential for school improvement. This characteristic of teacher leadership relates to Gronn’s (2002) ideas outlined in distributive leadership regarding
the notion of sharing leadership, by taking advantage of the skills and expertise of participants. The concept of teacher leadership and the way that it is expressed within the schools as formal or informal leadership provides insights into the leadership qualities that support school improvement for this study.

Other research (Silins & Mulford, 2004) describes teacher leaders as those teachers who enhance the capacity of the school and contribute to its success by promoting what happens in the entire school, not just their own classrooms. It was found in this research that when teacher leadership is encouraged and promoted, both formally and informally, schools were seen to have a significant focus on learning within the organisation. This relates to the earlier work of Macgregor Burns (1978) who described transformational leadership as leadership that works collectively between leaders and participants for the good of the organisation. Youitt (2007) identified that teacher leadership has four central and interrelated attributes – the leading of learning, sharing and collaboration, the building of a sense of community, and improving effectiveness. In each of these definitions the teacher leader is described as a person who has the capacity to effect positive change in a school environment. They are in a position, through their expertise and collaborative approach to support the vision and goals of the school through their leadership of teaching and learning and this has implications for this study.

Teacher leadership suggests teachers have the capacity and are in a prime position to positively influence improvement in schools if they are willing and are provided with the opportunity. This also reflects the ideas of Gronn (2002) in relation to distributive leadership and acknowledges the skills and expertise of teachers sharing leadership at different times to fulfil the vision and goals of the school. The distinguishing factor of teacher leadership is that teachers are able to influence student outcomes by their leadership of pedagogy. The work of Robinson (2011) reflects this notion and adds that through collaborative practices, teachers work in professional learning communities that build teacher capacity and motivates them to make a difference to students. Ghamrawi (2013) suggests that teacher leadership is nurtured when teachers lead professional development with colleagues. This approach to leadership builds teacher capacity and a culture that promotes professional learning. Teachers are at the grass roots of influencing students in the classroom and providing an environment to enhance student learning. This idea reflects Bosnich’s (1996) concept of subsidiarity where participants at the local level have a right and responsibility to make decisions that directly affect their working environment. Other researchers also found that “teachers who participate
in making decisions about conditions that affect what happens inside classrooms have a greater sense of empowerment” (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 258) which leads to greater ownership and commitment to the school’s goals and vision. This ownership and commitment has consequences for involvement in school improvement for this study.

Crowther et al. (2002) provide a comprehensive definition of teacher leadership stating that:

Teacher leadership facilitates principled action to achieve whole-school success. It applies the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth, and adults. And it contributes to long-term, enhanced quality of community life (p. 10).

This definition encompasses three features that Crowther et al. (2009) believe is inherent in teacher leadership. Firstly, that the work of teachers comes from a values base that strives to improve the quality of life for the community they serve. Secondly, that teachers are in a powerful position to change, enhance and give meaning to shape the lives of those they come in contact with and thirdly, for the first two features to flourish and thrive, school structures must be in place to support the work of teachers. From their research Crowther et al. (2009) have developed a ‘Teachers as Leaders Framework’ (Appendix 3, p. 318) that encompasses the different features of their definition. The seven point framework sets out the many aspects of what teacher leaders in schools do and is both an “idealized and pragmatic guide to action” (p. 11). In their research no one teacher leader that they observed met or accomplished all the features of the framework at any one time. However, many displayed different aspects of the framework at different times. Crowther et al.’s (2009) framework was developed further to suggest, that teacher leaders are most effective when they give direction to pedagogy and work within a three-dimensional pedagogical framework (see Appendix 4, p. 319). By exploring these three different pedagogies, teacher leaders collaboratively engage in dialogue with their colleagues to develop a shared language and meaning to direct and enhance student learning. As leaders of pedagogy, these teachers are influential in shaping classroom practice and a whole school approach to teaching, learning and assessment. A study in Scotland (Priestly, Miller, Barrett, & Wallace, 2010) supports this characteristic of teacher leadership in pedagogy. The research was conducted during 2007-2008 across five secondary schools. It was found that through collaborative processes teachers were enthused to work collectively and to try new initiatives in the classroom. Given time and resources they felt they were making a positive impact on student learning and could see the connection of school
processes and vision and their development of this with their work in the classroom. The study particularly emphasized the importance of teacher time for dialogue and the importance of creating a culture of professional inquiry and learning. This has importance for this study as the pedagogical leadership given by teachers within the school can provide useful insights into leadership qualities that can support the leadership of school improvement.

Teacher leadership is also part of the educative leadership approach but is not outlined as a separate framework as Crowther et al. (2009) developed within the IDEAS framework. Furthermore, within the LTLL framework, teacher leaders have a desire and responsibility to provide authentic learning experiences for students (Bezzina and Burford, 2010; 2014). It is through their actions of leading learning and living out their values and ethics as educative leaders that they transform the learning of their students.

In a study of twenty five teacher leaders in five schools (Beachum and Dentith, 2004), three central themes identified the presence and support of teacher leadership. The first theme identified specific types of school structures and organisational patterns; the second theme recognised specific processes and behaviours shared by those teachers interviewed; and the third theme acknowledged a certain and planned use of external resources in addition to strong community relationships. The study recommended that, through teacher leadership, positive change in schools could be made and that new roles and structures that promoted teacher leadership needed to be developed to support accountability in schools. It suggested that teacher leadership could “guide innovation and ingenuity” (p. 284), and supports the understanding that teachers and principals can work together, using their expertise, to provide an authentic learning environment for students, an understanding supported by the work of Crowther et al. (2009) and Bezzina and Burford (2010; 2014).

In summary, teacher leadership provides the opportunity for a school to look at different ways of providing leadership to support its vision and goals for student learning. It can be distinguished as both formal and informal leadership with set roles within schools or opportunities for teachers to take on leadership as needed. Teacher leadership allows teachers to express their passion as authentic teachers, as well as recognizing their expertise in pedagogy and their ability to work alongside principals in fulfilling a shared vision for the education of students. The concept of teacher leadership and the way that it is experienced and practiced in each of the schools within this research provides valuable insights into the experience of leadership and its influence on school improvement.
Within the concept of teacher leadership the main focus has been on the teacher and their ability and expertise to lead at relevant times. In the next section the specific role of the principal is explored. In the current climate the role of principal is becoming increasingly demanding and the exploration of different models of principal leadership may be beneficial in investigating distributed leadership within this role and help inform the research for this study.

2.1.2.4 Co-principalship

The role of school leadership has traditionally been one that has been seen as “synonymous with the principal” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 96). It assumes that the principal is the sole person who is able to lead and make decisions in schools. Today the role “has evolved to a point where the role has broadened, deepened and become more complex” (Cannon, 2004, p 64). If the role is going to be sustainable, it is necessary to broaden our thinking on current models and redesign the role for the future (Fullan, 2014; Duignan & Cannon, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2009). Research by Cannon (2004) explored the opportunity for the Catholic school principals’ role to be redesigned in order to attract increased quality applicants as well as retaining existing principals. The study was completed in two phases, using both interview and survey methods, with primary and secondary principals and assistant principals. The research used five models of co-principalship, taken from the literature, for redesigning the role of principal. The five models presented were:

1. Supported Leadership, the business matrix model;
2. Supported Leadership, a distributed leadership model;
3. Dual Leadership with split task specialisation;
4. Dual Leadership with job sharing; and
5. Integrative Leadership, a two-principal model with responsibilities integrated.

The major findings of the research were summarised into nine major themes: shared leadership, to share the immense role of principalship and give others a share in decisions; flexibility, customisation and contextualisation, multiple and flexible models of principalship are needed to fit the individual contexts of each school community; importance of relationships; centrality of learning, fostering the school as a learning community is fundamental to the principalship; work/life balance; gender sensitivity, especially to encourage women into the role; building leadership capacity; formation of leaders; and sustainability. These themes suggest the importance of involving others in decision-making
and building relationships as important aspects in leadership. They are consistent with the concept of distributive leadership presented previously by Gronn (2002) regarding shared leadership and taking advantage of the skills and expertise of participants to complete tasks. The participants in this study supported a shared leadership approach for the role of principalship that was flexible and customised to suit the local context of the school. These qualities may provide elements of successful leadership that may contribute to school improvement for the purposes of this study.

In summary, co-principalship provides the opportunity for different distributed approaches of leadership in schools. It focuses on the increasing reality that one person cannot take sole responsibility for everything that happens in schools and that leadership needs to be shared. It recognises that principals have particular expertise in strategic leadership and that, in partnership with teachers, the Focus of Leadership can place emphasis on the particular expertise each has for school improvement. The concept of co-principalship may have relevance to this study as this experience of leadership shows a leadership approach that moves away from traditional models. It allows other forms of leadership to be explored and may contribute to the understanding of distributed leadership in schools that may support school improvement.

Each of these models of leadership in education provides further elements that describe how leadership is distributed in schools. A summary of these leadership approaches is provided in Table 2.2 on the following page. It is presented under the three focus areas of Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants, Contextual Considerations to provide consistency with the General Leadership approaches.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Leadership</th>
<th>Effect on Participants</th>
<th>Contextual Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educative leadership</strong></td>
<td>Students and their learning.</td>
<td>Balance to provide engaging pedagogy and fulfil demands of compliance from systems and government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parallel leadership</strong></td>
<td>Principals and teachers work in partnership to build and sustain school improvement.</td>
<td>Trust and recognition of each person’s gifts and strengths and acceptance of individual and shared roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher leadership</strong></td>
<td>Expertise of the teacher recognised to influence and improve student achievement.</td>
<td>Leads pedagogy to enhance student learning. Teacher empowered which leads to ownership and commitment of school’s vision and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-principalship</strong></td>
<td>Flexible models of principalship for sustainability and attraction to the role.</td>
<td>Modelling forms of distributive and shared leadership.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.2: Educational leadership**

These elements inform this study the purpose of which is to find the most effective characteristics of leadership that influence staff and encourage them to take on responsibility and ownership of school improvement.

Within the literature outlining leadership the notion of school improvement has also been a focus. In order to explore the central research question, involving the leadership of school improvement, the notion of school improvement will now be examined as the second theme of the literature review.
2.2 THEME 2: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The second theme of School Improvement is broken up into four sub-themes: Organisational learning, History of School Reform, School Improvement Models, and Models of Change.

School improvement, as stated in chapter 1, refers to “planned educational change that enhances student learning outcomes as well as a school’s capacity for managing change” and emphasises that management refers to “processes and activities that have been carried out in schools in order to achieve change/improvement” (Creemers, Stoll, & Reezigt, 2007, p. 826). This definition captures the intent that school improvement is school based. However, schools do not work in isolation so an understanding of the larger system in which schools operate is essential in understanding the external pressures as well as the internal expectations schools have for improvement. Fullan (2009b) defines system to mean tri-level reform: school community, school region/district and State. As indicated in Chapter 1, Fullan (2009b) defines school reform as “deliberate policy and strategy attempts to change the system as a whole” (p. 102). As well as understanding the operation of larger school systems, a broader understanding of change in larger organisations can also assist in identifying elements which influence change and improvement.

The first sub-theme, Organisational learning, explores the way organisations respond to and adapt to change to improve the organisation. This focus will provide a general view of change, and the processes organisations engage in for improvement.

An understanding of the history of school, actually as reform, includes improvement taking place at the school level (Creemers et al., 2007), and the influences which are exerted on schools from both regional and State authorities. This historical understanding is significant in this research since, as previously mentioned, the focus is on school level reform. Therefore, the second sub-theme of school improvement explores the historical patterns of school reform. The third sub-theme explores different school improvement models that have been used in schools. These models include those that have been developed by governments as well as models identified by educationalists.

The fourth sub-theme explores models of change. This sub-theme identifies the elements that influence organisations and participants undergoing processes of change. As school improvement is a change process, these elements will help identify characteristics that are seen by the literature as being important for successful change and improvement.
The next section begins with the first sub-theme of Organisational Learning.

2.2.1 Organisational Learning

In linking with the first theme of leadership the way that organisations are led and learn from practice can have an impact on the manner participants respond to change and improvement within the organisation. Current literature regarding organisational learning recognises that such learning “helps organisations respond to changes in their institutional environments and adopt innovations that will improve their performance” (Sisaye & Birnberg, 2010, p. 337).

Lawler and Sillitoe (2013) acknowledge that organisational learning is not a one-off or isolated occurrence but a process of reflection and continual improvement. The approaches used to respond and initiate these improvements will be relevant for this study.

Argyris and Schon (1978) identify in their research on organisational learning that individuals are the “agents” (p. 16) that allow organisations to learn. This suggests that the major focus of an improved learning organisation should be characterised by valuing, managing and enhancing staff development at an individual level. Argyris and Schon (Sisaye & Birnberg, 2010, p. 340) describe two types of educational learning: single loop and double-loop learning. Single-loop learning locates and implements any new methods within existing systems which improve organisational performance. Therefore, changes can be gradual, thereby allowing a sequential development of new skills, techniques and knowledge. In contrast, double-loop learning requires extensive changes in the way organisation operates. In this case the organisation requires broad and fundamental changes to the methods used in conducting its work. This involves staff adopting new approaches to their working environment that may be different to prior approaches. The way that the leaders of the organisation manage these different approaches may affect staff ownership and engagement in the change process and ultimately impact on the organisation’s performance. These elements will be important for the investigation of this study.

O’Keefe (2002, p. 130) outlines seven characteristics important for organisational learning: learning antecedents; environment and innovation; perceived need and learning mechanisms; executive challenge and learning processes; cultural imperative of resourcing learning; organisational-wide learning; and learning organisation. As part of organisational learning he identifies that it is the individuals in the organisation who support its transformation. This means individuals need to feel valued for what they can contribute to the learning organisation. Such an organisation relies on employee initiative and creativity. This is
important in this research as the sense of value staff feel and the way they are encouraged to support change may affect their ownership of the improvement. This also acknowledges that leaders need to be open to a shared leadership approach that acknowledges employee contribution. O’Keefe (2002) outlines that when staff have a greater understanding of the organisation’s setting and share its vision, they feel a greater sense of ownership to the organisation and feel empowered to support and use their initiative to support the organisation. Both O’Keefe (2002) and Argyris and Schon (1978, 1996) also identify the notion of staff resistance to change as a factor that can effect improvement. It can be encountered in “defensive routines” (Morgan, 1997, p. 89) where staff seek to protect themselves and others from embarrassment or threat when companies punish employees for poor performance. O’Keefe (2002) adds that when staff believe learning is valued in a no-blame environment they feel respected and are more willing to contribute to the learning. This develops a sense of trust between staff and the leaders of the organisation to support improvement processes. These behaviours may influence the way staff engage in improvement processes and they contribute to an understanding of important elements that effect change within improvement processes for this research.

Wang and Ahmed (2003) support the ideas of O’Keefe (2002) and also acknowledges that staff behaviour is key to the development of a learning organisation. Their research further adds, that learning starts with the individual. However, organisations must build the capacity of the individuals and consciously and intentionally nurture a “collective aspiration” (p. 12) of the group where staff continually learn how to learn together and pursue continuous improvement for the benefit of the organisation. Duffield and Whitty (2015) also suggest that staff behaviour can be a hindrance to organisational learning due to a staff “fear of failure” (p. 313) if they do not feel their contribution will be valued and that there are valuable lessons to learn when projects do not go to plan. Wang and Ahmed (2003) further identify another type of learning from those presented by Argyris and Schon (1978), that of triple-loop learning which involves organisations:

constantly questioning existing products, processes and systems by strategically asking where the organisation should stand in the future, rather than merely single and double-loop learning which simply asks what is wrong, how to correct and prevent from errors (Wang & Ahmed, 2003, p. 13).
This collective responsibility for continuous improvement and evaluation of existing structures recognises the importance of strategic thinking for the organisation. This thinking requires reflection and evaluation of processes by staff to identify future directions for the organisations. Knipfer, Kump, Wessel and Cress (2013) also identify the importance of reflective practice by members of an organisation in their ‘bottom-up’ organisational learning style (p. 33). They describe that bottom-up organisational learning takes place at the lower levels of the organisation when employees create knowledge that changes daily work practices, which are then adopted by the organisation. Knipfer et al. (2013) argue that it is the most important catalyst for transforming daily work since it has the “potential to lead to a better understanding of one’s own work and can guide future behaviour” (p. 33). This reflective practice can lead to greater ownership of the change through employee involvement and participation and better outcomes for the organisation as a whole. It also suggests a certain amount of trust that is needed for employees to initiate and suggest improvements in their workplace. It gives employees a sense that their contribution to improvement is valued so that they do not engage in the “defensive routines’ suggested by Morgan (1997) previously.

The elements of reflection and trust will be important areas of investigation for this research as the way staff behave and engage with change processes and how organisations implement change can affect the success of improvement processes.

The importance of a team approach to organisational learning has been identified by Senge (2006) as a further element significant to organisational learning. He believes that there has never been a greater need to develop teams and master team learning than today. No longer do organisations and its individual members work in isolation. Teams become a “microcosm for learning throughout the organisation and their accomplishments can set the tone and establish a standard for learning together for the larger organisation” (p. 219). Senge (2006) identifies three critical dimensions for team learning within an organisation. Firstly, that teams need to tap into the potential of many minds to gain a broader perspective into approaches for improvement. Secondly, that team members need to work together and demonstrate that support each other’s actions. This collaboration builds what Senge (2006) calls “operational trust” (p. 219) between members of the team. This trust develops a relationship among the team where they are conscious of other team members and try to balance and support the workings of the team. Thirdly, learning teams continually foster other learning teams. Team members develop their skills and carry these forward to use in other learning teams. He suggests the “actions of senior teams are actually carried out through other teams” (p. 219) and in this way leadership is devolved within the organisation. Senge (2006) adds that teams
need to master practices of both, “dialogue and discussion” (p. 220). He sees these practices as complimentary with dialogue involving “free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues, a deep listening to one another and suspending of one’s own views” (p. 220) in contrast to discussion where “different views are presented and defended and there is a search for the best view to support decisions that must be made at the time” (p. 220). These two practices are not always seen as different in the way teams operate and a team’s ability to deal with these practices is important to the way individual team members contribute to the conversation. A team approach that develops individual team members provides an environment where staff feel valued and satisfied with their own work environment and then work towards improvements in the organisation. Kayes and Burnett (2006) refer to this team approach as “team learning” (p. 10) were individuals share their experiences which then contribute to the team knowledge. By ongoing reflection, asking questions, seeking feedback, experimentation and further reflection discussing errors and unexpected results, the collective construction of knowledge leads to deeper insights for the group and the organisation (Roschelle & Teasley, 1995). This collaborative approach enables both individual reflection as well as a sharing of new knowledge that supports collaborative decision-making. The benefits of working in teams and collaborative decision making will be important for investigation in this study.

In further investigating how organisations and its members behave, organisational learning looks at “how organisations adapt to new and changing environments” (Sisaye & Birnberg, 2010, p. 338). These new and changing environments may be seen in the ways schools approach improvement and how they maintain quality standards of educational outcomes through quality assurance. This research dealing with school improvement models has taken some of its direction from the quality assurance and learning organisation literature. This is relevant to this study regarding school improvement. Cuttance (1995) defines quality assurance as that which “refers to all the planned, systemic strategies and actions which are designed specifically to guarantee that the process is monitored and remains on target at all times” (p. 5). Cheng (2003) believes that, within education, organisations ensure that they meet the challenges of today’s changing educational environment through quality assurance models. He suggests that there are three models of quality assurance in education and that they are “mutually supplementary to one another” (p. 210). He describes firstly the importance of internal quality assurance where internal education processes, particularly teaching and learning, are reviewed in terms of meeting goals for students’ educational outcomes. The second model considers educational quality and its assurance in terms of
interface quality. This involves meeting the needs of all stakeholders, thereby satisfying the public’s right to full accountability in education. In addition to internal quality and interface quality, Cheng (2003) identifies that students need to be prepared for the future in a new age characterised by globalisation, information technology, and a knowledge-based economy with what he calls “future quality assurance” (p. 207). He suggests that “a new paradigm of education prescribes that students and their learning should be individualised, localised and globalised” (p. 208). These processes of quality assurance, that have been incorporated into education through school reform and improvement processes, require organisations to review and ask questions regarding structures and policies to ensure quality within the organisation that will meet the changing world for students today. Processes of quality assurance will be important for investigation in this study as the way schools monitor standards of excellence in teaching and learning and the accountability measures within schools and expectations from school systems may have an impact on the way the school is led and implements improvement.

As this research is set within an organisation of a system of schools, an understanding of the historical patterns of school reform and influences exerted on schools from quality assurance processes will provide an overview of school change processes.

2.2.2 History of School Reform

Education, both domestic and global, has undergone considerable change over the past 60 – 70 years. Beare (2010) separates these changes into five major clusters of reform: Post-war reconstruction, Reconstruction and upgrading of the 1970s and early 1980s, Economic rationality of the 1980s and 1990s, The technology revolution and Into the twenty-first century. These clusters represent educational eras which show how schools have grown and progressed as a response to significant economic, political and social changes throughout the world. These five clusters are presented in order in the following section.

2.2.1.1 Post-war Reconstruction

In Australia, following the Second World War, birth rates increased when soldiers returned from war. This occurred at a time when Australia increased its migrant quotas of displaced Europeans. As a consequence schools were put under pressure with increased enrolments. At this time Australia also introduced compulsory secondary education through the 1957 NSW Wyndham Report (Hughes, 2001). This change to compulsory secondary education replaced schooling that “had been characterised by elitism and a weeding-out process” (Beare, 2010, p. 62).
6) improving the learning environment for students and enabling a greater number of students access to higher levels of schooling. This was seen as “pivotal to the success of post-war reconstruction and to restoring the nation’s economy” (Beare, 2010, p. 6). The increased years of schooling was coupled with an increased emphasis on encouraging students into teacher training. This emphasis changed the “culture of Teachers Colleges from that of overgrown secondary school to that of an adult tertiary-level college” (Beare, 2010, p. 7). Inadequate resourcing levels in schools, forced the States and Commonwealth to also evaluate school funding (Beare, 2010).

On the international education stage, England had already introduced compulsory secondary education through the 1944 Education Act (Dent, 2011). In the United States, the Federal Government also launched their own large-scale national curriculum reform. By injecting large amounts of money, this “adoption era” (Fullan 2009, p. 102) attempted to implement innovations such as open plan schools, flexible scheduling and team teaching. However, these initiatives failed to be adopted by teachers in schools due to lack of ownership and professional development.

2.2.1.2 Reconstruction and upgrading of the 1970s and early 1980s

The reform efforts in the United States was the trigger for Australia to re-evaluate its own curriculum and, with an injection of funding, schools were in a better position to seek improvement by reforming curriculum offerings. In the early 1970s, the Whitlam Government created the Australian Schools Commission to oversee the funding formula for public and private schools. This funding was used for extensive reconstruction of schools with open-plan classrooms and libraries (Beare, 2010). Advances in teacher training recognised the importance of teacher qualifications to support student learning. With these changes came the decentralisation of the State school systems, the setup of Regional Offices and the systematisation of Catholic schools. Likewise, the creation of the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory school systems emerged. As these territories were the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, in 1967 the Ministry of Education was formed and it supported the resourcing to all schools which previously had been the specific domain of the States. This is one of the tiers (State) that Fullan (2009b) refers to in his definition of school reform. This interest in schooling also created further official government bodies to oversee schooling, The Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Ministerial Committee for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). These
committees have established policies and expectations for schools, for school improvement, that are still active today.

School reform was also on the agenda for governments world-wide. In England, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair gave priority to education introducing a National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (NLNS) to improve the literacy and numeracy levels of students. In the United States, there were some efforts at large scale reform however, the period was labelled as “no explicit use of change theory” (Fullan, 2009, p. 105).

2.2.1.3 Economic rationality of the 1980s and 1990s
This period of change was characterised by widespread social and economic reconstruction where both governments in England and the United States introduced educational policies based on privatisation, competition and the market economy (Beare, 2010). In Australia, expectations were similar with schools being “expected to become almost autonomous, with greater decision-making power being vested in the school, or more particularly in the School Principal” (Beare 2010, p.13). It is this change in school reform that initiated for individual schools expectations of performance and school improvement from governments and systems. The increased power given to schools and specifically school principals has compelled principals to look at different models of school improvement which will be investigated in the next sub-theme. It was at this time that the concept of self-managing schools was introduced and schools became more decentralized acquiring a devolved responsibility for decision-making regarding resource allocation but still subject to a centrally-determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards and accountabilities (Caldwell, 2004). At the national level, the government also set standards for schools with the ‘Hobart Declaration on Schooling’ (1989) introducing annual national reporting in an attempt to develop in students the essential skills of literacy and numeracy and the ‘Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century’ (1999) introducing benchmark standards of proficiency for students in literacy and numeracy (Cuttance, 2005; Jones, 2008).

2.2.1.4 The technology revolution
The technology revolution period from the mid 1990s is characterised by a single factor, the computer. This device was more than just technology as it revolutionised teaching and learning (Beare, 2010). The computer was transformational in the way schools presented the curriculum, the way teachers taught and students learned as well as the way systems interacted giving rise to online courses. Computers also assisted school management through
storing student data and supporting school finance. During this period, the Rudd Labor Government came into power on a platform of “providing computers for every student, a multi-billion dollar school rebuilding program, and the reintroduction into secondary education skills-based vocational course options and certification” (Beare, 2010). This change has led schools to introduce 1:1 laptop programs for students, further reconstruction of schools featuring open plan learning environments and online vocational courses which are accessible 24/7. These factors have been part of the elements of schools’ strategic plans for whole school improvement over recent years. As part of this improvement schools have also supported teacher professional development in eLearning strategies to enhance the laptop learning environment for students.

2.2.1.5 Into the twenty-first century

The fifth phase Beare (2010) refers to as “Into the twenty first century” where globalisation is influencing schools and learning. Teachers, students and parents are now more connected than before and patterns of schooling, curricula, assessment methods, learning programs and student data are accessible within and across countries. These world-wide connections have caused great debate regarding the comparison of schools and countries in such tests as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) (www.nap.edu.au) introduced in 2008 and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which measures school achievement through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) introduced in 2000 (www.oecd.org). Beare commented:

There is an increasing predisposition on the part of policy-makers and public to compare the results of systems and jurisdictions. There is also the revulsion of teachers themselves about the over simplification that those scores represent, how they distort what the school is endeavouring to do, and how they scream against measures which orient the school’s learning programs toward personal information and individualisation (Beare, 2010, p. 17).

In an effort to compete with other countries and maintain standards internationally and nationally and following the 1999 ‘Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century’, in 2008 the Australian Government continued these benchmarks and required greater accountability and transparency from schools by setting up the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). This body rates and compares schools of similar socio-economic backgrounds and student achievement levels in literacy and
numeracy (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2010). Then in 2009, a Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership was set up between government and education sectors to provide infrastructures and practices to deliver sustained improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). This accountability, although financially supported by governments, has forced schools to look at processes and strategies for improvement. This has challenged leaders to maintain a balance between meeting the external expectations and requirements of government and supporting authentic learning in their schools. Heck and Hallinger (2014) support this challenge and discovered that one strategy to support balancing system accountability and teacher autonomy was building professional relationships. They found that the interactions between school leaders and teachers particularly supported the learning environment for students. Leithwood et al (2002) in their study of ‘control versus commitment strategies for improvement’ found that new government initiatives do not always lead to improvements in teaching and learning. Harris et al. (2006) support this view, arguing that while external authorities can influence higher expectations, highly differentiated improvement approaches are also needed for school improvement to support individual student needs. This further supports the findings of Heck and Hallinger (2014) where different initiatives are needed at the school level to support school improvement.

These five periods of school reform have shown growth in schools and influences that have effected change in schools. The attempts at system reform (school community, school region/district and state) have included external influences from governments as well as individual schools pursuing school-based needs for improvement. It is the individual desire for school improvement which leads schools to look for models to assist improvement in a planned and structured way. This leads to the second sub-theme: School Improvement Models.

2.2.2 School Improvement Models
Representing part of the context of this research, governments and systems have concentrated their efforts on school improvement for the past two decades. More recent evidence suggests that we have seen a more resilient education sector emerge where people are “still seeking improvement despite frustration over some federal and state policies, a disastrous recession, and continuing disagreements about how to increase student learning” (Elmore, 2011, p. 156). To this end schools are continually seeking better and different models of school improvement. In order to gain an understanding of the types of models trialled, four models implemented widely in Australia are presented. Some of these models have been developed
by independent educationalists, others by government. These school improvement models include:

1. Productive Pedagogy;
2. The Quality Teaching Framework;
3. Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners;
4. IDEAS (Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools).

2.2.2.1 Productive Pedagogy
Productive Pedagogy was developed by the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study research team (QSRLS, 2001), extending the work of Newman and Associates (1995) known as “Authentic Pedagogy”. It has four dimensions: Intellectual quality, Relevance, Supportive environment and Recognition of difference, see Table 2.3 on the following page (Gore, Griffiths & Ladwig, 2004, p. 378).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions and items</th>
<th>Key questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher order thinking</td>
<td>Are higher order thinking and critical analysis occurring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep knowledge</td>
<td>Does the lesson cover operational fields in any depth, detail or level of specificity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep understanding</td>
<td>Do the work and response of the students provide evidence of understanding of concepts or ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantive conversation</td>
<td>Does classroom talk break out of the initiate/respond/evaluate pattern and lead to sustained dialogue between students, and between teachers and students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge problematic</td>
<td>Are students critiquing and second-guessing texts, ideas and knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalanguage</td>
<td>Are aspects of language, grammar, and technical vocabulary being foregrounded?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge integration</td>
<td>Does the lesson range across diverse fields, disciplines and paradigms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background knowledge</td>
<td>Is there an attempt to connect with students’ background knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness to the world</td>
<td>Do lessons and the assigned work have any resemblance or connection to real life contexts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem based curriculum</td>
<td>Is there a focus on identifying and solving intellectual and/or real-world problems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student control</td>
<td>Do students have any say in the pace, direction or outcome of the lesson?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>Is the classroom a socially supportive, positive environment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Are students engaged and on-task?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit criteria</td>
<td>Are criteria for student performance made explicit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td>Is the direction of student behaviour implicit and self-regulatory or explicit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition of difference</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural knowledges</td>
<td>Are diverse cultural knowledges brought into play?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusivity</td>
<td>Are deliberate attempts made to increase the participation of all students of different backgrounds?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Is the teaching principally narrative, or is it expository?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group identity</td>
<td>Does teaching build a sense of community and identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Are attempts made to foster active citizenship?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.3: Productive pedagogy framework*
These four dimensions provide an analytical framework for teacher development and teaching practice that can be used in the classroom to assist school improvement. Through a series of key questions teachers can prepare and analyse their classroom practice to capture pedagogical learnings and meaningful experiences which support improved student learning and values diversity.

Accordingly, the research of a teacher education program by Gore, Griffiths & Ladwig (2004) using the Productive Pedagogy Framework, involving thirty students in their final year, signalled just how valuable the Productive Pedagogy Framework was in supporting their preparation for teaching. It allowed them to plan for the diverse needs of learners in their classroom by accommodating or extending intellectual rigor as well as providing a safe and supportive learning environment. They also commented that the framework would be more effective if it was delivered early in their pre-service training. This would allow the principles to “be more fully integrated into the students’ knowledge base for teaching” (Gore et al, 2004, p 385). Further research (Mills et al., 2009) found that the Productive Pedagogy Framework, although used as a research tool, also provided a metalanguage to support those teachers who critically reflect on their teaching practice. Through this study, the teachers found that the framework helped them to develop a shared language for learning that assisted them to analyse their classroom practice and differentiate the content of lessons to better cater for the different learning needs of students in both extension and learning support. It also aided their thinking and planning by allowing them to take into account differences amongst students in areas such as cultural or socio-economic background. This catered for and improved the learning environment of all students.

The Authentic Pedagogy model (Newman et al, 1995) from the United States, which had provided a foundation for the Productive Pedagogy Framework, outlined its own standards for pedagogy and student performance. These standards were defined through three criteria: Construction of knowledge, Disciplined inquiry and Value beyond school. These criteria provided a construct that was directly related to improving pedagogy through authentic learning experiences. Newman et al (1996, p. 3) framed the model as: “Construction of knowledge through disciplined inquiry to produce discourse, products or performance that have value beyond success in school that can serve as a standard of intellectual quality for assessing the authenticity of student performance”.

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As a direct consequence the research from both the Authentic Pedagogy model and the Productive Pedagogy Framework was used as a source for the development of the Quality Teaching Framework. This is outlined in the following section.

2.2.2.2. The Quality Teaching Framework

The Quality Teaching Framework (QTF) has been developed by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. This model of school improvement was the result of research and investigation into improving teaching practice and hence student learning outcomes in New South Wales schools. It was developed at the University of Newcastle and utilised research from the Productive Pedagogy Framework created previously in Australia (Gore & Ladwig, 2004).

The QTF model has three dimensions (NSW DET, 2004, p. 9):

1. **Intellectual quality** refers to pedagogy focused on producing deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills and ideas. Such pedagogy treats knowledge as something that requires active construction and requires students to engage in higher-order thinking and to communicate substantively about what they are learning.

2. **Quality learning environment** refers to pedagogy that creates classrooms where students and teachers work productively in an environment clearly focused on learning. Such pedagogy sets high and explicit expectations and develops positive relationships between teachers and students and among students.

3. **Significance** refers to pedagogy that helps make learning meaningful and important to students. Such pedagogy draws clear connections with students’ prior knowledge and identities, with contexts outside of the classroom, and with multiple ways of knowing or cultural perspectives.

The QTF model provides teachers with support materials that are designed to build teachers’ capacity and change their approach to what they are trying to achieve in the classroom. The process requires collaborative planning and professional discussion between teachers as a result of observing classroom practice or planning assessment tasks.
Research conducted by Gore and Ladwig (2004) report that the QTF model requires instructional and distributive leadership approaches which involve teacher collaboration. The research found that the framework supported teachers to deprivatise their classrooms by allowing other teachers to gain insights, share their observations and provide feedback regarding the learning occurring within each other’s classroom. This interaction between the teachers in the study showed a high level of confidence by teachers in their own teaching ability and a willingness to share their classrooms with colleagues. It was seen, from this study, that teacher collaboration was a key outcome of using the QTF model as a planning tool. The framework required teachers to think more deeply and engage in quality professional dialogue and planning which increased the intellectual quality and significance of the learning experience for students. This reflects the work of Robinson (2011), presented earlier, regarding teacher leadership, which found that, through collaborative practices, teacher capacity is built which in turn motives teachers to provide learning experiences that make a difference to student learning. Further research (Labone & Long, 2014) using the QTF framework, found that the leadership of the QTF as a school improvement model was critical in maintaining the momentum and continued commitment to the improvement. The leadership from the principal was significant in being directly involved in the professional learning of teachers. In one of the research schools, in the study, the principal was involved in influencing classroom pedagogy by providing support to teachers from outside mentors to assist them in their understanding of current practice and desired practice to improve pedagogy.

Further models of school improvement that have improved pedagogy will be presented in the next section.

2.2.2.3 Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners (LTLL)

The Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners (LTLL) model of school improvement aims to investigate how leadership and learning behaviours in schools, based on a shared moral purpose, influences student learning (Bezzina & Burford, 2010, p. 268). The conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) of the LTLL model on the following page was influenced by the National Quality Schooling Framework (NQSF) (Cuttance, 2003) and was developed to allow greater alignment within the Catholic school context. It identifies many of the leadership and learning behaviours from current literature, that have been shown to improve student learning, such as, the significance and impact of the teacher, the importance of assessment for learning, whole-school approaches to curriculum development and implementation, shared moral purpose, and the connection between leadership and learning (Bezzina & Burford, 2010, p.
In the LTLL model it is the moral purpose, expressed in a school’s values and ethics, and its sense of a transformed leader that influences educative leadership and authentic learning, and supports the teacher as leader (Bezzina & Burford, 2010, p. 270).

*Figure 2.1: Leaders transforming learning and learners model*

Within this model the central focus on moral purpose is the distinctive characteristic that sets it apart from the other models. Today there is considerable pressure for schools to perform. Annually they are compared and rated by their performance in national tests (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). This creates much unnecessary tension among schools who are also motivated to remain authentic and provide a well-rounded education which supports students in all facets of learning and prepares them to be just citizens in society. The LTLL model requires schools to be clear and explicit about their fundamental values and to ensure all members of the community are committed, own, support and endeavour to live out these values in all that they do. “It is through the actions of teachers living out their values and ethics as educative leaders, and in the provision of authentic learning for students that transformation will take place” (Bezzina & Burford, 2010, p. 5).
Research (Bezzina & Burford, 2006) conducted in a pilot phase of the model of nine primary and secondary schools from four systems and a second phase involving eleven primary and secondary schools from five school systems found that shared and distributive leadership was an essential element of the ownership of the improvement by staff. The nature of the principal and teacher leadership was recognised as integral to effective pedagogy. The study also found that leadership approaches that were collaborative created a more open environment for change and supported regular sharing of professional dialogue among teachers. It was also noted that the formal leadership position of the principal was critical in providing the driving force for the model to be initially implemented. This model has only been implemented in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney and as such the findings are limited to this context.

A fourth school improvement model that has been effective in creating change is reviewed in the next section.

2.2.2.4 Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS)

The school improvement process, Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS), was the result of an alliance with the University of Southern Queensland’s Leadership Research Institute and the Queensland Department of Education in 1997 (Crowther, et al., 2009). It is a school improvement process that regards the work and professionalism of teachers very highly (Andrews, et al., 2004). Within the model four interdependent constructs were identified for school improvement:

1. the concept of organisational alignment. The IDEAS Research-based framework (RBF) for organisational alignment (Crowther, 2010, p. 23) sets out five ‘contributory’ elements and an ‘outcomes’ element that need to be aligned if a school’s outcomes are to be enhanced and sustained over time. A diagnostic inventory is used to assess a school’s perceived strengths and weaknesses at a particular point in time and helps to begin the alignment process.
2. the *ideas* process of professional inquiry which has five phases:

- initiating: resolving to become an IDEAS school, establishing a management team and appointing an IDEAS school-based facilitator;
- discovering: revealing your school's most successful practices and key challenges;
- envisioning: picturing a preferred future for your school - an inspirational vision and an agreed approach to pedagogy;
- actioning: implementing plans to align school practices with your school's revitalised vision;

3. three-dimensional pedagogy (3-DP) which provides a framework that enables “teachers to engage in dialogue where deeply embedded pedagogical practices are shared and new levels of pedagogical insight can be generated” (Andrews et al, 2004, 14).

4. parallel leadership (Crowther, et al., 2009, p. 60), displayed in Figure 2.2 on the following page. This dimension of leadership was examined in the first theme of the literature review of Leadership. It recognises the capability of teachers as leaders and emphasizes principals’ strategic roles and responsibilities. It is based on four values:

- mutual trust and mutual respect
- shared sense of purpose
- allowance for individual expression
- a commitment to sustainable school success
Schools that undertake the IDEAS process commit to a two to three year period of implementation which encompasses the five stages of the IDEAS process. The centrality of teacher leaders in this process is paramount and this feature is critical to the implementation which requires a school based team of facilitators, the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT), to manage the process. They are assisted by an external (university) support team. These facilitators undertake ongoing leadership development as part of their engagement with the IDEAS process.

Research (Ng et al., 2005, p. 9) using the IDEAS model identified that communication between the principal and teachers is vital in supporting a parallel relationship between both parties. This supports the concept of parallel leadership and the study found that the principals and teachers in the schools had high respect for each other borne out of trust (Ng et al, 2005, p. 3). Through this trust and respect they were very open in dialogue and, as a consequence, the professional sharing that resulted built a collaborative work environment in the schools. Further research (Lewis, 2006) also identified a shared leadership approach, with the teacher as the pedagogical leader and the principal as the strategic leader, as being significant in the engagement of staff in a whole school improvement process. Through engagement, teachers developed a shared sense of responsibility for bringing about change and this improved
school outcomes in student learning, relationships in the community and the coherence of school operation. A more recent study by Andrews, the University of Southern Queensland, the Leadership Research Institute and Education Queensland (Andrews, 2009) reporting on the implementation of the IDEAS project in twenty-two Victorian schools concluded that there had been significant improvements in school outcomes across the schools involved in the project. The project affirmed the concepts of teacher leadership and parallel leadership and their impact on school improvement. Their report particularly noted that through the IDEAS process, parallel leadership and teacher leadership highlighted the significant contribution of the differing roles of the principal and teacher leader (Andrews, 2009). It also recorded that there were significant improvements in teacher morale and teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of their pedagogy (Crowther, 2011). They observed that parallel leaders endeavoured to create an inclusive, non-hierarchical environment that emphasized a shared purpose to improve student outcomes.

The IDEAS model reflects the elements of a shared understanding and vision for school improvement as well as clear structures to lead and engage participants in the process. It also has the capacity to develop positive relationships and shows a vital link between the role of leadership and the role of the teacher to support improvement (Andrews, 2008). These elements of shared vision, participant engagement and building relationships will help to inform the specific focus of this study on school improvement.

The four models outlined above provide structured frameworks that support schools in implementing change. It is this area of change and change processes that form the third sub-theme of the School Improvement theme. It investigates different models of change in an effort to identify common elements that affect the leadership of change and improvement in schools. These change models are explored in the following section.

2.2.3 Models of Change
Much of the literature regarding change developed in the post-war period. During this time there were many attempts to identify a coherent set of factors which lead to an effective model of change. According to Ellsworth (2000), Change Theory is best explored from multiple perspectives using research and practice data gathered across several decades. He proposes that any understanding of change theory is more complete when not limited or confined to a single “best” approach to the change. Instead, he purports that educators or system authorities are better served by combining a range of change approaches and adapting
the most useful instruments of each to match the needs of the current educational context and stakeholders. This is consistent with the work of Hall and Hord (1987) who identified that multiple interventions to a given change model are more likely to produce the desired effects than a single intervention. Salisbury’s (1996) work on change theory added to the understanding of change by looking at the system perspective rather than change at a micro/smaller individual level. This understanding also took into account a combination of interventions to effect change in a larger system. He developed five technologies for educational change: Systems Thinking, Systems Design, Quality Science, Change Management and Instructional Technology. As the schools in this research are within a system of schools, the literature on change from a larger system perspective may provide insights that may be beneficial to this research. While Salisbury (1996) captured the history of change theory research via his “five technologies” spanning all industry sectors, Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) commenced research with a specific relevance to educational change. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) outline “four ways” of educational change:

1. The First Way of Innovation and Inconsistency: Post WWII to mid-1970’s where a social safety net of welfare state appealed to war veterans and families. This was also marked by a creative spirit in terms of experimentation, innovation, free schooling and teaching that was more child centered.

2. The Second Way of Markets and Standardization: Mid 1970’s to 1995 where educational citizens were redefined as clients, customers and consumers. This was characterized by increased competition among schools, fuelled by publication of national test rankings.

3. The Third Way of Performance and Partnership: 1996 to 2009 which was characterized by partnerships of public, private, non-profit and voluntary providers of education. However the Market and Standardization Way still reigned supreme.
4. The Fourth Way: 2009 to present. This way was initially characterized by endless and contradictory systems of state-wide or national testing. It also featured unrealistic timelines, excessive intervention strategies and top-down Federal Government centralisation. In more recent years there has been an over reliance and subsequent misinterpretation of data as well as equity measures based on one size fits all formulas. However, the Fourth Way also seeks to push beyond data-driven decision making to innovation, sustainability, raising achievement and professional engagement. (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009)

As part of the Fourth Way of change, Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) see sustainable leadership as a fundamental characteristic of change. They see change and the way that it is achieved through a distributed leadership approach. This involves a shared responsibility for change by both principals and teachers. In their research on educational change they found that distributed leadership created a pool of future leaders growing from the way teachers take leadership of pedagogy in their classroom. This is consistent with the work of Gronn (2002) whose notion of distributive leadership also involves acknowledging the skills and expertise of teachers as leaders of pedagogy. Crowther (2009) also found that teachers are most effective when they give direction to pedagogy and that, in the micro environment of the classroom, teachers experience autonomy in their change efforts which in turn builds their capacity and confidence to take on higher levels of leadership in the school. The research of Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) also identified the opportunities to develop leadership when stronger leaders support and mentor leaders who are struggling. This type of leadership empowers emerging leaders and develops their confidence to persist when times are difficult and it further supports leadership succession in schools.

Within the educational change landscape there are different approaches and models of change that have been successful in achieving improvement. However, there is also debate about the effectiveness and validity of some of these approaches and models in implementing change (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992, Fullan, 2005). Sashkin and Egermeier (1992) would argue that there is no single formula or model for successful change in schools. What works in one situation may not always be successful in another. Different models or innovations for change may be directed to changing pedagogy or curriculum or organisational structures, however, the culture of the school is a critical factor in achieving successful change. Scalfino (2005) suggests that the school’s culture needs a makeover by looking at the values it holds as important if it is to effect whole school change. She acknowledges that our personal values
and beliefs effect the way we act and respond in different situations. In a school setting, a shared set of values that gives direction and focus to the school’s vision, will also influence the way the school operates, conducts itself and the importance it places on students and improvement in their learning. In changing the context of a school other factors such as the trusting relationships between leaders and their staff must be taken into consideration (Browning, 2013). The contexts of the schools and the relationships between staff will be important elements to consider in this research.

Argyris (2000) maintains that much of the advice about change is flawed as it is unclear and often contradictory. He supports the notion that there is no one change model for improvement and the context of the organisation is significant in implementing change. Equally, Fullan (2001) makes the point that change can be messy, rapid and nonlinear. Alternatively, he also describes change as having the potential to produce educational revolutions. Taking many of the change models, with their different steps, stages or phases, can be helpful but there is no one answer. It is the leadership of the change that has a significant impact and makes the difference (Fullan, 2001; Browning, 2013; Chandra Handa, 2013). These ideas are beneficial for this research as it particularly investigates the influence of leadership on school improvement and is set within a particular school improvement model.

Although it has been identified that the use of change models can be inconsistent in implementing successful change, different change models have also had widespread success and acceptance in implementing change (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992; Argyris, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Fullan, 2005). The benefits of these models in understanding the nature of change may be helpful in identifying the different interventions and elements of leadership which have been successful in effecting improvement and change in organisations.

Of the many change models available, three different change models have been selected (Fullan, 2008; Reigeluth, 2005 & Kotter, 1995) which have proven success in implementing change across different sectors, both education and business. These change models provided a diverse range of elements that have been identified in effecting change. The first such change model is from Fullan (2008) whose change model is the most widely used in education. The second is Reigeluth (2005) who also comes from an educational perspective and whose change model more predominantly reflects research into system change. While this may provide a broader perspective in school improvement it is particularly relevant to this research which looks at school change within a system. Thirdly, to look beyond educational models,
Kotter’s model (1995) is one of the most prominent change models used in corporate businesses (Appelbaum et al., 2012). The elements that influence change in the corporate world may provide insights that are also relevant to the educational setting of this research. Within both themes investigated, leadership and school improvement, the educational and general perspectives have been provided in order to give a wider assessment of the theme. It is hoped that these three proven models provide a varied landscape from which to review change and improvement. The three models selected will be described in the following section.

The first change model is developed by Fullan (2008) who is one of the most influential educational change agents in Australia, Canada and America. He developed a particular model of change that has been adopted widely in the field and which describes ‘six secrets of effective change’: love your employees; connect peers with purpose; capacity building prevails; learning is the work; transparency rules; and systems learn. The six secrets are interrelated and overlap to support the improvement process. Fullan (2010) describes change as coming in all shapes and sizes but suggests we cannot bring about change “without hordes of others – teaming up to work through the vicissitudes of each new culture” (p. 6). This teamwork is also seen more broadly within system change where Fullan (2006) says schools and districts need to learn from each other. He emphasises the importance of those leading change, to be “attuned to the bigger picture” (Fullan, 2002, p. 17) where people and teams work together (Fullan, 2011). Through his research Fullan (2008) found that when organisational members are engaged in purposeful interaction they generate new knowledge which also builds their confidence and commitment to the organisation. This commitment constantly develops members who have a broader system perspective and fosters their leadership to continually look for ways to improve the organisation. Fullan and Boyle (2014) say that “the foundational purpose of whole-system change is best expressed as “the moral imperative realised” (p. 9). Within an educational environment it means teachers and leaders “having a deep commitment to raising the bar and closing the gap for all children ….and measuring your success in terms of what you actually accomplish by way of results” (p. 9). To achieve this, effective policies and strategies must be in place to drive the change, leaders must “strongly challenge the status quo” and the organisation must “attract people to a process, and to listen and learn from them as well as influence them” (p. 10). This approach to leadership further supports the sustainability of the improvement. The acceptance of Fullan’s work, through the adoption by several Catholic and public education systems in Australia, makes it an appropriate selection for this research.
The second change model, developed by another educationalist Reigeluth (2005), is less well known than Fullan’s (2008). However, the use of the model involves extensive work in the area of moving a school district through a profound system change process. This corresponds with the experience of the schools in this research that were part of a system’s driven change initiative. In Reigeluth’s model (2005) he describes five phases of change needed for transformation: assess readiness and capacity; prepare core team; prepare the expanded teams; design a new system; and implement and evolve the new system. Reigeluth (2005) takes the position that the relationship between a school and its school district or system has a significant impact on the success of any change process. For positive change both system and school must work and change simultaneously (Fullan, 2008 and Hamann, 2005). Some of the values upon which Reigeluth’s (2005) change model is built include: caring for children and their future, systematic thinking, broad stakeholder ownership, process orientation, participant commitment, dialogue, consensus-building, disclosure, respect, collaboration, organisational learning, vision, flexibility, culture and the engagement of a neutral facilitator (Reigeluth, 2005, p. 42). These values form a set of core values important to the change process. Given the system’s association with this research, this model seems appropriate for inclusion.

The expectation of change and improvement is not just limited to the education domain. Within the business and corporate sector many companies continually look for ways to improve. One well-known change model relevant to the business sector is that developed by Kotter (1995). As the third selected change model, Kotter (1995, p. 61) defines eight stages for successful change: “establishing a sense of urgency; forming a powerful guiding coalition; creating a vision; communicating the vision; empowering others to act on the vision; planning for and creating short-term wins; consolidating improvements and producing still more change; and institutionalising new approaches”. These stages flow in alignment and Kotter (1995) found that considerable time was needed for implementation from one stage to the next. Kotter’s model, set outside an educational setting, gives a broader perspective and might raise issues of decisions for change, relationships between and empowerment of participants, and vision development and implementation, which may not be included in the other two models. Therefore, it seems appropriate to include this model in the research.
There are many similarities between Fullan’s, Reigeluth’s and Kotter’s models. One that particularly stands out is the significance of multiple people playing a leadership role in the change process. Reigeluth (2007) says, “When it comes to transformation of any significance inside an organisation, the process demands that you motivate many people to play a leadership role in their own domain” (p. 18). This concept recognises the importance of all members of the organisation sharing the responsibility for improvement and all three change models advocate this concept.

Of these change models no one model is superior to another but there are many components that are comparable within the models and have also been identified in the literature. These three change models (Fullan, 2008, Reigeluth, 2005 and Kotter, 1995) have been utilised in the research to capture the key learnings and elements of leadership identified for effecting change processes. By summarising the convergence of their thinking a synthesised framework was developed which highlights a set of essential elements needed for change and improvement that has proven successful. These elements were identified through a combining and blending of the six common elements of the three selected models and are summarised under the headings: relationships, ownership, capacity building, moral purpose, continuous improvement and support. This set of elements was used as a lens to investigate leadership and the elements that influence school improvement in contemporary schools. This synthesis is summarised in Table 2.4 on the following page:
| Relationships | 1. Loving employees | 1. Assess readiness and capacity | 1. Establishing a sense of urgency |
| | Participants feel valued and cared for and work in unison towards a common goal | Openness and readiness for change | 2. Forming a powerful guiding coalition |
| | | Developing teamwork and connections | |
| Ownership | 2. Connect peers with purpose | 2. Prepare a core team | 3. Creating a vision |
| | Communicate a clear vision for understanding; builds trust | Builds momentum and involvement | 4. Communicating the vision |
| | | | Working together for common goal |
| | Builds individual and collective capacity | Builds a professional community, sustainability | Direct impact and improvement |
| Moral Purpose | 4. Learning is the work | 4. Design a new system | 5. Empowering others to act on the vision |
| | Expression of core values | Vision based on common beliefs and values | Commitment to values |
| Continuous Improvement | 5. Transparency rules | | 7. Consolidating improvements and producing still more change |
| | Openness and consistency | | Innovation and sharing experiences |
| Support | 6. Systems learn | 5. Implement and evolve the new system | 8. Institutionalising new approaches |
| | Time is needed for change, reflection and evaluation | Evaluate and revise | Adjustment and flexibility |

| Table 2.4: A synthesised framework for successful change |

These six elements of change, relationships, ownership, capacity building, moral purpose, continuous improvement and support provide a framework for reviewing change leading to school improvement. They also highlight those leadership behaviours identified by participants which add to the success and impact of the change process in a sustainable way.
The following section of this thesis reviews the literature related to each of the elements of the selected models. The review begins with the element Relationships.

2.2.3.1 Relationships
In any organisation, those who work within the organisation are its largest asset. This is human capital and the way they interact within the organisation has a significant impact on the organisation’s change processes. “Change is about relationships” (Elmore, 2011, p. 23) and these relationships, when working in unison, create the ideal conditions for change. Wheatley (2005) describes relationships as the pathways to commitment and intelligence in an organisation and says “without connections nothing happens” (p. 40). Fullan (2001) believes that developing relationships among the people in an organisation helps to establish the foundation for communication and achievement of the common goal. The importance of building relationships in organisations is found in many leadership approaches. These are presented in the first theme of this thesis. McGregor (1960) described through his Theory Y the natural desire workers have to exhibit self-direction, take responsibility and use their creativity and imagination to solve problems in their workplace. This satisfaction develops relationships between leaders and workers when managed successfully. Such relationships result in job satisfaction where workers feel a sense of value and connectedness to the organisation. More recent research (Sisodia, Sheth & Wolfe, 2014) into companies, ‘Firms of Endearment’, found that by nurturing relationships with all stakeholders – employees, corporate partners, suppliers, investors, clients and staff valued their connection, felt safe and secure and particularly enjoyed working for the company. The distinguishing mark of these companies was the high degree of trust built among employees in a work environment that emphasises fun, collegial, productive and meaningful work.

Similarly, Kotter (1995) indicates that the success of change and improvement depends upon the ‘guiding coalition of people’, the team leading the change and their relationship with the other participants in the organisation. Lines (2007) supports this view and adds that this relationship is also dependent on the ability of the team to exert or influence power, as well as the positional power they have. In a case study undertaken by Lines (2007) within a large telecommunications company it was found that leaders with position power gained more success in effecting change than leaders with less authority but high expertise. However, both relationships have a positive impact on implementing change. Kotter (1995) further agrees and says that change needs continuous support from the top. Within a school setting this would be the Principal, exercising and cultivating good relationships between the team
leading the change and the participants. It is those with the positional power that are entrusted with the overall vision of the organisation and who have the strategic drive to implement change (Appelbaum et al., 2012). It is this key relationship, sometimes referred to as parallel leadership, which Crowther et al. (2009) speak about in their research into school improvement. This is the parallel relationship between the Principal as the strategic leader and the teacher as the leader of change at the classroom level.

Also supporting the notion of the Principal as the strategic leader is a study of a large-scale change effort, the Bay Area School Reform Collective (BASRC), using 16 schools over a five year period (Copeland, 2003). This study also identified another important relationship, the “reform coordinator” (Copeland, 2003, p. 388), as a significant role in supporting the change. This person acted as the ‘link’ or ‘liaison’ between the vision and strategic direction (given through the leadership of the principal) and the enactment of the improvement effort. It was recognised that change and school improvement brings with it an extra workload and the ‘reform coordinator’ or ‘link’ role supported the work of the principal by keeping the school improvement agenda alive and providing a constant focus of conversation, development and implementation.

Building an environment where participants feel valued and cared for seems to enhance the professional relationships and thus the way people communicate and engage in change processes (Fullan, 2008). As a consequence, the element of relationships is a critical part of this research. The way people interact and communicate in a school setting may have an impact on the way the school functions, develops and ultimately changes. Relationships are seen to be linked to an ownership of the improvement process which is explored in the next section.

2.2.3.2 Ownership

Inherent in any change process is the ability of those in leadership to communicate a clear vision for the future and generate “both understanding and interest” (Kotter, 1995, p. 63). This understanding builds trust in the process and leads participants to take responsibility and ownership as a member of the organisation. Within organisations, research by Gruman and Saks (2011) found that ownership through staff engagement is a “key driver to individual attitudes, behaviour, and performance as well as organisational performance, productivity, retention, financial performance, and even shareholder return” (p. 125). Their research found that by using an engagement index, within 65 firms in different industries in the United States,
the top 25% had higher staff engagement practices. This resulted in a greater return on assets, profitability and more than double shareholder value compared to the bottom 25%. In other research by Taylor and LaBarre (2008), further ownership of the organisation increased in companies where they deliberately engaged workers in meaningful and purposeful interactions. Where workers eritomise with what the organisation stood for and could clearly see a vision for the future they supported the organisations practices. These practices were in keeping with their own values and this in turn contributed to the ownership of the practices (Scalfino, 2005) and their own development and sense of fulfilment in their work. The importance of staff owning the improvement process in schools has been a consistent finding in research (Burford & Bezzina, 2014; Reigeluth, 2005 and Kotter, 1995) and this element will form an important part in this research.

As people see and experience positive change and success, the momentum of involvement and ownership grows (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). An alignment of the work of leaders and teachers leads to mutual trust and respect and encourages a willingness and openness to support and take ownership of the goals of the organisation (Crowther 1996, 2009; Andrews 2006). The increasing ownership of teachers in whole school matters represents a different focus for teachers, and an expectation that teachers work together as ‘teacher leaders’ for the good of the organisation. The concept of teacher leaders was explored in the first theme of this thesis. In England after the initial success of initiatives to improve literacy and numeracy (1997 – 2001) the government funded six schools to continue the work of ‘teacher leaders’ and support the ownership they took for their efforts to improve literacy and numeracy for students (Fullan, 2008). The project had a common purpose and a clear vision for improving student literacy and numeracy levels. The funding for the project was used to create opportunities where teachers in different schools collaborated on strategies to improve literacy and numeracy. This collaboration resulted in teachers using their wisdom and experience and taking leadership of these initiatives in the classroom to share and spread effective practices across the schools. This leadership of classroom practice also supported the ownership and responsibility they took for improving the literacy and numeracy levels of the students. Fullan (2015) also acknowledges what research shows about the importance of the relationship between autonomy and collaboration. Teachers have historically had autonomy in the classroom. However, if their creative work is kept behind closed doors and they are not open to feedback and collaborative practices to guide and learn from others this may result in policymakers tightening standards and appraisals. The flow-on effect can mean “reduced commitment and less innovation, with no improvement in performance” (Fullan, 2015, p. 53).
The pedagogical leadership of teachers and their collaborative practices of sharing and leading classroom practice will be important elements that effect change for consideration in this research.

The importance of building teacher capacity to effect change is further explored in the next section.

2.2.3.3 Capacity Building

According to Fullan (2009), school reform and improvement is only complete when it incorporates, within the change process, a process of capacity building and sustainment of the improvement. Crowther (2011) defines this capacity building as “the intentional process of mobilising a school’s resources in order to enhance priority outcomes – and sustain those improved outcomes” (p. 20). In this section capacity building refers to both the professional development of the participants as well as the sustainability of the improvement. A study by Taylor and LaBarre (2006) supports the importance of building the professional development of staff. By investing in the development of their workers and giving them a clear understanding of the company goals, they found that the workers felt more aligned with the company and took greater ownership and responsibility to build their capacity for the betterment of the company. Taylor and LaBarre (2006, p. 199) state “victory comes to companies not through the employment of brilliant men, but through knowing how to get the most out of ordinary folk”. By building worker capacity in the education sector Kaniuka (2012) found that this led to greater confidence levels among teachers and this confidence consequently led to the leadership development of the teachers. In the implementation of a reading program for students, Kaniuka (2012) found that successful experiences of improvement by the teachers built their confidence and positively influenced the success of the reading programme. This success further led to a realisation by teachers that they could make a difference which increased their self-efficacy and built their capacity as teachers to effect further change. Kaniuka (2012, p. 344) says, “given the current organisation of schools, increasing teacher capacity and having effective leadership are non-negotiable elements for school reform”. This element of capacity building is important as the consequence of the impact on teachers of a school improvement model will be a major element of this research.
The concept of sustainability also recognises the importance of the distribution of leadership that is required for schools to succeed. This approach to leadership is examined in the first theme of this review. In building the leadership capacity of all participants and developing teams to support change (Stoll, 2009), the vision and goals of the organisation are in the hands of many to implement. Hargreaves, Boyle and Harris (2014) suggest that sustainability is often an afterthought in the change process. Organisations put an enormous amount of work into the process of change but neglect to really plan and develop the capacity of staff to carry the improvement forward. Hamann (2005) supports the increasing difficulty of individual schools to sustain improvement and innovation. However, too often the change is temporary, “disappearing when a teacher retires or principal moves on” (p. 2). Hamann (2005) also suggests that there is a strong relationship between change in individual schools as well as in school systems. He says there are two essential components of viable systematic school reform: firstly, that systems strive to reform the system as a ‘system’ with policies consistent across the system and secondly, that systems support individual schools and their efforts of improvement within their particular culture. Thornburg and Mungai (2011) further add that within schools the support of teachers in the improvement process has an effect on the change. They describe school improvement models as having undergone two waves: the first wave, professional development for teachers as a top-down approach, and the second wave, professional development for teachers that is collaborative and based on their identified needs. In a study by Thornburg and Mungai (2011) based on the second wave, they found that when teachers were involved in decision making processes through collaboration and undertook appropriate professional development there was a positive impact on classroom practice and student achievement in the school. The teachers also acknowledged that leadership changes within the school and central office had an affect on the consistency and follow-through of decisions and that these position changes often slowed down the change process. However, through the collaborative decision-making that had been evident in conjunction with their leadership of improvement in the classroom, they were able to support the principal through the school improvement process and simultaneously ensure the sustainability of the improvement. Sustainability of improvement was also a consideration for schools involved in school improvement programmes in England (Wikeley, Stoll & Lodge, 2002). In these schools it was found that when many members of staff (mainly Head Teachers but also other key members of staff) were involved in leading the improvement a change in leadership did not affect the sustainability of the improvement. In these schools it was clearly evident that the direct relationship between the school development plan and the improvement initiative supported a whole-school approach for change.
This approach to leadership again highlights the importance in the research of the essential ownership and responsibility by teachers to ensure that the school builds a professional community. This is important within this research as the role and leadership of the principal provides relevant information on leadership qualities that will help to inform the specific focus of the study. Capacity building is also seen as relating to the sense of moral purpose of the school. This is examined in the next section.

### 2.2.3.4 Moral Purpose

Research regarding the change process in schools identifies that the process of school improvement must start with the moral purpose (Fullan, 2009a; Bezzina & Burford, 2010; 2014). Degenhardt and Duignan (2010) believe that at the heart and core of a school’s moral purpose is its commitment to the school’s values. Its moral purpose is shaped by the understandings teachers have of ‘why’ we prepare students to be responsible citizens of the future and the commitment to the values and ethics they have in transforming students to participate more fully as responsible members of the natural, cultural and social world (Starratt, 2011). According to Fullan (2007), lack of clarity around the moral purpose of the school can hinder growth and ownership of any change or reform process. Eckel, Green, Hill and Mallon (2014) also found that any change in an organisation must align with its mission and values for the change to be successful.

Bezzina and Burford (2014) found that the linkage of moral purpose and authentic learning was a dominant theme of their research in a three phase school improvement study of 37 schools. It was the moral purpose that gave clarity and a ‘common language’ of understanding for participants. They (Bezzina & Burford, 2014) found that:

> the model provided members of the school communities with a common language with which to address issues of moral purpose, authentic leadership and authentic learning. This is also a strength of the model, particularly since many people in schools do not “speak the same language” when it comes to such things. A common language supports a common understanding of moral purpose, which in turn fosters a greater sense of ownership and more effective collaboration (p. 420).
This research resided in Catholic schools and as this research is also situated in Catholic schools, the issue of moral purpose will play a significant part in the investigation. In this research in Sydney Catholic schools their sense of moral purpose will play a significant role in the framework. Degenhardt and Duignan (2010) found in their research of school improvement and change that the school’s values and its moral purpose was significant in establishing a compelling rationale and inspiration for change and a catalyst for the change. The school, having been established by a religious order, had a set of values espoused by the founder of the religious congregation and this connection and history with the founder was something that resonated with the staff and thus provided a strong connection for the members of the school community. The staff said, “In the reinventing school, its Catholic and Mary Ward heritage provided both direction and boundaries for the change…..These values provided sustenance and support through the difficulties of managing and coping with the changes” (Degenhardt and Duignan, 2010, p. 175).

For the purposes of this research, the understanding and expression of the core values of each of the research schools and how, through the leadership of the school, these are communicated and impact on the school forms an important focus. The next section of this thesis will investigate the importance of continuous improvement in any change process.

2.2.3.5 Continuous Improvement

The research being focused on school improvement will address the sustainability of the improvement as “continuous improvement”, a concept Fullan (2008) describes as requiring consistency and innovation in its approach and needs to be embedded into the culture of the organisation. It requires staff to work together and explore new and better methods on a regular basis. This can often be challenging as it requires staff to dialogue, share resources and open up their classrooms. On occasion, this can hit a raw nerve as some teachers can feel exposed and following constructive feedback by peers this may lead to them experiencing a sense of fear or failure (Elmore, 2011). Crowther’s (1996; 2009; 2010b) model of parallel leadership outlines the specific support role of the teacher as a leader of pedagogy and classroom practice. This was outlined in the first theme of this thesis and will be investigated in this research.
Within a particular change initiative in London (Riley & Jordan, 2004), a group of 17 schools engaged in improvement through initiatives which aimed to influence teachers’ thinking and practice as well as developing teachers’ personal and professional skills in ‘professional learning communities’. The ‘professional learning communities’ (PLC), by building opportunities for collaboration and networking as well as feedback and evaluation, developed high levels of trust and increased the engagement between teachers. These efforts resulted in developing a culture that valued continuous improvement and innovation in the classroom. Success through continuous improvement opportunities of collaboration, networking, feedback and evaluation were also identified in school improvement models used by the United States Department of Education (Holmes & Maiers, 2012). In 2010 and 2011, a study of 831 schools found that in the first year of implementation of the school improvement programme early signs of success were recognised through collaborative processes of data analysis, professional dialogue and adequate time for reflection and evaluation (Holmes & Maiers, 2012). By providing time for staff engagement in collaborative processes the schools demonstrated signs of consistent improvement.

This concept of continuous improvement is important within this research as it could have consequences for the involvement and responsibility teachers take for school improvement. The final section of this theme deals with the support and flexibility that is needed when implementing change and is reviewed in the next section.

2.2.3.6 Support
This element of change deals with the complexity and uncertainty of change and identifies the importance of reflection, evaluation and flexibility to meet the changing needs of any organisation. Each of the three selected change models leaves the treatment of this element of Support to the last stage as they suggest the preceding stages need time for implementation before the final stage can be fully applied. This element suggests that change is complex (Fullan, 2008), needs evaluation (Reigeluth, 2005) and needs time for participants to feel confident in working within and dealing with the change (Kotter 1995). Quality implementation of any change process takes substantial time and patience to overcome difficulties and foster the necessary resilience to continue when the process is complicated and seemingly unclear (Elmore, 2011). According to research by Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) within school change processes, it can be the initial engagement and excitement of teachers and leaders, as they are confronted with complex problems, which motivates them to be involved. Fullan (2008) asserts that when people feel they are part of an organisation they are
energised to contribute to the process and slowly develop a broader system perspective which allows them to feel that they can make a difference. For this reason this research will investigate the motivations for staff engagement and ownership of school improvement. Pietersen (2002) in his research found that all companies in a change process go through waves or curves of uncertainty. He suggests that the companies that make it through the uncertainty are those companies who find ways and the momentum to “launch themselves onto a second curve” (p. 33). Pietersen (2002) further stated that small victories created “self-confidence and the belief that bigger successes are possible” (p. 37). He suggests it is this belief and confidence that creates the energy and the flexibility that sustains the effort needed for long-term change.

The deliberate provision of time was found to positively support a change initiative in seventeen schools in London (Riley & Jordan, 2004). As part of the process, teachers were given time for collaboration and networking within and across schools which included opportunities for sharing feedback and evaluating classroom practice. The research suggests that this built teacher capacity in the classroom. This also developed high levels of trust and engagement between teachers as well as creating an environment where they took greater responsibility for learning in their classroom. These practices of reflection and evaluation supported positive change in the schools which focused on improving the learning environment for students. The evaluations completed throughout the change initiative in the research schools have helped provide evidence of success. Further reflection on this so far has identified that the issue of sustainability and the challenge to engage all schools and all teachers to the same degree in order to support the change is an important question to be investigated.

This element of Support is important in this study as the proposed schools have implemented a school improvement process over a number of years. The insights of those involved in the process during this time will help to identify the beliefs about leadership and the influence of leadership in the process of school improvement.
2.2.3.7 Summary of change elements

A summary the six selected common elements - relationships, ownership, capacity building, moral purpose, continuous improvement and support, of the three change models (Fullan, 2008, Reigeluth, 2005 and Kotter, 1995) is shown in Table 2.5 below. These elements were used to analyse the way leadership is expressed and experienced and thus impacts on school improvement. They provide a lens, for this study, through which to view leadership and the elements that influence positive change for improvement. This lens is used to explore how the experience of leadership by participants and the elements of leadership that impact on their responsibility and ownership of positive change leads to school improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Leadership</th>
<th>Effect on Participants</th>
<th>Contextual Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Foundation for communication &amp; achievement of a common goal</td>
<td>Feels connected, cared for and valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Communicates a clear vision</td>
<td>Understanding and interest in organisation, Supports achieving a common goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Support for professional development and leadership development</td>
<td>Direct impact &amp; responsibility for student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Purpose</td>
<td>Preparing students to be responsible citizens</td>
<td>Commitment to school values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Consistency and innovation. Using a common language for learning</td>
<td>Collaboration which develops confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Complexity of change, reflection &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>Builds confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.5: School improvement as change*
2.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Insights gained from the literature relating to the research question have led to the following overall research question and sub-questions which help to focus the research design:

Overall research question:

How does leadership influence school improvement processes?

Sub-questions:

1. What were the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process?

2. To what extent did leadership, within these elements, contribute to the school improvement process?

3. How do the experiences of leadership of participants involved in school improvement reflect the different leadership approaches identified in the literature?

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The literature review explored the themes of leadership and school improvement which were the focus of the central research question. This identified a number of elements of leadership, such as, relationships, communication, innovation, using a common language, expertise, reflection and evaluation which may influence staff to take ownership and responsibility for school improvement. Such insights helped generate the overall and sub-questions for the research.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology used for the research. This involves discussing the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods used. Finally, issues pertaining to trustworthiness to ensure validity of the research, ethical issues involving the conduct of the research, together with the limitations and delimitations of the research are explained.

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework provides the structure underpinning the selection of the appropriate epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and data gathering methods used for this research (Crotty, 1998). Since the purpose of the research requires the researcher to gain an understanding of the views, experiences and perspectives of executive, middle managers and teachers regarding the influence of leadership practices on school improvement within secondary schools, the epistemological framework of constructionism was adopted.

In keeping with this epistemology, an interpretivist design was used as the theoretical perspective as it helps us to “make sense of the world” (O’Donoghue, 2007, p. 27). More specifically, the interpretivist approach of symbolic interactionism further supports this study through the exploration of the perspectives executive, middle managers and teachers have of their understanding of leadership and their responsibility for and ownership of school improvement. To complement this study’s epistemology and theoretical perspective a case study methodology was used which employs document analysis of school improvement in five schools; survey of all staff involved in school improvement; and targeted semi-structured interviews as methods of data collection. Analysis of data enables a deeper understanding about how executive, middle managers and teachers perceive their involvement in school improvement and the influence of leadership practices on school improvement. Insights from the data analysis provides support for further exploration of different ways leadership can influence school improvement in the future.
Table 3.1 below presents an overview of the research design illustrating the connected elements of the theoretical framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPistemology</th>
<th>Constructionism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE</td>
<td>Interpretivism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symbolic Interactionism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
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</tbody>
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**Table 3.1: Overview of the theoretical framework**

### 3.1.1 Epistemology

Epistemology explores the nature of knowledge, how it is gathered and the process by which it is validated (Crotty, 1998, O’Donoghue, 2007). For the purpose of this study, the epistemology of constructionism is most appropriate as it is based on the assumption that “all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Knowledge is not developed in isolation. For knowledge to be meaningful it is constructed when individuals, with their unique differences, engage together while at the same time allowing the similarity that unites them to be identified (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). Our notion of the world does not mean we share the same views; it is the interplay of people that will create meaning, “how we know what we know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 18) and therefore make sense of what we see and experience.

In the literature the term constructionism is sometimes interchanged with constructivism. Crotty (1998) makes the distinction between the two terms defining constructivism as a focus on individuals and constructionism as a focus on collective social interaction to create meaning. De Koster, Devise, Flament & Loots (2004) call this social interaction, Social constructionism as the reality we make of the world around us “can only be made through interaction with others” (p. 75). They stress the importance of culture and history in developing a shared understanding in a particular context. Therefore, the epistemology of
social constructionism is relevant to this study as it involves knowledge being constructed by participants engaging with school change and with each other. Through interaction with each other the participants in this study developed an understanding of the influence of leadership on school improvement within the context of a Catholic secondary school.

The social constructionist stance claims that “different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon” (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). This approach allows participants to interact within their social context according to the way they see it. Welch (2001) states that it is “through interpretation of the lived world that a person gives meaning to their lives” (p. 61). Within this study the executive, middle managers and teachers were influenced in their thinking by their lived experience, values, beliefs and perceptions of leadership and how leadership practices influence school improvement. In this context the interaction between the participants assisted in constructing the knowledge and meaning of leadership within a secondary school improvement process (Bryman, 2012). This helped to draw conclusions regarding participants’ involvement in school improvement.

The social constructionist approach allows for multiple perspectives to be gathered as the participants and researcher co-construct meaning (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). This provides the opportunity for a breadth of understanding of what is reality (Crotty, 1998). As knowledge is gathered and constructed we “continually test and modify these constructions” to make sense of new experiences (Schwandt, 2000, p. 197). The researcher’s task in this study was to understand and make meaning from the participants’ varied experiences of leadership in Catholic secondary schools and the data gathered from participants was analysed to show how their actual experiences have influenced their involvement in school improvement.

3.1.2 Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective that underpins this study is Interpretivism. The Interpretivist approach “emphasises social interaction as the basis for knowledge. The researcher uses his or her skills as a social being to try to understand how others understand their world” (O’Donoghue, 2007, p. 9). This means that, when individuals interact in a social context, meaning is constructed and interpreted from the experiences and backgrounds of those involved. For the researcher it involves putting “ourselves in the place of others” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). By using the interpretivist approach the researcher sought to give “a deeper, more extensive and more systematic representation” of the world, not “reinterpret the actions and experiences” of the participants (Candy, 1989, p. 5). Through this interpretation the researcher
sought to be faithful to the way participants see the world. It allows for a “systematic analysis of social meaningful action… in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain the social world” (Neuman, 2006, p.88). More specifically for this research symbolic interactionism was adopted as the theoretical lens within the interpretivist approach.

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the “ways in which meanings emerge through interaction” (Marshall, 1998, p. 1). Its prime concern is to make meaning and develop an understanding from the everyday actions of individuals as they interact in a social environment (Marshall, 1998). It places attention on human beings and their unique behaviour, as human action is based on the meanings humans assign towards things within the interactive process (Charon, 2007). Symbolic interactionism was chosen as the theoretical perspective for this research as it allowed the perspectives of the participants to be investigated within their social world. Within this social world the participants’ behaviours constantly change and adjust as they interact with the views, actions and behaviours of others. For this study, symbolic interactionism allowed the opportunity for multiple perspectives to be shared by participants involved in school improvement.

The concept of symbolic interactionism is based on three principles identified by Blumer (1969) and they have implications for this study because the perspectives of the participants may provide insights into elements of leadership that influence school improvement. The first principle states that “human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them” (p. 2). This suggests that human action is personal and meaning is the result of previous experiences as well as the interaction of participants within their environment. Participants are “not merely responsive but are active agents” (Dimmock & O’Donoghue, 1997, p. 53) in shaping meaning. The second principle states that “the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows” (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Meaning is constructed from the perspectives of others as participants interact together within their environment. This meaning is constantly being adjusted as humans encounter and interact with the actions of others. The third principle states that “meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). This principle indicates that meanings for a person arise through an interpretive process and through interaction within a social context. In this study symbolic interactionism was appropriate as the participants are involved in whole school improvement in which leadership was explored.
Keeping in mind Blumer’s (1969) principles of symbolic interactionism, the participants’ understanding of leadership was based on their own experiences and perspectives as well as through interaction with others in school improvement. The concept of leadership was modified and adjusted as participants worked together and experienced the improvement and consequently this interaction influenced the involvement they took in the improvement.

3.1.3 Research Methodology

Methodology is the “theoretical lens through which the research is designed and conducted” (Walter, 2010, p. 54). It describes the strategy or plan of action for the study (Crotty, 1998). The choice of methodology must complement the epistemological approach and the theoretical perspective chosen for the research. For the purpose of this research a case study approach was adopted “to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning from those involved” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). It allowed the researcher to gather multiple sources of information regarding the experience of leadership by participants in a variety of secondary schools where school improvement had been undertaken. This case study allowed the individual perspectives of those involved to be gathered within their social environment and ‘real-life’ context (Yin, 2009). The case study approach is consistent with both the epistemology of constructionism and the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism.

3.1.3.1 Case Study

A case study is “an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g. an activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection” (Creswell, 2008. P. 476). The concept of a ‘bounded system’ is inherent in its definition and is a defining feature of this type of research (Merriam, 1998). It allows the research to be conducted in such a way as to refine and set boundaries of what is to be studied. In this study, the bounded system is the improvement process of Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in School (IDEAS) implemented in five secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney over differing time periods. Punch (2009) concurs with this definition and outlines three other characteristics of case studies: “the case is a case of something and identifies what is being analysed; there is an explicit attempt to preserve the wholeness, unity and integrity of the case; and multiple sources of data and multiple data collection methods are usually employed” (p. 120). For the purpose of this study, the case study approach allowed an investigation into school improvement to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of leadership experienced by participants. Multiple data collection methods were employed to allow the researcher to look into and detail the complex and multifaceted interactions of the teachers, middle managers and executive. This provided
an understanding of how these participants experienced leadership and how it impacted on their role, responsibilities, and sense of ownership of school improvement.

Reflecting on the advice of Bassey (1999) this study was structured so that it provided the researcher with the potential to: “explore significant features of the case; create plausible interpretations of what is found; test for the trustworthiness of these interpretations; construct a worthwhile argument or story; relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature; convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story; and provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or argue or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments” (p. 65). In this way the research aimed to “uncover the interaction of significant factors of the phenomenon” to focus on a “holistic description and explanation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29) of this phenomenon.

This case study involved the researcher using an interpretive case study approach (Merriam, 1998, p. 38) to collect and analyse data, interpret the results and then theorize about the patterns and ideas that emerge. Case study design is also characterised as heuristic. It is intended to ‘illuminate’ and clarify the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study. It can “bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known” (Merriam, 1998, p. 30). This study used a ‘multisite’ technique (Merriam, 1998, p. 40) which involved collecting data over five schools to build up a comprehensive picture of the research problem concerning the leadership required for school improvement. It was not a ‘multiple’ case study approach which involved using multiple case studies and replication to illustrate an issue (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). The intention was to gain a deeper understanding of the different perspectives of leadership from the participants across the different sites, not to generalise across the sites.

It is also important to note that case study research has limitations and strengths. As the researcher plays a major role in data collection, interpretation and analysis some researchers believe this may affect the integrity of the research. The preconceived ideas of the researcher may leave the research open to bias (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, researchers also believe case study “has its own rigor” and has the advantage that it can “’close-in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 235). For this study these issues were managed through openness and transparency by the researcher, in order to maintain integrity and authenticity.
Case study methodology brings its own “uniqueness” about what it can reveal about the phenomenon of leadership, providing knowledge we would not otherwise have access to (Merriam, 1998, p. 33). The insights gained from this research regarding the influence of leadership in school improvement contribute to a greater understanding of school improvement and also provide insights into the influence of the different leadership approaches used.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The case study was bounded by Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney that undertook the school improvement process of IDEAS. Since 2007, the IDEAS process, in the secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney was undertaken in three time periods, 2007–2008, 2009–2010 and 2011-2012 involving twelve schools. For the purpose of this research it was decided to look at the schools in the first two time periods as they had time to implement the process and had begun to experience any change the process may have initiated.

Within the first time period, 2007-2008, six schools had began the process. Of these six schools one has closed down, three schools did not continue with the process and two schools were still utilising IDEAS. Within the second time period, 2009-2010, three schools had implemented IDEAS.

The schools that were part of the study were:

- School A: all girls, Years 7 – 12 and approximately 770 students.
- School B: co-educational, Years 7 – 12 and approximately 710 students.

Time period 2 (2009 – 2010)
- School C: all girls, Years 7 – 12 and approximately 640 students.
- School D: all girls, Years 7 – 12 and approximately 980 students.
- School E: all girls, Years 7 -10 and approximately 490 students.

Within each school, purposeful sampling was chosen as the most effective type of sampling as it is based on the assumption that the researcher intentionally selected participants to discover, understand and gain insight into the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 1998). The participants from each of the schools included five groups – principal, executive,
middle managers, the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT), and teaching staff. Any members of the ISMT were not chosen as part of any other group for the purpose of this research so that they were not interviewed multiple times. The five groups of participants were chosen in an attempt to gather a range of experiences and perceptions of those involved in the school improvement process.

For the purpose of the interviews the following participants were selected. The Principal, a purposeful sample of one executive, one middle manager and two teachers who are not part of ISMT, and a purposeful sample of two members of the ISMT from each school, all of whom were present when the school implemented IDEAS and were still members of staff, totalling 35 participants across the five schools. These participants were selected by the researcher inviting the Principal from each school to be a volunteer and also inviting staff from each of the other four groups to be volunteers by directing them to a separate email address where they could give informed consent for the next stage. The final group to be interviewed were then chosen randomly from those who volunteered.

For the purpose of survey, all staff present when the IDEAS process was implemented and were still a member of staff were invited to complete the survey.

The implementation stage of IDEAS runs for two or three years and in that time each school is supported by the University of Southern Queensland IDEAS team. This involves two combined workshop days with other schools in the cohort and two individual school visits by a member of the University IDEAS team each year over that time.

Table 3.2 on the following page outlines details of the number of participants interviewed. Table 4.1, page 119, in the next chapter, shows the number of surveys distributed and the response rate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of participants</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1x5=5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>1x5=5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Managers</td>
<td>1x5=5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISMT</td>
<td>2x5=10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2x5=10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total participants in each school</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.2: Number of participants interviewed*

Invitations to participate in this study were mailed out to all participants, along with information which detailed the purpose of the study, criteria for participation in the study, an explanation of the research design and an outline of the data collection methods. Participants were also provided with an explanation of the expectations of the study, how the findings are conveyed back to the participants and details of ethics clearance in order to alleviate any fears about participation and confidentiality of their identity.

### 3.3 DATA COLLECTING STRATEGIES

To support the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism and the methodology of case study different strategies of data collection were employed. Case study evidence can come from a variety of sources (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009) and there are “no specific methods of data collection or of analysis which are unique to it as a method of enquiry” (Bassey, 1999, p. 69). Using multiple sources of evidence allows an investigation to “address a broader range of historical and behavioural issues” (Yin, 2009, p. 115). For the purpose of this study document analysis, survey, and targeted semi-structured interviews, were utilised to allow for a broad range of data to be collected and give participants the opportunity to adequately express their lived reality of leadership in a secondary school improvement process. Each of the data collection methods outlines a different phase of the way the data was collected.
Table 3.3 below summarises the data collection phases, methods and participants involved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Data collection technique</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>All the staff who were present when the IDEAS process was implemented and are still members of staff, in each school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>A range of documents were gathered relating to the implementation and process of IDEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Principal, a purposeful sample of one executive, one middle manager and two teachers who are not part of ISMT, and a purposeful sample of two members of the ISMT from each school, all of whom were present when the school implemented IDEAS and are still a member of staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Data collection phases and methods and anticipated participants

These different methods of data gathering are explored in the following sections.

3.3.1 Document analysis

Document analysis is a non-intrusive and readily accessible method of data collection which provides direction and a checking mechanism to “corroborate and augment evidence” in case study research (Yin, 2009, p. 103). While documents are not specifically developed to address the research problem, all types of documents can help the researcher “uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (Merriam, 1998, p. 133). Documentation is a useful strategy for reviewing content, identifying new questions and making inferences. These inferences are not definite findings but rather lead to further investigation in order to validate data that are collected from a number of sources (Yin, 2009).

For this research documents collected included, where available, the IDEAS framework, the IDEAS diagnostic inventory, staff development day programs and files on IDEAS, IDEAS workshops and notes from school visits, and ISMT records of meetings. These documents provided evidence regarding the IDEAS process, how it was implemented in each school, the ongoing reflections and experiences of each school community and the experiences of participants through their involvement or leadership of the school improvement process. They
helped in answering the research questions by offering insights into participants’ perceptions of the success of the implementation of the school improvement process and whether the six leadership focuses for successful change and improvement can be identified and have contributed to the school improvement. The following matrix, Table 3.4, was used to map the emergence of the themes for the overarching research question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Success</th>
<th>Six Leadership focuses for successful change and improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moral Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Other emergent themes | |

Table 3.4: Research question matrix

As part of the process the authenticity and accuracy of the documents and the conditions under which they were produced were considered. As such, a system of coding and cataloguing the source of the documents was developed to provide easy access to the information for analysis and interpretation (Merriam, 1998). These documents were analysed and compared to the data collected through survey and semi-structured interviews to ensure accuracy and deepen the richness of the final findings.
3.3.2 Survey

Survey is a widely used method of data collection (Neuman, 2006). Surveys are used to gather and identify “attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics” of participants (Creswell, 2008, p. 388), thus providing valuable insights on current attitudes, opinions and beliefs that they hold. They invite participants to give their responses to a range of general questions which are designed to explore their experiences and perceptions of a phenomenon; for the purpose of this study that phenomenon is leadership.

The key characteristics of survey research include sampling from a population which allows results to be generalised from the sample; collecting data through questionnaires or interviews; designing an effective instrument for data collection; and obtaining a high rate of participant response (Creswell, 2008). For the purpose of this research, this method was chosen as it allowed the identification of perceptions and issues from a critical mass (Creswell, 2008) and the facility that it can be complemented with more qualitative approaches, such as interview (Yin, 1994). As part of phase one of the research, this approach allowed the researcher to identify issues that were then explored and clarified in more detail in the semi-structured interviews, which were part of phase two.

The online survey tool Survey Monkey, was used for this research. It is a widely used method of data collection within the Archdiocese of Sydney, so participants were familiar with it. Like all data collection methods, survey has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of surveys include the collection of large amounts of data across a wide geographic area; they can be distributed relatively cheaply; they offer confidentiality for each of the participants; they elicit high response rates when adequate awareness and preparation is provided; they are neutral and thus eliminate the possibility of researcher bias; and they are characterised by higher levels of reliability and uniformity than other methods, because all participants are given identical questions in identical format (Neuman, 2006). The disadvantages of surveys include the risk of low response rates, the inflexible nature of the survey instrument, the inability of the researcher to manage the circumstances under which the survey is administered, and the absence of the researcher to clarify or respond to inquiries which could emerge while the survey is being completed, thus resulting in a variation of survey interpretations and even incomplete surveys (Creswell, 2008; Neuman, 2006).
The survey is the initial data collection method to establish parameters and identify pertinent issues. It was issued to all the participants in each school who were present when the IDEAS process was implemented to gather a wide range of data which reflects a broad spectrum of perspectives and allows participants to provide responses regarding their own experience.

A crucial component of any quality survey is the questions themselves. Questions must be clear, concise and aimed to elicit the greatest amount of information from the participants. Taking this into consideration, the survey was pilot tested before it is made available for wider distribution: “A pilot test of questionnaire or interview survey is a procedure in which a researcher makes changes to an instrument based on feedback from a small number of individuals who complete and evaluate the instrument” (Creswell, 2008, p. 402). The pilot sample consisted of three staff members from the researchers own school, as they have experienced and are familiar with the IDEAS process. They are experienced educators who can provide feedback for the deconstruction of the questions in order to ensure that they are clear, concise and unambiguous, and yet worded in such a way as to produce the “rich” data needed to further illuminate the research questions. The researcher did not collect their answers to the survey questions, only their feedback on the questions asked, to alleviate any fear they may have regarding their answers, given the researcher is the Principal of the school. The researcher’s own school was not used in this research. The responses to the pilot survey identified clarification in the use of terms, “school-wide pedagogy” and “learning framework”, some tightening of language in the statements and some ordering of the statements.

The questions for the survey were written in the form of a statement to allow the participants to indicate the extent of their agreement with the statement as well as three open-ended questions. For the purposes of this research, the survey data was used to inform Research Question 2 and as such participants rated the success, the evidence of the success and the contribution of the success of the school improvement process and the leadership of the process in the context of their own school. The question statements were devised to reflect the common elements of successful change and leadership, identified through the three change models utilised from the literature. These elements provided a lens through which to investigate leadership and its influence on school improvement. The open-ended questions further allowed participants to provide extended responses to areas captured by the ratings. A copy of survey is included in the Appendix (Appendix 9, p. 343).
The four sections of the survey were:

1. Introduction, identification of school, and participant’s years of teaching at the school and role at the school.

2. The participant’s ratings of the success of the school improvement process and open-ended question 1: The IDEAS process has been successful in developing a school-wide pedagogy and vision for learning at the school. Why or Why not?

3. The participant’s ratings of evidence that supported the successful change and improvement through the school improvement process and open-ended question 2: Can you give examples of the way the school improvement process was led?

4. The participant’s ratings of the contribution of the school improvement process to successful change and improvement and open-ended question 3: Give an example of the way the vision and learning framework has contributed to school improvement.

All survey participants were familiar with the content and genre of the survey and were professionals in the field of education. They were contacted prior to receiving the survey and advised of the purpose of the survey. The survey was administered electronically and participants were encouraged to respond within a set time period.

3.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

One of the most important sources for gathering case study information is the face-to-face interview (Yin, 2009). They permit depth to be achieved by allowing the interviewer to “enter into the other person’s perspective” (Patton, 1990, p.196). Interviews are necessary when it is difficult to “observe behaviour, feelings or understand how people interpret the world around them” (Merriam, 1998, p. 72). In qualitative research, interviewing commonly occurs in an open-ended and less structured manner to allow participants the opportunity to reveal their perceptions of the world from their own perspective (Merriam, 1998). The use of interviews allows the interviewer to establish a rapport and asks the participants a series of questions directly related to the research questions and purpose of the study.
Semi-structured interviews involve the use of more flexibly worded questions or the interview is a mix of more or less structured questions (Merriam, 1998). They were used for the purpose of this research to allow for greater flexibility and depth of responses from the participants. As a research tool they enabled a number of key issues arising out of the survey to be explored in greater detail and to delve into the meaning behind the survey responses, especially those relating to the influences of leadership within school improvement.

The format of the semi-structured interviews followed a general guide to ensure a basic level of consistency in the questions asked of all participants. The interviewer was then be able to deviate from the guide by making informed decisions about which information should be pursued in greater depth (Patton, 1990). They allowed the interviewer to probe the participants for clarification or for more detailed information when needed. This is not possible in surveys where answers are given to questions that have been previously defined, thus making two-way interaction impossible. The types of questions asked in the interviews delved into the experience, opinion, values, knowledge and feelings regarding the influence of leadership in the school improvement process. Interviewees were asked to describe their personal experience of the school improvement process; the leadership behaviours they believe influenced the process, their understanding of how the process developed in their school and their feeling about whether they believed the process had been successful. The questions developed for the semi-structured interviews were generated from the survey statements and participant responses. The questions asked were:

1. Describe your involvement in the IDEAS process.

2. How were staff engaged in the IDEAS process?

3. How successful was this engagement and why?

4. How effective was the process of IDEAS as an instrument of school improvement?

5. What changes have occurred in the school since the adoption of IDEAS? Can you give evidence of the success or otherwise of these changes.

6. How did the IDEAS process contribute to these changes?
7 How was leadership exercised in the IDEAS process?

8 How did the following elements contribute to this leadership:
   • Relationships (Staff felt valued and cared for and connections were made that
evaluated and developed teamwork)
   • Ownership (A clear vision for learning was articulated and staff supported the
process towards a common goal)
   • Capacity building (The professional development of staff and the sustainability of
the improvement)
   • Moral purpose (Understanding of and commitment to the school values)
   • Continuous improvement (A consistent approach to school improvement,
inovation and sharing resources)
   • Support (The complexity and uncertainty of change and the importance of
reflection, evaluation and flexibility to meet changing needs)

9 Are there any other elements of leadership that you believe played a role in the
process?

10 What did you learn about leadership from your involvement in the IDEAS process?

11 Describe how leadership influenced the development of a vision for learning for the
school.

12 Can you give evidence of how leadership influenced the overall process of school
improvement?

It is important for the interviewer to develop a relationship with the participants to ensure a
level of trust and care (Patton, 1990). When participants feel comfortable they are more
willing to share their personal thoughts and experiences particularly when they are discussing
their work environment. This notion of ‘building trust and rapport’ with participants is an
important component of the data collection technique since it constructs a relationship
between the two participants that is not possible in surveys.
The research also recognises limitations in the use of semi-structured interviews for research (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Yin, 2009). They provide only information “‘filtered’ through the views of the interviewers” (Creswell, 2008, p. 226) and there is potential for the data to be subject to the bias of the researcher and participants. It can tend to be less useful because of poor recall of the case by the participants or the inability of the participants to clearly articulate the experience (Yin, 2009). The presence of the researcher may also affect how the participant responds and, if the interviewer is not skilled at questioning or listening, this can affect the quality of the data gathered (Creswell, 2008). As a method of data collection, interviews can also be time consuming and expensive.

In this research, a selection of participants from each of the five groups – the principal, one member of the executive, one middle manager, two members of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT), and two teaching staff were interviewed. This purposeful sampling provided a comprehensive representative range of perspectives on the influence of leadership within a school improvement process. The researcher invited the Principal from each school to be a volunteer and also invited staff from each of the other four groups, thirty five in total, to be volunteers through a separate question in the survey instrument in which they would provide their name for further contact. These volunteers need to have been present when the school improvement process was implemented in their school. The final group to be interviewed were then be chosen randomly from those who volunteered.

The interviews were conducted at each participant’s school at a time mutually convenient to both the researcher and participant. Following consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder from which subsequent transcription notes were made.

### 3.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Within qualitative research, data collection, data analysis and report writing are interrelated processes and happen simultaneously during the research project (Creswell, 2007). Data analysis involves “consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read” (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). Creswell (2008) describes the process using six key principles: it is inductive in form, going from the particular or detailed data to general codes and themes; it is a simultaneous process of analysing while collecting data; it is iterative, cycling back and forth between data collection and analysis; it requires reading data several times and analysing it each time to depth understanding; it is an eclectic process that does not have a single, accepted approach in the way data is analysed; and
qualitative research is interpretive research in that the researcher makes a personal assessment to describe a situation or theme that captures the major categories of information. For the purpose of this research, data analysis occurred simultaneously and iteratively, and used an interpretive research method to group data according to particular themes. As data was collected it is critically examined through constant checking, refining, discarding and evaluating, leading to the development of new meaning. This supports the constructionist paradigm as meaning is constructed through the interaction of participants and takes into consideration their perceptions and experiences. For the purpose of this research, meaning was constructed using themes generated from the literature and contained within the lenses outlined in Chapter 2. These lenses incorporated the themes of the six elements of leadership and change that influence school improvement - relationships, ownership, capacity building, moral purpose, continuous improvement and support, and the three focus areas of ‘Focus of Leadership’, ‘Effect on Participants’ and ‘Contextual Considerations’. As data was collected it was grouped together on the basis of similarity and comparison with the themes. The general aim of this analysis was to find patterns in the data and group it against the existing themes. For this research the analysis was constantly compared over two phases. Data generated through the initial phase of document analysis and survey provided the source of information to identify a broad range of perspectives from participants regarding their perception of the elements of leadership that effect change within school improvement processes. Semi-structured interviews, the second phase of data collection, provided the environment and “sifting” mechanism (Lichtman, 2006) to analyse and delve further into the meaning of the data that was generated from survey responses.

In qualitative research the purpose of analysing the text and words collected is to gather common ideas (Lichtman, 2006). This was achieved by using the data collected from the survey, the semi-structured interviews and the document analysis and coding the data against the existing themes and focus areas. The coding was similar to ‘selective’ coding as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Selective coding involves choosing the core category, methodically comparing it to other categories, authenticating those connections, then refining the category. As a result of the coding process, data are refined and reduced to allow conclusions to be drawn (Creswell, 2008). Throughout this process the researcher also wrote memos to elaborate on ideas, thoughts and hunches about the data and the coded process. Memos help direct the researcher “toward new sources of data, shape which ideas to develop further, and prevent paralysis from mountains of data” (Creswell, 2008, p. 448). While data was being collected and analysed the researcher ensured accuracy of the findings through
member checking and triangulation. As this was a multi-site case study the data across the five sites was analysed and compared to draw any further conclusions regarding the influence of leadership within a school improvement process that may be particular to an individual school. Finally, the researcher presented the findings by interpreting the perceptions of participants regarding the influence of leadership on school improvement, making comparisons between the findings and the literature, making recommendations from the findings and proposed areas for further research (Creswell, 2008).

Table 3.5 on the following page gives a summary of the data collection strategies and the general approaches used to analyse the data, organised by research questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Data to be collected</th>
<th>How the data will be analysed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What were the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process?</td>
<td>The data collected through the semi-structured interviews provided qualitative evidence by allowing the opportunity to delve more deeply into responses that emerged from the survey and allowed participants to give a more detailed response and provide richer contextual data.</td>
<td>The data collected was analysed using the matrix, Table 3.4, and coded against the themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To what extent did leadership, within these elements, contribute to the school improvement process?</td>
<td>The data collected through data analysis, survey and semi-structured interviews provided both quantitative and qualitative evidence of participants’ perceptions of leadership and its influence on school improvement.</td>
<td>The data will be analysed using the matrix, Table 3.4, to explore the evidence of leadership in the school improvement process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do the experiences of leadership of participants involved in school improvement reflect the different leadership approaches identified in the literature?</td>
<td>The data collected through semi-structured interviews again provided qualitative evidence that concentrated on the leadership approaches identified to gain an understanding of participants’ perceptions of the contribution and influence of different leadership approaches to the success of school improvement.</td>
<td>The data will be analysed using the matrix, Table 3.4, to explore the contribution of leadership to school improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.5: Data collection and analysis*
3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Validation in qualitative research is an attempt to assess the “accuracy” of the findings. It is a strength in this type of research through “extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness of the researcher to the participants in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 207).

Creswell (2007) outlines eight strategies that are regularly used by researchers to ensure validity and recommends at least two should be used by researchers who engage in qualitative research. The minimum of at least two can be chosen from any of the following: prolonged engagement and frequent observation in the field; triangulation, the use of wide range of sources, processes and related ideas to validate evidence; peer assessment; negative case analysis, this involves constant review and monitoring to ensure the researcher’s views are not given priority over the views and perceptions of participants; clarifying researcher bias; member checking, this involves returning collected data, subsequent analysis, perceptions, and conclusions to the participants for checking, accuracy and credibility of their information; text dense descriptions which allow readers to exercise discernment regarding transferability; and external audits, which allow third parties to evaluate both the process and the product of the account.

For the purpose of this study a number of the above strategies were utilised to ensure validity of the research.

1. Prolonged engagement with the research project over a number of years;

2. Member checks through the involvement of participants in critiquing the emerging data for accuracy;

3. Triangulation, which employs a number of data gathering techniques.
In this study, triangulation was achieved through document analysis, survey, and individual semi-structured interviews. The researcher was also aware that in checking accuracy of the views and perspectives of participants that every effort needed to be made to apply methods that support the participants in sharing their perspectives. The perceived hierarchical nature of leadership positions in schools means that the researcher needed to ensure that all groups were given time and felt comfortable about contributing and participating in this research. This allowed for a fairer representation of the reality of the implementation of the school improvement process and involvement in the IDEAS project to emerge.

Reliability refers to “the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (Merriam, 1998, p. 205). This stance is problematic as human behaviour is not static. Within qualitative research the terms ‘consistent’ and ‘dependable’ are better suited to ensure that results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) suggests three techniques that can be used to ensure dependability: “the investigator’s position; triangulation and audit trail” (p. 207).

For the purpose of this research, the researcher ensured reliability by clarifying and identifying her own experience and involvement in the school improvement process of IDEAS in her own school. This knowledge of IDEAS in her own school, although not used in the research, helped to eliminate any perceived bias in the research. A sound and clearly articulated research design also reduced researcher bias. The complete documentation of the research process, an ‘audit trail’ of how data were collected, coded and stored, also adds to the reliability of the research.

3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES
Ethical research can be seen as a balance between the potential benefit of the research project and the potential risk or harm (Berg, 2004). Issues arising from this balance require special consideration to be given to those involved. Ethical considerations must be adhered to under two main categories, everyday interactions with research participants and data collected from them (Glesne, 2006). As the nature of this research required participants to discuss personal experiences, it required a certain level of trust and therefore ethical guidelines must be followed.
Key guidelines included advising participants of the studies purpose; preventing unethical practices; providing information to participants (including the role of the researcher); honouring the integrity of the research site; reciprocity; employing ethical interview practices, and ensuring confidentiality (Creswell, 2008). To fulfil the ethical requirements of this research all aspects of study was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Catholic University (ACU) Research Project Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was sought from the ACU and the Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Sydney where the research schools are situated (Appendix 5).

Before the research began participants will be given information outlining the purpose of the research, the types of data that will be collected and how the data will be used and reported (Appendix 7 and 8). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, as well as participants informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement and aspects of the research that may affect their well-being (Glesne, 2006).

All data collected during the research was stored securely and safely and in accordance with ACU protocols and recommendations. Through the validity and reliability processes of the study, participants had access to transcripts, reports and documentation for checking and approval.

3.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Limitations to the research were discussed throughout the study, and attention was drawn to such aspects as the possible weaknesses of case study, reliability of the data collection and researcher bias. For this study these issues were managed through openness and transparency by the researcher, in order to maintain integrity and authenticity. Using a variety of data gathering techniques also ensured a wide range of responses by professionals engaged in the school improvement process.

In addition, it was acknowledged that the case study was set in a specific context, namely five secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney that had implemented the IDEAS process. Any conclusions drawn or suggestions arrived at may be specific to this diocese and not be fully transferrable. It is also important to acknowledge the researcher’s role as a principal of a school in the Archdiocese of Sydney and professional relationships with colleagues in the case study schools. The methodology and data collection strategies were designed to ensure that rich and authentic data was gathered. Assurances to all respondents were made that they
would remain anonymous and that the focus of the research was not on a comparison of schools or individual participants but on deriving information about leadership practices that influence school improvement. Involvement in the research was also on a voluntary basis. The researcher was also involved in the implementation of the IDEAS process in her own school, and, as such, acknowledged this to ensure transparency and openness.
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.0 INTRODUCTION
As outlined in Chapter 3 the methodology utilised for this research was that of a multi-site case study. Within this there was a mixed method approach that allowed the researcher to explore the influence of leadership on improvement processes in selected Catholic secondary schools. Data was collected from five secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney that have undertaken the school improvement process of IDEAS over differing periods of time. It was collected from each of the schools by survey, interviews and documents.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data, according to the three research sub-questions derived from the review of literature and they framed this study.

4.1 DATA GATHERING
All staff who were present when the IDEAS process was implemented in their school and are still a member of staff were invited to complete the survey. The response rate of the numbers of surveys distributed and returned is shown in Table 4.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of surveys distributed</th>
<th>Number of surveys returned</th>
<th>Response rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Survey response rate

Before the survey was implemented it was pilot tested on three staff members from the researcher’s own school who had experience and were familiar with the IDEAS process. These staff were given the questions and provided feedback to show they understood the context of the questions and that they were clear, concise and unambiguous ensuring validity of the survey questions. The participants in the survey were able to rate their responses using a six point Likert-scale (strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, agree, strongly agree). There were also three open-ended questions which gave participants the
opportunity to respond more fully. Not all participants responded to the open-ended questions. Participants were given two extra reminders to complete the survey, by their Principal, to try and improve the response rate. Despite follow up with each school the response rate was very low from some schools. This may have been caused by staff feeling that they could not remember the process sufficiently enough to comment, a change in leadership within the school or a dissatisfaction with the process. Sources of data for the survey will be identified as school (S) followed by a number to represent the school and participant (P) followed by the number to identify each individual participant. For example, School 4, participant 10, S4P10.

The interview participants were the Principal from each school as well as one executive, one middle manager, two teachers who were not part of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT), and two members of the ISMT from each school, all of whom were present when the school implemented IDEAS and are still a member of staff. There were seven participants from each school, totalling 35 participants across the five schools.

The response rate of the number of participants interviewed is shown in Table 4.2 on the following page. In four of the five schools however, there had been a change in Principal, therefore the responses from these Principals were not included as they were not present when the school improvement process began. For consistency the fifth Principal’s response was also not included. The number of participants selected was an attempt to give an equal balance towards staff who specifically had a teaching position and those staff who had a teaching as well as a leadership role. All participants interviewed were teachers but some also held leadership roles. For the purpose of this research it may be perceived that those staff in general teaching positions may have contributed further to the research, however, the seven staff from each school all carried responsibility for improvement whether it was in leadership of learning in the classroom or leadership through a specific role of responsibility. The data presented from the interviews will also be identified by a numbering and lettering system. The interview group has been identified by the school (S) and a number and then the participants divided into two groups, a member of the IDEAS Management Team (MT) or a teacher on staff and not a member of the IDEAS Management Team (T) followed by a number to distinguish each participant as interviewed. For example, School 1, member of the IDEAS School Management Team and participant 6 is represented as: S1MT6.
Documents collected from each school to inform the research questions included minutes of ISMT and staff meetings, staff meeting and staff development day presentations and evaluations, Diagnostic Inventory report cards, and school vision and learning principles documentation. These documents were not available from every school. The documents are shown as, the first letter and number indicating the school and the second letter and/or number indicating the type of document. The categories of documents are shown as school report card (RC), staff survey (SS), ISMT reflection documents (R), minutes of meetings (M), email correspondence (E) and Staff Development Day documents (SDD).

The data will now be presented according to each question. The first of these, Research Question 1 will identify the important elements that have influenced change within a school improvement process and will be presented under the three focus areas: Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations.

### 4.1.1 Research Question 1

What were the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process?

Having been involved in the school improvement process of IDEAS the participants in the interviews identified the important elements that have influenced change in their school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Executive</th>
<th>Middle Manager</th>
<th>ISMT</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.2: Interview response rate*
4.1.1.0 Introduction

For the first research question only the interview data was used to respond to this question. In discussion with the participants the interviews provided the setting for the personal sharing of information about the important elements that they considered had influenced and caused change within the school improvement process of IDEAS. From each school those interviewed consisted of two members of the IDEAS Management Team and four who were not members. The interviews consisted of twelve questions and six of these were related to Research Question 1. Table 4.3 below shows these questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Research Question 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe your involvement in the IDEAS process.</td>
<td>What were the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How were staff engaged in the IDEAS process?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How successful was this engagement and why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How effective was the process of IDEAS as an instrument of school improvement?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What changes have occurred in the school since the adoption of IDEAS? Can you give evidence of the success or otherwise of these changes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did the IDEAS process contribute to these changes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Interview questions relating to Research Question 1

The data analysis for Research Question 1 is now presented under the first focus area of Focus of Leadership as shown in Table 4.4 on the following page.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Leadership</th>
<th>Effect on Participants</th>
<th>Contextual Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe your involvement in the IDEAS process.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Engagement of ISMT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Engagement of staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT S1P2, S1P7 S2P6, S2P7 S3P2, S3P7, S4P3, S4P6, S4P7, S5P6, S5P7</td>
<td>S4P4 S5P2</td>
<td>S1P6, S1P3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear vision &amp; strategic direction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Engagement of ISMT</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT S1P2, S2P7</td>
<td>S4P4 S5P2</td>
<td>S1P3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment &amp; common language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Engagement of staff</strong></td>
<td><strong>Links with history</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT S3P2</td>
<td>S1P2, S1P7 S2P6 S2P7 S4P3, S4P5, S4P7</td>
<td>S1P2 Wanted to include History of College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment &amp; common language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Need for improvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT S3P2</td>
<td>S3P7</td>
<td>S1P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment &amp; common language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Need for improvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT S2P6</td>
<td>S3P3</td>
<td>S2P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How were staff engaged in the IDEAS process?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clear vision &amp; strategic direction</strong></td>
<td><strong>Links with history</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement of ISMT</strong></td>
<td>S1P4 S1P7 S2P6 S2P7 S4P3, S4P5, S4P7</td>
<td>S1P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment &amp; common language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Change in leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement of ISMT</strong></td>
<td>S1P2 S2P7 S3P7 S4P3, S4P7</td>
<td>S2P7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment &amp; common language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>S1P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement of ISMT</strong></td>
<td>S1P7</td>
<td><strong>Need for improvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment &amp; common language</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leadership development</strong></td>
<td>S1P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement of ISMT</strong></td>
<td>S2P4</td>
<td><strong>Links with history</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogy</strong></td>
<td>S1P3, S1P4 S2P3 S3P1</td>
<td>S2P7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Change in leadership</strong></td>
<td><strong>Change in leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement of staff</strong></td>
<td>S1P6 S3P3, S3P6 S4P2, S4P5</td>
<td>S3P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership development</strong></td>
<td>S3P2</td>
<td><strong>Change in leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MT</strong></td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td><strong>S4P4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>S5P5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of Leadership</td>
<td>Effect on Participants</td>
<td>Contextual Considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How effective was the process of IDEAS as an instrument of school improvement?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clear vision &amp; strategic direction</strong> S1P7, S3P7</td>
<td><strong>Pedagogy</strong> S1P2, S1P7 S2P7 S3P2 S4P3 S5P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment &amp; common language S2P6, S2P7 S4P3</td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong> S1P7 S2P7 S4P3</td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong> S4P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What changes have occurred in the school since the adoption of IDEAS? Can you give evidence of the success or otherwise of these changes?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clear vision &amp; strategic direction</strong> S2P1, S3P6, S4P4, S4P5, S3P1, S3P3 S5P2, S5P5, S5P7</td>
<td><strong>Leadership development</strong> S5P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment &amp; common language S2P6 S3P2, S3P7 S4P3 S5P6</td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong> S3P2</td>
<td><strong>Leadership development</strong> S2P7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How did the IDEAS process contribute to these changes?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leadership development</strong> S4P3 S5P6</td>
<td><strong>Leadership development</strong> S2P7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear vision &amp; strategic direction</strong> S2P7 S3P2</td>
<td><strong>Leadership development</strong> S4P3 S5P6</td>
<td><strong>Pedagogy</strong> S1P6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment &amp; common language S1P2 S3P7</td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong> S1P3, S1P5 S2P1, S2P2 S2P5 S3P1, S3P5 S5P4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.1.1 Focus of Leadership

From an analysis of the transcription data for the six interview questions, relating to the focus area of the Focus of Leadership, four themes emerged: Establishment of the School Management Team (ISMT), Strategic direction and clear vision, Alignment of programs and initiatives, and Common language. These themes are explored below.

4.1.1.1.1 Establishment of the School Management Team (ISMT)

Within this theme of the establishment of the ISMT, two issues emerged: the initial creation of the team and the mixture of staff from different faculties that formed the team. The first issue of the initial creation of the team is seen in two parts, those who were invited and those who volunteered to be part of the ISMT. Of the ten members of the ISMT interviewed, six were invited to be part of the team, three particularly stated that the Principal had invited them, and four volunteered. Of the six participants who were invited, one participant from each of Schools 1, 3 and 5 were also invited to coordinate the ISMT. In School 4 the original coordinator had left the school and the Curriculum Coordinator, who now coordinates the team, was not there at the beginning of the process, therefore, she was not interviewed. The two members of the ISMT from School 4 who were interviewed were part of the three who said they were approached by their Principal to be part of the team. Management team participant 7 commented:

I became involved through the Principal who established the program and she ran it past all staff members looking for interest in the program. At that time I didn’t show any interest whatsoever but subsequently she came and spoke to me and asked me to be part of the program and I eventually took up the option and became involved. (S4MT7)

In School 2 Management Team participant 7, who now coordinates the ISMT, applied for the position after the original coordinator was promoted to Assistant Principal in the second year of implementation. She had also just taken up the position of Administration Coordinator at the time and she saw the ISMT as a way of getting to know more about IDEAS and what direction the school was taking with this improvement process:
At that time, I’d sort of watched what was happening with IDEAS and I wasn’t really quite sure what was really happening, what they were doing, and where we were going and I suppose I sort of felt that I didn’t really know very much about it. If I didn’t know very much about it, probably nobody else, who wasn’t part of the committee, knew very much about it either. So I thought well in for a penny and in for a pound. I decided that I would find out more and I would apply to be the coordinator of IDEAS which I was successful in getting. (S2MT7)

The ISMT Coordinators in Schools 1, 3 and 5 also held another leadership position as either Curriculum Coordinator or Studies Coordinator when they were invited to coordinate the team. This seems to suggest that when the ISMT was initially being established in each school the Principal felt that the leadership of the ISMT needed to be someone with leadership experience.

In Schools 1, 3, 4 and 5, the staff who were approached to be part of the team were also asked to attend workshops run by the Catholic Education Office and the IDEAS Team from the University of Southern Queensland to broaden their understanding of school improvement. School 4, Management Team participant 3 who was asked to go to these workshops described her involvement as “a tap on the shoulder, the people who went were people who have an interest in whole school improvement”. These comments are contrary to the comments of the other ISMT member, participant 7, from her school, who was reluctant to be involved. She described her reluctance due to the extra work it would create and the time commitment it would involve:

I guess I could see issues – because we’re such a small school, I sometimes fear that we take on too many projects and we’re often calling on the same people to get involved in them and that, I think, can become taxing. (S4MT7)

Of the ten ISMT participants interviewed all were happy to be part of the ISMT except this participant and the ISMT Management team participant 7 from School 3. She was also reluctant to be involved and was initially against the IDEAS process but by default and her position as Curriculum Coordinator was told she had to be part of the ISMT. “I suppose I was a little anti-IDEAS initially and I was on leave when the decision was made to start it.” She consequently did not make it a priority to be at all ISMT meetings. This reluctance to be involved may have created some degree of uncertainty for staff because she did not model a
commitment to the process. School 4 Management team participant 7, who was a Studies Coordinator, may also have added to this uncertainty when speaking with members of her department as she could not articulate clearly what the ISMT was doing: “Even my own department would say to me, what’s it all about, what’s happening, and I’d go well, I’m not sure yet, I’m finding my way”. This uncertainty may have affected the dynamics within the team itself and the ability of the ISMT members to engage because of lack of clarity and understanding of the process. It may also have diminished the confidence of the staff in the process and their willingness to be involved when their coordinator lacked confidence herself.

As part of the initial establishment of the ISMT the participants also described an initial staff meeting or gathering where the process was outlined to the staff and a general invitation for any staff member to be a part of the ISMT. This invitation and its influence and effect on the participants was shown in the following comment by School 2 Management Team participant 6, who saw the ISMT as a way of getting to know about the school’s learning agenda:

The Principal called for expressions of interest and people who would like to be involved in the process. She gave us a ‘brief’ about what it was about and I thought it was quite interesting. I was new to the school at that stage and interested in what the school processes were. I felt for my own being that it was very good to get in on the ground level of this team to see where the school’s headed to over the next few years. (S2MT6)

The second issue regarding the establishment of the ISMT involves the notion that the ISMT was a mixture of staff from different faculties. Participants, from all the schools, who made up the ISMT observed that the ISMT was made up of a variety of staff. School 4, Management Team participant 3 added to her comment above, suggesting those who were invited to be part of the ISMT had an interest in school improvement as well as representation across the staff: “I guess because our PE Coordinator was one and I’m a member of the learning support team and literacy, I think she (the principal) was looking for people who would have scope across the school.” This suggests a desire of the Principal, for the ISMT not only to choose people with some interest and knowledge in the area of school improvement but to have a mixture of staff from different areas across the school. School 2 Management Team participant 6 supported this view and observed how the staff chosen for the ISMT seemed to be intentionally targeted to make sure the different curriculum areas were well represented: “The ISMT itself was a mix of many different KLA’s purposefully to make sure that we had a good
representation across the whole school”. As the ISMT’s were being established other members of staff also felt confident to join the team. There was no feeling that the team had been prearranged by the Principal or Executive to drive their own agenda in the school. This was the experience described by School 2 Management Team participant 6 above in his comment regarding the Principal asking for expressions of interest, as well as School 1, Management Team participant 2, who emphasised the attraction of the ISMT as a practical learning experience to supplement formal study, but again mentioning both the invitational and representative nature of the team:

The IDEAS team was already set up and they presented something at a staff meeting and I thought I could be of value to this team because at the time I was doing my Masters and there was a course I was doing on leadership and another course I was doing on managing student behaviour and I just thought that maybe I could offer something. (S1MT2)

These issues of the initial establishment of the ISMT and the mixture of staff from different faculties that formed the ISMT were regarded as significant by the participants in effecting change in the school. They determined whether staff felt they were included and could be part of the team who would lead the improvement process, as well as a feeling that they felt well represented by the team. The next theme in this section explores how the process assisted in the development of a clear vision and strategic direction for the school.

4.1.1.1.2 Strategic direction and clear vision

The second theme that emerged from the interviews reflected a general agreement by the participants that the school improvement process assisted them in developing strategic direction and a clear vision for the school. This direction and its influence was shown in the following comment by School 3 teacher 6 who saw the process as providing a framework as a way to set directions for improvement in the school:

I think it provided a framework for devising an action plan in terms of future direction, in terms of strategic management plan, in terms of school review and improvement. It gave us a focus or the capacity to set goals as a team and as a College. So I do believe it was quite effective in providing that framework for us. (S3T6)
School 1 Management Team participant 2 was also in agreement and saw the process as providing a new way of assisting the school in its planning processes:

> It gave us a model and a direction we didn’t have before. Instead of just reaching out in the dark and not really knowing where we’re going, at least now we’ve got something to focus on, with whatever we do. (S1MT2)

The process was also described as one that created improvement for the school as shown in the comment by School 4 teacher 4 who observed positive changes in the school over the last five years: “I think it gave us a framework to work in and I think our school has certainly improved. It’s a better place now than it was five years ago”. This future planning was also seen in School 5 where teacher 5 described the process as providing a “guideline for where we’re going in the future”. This seems to suggest that for school improvement it is important to provide some sort of structure that will assist the school to plan strategically to carry it forward into the future.

As part of the IDEAS process, the process is designed to enable and support a school in developing a school-wide pedagogy. This involves developing a vision for learning and then what are called ‘learning principles’. These learning principles attempt to outline clear directions and a shared understanding of how to engage students in their learning, that is, particular to that individual school. School 1 teacher 6 described how their learning principles gave direction for learning and supported teachers to assist students in a practical way in the classroom and create an environment for improvement:

> Well with the learning principles I think having those established through the IDEAS process that then helped to take different parts of the learning principles and see how we put them into practice in a practical way to help move them forward but also move the kids forward as well. (S1T6)

School 1 Management team participant 7 described how the learning principles and vision assisted the school in making strategic decisions regarding school improvement projects based on how the project linked with their vision and learning principles: “So that strategic planning is around being able to discriminate between what is essential or not, based on the criteria raised through our vision and our expert learning principles”. This is supported by School 4 teacher 6, who also described how projects in the school seemed to be linked to the
learning principles: “The three principles that came out of the IDEAS program – everything seems to be linked to it”. This seems to be suggesting that having a clear direction for learning allows a school to make decisions in a very deliberate and considered way so that the school can plan and target areas for improvement. This may also allow staff to see clear links to their learning principles and priorities for improvement, and may assist their understanding regarding school decisions for improvement.

The participants also described how the process allowed schools to facilitate staff collaboration to develop or revitalise their school vision statement. School 3 teacher 1 describes how they revamped their vision statement and how it has provided a clear focus and direction for the school: “We’ve revamped our vision statement …It’s made our focus clearer”. She further adds that through collaborative processes they are in the process of developing a visual representation of their vision:

We’re voting at the moment on the whole school pedagogy vision statement, or visual representation that we want. We were put in collaborative teams and we each created something….Regardless, we’re in that voting process at the moment onto which we value, and which we’re going to choose for our school. So we’re got a visual statement, and now we’re working on a visual motto or visual representation. (S3T1)

School 4 teacher 3 also described how one of the changes the process had created was that the school now had “a clear vision and mission” and School 2 teacher 1 described the change as, “Making our mission statement and vision statement very clear, having that published and in print”. School 3 Management Team participant 7, supported these comments and added that by focusing on the vision and making it explicit and clear it was now something that was more tangible across the whole school:

I’ve always talked about our vision and that’s always been something that has been very central to me but I get that it wasn’t through the whole school. So I think it has been very effective in focusing attention on the vision and making the vision something that is a bit more lived. (S3MT7)
These comments regarding the process allowing a clear vision to be created and recognised, and providing strategic direction for the school were made by both members of the ISMT and teachers on staff. This suggests that these elements were apparent across different staff who were involved in the process in a variety of ways and that a clear vision and strategic direction played a significant part in the experiences of some teachers in achieving change in the improvement process.

The third theme is presented in the next section and focuses on how the improvement process allowed for an alignment of programs and initiatives in the school.

4.1.1.1.3 Alignment of programs and initiatives

Under the area of Focus of Leadership a third theme emerged from the interview data. The theme centred on how the process allowed an alignment of programs and initiatives across the school. Participants in two schools described this alignment as providing an ‘umbrella’ under which all other programs and initiatives could sit. This theme links with the previous theme of strategic direction as School 1 Management Team participant 2 described the ‘umbrella’ as allowing the school to align and link the professional development of staff with the school’s learning principles:

IDEAS has been a nice umbrella to introduce a lot of new things as well, I mean even right down to if teachers are going on an inservice, we now actually address our learning principles when teachers are applying to go to that inservice, what learning principle do you think this inservice will help you address. (S1MT2)

School 5 teacher 5 also used the ‘umbrella’ analogy to describe how the process aligns and gives direction to the particular programs the school wants to implement:

I think it was fairly effective, in so much as it gave us a guideline or we created a guideline under the umbrella of IDEAS, of the direction that we wanted to flow in and in the timespan of when things would occur and what we would see. (S5T5)
By the process providing this alignment, the participants, particularly the ISMT, believed it helped to implement the improvement process across the school. It avoided the staff thinking it was something extra they had to do. It seems to have helped staff to see the ‘bigger picture’ of what the school was trying to achieve. In School 3, the Management Team participant 2, particularly commented on this and described that, in order for the staff to consider introducing the process, it was important that there was a sense that it wasn’t creating more work:

When IDEAS came about, we could see that it would work as a way to align all of the things that we had been trying to do together. But for staff we had to really try to establish that it wasn’t something extra that we had to do. It wasn’t something extra that we were putting in, that we had to show that we were doing in our programs. It was a way to try to synthesise everything that we were doing and try to, I guess, bring everything down to a core or an essence about what it is we’re doing. (S3MT2)

This alignment also links with the previous theme of providing a clear vision for the school. This is seen in the comments from School 3 teacher 3 who could see that the process allowed staff to see a bigger vision of the school’s direction:

Initially it was good. I think because we were there at a point in the College where we were taking on different initiatives and the IDEAS process basically just pulled them all into alignment. I guess we could see, big picture wise, why we were doing these other little individual initiatives. So it was quite good because we were able to see where we were, some of the good things that we had done and why we were doing – or why we were engaged with other initiatives. (S3T3)

These comments seem to suggest that participants believed that, by aligning programs and initiatives, staff could see the clear direction the school was taking. In this way staff seemed supportive of the changes and improvements in the school and they had an understanding of the school strategic directions. The next theme outlines how the process has provided a common language for learning across the school. This is presented in the next section.
4.1.1.4 Common language

The fourth theme to emerge from the interviews related to the creation of a common language for learning across the school. This meant that there was consistency in the way the vision and learning principles were articulated by staff. It allowed for a shared focus to learning and a common approach in the way that learning occurred and was implemented across the school. School 3 Management Team participant 2 described how the development and use of a common language had been the greatest change within the staff: “I guess the biggest thing is building a common language, I think this has been the biggest shift. We’re all talking about the same ideas or principles”. This was reinforced by School 4 Management Team participant 3 who also spoke about the common language in terms of staff agreement: “We have a sense of ourselves as educators and our role and largely an agreement about what we mean by all of that”. Another participant who was not part of the ISMT but a member of staff, School 5 teacher 2, also reinforced how the process gave a common language and focus to teaching and learning in the school:

I think the micro level it was quite an interesting process, that reflection on a common language, reflection on a common goal and a kind of focusing – it really began our focus on what is our pedagogy which then continued past IDEAS. (S5T2)

This notion that a common language gave a focus on pedagogy was supported by School 2 teacher 3 who saw the common language as a way of setting expectations and a standard for learning across the school:

I think – we hadn’t in my experience, and I came in 2007 – as I understood it there wasn’t any expression of a learning framework or a teaching and learning vision prior to IDEAS. So it established the sense of there is a need for this within the school. So that was our first step into articulating what teaching and learning looked like here. So in that regard that was a huge step forward for us, to actually have a shared language around what the expectations of every classroom teacher were, what students - what the expectations of students were….So whilst we were part of the IDEAS process there was certainly a lot more discussion about what teaching and learning looked like across all KLA’s (Key Learning Areas) and for every teacher. (S2T3)
The common approach to pedagogy in the school was also supported by School 5 teacher 2, who saw a common language for teaching and learning as a real strength of the process. She believed that the IDEAS process had contributed to the changes in the school because of the focus on a common language:

I think by language. No I think the one thing I didn’t mention was I think it still contributes because the need for a common language which was hammered by IDEAS, the need to have a common language is actually now quite accepted here which wasn’t before. It was like we know what we mean; we know what we’re talking about. No you don’t. You all mean different things by the same word. So I think the one lasting thing that I see as being rooted in IDEAS was this need to develop a common understanding of the language we use particularly around pedagogy. (S5T2)

These comments are suggesting that having a common language assisted the school in implementing change as it provided a consistency of approach and a common focus for pedagogy within the school. Staff could see they were working towards a common vision and goal to support students in their learning. This seems to suggest that it supported their involvement and ownership of the change. The creation of a common language for learning was considered influential in staff reflections on the important elements that effect change within a school improvement process.

The next section presents the data outlining the important elements that have influenced change within a school improvement process under the second focus area of Effect on Participants.

4.1.1.2 Effect on Participants

The analysis of the interview data relating to Research Question 1 under the second focus area of Effect on Participants identified four themes: Staff engagement, Pedagogy, Collaboration, and Leadership development (see Table 4.4, pp. 123-124). Each of these themes are taken in turn to analyse the data relating to the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process.
4.1.1.2.1 Staff engagement

The first theme to emerge from the data relating to the focus area of Effect on Participants was staff engagement in the process. Participants generally described the engagement of staff mainly at staff meetings and Staff Development Days. School 1 teacher 6 described the activities influencing this engagement as being diverse with the use of smaller groups for greater collaboration: “They used a lot of activities in the time that was devoted in staff meetings to IDEAS. So it was very collaborative getting ideas from people but they were quite structured activities”. These smaller groups were also supported by School 5 teacher 4, who described the process as small group tasks: “Staff were engaged generally in small group contributions to whatever question happened to be asked on a particular day”. These comments suggest that dividing staff into small groups is an effective way to engage them in processes to effect change in schools.

Staff engagement in the process was experienced differently by the staff who were part of the ISMT and those who were not part of the ISMT. The ISMT who planned the activities were very conscious of really engaging staff in a variety of activities and different forums so they had a voice. School 1, Management Team participant 7 described how the ISMT tried to provide opportunities for less formal discussion and input:

We tried to have some other opportunities apart from staff meeting time where people could engage with the process informally. So we had a competition for people to find an image about what our school means to them now and what they would aspire for the future. (S1MT7)

Within these activities the ISMT were also very aware that they wanted staff to have ownership of the process and School 1 Management Team participant 2, described how providing a number of activities increased staff engagement: “We did a plethora of activities that asked staff to be involved because we were very conscious of the IDEAS being something that we wanted all the staff to own, to have that common ownership”. The ISMT did not want staff to see this as a process that was imposed upon them.
Management Team participant 3 from School 4 acknowledged how they felt the process may not have been as cohesive for the staff who were not part of the ISMT: “The activities when we did them were stretched quite a distance apart from each other and I don’t know that it had cohesion in their minds in the way that it did in ours”. The ISMT in Schools 1, 2, 3 and 5 also described how they were conscious of this and tried to make it a priority to keep staff informed. School 1 Management Team participant 7 said: “So one of the things I tried to change was making sure that there was a lot more feedback to the staff about what we were doing and where we were going”. This was also a priority in School 2 by Management Team participant 7:

I was trying to ensure that what the committee was doing was actually being relayed to the rest of the staff so that they did feel that there was progress happening in what we were doing and where we were going. (S2MT7)

In trying to keep staff informed the Management Team participant 2 from School 3 also commented that the ISMT found some frustration in how long the process was taking. In their planning they could see a way forward but they needed to ensure all staff understood the process:

I think too, sometimes a bit frustrating for the IDEAS Management Team, because we knew where we were going and how it was going to work, but having to pull ourselves back a little bit to make sure that we had everyone on board with us before we moved to the next stage. (S3MT2)

Although the ISMT were conscious of these issues of keeping staff informed and tried to put strategies in place, some staff still felt disconnected with the process. This was described by School 4 teacher 2 who felt staff could not really see the direction of the process: “I don’t think we could see where it was heading really initially. So it was a bit of a long tunnel without a light at the end sort of thing”. Some participants did however describe real engagement on Staff Development Days but at other times there seemed to be long breaks before they were engaged again and this created some disconnection. This was experienced by School 3 teacher 1: “I believe – to be honest back then I don’t feel that there was as much of a – it was pushed forth in a staff development day. But I feel that it was just left in isolation”. Another teacher, participant 4, from School 4 described how the process created enthusiasm and interest initially but this did not continue. She observed that the ISMT worked
a little more in isolation, meeting regularly but doing a lot of the work themselves. She felt that although the ISMT were keeping staff informed the lack of staff engagement in the process created a lack of ownership by staff: “A lot of real engagement and excitement and discussion in those early days …I think we were kept in the loop enough to know what was going on, but not ownership of it”. The ISMT, because they were engaging in discussion and planning, seemed to be more informed and could see a little better where the process was heading.

The participants in the interviews identified staff engagement as an important component in effecting change within the school improvement process. The comments from both the ISMT and teachers seemed to suggest that staff engagement was affected by the time line of the process and how connected staff felt. These comments also seemed to suggest that staff ownership of the process was affected.

The second theme presented is related to pedagogy, a change in teaching practice and the focus on students within the process.

4.1.1.2 Pedagogy

The second theme, from the interview data, relating to the Effect on Participants was pedagogy. The major issues in pedagogy were related to firstly, a change of focus in the schools concerning teaching practice and secondly, the needs of the students.

The participants described how the school improvement process assisted their school to develop their school-wide pedagogy and learning principles and in doing so really opened up discussion amongst staff about what was happening in their classrooms. School 4 teacher 2 spoke about how discussions about pedagogy are part of everyday practice and that there is a real awareness and focus on classroom pedagogy:

We’re more aware of pedagogy. That’s a term that’s spoken about more now. We’re looking at personal pedagogy and classroom pedagogy. We’re a little bit more in tune with how we’re teaching and how students are learning and that sort of thing and what’s our vision of the school, where are we going, who are we and how we are perceived by people outside. (S4T2)
School 2 teacher 2 also reinforced this collaborative and reflective practice and described how the process enabled an emphasis on a common focus to pedagogy in the classroom:

I saw it as an opportunity to give us commonality in the classroom and give us something that we were going together and working together, so that the kids were moving from class to class and they were getting not different stories. It gave us a vision in the classroom in terms of our teaching strategies. (S2T2)

This commonality supports the earlier data presented in the focus area of Focus of Leadership regarding the significance of developing a common language to allow consistency in the way the learning principles were implemented. It is again reflected in discussions regarding different approaches to pedagogy from School 4 Management Team participant 3 who also described how these discussions led to the development of a common language: “It explored pedagogy and people’s personal beliefs about pedagogy and looked at a common language”. This seemed to allow more professional conversations to happen amongst staff and a collegial sharing of good teaching practice.

There was however an inconsistency in School 2. Teacher 2 above described how the process gave a vision for teaching and learning and a commonality in the classroom. Teacher 3, however, felt that staff found it difficult to actually implement the learning principles in the classroom and that implementation had not happened:

I don’t feel that staff saw a way in which to bring it into their classrooms. So there was a gap…it was strongly led by the facilitator (of the ISMT) but the transference in the classroom didn’t actually happen. So it wasn’t taken up by classroom teachers in any real sense. (S2T3)

This comment, however, was not supported by any other participants in School 2 and others described how they have implemented it into programs and teaching practice. Management Team participant 7 described the discussions from staff as being more open to changing their classroom practice:
I think that certainly changed that notion of sharing and opening up classrooms and talking about experiences…I mean we still have a long way to go to pull down walls and have transparent classrooms but I think that was the beginning of that. So people could see a little bit more of a comfort in being able to talk more openly about what happens in their classrooms, ways of teaching, and sharing strategies. (S2MT7)

These discussions and interactions amongst staff have allowed for different teaching methods to be explored and an openness of staff to collaborate together rather than working in isolation. The second issue within this theme is related to a change in focus on the needs of the students. This can be seen in the comment from School 1 teacher 6 who described how the process caused staff to reflect and think about the importance of focusing on student needs:

I think it was very useful because it got us focusing back on what our core business is which is teaching. Looking at what are the needs of our students and what’s the latest pedagogy say and how can we go about implementing some of that in our practice. (S1T6)

The focus on students was also seen in the comment from School 4 teacher 2 who described how the process led to discussions regarding student assessment and the way students like to learn:

Certainly the way we look at assessment and what we’re assessing and how we’re assessing the students. I think that’s sort of an ongoing thing that we’re looking at in terms of the feedback that we got from the small group sessions with the students and the parents about how they like to learn and that sort of thing. (S4T2)

School 3 teacher 1 also spoke about how they focused on the learning needs of students not just in one subject but across subjects. They saw the importance of developing a passion in students as lifelong learners:

We’ve profiled our students and what we expect from them and what we want to leave them with when they leave the school. So that’s very important, because we’re here to make them lifelong learners, not to make them learners in one particular subject. (S3T1)
The focus on students was also explained by School 1 teacher 3 who described the work they have done on differentiation in the classroom: “I think there’s a greater focus in trying to, what’s the word, tailor the curriculum – differentiate the curriculum – for those kids (special needs and talented), for all the kids in particular”. These teaching practices seem to allow for a change in the work practices of staff to cooperate together and work as a team. It seems to allow for real authentic engagement of students in their learning and a focus on their particular learning needs. This focus leads to the next theme which explores how the school improvement process has engendered collaboration amongst staff.

4.1.1.2.3 Collaboration

The third theme that has emerged from the interview data relating to Effect on Participants is collaboration amongst staff. This theme indicates that staff viewed the school improvement process as collaborative and promoting opportunities for staff to get together and share ideas. Participants commented that there was time given for this discussion and that staff felt the process was inclusive. Staff particularly felt that they had a voice in the direction the school was taking. This was supported by both teachers and Management Team participants across all schools. School 1 Teacher 6 commented:

It allowed everyone to voice their ideas initially and then see where their ideas fitted into the bigger scheme of things…It also allowed people to stop and reflect because the IDEAS process was being used not only to develop a vision statement but a direction for the learning. (S1T6)

This was also supported by School 2 Management Team participant 7: “I think what was successful about it was the fact that staff felt that they very much had a say in what direction the school was going to be and what the framework was going to be”. The comment from School 3 teacher 3 also reinforced this fact. She described how staff felt they had a real say and were involved in the decision-making process in the school. She said staff were: “Involved in decision-making and the various aspects of it along the way.” This comment seems to suggest that the involvement and collaboration of staff allowed them to have regular input into decisions made by the school through the improvement process.
This was supported by the comments from School 4 Management Team participant 3 who connected this theme with the previous theme of pedagogy and a focus on students. The participant described how the process had contributed to changes in the school by allowing staff collaboration and discussion, which led teachers to really focus on student learning needs: “I guess through raised awareness and discussion and looking at our pedagogical principles and what we believed in as educators and what we wanted for our girls. That was all highlighted through IDEAS.” This seems to be suggesting that this awareness focuses teachers towards the genuine needs of students and allows the opportunity for school improvement.

This collaboration has led to other initiatives in some of the schools. School 4 teacher 6 described how this collaboration led to staff involvement in team teaching: “We are doing a lot more collaborative team teaching, as such and sharing our resources and ideas.” This also seems to have reaped benefits through staff sharing resources and engaging together to support the teaching and learning in the classroom. In School 2 the collaboration led to staff being given the opportunity to visit other schools and see what they are achieving in the classroom. It has also led to discussions on pedagogy which links to the previous theme:

I think that it was valuable because it allowed staff to talk and to express what they wanted, what their ideas in terms of pedagogy were. We also gave some staff opportunity to go away and have a look at what was happening in other schools and bring some ideas back. (S2T2)

These responses seem to suggest that collaborative opportunities amongst schools have led to a sharing of good teaching practices. This element of collaboration has been identified as an element that has contributed to change within the school improvement process.

The final theme related to Effect on Participants outlines the opportunities the process has provided for leadership development.
**4.1.1.2.4 Leadership development**

The fourth theme under the focus area of Effect on Participants is leadership development. This theme identifies how the school improvement process has allowed the opportunity for staff to develop their leadership skills and then progress into further leadership positions. It also identified that staff were able to show and use their gifts and talents to lead at different stages of the process depending on the needs of the school.

In the previous focus area of Focus of Leadership, the first theme identified how staff where invited or volunteered to be part of the ISMT. The role of this team was to lead the school improvement process and develop the activities to lead staff through the process of developing a school vision and school-wide pedagogy. The participants in the interviews described how members of the ISMT were instrumental in leading their school through the process and particularly commented on the leadership skills of the ISMT Coordinator. They described how committed and skilful they were in keeping staff engaged in the process and keeping up the momentum of the process both within the ISMT and the whole staff. School 3 Management team participant 7 described their ISMT Coordinator as being:

> our big leader and she’s – because there’s been so much change she’s kind of the one left and she is a good leader. She’s good at engaging people; she’s good at context; she’s good at gently moving them, whatever. So I think her leadership I think has been fantastic. (S3MT7)

Opportunities for leadership were also experienced in School 5. Teacher 4 described how the school improvement process allowed leadership opportunities and the up skilling of staff in their school:

> I think it’s a great thing to allow people to provide opportunities to work on their leadership skills, to actually engage with that sort of level that is outside KLA or a pastoral care which is quite different in their leadership roles. I think to move in a whole school leadership opportunity requires different skills and therefore I think it’s really good that people can get to that process how do I perform, what do I need to work on. (S5T4)
School 2, participant 7 added to this by describing how the process had developed the leadership potential of their staff who then went on to take up other leadership positions:

That committee remained reasonably sized for a long period of time but towards the end of it, most of those teachers, who were on that committee, became Coordinators or moved onto the Executive. So I think that’s a really good example of how that project had allowed people to grow professionally and to develop their leadership skills because they were able to sort of show what they can do and give some opportunities and be promoted as opportunities came through. (S2T7)

Within some of the schools, participants also described how the ISMT utilised the different skills of staff. School 2 Management Team participant 7 described how different staff members were used at different times to help lead the process, depending on the skills that were needed:

I think we now tend to not go offsite for professional development so much. That we use the talents that we have inside the school which were there before but I just don’t think that they were identified – that we had people with those skills that we could utilise. So I think there have been lots of opportunities for people to develop their leadership styles and leadership skills as well. (S2MT7)

This was also supported by School 3 Management Team participant 2 who described how the process allowed different staff to step up at different times depending on their skills. They particularly described the leadership as parallel leadership which allows the teachers to lead learning and the Principal to lead the strategic direction in her school: “I think because we’ve had so many different members coming in and out, which has been good, because that’s part of the whole parallel leadership idea anyway - using people’s skills and knowledge at different times of the process”. Participant 2 also suggested that the school improvement process was best led by those members who had been in the team right from the start:

But what it did mean at some points was that if we wanted to move further than – if we wanted to move to the next step, it was up to whoever was there right from the beginning to keep it going, because the momentum or the vision for it was from the ones who were right there from the beginning. (S3T2)
This suggested that the process was hindered if members did not attend the original workshops or were not part of the initial group. This is contrary to the suggestion that it was important that the team be made up of a variety of staff and that the team changed depending on the skills needed to lead at different times. However, his point was not supported by participants from other schools.

Each of these themes, Staff engagement, Pedagogy, Collaboration, and Leadership development, were described as important elements impacting on participants and seemed to effect change within a school improvement process. The final focus area of Contextual Considerations and the themes associated with this area for Research Question 1 are presented in the next section.

4.1.1.3 Contextual Considerations
Analysis of the interview data revealed four themes relating to Contextual Considerations: Need for Improvement, History and foundations, Physical changes, and Change in leadership (see Table 4.4, pp. 123-124). Each of the themes will be presented in turn.

4.1.1.3.1 Need for Improvement
The first theme to emerge from the interview data related to the context that the schools needed to make improvements and explores reasons why the schools decided to implement a school improvement process.

Of the five schools, three of the schools decided to begin a school improvement process because they were looking for strategies to make improvements and a way to revitalise themselves. One school wanted to increase student Higher School Certificate (HSC) results, one school needed to increase numbers, and the third school had a change in Principal, who was looking for a fresh start and needed to continue to boost numbers. The fourth and fifth schools were invited by the Catholic Education Office to attend a presentation day about IDEAS. The Principal in one of these schools was interested in the process so attended the presentation day. The Principal of School 5 also attended the day at the invitation of the Catholic Education Office.
Of the schools looking to revitalise themselves, School 2 teacher 2 described how they had just gone through some hard times with decreasing numbers and that numbers had started to build up again. They had also had a change of Principal and that the school needed something new to continue to support the growth:

Her (the Principal) big challenge was in building numbers for the school, in building the student numbers up. She really had to work hard to build those numbers up….I suppose my interpretation of it is that we needed something to drive us forward. (S2T2)

Teacher 1 from the same school described how staff were very open and happy to try and see what the process could do for the school under these circumstances: “So I actually think we’re quite positive in that way as opposed to thinking oh, this is just another thing”. This openness seemed to allow a genuine desire by the staff to try something new to support the need to boost student numbers. There was a different experience in School 4. Here the Principal was the one to initiate the interest in the program and by taking staff along to the Catholic Education Office presentation on IDEAS, she hoped to build the interest of staff. However, Teacher 5 described that staff didn’t really seem to understand what the improvement process involved: “I don’t think staff really understood from the beginning what this journey was going to be”. This comment seems to suggest some uncertainty in what the process could achieve for the school and that the staff were not as interested as the Principal in starting something new.

School 3 Management Team participant 2 described their decision to take on the school improvement process as a strategy to help revitalise the school and boost numbers: “We had different blocks being refurbished and I think our numbers were going down and there was a bit of pressure to boost numbers”. Teacher 3 in the same school described how they could see that, by being involved in the process, it would bring all the initiatives that the school had undertaken together and “basically just pulled them all into alignment”. This seemed to suggest staff were in favour of trying the process. This response also links with the theme of alignment in the first focus area of Focus of Leadership.
School 5 were invited by the Catholic Education Office to be involved and they supported staff to attend the IDEAS presentation day. Due to a major building project the school leadership team decided they would not take on the process initially but wait another twelve months. Teacher 2 described how the process initially was very “emotional” for staff and that there was some “resentment” because staff felt they had already developed their school vision two years prior to taking on the IDEAS process. Staff felt they had discussed and agreed upon what the school valued and a “driving statement” to take them forward. The teacher observed that the ISMT were struggling with the directions they were given regarding the implementation of the process:

The ISMT were still struggling with the idea that they were being told you have to go through these process steps. For us the process steps were like, lord we’re doing it all again and we only did it two years ago because those initial steps we’d instituted as a school outside the IDEAS process to try and focus where we were going. (S5T2)

It is interesting to note that this school kept the statement they had developed two years prior as their vision statement within the IDEAS process. The teacher went on to say that staff did eventually become more engaged with the process after they “could actually see, after it became a discussion around language and what language we would use to create a statement”. The staff could then see a real purpose in their involvement in the process and a need for change in the school. This focus on language links with the previous theme in the Focus of Leadership, that of common language, which outlines the benefits participants felt a common language provided in implementing the school’s learning principles. The staff then went on to develop their learning principle statements. This seems to have allowed them to see that the process is much broader than they first thought.

These contexts provide different settings as to why each school was part of a school improvement process. The reasons seem to have a bearing on how the school would accomplish change and how effective that change was. The next theme to emerge from the data involves the history of the school and how the past and the present merge to support the specific needs of the school today.
4.1.1.3 History and foundations

The next theme related to the Contextual Considerations centred on the importance and significance of linking the current values and needs with the past history and founder of the school.

As part of the school improvement process school staff reflected on their moral purpose and their values. In deciding what was important to them they recommitted to the values and ethics that they believed were important to their individual school. Each school in the research was founded by a particular religious order, with one school being the amalgamation of three religious orders. The participants in the interviews particularly felt that the school improvement process had made them reconnect with the founder of their school and the values that they espoused. This connection was expressed as an important element by School 1 Management Team participant 2: “We really wanted to reach into our past and see what our school’s about as part of the process of developing our current vision and our principles that we eventually came up with”. In School 2 both the Management Team participant and a member of staff commented on the benefits of connecting with the past. Management Team participant 7 commented that this connection was something that the staff embraced and wanted to keep:

I think developing a vision statement had very much meaning. It connected with (the founders of the school) which was something that we identified that we wanted to keep but wasn’t working as well as what we had thought it could have worked. I think in those ways they (the staff) were happy to embrace the IDEAS process and the changes that we might be making because they could see that it’s actually who we are and it’s about identifying who we are – which is not the experience they had had before. (S2MT7)

In the same school Teacher 1 recognised how identifying the particular charism of the school and its founder assisted in the improvements in the school and the identification of what the school stood for: “It definitely did improve the school because in one area we kind of worked out who we stood for and why, what our mission was and our link to our founder became a lot stronger”. These strong links were evident in each of the schools and staff seemed to really connect and not want to lose their connections with the past.
Some of the participants commented that their particular vision, both oral and visual representation, was based on a particular symbol connected with their founder. School 2 Management team participant 6 explained:

We centre that around the symbol of a lantern which is very strong in the (religious) order because our founder used to walk around the poor areas of the island with a lantern at night. So our school motto … became adopted by the IDEAS process as the visual clue for the (learning principle) elements. (S2MT6)

This identifiable symbol made easy connections with the school community. School 1 Management Team participant 2 talked about a particular activity of the process where teachers who had been at the school for a long time spoke about the religious brothers or sisters who used to teach in the schools and what values they embraced as they went about their daily life:

One of the things we did – one of the things we did was called a history talk or something like that and this was something I was excited about because I’m the (one of the religious orders) facilitator here, so I have a bit of an attachment to that particular charism. Our school has three charisms. (S1MT2)

It is in these strong relationships and associations that schools seemed to be able to enact change in a very positive way. Participants in the interviews expressed a real desire and commitment to continuing to connect the school with the original religious founder. This seemed to give the school a very distinctive feature which provided a way to express their values and support the change process.

The next theme, relating to Contextual Considerations, involves a context where some of the schools were going through major building projects and upgrades. This is outlined in the next section.
4.1.1.3 Physical changes

The third theme relates to a context where a number of the schools were undergoing physical changes and updating facilities. Three of the five schools were involved in major building projects as part of a school renewal and development program. The system was supporting the upgrade to help revive the schools for a variety of reasons, as described in the first theme of this focus area.

Participants in the interviews commented that as well as implementing IDEAS they were also physically improving the site. They described how the school improvement process was driving the design for the teaching and learning areas. School 2 Management team participant 7 said:

We needed new buildings which were coming along but the designs of those buildings were being driven by what was being identified as a good learning environment…We did end up producing buildings with flexible walls and having those break out spaces and having a different approach which meets what we were looking for in our vision statement and our pedagogical framework. (S2MT7)

This outcome of aligning the school vision and learning principles with the new teaching and learning spaces was developed through collaboration and consultative processes. Such an outcome supports two of the earlier themes of collaboration and alignment where staff could see real links in the improvement process and took ownership of the change because they felt consulted and part of the decision-making process.

School 4 teacher 2 saw a similar relationship between their new buildings and the collaboration of teachers about effective teaching practice. The school improvement process was generating conversation that focused on the needs of students and their learning styles:

It’s been instrumental in thinking about the planning for the new building and future planning for the site and the environment and then what our classrooms look like and the fact that students are using laptops now and our classrooms are looking different and how we’re setting up the rooms. (S4T2)
This focus on students was an important area in the theme of pedagogy presented in the previous focus area of Effect on Participants. In the same school, teacher 6 also added: “We are discussing the future plans of our school development – the building project – and from that we then were engaged in discussing learning spaces and planning of our new learning spaces.” These comments also support the collaborative processes of staff to support students and their learning.

School 5 was in the middle of its building program when they were invited to implement IDEAS. They made the decision to wait twelve months and then start the process. They did not comment that the school improvement process had given any direction or influenced the design of the buildings.

For Schools 2 and 4 the school improvement process certainly had an impact on the design process and planning for the learning spaces. The process definitely initiated conversation amongst teachers regarding students and their needs and how best to accommodate these needs within the physical spaces of the school. These conversations and physical changes are related to the day-to-day work of teachers and are important elements effecting change for improvement.

The final theme under the focus area of Contextual Considerations is related to the change of Principalship that was experienced in the schools during the school improvement process.

4.1.1.3.4 Change in leadership
The last theme relates to the context of the leadership of the school and the particular position of Principal. In four of the five schools used in this research the Principal changed during the implementation of the school improvement process.

School 1 was the only school where the Principal began the school improvement process and is still the current Principal. In Schools 2 and 3 the current Principal had not been involved in the IDEAS process before and did not know anything about the process. In School 4 the Principal had been on staff in a previous school who had implemented IDEAS and in School 5 the current Principal had begun the process in another school so they both had a background in IDEAS.
The participants in the interviews described the change in Principal as a transition time and for School 3 Management team participant 2 a time to just ‘pause’ to give the incoming Principal time to be inducted into the current stage and progress of the process in the school:

> We paused the process, I guess, but we didn’t stop doing what we had been focusing on. At that point we had our renewed – a rewritten vision for the school, so we used that quite strongly to then reflect on every time we had a staff day or any new professional learning strategy day or trying to make sure that everything that we were doing or trying to introduce was still aligning with the vision. (S3MT2)

The staff has been able to continue the process as first stated and the ISMT in this school showed real leadership and the capacity to sustain the improvement through this change. Things did not stop or fall apart just because the Principal changed. This suggests the staff had real ownership and a say in the strategic direction of the school. Although the feedback from Principals is not part of the overall data used in the research, the comment from the Principal at School 3 is significant in supporting the work of the ISMT as a new Principal in the school:

> I think that the leadership came from the IDEAS committee initially I think, and I think that it came from a shared understanding or a shared passion for what they wanted the school to look like and what they wanted our girls to look like as learners. I think that they were very well supported. This leadership initially was actually well supported by the Principal at the time and I’ve tried to support that process this year and last year as well.

In Schools 2, 4 and 5 the transition was very different. The incoming Principal looked for ways to engender a passion for learning in their schools from their perspective and as a fresh start. In School 2 the current principal has come in after the vision and learning principles have been developed. The school was at a stage where these were being implemented across the curriculum areas to varying degrees. The Management team participant 7 said: “It’s taken her (the Principal) a little bit of time in which to be able to see how she could use that which she quite likes”. Another teacher in the school also described how the Principal had also introduced three other rhyming words to the students to invigorate their passion for learning as she seemingly could not connect with the school-wide pedagogy they already had. In
School 4 teacher 4 would say that, with the incoming Principal, the process had “lost some momentum” and that the ISMT had disbanded. In School 5 the participants who were interviewed were aware of a number of initiatives in the school but were not really aware of which were attributed to the IDEAS process. They seemed to be aware of their vision statement but felt there was no real follow up on the implementation of the learning principles under the name of IDEAS. Teacher 3 commented: “I don’t think I’ve ever heard the IDEAS thing come into it. Especially the teachers who’ve been here in the last couple of years, I don’t think they have had it mentioned”. This does not mean the learning principles are not part of the processes and programs, it just suggests that the name of IDEAS is not part of the normal language of the school and they may now refer to their learning framework using a different name.

A change in Principal in a school is certainly an important element effecting change within a school improvement process. Their understanding of the process and particular induction into the process by the ISMT seemed to be important in the opinion of the participants. It allows the school-wide pedagogy, as developed, is not lost and the work of the ISMT and staff is acknowledged and recognised.

The interview data, relating to Research Question 1 has identified the important elements that effect change within a school improvement process under three main focus areas: Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations. Each focus area has identified a number of elements that have been influential in the change process and affected the participants’ experience of the improvement.

The next section of this chapter presents the research data related to Research Question 2.

4.1.2 Research Question 2

Research Question 2 explores to what extent did leadership, within the elements effecting change for school improvement, impact on the improvement in each school involved in a school improvement process. The data from the surveys, interviews and documents are used to explore Research Question 2. The six leadership focus areas for successful change and improvement identified from the literature were used to map the data for this research question.
4.1.2.0 Introduction

The data emanating from the surveys, interviews and documents for Research Question 2 are summarised and displayed in Table 4.5 on pp. 154-156. The survey gives an average rating for each school, School 1 (S1) – School 5 (S5) and any responses from the open-ended questions relating to that section. The open-ended responses are shown as school and number of the school, then the survey (SV) and number, and then the open-ended question (Q) and number, for example, School 1 survey 3 open-ended question 2, S1SV3Q2. The Interviews are shown as, the first letter and number indicating the school and the second number indicating the number of responses from that school relating to that section, for example, School 1, 4 responses, S1 4. The documents are shown as, the first letter and number indicating the school and the second letter and/or number indicating the type of document. The categories of documents are shown as school report card (RC), staff survey (SS), ISMT reflection documents (R), minutes of meetings (M), email correspondence (E) and Staff Development Day documents (SDD).
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S5SV13Q3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S5SV14Q1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2.1 The Survey

The survey consisted of three sections, Parts B, C and D, which addressed Research Question 2. Table 4.6 on the following page shows how the survey questions were mapped against the six leadership focuses and the same three focus areas as used in Research Question 1. The data is also identified using a letter and numbering system. The questions have been identified by the section of the survey they relate to, B, C or D, and the number identifies the question number. For example, survey part C question 2, C2.
### Focus of Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership focuses</th>
<th>Focus of Leadership</th>
<th>Effect on followers</th>
<th>Contextual Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Relationships</td>
<td>B1, C2</td>
<td>B2, D2</td>
<td>B3, C1, D1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ownership</td>
<td>B7, C5</td>
<td>B4, C4, D4</td>
<td>C3, D3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Capacity Building</td>
<td>C6, D5</td>
<td>B5, C7</td>
<td>B6, D14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moral Purpose</td>
<td>D6</td>
<td>D7</td>
<td>C8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>B8, C9, D8</td>
<td>D13</td>
<td>B9, D9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support</td>
<td>B10, D12</td>
<td>C10, D11</td>
<td>D10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.6: Survey questions for Research Question 2*

The open-ended response questions in the survey were:

1. The IDEAS process has been successful in developing a school-wide pedagogy and vision for learning at the school. Why or Why not?

2. Can you give examples of the way the school improvement process was led?

3. Give an example of the way the vision and learning framework has contributed to school improvement?

These responses have been included in the data for the six Leadership focus areas (see Table 4.5, pp. 154-156).

### 4.1.2.2 The Interviews

The interviews consisted of twelve questions and three related to Research Question 2 and the extent to which the six leadership focuses for successful change and improvement identified from the literature contributed to school improvement. Table 4.7 on the following page shows these questions.
Interview Questions | Research Question 2
--- | ---
• How was leadership exercised in the IDEAS process?  
• How did the following elements contribute to this leadership:  
  • Relationships  
    (Staff felt valued and cared for and connections were made that developed teamwork)  
  • Ownership  
    (A clear vision for learning was articulated and staff supported the process towards a common goal)  
  • Capacity building  
    (The professional development of staff and the sustainability of the improvement)  
  • Moral purpose  
    (Understanding of and commitment to the school values)  
  • Continuous improvement  
    (A consistent approach to school improvement, innovation and sharing resources)  
  • Support  
    (The complexity and uncertainty of change and the importance of reflection, evaluation and flexibility to meet changing needs)  
• Are there any other elements of leadership that you believe played a role in the process? | 2. To what extent did leadership, within these elements, contribute to school improvement process?

*Table 4.7: Interview questions for Research Question 2*

### 4.1.2.3 The Documents

A variety of documents were collected from each school which included minutes of ISMT and staff meetings, staff meeting and Staff Development Day presentations and evaluations, diagnostic inventory report cards, and school vision and learning principles documentation. These documents were not available from every school and some documentation was very limited. As part of the IDEAS process, all schools had gathered initial data about their school from staff, parents and students through a diagnostic inventory and written a report card. Unfortunately, only Schools 1 and 3 were able to find the initial report card. These documents will be used in the analysis of Research Question 2.

The data for Research Question 2 is now presented, shown under the six leadership focuses contrasted against the three focus areas. The first leadership focus area is Relationships.
4.1.2.4 Relationships

The leadership focus of relationships is mapped against the three focus areas: Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations derived in the literature (see Table 2.5, p. 93). The definitions from Table 2.5, which emerged from a synthesis of the positions taken from the literature, are briefly outlined as: the Focus of Leadership as the ‘foundation for communication and achievement of a common goal’, the Effect on Participants is that participants ‘feel connected, cared for and valued’ and the Contextual Considerations are that it ‘builds trust and connections’ in the community. Under each of these focus areas the survey, interview and document data will be presented.

The survey questions, mean score for each individual school and overall mean score are outlined in Table 4.8 below. The responses were scored on a six point Likert-scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree and are mapped against the three focus areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey questions</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>School 5</th>
<th>Mean for all schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1. The school vision for learning was developed by the collaboration of staff and students.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2. The professional conversations amongst staff regarding student learning has improved since the development of the school vision and learning framework.</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect on Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2. In developing a clear vision for learning the staff felt their contribution to the process was valued.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2. Staff feel valued for their expertise and experience in leading learning.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Considerations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3. The IDEAS process promoted teamwork within staff.</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1. The school improvement process built stronger relationships amongst staff.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1. There is an atmosphere of trust between the school leadership team and the staff.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.8: Schools’ means response for the focus area of Relationships*
4.1.2.4.1 Focus of Leadership

There were two survey questions relating to the area of the Focus of Leadership. The mean scores for these two questions across the five schools are shown in Table 4.8 above. For Question B1, School 1 showed the highest rating with a mean of 5.5 and School 5 had the lowest rating with a mean of 4.0. Overall, a mean of 4.64 suggested the schools involved in the survey supported the notion that there had been collaboration of staff and students in developing the school vision for learning. This collaboration provided a good foundation for communication within the school community to achieve a common vision for student learning.

The overall mean for the second question C2 was 4.68 which was similar to the mean of Question B1. School 4 had the highest mean of 5.5 and School 5 had the lowest rating again with a mean of 4.0. These ratings suggest that positive relationships have developed from the professional conversations of staff and that both the professional conversations and staff collaboration have supported the development of a school vision and learning framework.

From the definition outlined (see Table 2.5, p. 93), the Focus of Leadership in this area is concerned with the way staff interact and communicate within the school as this has an impact on the ability of the school to achieve a common goal.

Of the open-ended responses in the survey only one related to this Focus of Leadership, School 5, survey 10. The respondent suggested that the development of a school-wide pedagogy and vision for learning had been successful because: “there has been a broader communication between the leaders of the College and staff members”. This comment identifies the importance of establishing good communication channels to support change processes. This broader communication supports the development of quality relationships amongst staff and allows the opportunity for a shared approach for improvement in the school. This response suggests good communication was an important part of the process.

The interview responses relating to the Focus of Leadership, outlined in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed one response from School 1, six responses from School 2, three responses each from School 3, seven responses from School 4 and four responses from School 5.

Of the responses offered, there were two main themes presented. Firstly, respondents commented on relationships amongst staff through the general communication within the process and secondly respondents commented on the relationships between members of the IDEAS Management team (ISMT) and their leadership of the process. The comments about staff relationships and communication within the process revealed that staff felt an openness
and the opportunity to discuss and give their opinions about setting the vision and goal they wanted to achieve for the school. This is shown in the following comment by participant 7, School 2: “I think communications and being able to go and talk to people about different things, get other people’s opinions and giving them opportunities to feedback in a non-threatening way was very much a part of getting people on board”. This was also supported by School 5 participant 7: “It was done in a very two-way communication way.” These comments suggest the staff felt that communication within the process was collegial and a way to build positive relationships. This also supports the earlier data of the survey that showed there had been good communication through staff collaboration in developing the school’s vision for learning.

The respondents also described how the ISMT was made up of staff from different faculties and how through these relationships staff were regularly given updates. School 2, participant 2 observed:

It was driven by the IDEAS Committee which had members of staff from all different faculties and all different areas. So it was across the school which I suppose is a positive for it in that the information would filter back to all faculty areas. (S2T2)

This supports the earlier data presented for Research Question 1 regarding the establishment of the ISMT. School 4 participant 3, who was part of the ISMT, commented on the positive relationships among the group:

Well certainly the relationships within the group were certainly I thought outstanding in that we felt totally confident to discuss anything with each other. We would rely on each other when it came to presentations for the staff and assisting staff etcetera. So of the team it was really good. (S4MT3)

Others described how they experienced the workings of the ISMT as they lead the process. School 5 participant 5: “They (ISMT) are extremely approachable which is good” and School 2 participant 3 added: “I know the group (ISMT) worked cohesively together.” These relationships supported staff involvement and willingness to be part of the process. School 1 participant 6 also spoke highly of the ISMT and how they felt included and connected with the process:
The fact that they listened (ISMT), compiled everything. They obviously then had to reflect on what they had in front of them. Also the staff were led to reflect and sort of put things in order. Even coming up with the wording of the document, staff had input in that. (S1T6)

School 3 participant 5 also acknowledged that the ISMT were committed to the process and focused on making sure that staff who were not part of the ISMT were kept informed about what was happening:

I think the first thing is their (ISMT) passion. They really believe in it. I think if you’ve got passion in teaching you can just about do anything. I think that’s what’s driven it, is the passion, and I know with (the facilitator) keeping updated with all the in-servicing that she went to, and then making that available to us. We’ve got on our general drive a whole section on IDEAS, so if you want to look up anything you can go to that. I think it’s the passion that’s driven it. (S3T5)

These responses seem to support the notion that relationships are seen as providing a good foundation for communication to support the improvement process. They play a key role in focusing staff attention on achieving a common goal.

Within the variety of documents collected from the schools there was evidence that the staff in the schools had been involved in developing their school vision and school-wide pedagogy. This was seen in School 2 in an email exchange between the Coordinator of the ISMT and an IDEAS member from the University of Southern Queensland. The Coordinator described that there had been a lot of discussion amongst staff regarding the vision statement and that they were inviting staff to come along to the ISMT meeting to give further input and be involved in the final decision:

We are still discussing the vision statement…..and how we interpret this within our community. There has been lots of discussion which is good but then it makes for a very slow process. This week we are opening up our meeting so that those who wish to be part of the discussion can and with the hope that we might finalise the vision statement – at last. (S2E1)
In the development of the vision, the Coordinator of the ISMT in School 1 reflected on her leadership as part of the process and described how her focus had been to provide clear communication to staff: “Better ways to involve all members of my school community through purposeful consultation and clear communication”. (S1R)

These responses focus on the importance of having good communication, particularly between the ISMT and staff as this develops strong and supportive relationships. It seems to also suggest the importance of providing the opportunity for staff to be involved in the visioning process to support the achievement of a common goal. These documents support the data found in the survey and interview responses.

The second focus area of Effects on Participants is presented in the next section. It is related to how valued and connected staff feel to the process.

4.1.2.4.2 Effect on Participants

The survey responses in Table 4.8 (p. 159) show two questions related to the Effect on Participants. Question B2 had an overall mean of 4.28, with School 1 showing the highest rating with a mean of 5.4 and School 2 with the lowest rating with a mean of 3.2. With an overall mean of 4.28 the staff who responded to the survey felt their contribution to developing a school vision for learning, had been valued. However, in School 2, this was not as strongly supported and the staff in this school felt that their ideas in developing a vision for learning were not as valued as in other schools. For Question D2, School 1 again had the highest rating of 5.3 and School 3 had the lowest rating of 4.3. These ratings and an overall rating of 4.70 reveal that staff felt valued for their expertise and experience in leading learning. This acknowledgement of staff seems to support the building of relationships that promote cohesion and where they feel valued for their contribution.

From the open-ended responses there were three responses that were associated with the area of Effect on Participants. The general feeling from these responses described how staff were involved in the process and that they felt their contribution was valued. This is shown in the comment from School 3 survey 12: “Surveys by key stakeholders who feel valued and heard”. These feelings of being valued and listened to seemed to allow relationships to foster where staff felt they had a real role and contribution to make towards the improvement process. This is also supported in the survey data.
The interview responses related to the Effect on Participants, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed five responses from School 1, seven responses from School 2, eleven responses each from School 3 and nine responses each from Schools 4 and 5.

Participants responded that the process was consultative and that positive relationships developed because staff felt their opinions were valued. This point was confirmed by participant 3, School 1: “I think there was a great deal of a sense of what we were saying was valued and trying to let everyone have their say. So relationships were fostered”. This was also reported by School 3, participant 6, who added that relationships were also developed by staff collaborating outside their normal curriculum (KLA) or pastoral groups:

I do believe that because we had a voice in that initial survey experience and when the findings were presented to us and we actually had an opportunity at a staff day to talk about the findings and collaborate together on future directions. It really affirmed the relationships among staff and irrespective of just KLA or pastoral groupings it really affirmed that because we felt we were heard. I think that was a move in the right direction. (S3T6)

School 5, participant 7 also spoke about different staff groupings that were used within the process, particularly separating them out of their KLA curriculum groups to foster different relationships amongst staff:

I think the fact that during the IDEAS process, you were put in – you were allocated a group to belong. That enabled you to step outside your normal social comfort zone or even professional comfort zone and be able to listen to and express ideas that were cross curricular. Even staff, admin, things that you wouldn’t ordinarily do. So I think it was – it had a positive impact on relationships. (S5MT7)

School 4, participant 5 commented that they felt the process was collaborative and that that lead to positive relationships where staff felt valued for their contributions:
It was a bit of a collaborative style. Yeah, sort of where people did feel valued, people’s ideas and contributions, they felt valued for saying what they did and you know, that was recorded and whatever, but that style, the collaborative style worked well. (SST5)

These comments specifically link the success and importance of the process being due to building quality relationships where staff felt consulted, valued and heard. These findings endorse the findings of the survey where staff had responded that they felt that relationships had been fostered because their contribution to the process had been valued.

Within the documents there was no data that related to the Effect on Participants.

The third focus area of Contextual Considerations is presented in the next section and relates to how the process builds trust and connections in the school community.

4.1.2.4.3 Contextual Considerations
For Contextual Considerations there were three survey questions relating to this area, as shown in Table 4.8 (p. 159). Question B3 had an overall mean score from the five schools of 4.38. School 1 had the highest rating with a mean of 4.9. School 4 had the lowest mean of 4.0. The overall mean suggests that staff felt that the school improvement process had promoted teamwork. In this context, the teamwork had developed relationships that built connections amongst staff. They also felt comfortable giving their opinions and suggestions in order to develop a school vision for learning. For Question C1, School 1 again had the highest rating of 4.4 and School 4 again had the lowest rating of 2.5. With an overall rating of 3.72 it can be seen that the schools differed in their responses about how the school improvement process had built stronger relationships amongst staff. School 4 particularly did not support this. Question D1 had an overall rating of 4.72, within which School 2 had the highest mean of 5.1 and School 3 the lowest mean of 4.4. These means being relatively high supported the belief that, in the schools, there was an atmosphere of trust between the school leadership team and the staff. In this context, these strong relationships and the building of trust seemed to contribute to the successful implementation of the improvement processes in the school.
Of the open-ended responses one related to the area of Contextual Considerations. School 3, survey 4 described the opportunity staff had for input and feedback within meeting times: “Through staff meetings that were structured, all sections of the school community had a chance for input and feedback during the process”. This suggests staff felt an openness to be involved in the process and a sense that their opinions were respected.

The interview responses related to the Contextual Considerations, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed no responses from School 1, four responses from School 2, seven responses from School 3, five responses from School 4 and four responses from School 5.

Within this context of relationships, School 5, participant 2 commented that the process built new connections amongst staff through mixing the staff groupings particularly on Staff Development Days. These groupings seemed to push staff to develop relationships with others where they were able to see the bigger picture of what the school wanted to achieve. This links with the findings of the previous focus area of Effect on Participants:

There was a clear effort to separate groups we knew already had kindred spirits, as you do. So that was good. It built new connections and I think that was probably the most valuable part of the day, the building of new connections. (S5T2)

Other participants responded that these connections were also further developed because staff had respect and trusted those that were leading the process. School 3 participant 2 was a member of the ISMT and they felt this firsthand:

I think because myself and some of the other initial members of the team had been at the school for a number of years generally the staff felt if it was something that we thought was a positive process to go through, then you already had those people initially come on board. (S3MT2)

School 4 participant 6, who was not a member of the ISMT in their school, also confirmed this: “The person that was leading it was greatly respected, was trustworthy and we knew that whatever was said or that we weren’t being judged and that – he carried us on this journey and delivered”. These trusting relationships seemed to enhance and support the involvement of staff in the process as they believed that their opinions and comments would be respected.
Within the documents collected from the schools there were two that related to the Contextual Considerations in the leadership area of relationships. Both documents are from School 1 and relate to genuine relationships of respect and trust. The first document is the School report card that indicates that the staff have good working relationships: “At (School name), teachers see themselves as part of an important profession with working relationships between staff demonstrating unity, respect and trust”. This statement also supports the high ratings of School 1 in the survey data. The second document is a staff survey which describes a respectful relationship between the Principal and staff: “The development of a genuine relationship – respect between principal and staff”.

These comments highlight the importance of quality relationships that allow participants to be involved and motivates them to build connections in their school. It further develops trusting relationships that support the engagement of staff. All the data collected seemed to focus on the importance of a setting that fosters relationships that connect the community. This point is particularly acknowledged in the survey responses, where participants reported that the process had nurtured relationships that promoted teamwork amongst staff.

4.1.2.4.4 Summary

Overall, taking each of the areas under relationships into consideration, Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations, there seems to be a strong focus amongst the schools on the importance of good communication, collaboration and teamwork between staff rather than on the contributions of individual staff being valued. This is particularly strongly illustrated in School 2. There are also differing opinions amongst the schools regarding whether or not the school improvement process built stronger relationships amongst staff. School 4 specifically did not experience this. Staff in the schools generally felt that through the process their opinions and contributions were valued and accepted which seemed to have played an important role in the value of quality relationships for the success of the school improvement process.

The next leadership focus, relating to how staff took ownership of the school improvement process is presented in the next section.
4.1.2.5 Ownership

The second leadership focus is ownership. Table 2.5, page 93 gives the definition, synthesised from the ideas taken from the literature, of the leadership focus of ownership mapped against the three focus areas in this section. The definition describes that:

1. the Focus of Leadership is to ‘communicate a clear vision’;

2. the Effect on Participants is that they have an ‘understanding and interest in the organisation and support a common goal’

3. the Contextual Considerations are that it ‘builds mutual trust and respect which leads to positive change’.

The following section presents the survey, interview and document data that relates to this leadership focus under these three focus areas.

The survey questions that relate to the leadership focus of ownership are outlined in Table 4.9 on the following page. It shows an overall mean and an average of each school’s response to the question. These responses were again scored on a six point Likert-scale.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey questions</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>School 5</th>
<th>Mean for all schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7. The IDEAS process has enabled the school to develop a clear vision for learning at the school.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5. The Principal worked alongside staff in the development of the vision.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect on Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4. Staff took ownership for developing the school vision and school-wide pedagogy.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4. Staff were very engaged in the development of the school vision and learning framework.</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4. All staff are committed and have taken ownership for the school vision for learning.</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Considerations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3. The IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) took an active role in leading the school improvement process.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3. Parallel leadership is evident in the way learning is led in the school.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9: Schools’ means response for the focus area of Ownership
4.1.2.5.1 Focus of Leadership

Within the survey, there were two questions related to the area of Focus of Leadership, as seen in Table 4.9. The first question B7 had an overall mean of 4.52. School 1 had the highest mean of 5.0 and School 5 the lowest mean 3.7. These ratings suggest the participants believed the school improvement process had developed a clear vision for learning at the school. However, School 5 was not as assured as the other schools. The second question C5 described how the Principal worked alongside staff in the development of the vision and learning framework. The overall mean in this area was 4.82, with School 1 again with the highest mean of 5.4 and School 4 the lowest mean of 4.5. These high ratings suggest the Principal was a co-contributor to the process, working with the staff and not taking over the leadership of it. This supports the data collected in the documents for the previous leadership focus of relationships in the area of Contextual Considerations.

From the open-ended responses in the survey, five responses related to this area. The responses highlighted the importance of a clear vision and goals to direct and focus the school community. This is supported by School 5 survey 4 who commented that the clear vision has supported the learning process: “It has enabled us to clarify our goals and vision as a learning community”. School 1 survey 1 also supported this and added that the vision and school-wide pedagogy had been used to inform the school’s Annual Development Plan: “The vision and school-wide pedagogy have been used to inform the Annual Development Plan”. School 2 survey 2 also added that the clear vision had given the school direction and supported the success of the process: “I think having a goal and a clear vision where we were going as a school made it successful”. These comments support the notion that ownership of the process seems to be attributed to the Focus of Leadership being on communicating a clear vision. The participants suggest that it is important for a school to clearly articulate a vision for learning.

The interview responses related to the Focus of Leadership, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed one response from School 1, no responses from School 2, three responses each from Schools 3 and 4, and two responses from School 5.

These responses support the importance of developing and communicating a clear vision as participants suggest that a clearly articulated vision leads to three main ideas: a common goal, ownership of the vision and the building of relationships.
In working towards a common goal participant 4, School 1 noted that a clear vision had been articulated at their school and that staff supported the process and their involvement in it: “A clear vision for learning was articulated and staff supported – we all had this common goal of supporting the IDEAS process and being part of the implementation”. The notion of the vision setting directions towards a common goal was also supported by School 5, participant 2 who described how the improvement process had really provided the opportunity for them to clearly articulate their vision. This began them working towards their common goal:

I think IDEAS began us on the process towards a common goal. I think it certainly articulated very clearly and there was a great deal of effort put into trying to create a clear and communal vision for that common goal. (S5T2)

The second idea of how the clear vision leads to staff taking ownership of the process is seen in the comments by School 3 participant 7: “The vision was certainly a shared vision so the way that that was managed, people did feel that they had ownership of that vision statement”. This was also supported by participant 6 in the same school who added that the vision and ownership of it was the catalyst for continued improvement: “So essentially the vision statement was what we owned and that was the springboard for everything else”.

The third idea links with the previous leadership focus of relationships and describes how the development of the vision is supported by the relationships that developed. School 3 participant 1 supports this and describes the relationships in terms of relationships through leadership: “We’re based on a clear vision for learning, and the professional development for that is being supported by the leadership, by the relationships”. School 4 participant 6 also described a clear vision and how staff felt that they had been a part of its development and had ownership of the vision. This support is seen through the relationships and the responsibility staff felt to make sure the vision was realised in the classroom:

I thought that there was definitely clear vision but the other thing was that we were supported and that we felt that we were listened to. So our ideas were considered and they were up there. They were part of the steps and the result and we could see that it was – we were the ones who were going to make the change in the end, we would have to be the ones in front of the classroom and what we said was considered. (S4T6)
Within the documents collected there was a general emphasis on the importance of communicating a clear vision. This was supported by the survey and interview data. School 1’s Report card showed that the school already was seen as an important learning centre in the community that had clearly articulated goals. This suggests that this was not one of their challenges in implementing the improvement process:

(The school name) is seen as an important learning centre within the (suburb name) community that prepares students well for an ever-changing future as concerned, active citizens and inspiring students. This may be, in part, due to the school’s goals and values being clearly articulated. (S1RC)

This was not the same experience for School 3. In their Report card their challenge was to take their current vision statement and reflect and evaluate whether it was current and something that could be lived within the school community: “To evaluate and deconstruct the current school vision statement to enable staff to develop a school-wide pedagogy and culture to ensure it is a lived vision”.

This was the same reflection and challenge for School 4. In a staff survey that asked staff what they would change in order to enhance the school’s effectiveness they responded with the following two dot points:

- Revamped vision and mission statements that drive the school forward.

- Work on distinct vision and mission, written by all staff. Publish it and refer to it with staff, students and community.

These responses seem to support the success of the school improvement process through the communication of a clear vision. It seems to be a recurring theme from the participants that a clearly articulated vision supports a common goal, ownership of the process and also supports the building of relationships. These ideas are supported in the responses by participants in all survey, interview and document data and highlight how the vision gives direction for the school community.
The next section presents the data for the second focus area of Effect on Participants. It continues the theme of supporting a common goal through participants having an understanding and interest in the school.

4.1.2.5.2 Effect on Participants

There were three survey questions that related to the area of Effect on Participants, shown in Table 4.9 (p. 169). In Question B4, School 1 showed the highest rating with a mean of 4.6. School 5 the lowest rating with a mean of 3.9. This rating from School 5, compared with the other four schools, suggests the staff did not take as much ownership for developing the school vision and school-wide pedagogy as the staff in the other schools. However, the mean is still high. The overall mean of 4.36 suggests that staff generally took ownership of developing a vision and school-wide pedagogy and supported the process across the schools. For Question C4, the overall mean was 4.42. School 4 had the highest mean of 5.0 and School 5 again had the lowest mean of 3.9. These ratings suggest participants felt they were very engaged with developing a school vision and learning framework. The ratings from School 5 for both questions is low and shows this school did not feel as committed and engaged as the other schools. The third question, D4 has a lower overall rating of 3.88. School 1 has the highest rating of 4.1 and Schools 4 and 5 have the lowest ratings of 3.5 and 3.6 respectively. This rating from School 4 shows some conflict with the previous rating which showed that participants were very engaged in the development of a school vision and learning framework. However, this rating shows that they were not as committed and did not really own it. School 5 again were not as committed as Schools 1, 2 and 3.

From the open-ended responses in the survey, six responses related to the area of Effect on Participants for Research Question 2. The response from School 1, survey 4, shows how the process helped the staff to focus and have an understanding of a common goal for the school: “It helped people to centre and focus on the ideas they already had processing in their minds in a common form”. This point regarding supporting a common goal was also mentioned by School 3, survey 6: “We worked together as a team to achieve a common goal” and School 5, survey 9: “The staff have a common vision to work to”. A further response has added another dimension to this area by outlining how the ownership of the improvement was enhanced because of the involvement of many stakeholders. School 3, survey 2, noted that this resulted in significant development and thus contributed to the success of the improvement in the school: “There was significant development of the process through the involvement of the teachers, students and to a lesser extent the parents”. These comments support the
significance of staff involvement and teamwork for real ownership of change and improvement. They also outline the contribution this makes to staff supporting a common goal through their understanding of the school’s direction with regards to learning.

The interview responses, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), related to Effect on Participants showed five responses from School 1, seven responses from School 2, six responses each from Schools 3 and 4, and two responses from School 5.

These responses suggest that participants felt it was important, for the success of the process, for staff to have a good understanding of the direction of the school and that it was important that they took ownership of the process by working together to achieve and support a common goal. This point is supported in the comment from participant 2, School 4, who acknowledged that staff could see the importance of a common goal and working together to achieve it: “Everyone could see the value of it in terms of having that vision, a united vision kind of thing”. In supporting a common goal, participants also described how this common direction supported the development of quality relationships. This is reinforced in the comment from School 1 participant 6 who observed these relationships developed because staff were given a voice: “I think people were able to voice their ideas. It developed quite positive relationships amongst the staff and we were working for a common goal. So it was a good direction”. This is aligned with the previous leadership focus of relationships and the sense of value staff felt because they were part of the process.

Participants also described how ownership was increased through staff consultation. This is seen in the comment from School 2 participant 3 who described how staff were given the opportunity to provide feedback and input at staff meetings: “There were opportunities at staff meetings to feed back as to when different statements were developed, whether or not that statement was meaningful and so forth. So that broadened the ownership of the process”. School 3 participant 2 supported this ownership through the interest and engagement of staff at Staff Development Days:

We’re taking responsibility, we’re owning it, owning the process and that’s what will make it real. It’s not something that people are imposing upon us. So they do get really involved and really engaged in those days, because they know it’s – what do you want? This is your opportunity to have your voice, so you need to get on board with this, and they go, so it’s been good. (S3MT2)
School 3 participant 6 also described the involvement and input of staff as a reason why they felt staff owned the vision statement and supported it towards a common goal: “We had an opportunity to really think about what was presented to us. We had a say in how we could change things, what we envisaged the College vision to be in the current context”. School 2, participant 6, took this idea a little deeper to comment about how the ownership of the vision was taken up by each KLA across the school and that it was also seen and active in every classroom:

> With ownership each KLA took ownership of a particular element of our vision. That then translated into programming – either they program those values into whatever the programs that were being written. But also ownership in the classroom by both teachers and students. (S2MT6)

This was supported by School 1 participant 5 who also saw this ownership and support of a common goal in the classroom:

> We worked well as a team. If there were problems in a particular area, we go to another leader, you might say, in the English department, and help, or we team-teach together to support those common goals of ownership of the students’ own learning. (S1T5)

These responses seem to indicate that staff ownership and engagement in the school improvement process is related to their understanding and involvement in developing the school’s vision. They also seem to indicate that staff see the importance of working together; being committed to supporting a common goal and how this then transfers into the classroom. This theme is seen in both the survey and interview responses.

Within the document data there seems to be a clear direction that staff need to be involved in decisions regarding the direction of the school. The analysis of the Report card from School 1 reveals this where it is noted that there is “a need for greater transparency with school decision-making processes with a need for more staff and parent input into school planning”. The importance of staff involvement is also supported in a staff survey from School 4 where staff acknowledged that a most distinctive achievement of the school has been the “involvement of staff in the development of the Annual Development Plan”.

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These responses support the data from the surveys and interviews and highlight the importance of staff being involved in the decisions to support the school’s direction for the future.

The third focus area of Contextual Considerations is presented in the next section and relates to ownership in a context that builds mutual trust and respect.

**4.1.2.5.3 Contextual Considerations**

There were two survey questions related to this area shown in Table 4.9 (p. 169). Question C3 had an overall mean of 4.60. School 1 had the highest mean of 5.5 and School 4 the lowest mean of 4.0. These ratings indicate that the participants saw the ISMT taking a very active role and leading the school improvement process. Question D3 had an overall mean of 4.36. School 4 had the highest rating of 5.0 and School 1 had the lowest rating of 3.5. This suggests that most of the schools could see parallel leadership evident in how learning was led in the school and that teachers took an active leadership role in the classroom. The rating from School 1 seems to contradict their rating in Question C5 of 5.4 from the focus area Focus of Leadership. Here the participants said the principal worked alongside staff but in Question D3 they said parallel leadership is not really evident. This could suggest a lack of understanding of the term ‘parallel leadership’ and their perception of the role of the principal.

There were no comments from the open-ended responses that were directly related to the Contextual Considerations of building mutual trust and respect which then leads to positive change.

The interview responses related to the area of Contextual Considerations, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed three responses each from Schools 1, 3 and 4, eight responses from School 2 and no responses from School 5.

These responses from the participants seem to be divided into two contexts: the ownership of the process by staff and the leadership of the process by the ISMT. The former was seen in the context that they felt that, as teachers in the classroom, they are the ones who could make the change. This is seen in the comment from School 3 participant 5:
I think because we realise that we’re the people that can make the change. You can’t sit back and let the maths department organise this, it’s not like that, it’s about every teacher being on board with owning the process basically. (S3T5)

This ownership by staff seems to allow a mutual understanding that they have an important role and responsibility as teachers. School 2 participant 1 also commented that staff took ownership of the process because it was the teachers who were very much a part of the decisions regarding the school’s vision and goals: “I think there was, definitely, because the people doing this were teachers, the teachers of the school. There was no sort of – they were coming up with what our statement was and what our goals were”. Another participant, from School 1 teacher 4, also felt that when other teachers were used in the process, to lead at different times, they had a real impact on the engagement of staff:

So it gave me a better understanding of what the IDEAS process was about and also then, the staff listening to me rather than to the IDEAS committee or to the Principal it sort of brought a little bit more down to, not their level but down to earth because it’s coming from another staff member, sort of on par with them and maybe they listened more. (S1T4)

School 4 participant 6 also commented that the ownership of the process was due to the context where different staff led the process at different times: “I thought the respect of all the staff, non-judgemental and recognising strengths of various people and utilising that in the process”. This context seems to support the ownership of the process because staff respected and acknowledged that other staff were recognised for their skills in leading the process when needed.

The second context in this focus area is the leadership of the process by the ISMT. This leadership was observed by some participants as a shared leadership approach which was respected by staff and supported change in the school. This was seen in the comment from School 2 participant 7 who described a sharing of leadership amongst the committee and support from the Principal when needed:
I think the success of getting it to where it got to and how far we did get was because it wasn’t driven by just a small group of people. It was a committee that shared leadership and I think that sharing of leadership was very important. There were certainly times when the Principal had to make decisions because we’d been going around in circles maybe for too long. Sometimes you just – somebody has to make that decision in order to move forward. That would happen as necessary but certainly it wasn’t driven by the Principal. It was more or less driven by the committee and the committee was feeding back to the rest of the staff. (S2MT7)

School 3 participant 3 also described the ISMT as a well-respected group of staff who lead the process in a very collaborative way:

Well as I said the staff members that headed the project are very well respected amongst staff. So they’re quite approachable and quite casual, or natural I’d say, in their talking and in their manner. So that was fantastic, and each member of staff had a chance to say what they believed or what they thought and were engaged with it. I think largely due to the manner of the teachers running it, that they allowed for that input. They allowed for a collaborative approach rather than dictated, this is what we’re doing, approach. (S3T3)

These two contexts of staff ownership of the process and the leadership of the ISMT seem to highlight the importance of mutual respect amongst staff within the improvement process. This trusting environment seemed to promote an ownership of the process by staff.

Within the documents, the School 3 Report card supported the notion that ownership builds mutual trust and respect within staff. This is seen as a successful practice that was reported before they began the improvement process. “A culture of mutual respect is fostered and encouraged in all learning spaces”. This culture supports the importance of ownership by staff and is considered as an important practice to foster and encourage within their teaching areas to support teaching and learning in the school.
4.1.2.5.4 Summary
Overall, within the leadership focus of ownership all schools considered this an important element that contributed to the success of a school improvement process. The responses from the participants suggest that, overall, staff generally took ownership for the direction the school was taking and that they felt a clear vision had been communicated. They considered the understanding and input of staff into the vision contributed to and supported the success of the school improvement process. The acknowledgement of the strengths and skills of staff to lead the process also seemed to contribute to the ownership they took of the process.

Capacity building is the third leadership focus. The data relating to this section is presented in the next section and relates to the ability of staff to lead and sustain the process and impact on the learning needs of students.

4.1.2.6 Capacity Building
The leadership focus of capacity building and the data collected from the surveys, interviews and documents is presented as consistent with the previous leadership focuses. These are under the three areas of: Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations. The definition of capacity building is mapped against these three areas in Table 2.5, p. 93. The definitions, adopted from a synthesis of the stances taken from the literature, are: the Focus of Leadership ‘supports professional development and leadership development’, the Effect on Participants involves staff having a ‘direct impact and responsibility for student learning’, and the Contextual Considerations is that it ‘builds individual and collective capacity and sustainability’ of the improvement.

The survey questions, individual school means and overall mean related to capacity building are shown in Table 4.10 on the following page, mapped against the three focus areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey questions</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>School 5</th>
<th>Mean for all schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6. Staff feel more confident in taking leadership for student learning.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D5. Leadership of learning is distributed amongst staff reflecting their skills and talents.</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect on Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5. My classroom practice has changed as a result of adopting the learning framework.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7. The school allowed/provided professional development opportunities for staff that had a direct impact on student learning.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Considerations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6. Having been involved in the IDEAS process I would describe the school as a professional learning community.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D14. The expertise of teachers is recognised and valued.</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.10: Schools’ means response for the focus area of Capacity building*

4.1.2.6.1 Focus of Leadership

There were two questions in the survey that related to the Focus of Leadership. The first question, C6, rated whether staff felt more confident to take leadership of student learning. School 1 had the highest mean of 5.0, School 4 had the lowest mean of 3.0 and the overall mean was 4.06. The overall mean suggested that most staff felt confident to lead learning having been involved in the school improvement process. However, School 4 did not feel the process had increased their confidence and this is reflected in their low rating. The second question, D5, had an overall mean of 4.38. School 1 again had the highest mean of 4.9 and Schools 2 and 5 had the lowest mean of 4.1. Participants responded that they felt the leadership of learning was distributed amongst staff reflecting their skills and talents and the
fairly even means overall support this. From the definition, the Focus of Leadership is to build the capacity of staff by increasing their confidence through supporting professional development and leadership development opportunities. The responses seemed to indicate that staff skills and talents had been recognised in the improvement process and that they were encouraged to lead in these areas where possible.

In the open-ended section of the survey there were eight responses related to the area of Focus of Leadership to build staff capacity. School 5, survey 10 highlighted the many opportunities that had been provided for staff professional development in their school: “This process has been discussed at length and there have been many opportunities for professional development in this area”. School 2, survey 1 supported this and commented that the staff in their school had also been given professional development opportunities: “Various teachers observed other schools and attended IDEAS workshops held by the University of Southern Queensland”. This comment suggests that staff from different schools interacted to improve their knowledge and skills from each other. This was both through visiting other schools as well as interacting in the IDEAS workshops. School 3, survey 8 added that: “Specially trained staff presented at staff development days and staff meetings”. Thus it seems suggests that staff were given opportunities to develop their leadership skills and lead at different times in the process. This also supports the responses from survey question D5. School 1, survey 2 commented how the process had led to a key staff appointment to lead learning: “A Teaching and Learning Coordinator is now in place to give direction on across school projects”. This comment suggests that the way the process was led provided significant opportunities for staff interaction and professional development. Such support also provided staff with opportunities to step up and lead the process at different times to show their own skills. This professional and leadership development seemed to assist the schools to build the capacity of staff to support the school improvement.

The interview responses in Table 4.5 (p. 154) related to the area of Focus of Leadership showed nine responses from Schools 1 and 4, five responses from School 2, ten responses from School 3 and four responses from School 5. The responses from the participants are divided into two main categories: the professional development and the leadership development of staff.
In the area of professional development, the participants described how the process provided opportunities for professional development and that this is still a priority in the school. This is seen in the comments from School 4 participant 4 who described the many professional development opportunities provided and the improvement this provides for staff: “I think professional development is excellent here, certainly right across the board. So people feel as though they have options for professional development and by being developed you’re improving”. This is also supported by School 1 participant 4 who adds and acknowledges the professional development opportunities provided by the Principal.

Professional development of staff has come a long way, particularly here at the school. I’ve found that (the Principal) has given staff many more opportunities and this Principal – generally speaking – does give staff more opportunities than what I have experienced in the past in previous schools.

Within this category of professional development, some responses indicated that the process provided specific professional development for the ISMT. One member of the ISMT, School 1 participant 7, particularly commented that her involvement as a leader of the process provided significant professional development for her:

I think as I said, my capacity grew – I would say that being involved in IDEAS and I completed my Master’s at the same time, those two things have been the most significant professional development that I have had in this part of my career.

(S1MT7)

These professional development opportunities seem to suggest that the capacity of staff was built during the process, both for staff and members of the ISMT. Participants also comment that these opportunities for professional development are still provided for staff, which is perceived by them as an important part of their development as a teacher.

Leadership development was the second category acknowledged by the participants. Participants commented on both the opportunities provided for staff leadership development as well as the leadership opportunities provided for the ISMT. Of the responses School 1 participant 2, who was a member of the ISMT, described how all staff were given the opportunity to lead and some staff were also invited by the ISMT because they had the skills needed to lead particular parts of the improvement process:
People who we believed might have something to offer were invited to be part of different parts of the development along the way. Really anyone could step up and be part of the leadership if they wanted to be. The ISMT were very open. (S1MT2)

They further gave the example of a maths teacher and described how this built her confidence. ‘I’m thinking of one of our maths teachers. I remember her stepping up and presenting something really dynamic and that built her confidence”. Participant 6 from the same school, who was not a member of the ISMT, also supported the leadership opportunities that the process provided for staff:

So it allowed them to step up and experience what leadership involved in the way of coordinating, being collaborative, listening and working out what needed to stay and then sort of filtering out what didn’t so I think it was a really good opportunity for these people.(S1T6)

School 2 participant 7, who was the Coordinator of the ISMT commented that she made a point to ensure a variety of staff led the process, so that the process was not seen as hierarchical:

As I said, there were lots of opportunities for people to be able to develop their individual leadership skills. I tried to ensure that classroom teachers had an opportunity in which to deliver things to staff meetings so that it didn’t always seem to be coming from the top but coming from the grass roots so to speak. (S2MT7)

Within the category of leadership development some of the participants, who were members of the ISMT, also commented how the process particularly developed the leadership skills of the ISMT. This was apparent in the comment from School 3 participant 2 who observed how the process provided a structure for their leadership development and supported and strengthened the development of the team:
So it helped to develop ours. It helped to develop, I guess, leadership skills or – I
guess putting some of us out of our comfort zone a little bit, but in a guided way
as well, because it helped to – we were working with our strengths, I guess. So
that was the other thing too. We became quite a tight team. (S3MT2)

This found support in School 4 where participant 3 commented how as members of the ISMT
they developed their leadership skills through leadership at staff meetings. “I think as a group
the team built their capacity quite a bit in terms of them being asked to take leadership roles in
staff meetings with the staff and to do some planning around it”.

Within the document data there were two documents from School 1 that recognised that a
challenge for the school was to provide professional development for staff. This was seen in
the Report card where staff indicate the need for professional development. “The staff feel the
need for greater support re: professional development in terms of both time and resources.
This is also supported in a staff survey where two dot points show a request for professional
development.

- Greater emphasis on staff development opportunities.
- Improved opportunity for professional development, including faculty meeting time
  for collaborating, reflection, sharing of resources etc.

A third document, also from School 1 is contained in a reflection document of the ISMT
where they believe professional development has been enhanced in the school through the
improvement process: “The establishment of networks within my school and externally to
‘talk teaching”’. These responses support the need for professional development that supports
the building of the capacity of staff.

An important finding in the data from the surveys, interviews and documents seem to support
the idea that the success of the process is credited to staff professional development and
leadership development. Both the comments from the survey and interviews seem to support
the success being attributed to the professional development opportunities for staff and the
leadership development that provided opportunities for staff to interact, share their skills and
learn from others. The opportunities provided to members of the ISMT also seemed to
enhance their capacity to lead the process. The document data also supports the need for
professional development of staff.
The next focus area of Effect on Participants is related to the influence the process had on the direct impact and responsibility staff took for student learning.

4.1.2.6.2 Effect on Participants

There were two questions from the survey related to this section, shown in Table 4.10 (p. 180). The mean score for Question B5 for the area of Effect on Participants for the leadership focus of capacity building across the five schools was 3.92. School 1 showed the highest rating with a mean of 4.6. School 3 had the lowest rating with a mean of 3.5. Schools 2 and 5 also had lower means of 3.8 and 3.7 respectively. These ratings suggest that the teachers in these schools did not implement as much change in their classroom practice, as other schools, as a result of the school adopting their learning framework. A second question, C7, also related to this area. It rated whether the school allowed/provided professional development opportunities for staff that had a direct impact on student learning. The overall mean was 4.24 and School 1 again had the highest rating of 5.4 and Schools 4 and 5 had the lowest ratings of 3.5 and 3.7 respectively. Looking at the ratings from the two questions and comparing the data, in Schools 2 and 3 participants said that, although they had been given professional development opportunities, their classroom practice had not really changed after adopting the new learning framework. In School 4 classroom practice had changes but the school had not provided professional development opportunities. This seems to contradict the comments in the focus area of Focus of Leadership presented above, where participant 4 commented that there had been many opportunities for professional development. School 5 had low ratings in each of these questions suggesting there was little professional development and classroom practice had not really changed. As a result there does not seem to be a clear connection between the professional development provided to staff and the impact of the learning framework on student learning in their classroom practice.

The open-ended sections of the survey had two responses that related to the area of Effect on Participants in the leadership focus of capacity building. Of the responses, School 3, survey 9 commented that the learning framework had meant that staff were more focused on student learning: “Student learning is always a focus. Using technologies that are most engaging for our students” and survey 10 affirms this focus, while adding that teachers have the ability to impact on students through their teaching strategies: “This shapes how each teacher identifies the need for students to be independent critical thinkers in the world beyond the College. Teaching strategies lead to this”. These comments suggest that staff are focused and took an active role in their responsibility to support the learning needs of students and making
learning engaging in the classroom. The learning framework seems to provide a unified approach for these needs to be met and for staff to have a direct impact on student learning.

The interview responses related to Effect on Participants, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed only four responses from School 1 and one response from School 3. These responses generally indicated that the participants felt that the process had supported staff to effect change in their classroom that would impact on student learning. The comment from School 1 participant 7 suggests that the capacity of staff was built through their focus on best practice in the classroom: “As far as staff themselves. I guess that opportunity to reflect with best practice built their capacity”. This was supported by participant 6, from the same school, who commented on the professional sharing of staff to support student learning: “There’s been that sort of professional sharing of ideas in what makes or what might help our kids to become better learners”. School 3, participant 6, also acknowledged a focus on classroom practice and how the improvement process had led staff to look at the individual needs of students and how this was impacting in the classroom:

I think the movement towards an effective pedagogy, knowing our students. So for instance the IDEAS process has identified differentiation as a major pedagogical element. It’s now used as an impetus to move to the next phase. (S3T6)

Within the documents, the School 1 Report card acknowledges that staff have different views on best practice in the classroom and that that was an area that was a challenge for the school. They also added there needed to be more communication with students regarding teaching methods: “Staff are not communicating to students about the ways they teach, students learn and how they use equipment. There is a discrepant notion among staff as to what constitutes an excellent teacher”.

The interviews and open-ended comments generally seem to contradict some of the responses of schools in the survey. They suggest there has been a focus on what teachers are doing in the classroom to effect change. Whereas the survey responses suggested that the learning framework developed through the improvement process had not caused staff to change their classroom practice. This was particularly evident in Schools 2 and 3.
The data identified in the documents suggests a focus on the needs of students and the teaching and learning in the school. This is seen in the School Report card from School 1 where staff feel that teaching and learning is impacted on because of limited time to engage in professional conversation and development. This also links with the previous section in that:

The staff feel the need for greater support re: professional development in terms of both time and resources and that teaching and learning are being impacted upon by a lack of time and the inflexible use of time. (S1RC)

This is also supported from their reflection after one of their staff development days: “The challenge is to take the focus off the teacher and put it firmly on the learners”. In other documents from School 1 they take this forward and report a focus on promoting a supportive environment which is a particular focus of their Annual Development Plan and one of their learning principles: “In 2012 (the school) will focus on ways to promote a supportive environment, where students and teachers work productively in classrooms clearly focused on learning”. A staff survey also reports some achievement of this through the comment: “The attention paid to improving curriculum programs, including detailed analysis of learning activities”. School 4 also reports a significant achievement through a staff survey where the focus has been on learning strategies and the use of technology: “Becoming more technology efficient and using it more in classes”. The focus on students is also supported in School 5 where through a staff survey they acknowledge that they engage students: “teaching and learning through a variety of teaching strategies and differentiated curriculum”. These responses support the responses in the interview data and show an indication of a change in classroom practice that seemed to be contradicted in the survey data.

The third focus area of Contextual Considerations is presented in the next section. It focuses on how the process builds individual and collective capacity in a context that supports the sustainability of the improvement.

4.1.2.6.3 Contextual Considerations

Two further survey questions, shown in Table 4.10 (p. 180), relate to the leadership focus of capacity building under Contextual Considerations. In Question B6, both Schools 1 and 4 had the highest mean of 5.0 and School 5 had the lowest mean of 4.3. The overall mean of 4.72 suggests that staff believe the school improvement process has enabled the school to describe itself as a professional learning community. Question D14 also has high ratings from each of
the schools, with an overall rating of 4.66. School 4 has the highest mean of 5.5 and Schools 2 and 3 the lowest rating of 4.3. This question shows that staff, in the schools, believe the expertise of teachers is recognised and valued. In this context, the ratings suggest that the schools believe that they operate at a professional level with staff supporting the improvement through their expertise and dedication to teaching and learning. The fact that they feel their expertise is recognised and valued seems to suggest that they are more willing to engage in the process and share their knowledge. This adds further to the school’s capacity to seek improvement and it supports the data presented in the leadership focus of relationships in the area of Effect on Participants.

From the open-ended responses, only two related to the area of Contextual Considerations. School 3, survey 8, described how the process had built capacity because it had involved all staff and provided a structure to review faculty practices that increased the knowledge of faculty members: “Yes as it involved all teaching staff and involved a review of practices within each faculty”. The second response from School 1, survey 8 described how capacity was built through using staff expertise to facilitate workshops: “Through workshops where staff with particular talents/skills were identified and used to facilitate groups”. These comments support the ratings from the survey where staff felt they functioned as a professional learning community and that their expertise was recognised and valued. Through professional conversations and utilising staff expertise there may also be a greater chance of the school being able to sustain the improvement.

The interview responses in the area of Contextual Considerations and shown Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed three responses each from Schools 1 and 2, six responses from School 3, two responses from School 4 and four responses from School 5. From the responses there were two factors that emerged that showed a context where the process firstly, built the capacity of individual staff members who shared their expertise with others and secondly, enabled the improvement to be sustained.

In the first context some participants described how the individual capacity of staff was built when the skills of different members of staff were utilised. This is seen in the comment from School 2 participant 3 who observed how influential this action was to the process:
So when we were talking about what shared meant or what holistic meant (concepts from the school’s learning principles), those people who were in another context, classroom teachers, would stand up in front of the staff and explain, elaborate and start those sorts of discussions which is really powerful. (S2T3)

Participant 6, from the same school, also described how these staff became resource people on staff for their faculties to support the improvement process: “We trained up – each person from the ISMT was from a different KLA, so they were the resource person for that KLA around the IDEAS process”. In doing this, School 3 participant 2 observed that these staff were recognised and acknowledged as experts and this supported the leadership of the process: “Those people who we had seen doing those projects, or showcasing those projects, they were people who were seen as the experts to go to now”. This is also supported by School 5 participant 4 who commented that, in this context, the capacity of these staff was developed: “So I think it provided those opportunities that people then looked at another individual with different eyes and recognised that these people do have some very different skills”. This relates to the first focus area of Focus of Leadership which acknowledged how the process developed the leadership skills of staff.

The second factor that emerged in this area revealed a context where participants believed that the structure of the process enabled the improvement to be sustained. In some schools, participants believed that the improvement would be sustained even if the ISMT members changed because the process had involved and included everybody. This is seen in the comment from School 3 participant 3 who felt the school had a very clear vision that had not only been developed by all staff but was therefore owned by all staff and not just the ISMT: “While they’re the face, it’s built from everybody. So whether or not they moved on or somebody else took over the reins, I do believe that that vision is definitely sustainable”. Participant 6 also from School 3 supported the comment that the improvement would be sustained because they felt the process had provided a sound structure and they could see that the school had made improvements:

I think because it’s always a permeating factor in the culture of the school it is a sustainable practice if you will and I suppose where we started and where we are now, it’s provided the foundations and the building blocks. So I think it is a very, very sustainable structure to have within the College. (S3T6)
School 4 participant 3 also acknowledged that the process was sustainable because it had changed the way staff acted and behaved: “I think it is sustainable because I think it’s become part of the way that we speak, the way that we deal with each other”. These changes in the way staff interact together have developed a supportive culture that seems to maintain the improvement in the school.

There was no documentary evidence that related to the area of Contextual Considerations.

These ratings and comments suggest that the context of capacity building requires all staff to be active participants in the improvement process. Participants acknowledge that capacity can be built through the support of professional and leadership development, professional conversation and recognising the skills of the staff. They also identify the importance of building a culture in the school to support and sustain the improvement process.

4.1.2.6.4 Summary

Overall, schools are perceived as being very supportive of staff having the opportunity for professional development and leadership development. However, not all staff who participated in the survey saw this development transferring into the classroom where teachers can have a direct impact on student learning. This is particularly evident in Schools 2, 3 and 5. There also did not seem to be a connection between the professional development provided to staff and the direct impact on student learning in the classroom. Of the staff who were interviewed, the participants felt the process had developed staff professionally and acknowledged that some staff had developed further skills that enhanced their leadership capacity. The participants also acknowledged that the improvement was sustainable because the process provided a firm foundation and a change in culture. There was a clearer indication in the document data that there needed to be a focus on students and their learning and classroom strategies to enhance this. In Schools 1, 4 and 5 there was evidence that there had been some changes in classroom practice.

The fourth leadership focus of Moral Purpose which relates to a commitment and alignment of the school values is presented in the next section.
4.1.2.7 Moral Purpose

The data relating to Moral Purpose is presented, mapped against the three focus areas (see Table 2.5, p. 93). The definition from Table 2.5, for moral purpose, which was developed from a synthesis of the viewpoints taken from the literature, describes the Focus of Leadership as ‘preparing students to be responsible citizens’, for the Effect on Participants to have a ‘commitment to the school values’ and for Contextual Considerations an ‘alignment of values’. The survey data is presented first, followed by the interview and then the document data.

The survey questions related to Moral Purpose are shown in Table 4.11 below. An overall mean of the five schools is shown and the individual school means are scored using the same six point Likert-scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey questions</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>School 5</th>
<th>Mean for all schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D6. The school vision helps to prepare students to be</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsible citizens for the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect on Participants</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D7. The values of the school community are lived</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through the school vision.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Considerations</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8. The vision for learning at the school is now</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evident in classroom practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.11: Schools’ means response for the focus area of Moral purpose*
4.1.2.7.1 Focus of Leadership

Within the survey data there is one question related to the Focus of leadership, Question D6, as shown in Table 4.11 above. It has an overall mean of 4.78, with School 1 the highest rating of 5.4 and School 4 the lowest rating of 4. In each of the schools the ratings are high and participants acknowledged that the school vision helps to prepare students to be responsible citizens for the future. This clearly aligns with the Focus of Leadership definition and the commitment to the school’s values realised through its vision.

Within the open-ended responses there were two responses related to the leadership focus of Moral Purpose under Focus of Leadership. A response from School 2, survey 8 described how the vision and learning framework had contributed to school improvement by “students taking more responsibility for their own learning through pride, positivity and participation” and School 3, survey 8 described how “More students are completing Year 12 as confident, responsible and intelligent young ladies eager to continue tertiary studies and take on challenges”. These comments, from the staff, show how the improvement process has affected the students and their learning and describes how the process seemed to help build confidence in the students and prepare them for life after school.

The interview responses related to the Focus of Leadership, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed one response from School 1, two responses from School 2, four responses from School 3 and three responses each from Schools 4 and 5. The participants supported the definition for the area of the Focus of Leadership recognising the importance of preparing students to be responsible citizens. This can be seen in the response from School 3 participant 3 who commented that the staff had spent a lot of time making sure the vision reflected the understanding that students are lifelong learners and it was important to equipe them with the necessary skills for the world beyond school:

We focused a lot about this in really looking at the moral and ethical validity of our vision, and whether or not it was what we wanted to achieve. I think we definitely got there because we’re looking at the skills that the young ladies should have upon graduation from (the school), and lifelong learners. Not just, if you will, teaching to a test, but equipping them with the skills, or the necessary skills, to cope out in the outside world. So I think the moral purpose of the (school improvement) process is something that really was hit home to staff and something that we were most definitely conscious of. (S3T3)
This emphasis is supported by School 2 participant 7 who also acknowledged that one of the roles of educators is to prepare students for the future and life after school:

I think that’s really very important because when your vision and your pedagogical framework has to reflect who you are as a school – we spent quite a bit of time looking at what were the important values for (our) students and what did we want them to be when they left the school as graduates. (S2MT7)

School 3 participant 1 commented that it was important that their vision highlighted the significance of students as global citizens: “One of the words that we identified as significant for our vision for learning was students who have a global understanding and global empathy”. Participant 6, from the same school supported this and added that this was reflected in the teaching programs: “We want our students to be global citizens with a genuine concern for others. That’s now permeating in the way in which we relate to each other, in our programs, in the way in which we relate to the students”. These responses seem to emphasise the importance of students having a broader understanding of the world they live in.

Other participants also acknowledged that the process had included an exploration of the school values that centred the school on what was at the core of their existence. This is seen in the comments from School 4 participant 4 who commented that, by incorporating the school values, the focus had given attention to trying to make the school a better place particularly for the students:

I think that the school values have always been part of the process of IDEAS. They’ve tried to incorporate the whole (school) charism and always with the understanding that it’s for the betterment of our students and for the school to be a better place. (S4T4)

These comments emphasise the importance of a school’s commitment to the development of the ‘whole’ student. The participants highlighted the significance of the school vision reflecting their values and what the school stands for. Participants in the interviews recognised that it was important for staff to have an understanding of their purpose and a bigger picture of the meaning of why we educate students. They recognised the school improvement process had had an effect on their responsibility as educators to ensure students were global citizens.
Within the documents it was emphasised in both Schools 1 and 3 report cards that the schools already were recognised as schools that supported their students for life after school. This is seen in the point from School 1’s report card that was acknowledged also in the leadership focus area of ownership, citing that the school: “prepares students well for an ever-changing future as concerned, active citizens and inspiring students”. School 3 also has documented in their report card that the school is “a centre of excellence in developing life-long learners well equipped to respond to the challenges of life beyond school”. This suggests both schools are already supporting their students to be responsible citizens. School 1 acknowledges in a staff survey that their students also support social justice initiatives: “Community involvement – Vinnies Van, Buddies Day”. In School 2, also through a staff survey, the staff identify on a Staff Development Day that there is a need for them to: “develop students as global citizens”. This aligns the interview data and the survey data through the focus of the school vision.

The next focus area is Effect on Participants and recognises the importance of a commitment to the school values.

4.1.2.7.2 Effect on Participants

The average individual survey responses for Question D7 related to Effect on Participants from Table 4.11 (p. 191) show an overall mean for the five schools of 4.80. School 1 has the highest mean of 5.5 and School 5 has the lowest mean of 4.3. These high ratings suggest that the schools believed their values were lived through the school vision, suggesting that the development of the vision had really incorporated the values that the school espoused. This understanding of and commitment to the values by the school community suggests that it is an important element that has contributed to the improvement process.

There was also a response from School 5, survey 7 in the open-ended question of the survey that described how the school improvement process had allowed staff the opportunity to revise the school values in the development of their vision statement: “Revising of school values and vision at staff meetings and staff development days”. This supported the importance staff placed on developing a clear vision that had a core understanding and commitment to the school’s values. This shows a strong relationship with the leadership focus of ownership and the importance of communicating a clear vision.
The interview responses related to the area of Effect on Participants, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed one response each from Schools 1 and 4, no responses from Schools 2 and 3, and three responses from School 5. In recognising a commitment to the school values, the participants in the survey acknowledged the founders of their schools and were committed to ensuring the values they advocated were continued. This is seen in the comments from School 1 participant 2 who described the connection staff had with people who had supported the school’s development in the past and their desire to continue their good work:

I think we were very, very aware of what the people had done before us, the generations before us and we wanted to honour that and continue that, the hard work that had been done by the parishioners here, the community itself, the priests, the sisters and the brothers and we wanted to build on that and really honour that. (S1T2)

This connection acknowledges the appreciation and respect staff had for its history and foundations and obviously forms part of the focus area of Contextual Consideration in Research Question 1.

Other participants described how the process allowed them to revise and reflect on their school values so they were sure they reflected the current values and what they wanted for the students. This revising and reflection on the values supports the comment in the open-end question and is seen in the comments from School 5 participant 4 who also described how the learning principle statements allowed a commitment and shared understanding of the values for them to take forward into the future:

Definitely our values were – it did provide an opportunity for us to articulate our values for sure. We knew what it was, we just couldn’t put words to it and so this was a great opportunity to actually sit down and say alright, now who are we? What do we value? What do we want for our girls? So from that perspective to see it in concrete, to get everyone on the same page and to have statements we could move forward with by saying yes, that’s what a (founder) school that’s what we want for our students, that’s what we want as teachers in a school. That was very well done. (S5T4)
The commitment to the school values was also described by School 4 participant 7 as a real strength of the process and the motivation to support the success of the improvement:

I think that’s probably one of the places where we’ve probably got our greatest strength is commitment to school values, and I think that’s a huge motivation for all our leaders in the school. The (school improvement) process and how that impacted on that, I think probably the moral purpose could have been one of the driving forces that was behind everyone's desire to make the whole thing successful. (S4MT7)

These comments seem to support the notion that when staff have an understanding of and reflect on the moral purpose of the school they realise the importance of their commitment to the school values. Participants also suggested that these values were strongly connected with the founder of their school and were committed to ensuring the values they espoused were continued and lived within the school community.

Within the document data there is one document from School 1 that supports this area. It is their report card where they acknowledge that the school already reflects their school values in teaching: “Teaching is carried out in a caring environment where individual students are respected in ways that reflect community values”. This supports the survey data that showed the school’s values are reflected in their vision.

The alignment of these values is presented in the next section under the focus area of Contextual Considerations.

4.1.2.7.3 Contextual Considerations
There was one survey question related to the area of Contextual Considerations. Question C8 showed School 1 with the highest mean of 5.0 and School 4 with the lowest mean of 3.5. With an overall mean of 4.24 the staff who participated in the survey believed that the vision for learning at the school was now evident in classroom practice. This suggests a change has occurred from the schools’ involvement in the improvement process. School 4 does not rate this as high as the other schools. It is interesting to note that School 1 has the highest mean in each section of this leadership focus of moral purpose and suggests that they rate this as an important element that has contributed to the success of the school improvement process.
Within the context of Moral Purpose in the open-ended responses in the survey there was one comment from School 3, survey 5 that is related to this section. This response acknowledges that a vision has been developed, however, suggests that it now needs to exist within the classroom to see a real alignment of what is written and what is practised: “The vision is there but I feel we have still quite a way to go in terms of implementation into our working programs”. This comment suggests the importance of the vision and a realisation that this vision, if it is to be lived in the school, needs to be active in the classroom. The participants suggest that the process has supported the development of the vision and now more work needs to be done for implementation in the classroom so that there is real alignment of vision, values and practices across the school. This comment contradicts the survey rating from School 3, which was relatively high at 4.3, and suggests that the school vision for learning is now evident in classroom practice.

The responses related to Contextual Considerations, in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed four responses from School 1, eight responses from School 2, three responses from School 3 and five responses each from Schools 4 and 5. From the responses, two main themes emerged that outlined an alignment of values: the connection to the school’s founder and history, and a connection and relationship between the school’s vision and learning principles and its values.

The first theme was the connection to the school’s founder and history and suggested that staff were very committed to making sure the founder’s values formed the basis of the school’s overall values. This is seen in the comment from School 2 participant 5 who suggests schools are places of more than just education: “Yeah so understanding that our school stands for something that’s deeper than just education, like morally shaping people, taking the example of our founder to continue on her – what’s the word – charism”. This is supported by School 5 participant 5 who described how the values of the school were always an important feature of who they were and from where the school had begun: “Reaffirm would be a good word because it’s very – it’s always been very vocal in this school, the (founder) values that we have”. The school’s values seem to be significant for School 4 participant 7 also and she suggest that they are the motivation for people’s involvement in activities and processes: “As soon as you mention values and things here, that’s a very strong motivation for people to embrace things and get on with them”. These comments seem to suggest that it is important to staff that the values of the school show a strong alliance and link with the values of their founder and history.
The second theme to emerge from the interviews was the importance of a connection and relationship between the school’s vision and learning principles and its values. This is seen in the comment from School 1 participant 2 who suggested that the school’s involvement in the improvement process was partly to make sure all of these important elements aligned:

That goes without saying, that the whole expert learning principles and vision and mission statement would not have developed unless we really examined our school values, our commitment to our charisms and understood what it was to be a Catholic school. So definitely the moral purpose of - was the whole reason for doing it. We wanted to know who we were, we wanted to know what our personality was as a school and how we fit into our community and what our demographic was. We wanted to build on that. (S1MT2)

This is supported by School 4 participant 3 who made the point that, for the ISMT and for the school, a major focus was to make sure the learning framework encompassed the school values to embody what the school stood for and what they wanted to achieve:

It contributed a lot because I think where pedagogy married with our values as a Catholic girls’ school was constantly – it wasn’t the intention but it was something that we were really clear about that at the core we are a Catholic girls’ school and that we take pride in that. So I guess it made us as a team and also as a school in the engagement, in the activities, basically identified that that’s our core values and that’s that everything fits within that framework. (S4MT3)

This comment supports the importance of aligning the school’s values with their pedagogical practices. Participants in the interviews suggest that an important element in the success of the improvement process has been to bring things into alignment in the school. This has enabled staff to see the bigger picture of the improvement process.
Within the document data there are three schools that provided evidence to support this area and the alignment of values, Schools 1, 2 and 3. In Schools 1 and 3, Staff Development Day planning documents outline the ‘History walk’ activity that connects with the responses connecting the values to the history of the school. In School 2 minutes of meetings show a focus of discussion on the values and the importance they placed on spending time in discussion to ensure they were also reflected in the school vision. These documents support the data highlighting the importance of a commitment to the school values and an alignment of the values.

4.1.2.7.4 Summary
Overall the schools involved in the survey and interviews acknowledged the importance of preparing students for life after school and setting high expectations for their achievement. They also highlighted the significance of a commitment and alignment of school values when developing a school vision and that this vision also needed to be something that was seen within classroom practice. The document data also supported the commitment and alignment of school values. The participants seemed to suggest that the moral purpose of the school was an important element that can make a significant contribution to the success of the school improvement process.

Continuous improvement is the fifth leadership focus and is presented in the next section. It is related to the building of a learning culture that seeks to develop the confidence of staff to support the needs of students in innovative ways.

4.1.2.8 Continuous Improvement
Following the pattern of the other four leadership focuses the data collected for the area of continuous improvement is presented under the three focus areas: Focus of Leadership, Effect on Followers and Contextual Considerations derived from the literature (see definition Table 2.5, p. 93). The definition from Table 2.5, created from a synthesis of the opinions taken from the literature, outlines the Focus of Leadership as ‘consistency and innovation’, the Effect on Participants as ‘collaboration develops confidence’, and the Contextual Considerations are that it ‘builds a culture of learning’. Under each of these focus areas the survey, interview and document data is presented.
The survey questions related to continuous improvement are shown in Table 4.12 below. The responses were scored using the same six point Likert-scale showing the individual means for each school and an overall mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey questions</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>School 5</th>
<th>Mean for all schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8. The new learning framework for the school has improved student learning outcomes.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C9. There is evidence of new innovative approaches to student learning as a result of the new vision and learning framework.</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D8. There is a shared language for learning at the school.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect on Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D13. Decisions regarding student learning are made collaboratively.</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Considerations</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9. The school-wide vision and learning framework has been successfully integrated into the curriculum areas in which I teach.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D9. The development of a school-wide pedagogy has highlighted the importance of a strong learning culture in the school.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.12: Schools’ means response for the focus area of Continuous improvement*
4.1.2.8.1 Focus of Leadership

From the survey responses, three questions related to the area of the Focus of Leadership. Question B8 had an overall mean score from the five schools of 3.98. School 1 showed the highest mean of 4.6 and Schools 4 and 5 had the lowest means of 3.5 and 3.4 respectively. The overall mean suggests that the staff who completed the survey felt the new learning framework has made some improvement to student learning outcomes. However, in Schools 4 and 5 this was not as evident. In the second survey question C9, School 1 had the highest mean of 4.9 and School 4 had the lowest mean of 4.0. For this question the overall mean of 4.46 suggested that staff believed there was evidence of new innovative approaches to student learning as a result of the new vision and learning framework. The higher ratings, especially in Schools 4 and 5, do not match their previous question ratings. The staff are suggesting that, since the introduction of the new learning framework, there have been new innovative approaches to student learning but these are not improving student learning outcomes. The third question D8 indicates that there is a shared language for learning at the school. School 1 had the highest rating of 5.3, Schools 3 and 5 had the lowest rating of 4.3 and the overall mean was 4.60. These high ratings suggest that the shared language is very evident across the schools. Across these three survey questions School 1 has the highest rating in all three. This suggests that School 1 rates very favourably the area of Focus of Leadership and therefore rates the school highly for consistency and innovation, suggesting there is a shared language for learning at the school.

Of the open-ended responses provided only three are connected to the area of Focus of Leadership. The comments seem to illustrate that there is a need for consistency across the school in implementing the learning framework. This is seen in School 5, survey 7 who commented that the framework had “provided a reminder for all staff of the consistency in approach that is needed to successfully implement the school vision”. School 5, survey 8 added to this describing how this consistency is seen through a common pedagogical language: “We are all speaking a common language in terms of pedagogical practices”. This comment indicates that the process has enabled a common language to be developed which gives consistency to the pedagogical approach in the classroom. School 2, survey 1 provides an example of how the school implements the learning framework across the school: “Each KLA has taken responsibility for a particular element of the framework”. This approach provides a consistent way of focusing on the learning framework. It also provides a structure to involve all key learning areas (KLA). These comments regarding consistency and common
language support the survey results above and could be an influence on the improvement to student learning outcomes in the classroom that staff are suggesting in the survey responses.

These ratings and comments suggest the importance of maintaining a consistent approach and common language for learning in the school. Within the school improvement process of IDEAS each school develops their own individual learning framework and learning principles. The staff in the schools have suggested that the use of the learning framework has resulted in a consistent approach through the use of a common language and that they have seen some improvements in learning outcomes for students as a result.

The interview responses related to the area of Focus of Leadership showed one response from School 1, two responses each from Schools 2 and 4, three responses from School 3 and five responses from School 5. Of the responses offered, there are two main themes that have emerged: consistency and innovation.

The first theme of consistency revealed that staff believed the learning framework developed through the IDEAS process provided a structure to support a consistent approach to learning. This is seen in the following comment from School 3 participant 6: “I think as I said before it provides a framework and the approach has been consistent all the way through”. School 4 participant 5 also describes a consistent approach to learning and acknowledges that the leadership structures in the school have supported staff professional development to try to provide more creative and innovative teaching and learning strategies: “There is a consistent approach. The leadership are providing our staff days where we are doing lots of professional development, trying to be innovative”.

This shows a strong relationship to the second theme that emerged from the interview data regarding the innovative approaches and opportunities that the process has provided. It also links with the leadership focus of capacity building in the area of Focus of Leadership.

School 1 participant 2 commented that the improvement process had provided the impetus for staff to try new, innovative approaches in the classroom:
We have a lot of staff who are really excited about new innovations, about new ways of teaching, about using technology, about trying new things. This has been a vehicle that they can practise those innovations within. So I think since we’ve done – since we’ve implemented our principles, people have felt very encouraged to move forward and try new things. (S1MT2)

This was supported by School 4 participant 6 who added that, through the process, staff were more open to sharing resources and acknowledging the expertise of colleagues: “There’s definitely innovation and sharing of resources evident within our KLA; the sharing of expertise of different people”. Further support is shown in the following comment from School 5 participant 7: “It has continued to improve learning, innovation”. This comment again links the two themes describing how innovation has provided consistency and continuous improvement in the school.

These comments suggest participants can see real connections and positive change within this consistent approach. The development of the learning principles in each school is described as a real way to provide a consistency and innovation to classroom practice.

Within the documents provided, Schools 1, 4 and 5 showed evidence in this area. Both Schools 4 and 5 acknowledged achievements, with School 4 suggesting that there is consistency to support the learning in the school: “Evidence of consistency in the learning community with regard to the management of reluctant learners”. School 5 also acknowledges that there is a consistent approach through: “Consistency across KLA’s, staff”. School 1 in their report card see this area as a challenge for them and a need for them to focus on classroom practice and student needs: “Staff are not communicating to students about ways they teach, students learn and how they use equipment”. These responses support a need for a consistent approach and teaching strategies that support the individual needs of students.

The focus area of Effect on Participants is presented in the next section. It is related to the collaborative way staff have engaged in the process and that then has built their confidence for continuous improvement in the school.
4.1.2.8.2 Effect on Participants

There was one survey question that was directly related to the Effect on Participants. In Question D13, School 1 has the highest mean of 5.1 and School 5 has the lowest rating of 4.0. The overall rating of 4.58 indicates that staff consider that decisions regarding student learning are made collaboratively. This suggests that being part of this process allows staff to be informed and confident in the school’s direction for student learning.

There were twelve responses in the open-ended questions related to this section. These responses align with the definition that describes staff involvement in terms of collaboration and are consistent with the ratings from the survey above. School 3, survey 4 said: “The entire school community has been involved in this process” and survey 9 from the same school said involvement was: “Particularly in collaborative learning activities”. This idea is also supported by School 2, survey 2 who describes links between the collaborative approach to developing the school vision and learning framework and the improvements in the school: “Having excellent school leadership and collaboration with staff regarding the school vision and learning framework has contributed to the school improvement”. School 5, survey 13 also added that the process had been led: “through collaborative discussions and collation of resultant identified priorities”. These responses suggest that collaborative processes have contributed to the school improvement. This seems to allow staff to feel a sense of confidence in the part they have played in developing the school vision and learning framework. It also supports their continued and consistent approach to school improvement.

The interview responses related to Effect on participants, shown in Table 4.5 (p. 154), showed three responses each from Schools 1 and 4, two responses each from Schools 2 and 3, and one response from School 5. Participants responded that the process had provided opportunities for staff to collaborate in a variety of ways. This was seen in the comment from School 5 participant 6 who described the way staff were collaborating by visiting each other’s classroom and observing good practice:
We went, why can’t we spend a little bit of time – when we have a little bit of free – and say hey, can I come and see how you’re engaging students, how they’re learning? I think that was a very, very big success of what we’re doing here now. The IDEAS process played that – it almost like a little light bulb switch, do that, and not being afraid. Because I think sometimes you just shut the door – I find a lot of teachers, and that’s it, and they can’t deal with another teacher in the classroom. Because we think that we’re adults, and we’re the teacher, but we’ve learned to let go of that. It’s more no, we are here for the students, and we’re here to prove what we’re doing every day. It is definitely happening here. (S5MT6)

School 4 participant 3 added to the theme of collaboration, describing how the process provided the opportunity for staff to discuss their practices and continue to look at ways to improve:

I think because in itself IDEAS is a process of continuous improvement and it offered an approach to it. I guess because it radiated out to all members of staff that we need to be looking at our practice and deciding what it is that we should be doing and shouldn’t be doing and what our intentions are, then yes it’s certainly been part of that. (S4MT3)

Other participants describe how, through collaborative practices, staff were very open to sharing resources. This is seen in the comment from School 4 participant 5 who described a very open and collegial atmosphere amongst staff: “There’s a very good spirit amongst the staff, so people are very willing to share”. The openness of staff to share resources supports the comments in the previous area of Focus of Leadership.

As part of the collaboration, staff seemed to become more confident to voice their opinions and share their ideas. This is seen in the comment from School 1 participant 6 who suggested the process and its collaborative approach became a way to get staff on board: “Some staff became more confident at voicing their ideas within those working groups, I’d say. Because it became infectious and if they wanted to be on board it sort of brought them on board”. This suggests a real confidence had developed amongst staff through the process.
Within the documents there are two schools that provided evidence in this area. School 3 provides Staff Development Day planning documentation which outlines activities that are collaborative and School 5 provides a staff survey that outlines that staff support learning where staff: “compare and share work with others”. These documents support the responses in the survey and interview data that show the importance of collaboration amongst staff. The survey, interview and document data seem to support the success of the improvement process and the contribution that a collaborative approach makes to the way staff have engaged in it. This is a significant step as staff have felt very much a part of the decision-making process that allows for continuous improvement in the school.

The next section presents the area of Contextual Considerations and relates to how continuous improvement builds a culture of learning in the school.

4.1.2.8.3 Contextual Considerations

From the survey there are two questions that relate to this section. Question B9 had School 1 with the highest rating of 4.6 and Schools 4 and 5 the lowest ratings of 3.5 and 3.7 respectively. With an overall mean from the five schools of 4.12, the staff who responded indicated that they have successfully integrated the school-wide vision and learning framework into the curriculum areas in which they teach. However, this was not as successful in Schools 4 and 5. The second question D9 had an overall mean of 4.64, with School 1 again showing the highest mean of 5.3 and School 5 again the lowest mean of 4.2. These ratings showed that in all schools staff believed the development of a school-wide pedagogy had highlighted the importance of a strong learning culture in the school. In reflecting on both questions, although in all schools staff could see how the school-wide pedagogy had highlighted the importance of a strong learning culture, in Schools 4 and 5 this did not translate to the staff in these schools integrating it as well into their own classrooms.

From the open-ended questions in the survey eleven responses related to the area of Contextual Considerations in the leadership focus area of continuous improvement. These responses reinforce the importance of a consistent approach to pedagogy and described a culture that valued teaching and learning. This is seen in the comment from School 2, survey 8: “The school now has a solid foundation and a vision of where the school is heading in terms of pedagogy” and this is backed up by School 4, survey 1, in their comment: “It has contributed along with other factors to a more unified approach to student learning”.

Interestingly this comment from the participant in School 4 is inconsistent with the survey mean for question B9 presented above. From the survey and the lower mean of 3.5 the staff suggest that the school-wide vision and learning framework has not been as successfully integrated into the curriculum areas. However, from the open-ended response, the participant suggests that there has been a more unified approach. Both comments, though, leave room to suggest that there is still work to be done in the school. In School 5 a number of comments supported the notion that the school had a consistent approach to pedagogy that was the focus of classroom teaching. Survey 5 said: “There is definitely dialogue about pedagogy and best practice for teaching and learning” and Survey 14 commented, “Subject meetings became more focused on pedagogy”. These comments, like School 4, are inconsistent with their lower mean of 3.7. Although there have been conversations about pedagogy, this has not translated as well into their classrooms.

Taking the survey means and the open-ended comments into consideration, it is suggested that the context needed for continuous improvement is that of a unified community that has, at its centre, a vision for learning. Staff comments have been in agreement that for continuous improvement a school needs to build a culture of the importance of learning. It is also important that individual teachers take responsibility and change their practice to implement the agreed learning framework. Staff suggest in this context that this has happened to varying degrees.

The interview responses related to the area of Contextual Considerations showed two responses each from Schools 1 and 4, five responses each from Schools 2 and 3, and one response from School 5. The responses describe a change in the culture since the adoption of the improvement process. This is seen in the comment from School 5 participant 6 who acknowledged that staff now have a better understanding and acceptance of the need to continually strive for improvement in their school: “I think that element of continuous, the awareness of the need for continuous improvement, is much more widely accepted now than it would have been pre-IDEAS”. This is also seen in School 3 participant 7 who describes a culture focused on improving learning: “I think I feel the culture here is one of always striving for best practice, what can we do better”. School 4 participant 6 also acknowledged a focus on improving learning that is evident in the school: “I think the focus definitely has been on improving delivery of our teaching and learning and that’s very evident”. School 1 participant 3 added to this and described more specifically how the improvement in learning was focused on meeting the needs of the students in the classroom:
It’s been a continuous improvement, they’re always trying to find a better way of doing things in that and as I said, it’s the tailoring of the curriculum that we offer to meet the needs of individual kids. I think that’s continued over the years since. (S1T3)

This was supported by School 1 participant 6 who identified this focus on student needs and the work the staff had done on providing differentiated activities for students. It also ignited other groups who had previously operated in the school and gave them a renewed focus:

Because other things sort of flowed out of the IDEAS process I think that focus on continually trying to improve has happened, like the differentiation being adopted more strongly. The reflective practices, not only of staff in their practices but also the students in their learning. I think that’s been very good and it’s probably not directly linked with the IDEAS process but the redevelopment or reestablishment of our professional learning group, I think that’s sort of an offshoot. (S1T6)

This focus on pedagogy is also seen in the comment from School 2 participant 2: “So it provided the vehicle for the staff to look at that and to look at our pedagogy”. More support came from School 3 participant 3 who also identifies the importance of aligning the pedagogy with the school vision and common goal:

Look I guess nothing’s perfect so there’s always room for improvement, and that idea of always reflecting on the school approach, the pedagogy, and then your own personal pedagogy. I guess not trying to dictate a personal pedagogy but just to be aware of the fact that it needs to align in some sense to the school vision and school-wide pedagogy, and if it doesn’t then we’re on different pages and not really working towards a common goal. (S3T3)

This comment links with the previous leadership focus of ownership and the significance of providing a clear vision that supports a common goal in the school.
The participants in the interviews highlight that in the area of the Contextual Considerations there seems to have been real success in the process building a culture of learning in the school through staff understanding and acceptance of the need to continually look for ways to improve their teaching practices in the classroom. This is seen in the review of their teaching style in the classroom, their collaboration and exchange of ideas with colleagues and through tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of students.

Within the document data School 3 provides two documents that support the building of a culture of learning in the school. In their report card this is seen as one of their challenges to align their priorities and pedagogy to support the learning process: “The adoption of a global strategy such as IDEAS to align our priorities and pedagogy will support community growth in this challenge”. The second document shows activities planned for a Staff Development Day that focuses on learning and the needs of students. Both these documents support a culture that identifies and focuses on pedagogy and the needs of students.

It is interesting to note that School I has the highest rating in each of the survey questions related to continuous improvement. It suggests the importance the school places on trying to ensure that it builds a culture of learning. This is seen through its desire to be innovative in the classroom and the consistent approach it takes to implementing its learning principles to meet the individual needs of students.

4.1.2.8.4 Summary

Overall from the survey data, staff in the schools believe the school vision and learning framework has been successfully integrated into the curriculum areas in which they teach. However, in Schools 4 and 5 this has not been as successful and the staff do not believe that this learning framework has improved student learning outcomes as much as in other schools. The participants in the interviews expressed the need for a consistent approach to learning in the school and a common language to speak. They believed a culture of learning and continuous improvement was developed through collaboration and linking all aspects of learning to a common vision. They also describe a real change in the way teaching and learning now happens in the school. The document data also supports the focus on building a culture of learning in the school.
The sixth leadership focus of Support is presented in the next section. It acknowledges the complexity of change and the importance of reflection and evaluation to build an openness to change.

### 4.1.2.9 Support

The final leadership focus area is support. The data will again be presented under the three focus areas: Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations (see definition Table 2.5, p. 93). The definitions, generated from a synthesis of the positions taken from the literature, in Table 2.5, describe the area of the Focus of Leadership as the ‘complexity of change, reflection and evaluation’, the Effect on Participants as ‘builds confidence’ in staff and the Contextual Considerations as ‘builds a culture of openness to change’.

The survey questions related to the area of support are shown in Table 4.13 below. The means presented in this table have also been scored using the six point Likert-scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey questions</th>
<th>School 1</th>
<th>School 2</th>
<th>School 3</th>
<th>School 4</th>
<th>School 5</th>
<th>Mean for all schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B10. The process of developing a school-wide pedagogy provided the opportunity for reflection and evaluation.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D12. The Focus of Leadership in the school is on student learning and student’s needs.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect on Participants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10. Staff were well supported in developing the school-wide pedagogy.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D11. Staff new to the school are inducted and supported into embracing the school vision.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual Considerations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D10. There is an increased culture of reflection, evaluation and continuous improvement in the school to support student learning.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.13: Schools’ means response for the focus area of Support*
4.1.2.9.1 Focus of Leadership

There are two survey questions related to the area of Focus of Leadership. In Question B10, School 1 had the highest rating of 5.8 and School 5 had the lowest rating of 3.9. The overall average was 4.82. This is the highest individual rating for School 1. This was the highest rating achieved by any school in all the survey questions and it indicates the importance they placed on reflection and evaluation in the improvement process. The overall mean indicates that the improvement process provided all the schools with the opportunity for reflection and evaluation. It also acknowledges the importance staff place on reflection and evaluation in developing the school-wide pedagogy to support the school improvement. Question D12 shows School 1 again with the highest mean of 5.4 and School 5 again with the lowest mean of 4.0. The overall mean of 4.94 suggests that schools focus their leadership on student learning and student needs. All the schools again rate this very highly. This is the highest overall mean of any of the survey questions. This Focus of Leadership allows student learning and needs to be met through a process for school improvement.

Of the open-ended responses thirteen comments were related to this area. The comments described how the process provided many opportunities for staff professional conversation, reflection and evaluation. One such comment was from School 1, survey 8 who said it: “Gave the staff opportunities for professional dialogue” and School 1, survey 1 supported this and acknowledged how the reflection and evaluation had supported the development of the school’s vision and school-wide pedagogy: “The process itself prompted critical reflection and the chance for professional dialogue. In doing so we were able to review models of authoritative pedagogy and use these to inform our vision and school-wide pedagogy statement”. School 2, survey 4 also supported this, commenting that it gave staff the: “Opportunity to reflect” and School 2, survey 10, said it: “Caused discussion and evaluation of our goals and mission”. These comments indicate the importance staff placed on reflection and evaluation to support the success of a school improvement process in developing their vision and goals for the future.
Other comments added that time was also an important factor in supporting the implementation of a successful school improvement process and commented on the importance the school placed on this. School 3, survey 7, said: “Yes, because time has been set aside for this to happen”. The importance of reflection was also added by School 4, survey 2 who commented: “The school-wide pedagogy development was a very inclusive and valuable reflective experience”. Each of these comments highlights the significance of reflection and time for the success of the school improvement process.

Another interesting comment acknowledges the fact that, through IDEAS, a school-wide pedagogy is developed and, as this is implemented, the school begins to speak in the language of its learning principles. It is therefore quite viable for the process name of IDEAS to become redundant and the school continue with their own pedagogical language. This can be seen in School 5, survey 14’s comment:

At the time it was good in enabling staff to reflect on teaching practice. Unfortunately IDEAS now seems like a good idea from the past but that said it may well be that the school-wide pedagogy is now part of our everyday practice without being conscious of it. (S5SV14)

These ratings and the fact that there are thirteen comments attributed to this section seem to indicate that the schools support the idea that change is complex and that the time in reflection and evaluation is an important part of the school improvement process. The high ratings showed the importance that staff place on time being given for reflection and the opportunity to evaluate to meet the changes needed in a school for improvement.

The interview responses related to the area of Focus of Leadership showed ten responses from School 1, three responses each from Schools 2 and 3, eight responses from School 4 and six responses from School 5. Of the responses three main themes emerged: The complexity of change, reflection and evaluation opportunities, and sustainability.
The first theme of complexity describes the complexity of change and how this creates some uncertainty in the process. This is seen in the comment from School 4 participant 7 who acknowledges this uncertainty but comments that in order to move the school forward there needs to be a degree of flexibility and belief in the process: “I think there was always that feeling that yes, change does make us feel uncertain but we need to support each other in all these things and we need to go forward and we need to be flexible”. School 1 participant 2 supported this and also acknowledged that the process allows for mistakes and trials and then adjustments to be made:

It was really important at every step that we made that we reflected and said, have we gone the right way with this and sometimes we had shut that door and try another door because it wasn’t the right way. So I think there was a lot of discussion by staff and sometimes we did realise that we hadn’t made the right decisions. Change is healthy, but it’s scary. (S1MT2)

The process also allows staff to see the direction the school is going and how the changes that are made are decided from the strategic directions developed through the process. This is seen in the following comment from School 5 participant 2:

So in terms of the complexity and uncertainty of change and change overload I think now generally on staff there is a clearer idea that the change is probably driven by something strategic as opposed to where the hell did that come from, which makes it easier to deal with. (S5T2)

The second theme recognises the importance of reflection and evaluation in any change process. This is indicated in the comments from School 1 participant 7 who says it is important to challenge practices that are not meeting appropriate standards or meeting the needs of students and this is done effectively through reflective and evaluative processes:

So challenging some practices that may not be quite as good. The idea of continuous improvement was the prompt to start us at the beginning and gave us that momentum to continue. It gave us that direction, this is what we’re doing this for. As I said, a legacy of the IDEAS process, is the fact that we are much more critical, reflective and wanting to improve and we take a great deal of pride in the success that we’ve had there. (S1MT7)
Reflection was also a part of the process in School 3. Participant 2 commented that, through reflection, the staff were able to see the bigger picture of the school’s direction and how the process allowed them to evaluate the implementation of new programs:

With big staff days we do, as I said, tend to go back and reflect so that we know where the next step is, how it fits in to the bigger puzzle. I think where before we were trying to find things to – for quick fixes, strategies for quick fixes, let’s try this, let’s try that, I think because we’ve been so focused on where the IDEAS process is guiding us, there’s a little bit more – we’re a bit more discerning about what we want to take on and what we don’t. (S3MT2)

This was supported by School 5 participant 6 who commented that the process had prompted staff to continue to use reflective processes in the school: “There’s always a time for reflection all the time. We always need to step back, and reflect”. This was also seen in School 3. Participant 5 commented that this continues to allow staff to evaluate programs and adjust as necessary: “We tend to be evaluating everything now, which is so much better because you can adjust it”. School 4 participant 3 added that these reflective and evaluative practices have provided a significant contribution to the way the school operates and makes decisions:

That would probably be the core part of IDEAS and its significance in terms of what it contributes to the school I would say because it’s all about reflection; it’s all about considering and evaluating and then flexibly responding to parent surveys and student surveys and the small group seminars etcetera that we had where we heard from the stakeholders in the school. We understood that there were other stakeholders in the school. (S4MT3)

The third theme relates to the area of sustainability of the improvement and the contribution that the reflective processes have contributed in the school made in the comments above. School 1 participant 7 commented that the sustainability of the process can be attributed to the practices of reflection and evaluation that the process provided: “The fact that we have become more reflective is one of the more sustainable attributes of the process”. This seems to describe how these practices have now become part of the culture and the way these are done in the school.
Within the documents, four of the schools provide evidence to support this area, Schools 1, 2, 3 and 4. School 1 stated directly a need for more “time for reflection and evaluation”. However, through the reflections from the ISMT they also acknowledge that the school has spent time reflecting and engaging with authoritative pedagogy: “Authentic engagement with authoritative pedagogy”. School 2 shows, within the minutes of meetings, that staff were given the opportunity to reflect and provide feedback on the school values. School 3 outlined in their report card a challenge to reflect and evaluate their vision statement. This also links with the leadership focus of ownership: “To evaluate and deconstruct the current vision statement”. School 4 also acknowledged a need to provide time for staff for professional networking: “Time provided for professional networking, team building and collegial discussion. These documents support the survey and interview data that confirm the need for reflection and evaluation.

Participants have identified that the focus of the school in providing time for reflection and evaluation has been significant in supporting the school improvement process. The survey, interview and document data are consistent in their comments regarding the positive nature of these elements.

The next section provides the data for the area of Effect on Participants. It relates to how the supportive practices of reflection and evaluation help to build the confidence of staff.

4.1.2.9.2 Effect on Participants
There are two survey questions directly related to the area of Effect on Participants. In Question C10, School 1 had the highest mean of 5.4 and School 4 had the lowest mean of 4.0. The overall rating of 4.42 indicates that staff felt well supported in developing the school-wide pedagogy. In Question D11, School 1 again had the highest mean of 5.0 and School 4 again had the lowest mean of 3.0. The overall mean of 4.14 indicates that generally staff felt that staff new to the school were inducted and supported in embracing the school vision, although this support was not seen as effective in School 4. These comments suggest the importance of supporting staff to understand the school vision so they can actively implement it in the school through their role as classroom practitioners.
School 2 particularly viewed the importance of new staff being inducted into the school vision and learning framework much more carefully, much more than just an introduction at the initial induction phase. This can be seen in the comment from survey 1 in the open-ended question of the survey:

The school is implementing its school-wide pedagogy and there remains a core group of teachers committed to developing this initiative. We need to reflect on how better to support new teachers with the vision statement past the initial induction phase. The core understanding is present among the whole community (best in teachers, good in students, still achieving among parents…) but it is in unpacking the statements that we need to develop. (S2SV1)

This comment suggests that, for all staff to be committed to implementing the school-wide pedagogy, it is important that they not only understand it but are also aware of their responsibility in implementing it as a teacher in the school. This also supports the survey results.

The interview responses related to the area of Effect on Participants showed one response from School 1, two responses each from Schools 2 and 3, three responses from School 4 and no responses from School 5. The responses from the interviews generally fall into two main categories. The first relates to the support staff felt from the ISMT in their school. The second category is the support the ISMT felt from the IDEAS team from the University of Southern Queensland who was helping them implement the process.

In the responses related to the first theme, participants described the success of the process being attributed to the way the ISMT members were willing to listen and were approachable to ask and answer questions. This is seen in the comment from School 3 participant 3 who described many times where the ISMT and members of staff were engaged in conversation about the process:

Look there’s most definitely support. As I said earlier, all three people (people named) are extremely approachable and are willing to give time to the process and to any feedback, any questions, etcetera. So that’s shown just around the grounds in casual chat, or on formal Staff Development days when the questions are asked and answers are most definitely given. (S3T3)
This is also supported by another member of staff at the same school, participant 5, who described the way the ISMT interacted with the staff which made them feel included and supported:

Yeah, and it’s as if the IDEAS team are listening to what the staff are wanting to do, and any ideas discussed. I think it’s giving people a feeling of being inclusive. I think right across the staff everybody is included in the process. All the kids are included, the parents in the survey etcetera. So I think it has worked well and I think staff feel supported by the team and the team feel supported by staff. (S3T5)

The second category that emerged from the interview data related to the external support given to the implementation of the process. This was the experience described by School 2 and two members of the ISMT. Participant 7 described how, without the support of the University of Southern Queensland, she would have felt more uncertainty in the direction the process needed to take:

I think the support, particularly from USQ was invaluable. I mean I said before, without that support I found it really quite challenging at times to set my head around what was happening. (S2MT7)

This was supported by another member of the ISMT, participant 6, who described how the support of external agencies and schools allowed for cross communication of ideas and also supported their leadership of the process in their school:

We were very well helped by the University of Southern Queensland and we had lots of contact with various people. We attended various regional workshops on the IDEAS process. So we weren’t working in isolation, we’ve see models and programs from other schools telling us best practice. We’re in constant communication with various schools, not just within New South Wales but across a couple of other states as well and steal a few of their ideas. That leadership beyond the school helped us significantly as well. (S2MT6)
These responses highlight the importance of good communication between those leading the process and those who are part of it. The participants who were part of the ISMT in their school also acknowledged the importance of not working in isolation and interacting with other external groups to support the implementation of the process. This interaction seems to build the confidence of staff and acknowledge that the process is supporting the needs of the school.

There is no document data related to this focus area, Effect on Participants.

The next focus area to be presented is Contextual Considerations and relates to how the process builds a culture of openness to change. The survey data is presented followed by the interview and document data for this section.

4.1.2.9.3 Contextual Considerations
There was one survey question that was related to the area of Contextual Considerations. In Question D10, School 1 had the highest rating of 5.4 and School 2 had the lowest rating of 4.2. The overall mean was 4.58. These high ratings indicate that staff felt there was an increased culture of reflection, evaluation and continuous improvement in the school to support student learning. This suggests that there was a real shift in the schools and a change in culture to an openness to find ways to continually improve to support the students.

Within this context of support there were seven comments in the surveys that related to this section. School 5, survey 15, described how the process allowed the staff many opportunities to focus on pedagogy at the school. In doing so this suggests that staff were open to change as they evaluated the processes at the school:

The staff contributed to the initial development of the vision and pedagogy. Many meetings were spent evaluating the strengths and areas for improvement at the College, as well as statements to support these ideas. The direction pedagogy was to take place was clearly outlined. (S5SV15)
School 2 described the support of the process in terms of providing a framework and two of the participants supported this. Survey 6 said: “It offered a framework with which to execute teaching” and survey 10 said: “It produced a framework to “hang” other educational outcomes on”. This framework provided a structure to allow staff to see the possibility of change. It also allowed them to be open to the improvement it would provide.

These responses seem to continue to support a culture that is open to change and how the structure of the process supported staff to make the changes. They also indicated the importance staff placed on reflection and evaluation during the process and, through these processes, focused them on teaching and learning.

The interview responses related to the area of Contextual Considerations showed two responses from School 1, one response from School 2, three responses each from Schools 3 and 4 and two responses from School 5. Participants in the interviews commented that the process itself provided them with a structure and plan to follow and this assisted the change process. This supports the comments from the surveys presented above. Some evidence for this is provided by School 1 participant 7 who commented how staff could see the direction the school was taking: “It gave us that direction, this is what we’re doing this for”. School 2 participant 2 supported this and added that staff could see the process was implemented in stages and this staging also helped them to understand the school’s direction: “It was a staged process, so we knew what our goals were at each stage and where we were trying to get to”.

Other comments suggested that, having been through a change process, staff had an understanding and openness that there would be continued change in the school leading to continued improvement. This is seen in the comment from School 5 participant 2 who recognised that staff could see a connection between the change and the strategic direction and decisions in the school:

I think there is no uncertainty of change anymore. I think if you ask our staff it would be the one thing that they would be certain of, that it will change. Something will change. I think they’re better now than they were two years ago at just rolling with the punches. I have thought about this quite a bit and I really do think for the most part there is now more faith in the changes being driven by big picture thinking of strategic planning. (S5T2)
School 3 participant 5 also commented that the process has developed an openness to change within the staff. They see this change in culture also supporting staff to understand why decisions are made and how they can then make changes within their own classroom to support this strategic direction:

I think the team that have been the IDEAS team have been giving us information constantly and therefore then we’re a bit more ready for changes to happen. I think those changes and knowing that they’re happening for the right reasons, it just goes back to then they’re giving us more information and we’re putting it into processes in our teaching. (S3T5)

These comments from the participants suggest the process has successfully made improvements in the school and that this has been supported by the structure the process provided and a real openness to change.

There is no document data related to this focus area of Contextual Considerations.

4.1.2.9.4 Summary
Overall, within this leadership focus in the area of support one of the survey questions has the highest overall mean amongst all the survey questions. It indicates that the participants consider that the greatest contribution to the process of school improvement and developing a school-wide pedagogy has been the provision of time for reflection and evaluation. Participants acknowledged the process and the structure it provided enabled them to engage in reflective and evaluative practices which have developed an openness to change in the school community. The responses from the interviews also acknowledged that staff felt that having been through a change process they were more open to further changes in their school particularly because they could see how the changes linked with the school’s strategic direction.

In each of the six leadership focuses School 1 had the highest mean in 29 of the 34 questions. Adding to this School 1 had the highest mean for three out of the six leadership focuses: moral purpose, continuous Improvement and support. This suggests School 1 believes that each of the six leadership focuses have contributed significantly to the school improvement process.
The next section presents the data relating to Research Question 3.

4.1.3 Research Question 3
How do the experiences of leadership of participants involved in school improvement reflect the different leadership approaches identified in the literature?

4.1.3.0 Introduction
An analysis of the interview data was used to inform this research question. Of the twelve interview questions, the last three related to Research Question 3 and are shown in Table 4.14 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Research Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What did you learn about leadership from your involvement in the IDEAS process?</td>
<td>3. How do the experiences of leadership of participants involved in school improvement reflect the different leadership approaches identified in the literature?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe how leadership influenced the development of a vision for learning for the school.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can you give evidence of how leadership influenced the overall process of school improvement?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14: Interview questions for Research Question 3

In the interviews the participants described their experience of leadership and identified, from their experience, key elements of leadership that influenced the school improvement process. At this stage, the focus is on presenting the different elements of leadership identified by the participants rather than analysing these in relation to the different leadership approaches identified from the literature (Table 2.1 & Table 2.2, pp. 44 & 56). These leadership approaches are: transformational, servant, distributive, ethical and moral, authentic, educative, parallel, teacher (leadership) and co-principalship. The relationship between the elements identified by the participants and the leadership approaches are shown in Table 4.15 on the following page and will be discussed in Chapter 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Leadership</th>
<th>Effect on Participants</th>
<th>Contextual Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Leadership approach</td>
<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **What did you learn about leadership from your involvement in the IDEAS process?** | Listening  
S1P2p11  
S1P4p15  
S1P6p8  
S3P5p11  
S4P6p11  
Cooperative relationships  
S1P3p11  
S2P5p10  
S3P2p18  
S5P7p10  
S5P7p11  
Student-centred learning  
S1P6p8  
S3P6p9 | Authentic  
Consultation  
S2P5p10  
S2P6p10  
S4P4p13  
Servant  
Common goal  
S2P3p11  
S3P3p8  
S3P6p8  
S4P5p10  
S4P6p11  
S5P4p12  
Transformational  
Parallel  
Shared ownership  
S2P3p11  
S3P7p9 | Collaborative  
S1P3p11,12  
S1P7p12  
S2P1p12  
S2P2p14  
Transformational  
Educative/Transformational  
S5P3p15  
S5P6p14  
S5P7p10  
Parallel  
Eductive/Parallel  
Transformational  
S4P6p12  
S4P7p14  
S5P2p20 | Transformational  
Distributive/Parallel  
Transformational  
Transformational/Parallel  
Distributive/Teacher |
| Teacher  
Educative  
Transformational  
Parallel | Servant  
Transformational  
Parallel | Staff expertise |
| **Describe how leadership influenced the development of a vision for learning for the school.** | Cooperative relationships  
S1P3p12  
S1P2p11  
History and Charism  
S3P2p19,20  
S3P3p9 | Servant  
Consultation  
S1P2p12  
S1P6p9  
S3P1p15  
S4P2p11  
S5P5p14  
S4P4p14  
S1P7p14  
Ethical & Moral  
Common goal  
S2P7p12  
S3P6p9  
S4P4p13  
S4P5p11  
S5P4p13,14  
Transformational  
Ethical & Moral  
Transformational  
Ethical & Moral  
Transformational  
Transformational  
Parallel | Collaborative  
S1P6p9  
S2P6p11  
S3P7p9  
S4P6p12  
Shared ownership  
S2P1p13  
S2P5p11  
S3P1p16  
S5P6p15  
S5P7p11 | Transformational/Parallel  
Parallel  
Transformational  
Distributive/Educative  
Transformational  
Transformational/Teacher/Authentic  
Transformational  |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Leadership approach</td>
<td>Theme</td>
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<tr>
<td>History and Charism</td>
<td>Ethical &amp; Moral</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2P6p11</td>
<td>Transformation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td></td>
<td>S3P1p16</td>
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<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
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<td>S1P5p13</td>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>Common goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>S2P6p11</td>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td>S5P4p15</td>
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<tr>
<td>S5P3p16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student-centred</td>
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<td>learning</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>S3P3p9</td>
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<td>S3P5p11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td>S3P6p10</td>
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<td>S4P6p14</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>S5P7p12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The data for Research Question 3 will be shown under the three focus areas: Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations, consistent with the data presented for the previous Research Questions.

4.1.3.1 Focus of Leadership
From an analysis of the transcription data of the interview questions, relating to the focus area of the Focus of Leadership, four themes emerged: Active listening, Cooperative relationships, Student centred learning, and History and charism (see Table 4:15, p. 222). These themes are explored below.

4.1.3.1.1 Active listening
The first theme that emerged from the interviews reflected a general agreement by the participants that it was important for those leading the school improvement process to actively listen to the views and ideas of the staff. This was reflected in the comment from School 1 participant 2 who, as a member of the ISMT at her school, recognised the importance of listening and not just acting upon the ideas and views of the members of the committee:

I think that ability to just really listen to other people, because often an idea is so at the forefront of our mind that that’s difficult. But I think that that’s one thing I’ve learnt to do, is just really listen to other people and take on what they’re saying as well. (S1MT2)

School 3 participant 5 observed that the ISMT in her school did this very well and really took on board the ideas from staff: “(The ISMT) they are all very good listeners. So they will listen to any suggestion and I think listening plays a big part in being a good leader”. This seems to suggest that staff saw this as a significant characteristic of good leadership.

The importance of active listening was also supported by School 1 participant 6 who additionally commented that within the school improvement process they noticed that when leaders listened, it also helped the staff to confirm their core values for learning: “That you do need to listen very carefully. That it helps you reaffirm some of your core values around learning”. School 4 participant 6 affirmed this and added that leaders are role models to staff so their actions are very important: “That listening is very important and that you need to have, as I said, clear direction and people looking for you as role modelling practices”. School 1 participant 4 also observed how they saw listening as an important element in the
improvement process and changed their behaviour as a result of being a part of the process: “I’m listening a bit more than what I would have in the past”. These comments suggest that staff believed that active listening made a significant difference to the way they engaged in the improvement process and with those leading the process.

Within the literature, for example Stone, Russell & Patterson (2003) and Moran (2005), there are a number of leadership approaches that identify that active listening is an important characteristic of leadership. This characteristic in relation to specific leadership approaches is discussed further in the analysis of data in the next chapter.

The next theme in this section explores the importance of leaders connecting with staff in cooperative relationships.

4.1.3.1.2 Cooperative relationships
The second theme under the focus area of Focus of Leadership reflects the importance of cooperative relationships between leaders and staff within the improvement process. Participants commented that they experienced a real sense of staff working together. This is seen in the comments from School 1 participant 3 who believed they were very much part of the process every step of the way:

So there wasn’t a sense of we’re going to do it this way. There was never any sense like that, it was always let’s. We’ll go and take the butcher paper away and we’ll go and collate it and come back to you. So there was every opportunity for everyone to have their say and to feel part of the process, even if they didn’t want to. (S1T3)

This was supported by School 3 participant 2 who, as a member of the ISMT, had to be very aware of the different mix of personalities, staff’s experience and sensitive to their readiness to engage, as they helped to lead them through the process. Through this they relied on the leadership skills they had learnt from past leadership positions as well as observing the leadership practices of others:
Just knowing when to bring new ideas in, knowing when to start the next part of
the process, knowing when staff are ready, you have to be a bit intuitive. But you
also have to be strategic and I had the benefit of having developed some
leadership skills in both pastoral and curriculum. So I had the opportunity to learn
from looking at others and how they think through their strategies, or not think
through their strategies sometimes. But yeah, I think it’s just knowing that things
take – will always take a lot longer than you think they will, because we’re all
different personalities and some people need a bit more time to think and reflect
on things before they’re willing to move on. (S3MT2)

School 1 participant 2 added that their experience had identified that leadership does not just
happen through those who hold formal leadership roles. They suggest all staff have a
responsibility to be part of the process:

It’s not the person always that holds the top job and I think that what we’ve found
out a little bit but we’re still working out, is that leadership perhaps is the person
who is just able to work well with others, listen carefully and contribute. It doesn’t
have to be the person that’s got the badge and I think that’s something that we
started to learn in our development of our vision and I think it’s something we
need to explore a lot more. (S1MT2)

This comment relates to the previous theme of the importance of a leader actively listening to
staff in order to involve them in the improvement process. It suggests leaders need to focus on
integrity and honesty in these relationships and that all staff can have a leadership role. It also
suggests that it is very important that staff feel very involved in the direction the school is
taking and the decisions made.
School 5 participant 3 also describes their experience of the leadership of the process as very positive and one where teachers worked together and were guided by those leading the process: “Teachers having to work together, team teach all that sort of stuff. I think they (ISMT) give us a lot of help and professional development and all of that. I think they’ve shown us guidance on how to do it”. It suggests that leadership focuses on a genuine partnership between those leading the process and staff. In this particular comment it seems that those leading the process are supporting staff through professional development to align with the school’s strategic direction, while staff are supporting each other through team teaching and classroom practice.

School 1 participant 3 also describes a genuine attempt by those leading the process to support staff through providing opportunities for professional development: “They didn’t necessarily impose it. They just provided the – like any good teacher, you facilitate the learning, you provide the opportunity for the person to learn themselves”. The professional development is described as not something that is imposed on the staff but recognised as a need, by those leading the process, to support the improvement process.

Within the literature, for example, Gronn (2002), Harris (2008) and Crowther et al. (2009), the notion of cooperative relationships is across many of the leadership approaches. The focus of this data seems to be particularly reflective of the definitions of the leadership approaches of transformational, servant, authentic and parallel leadership due to the relational nature of these approaches. This is discussed further in the analysis of the data in the next chapter.

The next theme to be presented focuses on students and their learning.

4.1.3.1.3 Student centred learning
The third theme to emerge from the interview data is the importance of a leadership focus on the students and their learning. The participants who were interviewed identified that, as a result of the leadership of the improvement process and a focus on learning, there has been a real change in the conversations regarding pedagogy amongst staff. This is seen in the comment from School 4 participant 7 who believed the IDEAS process had initiated these conversations and staff were now more focused on the learning needs of the students:
So I think that’s probably evidence that there’s been a lot more conversations around pedagogy in the school than previously, before the IDEAS committee, and that’s actually grown, that dialogue has grown over the last few years. So I think that’s probably directly related to IDEAS, I don’t think those sort of conversations would have taken place without the IDEAS program. I think people are looking to change classroom practice and I think that’s probably directly related to the IDEAS program and the dialogue that’s gone on around it, not just in terms of teaching but the classroom environment as well. (S4MT7)

This is supported by School 1 participant 6 who also identified how the leadership of the process had refocused staff on students and their learning: “That you do need to keep up to date with pedagogy and what’s happening. I guess it refocusses the fact that you’re not – student centred is how we have to be”.

School 3 participant 6 commented that, through the development of their school vision, staff realised that the school vision they developed needed to be a lived action in the school. It had to happen at the classroom level:

So I suppose we identified what our vision – our school vision was. We evaluated that and then we looked at what we need to do in order to realise this….So I suppose in terms of how leadership developed that vision, it did allow for opportunities to demonstrate best practice and to align with what we wanted to do, how is that reflective in the classroom at grass roots. (S3T6)

This was also supported by participant 3, in the same school, who saw that through the school’s common goal, classroom practice was changing:

So that idea that when you are on the same page and when we’re focusing on a particular goal, that it’s continually changing, or we continually change our practice and our pedagogy to suit who’s sitting in front of us. (S3T3)
Participant 5, from the same school, also identified an observable change of classroom practice and pedagogy. She suggested that this focus was driven by the staff who led the improvement process:

I think the evidence would be in the classroom. The kids, if you talked to them, or just wandered into any of the classrooms, there’s something positive happening in every classroom. I think that’s all driven too by good leadership. With the IDEAS project or process I think we’ve had good leaders right through guiding us through that process. (S3T5)

These comments suggest that the leadership of the process has the capacity to influence staff to improve the learning environment for students. This theme could align more specifically with the leadership approaches that are educational in nature, as it has a student focus. However, at this stage other leadership approaches that identify with the needs of others and authentic relationships also need to be considered. This is discussed further in the analysis of the data in the next chapter.

The fourth theme presented in the next section identifies the importance of leaders keeping a connection with the history and charism of the school.

### 4.1.3.1.4 History and charism

Under the area of Focus of Leadership a fourth theme emerged from the interview data. The theme centred on the importance of those leading the process connecting the past and the present. Participants acknowledged the importance of recognising the values of the founding religious order of the school and its charism while also looking to the future and present achievements. This is seen in the comments from School 3 participant 2 who commented that the school vision statement recognised the traditions of the past and current achievements:

But I think it was that recognition that – from the leadership team, from the executive – that there was a really strong tradition of being exceptional and challenging. That came through in the vision statement, so it wasn’t about, we’re getting rid of the past, we’re throwing away tradition and everything the school was about before and starting something new. It was about acknowledging the past and recognising the things that were good in the present, to be able to move forward. (S3MT2)
Participant 3, from the same school, supported this and added that it was now important for the leadership of the process to look to the future and add to and enhance the excellence of the past.

So really looking back at our history and why (name) College was basically built in the first place, and really staying true to the ethos of the (founding religious order of the school) and really almost paying homage to what we have done in the past, but looking to how we can change it for the future and develop it. (S3T3)

School 2 participant 6 also supported this and recognised the importance of keeping a strong connection with the school’s values and charism: “I feel that we’ve preserved the charism of the (founding religious order of the school) and that’s vital. That’s part of what we’re trying to do”.

These comments seem to suggest that staff have a strong bond and connection with the school’s history and charism and the commitment and importance they place on keeping this connection. This theme therefore relies on a leadership focus that shows a commitment to the school’s shared values to lead the school into the future. Within the literature, for example Starratt (2004) and Sherry (2007), this could correspond with leadership approaches such as transformational, and ethical and moral leadership, and will be discussed further in relation to specific leadership approaches in the next chapter.

The interview data, outlining the experience of leadership of the participants in the improvement process under the second focus area of Effect on Participants, is presented in the next section.

4.1.3.2 Effect on Participants

The analysis of the interview data relating to the second focus area, Effect on Participants, for Research Question 3 identified two themes: consultation and common goal (see Table 4.15, p. 222). Each of these themes are presented in the next section where the data relating to the participants’ leadership experience in the school improvement process is analysed.
4.1.3.2.1 Consultation

The first theme to emerge from the interview data was the importance of consultation. Participants generally described how the leadership of the process provided the opportunity for consultation and that staff felt they were involved in the direction and decisions of the school. This was seen by School 4 participant 4 who described how the consultation created ownership of the improvement by staff:

> Just that consultation is really important. That things take time and that really it’s so important for any effective change to have ownership. Because without it, if it’s just – as a leader, if it’s just my idea and trying to enforce it on other people, it’s just not going to work. They have to feel that they’re contributing; they have to feel that they’re consulted and they have to feel that there’s some sense of ownership in order to move forward. (S4T4)

This was supported by School 1 participant 6 who also commented that staff seemed to take ownership of the process from the consultation that took place: “Everyone was involved and could have a voice so that it would help have that ownership”.

School 5 participant 5 added that the leadership of the process had particularly made an impact through consultation and their efforts to make staff feel a part of the process: “Well, we wouldn’t be doing it if it wasn’t for the leadership that had come in and the way that they’ve passed onto us to make us part of the whole program to go forward”. This was supported by School 1 participant 2 who added that the leadership of the process had also provided opportunities for any staff members to lead at different times. They suggest staff felt that the opportunity to lead was open to all staff members.

> I think leaders of different types were given opportunities during this development phase of our vision and I think that we really had to be very, very careful to give everybody that opportunity, not just the people who were named as leaders. (S1MT2)
School 1 participant 7 provided further evidence for this by acknowledging that, through the consultation process, staff were able to articulate the values that they felt the school stood for:

Again it was through consultation. It was through acknowledging the values and as I mentioned before that process of articulating our values was incredibly important to people. That was one of the things that assured people wanting to buy in to the process to some degree rather than no degree. (S1MT7)

This links with the previous theme from the focus area of Focus of Leadership regarding the importance of the leadership of the school connecting with the past history and charism of the school. It suggests that participants take responsibility for school improvement through a commitment to the shared values of the school.

Other participants commented that the leadership of the process drove the process. They continually consulted and kept staff informed. This suggests that this kept the energy levels and momentum of the process. School 4 participant 4 commented: “They kept the momentum going and it was fed back to us really clearly as well. So people can’t say they haven’t heard about it, they don’t know what the outcomes were”.

The participants also described how the leadership created an atmosphere that acknowledged the contributions and successes of the school and provided the opportunities for all staff to be leaders. This is evident in the comment from School 3 participant 2 who described the positive energy this created. “But also recognising that everyone on staff is a leader and that – acknowledging their contributions and acknowledging success and things like that are always going to create more positive energy”. Participant 1 from the same school supported this and added that the expertise of staff was recognised to lead at different times. “We are given all opportunities in our specific specialised areas to present at different times to staff”.

Within the literature, for example Macgregor Burns (1978) and Robinson (2011), the importance of staff consultation is part of many of the leadership approaches. This characteristic in relation to specific leadership approaches are discussed further in the analysis of data in the next chapter.

This focus leads to the next theme which explores how the leadership of the process supported staff commitment to a common goal.
4.1.3.2.2 Common goal

The second theme that emerged from the interview data relating to the Effect on Participants is how the leadership of the improvement process led staff toward a commitment to the school’s common goal. This is seen by School 5 participant 4 who described the importance of the leaders setting the direction for the school and making a definite decision that is clear to staff:

I think the first step was the vision, to have somebody to identify where education’s going and for the teaching and learning and the fact that we do have to change and be brave enough to actually say we need to change, this is where we need to go and make a stand on that I think is the first thing. (S5T4)

This is supported by School 2 participant 7 who also commented that it is the responsibility of the leadership of the school to make a decision and set the direction for staff to follow:

I suppose leadership is very important in developing a vision because I think schools as a whole like to see that there is a direction and that we’re going along in the path that’s right for the school. So I think that the leadership of the school has an obligation to see what the vision of the community is and to be able to provide that direction. (S2MT7)

This comment supports the previous theme of consultation as it suggests that the vision, although set by the leadership of the school, is established as a community decision. This is also supported by School 3 participant 3 who affirms the need for the common goal to be decided after consultation with the staff: “That we need to be working towards a common goal, and whatever that goal is, it is something that needs to be decided by, if you will, the staff, the people”. School 4 participant 5 also agrees with this collaborative leadership approach and adds that once the common goal is determined it needs to be clearly articulated:

I like a style of leadership that is collaborative. So I guess I learnt a little bit about that. I think I learnt that you’ve really got to clearly articulate goals, tell people where you’re going or where you would like to go and how you’re going to get there. (S4T5)
Many of the leadership approaches reviewed in the literature focus on the theme of the importance of a commitment to a common goal. The research of Silins & Mulford (2004) and Andrews (2008) are examples of the importance of this commitment. In the next chapter, this is discussed further in the analysis of the data in relation to specific leadership approaches.

The third focus area of Contextual Considerations will be presented in the next section and relates to how the experience of leadership of the participants builds the culture of the school.

4.1.3.3 Contextual Considerations
An analysis of the interview data relating to Research Question 3 identified three themes: Collaboration, Staff expertise and Shared ownership (see Table 4.15, p. 222). The first of these is analysed in the next section.

4.1.3.3.1 Collaboration
The first theme to emerge from the interview data relating to the focus area of Contextual Considerations was the importance of collaboration. The participants described two elements of collaboration: collaboration as part of the improvement process and collaboration that is still occurring as a result of the leadership of the improvement process.

As a collaborative process, School 1 participant 6 described how the collaboration had provided the opportunity for everyone to be involved, take ownership of the decisions made and assist the leaders to move the process forward:

Because it was that collaborative form of leadership I think that’s what helped move it forward. It wasn’t something that was just being imposed from the top. Everyone had a voice so that it would help have that ownership. So the recognition that you needed ownership by the people who were in leadership was important. (S1T6)

A number of participants obviously supported the collaborative approach, the chances to be involved, the opportunities for professional sharing and development, a strong ownership of decisions and how the collaborative discussions led staff towards a common goal. This is evident in their comments:
1. School 5 participant 3: “So you need that collaborative approach type thing, everyone involved”.

2. School 4 participant 6: “I think giving us opportunities to attend staff development days, opportunity to go and further develop our skills where we’re doing different courses and things and giving us information about the possibility of attending things, encouraging us, the sharing of our knowledge I think through collaborative practices within the school; I think that was a plus. (S4T6)”.

3. School 2 participant 1: “It was a collaborative effort and that staff were involved in making decisions that are now in print and will be in print for a while”.

4. School 2 participant 2: “Also just the discussions that happened in the meetings, they got fiery a few times but they were basically collaborative and basically there was a goal. There was something that we were trying to achieve together”. This also links with a previous theme that emerged in the focus area of Effect on Participants of a commitment to a common goal.

The second element of collaboration that emerged from this data described how collaborative processes were now part of the culture of the school. This was seen by School 3 participant 6 who described a shift within the staff in their own classroom practice and relationship with their students:

But ultimately we are seeing a shift in their (staff) thinking. Change doesn’t happen overnight, we know that, it’s a very long process but we are seeing stronger relationships: we are seeing students and staff who really collaborate in order to fulfil that vision. That’s leadership in the classroom really. (S3T6)

School 1 participant 7, who was a member of the ISMT, also described how the staff were now more reflective and collaborative, having been led through the improvement process:

As I said we are more reflective and part of that comes back from the initial principles around IDEAS that it’s a no-blame culture. That there are going to be things that everybody can improve on. It’s more part of our culture now to discuss what they are. We are much more collaborative, I believe, today than what we
would have been back in this time. We’ve got our professional learning group. So people are used to talking teaching. We are much more strategic, as I said. (S1MT7)

She also added that personally she had learned a lot from being part of the leadership of the process and that collaboration was very significant in making sure staff took ownership of the process:

We talked about the process of skilful discussion. I can see so much the value of parallel leadership, the collaborative model of drawing people in, building their capacity, asking their advice so that you get that ownership happening. I definitely became much more strategic going through this process as my skills developed and much more organised. (S1MT7)

Ownership of the process was also seen as an important element of the theme of consultation that emerged in the focus area of Effect on Participants in the previous section. Within the literature this theme is a part of many of the leadership approaches. It is considered in relation to specific leadership approaches in the analysis of data in the next chapter.

This leads to the next theme which explores how the leadership of the process supported and acknowledged staff expertise.

4.1.3.3.2 Staff expertise
The second theme that emerged from the data relating to Contextual Considerations is how the leadership of the school improvement process recognised staff expertise to assist the leadership of the process at suitable times and developed staff leadership potential.

This was supported by School 4 participant 6 who commented how in her school the leadership of the school was quite strategic and recognised staff strengths and weaknesses and thus, as appropriate, encouraged staff to lead and support the improvement process: “So I think strategic ideas are necessary – how you’re going to get there – but also lead the people. Recognise, I think; the recognition of strengths and weaknesses of people and using those within your school system I think”. She also added that this encouragement now continues in the school and leadership opportunities are provided particularly for the younger members of staff:
So if there is a sense that you have the capability to being a leader you are encouraged to do so. So there is opportunity there. So I do feel that, particularly the younger teachers at the school, more so than when I was starting out, have opportunity to start leadership a lot earlier if they display or are willing to learn. (S4T6)

School 5 participant 2 also acknowledged how the improvement process had allowed and provided the opportunity for staff to develop their leadership skills and leadership of the process: “But learning about leadership in general, look I think the biggest single thing I learnt about was its potential to assist people to evolve from a very narrow perspective of their role”.

In School 4, participant 7, who was a member of the ISMT, recognised how her leadership skills had been developed and how, in leading the process, she particularly looked for expertise on the staff to assist it:

I think even like I said about myself, that I’ve learnt to step back, I think I’ve seen other people in the group learn to step back as well and allow other people the chance to step up when they’ve wanted to or take something on when they’ve wanted to. (S4MT7)

She also added that as a leader of the process she had learnt to take time to recognise the potential and ability of other staff and encourage them to develop further as leaders:

Probably recognising other people’s leadership skills, I think that was something I definitely - whether I learnt about it but I learnt to look for it, which I think is important because sometimes if you’re not looking for it you can miss that other people have got skills there that you haven’t seen and then how do you help them or develop them if you haven’t identified them. So I probably learnt that as well. (S4MT7)

These comments suggest that the experience of leadership of the participants was both supportive of the expertise of staff to lead during the improvement process and also recognised the potential of some staff to develop their leadership skills. This theme could align more specifically with the leadership approaches of distributive or teacher leadership as
they have a teacher focus. However, other approaches that involve supporting a culture of staff development and leadership capacity may need to be considered. This is discussed further in the analysis of the data in the next chapter.

The third theme presented in the next section identifies the importance of leaders providing opportunities for shared ownership of the process by all staff.

4.1.3.3 Shared ownership

Under the focus area of Contextual Considerations a third theme emerged from the interview data. This theme highlighted the importance, for those leading the process, of building a culture of shared ownership of the improvement by the staff. This is seen in the comment of School 4 participant 2 who indicated that, if the process was not shared, staff would not have taken ownership and adopted the change. He added that it was expected that those leading the process had to take on the ownership first and provide the direction, and then the rest of the staff would commit: “Yes I think it had to be shared or it wouldn’t work, for this sort of project. I think key people in the school had to adopt it so that they would draw the rest of us in”. This was supported by School 5 participant 5 who also added that the leadership of the process had to engender in staff their responsibility to commit to and support the direction of the school: “But to engage as many people as possible, to give them a sense of belonging and ownership of what we were doing and, therefore, some form of responsibility to – all heading in the one direction”.

A sense of shared ownership was also seen by the participants in the development of their school’s vision, learning framework and learning principles. This is seen by School 1 participant 2 who described how she could see evidence of their learning principles in classroom practice:

So I suppose the evidence is really in our learning principles. Those learning principles are there because everybody was invited to be a leader in their own way and contribute. How has that affected our school improvement? Well we have a common ownership of our learning principles now. I think that we’re improving in our teaching and learning practice, that there’s no doubt about that. (S1MT2)
This is also seen by School 2 participant 5 who commented that their learning framework was owned by staff as it was evident in the curriculum programmes. She also pointed out that there still needed to be leadership by the ISMT to oversee the process:

I guess needing to make sure that you had someone on the committee that was overseeing it (the learning framework) and that they still believed in it and it wasn’t going to be tokenistic, a poster in a classroom and/or a register – in a programme as part of a register. That we were identifying within the programmes for all KLA’s where is learning holistic, where is it innovative, there it is. We need to make sure we are following through with it. (S2T5)

School 4 participant 3 also added how their staff had taken ownership of the agreed pedagogical principles and that this was evident through other school structures:

We have pedagogical principles that we believe should inform everything that we do and that that is actually being put in place at the moment; that as we do our PPPR or our planning within KLA’s etcetera that we give consideration to our agreed pedagogical principles as a school. (S4MT3)

This shared ownership was also evident in School 5 Participant 6 commented how their vision was more than just a statement and it was evident in the classrooms:

Describe leadership – I think there I would have to say – everyone had to stand back, and really take in this vision statement. Then take it to their classrooms. That was an important thing I think. It wasn’t all about just we’ve got this vision, here it is, it’s going to be put onto the wall.

Participant 6 added that the school vision was also being expressed through a common language used in the school: “If you walk around in some of the classrooms, and you hear some teachers, you can hear that they’re talking the same language….. Everyone’s sort of on the same page now”. These comments suggest the importance of a shared ownership of the improvement and the responsibility of those leading the process to make sure staff have the opportunities to feel that they have contributed, that then seems to build a culture of ownership and acceptance of the improvement.
Within the literature there are a number of leadership approaches that identify that shared ownership is an important element to support the leadership of a school improvement process. This characteristic in relation to specific leadership approaches will be discussed further in the analysis of data in the next chapter.

4.1.3.3.4 Summary

Resoundingly this data was across many of the leadership approaches identified in the literature. In the next chapter an analysis of these themes will be explored using the different leadership approaches identified in the literature where they seem to best correspond. This data may actually improve our understanding of the nature of all the approaches.

4.1.3.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the data has been presented under three focus areas, derived from the literature: Focus of Leadership, Effect on Participants and Contextual Considerations in response to the three research sub-questions. The participant responses to these questions have been explored through their involvement in the school improvement process of IDEAS. For Research Question One, some of the elements of leadership that have been identified as effecting change were the identification of a team to lead the improvement process, collaboration, articulating a clear vision and strategic direction, common language, change in leadership and links with the values and history of the school. Research Question Two explored six elements of leadership from the literature which contributed to school improvement while Research Question Three identified different experiences of leadership of the participants and investigated how these experiences were reflected in the different leadership approaches identified in the literature. These experiences included cooperative relationships, consultation, shared ownership, staff expertise, collaboration, the school’s history and charism, active listening and student-centred learning. This data will be discussed in the next chapter to answer the research questions and present findings from across the five schools used in this research.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research data and develop research findings. The research focused on leadership within school improvement and change in relation to that improvement. The previous chapter presented the data for each of the research questions that framed the study. They are now analysed further by drawing on both the literature and the research data. The chapter concludes with the development of a model for school improvement created from a synthesis of the findings from the research questions.

5.1 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 1
Research Question 1: What were the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process?

Data related to Research Question 1 indicated that there were six main elements that effected change within the school improvement process: Establishment of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT), the creation of a strategic direction and clear vision, opportunities for collaboration, a focus on pedagogy, as well as the leadership development of staff and the identification of the need for improvement. Each of these elements frames the discussion of the findings related to Research Question 1.

5.1.1 Establishment of the ISMT
The first element identified as effecting change in the school improvement process was found to be the establishment of the ISMT. The process of establishing the members of the team to lead the improvement process and the inclusion of a mixture of staff from different faculties was described by the participants as critical to the leadership of change in the school improvement process.

The team was established in each of the research schools by Principal invitation through expressions of interest from across the staff. By calling for team members in this way the Principal was searching for interested staff members who wanted to exercise their passion for school improvement in a voluntary way. The importance of voluntary membership of these teams has not been identified in previous literature. While the change models proposed by both Kotter (1995) and Reigeluth (2005) identify the principle of the importance of forming a team to lead the improvement process, the findings of this study suggest that team formation
should be formed through voluntary participation for when staff volunteer to be part of a team to lead improvement their motivation to begin the change process is far greater. This idea of volunteering is a significant departure from traditional ways of forming leadership teams. It highlights the move from formally appointed members to the provision of opportunity for all staff. Here, the improvement process being led and driven by voluntary staff members with an expressed interest in improvement seems to bring a greater commitment and desire to influence school improvement.

A further advantage of voluntary membership is that this produced teams representative of different faculties and leadership levels. This supported earlier findings by Senge (2006) and Wang & Ahmed (2003) who found that a broad perspective helps to guide staff towards improvements for their schools. But the findings of the current study add to the understanding of why the broad based teams are more effective, as staff reported that being part of the team would also give them a fuller understanding of the strategic direction of the school. As a result, the cross-faculty staff mix of the ISMT teams in this study seemed to increase the participants’ confidence in the improvement process. Staff felt reassured that there would be an opportunity for their views to be considered through their faculty representative on the team. The comment from School 2 Management Team participant 6 particularly conveyed this view: “The ISMT itself was a mix of many different KLA’s purposefully to make sure that we had a good representation across the whole school”.

Adding to the importance of a broad representation to the team was the importance of staff being involved in decisions that directly affect their working environment. Participants in this study believed that by forming a team which was representative of the wider group, their views would be included in the decision-making process and they were therefore committed and motivated towards being involved in the improvement process. In the literature, the responsibility and right to a voice in decisions that directly affect the working environment is described by Bosnich (1996) and Starratt (1996) as the principle of ‘subsidiarity’.

In this study, subsidiarity exercised through the ISMT team approach to decision-making seemed to lead to a greater commitment and motivation by staff to support the improvement process. This is consistent with the findings of York-Barr and Duke (2004) who found that teachers who participate in making decisions have a greater sense of ownership and commitment to the school’s vision for improvement. Therefore, this study revealed the power of subsidiarity, as a principle, when utilised to effect school improvement. It also reflects the
expectation of “voice” playing an integral role for the contemporary teacher being involved in decisions that affect their daily work.

While the breadth of representation was important in team membership, participants in this study also considered that leadership skills were an important quality for team members to possess. The ISMT Coordinators held other leadership positions in their schools; some Principals felt that the leadership of the ISMT needed to be filled by someone in a formal role of leadership who had proven leadership skills and was also respected by the staff for his/her previous leadership ability. While Copeland (2003) identified in the literature, the pivotal role of the “link” or “reform coordinator” to lead a change process, this study identified that the ‘link’ role of the coordinator is far more effective when they also hold another leadership position. By holding another leadership position, it seemed that further opportunities were provided to promote the school improvement journey in different forums and create a positive impact. The advantage of team members holding leadership positions has been recognised in the work of Lines (2007) who found that leaders with ‘position power’ gained more success in implementing change. Consistent with this, the current study highlights the fact that school improvement is assisted when the ISMT coordinator already held an existing leadership position. Further benefit arising from their existing leadership position was the increased respect and credibility they already had among staff. This reaffirmed the trust and confidence staff had in their leadership and supported the school improvement process. Starratt (1996) specifically addresses this aspect suggesting that an alignment of “trust” (p. 124) is needed to lead staff through a change process, not only previous leadership experience. The current study supports Starratt’s work finding that staff trust and confidence in the leadership skills of the ISMT coordinator was central to effecting change in the school.

The findings also suggest that the team needs to have a shared focused. Priestly, Millar, Barrett & Wallace’s (2010) also found that change processes in schools are more effective when facilitated by a team of like-minded teachers with a shared focus, thus adding strength to the findings of this study.

The ISMT were the group that were particularly charged with the leadership of the school improvement process in this study. The importance of having a group to lead the school improvement process is significant in effecting change for improvement. To summarise the specific findings from the data suggest that:
1. membership of the leadership team with the responsibility for the management of the improvement process needs to be voluntary with an interest and commitment to school improvement.

2. a cross-faculty mix of staff in the leadership team allows a broad perspective and the opportunity to share knowledge for a greater understanding of the school’s vision.

3. a team approach to decision-making allows staff to be involved in decisions that directly affect their daily work. This approach leads to a greater commitment and motivation by staff towards involvement in the improvement process.

4. the coordinator of the management team, given responsibility for the conduct of the improvement process in schools, needs to have proven formal leadership ability and respect as a leader to gain the confidence and trust of staff to effect change within the improvement process.

The school improvement process also had clear links with assisting the staff to develop the school’s strategic direction and vision, the next area identified in the data.

5.1.2  **Strategic direction and clear vision**

The process of developing a strategic direction and clear vision for the school was seen as an important element in effecting change in the schools. The fact that the schools in this research found benefit in using a school improvement framework developed by Crowther et al (2009) termed IDEAS, to implement change, is consistent with the research of Fullan (2008) who acknowledges the importance of using a school improvement framework to develop a strategic plan for an organisation. The findings of this study add to this literature by suggesting that a school improvement framework provides a structure that directs staff in a focused way to create a strategic direction and clear vision for school improvement.

The findings suggested that the use of a framework was a key factor in the development of a clear vision for the school. The framework used in this study recognised that a clear vision and learning principles were core elements for successful change. Learning principles in this case is a term used as part of the framework used in this study to give further understanding to the school vision. It refers to the common pedagogical priorities used in the classroom that provide a consistent approach to learning across the school. This consistent approach to
learning was important in supporting a clear vision for the school. The participants described how they were able to develop their school vision and learning principles as a direct response to their new understanding of a whole school approach to learning. Furthermore, the development of their agreed vision seemed to support a strategic direction that was understood and consistent across the school. While the importance of communicating a clear vision and consistent direction is recognised in the change models of Fullan (2008), Reigeluth (2005) and Kotter (1995), the findings of this study suggest that the development of learning principles is important in facilitating this clear vision and direction. This clear vision coupled with the learning principles then allowed staff to see a bigger picture of the school’s mission and an alignment of programs and initiatives. Three schools (Schools 1, 3 and 5) particularly identified how they could see this alignment across the school and how they were linked to the school’s strategic direction. The importance of this collective aspiration among staff is acknowledged by Wang & Ahmed (2003) who found that where staff learn together it assists them in building an understanding of the school’s vision for the future. Consistent with this, the staffs in this study worked collectively to develop a clear direction for the school that was shared by all staff. Importantly, when the staff could see an alignment of this direction with the programs and initiatives undertaken, there seemed to be a greater commitment by staff to work together in a common direction for the future.

Another key factor in the development of a strategic direction and clear vision was the development of a common language. The findings suggested that one of the biggest shifts in staff attitudes towards school improvement was in the development of a common language to articulate the school vision for learning. The importance of this common language was acknowledged by Andrews et al. (2004) who found that, in order for participants to contribute and be involved in the improvement process, they must be able to articulate an understanding of a shared image of the work of teachers using a common language. Similarly, Starratt (2011) and Fullan (2008d, 2009a) highlighted the importance of the use of a common language to give consistency to the articulation of the school vision. While this previous research acknowledges the importance of a common language in articulating the school vision, this study adds to the literature by giving some understanding of why common language is an important factor in school improvement. The findings indicated that the use of a common language increased dialogue between staff members and therefore contributed to staff engagement in the improvement process. This important role of common language was acknowledged by the majority of participants who indicated that their school either did not previously have a common language or they were unaware of it. This is best conveyed in the
comment by School 3 Management participant 2: “I guess the biggest thing is building a common language, I think this has been the biggest shift. We’re all talking about the same ideas or principles”. This concept of a common language supports the development of the learning principles, as described in the previous paragraph, providing a consistent approach to learning across the school. Furthermore, the findings suggest that active involvement in the development of a common language provided a way to set expectations and standards for learning that were consistent across the staff. This is consistent with the research of Crowther et al. (2009) who found that when teachers listened and explored each other’s views and values, taking special note of the positive language they wanted to see used, the change was supported. In the process of developing a common language in this study, it was found that staff felt more included and therefore took ownership of the implementation of a shared vision for student learning. It also seemed to provide a consistent way for the vision to be articulated and understood.

While the understanding of the vision that supported a shared direction by staff to school improvement was important, it was equally significant to staff that the vision was developed collaboratively. While Andrews (2006) and Crowther (1996, 2009) found that, if the vision was collaboratively developed, staff were more likely to be committed to ensuring this vision was part of everyday practice in the classroom. The findings here suggest that collaboration has a motivational impact that permeates attitudes to the school improvement process generally, not just practice in the classroom. Through collaborative involvement in the development of a direction and future plan for the school, staff were more willing and open to support the vision and goals of the school and the improvement process. Staff ownership of the changes for improvement seem to be directly connected to the responsibility and right they feel they have in decision-making processes that directly affect them in their daily work (Bosnich, 1996). When teachers were involved in the development of the vision and decisions that affected classroom practice they seemed to be committed to take ownership of the change (Crowther et al., 2009). This position links with the principle of ‘subsidiarity’ referred to in the previous element indicating the responsibility and right to a voice that staff believe they have in decisions that directly affect their working environment.

To summarise the finding in the area of strategic direction and clear vision the findings show that:
1. a framework or process for school improvement is required to provide a structure to focus staff in developing a strategic direction and clear vision.

2. a clear vision must be developed to give clarity of understanding and purpose to staff for future strategic direction. The vision enables staff to understand decisions regarding particular programs and initiatives that are implemented and how they align with the strategic direction of school. It also provides a common language, to articulate a shared vision, which sets clear expectations and a consistent approach to learning that is understood by staff. Staff involvement in the development of a common language for this vision increases their commitment to and ownership of the implementation of this shared vision.

3. the vision must be developed collaboratively utilising open dialogue and participation in decision-making by staff. This collaboration assists staff to take ownership of the vision and strategic direction from their involvement in its development.

Thus strategic planning and the development of a school vision give a specific way and definite future direction for a school.

While the schools’ vision linked to the strategic direction was most effective when developed through collaborative processes between staff members, the element of collaboration adds further insight into the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process and will be discussed in the next section.

5.1.3 Collaboration
Collaboration is the third important element identified as effecting change for school improvement. In particular, time for collaboration was seen as the key factor in enabling collaboration and supporting staff in accepting change. The participants indicated that within the normal day to day running of schools, time allocated for staff to work collaboratively is limited and they valued the extra time for collaboration that the process of school improvement provided. The importance of time for collaboration is identified by Elmore (2011) who found that quality implementation of any change process takes substantial time. The findings of this study add to the literature by highlighting the specific benefits that collaborative time enables; by being given extra time to collaborate, staff had the opportunity to share, discuss and feel confident in working within and dealing with change.
Collaboration also provided the opportunity for professional dialogue allowing staff time to reflect on practices, ask questions, experiment and share experiences. This is consistent with what Senge (2006) calls ‘organisational learning’. To support organisational learning, reflective practices between staff members contribute to the collective construction of knowledge for the benefit of decision-making for the whole organisation. The findings of the current study add to the understanding of the benefits of ‘organisational learning’ as staff found that these collaborative conversations allowed staff time to realise and understand where their ideas were aligned with the overall school vision. It also assisted their decisions regarding the implementation of new programs and initiatives.

The collaborative nature of the school improvement process also gave staff the opportunity to have a voice and input into decisions which supported whole-school improvement. This led to staff feeling valued, appreciated and listened to by those leading the improvement process for their contribution. The importance of valuing and appreciating people is seen in the research of Stone, Russell & Patterson (2003) and Moran (2005) who identified that workers experienced greater job satisfaction when they felt leaders valued the contribution they could make to the organisation. Adding to the literature, the findings from this study, give some indication of the factors that employees feel should be valued by those leading change. These factors included staff opinions, experience and expertise. All schools in this study reported that the more collaborative opportunities that were provided where staff felt that their opinions, experience and expertise were taken into account and included in the decisions the more they were energised to engage and support the school improvement process.

Further benefits of collaboration are identified in the work of Starratt (1996) and Shapiro & Stefkovich (2010) who found that through collaborative processes staff relationships and connections were deepened. Participants’ comments supported these findings from the literature and indicated that time for reflection and discussion fostered professional conversations that valued staff voice and built relationships. Participants, in this study, identified that the team leading the process particularly took into consideration their ideas regarding the ways the school could improve. This process of collaboration and consultation built and strengthened staff relationships leading to a distinctive set of shared learning principles being developed for each school.
While the importance of collaboration is widely acknowledged, the findings of this study add significantly by indicating the specific structural processes that support collaboration. Participants identified collaborative staff engagement in workshop style activities, and discussion and collaboration at staff and faculty meetings and staff development days. Of particular importance was the use of smaller groups for discussion as it seemed to result in greater collaboration among staff and more involvement in the process. Furthermore, small groups seemed to build stronger relationships as staff were more confident and open to share their views and opinions with each other in these smaller gatherings. The issue of group size in facilitating collaboration does not seem to have been previously identified in the literature. This suggests that an important contribution of this research is in informing structures that best facilitate collaboration.

The research also showed that the level of engagement of staff was affected by the timeline of the process. In the literature, a number of authors identify the importance of a regular connection (Wheatley, 2005) and staff engagement that allow individuals to work in a more collaborative style (Fullan, 2008, Taylor & LaBarre, 2008). Participants in this study described a real excitement and engagement with the process, initially due to the amount and frequency of discussions and collaboration between staff. However, as time progressed and there were longer gaps between the times when staff engaged in discussion and activities, their connection with the process seemed to diminish. This decline in staff engagement through regular interaction as a group affected their ownership of the process and staff felt the group leading the improvement process were working as a separate group to them, who just simply kept staff informed of decisions they were making. The need for an awareness of the frequency of meetings and communication and a consistent and regular connection with staff are important if they are to feel part of the improvement process and have ownership of decisions.

Collaborative processes provide an opportunity for staff to work together. The findings suggest that collaboration:

1. is effective for school improvement when extra time is given. This allows opportunities for staff to share, discuss and feel confident in working within and dealing with change.
2. increases professional dialogue and reflective practices that allow staff to ask questions, experiment and share experiences. The conversations seem to allowed staff time to realise and understand where their ideas were aligned with the overall school vision and therefore, assist their decisions regarding the implementation of new programs and initiatives.

3. give staff a feeling of being valued, appreciated and listened to for their opinions and a voice in the school decision-making processes. This led to stronger relationships among staff, a greater sense of job satisfaction and staff being more energised to engage and support the school improvement process.

4. works best in smaller group settings. This helps stronger relationships to develop where staff feel more confident to share their views and opinions with others and encourages more involvement and commitment from staff to the school improvement process.

5. needs to be regular and substantial to ensure staff feel connected with the process. Through frequent communication staff are committed to support and be involved in the improvement process.

The collaborative nature of the improvement process seemed to indicate the importance of a focus on pedagogy in the schools, the next element identified in the research.

5.1.4 Pedagogy
The fourth element identified as effecting change in schools is the importance of a focus on pedagogy. The participants in this study acknowledged that the improvement process had opened up pedagogical discussions amongst staff. They reported that there were more professional conversations regarding pedagogical approaches in the classroom, including the sharing of good teaching practice. They described a greater ‘openness’ by staff to collaborate and discuss ways to enhance student learning through sharing ideas and best practice. This is consistent with the research of Thornburg & Mungai (2011) and Robinson (2011) who found that, to have a positive impact in the classroom through pedagogical change, teachers need to engage in professional conversations and share best teaching practice. An important finding of this study was that the sharing of best practice was most beneficial when the environment between staff was collaborative as this seemed to provide the setting where staff felt an ease
and an openness to speak freely and share their classroom practice. Bezzina & Burford (2010) in their research developed a framework that outlined the importance of the collaborative sharing of practice and resources to support the transformation of the learning environment for students. Similarly, Duignan and Macpherson (1993) found that to maintain a holistic approach to leading change, a model must involve the social interaction between people through professional conversation and practice. While the findings of this study supported this previous research, participants in this study acknowledged these types of professional conversations between staff were not always easy if previous practice had been for teachers to plan independently and if they were not accustomed to sharing their teaching practices with each other. However, the findings suggested that, when structures that supported collaboration were in place, it allowed for open collaborative conversation focused on pedagogy.

The focus on pedagogy through the professional conversations by teachers in this study also identified a building of confidence amongst staff in their ability to make a difference and improve the learning experience for students. Participants indicated that this confidence ensured that attention was given to ensuring the authentic engagement of students in their learning and that their particular learning needs were the focus of planning pedagogical strategies in the classroom. School 1 teacher 6 best identified this focus:

I think it was very useful because it got us focusing back on what our core business is which is teaching. Looking at what are the needs of our students and what’s the latest pedagogy say and how can we go about implementing some of that in our practice. (S1T6)

This position regarding a focus on pedagogy through teacher professional dialogue is identified in the framework developed by Shapiro & Stefkovich (2010) who emphasise the importance of placing students at the centre of the educational setting. Similarly, Bezzina & Burford (2010) found that for schools to be ethical and authentic all decisions and conversations by teachers and leaders should revolve around the best interests of the students. The current study clearly supports this previous research suggesting that staff value professional conversations focused on pedagogy as core business.

A further finding of this study was that the emphasis on pedagogy situates the teacher as a leader of learning in the classroom. This aligns with research by Silins & Mulford (2004) and Priestly et al. (2010) that highlights the importance of the teacher as a leader of learning and
that, when teacher leadership is emphasised in schools, there is a real focus on student learning. In this study there was a real focus on the impact teachers can make to student learning through their leadership of classroom practice. The distinguishing factor of teacher leadership that these authors found was that teachers are at the grass roots of influencing student learning through their leadership of pedagogy. Within this research, participants acknowledged the contribution they could make to student learning. In particular, the research showed that teachers were making a positive impact on student learning and could see the connection of school processes and the vision, and their development of this with their work in the classroom. The “Teachers as Leaders Framework” (Appendix 3, p. 316) developed by Crowther et al. (2009) also identifies the ways teachers are influential in shaping classroom practice and are most effective when they give direction on pedagogy and the needs of students. This model was applicable in this study with participants recognising the importance of teachers being seen as leaders of classroom practice and focusing on tailoring the curriculum to meet the learning needs of students. This research indicated that, in their planning, staff worked collaboratively with other members of their department to make decisions regarding different pedagogical approaches. This collaboration and decision-making led to a real shift in pedagogical practices with teachers leading this change.

For effective change for school improvement a focus on pedagogy seems to lead to improved teaching and learning practices. The findings indicate that a focus on pedagogy:

1. increases staff professional conversation and sharing of best teaching practice. The professional discussions need to be collaborative in nature with a real openness by staff to share best teaching practice.

2. develops teacher leadership as leaders of pedagogy. Teachers need to lead decision-making processes regarding effective pedagogical strategies for improved student learning in the classroom.

Pedagogy is an important part of the leadership development of staff. In order to influence pedagogy, participants identified the need to develop their leadership skills to encourage and guide staff participation in the improvement process.
5.1.5  **Leadership development**

The leadership development of teachers and the need to build teacher capacity and sustainability is a strong feature identified as effecting change in schools. This study found that the members of the ISMT, the group leading the improvement process, were in a position to develop their own leadership capacity as they had ongoing leadership development as facilitators of the process. Through the process, members of the ISMT described how they were able to develop their leadership skills and expertise by continually refining, evaluating and synthesising the contributions of the whole school throughout the improvement process.

In each of the three change models of Fullan (2008), Reigeluth (2005) and Kotter (1995), which were used to frame this research, teacher capacity building and leadership development were identified as important to build individual and collective capacity for direct impact and improvement. This is reflected in the findings of this study which emphasise that by being a member of the team leading the improvement process, both as an individual as well as a group member, participants were able to develop their leadership capacity to influence school improvement.

As well as building their leadership capacity, the team leading the school improvement process for this study also engaged different staff to lead the process at different times. This approach further emphasises the important role of teacher leaders as identified in the previous element and recognises the importance of a distributive leadership approach that acknowledges the leadership of the ISMT as well as teacher leadership of pedagogy. Within this study the participants also identified parallel leadership, a term used by Crowther, Ferguson & Hann (2009), that is related to the language utilised by the school improvement process (IDEAS) and was used in this research. It acknowledges that teachers use their expertise as leaders of pedagogy and lead projects focusing on the learning needs of students in the classroom which works in parallel with the strategic leadership of the Principal. It focuses on attempting to give teachers a real sense of worth for what they can contribute and acknowledges their expertise as leaders of learning. This leadership approach allows teachers who do not necessarily have previous leadership experience to develop their skills as well as contribute to the improvement process, something Hargreaves & Fink (2008) say is important in educational change.
This study similarly suggests that teachers were able to develop their leadership skills and confidence to lead staff by being given the opportunity to lead because of their skills and expertise in teaching and learning. A leadership approach which recognises the leadership of staff across an organisation that is distributive and devolved, depending on the leadership skills needed, is acknowledged as significant in supporting change by many researchers within the literature (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001; Gronn, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2007; Hargreaves & Fink, 2008; Harris, 2008 and Spillane, 2012).

The importance of a shared role of leadership was further emphasised in four of the five schools in this study, in which the principal changed during the time of implementation of the school improvement process. The fact that the Principal changed did affect the advancement of the improvement process. However, the process just needed to allow time for the new principal to be inducted into the current stage and progress of the implementation of the school improvement process. In the literature, the importance of a shared approach to leadership was reported by Cannon (2004) which is supported in this study as the ISMT continued to meet as a team and maintained leadership of the process giving the Principal time to gain an understanding of the school’s position in the improvement process. Although the feedback from principals was not included in the final data due to the fact that they were appointed after the school had begun the improvement process, the comments from the Principals were significant in supporting a shared approach to leading school improvement and the importance of the leadership of the ISMT to them as new principals in the school. This approach of devolving responsibility to a leadership team highlights the importance of empowering staff to take responsibility and ownership for the improvement, as suggested by the research of Greenfield, Braithwaite, Pawsey, Johnson & Robinson (2009). In this study, the importance given to the distributive leadership and teamwork of the group leading the improvement process ensured that previous decisions and the implementation of the process were not affected by the change in leadership of the principal. It also seemed to give staff a sense of satisfaction that their leadership of both the process and pedagogy was acknowledged and accepted by the new Principal. This seemed to contribute significantly to the way they engaged in the improvement process. It also gave staff satisfaction to know that their previous work was respected and developed a sense of job satisfaction that their work and expertise were valued. This satisfaction reflects Herzberg’s ‘motivator factors’ which he saw as affecting job satisfaction and workers’ sense of “achievement, recognition, advancement and growth” (Carson, 2005, p. 456).
This research further acknowledged that the leadership of staff in the classroom was important in making a difference to student learning and that staff were recognised as experts in supporting the learning needs of students. This is consistent with the work of Leithwood et al (2007) who found that when leadership is distributed between the Principal and the staff, staff take ownership and leadership of learning in the classroom and their skills are acknowledged. A distributive leadership approach in this study seems to allow staff to develop their leadership capacity and acknowledges their contribution and expertise as leaders of classroom practice.

Leadership development was recognised as the fifth element effecting change in the improvement process. To show how the findings on leadership development impacts on change in the improvement process, a summary of the findings follow:

1. leadership capacity of the group leading a school improvement process is developed through continual refining, evaluating and synthesising of the contributions of the whole school throughout the improvement process.

2. leadership needs to be distributed to emphasise both the importance of leadership of the improvement process and the role of teachers to lead pedagogy for school improvement. This distributive approach acknowledges improvement and that leadership is a shared domain between the Principal, as the strategic leader and staff, as pedagogical leaders.

3. the recognition of staff expertise and the opportunity for them to develop their leadership skills as leaders of learning influenced the way staff engaged, contributed and took ownership of the change process.

4. a change in leadership of the Principal does not have to affect the implementation of the school improvement process. Through a distributive leadership approach the improvement process can continue while the incoming Principal is inducted into the process and stage of implementation in the school. This acceptance allows staff to feel a sense of satisfaction that their previous leadership of the process is valued and expertise respected.
The final element identified in the research as effecting change within a school improvement process was the ‘need for improvement’. The reason for deciding or needing to implement change seems to affect the ownership, engagement and responsibility of staff to support school improvement. This element is examined with reference to the present relevant literature.

5.1.6 Need for improvement

The final element identified in this research as effecting change in schools is the recognition of the need for improvement. Within the five schools, three of the schools identified that they needed to investigate a process of school improvement to enhance and revitalise themselves, while the other two schools were invited by the system to investigate a process for school improvement.

In the schools identified as needing to revitalise themselves to improve the learning environment for students, the participants indicated that there was a readiness and willingness of staff to begin a process of improvement. This idea of necessity for change is consistent with the first element of Kotter’s (1995) change model which describes the importance of ‘establishing a sense of urgency’, where an environment of necessity is created and participants can see that change is crucial for the good of the organisation. In these schools in this study, this urgency to improve student learning created an environment where the Principal and the staff were both working together to support and take ownership of the improvement. There appeared to be a focus by the principals and the team leading the improvement process to centre their attention on the bigger strategic direction of the school, while teachers took responsibility to lead learning in their classrooms. This dual focus developed through recognition of the need for change reflects the concept of parallel leadership identified by Crowther (1996, 2009) and Andrews (2006).

A further finding of this study was the importance of recognising and preserving the school’s identity and distinctive character within the school improvement process. Given all the schools involved in the sample were Catholic and coming from a position of value-based religious culture, recognising the schools’ need to re-connect with their history and foundations was very important. The research revealed that the improvement process allowed the participants to re-connect with the founder or founders of their school and the values they espoused. The importance of identifying the school’s values and purpose is consistent with the research of Fullan (2009a) and Bezzina & Burford (2010) who recognise that the process
of school improvement must start with the moral purpose. In this current study it was noted by the participants that it was important that the current values and needs of the school needed to be linked with the past history and founder(s) of the school as they developed their school vision. This was identified as something the staff embraced and welcomed and supported the effectiveness of the improvement process. Similarly, Degenhardt & Duignan (2010) found that at the heart of a school’s moral purpose is its commitment to the school’s values. The importance of developing the school vision that identified with its foundations and reflected the school values allowed the participants in this study to reflect on the moral purpose and particular values underpinning the school. Previous research by Fullan (2007) and Bezzina & Burford (2010) has identified that lack of clarity around the moral purpose of the school can hinder growth and ownership of any change or reform process. The current study reinforces the importance of clarity around moral purpose as a driver of school improvement. It adds further to the literature by suggesting that, when the moral purpose and values of each school were linked to the charism of the school and the values of the founder, staff were more engaged in the development of the school vision for improvement.

The need for improvement was also seen in the physical changes that were occurring in the schools and impacted on the school improvement process. As part of school review, revitalisation and improvement processes in the Catholic Education System, three of the five schools in the research were involved in major building projects and were being supported by the system. Participants described how the improvement process was helping to drive the design for the new teaching and learning spaces to enhance the learning environment. This was being achieved through collaborative and consultative processes with both staff and students. Research by Bezzina (2007) and Bezzina & Burford (2010) found that this professional sharing between teachers allows them to identify and lead discussions which focus on the learning needs of students within the school’s physical environment. This study supports their position as participants identified that these conversations and physical changes were related to their day to day work. They also believed it was important that they were consulted. As teachers are at the coal face of classroom practice, the participants realised the importance of them being involved in the decisions that affected their work, which, in turn, affected their involvement in the school improvement process. This finding further supports the work of Bosnich (1996) and Starratt (1996) who stress that professional dialogue is important in allowing staff to have a voice in decisions that directly affect their working environment.
A summary of the findings for the “Need for improvement” and how that effects change in the school follows:

1. it was important that participants could see a real need for improvement and a connection and focus on improving the learning environment for students.

2. identification with a school’s history and foundations, especially in religious schools, is an important element that can contribute to the development of a school vision that connects its moral purpose and values.

3. physical changes in a school and the importance of staff having a voice in decisions relating to the design and functioning of new learning spaces together with the fact that staff are consulted acknowledges their expertise as classroom practitioners and fosters a collegial environment where they feel valued for their contribution to decision-making.

4. the involvement and collaboration of staff regarding physical plant further supports the processes of ownership and trust developed by staff to support the improvement process.

From the literature, six leadership focus areas were further identified as successful elements in implementing change. These elements will be explored as part of analysing and discussing the findings associated with Research Question 2.

5.2 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 2
Research Question 2: To what extent did leadership, within these elements, contribute to the school improvement process?

The data related to Research Question 2 is analysed and discussed under six leadership focus areas which were selected from a synthesis of elements in three different change models: Fullan (2008), Reigeluth (2005) and Kotter (1995). These six focuses are: relationships, ownership, capacity building, moral purpose, continuous improvement and support. A discussion of each of these focus areas will identify how they contributed to the school improvement process and form the findings for Research Question 2.
5.2.1 Relationships

The first focus area of relationships identified three areas that were significant in supporting the improvement process: collaborative relationships, valuing staff expertise and experience and building teamwork and trust.

5.2.1.1 Collaborative relationships

Collaborative relationships is the first area identified as contributing to school improvement. In this study the participants indicated that staff had worked collaboratively to establish a common vision for learning and that this collaboration had built positive relationships amongst staff. The importance of collaborative relationships was suggested in early literature by Macgregor Burns (1978) who highlighted the importance of developing stronger relationships between the leader and staff. Research by Burford & Bezzina (2006) built on this, not only endorsing the importance of collaborative relationships between leaders and staff, but also finding that collaborative relationships are built through cooperation and teamwork. Consistent with the previous research this study also recognises the importance of collaborative relationships but adds to the understanding of why these relationships are important by suggesting that these relationships build better communication and support the development of a common vision for student learning between those leading the improvement process and staff. Furthermore, collaborative relationships were improved through the professional conversation between the leaders of the improvement process and staff by giving opportunities to discuss and adopt an agreed vision for student learning in a collaborative environment.

Collaborative relationships were also identified as a key element that effected change in Research Question 1. All three change models presented in the literature, Fullan (2008), Reigeluth (2005) and Kotter (1995), found that developing positive relationships among participants was the foundation for good communication within change processes. These researchers found that, by building positive relationships, staff engagement in the change process was enhanced and contributed to the success of the improvement. This study supports their position in finding that the leaders of the improvement process reported that staff relationships were strengthened when there was collaboration to develop the school vision, future directions for the school and staff supporting commitment to the vision that they had helped create. Elmore (2011) in his research found that the people in the organisation are its biggest asset and, when relationships are working in unison, the conditions for change are ideal. The fact that decisions in this study were made in a collegial way supports Elmore’s
work and suggests that the relationships formed were supportive of each other and the school and contributed to the adoption of a shared goal for improvement. It also seems to suggest that staff felt confident in sharing their ideas in the visioning process and this in turn strengthened and supported decisions made.

 Relationships were further strengthened through the way staff felt valued for their expertise and experience.

5.2.1.2 Valuing staff expertise and experience
As part of the focus area of relationships the importance of valuing staff expertise and experience was identified as significant in supporting the improvement process. The participants in this study acknowledged that staff felt their contribution to developing the school vision had been valued and taken into consideration. They also felt appreciated and respected for their expertise as leaders of learning and for what they could contribute to the improvement process. This is consistent with the research of Stone, Russell & Patterson (2003) who support relationships that respect “the importance of valuing people, listening,…and empowering followers” (p. 354) and Moran (2005) who found that when people felt valued they were committed to building relationships that value a strong sense of community and this supported the organisation and its future directions. An important finding of this study in relation to valuing and supporting a sense of community was that staff were asked to work in mixed KLA curriculum groupings to allow for cross curricular perspectives to be discussed. This mix of staff had supported real engagement in the process as they felt their KLA expertise was acknowledged and respected. A further advantage of these mixed groups is that staff believed that the leaders of the improvement process were authentic in gathering and valuing the contribution of all. This aligns with Starratt’s (2004) notion of building positive relationships in an organisation and suggests that, if leaders were authentic, they allow real engagement between people and respect and acknowledge the contribution that each person makes to support the future directions of the organisation.

These findings suggested that the success of the school improvement process was linked to the positive relationships that were developed among staff through consultation and their feeling of being valued for their contribution to the improvement process. These relationships seemed to further build teamwork and trust amongst staff.
5.2.1.3 Building teamwork and trust

The third area identified as contributing to relationships that support school improvement is building teamwork and trust. In this study the consultative way the process was conducted led to the promotion of teamwork and the building of trust. Added to this, all schools identified that there was an atmosphere of trust between those leading the process and staff. Furthermore, where trust seemed to be evident staff took greater responsibility for school improvement. Trust is identified in the literature as an important factor in the success of school improvement. This is seen in the work of Crowther et al. (2002) who found that where trust is “nurtured, practiced and valued” (p. 55), teachers share in the collective responsibility for school improvement. Alban-Metcalf et al. (2006) added that in organisations that promote collegial relationships, build connections and a culture of “integrity, openness and transparency and a genuine valuing of others” (p. 68), staff are better able to support the future directions of the organisation. This study clearly supports this previous research suggesting the importance of relationships that develop trust and teamwork between the leaders of the process and staff.

The importance of quality relationships has been identified as an important focus in leading a school improvement process. The specific findings from the data suggests that relationships:

- are strengthened through collaborative processes of developing a school vision. The collaboration improves communication and cooperation between those leading the process and staff, building a sense of teamwork and increasing professional dialogue while also developing staff confidence to contribute to decision-making processes.

- built through collaborative and consultative processes contribute to staff feeling a sense of value for their contribution and respected for the expertise they bring to decisions for improvement.

- build trust between the team leading the school improvement process and staff through the consultation of multiple voices and staff feeling listened to when decisions are made. This trust impacts on the ownership and responsibility staff feel about the improvement process.
The second leadership focus area selected from the literature is ownership and the findings from the data are presented in the next section to identify how it contributed to the school improvement process.

5.2.2 Ownership
From the data relating to the second focus area of ownership, three areas were recognised as significant in supporting staff ownership of the school improvement process: communicating a clear vision, engagement and staff voice, and shared leadership. Each of these is discussed in turn.

5.2.2.1 Clear vision
The first area identified within the focus area of ownership is communicating a clear vision. Participants indicated that the improvement process had assisted them in developing a clear vision for learning at the school. Furthermore, they identified that the vision had been developed collaboratively as part of the process and that they felt their ideas had been listened to and taken into consideration when the vision was developed. These ideas are connected closely to the previous focus area of relationships and the importance of collaborative processes to support decisions for improvement. While Kotter (1995) identified that a clear vision generates “both understanding and interest” (p. 63) and Fullan (2008) found that ownership of change is supported when those leading the process communicated a clear vision, this study added to these positions the idea that communicating a clear vision supported staff ownership of the improvement and was more effective when staff were part of developing the vision.

Engagement and staff voice were also identified as important in supporting the ownership taken by the participants in the school improvement process.

5.2.2.2 Engagement and staff voice
The second area identified as contributing to the ownership of the school improvement process is engagement and staff voice. The findings suggest that the participants felt their ownership of the vision for improvement was gained through staff collaboration and engagement to develop the school vision. Participants described how staff voice and consultation set a common goal and direction for learning in the school which in turn affected their relationships. This is best described by School 1 participant 6: “I think people were able to voice their ideas; it developed quite positive relationships amongst the staff and we were
working for a common goal. So it was a good direction”. In the literature, the work of Muijs and Harris (2006) found that staff engagement through a collaborative approach of teachers working in teams supported school improvement processes in their research. This is evident in this study, particularly identifying the contribution of staff working in curriculum teams. Participants described the teamwork that was evident within the KLA curriculum teams and the importance of the collaboration and the professional dialogue it generated. The teachers additionally felt that this collaborative approach assisted their engagement and ownership of improvement to support the common direction of the school. This again shows a similarity with the previous section of relationships where relationships are strengthened through collaborative processes. Crowther et al. (2009) observed in their research that there was a real sense of ownership of the school vision, when there was increased dialogue and staff voice to develop the school’s vision and plan its directions for the future. Similarly, Grumen and Saks (2011) also identified staff engagement as a key factor in implementing change in their research. The involvement of staff in the school decision-making processes in this study supports these positions and suggests that staff were more inclined to take ownership of the decisions made and support the future directions of the school when they had a voice in decisions.

The ownership of change seems to be identified through collaborative processes of staff engagement and voice in decision-making. The collaboration also identified teamwork between the Principal and staff and this shared role of leadership is further identified in the following section.

**5.2.2.3 Shared leadership**

Shared leadership is the third area identified as contributing to the ownership of school improvement. The school improvement process, used in the research, identifies a particular shared approach to leadership, termed Parallel leadership, which distinguishes the leadership of the principal as strategic and the leadership of teachers as pedagogical. The notion of teachers being leaders of learning links with the previous element of relationships where it was identified that staff were valued for their expertise and experience and took ownership of the school vision through their active leadership of learning in the classroom. In this study the participants describe a realisation by staff that they could make a real difference to pedagogy as teachers in the classroom. This is consistent with the findings of Priestly et al. (2010) that supported the importance of teachers as leaders, whereby teachers took ownership and were enthused to work collectively and try new things when they felt respected as classroom
educators. Crowther (2009, 1996) and Andrews (2006) also support this notion of teachers taking leadership and ownership as leaders of learning in the classroom to enact the school vision. Their work found that teachers are most effective in supporting the school vision when they give direction to pedagogy.

In this study, shared leadership was also identified through the ISMT who took a very active role in leading the school improvement process in each of the schools, sharing leadership of the process with the Principal and members of the team. Within this context, the ISMT used the expertise and skills of different staff to lead the improvement process at different times. This shared leadership was respected by staff and they were supportive of the change. The context of shared leadership is supported by the work of Leithwood (2007) who found that organisations have different leadership capabilities and that, by acknowledging and valuing the contribution and expertise of others, ownership and sustainability of the change can occur. Likewise, Harris (2008) found that by sharing leadership, where individuals work very closely together, the interactions between individuals and teams is maximised and members of the organisation take a collective responsibility and ownership of the change. The findings of this study add to this literature highlighting the specific benefits of a smaller team, like the ISMT, to share leadership of the process. The participants particularly identify shared leadership as teacher leadership of pedagogy and classroom practice, principal leadership of the strategic directions of the school and the ISMT who took leadership of the improvement process.

The leadership focus of ownership has been recognised as a significant element that contributes in a positive way to school improvement. It connects closely with the previous element of relationships and the findings indicate that ownership of the improvement process is enhanced by:

- communicating a clear vision for the school that has been collaboratively developed. The collaboration process assists staff to understand the vision and enables it to be shared and owned.

- staff voice in decision-making. The decision-making process must be collaborative and consultative where staff are engaged in meaningful professional dialogue which contributes to the whole-school vision for learning. When staff work in curriculum groups it builds teamwork, increases professional dialogue and contributes to the ownership staff take to improving the learning environment for students.
• shared leadership. Ownership of the improvement seems to work best when leadership is shared and the responsibility for improvement is acknowledged as the responsibility of all staff. This responsibility is found through the strategic leadership of the Principal, the pedagogical leadership of teachers where they are respected for their expertise and skill as leaders of learning as well as a smaller group, the ISMT, to lead the improvement process.

Capacity building, the third leadership focus area identified from the literature, is explored in the next section to ascertain its contribution to the school improvement process.

5.2.3 Capacity Building
The third focus area, Capacity Building focuses on the professional and leadership development of staff and the impact of these both, on staff and in the classroom, to build teacher capacity. The data indicated three important elements that supported capacity building: Professional and leadership development, Classroom practice and Teacher expertise.

5.2.3.1 Professional and leadership development
The first area identified within the focus area of capacity building is professional and leadership development. Participants described how the improvement process allowed staff the opportunity to develop professionally by developing their leadership skills, taking on leadership roles at different times depending on their expertise and skills. The use of staff expertise in this study seemed to suggest that staff confidence was built through the acknowledgement of their expertise to lead when needed in the process. This is consistent with the work of Fullan (2009b) who found that improvement processes cannot be a quick fix but need to include the leadership development of staff, building their confidence, capability and expertise as leaders of reform. These findings are in keeping with the literature by suggesting that this development is fostered through a shared leadership approach where different staff were called on to lead at different times depending on their skills and talents. This acknowledgement of shared leadership links with the previous areas of ownership and relationships, where staff expertise and experience is valued.

The professional and leadership development provided by the improvement process seems to indicate an increased focus on student learning and changes to classroom practice and is further explored in the next section.
5.2.3.2 Classroom practice

The second element contributing to capacity building is a focus on classroom practice. Participants in this study indicated that the school improvement process focused on student learning in the classroom and that the learning framework and principles developed through the improvement process seemed to provide a unified approach to student learning. The fact that the learning principles and framework were developed collectively by staff meant that they were open to sharing classroom practice with an emphasis on professional development that was intentional, concentrating on teaching strategies to improve student learning. This unified approach to student learning and staff capacity building is consistent with the research of Crowther et al. (2009) who found that, in schools where staff engaged in professional dialogue to develop a common framework for teaching and learning, this engagement developed staff confidence and built their capacity in the classroom. The participants further added that they felt the improvement process had supported staff in effecting change in the classroom through these consultative processes and professional dialogue. They particularly noted that there had been a significant shift by the teachers to focus on student learning and the direct impact they made in the classroom. This is further supported in the professional leadership program developed through the research of Burford and Bezzina (2006) which maintains that teachers transform their teaching and learning practices through the sharing of good practice. Similarly, the collaborative approach used in this study to engage staff in professional development seemed to increase the professional dialogue between staff and impact positively on classroom practice.

The next section analyses the third element identified in the leadership focus area of Capacity Building, Teacher expertise.

5.2.3.3 Teacher expertise

Capability building developed through recognising teacher expertise was identified in this study as contributing to school improvement. The current research indicated that staff perceived their schools to be professional learning communities where teacher expertise is recognised and teachers are valued as professionals who are dedicated to teaching and learning. This recognition seems to identify a distributive leadership approach and is consistent with the work of Gronn (2002) who found that when leadership is distributed across an organisation the diverse strengths and gifts of individuals in the group are recognised, the organisation benefits and individuals take collective responsibility to sustain improvement. Within the current study it was recognised that staff used their expertise,
knowledge and skills to develop their own leadership capacity as well as sharing their skills to develop the leadership capacity of the whole group. In the literature, Stoll (2009) recognised the importance of building individual as well as organisational leadership capacity. She found that by building the leadership capacity of participants and teams to implement the vision and goals of the organisation, it assisted their collective responsibility to support and sustain change. In this study the expertise of staff was acknowledged. However, the findings of this study add to the literature by highlighting that when the expertise of staff was gathered and utilised across faculty groups, staff capacity to support and sustain the improvement was even more effective.

Capacity building has been identified as a significant element that impacts on the success of school improvement processes. Capacity is built through:

- staff confidence to lead learning. When staff feel respected for their expertise and experience their capacity to lead learning increases. The provision of professional development builds staff confidence as pedagogical experts which in turn supports their leadership development and ability to sustain the improvement.

- targeted professional development that focuses on student learning and sharing best classroom practice. A collaborative approach to sharing best practice seems to increase professional dialogue and impact positively on classroom practice. Professional development needs to link to the school-wide pedagogy and learning principles developed by the school that support a unified approach to student learning.

- using staff expertise. When staff expertise and skills are acknowledged to lead improvement at appropriate times staff feel valued for their contribution which builds their leadership capacity. This approach distributes leadership for sustainability of the improvement. Expertise in faculty groups can identify specific expertise and develop the leadership capacity of staff for sustained improvement.

The fourth leadership focus area selected from the literature of Moral Purpose is analysed in the next section.
5.2.4  Moral Purpose

Moral purpose reflects the values, culture and traditions of a school that are identified as significant by participants. The data from this study identified three main elements that supported the moral purpose in the school improvement process: a vision for students, commitment to school values and alignment of values.

5.2.4.1  A vision for students

A vision for students as learners was the first element identified as contributing to the moral purpose of school improvement. Within the improvement process in this study, the participants identified the importance of ensuring a clarity of purpose in the school vision, particularly ensuring it reflected an understanding of students as lifelong learners and equipping them for the world beyond school. All schools, in the study, acknowledged that, through the improvement process, this clarity saw a shift in emphasis to indicate the importance of an education that prepares students to be worldwide citizens and a belief that their school vision helps prepare students to be responsible citizens for the future. The response from School 3 participant 6 highlights this:

We focused a lot about this in really looking at the moral and ethical validity of our vision, and whether or not it was what we wanted to achieve. I think we definitely got there because we're looking at the skills that the young ladies should have upon graduation from (the school), and lifelong learners. Not just, if you will, teaching to a test, but equipping them with the skills, or the necessary skills, to cope out in the outside world. So I think the moral purpose of the (school improvement) process is something that really was hit home to staff and something that we were most definitely conscious of. (S3T6)

In developing the vision participants emphasised the importance of students having a global understanding of their world and an empathy and concern for others. They indicated that in their participation in the school improvement process they were committed to developing the ‘whole’ student with a more comprehensive vision of their place in society. The importance of this participation and ownership of the vision supports the work of both Fullan (2009a) and Bezzina and Burford (2014) who found that lack of clarity around the moral purpose of the school can hinder growth and ownership of any change or reform process. Consistent with this previous research, participants identified their desire to develop students as life-long learners well equipped to respond to the challenges of life after school and that they supported
the school vision for this. This support of the school vision connects with the previous focus area of ownership that identified the importance of staff being involved in the development of the school vision. Through their involvement they gain a better understanding of the vision, its purpose and are more inclined to take ownership of something they have helped create, which ultimately supports the success and sustainability of the improvement.

Moral purpose also incorporates the school’s commitment to its values and this is discussed to identify how it has contributed to the school improvement process.

5.2.4.2 Commitment to school values
The commitment to the school’s values is the second element identified within moral purpose as significant in supporting school improvement. The data in this study strongly indicated that the school’s values were lived through the school vision and this seems to suggest that, in the development of the vision, the staff had ensured that they had incorporated the school’s values. Degenhardt and Duignan (2010) found that at the heart and core of a school’s moral purpose is its commitment to the school’s values. They also believe the link between the school vision and the communication of its values is what gives a school its particular identity and culture. The findings of this study support this position indicating that in developing the school vision they had integrated the school’s values. The importance of ensuring the school’s values are embodied in the school vision also connects with the leadership focus of ownership where the importance of communicating a clear vision was identified. The moral purpose identified in this research extends this by suggesting that, for the vision to be clearly communicated, it needs also to encompass the school’s values. The participants described that they particularly wanted the school vision to articulate what staff valued as a school community as well as ensuring an understanding of what they wanted for the students and this links with the element ‘a vision for students’ outlined above. They described how the commitment to the school’s values was a real strength of the process and went on to say that they believed the moral purpose was a motivation for staff to support the success of the improvement process. This impact is described by School 4 participant 7:
I think that’s probably one of the places where we’ve probably got our greatest strength is commitment to school values, and I think that’s a huge motivation for all our leaders in the school. The (school improvement) process and how that impacted on that, I think probably the moral purpose could have been one of the driving forces that was behind everyone’s desire to make the whole thing successful. (S4MT7)

The notion of a school being committed to its school values is also consistent with the research of Starratt (2011) who found that the moral purpose of the school is shaped by the understandings teachers have of ‘why’ we prepare students to be responsible citizens of the future. Starratt (2011) added that the commitment teachers have to the school’s values is reflected in the way they view their responsibility for transforming students to participate more fully as responsible members of the global world. This commitment to school values is also reflected in the work of Andrews (2008) who found that the moral purpose sets the standard by which the school operates and Wildy and Faulkner (2008) who found that it strengthens the identity of the school. The data from this study strongly supports the positions of these authors in the finding that the commitment to the school’s values was integral to the success of the school improvement process. This commitment to the school’s values is understood as the school’s moral purpose and is articulated and lived through the school vision.

The next section analyses how the moral purpose expressed through the school’s vision is now evident and aligned with classroom practice, a third element identified within the leadership focus area of Moral purpose.

5.2.4.3 Alignment of values

The importance of meaningful alignment between the school’s vision and values, and classroom practices is the final element identified in the focus area of moral purpose as contributing to school improvement. The participants identified that when they could see that the school’s values were aligned with the values espoused by the religious founder of the school, its historical connections with the school’s beginnings and its newly developed or revised school vision, it was a strong motivator for staff interest and participation in the improvement process. The importance of alignment is consistent with the research of Crowther (2010) who developed a Research Based Framework (RBF) which sets out elements that need to be in alignment if a school’s outcomes are to be enhanced and sustained over
time. His research found that, if there was an alignment in these areas, the identity of the school was strengthened and this led to improved student outcomes and a more successful outcome of the improvement process. The findings of the current study add to the understanding of the benefits of alignment as staff were particularly motivated to ensure that the vision and values were a lived expression in the school. This was evident in the way the learning principles, developed through the school improvement process, were implemented in classroom practice. The participants indicated that staff discussion and collaboration to develop the learning principles were centred around ensuring an alignment of the school’s values and the pedagogical practices in the classroom. This suggests a commitment to the school vision by staff and the importance they placed on aligning the school’s values with the teaching and learning practices in the classroom.

The concept of moral purpose has been identified as being an important element affecting improvement processes. The findings indicate that the moral purpose of a school is significant to the success of the school improvement process when:

- it reflects an understanding of students as lifelong learners and equips them for the world beyond school. It is important that students have a global understanding of the world and that they have an obligation to be responsible citizens in it.

- it is reflected in the school vision identifying the significant values important to the school community. This vision is what gives a school its particular culture and identifies important traditions that must be part of school life.

- it is embedded in teaching and learning practices. These practices must be aligned to the learning principles developed through professional dialogue and collaboration between staff in the school improvement process.

The fifth leadership focus area of Continuous Improvement identified from the literature is analysed in the next section and will add further evidence in identifying the leadership elements that have contributed to school improvement processes.
5.2.5 Continuous Improvement

From the data relating to Continuous Improvement, three areas were recognised as significant in supporting the school improvement process: Consistent and innovative approach, Staff confidence and Learning culture.

5.2.5.1 Consistent and innovative approach

Consistent and innovative approach, within the focus area of continuous improvement, is the first element identified as contributing to the school improvement process. From the data, the participants identified that, through the improvement process, a new or revised school vision has been developed as well as a learning framework which describes specific learning principles particular to each school. Further, all schools identified that the learning principles provided a shared language for learning at their school. A learning framework and learning principles are particular elements that are developed as part of the school improvement process used in this research. The findings of this study are consistent with the research of Andrews et al. (2004) who found that a shared language is fundamental to shared meaning and a consistency of approach in pedagogical principles for school improvement. Participants in this study acknowledged that the common language created through the learning principles developed in the improvement process was being implemented in the different curriculum areas and also provided consistency in the pedagogical approach in the classroom.

This research also showed that the improvement process was assisting the development of a culture that emphasised the importance of consistency and innovation through providing professional development for staff. Participants described how the professional development was aligned to the school-wide pedagogy and learning principles they had developed and that it was making an impact on the innovative approaches teachers were using in the classroom. This connects with the importance of professional development for staff identified in the leadership focus area of capacity building mentioned previously. This position is consistent with the research of Fullan (2008) who identified that for continuous improvement, consistency and innovation must be embedded in the culture of the organisation. He identified that these approaches required staff to dialogue and collaborate, share resources and open up their classroom. Those leading the improvement process in this study described how the development of learning principles had enthused staff, motivating them to be involved in professional development. This opportunity for improvement was motivating them to be innovative in their approach to classroom practice. School 1 participant 2 best describes this:
We have a lot of staff who are really excited about new innovations, about new ways of teaching, about using technology, about trying new things. This has been a vehicle that they can practise those innovations within. So I think since we’ve done – since we’ve implemented our principles, people have felt very encouraged to move forward and try new things. (S1MT2)

This approach to teaching and learning, where staff collaborate and share classroom practice, can generate mixed feelings from staff as they may not be used to sharing their classroom with others. Elmore (2011) noted that staff must feel an element of trust with colleagues as collaboration and opening up their classrooms can leave them feeling exposed and vulnerable. Participants in this study reflected this position as they described how they were being encouraged from the leadership of the school to be involved in the professional development, to collaborate, to share practice among staff; to be innovative and try new things, all of which supported the building of relationships and impacted on classroom practice. This suggests that staff felt confident in trusting one another to try new things and share classroom practice. This finding connects with two of the previous leadership focus areas, relationships and capacity building, which also identified that collaboration between staff builds trusting relationships as well as building staff capacity through professional development opportunities which has a direct flow-on effect in the classroom.

Staff working together using a consistent approach toward language for learning seems to build staff confidence as classroom practitioners. This will be analysed further in the next section to determine its contribution to the improvement process.

5.2.5.2 Staff confidence
The second element contributing to the focus area of continuous improvement for school improvement is staff confidence. In this study, the participants acknowledged that the collaborative decision-making environment used within the improvement process, built staff confidence to be involved and supported the importance they placed on having a say in the decisions made for improvement. Participants particularly commented that involvement in decisions that centred on classroom practice ensured they understood and were part of the school’s future directions. This aligns with the research of Bosnich (1996) and Starratt (1996) who identify the importance of staff having a voice and the right to make decisions that directly affect their work. Further, in this study, direct knowledge of the school’s strategic direction seemed to ensure staff continually tried to look for ways to improve and provide an
engaging classroom environment to meet student learning needs. Similarly, Priestly et al. (2010) found that through collaborative processes teachers were enthused to work collectively and tried innovative initiatives in the classroom for continued improvement. The findings of this study supported this position from the research and highlighted that through the opportunities staff had for collaboration their confidence was built and that this collaboration was not just through discussion but by visiting others’ classrooms and observing good practice. This also suggests an openness by staff and a confidence to change their classroom practice to meet the learning needs of students. This interaction connects with the previous section which outlined the benefits of teamwork, sharing resources and an openness amongst staff to allow others into their classrooms and the importance of innovation that was identified through the use of a shared language for learning.

Learning culture, the final element identified within the focus area of Continuous Improvement is discussed in the next section.

5.2.3 Learning culture
The third element identified as contributing to the school improvement process in the leadership focus area of Continuous Improvement is the development of a learning culture. Participants believed a strong learning culture had been established through the development of a school-wide pedagogy and the integration of the school-wide vision and learning framework. The findings also identified a real interest from staff in the students, who were continually trying to improve and tailor the curriculum to meet student needs, as reported by Riley and Jordan (2004). School 1 participant 3 highlights this:

It’s been a continuous improvement, they’re always trying to find a better way of doing things in that and as I said, it’s the tailoring of the curriculum that we offer to meet the needs of individual kids. I think that’s continued over the years since. (S1T3)

Participants further described how the improvement process had changed their interactions and the sharing of resources between staff, initiating staff to develop professional learning groups. Staff now also saw the importance of aligning the pedagogy with the school vision and common goal for a consistent approach to learning. This is consistent with earlier findings by Robinson (2011) who found that, where teachers work in professional learning communities, they are motivated to make a difference to students. Similarly, Fullan (2008)
describes the importance of what he calls ‘transparency’ an openness and consistency of approach to change and Kotter (1995) suggests that improvements need to be consolidated as well as producing more change through innovation and sharing experiences. While the findings of this study supported this previous literature, participants describe a culture that values teaching and learning and that the development of a learning framework particularly contributed to a culture that valued a consistent approach to student learning. The findings suggest that a solid foundation for the direction of pedagogy has been set through this learning framework and that the integration of this has contributed to a more unified approach that seeks continual improvement to support student learning.

The importance of an emphasis on continuous improvement has been identified, in this study, as playing a significant part in the success of implementing improvement in schools. The specific findings from the data suggest that continuous improvement is achieved through:

- a consistent and innovative approach to teaching and learning. This approach needs to be identified through a common language expressed as learning principles that are developed in a school-wide pedagogy. This common language gives a consistency to the pedagogical approach used in the classroom and is a focus for staff professional development. The professional development must provide staff with opportunities to share best practice in a collaborative and trusting environment.

- building staff confidence to be innovative in the classroom. This confidence is built through communicating a clear vision and direction for student learning and through a collaborative approach where staff are open to trying new ideas and sharing resources, while continually trying to tailor the curriculum to meet the learning needs of students.

- building a strong learning culture through the development of a school-wide pedagogy. The school-wide pedagogy must define important learning principles which give a particular approach to teaching and learning. It also gives a solid foundation and whole-school approach for consistency that focuses on the learning needs of students.

The sixth leadership focus area selected from the literature of Support is the final leadership area analysed in response to Research Question Two.
5.2.6 Support

Support is identified in the reflective and evaluative practices that support a readiness for change in improvement processes. The data indicated three important elements of support: Reflection and evaluation, Guidance and Openness to change.

5.2.6.1 Reflection and evaluation

The first element identified as contributing to the focus area of support was reflection and evaluation. The participants in this study clearly identified the importance of the time provided to staff for reflection and evaluation in the school improvement process. They acknowledged that the improvement process created some uncertainty but that a degree of flexibility and belief in the process created by allowing time to process and adapt to the change supported staff in the improvement process. School 4 participant 7 best describes this: “I think there was always that feeling that yes, change does make us feel uncertain but we need to support each other in all these things and we need to go forward and we need to be flexible”. In the literature, Fullan (2008), in his research, identifies that time is needed for reflection and evaluation to support people adapting to the change; Kotter (1995) identifies that time is needed for adjustment and flexibility to meet the needs and context of the organisation, while Reigeluth (2005) identifies that time is needed for new systems to be evaluated and revised. Furthermore, Elmore (2011) also found that implementation of any change process requires substantial time, patience to overcome the difficulties and resilience to continue when the process seems complicated and seemingly unclear. The current study supports these authors finding that staff dealt with the uncertainty of change through reflection and evaluation within the improvement process and that this approach contributed to the success of the improvement.

The support for the complexity of the school improvement process also identified the need for further guidance and this is analysed in the following section.

5.2.6.2 Guidance

Guidance is the second element identified in the focus area of support that contributed to the school improvement process. In this study, staff acknowledged they felt supported through the guidance they received from the ISMT, that they felt listened to and that communication between the ISMT and staff was very open and helpful. These interactions seemed to build the confidence of staff and increased their interest to be involved and continue with the process when they felt uncertainty. The participants also described that staff new to the school
were inducted by the ISMT into the school vision and learning principles of the school-wide pedagogy. These programs seem to allow a way for all staff to feel part of the school and gain a broader understanding of the school’s vision for learning. This is consistent with the research of Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) who found that, when people feel they are part of an organisation and have confidence that they can overcome difficulties through the guidance from those leading the process, they gain a broader perspective and are motivated to be involved and energised to contribute to the process.

This guidance seems to encourage an environment that is open to change.

5.2.6.3 Openness to change
The third element of support that was identified as contributing to the school improvement process was openness to change. The participants identified an increased culture of reflection, evaluation and continuous improvement in the school through the improvement process, which supported an openness by staff to change. This is consistent with the literature of Kotter (1995) which highlights that change needs time for participants to feel confident in working with and dealing with the change. While the findings of this study support this previous research, participants describe the importance of the opportunity given to staff to particularly focus on pedagogy. They also identified how this time provided by the structure of the school improvement process allowed staff time to see the possibility of what the change could achieve to support student learning. This suggests an openness by staff to embrace change and that there was a change in the school’s culture focusing on ways to continually support students and their learning needs.

As identified in the previous element, the leadership of the ISMT was significant in supporting the confidence staff felt with the school improvement process. Adding to this, participants also commented that they felt well informed through the leadership of the ISMT of decisions and that this supported their acceptance of the change. This aligns with the findings of the research of Wildy and Faulkner (2008) who identify that those leading the process of change are “custodians of the school vision and school-wide pedagogy” (p. 86) and that they have a responsibility to support all staff in a change process. This current study clearly supports this earlier research and highlights that the way the ISMT lead the process allowing staff time to discuss and process the changes helped them to accept that improvement processes mean there will be changes.
Support of the improvement process has been recognised as significant for school improvement. The findings indicate that support is shown by:

- providing opportunities for reflection and evaluation. These opportunities allows staff time to process and adapt to change.
- providing guidance to staff. The guidance may include open and reflective discussions between staff for further understanding or induction of new staff into the improvement.
- an openness to change. The team leading the improvement process need to build a culture with staff that acknowledges that change is part of improvement and that values the importance of an openness to change.

From the literature a number of leadership approaches were identified that support school improvement processes and within the research the participants identified different experiences of leadership that influenced the improvement process in their school. The connection between these elements and the different leadership approaches is investigated as part of examining and presenting the findings associated with Research Question 3.

5.3 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Research Question 3: How do the experiences of leadership of participants involved in school improvement reflect the different leadership approaches identified in the literature?

For Research Question 3 participants described their experience of leadership and identified nine key elements of leadership that influenced the school improvement process. The nine elements were: Active listening, Cooperative relationships, Student-centred learning, History and charism, Consultation, Common goal, Collaboration, Staff expertise and Shared ownership. These elements are mapped against the leadership approaches identified from the literature to ascertain the connection between them. The leadership approaches were: transformational, servant, distributive, ethical and moral, authentic, educative, parallel, teacher and co-principalship. With reference to the literature each of the nine key elements of leadership are discussed in relation to the different leadership approaches.
5.3.1 Active listening

The first key element of leadership identified by the participants, that influenced the school improvement process, was active listening. In this study, the participants described how active listening engaged staff in the improvement process. They commented that those leading the improvement process in their school really listened and were open to all types of suggestions and ideas and that they considered this an important trait of a good leader. This is described best in the comment from School 3 participant 5: “(The ISMT) they are all very good listeners. So they will listen to any suggestion and I think listening plays a big part in being a good leader”. Added to this, those leading the improvement process (the ISMT) also identified a real change in behaviour from the staff when they were consulted and felt the ISMT were actively listening and taking on-board their opinions and suggestions. The ISMT found that the staff were more motivated to be involved when they felt listened to in the process. The importance of active listening is identified in the research regarding servant leadership by Joseph and Winston (2005) who identified that, by being listened to in an organisation, participants feel they are valued and appreciated for their opinion and what they can contribute to the organisation. This is supported in this current study as the active listening by the leaders (ISMT) contributed to the ownership and involvement of the participants. Bass (1997) called this ‘individualised consideration’ in his work on servant leadership and similarly, saw the importance of listening and appreciating the worker and the positive influence and impact they can have to support improvement processes. Daft’s (1999) work added to this outlining four main characteristics of servant leadership, one of which, is the importance of the leader listening as a means of affirmation. The findings of this study provide further confirmation of the importance of leaders actively listening to staff to affirm their contribution and involvement in improvement processes.

Active listening is also identified as an important element in transformational leadership. Stone, Russell and Patterson (2003) reported that people felt appreciated and valued by the leader when they actively listened to employees and this fostered employee participation and support for the organisation. This role of actively listening in transformational leadership differs from active listening in servant leadership as it moves the worker beyond feeling valued to active participation. The findings of this study supported this process suggesting that listening to staff affirmed the contribution they believe they make to the process.
While the importance of active listening resulted in participants feeling valued and appreciated for their contribution, participants further described how the experience of being listened to changed their own behaviour towards other staff. By being listened to they also learnt how to really listen to others and also take on board others’ suggestions and ideas. In this way active listening changed their behaviour and strengthened the relationship between the leader and the participants and between participants themselves, seemingly building a rapport of trust between them. Participants commented that they felt a sense of trust to share their opinion and ideas in this environment, knowing their contribution and the contribution of others would be accepted as part of the discussion and decision-making processes. This suggests that when participants feel the leader is really listening; takes on board their opinion, and the opinion of others is valued, they are supportive and motivated to be involved in improvement processes. This is supported in the literature where Evans (1996) identifies in his research on authentic leadership the importance of building a relationship of trust between the leader and workers. His research identified the importance of leaders being committed and acting with integrity and honesty in the way they deal with people. This authenticity is created through a trusting environment where leaders actively listen to workers and workers feel leaders are genuine in their dealings with people. Similarly, Daft (1999), in his research on servant leadership, also identifies trust as an important element needed between the leader and workers. He found that a relationship of trust is needed to support the involvement of workers in a change process. This position of the importance of trust built through active listening is supported in this current research and is identified in both authentic and servant leadership approaches, as seen in the work of Russell & Stone (2002) and Duignan (2009).

Through active listening the relationship between the leader and participants seems to be strengthened. The development of this relationship is further explored in the next section where participants also described how the school improvement process developed cooperative relationships.
5.3.2  Cooperative relationships

Cooperative relationships is the second element of leadership identified by the participants influencing the school improvement process. Cooperative relationships such as active listening, was part of a number of the leadership approaches identified from the literature and was identified in servant, authentic, transformational and parallel leadership approaches. These approaches focus on building genuine partnerships built on trust and integrity that provide the environment for a collective and shared approach to supporting the directions of the school.

In this study the participants described a real sense of cooperation between those leading the process and staff, where staff felt they were working with the leadership team in the decision-making process. The participants described relationships that were two-way with a feeling of trust and confidence that enabled them to voice their ideas and opinions and ensured they were regularly consulted before decisions were made. This is described by School 1 participant 3:

So there wasn’t a sense of we’re going to do it this way. There was never any sense like that, it was always let’s. We’ll go and take the butcher paper away and we’ll go and collate it and come back to you. So there was every opportunity for everyone to have their say and to feel part of the process, even if they didn’t want to. (S1T3)

These types of cooperative relationships and the importance of trust connects with the previous leadership element of active listening and is reflected in both servant and authentic leadership approaches. Boyum (2008) found in his research on servant leadership that when leaders focus on people and building a relationship between themselves and their workers that relationship rely on cooperation and trust between both parties. As previously identified, trust has already been recognised as a significant element within active listening in the work on servant leadership from Daft (1999) as well as the work on authentic leadership from Evans (1996). Evans (1996) adds that, with trust there also needs to be cooperation and that authentic leaders act with integrity in the way they deal with people. This is consistent with the current study and shown in the comment from School 1 participant 3 above. Further, the importance of cooperative relationships identified in this study are consistent with Duignan’s (2002) work which acknowledges that authentic leaders deal with people and, as such, take
responsibility to build cooperative relationships that share in the collective good of the organisation and the decisions that are made.

Genuine partnerships between leaders and staff also motivated staff to be part of the improvement process as they felt guided and worked collaboratively in a shared direction for improvement. This finding is consistent with a transformational leadership approach. Macgregor Burns (1978) in identifying transformational leadership, found that, within relationships, it is important for the leader to have an insight into the group to be able to satisfy the wants and desires of both the leader and worker in order to achieve a shared understanding to support the direction of the group. Sashkin (2004) also found that transformational leaders move from supervisory and management roles to roles that inspire and motivate workers to work for the good of the organisation and that, when leaders and workers cooperate together, genuine and honest partnerships are formed. The findings of this research support this previous research, participants described how they felt empowered by those leading the process and were given autonomy to make decisions in the classroom to direct student learning and that the principal provided professional development opportunities for them to collaborate and share classroom practice to support the direction for student learning. This created a relationship where the leaders and teachers were working cooperatively in a unified direction for school improvement. Crowther (2009) identified this cooperative approach as parallel leadership, “a process whereby teacher leaders and principals engage in collective action to build and sustain school capacity” (p. 36). In his work he found teachers and principals have responsibility for different parts of the improvement process - teachers taking leadership for student learning and principals taking ownership for the strategic direction of the school and providing professional development aligned to this strategic direction. This partnership builds a sustainable future for the school. Consistent with this, participants described a real partnership in the improvement process, with teachers leading learning and the principal as a strategic leader. These cooperative relationships seem to support student centred learning in the school and this experience by the participants is discussed in the next section.
5.3.3 Student-centred learning

Student-centred learning has been identified as a key element in the improvement process and is reflected in the leadership approaches of parallel, educative and teacher. Participants, in this study, commented that the leadership of the school improvement process had refocused staff attention on students and their learning needs. This change in focus on student-centred learning is reflected in a teacher leadership approach where the distinguishing factor acknowledges that the teacher in the classroom is in a position to influence student learning. Crowther et al. (2009) identified this teacher leadership approach and found that teachers are most effective when they give direction to pedagogy through their leadership of learning in the classroom. As a result of being part of the school improvement process in this study the participants recognised that there was an increase in professional dialogue amongst staff in enacting changes in classroom pedagogy. This increase in professional dialogue seemed to be the result of the opportunities staff had to lead change and influence learning in their own classroom. A further finding of this current study was the ownership of student learning that teachers seemed to take when they are involved in decisions that directly affect classroom practice. This is consistent with an educative leadership approach. Burford and Bezzina (2007) identified that teachers take greater ownership in the classroom when they participate in decisions that directly affected classroom practice.

The development of a shared language for learning and learning principles in each of the schools is consistent with the parallel leadership approach identified in the work of Crowther (2009). The shared language seemed to give staff a common direction and approach to learning that was consistent across the school and also seemed to contribute to the increased professional dialogue that was experienced. Crowther (2009) identified the importance of professional conversations and dialogue between colleagues to ensure staff are working together towards an agreed school vision for student learning. In order for staff to work together a common vision is often connected to the school’s history and charism and this focus was seen to be reflected in an ethical and moral leadership approach identified in the literature.
5.3.4 History and charism

The importance of maintaining a bond and connection with the school’s history and charism is the fourth element identified by the participants as significant in supporting their commitment to the school improvement process. This element is most closely linked to an ethical and moral leadership approach which focuses on leading an organisation with integrity and honesty and committed to a shared set of values.

In this study participants identified a common and shared set of values found in the traditions and religious background of the school. They acknowledged they had a strong bond to the school’s origins and founding religious order, the values they espoused and that this link supported a real connection to the school for the staff. They described how this set of values was a motivation for staff participation and support for school improvement. This common bond assisted the leadership of the improvement process in developing, with staff, a vision for the school that acknowledged the traditions of the past, while creating a new vision to take it forward into the future. This importance of a shared set of common values is identified in the work on ethical and moral leadership by Sherry (2007) who recognised that an ethical and moral approach is demonstrated by word and action that is committed to shared values within an ethical code of behaviour. Sherry (2004) further adds that ethical leadership is crucial to the integrity and honesty of any person and the organisation to which they lead and guide. Starratt (2004) supports this leadership approach and identified ethics as “the underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles and values that support a moral way of life” (p. 5). Starratt (2004) acknowledges that ethical and moral leadership is “humanly fulfilling” (p. 3) to both leaders and workers in their satisfaction to achieve a commitment to their shared values. The fact that staff in this study particularly wanted to ensure the values and traditions of the school were evident in the school vision seemed to impact on the satisfaction they felt for participating in the improvement process, supporting the findings of Starratt (2004) and Sherry (2004). Staff described how it was vital to them to preserve the connection to the founding religious order if they were to remain true to the school’s values and charism. This is identified as being most closely linked with an ethical and moral leadership approach. The experiences of leadership were also identified in consultative processes within the improvement process.
5.3.5 Consultation

The fifth element identified by the participants as significant in supporting their commitment to the school improvement process is consultation and it is reflected in the leadership approaches of transformational, servant, distributive, ethical and moral and authentic. In this study staff identified that the improvement process had provided them with the opportunity to have a voice and that they were consulted in decision-making processes. This seemed to result in supporting the ownership staff took of the decisions for improvement in the change process. This is consistent in the work on servant leadership by Moran (2005) who found that there were high levels of employee satisfaction when staff were consulted. He found that staff felt valued and appreciated for their opinions and ideas in the consultation process and that this supported staff ownership of decisions, building a commitment to and a strong sense of community. Similarly, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) and Starratt (1996) identified in one of their four models of ethical leadership, the importance of multiple voices in the decision-making process to assist staff to take ownership and support the organisation for which they work. These positions are supported in this study highlighting the importance of staff consultation in decisions for improvement.

Consultation was further described by the participants through a regular update of outcomes throughout the process. This consultation seemed to impact on and build the confidence of staff to contribute to decision-making processes and build trust that strengthened a feeling by staff that they were part of a larger community, not just individuals in the organisation. This is a finding in the literature from both Starratt (1996) and Whelan (2000). Starratt (1996) in his research found that transformational leaders develop trust and confidence in their followers, which motivates them to work as part of a larger organisation and Whelan (2000) found that, when leaders, principals and consultants, develop trusting and caring relationships, they are able to build confidence in staff to support the school as a whole. The importance of building trusting relationships in improvement processes has already been recognised in the elements of active listening and cooperative relationships presented previously. Starratt (2004) further identified the ‘ethic of authenticity’ in his research where he defined authenticity as relational and required engagement between people. Starratt (2004) found that authentic leaders have a responsibility to act for the good of others and to ensure all people in the community are engaged through consultation when decisions are made and by this process the community benefits as a whole. Starratt’s (2004) findings are supported in this study where the experience of consultation in the improvement process was found through staff voice and
staff feeling that their opinions were valued. This suggests an alignment with an authentic leadership approach contributing to staff ownership of these decisions for improvement.

In this study the participants also identified that the leaders of the improvement process extended their consultation to staff by inviting them to lead different parts of the process. Participants described opportunities that were provided and open to all staff to lead at different times and that this consultation seemed to contribute to staff confidence and create a positive energy among staff, which seemed to influence their involvement in the improvement process. This is consistent with a distributive leadership approach identified by a number of authors. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001) acknowledge that, within distributive leadership, there are ‘formal’ approaches to leadership as well as ‘informal’ approaches which develop from consultative processes and the expertise needed for the task. In the current study, ‘formal’ approaches to leadership were seen by the group who were ‘formally’ given the task of leading staff through the improvement process, while ‘informal’ approaches were seen when other staff were invited, or just stepped up, to take the lead due to their skills and expertise. Harris (2008) further identifies that within distributive leadership the practice of leadership is shared amongst members of the organisation and that the decision-making is influenced by the interaction and consultation of people rather than from individual direction. Gronn (2002) also acknowledges from his research that organisations consult, taking advantage and capitalising on the range of skills within their workers and operating within a distributed leadership model for the benefit of meeting the needs of the whole organisation. These findings are supported in this study emphasising how leadership was distributed through the consultation of staff, taking advantage of their expertise and skills to share the leadership of the improvement. The consultation process also led to the focus on a common goal by the participants, identifying further leadership approaches which supported the improvement.

5.3.6 Common goal
Having a common goal has been identified by the participants as the sixth element that influenced the school improvement process and it is reflected in both, transformational and parallel leadership approaches. In this study, the participants described how the leaders in their school motivated staff to develop a common goal by providing opportunities to develop the school vision collaboratively and that this collaborative approach was significant in the ownership they took of the school vision. This approach to leadership is identified in one of the four behaviours of transformational leaders identified by Bass (1997). From his research
Bass (1997) found that when leaders engaged in transformational leadership and inspired workers towards a common vision, workers were changed by them. They then became committed followers with a desire to improve the organisation and follow a common direction for the good of the whole group. Ozaralli (2003) similarly found that team members felt empowered by leaders who showed these transformational characteristics and were inspired by a common vision and motivated to work more effectively as a team towards this vision and goal. Developing a common goal links with the previous element of consultation and suggests that the vision needs to be developed by the whole staff not just by those leading the process. In this study the fact that the participants identified that they were motivated and encouraged by those leading the process to develop a school vision and common goal collectively seems to suggest that staff were more enthused and took greater ownership of the vision and the common direction for improvement. Having a shared purpose is also identified by Crowther et al. (2009) in a parallel leadership approach. In their research Crowther et al. (2009) observed increased dialogue and consultation by the leaders of the improvement process and the staff to develop a school vision. This study also highlights the importance of a shared and common vision in supporting the improvement process and particularly identified that the shared understanding of the school’s direction came from the increased dialogue and consultation provided through the leadership of the improvement process.

Collaboration and its relationship to different leadership approaches that were experienced by the participants in the school improvement process is further explored in the next section.

5.3.7 Collaboration

The importance of collaboration is the seventh element identified by the participants as significant in supporting their commitment to the school improvement process. This element is most closely linked to transformational, distributive, educative, parallel and teacher leadership approaches. In this study, the participants described that collaborative processes of decision-making were provided to staff in the improvement process by those leading the process. Participants identified that the collaboration gave all staff the opportunity to be involved and this seemed to support the ownership by staff of decisions. It also assisted the leaders to move the process forward. Collaboration is identified in the literature as significant in a transformational leadership approach. Bennis and Nanus (1985) found that transformational leaders motivate workers to achieve significant change when decisions are made collaboratively and Kotter and Heskett (1992), Sashkin (2004) and Schein (2010) all identify the importance of transformational leaders fostering cultures of collaboration within
the organisation; thus supporting staff ownership of decisions and the achievement of a common goal. The findings of the current study highlight that collaboration fosters a culture of involvement in decision-making and ownership of decisions to transform the schools and take them forward into the future. A culture of collaboration is also reflective of the work by Crowther et al. (2010a) who found that, within a parallel leadership approach, the principal and teacher must work in partnership and be acknowledged for the individual and shared roles that they play in school improvement. Their involvement in the improvement process allows them to work collaboratively, within their area of expertise, to inform decisions and take responsibility for the improvement. The findings of this study particularly highlight the importance of the partnership between those leading the improvement process and staff, and the responsibility staff seemed to take of the decisions when they had a role to play in this partnership. This partnership was further described by the participants through their engagement in curriculum teams and professional development, where they worked collaboratively sharing classroom practice and resources. At these times the participants described how they shared their expertise and led improvement through their skills and curriculum expertise. This is consistent with the research of Gronn (2002) and Harris (2008) who found that a distributive leadership approach involves organisational structures that maximise interactions between individuals and teams. This interactive and collaborative style allows staff to develop their expertise and share this within the group. Burford and Bezzina (2006) also identified, in their research on educative leadership, the benefits of collaboration through professional teams. In this study, the organisational structures and professional teams described by these authors were particularly identified in the curriculum faculty teams utilised in the improvement process.

Participants also identified that the collaborative processes of engagement in curriculum teams seem to build positive relationships when the teachers work collectively sharing and trying new initiatives in the classroom. This is consistent with the teacher leadership approach identified in the research of Priestly et al. (2010) who found the significant contribution teachers can make as leaders of classroom practice and the importance of teachers engaging together in building relationships, where they are open to sharing best classroom practice. These relationships, built through the collaborative practices, also seemed to be causing staff to be more reflective and to maintain professional dialogue to continually seek improvement for student learning. Within an educative leadership approach, Burford and Bezzina (2006) identify the importance of collegial sharing amongst staff to support the learning needs of students. They found that, when teachers met collaboratively, it tended to
give the impetus for regular contact, as teachers were relying on each other for a continued professional conversation and sharing of classroom practice. This study also found that the regular professional learning and sharing among staff to support the learning needs of students, identified in an educative leadership approach, seemed to provide the environment that supported continual improvement. The experience of collaboration has identified another element, the expertise of staff and how this is reflected in the leadership of the improvement process.

5.3.8 Staff expertise

The recognition and utilisation of staff expertise was seen as an important element of those leading the improvement process in this study. The fact that staff believed the leaders recognised that other teachers had the skills to lead the process at different times and also valued teacher expertise and their contribution to the improvement process seemed to build teacher leadership capacity and confidence to contribute to the improvement process. This approach is consistent with the elements of distributive leadership identified by Greenfield et al. (2009). They found that partnerships between leaders and staff are strengthened and staff are empowered to take on responsibility for improvements within the organisation, when they are recognised for their ability to lead and their capacity as leaders is encouraged. Muijs and Harris (2006) further identified that within teacher leadership, there is the possibility for all teachers to become leaders at various times. They also found that teachers may choose to lead at different times and in different ways depending on their skills, circumstances and expertise. The fact that teacher leadership was utilised in this improvement process to effect change was an important finding of this study.

The fact that different staff were identified to lead the improvement at different times as well as being acknowledged for their expertise as classroom practitioners seemed to also nurture and support the leadership potential of staff. The leadership opportunities provided seemed to give staff confidence in their skills and encouragement to develop their leadership to support school processes for improvement for the future. This is significant in the research of Gronn (2002) who found that, through a distributive leadership approach, when organisations take advantage of the particular skills and expertise of staff and build staff confidence to develop these skills, the goals of the organisation are sustained. Leithwood et al. (2007) additionally identified that organisations have different internal capacities and that when distributive leadership is exercised and leaders nurture and value the contribution and expertise of staff, positive and sustainable change can occur within an organisation. The current study supports
these findings identifying that distributive leadership, where leadership is shared and expertise valued, was central to effecting change in the school.

The recognition of staff expertise and skills also seems to suggest a shared ownership by the leaders and staff to the improvement process. This is explored as the final element of leadership experienced by participants in the school improvement process.

5.3.9 Shared ownership

Shared ownership between the leaders of the improvement process and staff was identified by the participants as the ninth and final element significant in supporting the improvement process. The element of shared ownership is linked to many of the leadership approaches identified from the literature. However, from the research, it is most closely linked to transformational, educative, parallel and teacher leadership. The participants in this study described that, in the development of the shared vision created as part of the improvement process, all staff had an opportunity to share their suggestions and identify those values that were most important to them. This opportunity seemed to engender staff to take on a shared responsibility and commitment to the school’s vision and goals. This shared responsibility and commitment is identified in a transformational leadership approach which is consistent with the research of Bennis and Nanus (1985) who found that people are motivated towards a common goal when the vision of the organisation reflects the interests of the leader and workers. Similarly, Whelan (2000) found that a culture of shared ownership is built when there is a focus on a shared value system within the organisation. The fact that in this study the leaders encouraged a shared vision to be developed collaboratively by staff, which reflected their values and ideas, seems to suggest that staff were motivated by them to take ownership of a vision they helped develop.

The importance of a shared ownership of values is also identified in an educative leadership approach. In this study, the participants identified that the improvement process used in this study provided a structure to assist staff in developing a vision, followed by processes to implement and enact that vision in classroom practice. This is consistent with the research of Burford and Bezzina (2006) who identified in, an educative leadership approach, the importance of a school’s shared vision for learning and the importance of providing a structure to support the action of this vision in the school. In this study, the structure and processes used in the development of the school vision and learning principles seemed to be significant in assisting staff take active ownership of the shared vision in their leadership of
pedagogy. This further increased professional dialogue and collaboration amongst staff leading to shared ownership of the vision and a collective responsibility for ensuring these learning principles were active in classroom practice. This leadership and ownership of the vision by staff is also consistent with the parallel leadership approach identified by Crowther et al. (2009). The fact that staff actively participated in the development of the school vision and learning principles seemed to ensure that they took a shared ownership of and commitment to the school’s goals and vision. This is also supported in the work of Bosnich (1996) who identified a teacher leadership approach which recognises the right and responsibility staff have to making decisions that directly affect their work in the classroom. This is evidenced in the comment from School 1 participant 6 who described how the vision and shared learning principles in the school developed by staff were seen in classroom practice and that this reflected staff taking ownership and specific responsibility for student learning:

So I suppose the evidence is really in our learning principles. Those learning principles are there because everybody was invited to be a leader in their own way and contribute. How has that affected our school improvement? Well we have a common ownership of our learning principles now. I think that we’re improving in our teaching and learning practice, that there’s no doubt about that. (S1T6)

The experiences of leadership by the participants in this study reflect a variety of different leadership approaches. There is no one leadership approach that stands out as superior to any of the others in supporting school improvement. This suggests that the elements from a number of the leadership approaches are important in supporting a school improvement process.

Further discussion and synthesis of the findings of the three sub-questions presented here are used in the next section to generate findings for the overall research question.
5.4 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS FOR THE OVERALL RESEARCH QUESTION

Overall Research Question: How does leadership influence school improvement?

Analysis of the research data regarding elements that effect change within school improvement processes, leadership focuses that contribute to school improvement processes and experiences of leadership that are reflected in different leadership approaches revealed seven recurring themes:

1. establishing a core team to lead the improvement process;
2. clear vision and strategic direction;
3. collaboration;
4. shared leadership;
5. commitment and alignment of values;
6. learning culture;
7. reflection and evaluation.

Within the discussion that follows, there will be some overlap of ideas and themes presented previously, as the overall research question includes the recurrence and commonality of themes from the three sub-questions.

5.4.1 Establishing a core team to lead the improvement process

Leadership through the establishment of a core team to lead the school improvement process was identified as significant in influencing school improvement. In this study, this leadership by a core team was recognised as most effective when it had voluntary membership and a broad representation from a cross-faculty mix of staff. This seems to suggest that staff approached their membership of the team with an interest and commitment to school improvement. In addition, a cross-faculty mix of staff provided a wide-ranging perspective of knowledge to the team. This is consistent with the work of Priestly, Millar, Barrett & Wallace (2010) who found that, where there was a connection between like-minded teachers and a shared focus, membership of the facilitating group helped effective change processes in schools. Kotter (1995) and Reigeluth (2005) also identify the importance of a team approach, with broad representation, in helping to get a ‘buy-in’ from a majority of participants as significant to change and improvement. In particular, this study highlights the significance of
the team leading the improvement process having voluntary membership and broad representation, which helps establish ‘buy in’ and seems to provide a greater commitment to influence school improvement and effect change.

Further, participants believed, that, by forming a team to lead the process, which was representative of the wider group, they would have a fuller understanding of the strategic direction of the school and feel more included in the decision-making process. The importance of staff being involved in decisions that affected their work was significant in distributing and devolving leadership within the improvement process and supported the ownership, commitment and motivation of staff towards the improvement process. This is supported in the research of Bosnich (1996) and Starratt (1996) who identify the importance of staff responsibility and right to a voice in decisions that directly affect them in their work. York-Barr and Duke (2004) likewise found the benefit of staff participation in decision-making about conditions that affect what happens in their classrooms. The findings of this study suggest that this team is a key leadership structure in school improvement as it fosters ownership of and a commitment to change by staff, giving them representation and a voice in decisions that affect their daily work and a fuller understanding of the strategic direction of the school.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the leadership of the coordinator of the team leading the improvement process was strengthened by them having another leadership position in the school. This existing leadership position seemed to provide them with the opportunity to continue the school improvement conversation in different forums and that they also had the respect of staff from their proven leadership capacity. Similarly, Lines (2007) found that leaders with ‘position power’ gained more success in implementing change as they are able to exert or influence power for change to occur. This study confirmed that the existing ‘position power’ held by the coordinator enhanced the confidence and trust staff had in them as a leader of the improvement process. This respect and trust came from the core team as well as the staff who were involved in the improvement process. Starratt (1996) specifically identifies trust as an element that builds staff confidence and supports schools in leading staff through a change process. Trust between the staff in this study was developed from their confidence in those leading the improvement process, supporting Starratt’s (1996) finding.
Once a core leadership team and coordinator for leading the improvement process have been established the importance of developing a clear vision and strategic direction for the school is seen as an essential leadership element in providing clarity and understanding for staff for school improvement.

5.4.2 Clear vision and strategic direction

The second important element of leadership that was identified as significant in influencing school improvement is the importance of articulating a clear vision and developing a strategic direction. In this study the fact that, to implement change, a school improvement framework developed by Crowther et al. (2009) and termed IDEAS, was used to support and give guidance to the team leading the improvement with staff was significant in influencing improvement. This is consistent with the models of change and improvement developed by Fullan (2008), Reigeluth (2005) and Kotter (1995). Fullan (2008) identified that a strategic plan gives purpose to the individual and group and communicates a clear vision and understanding. It emerged from this study that the school improvement process used provided a structure that directed staff in a focused way to create a strategic direction and clear vision for the school, thus supporting Fullan’s (2008) research. Fullan (2008), Reigeluth (2005) and Kotter (1995) all advocate the importance of communicating a clear vision as essential in creating an environment for change and providing clarity of understanding and direction and a common goal that staff could work towards. When leaders clearly communicate a specific vision for an organisation it generates both “understanding and interest” (Kotter, 1995, p. 63) in staff and, by communicating a clear vision, it develops understanding and allows staff to work together in a common direction to effect change and improvement (Fullan, 2008). In this study the use of the framework supported the leaders in communicating the specific vision and common direction for learning in the school. Nurturing a collective aspiration among staff, as reported by Wang & Ahmed (2003), assists them in building an understanding of the school’s vision for the future. In this study, the leadership of developing this collective vision and strategic direction was significant in supporting staff to see a bigger picture of the school’s mission and direction. This further seemed to ensure that staff were working together with a common focus for improvement for the future.
Leadership that articulates clear vision and strategic direction was characterised by the use of a common language of the vision that was developed collaboratively with staff in open dialogue together. This also seemed to strengthened the ownership and commitment of the vision by staff as they had been directly involved in its development. This is consistent with the research of Andrews (2006), Crowther (1996) and Crowther et al. (2009) who found that if the school vision articulated through a common language was developed collaboratively staff were more likely to be committed to ensuring this vision was part of everyday practice in the classroom. Leadership that supported open dialogue and collaboration amongst staff to develop a common language was certainly significant in this study, supporting the positions of these authors. This leadership provided the opportunity to create an agreed language together; led to more professional relationships and increased dialogue between staff members. Through collaborative processes of developing a vision and common language, staff seemed to be willing and open to supporting the vision and goals of the school and the improvement process. In this study, leadership that provided opportunities for collaboration, reinforced a shared understanding and strengthened staff commitment and ownership of the vision because of their involvement in its creation.

The importance of developing a school vision collaboratively has been identified as important in supporting the leadership of school improvement processes. Collaboration will be further explored in the next section as the use of collaborative processes throughout the school improvement process has been identified as crucial in supporting the leadership of change.

5.4.3 Collaboration
Leadership that fostered collaboration was identified as significant in supporting change for school improvement. By allowing staff time to collaborate, professional conversation increased further developing staff professional relationships. This is consistent with the research of Elmore (2011) who found that quality implementation of any change process takes substantial time and the participants in this study indicated that they valued the extra time the leaders of the school improvement process had provided. Kotter (1995) also found that, in supporting change, participants needed time to share, discuss and feel confident in working within and dealing with change. This suggests that leaders of school improvement need to ensure extra time is provided to give staff the chance for more professional conversation and to develop professional relationships, which build their confidence to collaborate with others. This collaboration also provides the opportunity for staff to reflect on practices, ask questions, experiment and share experiences. These professional conversations
arising during this time allows staff time to realise and understand where their ideas are aligned with the overall school vision and assists their decisions regarding the implementation of new programs and initiatives. Thornburg and Mungai (2011) acknowledge that when teachers are involved in decision-making there is a positive impact on classroom practice. This finding is also supported by the findings of this study as leadership that provides time and structures for collaboration gave staff the opportunity to discuss and have input into decisions which supported improvements in classroom practice.

The importance of leadership that allowed staff to have a voice in decisions and gave staff a sense of being valued for their contribution was clearly evident in the findings of this study. This importance of leaders valuing and appreciating people is seen in the research of Moran (2005) and Peterson et al. (2012) who identified that workers experienced greater job satisfaction when they felt leaders valued the contribution they could make to the organisation. Bass (1997) called this ‘individual consideration’ (p. 134) which emphasised the importance of appreciating workers for their contribution. This idea of leaders fostering ‘individual consideration’ was supported and identified in this study as, the more collaborative opportunities that were provided where staff felt that their opinions, experience and expertise were taken into account and included in the decisions, the more they seemed to be energised to engage and support the school improvement process. These collaborative processes built stronger relationships among staff and an environment of cooperation where staff felt valued by those leading the process for their contribution in developing a set of shared learning principles for improvement.

The fact that the leadership of the process used smaller teams for collaboration was significant in building stronger relationships among staff in this study. This finding seemed to create more openness among staff and develop their confidence to share their views and opinions. This was identified in the research of Whelan (2000) who found when school principals and consultants worked collaboratively together stronger relationships developed. As a small team, both the principal and consultant collectively supported the strategic direction of the school. Participants also commented that the number of opportunities and frequency of discussions provided by those leading the process in this study contributed to their excitement and engagement with the improvement process. The importance of regular connections by staff was identified in the research of Wheatly (2005) and Taylor and LaBarre (2008). The importance of leaders providing opportunities for frequent meetings and communication, with a consistent and regular connection between staff, are also important findings of this study,
supporting staff involvement in the improvement process and ownership of decisions. The collaborative nature of the improvement process seemed to identify the importance of a shared leadership approach, another element identified as significant in contributing to the leadership of school improvement.

5.4.4 Shared leadership

A leadership approach which recognises the leadership of staff across an organisation that is shared, is the fourth element of leadership that was found to influence school improvement. The participants in this study commented that teachers were able to develop their leadership capacity and confidence by being given the opportunity to lead and use their skills and expertise at different times during the improvement process. This shared leadership approach recognised staff expertise and seemed to give staff greater confidence to be involved in the improvement. Shared leadership is acknowledged as significant in supporting change by many researchers within the literature (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001; Gronn, 2002; Leithwood et al., 2007; Hargreaves & Fink, 2008; Harris, 2008 and Spillane, 2012). Leadership that acknowledges and values the contribution and expertise of staff has been previously recognised in the research of Leithwood et al. (2007) as well as Katzenmeyer et al. (2009) who added that where individuals work very closely together, members of the organisation take a collective responsibility and ownership of the change. Additionally, in the study, when leadership was distributed or devolved, depending on the skills needed, participants commented that teachers were recognised for their leadership and expertise in pedagogy, and the principal for leadership and expertise in strategic development. For the teachers, this particularly built their leadership capacity and developed their confidence as leaders of learning in the classroom. This is consistent with the research of Crowther, Ferguson & Hann (2009) who identify a shared approach to leadership as parallel leadership where teachers use their expertise as leaders of pedagogy and lead projects focusing on the learning needs of students in the classroom. Such leadership works in parallel with the strategic leadership of the Principal. This approach to leadership seemed to give teachers a real sense of worth for what they can contribute and acknowledges their expertise as leaders of learning. It allows teachers who do not necessarily have previous leadership experience to contribute to the improvement process as reported by Hargreaves & Fink (2008).
Teacher leadership, as described by Priestly et al. (2010) and Robinson (2011) was particularly identified in this study as influential to the success of the school improvement as participants seemed to take ownership of classroom practice and share best practice with colleagues to lead learning in the classroom. The participants clearly identified a shared leadership approach where they took leadership of pedagogy and classroom practice, and the team leading the improvement process with the principal took leadership of the strategic directions of the school. Participants describe a realisation by staff that they could make a real difference to pedagogy as leaders in the classroom. In this study teachers indicated a sense of ownership within the classroom setting as they were collaboratively involved in decisions that affected classroom practice. These findings clearly suggest that leadership of a school improvement process should foster teacher leadership. Furthermore, this links closely with the importance of collaborative processes described in the previous element presented. The involvement of staff in decision-making also seemed to impact on the responsibility and right they felt to make decisions that directly affect their working environment, as identified in the research of Bosnich (1996). In this study, the recognition and utilisation of staff expertise as leaders of learning and the fact that staff felt the leaders of the improvement process recognised that teachers had the skills to lead the process at different times, seemed to build teacher leadership capacity. The way teacher expertise and their contribution to the improvement process was valued by the leadership seemed to further contribute to the confidence of staff and their support of the improvement process, supporting the findings from literature such as Hargreaves & Fink (2008), Harris (2008) and Spillane (2012).

A shared approach to leadership identifies the importance of a shared approach to improvement within a culture that respects the values and traditions of a school. This commitment to the values is identified as the fifth element of leadership contributing to school improvement.

5.4.5 Commitment and alignment of school values
Leadership that fosters alignment between the school’s values and vision was identified as important in supporting school improvement processes in this study. The participants indicated that, in the leadership of developing the school vision, it was important that the vision reflected the school values. They described that they particularly wanted the leaders to ensure that the school vision clearly articulated what staff valued as a school community, as well as ensuring an understanding of what they wanted for the students. Similar to the research of Fullan & Boyle (2014), participants described how the commitment to the
school’s values and moral purpose was a real strength of the process and was a motivation for staff to support those leading the improvement process. The commitment to school values is also reflected in the work of Andrews (2008) who found that the moral purpose sets the standard by which the school operates and Wildy and Faulkner (2008) too found that it strengthens the identity of the school. The importance of leaders being committed to aligning the school’s values and vision reflecting its moral purpose was clearly evident in the findings of this study and indicated that it had a positive influence on staff commitment and motivation to support the success of the school improvement process.

The participants further identified that, when they could see that the school’s values were aligned with the values espoused by the religious founder of the school, its historical connections with the school’s beginnings and its newly developed or revised school vision, it was a strong motivator for staff interest and participation in the improvement process. Staff were particularly motivated to ensure that the vision and values were a lived expression in the school and more particularly in their classroom. This was evident in the way the learning principles, developed through the school improvement process, were implemented through teacher leadership in the classroom. The research of Crowther (2010a) and Bezzina & Burford (2014) found that, if there was an alignment of values and classroom practice, the identity of the school was strengthened and this led to improved student outcomes for school improvement. Consistent with this, participants indicated that staff discussion and collaboration were centred around an alignment of the school’s values and the leadership of pedagogical practices in the classroom. This suggests a commitment to the school vision by staff and the importance they placed on aligning the school’s values with their leadership of the teaching and learning practices in the classroom. The finding of this study supports the findings from the literature but particularly added that the leadership of connecting the values of the religious founders of the Catholic schools in the study was significant in the ownership and connection of staff to supporting the improvement process and their leadership of implementing the vision in their classroom.

The significance of a commitment to the school’s values and classroom practices identified the importance of a strong learning culture. A learning culture and its influence on school improvement was identified as significant in the leadership of change and is the next element discussed.
Learning culture

The importance of leadership in developing a learning culture that focused on continual improvement was the sixth element identified as significant in the leadership school improvement. In the case of the schools in this study, participants described a real interest from staff in the students and continually trying to improve and tailor the curriculum to meet student needs. Through the leadership of the process, staff were provided with opportunities for collaboration, dialogue and sharing resources where staff were motivated to work together to make a positive impact on the learning environment for students. Collaboration and its importance in supporting school improvement has already been identified and, in this study, it was found that leadership which provided opportunities for collaboration and sharing between staff seemed to create an environment where staff were continually looking at innovative strategies to improve student learning. Through the professional dialogue opportunities provided, these strategies seemed to create a consistent approach to improvement. The impact of collaborative practices achieving a strong learning culture focused on continuous improvement and making a positive impact on student learning is consistent with the research of Gore & Ladwig (2004) and Robinson (2011). In this study, the fact that the leadership of the process gave participants time to collaborate, dialogue and share resources enabled them to see the importance of aligning the pedagogy with the school vision for a consistent approach to learning. The school vision and learning principles developed through the process used in this study particularly provided a consistency of approach and opportunities for teacher leadership allowing staff to trial different strategies and innovations in the classroom to engage students in their learning. The open dialogue and opening up of classrooms developed relationships among staff that seemed to support a growth in trust between staff. In this study, this trust seemed to build stronger professional relationships between staff, building teamwork and openness to share resources, further supporting an ownership both individually and collectively for school improvement. Elmore (2011) acknowledges in his research that staff must feel an element of trust with colleagues in order to collaborate and open up their classrooms. The trust developed through the leadership of promoting a collaborative learning culture formed in this study supports Elmore (2011). It suggests that the leadership needs to provide opportunities for open dialogue between staff to build staff confidence and trust with one another to try new innovative approaches and share classroom practice.
The leadership of a learning culture that values the importance of continually looking to improve the learning environment for students identifies that importance of consistency and innovation. For continuous improvement, a culture of reflection and evaluation has been identified as significant in the leadership of school improvement.

5.4.7 Reflection and evaluation

The final element of leadership for school improvement acknowledges the importance of providing time for reflection and evaluation throughout the school improvement process. In this study, the participants reported that the leadership had given time and opportunity for reflection and evaluation throughout the process. They acknowledged that this time increased the professional dialogue amongst staff and allowed for a degree of flexibility in the process for staff to adapt to the change. This flexibility is consistent with the research of Kotter (1995) who identifies that time is needed for adjustment and flexibility to meet the needs and context of the organisation for change. The importance of leadership providing substantial time for change processes is also consistent with the research of Elmore (2011) and Crowther et al. (2009) who found that staff have a role to play in refining and evaluating the implementation of the improvement for the future. In this study, the time provided for staff reflection and evaluation seemed to build the confidence of staff and increased their interest in being involved and continuing with the process, which also seemed to support the continued sustainability of the improvement. These findings suggest that leadership of school improvement must ensure adequate time is provided for staff to reflect and evaluate. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that this time needs to be provided as a continual process throughout the improvement process. This in turn assists staff in accepting change. Through regular opportunities for reflection and evaluation, staff seemed to become familiar with the concept that change is part of improvement and it seemed to further build their confidence in accepting change.

These seven elements identified commonalities and the overlap of themes identified as significant in the leadership of school improvement. This led to the development of a model for school improvement that is presented in the following section.
5.5 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL

A model for school improvement (Anderson) has been developed from the literature review and findings of the study. The model emphasises an association of the seven leadership elements identified, which are not linear but interrelated, to effect positive change for school improvement. The model is provided in Figure 5.1 on the following page.
Figure 5.1: The Anderson School Improvement Model

The Anderson School Improvement Model

**ESTABLISH A CORE TEAM**

- Voluntary participation
- Cross-faculty membership
- Proven leadership experience

Confidence and Trust

**CLEAR VISION AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

- Use of a structured framework or model
- Common Language

*Open dialogue, staff engagement, commitment and ownership*

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**Collaboration**

- Smaller teams
- Time for professional conversation
- Involvement in decision making

**Shared Leadership**

- Staff acknowledged for their expertise and experience
- Teacher leadership of pedagogy
- Principal strategic leadership

**Commitment & alignment of values**

- Links school vision & values
- Identifies moral purpose
- Alignment between school values and classroom practice
- Links to religious founder & traditions

**Learning Culture**

- Whole-school approach to improvement
- Focus on continuous improvement
- Time for collaboration & sharing resources

**Reflection & evaluation**

- Time given for reflection & evaluation processes
- Continual process of reflection and evaluation

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**Characteristics**

- Stronger relationships, staff confidence to share & discuss, staff feel valued for their opinion & expertise, job satisfaction

- Leadership capacity, confidence, ownership of classroom practice

- School identity & culture, commitment to values, improved student outcomes, motivate staff interest & participation

- Motivates staff to consider the good of the group, consistency of approach, open dialogue & innovation, importance of aligning school vision and pedagogy, trust and teamwork

- Adaptation to change, adjustment & flexibility, increased professional dialogue, confidence & interest for involvement, teacher capacity for sustainability
The model begins with the element of establishing a core team to lead the improvement process. The core team is characterised by membership that is voluntary in nature with a cross-faculty mix of staff who have some proven leadership experience. By establishing the team in this way the model suggests that this creates an environment where staff are more trusting and have confidence in the improvement process and its leadership. Once the core team has been established this team leads the development of a clear vision and strategic direction for improvement. This leadership is characterised by the use of a structured framework or model that supports the development of a common language for improvement. This common language is created through open dialogue and staff engagement and impacts on staff ownership and commitment to the vision that they collaboratively developed.

The school improvement model identifies five other elements that are not hierarchical in nature but are essential practices for the leadership of school improvement. These elements may be used, both, individually or in combination within the school improvement process.

Collaboration is significant in the school improvement process and is most effective when staff work in smaller teams. Within the process of improvement, giving time for staff collaboration increases professional conversation and staff involvement in decision-making. Collaborative processes build stronger relationships among staff where they are more confident to share and discuss their opinions. This leads to staff feeling valued for their opinions and expertise and influences their job satisfaction.

The model identifies a leadership approach to school improvement that must be shared. This approach acknowledges staff expertise and experience and suggests that teacher leads improvement through pedagogy in the classroom, while the principal leads the strategic direction of the school. A shared leadership approach develops the leadership capacity of staff, building their confidence as classroom practitioners and their ownership of classroom practice.

Another element of leadership for school improvement in the model is the commitment and alignment of values. This commitment and alignment links the school vision with its values, identifying the school’s moral purpose. It is important that the alignment is characterised by an alliance between the school values and teaching practice in the classroom. In faith based schools, such as the schools used in this study, it is essential that the school values be aligned with the religious founder of the school and the school’s traditions. Through this alignment a particular identity and culture for the school is established where staff seem to have a greater
commitment to the values. The model identifies that this alignment and the link to the school’s values and traditions, motivates staff interest and participation in the school improvement process.

The development of a learning culture that supports a whole-school approach to improvement is the next element that is essential for leadership of school improvement in the Anderson School Improvement Model. It is important that the learning culture focuses on continuous improvement and that time is given for collaboration and the sharing of resources between staff to develop this culture. This impacts and motivates staff to consider the whole school and not just their individual classroom practice for improvement, thereby giving a consistency of approach to learning. The time given to develop the learning culture allows open dialogue, the sharing of innovative practice and builds a sense of teamwork between staff. This collaboration builds trust in an environment that recognises and accepts the importance of aligning the school vision and pedagogy.

Within the school improvement model the importance of reflection and evaluation highlights the final element of leadership that is essential for school improvement. Significant time must be given to these processes to allow staff time to adapt to change and for adjustment and flexibility in the improvement process. Reflection and evaluation also increases professional dialogue between staff and impacts on their confidence and interest to be involved. The reflective and evaluation processes also build teacher capacity for change which can further impact on the sustainability of the improvement.

5.6  CHAPTER SUMMARY
In this chapter the research data has been analysed and findings presented for each of the research questions. The chapter concludes with the development of a model for school improvement developed through the literature review and findings of the study. The next chapter will translate the findings of this research into recommendations to assist leaders in identifying important elements of leadership that support processes of school improvement.
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the research findings and present the recommendations and conclusions from the research. The recommendations are designed to assist school leaders in implementing school improvement and contribute to the understanding of how leadership influences school improvement. Further suggestions will be made for future research.

The purpose of this research was to explore the influence of leadership on school improvement in secondary schools. It investigated how leadership influenced those participants who were involved in school improvement and what conclusions can be made from their perceptions regarding the leadership of school improvement.

School improvement has attracted significant attention in recent years and has been the focus of considerable research and writing in the field of education, as has the influence of leadership on this process (Burford & Bezzina, 2014; Fullan & Boyle, 2014; Fullan, 2014; Harris, 2014; Hargreaves, Boyle & Harris, 2014; Spillane, 2012; Crowther, 2011, Robinson, 2011; Starratt, 2011; Bezzina & Burford, 2010; Duignan, 2009; Fullan, 2009; and Harris, 2008). However, there is still an incomplete picture of effective models of leadership and leadership approaches that have led to successful school improvement. This research therefore, attempted to investigate the issues raised in the literature on leadership for school improvement and provide insights into particular elements of leadership that impact on school improvement.

6.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The overall research question, derived from the review of the literature, that framed this study was:

How does leadership influence school improvement?
This question was used to generate the following three sub-questions:

1. What were the important elements effecting change within a school improvement process?

2. To what extent did leadership, within these elements, contribute to the school improvement process?

3. How do the experiences of leadership of participants involved in school improvement reflect the different leadership approaches identified in the literature?

The purpose of the research was to gain an understanding of the experiences and perspectives of executive, middle managers and teachers about leadership of school improvement. The study focused on case studies of five Catholic systemic secondary schools involved in an improvement process. The epistemological framework of constructionism was adopted. More specifically, the interpretivist approach of symbolic interactionism was employed as it explored the perspectives participants have of their understanding of leadership and its impact on school improvement.

6.2 FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section presents a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn from these findings. In the previous chapter the findings of the three research sub-questions were discussed and presented and these findings led to conclusions regarding the overall research question. The overall research question sought to investigate ways in which leadership was experienced by the participants and how this influenced the school improvement process. In addressing this question the findings led to certain conclusions that informed the construction of a model of essential characteristics of leadership needed for school improvement.

The key conclusion from the research is that there are seven elements that influence school improvement: establishment of a core team, clear vision and strategic direction, collaboration, shared leadership, commitment and alignment of values, learning culture, reflection and evaluation. While these seven elements have been identified from previous research in the literature, as shown in Chapter 2, they were consistently identified as important elements of leadership for school improvement in this research. The fact that they were identified again in
this research reinforces their importance to school improvement processes. The significant highlight of this research was the unique alignment and orientation of the elements to form a model for school improvement, The Anderson Model. The construction of a model, using these seven elements, and the unique way the elements have been grouped provides a framework for leaders to effect school improvement. Although the research was conducted within Catholic schools the application of the model is not specifically related to schools who serve within a religious context. Both Catholic and non-Catholic schools would find relevance in applying the model. One of the elements of the model, Commitment and alignment of values, makes links to the religious founder and traditions of the school which may be seen as only applicable to Catholic schools. However, non-Catholic schools, would also have traditions and identified values that are important to the school and therefore, would be able to commit to these values and link these values and their traditions to classroom practice for school improvement.

The Anderson Model of school improvement reflecting the seven elements of leadership is provided for reference in Figure 6.1 on the following page.
The Anderson School Improvement Model

Figure 6.1: The Anderson School Improvement Model

**Establish a Core Team**
- Voluntary participation
- Cross-faculty membership
- Proven leadership experience

**Confidence and Trust**

**Clear Vision and Strategic Direction**
- Use of a structured framework or model
- Common Language

**Open dialogue, staff engagement, commitment and ownership**

**Collaboration**
- Smaller teams
- Time for professional conversation
- Involvement in decision making

**Characteristics**
- Stronger relationships, staff confidence to share & discuss, staff feel valued for their opinion & expertise, job satisfaction

**Learning Culture**
- Whole-school approach to improvement
- Focus on continuous improvement
- Time for collaboration & sharing resources

**Characteristics**
- Motivates staff to consider the good of the group, consistency of approach, open dialogue & innovation, importance of aligning school vision & pedagogy, trust & teamwork

**Commitment & alignment of values**
- Links school vision & values
- Identifies moral purpose
- Alignment between school values and classroom practice
- Links to religious founder & traditions

**Characteristics**
- School identify & culture, commitment to values, improved student outcomes, motivate staff interest & participation

**Shared leadership**
- Staff acknowledged for their expertise and experience
- Teacher leadership of pedagogy
- Principal strategic leadership

**Characteristics**
- Leadership capacity, confidence, ownership of classroom practice

**Reflection & evaluation**
- Time given for reflection & evaluation processes
- Continual process of reflection and evaluation

**Characteristics**
- Adaptation to change, adjustment & flexibility, increased professional dialogue, confidence & interest for involvement, teacher capacity for sustainability
The findings of the research will now be presented as recommendations and guidelines for leaders to effect school improvement. These recommendations and guidelines relate to the model and each of the individual elements of the model developed from the research. The implementation of these recommendations and guidelines outline the specific findings of this research to assist leaders to influence improvement in schools. Each will be presented in turn.

6.2.1 Implementation of the Anderson School Improvement Model

Recommendation 1: That schools adopt and implement the seven elements of the Anderson Model for School Improvement, as grouped and aligned in the model, when undertaking school improvement.

A model for school improvement was developed from the findings of the research and identified seven elements of leadership that influence school improvement. The unique grouping and alignment of these identified elements for implementing improvement in schools is specific to this research. Firstly, the model identifies the importance of establishing a core team to lead the improvement process. Following the creation of the core team, an initial priority, is then to lead staff in open dialogue to develop a clear vision and strategic direction for improvement. This is the second element of the model. The model then highlights five further elements for improvement: Collaboration, Shared Leadership, Commitment and alignment of values, Learning culture, and Reflection and evaluation. The implementation of these elements has no specific order but can be used in conjunction with each other to effect change for school improvement.

The next set of recommendations and guidelines involves each element of the improvement model developed from the research findings. Each of the elements constitutes individual recommendations. These will be outlined and presented with guidelines for implementation. The development of each recommendation and the guidelines to assist in the implementation of each recommendation is developed from the findings of the research.
6.2.2 Establishment of a Core Team

Recommendation 2: When implementing school improvement schools develop a core team to lead the school improvement process.

The first element of the model regards the establishment of a core team to lead the school improvement process. The findings indicate that leadership of the school improvement process will be best achieved through the establishment of a core team to lead the improvement process. Both Kotter (1995) and Reigeluth (2005) recognised that the establishment of a team with broad representation to lead a renewal process was significant in helping to get buy in from a majority of participants. In this research, set within secondary schools, additional to the establishment of the core team, were three characteristics that needed to be present within the team. These characteristics were recognised as significant in building confidence and trust from staff to engage with the team in the improvement process. The three characteristics: voluntary participation, cross-faculty membership and proven leadership experience led to the following guidelines for implementation of the recommendation of establishing a core team.

Guideline 1: That principals and school leadership teams actively canvas staff to lodge expressions of interest to join a team which will lead a process of improvement for the school.

The research found that when the core team leading the school improvement process was formed from an invitational process open to all staff, staff were more trusting of the process. They had confidence that this group, who had voluntarily gathered, rather than being selected by a higher party, had interest and would be committed to the improvement process.

Guideline 2: That principals and school leadership teams try to ensure that membership of the core team to lead the school improvement process consists of a broad cross-faculty mix of staff.

From this research it was identified that the core team needed a cross-faculty mix of membership for improvement in a school setting. This cross-faculty mix provides the setting for a greater spread of staff across curriculum areas to engage in the process and a wide-ranging perspective of knowledge to the team. This engagement allows staff the opportunity for greater understanding of the improvement process and a voice and involvement in the decisions that might directly affect their teaching area.
Guideline 3: That the core team leading the school improvement process has members of staff who already hold leadership positions in the school or have proven leadership experience.

Participants in this research indicated that it was important for members of the core team to have proven leadership experience. This leadership capacity impacted on the respect members of the core team were given as leaders and the trust and confidence staff had in the leadership of the core team when the leaders held another leadership position in the school.

The second element of the Anderson School Improvement Model developed from the research findings identified the importance of developing a clear vision and strategic direction for school improvement.

6.2.3 Clear vision and strategic direction
Recommendation 3: That a clear vision and strategic direction be developed when implementing school improvement

Developing a clear vision and strategic direction was identified as the second element of the model. From the literature of the three change models, Fullan (2008), Reigeluth (2005) and Kotter (1995), used in this research, all three researchers identified the importance of communicating a clear vision and consistent direction to enact change. In this research, adding to the literature in the field of school improvement and change, was the way the vision and direction for improvement was developed through the improvement process. This had a significant impact on staff and was important in implementing the improvement.

The next three guidelines assist in implementing the development of a clear vision and strategic direction.

Guideline 1: That when leading school improvement, a structured framework be used to guide and focus staff in identifying a clear vision and strategic direction for improvement.
This research was set within schools where a particular school improvement process was used. The findings concluded that the use of a framework or model for improvement was necessary to support the team leading the improvement. This framework gave the team a guide to direct their discussions and assisted them in the planning process. This guided focus assisted staff in understanding the school’s direction in order to create a clear vision and supported staff to see a bigger picture of the school’s strategic direction for school improvement.

Guideline 2: That an agreed common language be developed to articulate the school’s vision for improvement.

While the literature, Starratt (2011) and Andrews et al (2004), identified the importance of a common language, this research added to the literature by giving an understanding of why a common language is an important element in improvement processes. Developing a common language provided clarity of understanding and purpose to staff for future directions and therefore consistency in the way staff enacted the vision in the school. This clarity of vision was seen in the way staff lived the vision in their everyday classroom practice.

Guideline 3: That a clear vision and strategic direction for improvement be developed through open dialogue and collaborative processes among staff.

The research also found that it was important for the clear vision and strategic direction to be developed by staff through open dialogue and collaborative processes. The impact of these processes increased staff discussions and engagement in the improvement process and identified that staff were committed and took ownership of the vision as they had direct involvement in its development.

The next five elements of the model follow the first two introductory processes for school improvement. They highlight principles of implementation that affect the school improvement process.
6.2.4 Collaboration

Recommendation 4: That collaborative processes be used when implementing school improvement.

Collaboration within the school improvement process was identified as significant by participants in this research. Within the literature, Elmore (2011) Shapiro & Stefkovich (2010) and Senge (2006), also identify the importance of collaboration in improvement processes. This research however, identified three characteristics of collaboration that were important in school improvement processes. These three characteristics provide the guidelines to assist the implementation of the recommendation that collaborative processes be used when implementing school improvement.

Guideline 1: That within school improvement processes, the opportunity be provided for staff to collaborate in smaller teams to discuss and engage in professional conversation regarding student learning.

From this research it was identified that collaboration in smaller teams was significant in supporting the school improvement process. The smaller groups built stronger staff professional relationships where they were more confident and open to sharing their views and opinions and this increased staff involvement and commitment to the improvement.

Guideline 2: That principals and school leadership teams provide regular structured time for staff to collaborate and engage in professional conversation within school improvement processes.

Structured time for collaboration built into the school day and planned provided a consistent approach where staff felt more regular involvement in the improvement process. This time provided the opportunity for more professional dialogue and built stronger relationships among staff. By being given frequent time to collaborate staff had the opportunity to share, discuss and feel confident in working within and dealing with change. These professional conversations also allowed staff time to realise and understand where their ideas were aligned with the overall school vision and assisted the decision-making process.
Guideline 3: That principals and teams leading school improvement processes ensure staff are involved in decision-making processes for school improvement.

When staff worked together, the collaboration allowed staff to have a voice and input into decision-making, which positively impacted on their support of the school improvement. The collaboration and input into decisions gave staff a sense of being valued for their opinions and expertise. This further effected staff engagement in the school improvement process, staff commitment in supporting decisions for improvement and improved their job satisfaction.

The next element of the Anderson School Improvement model identified the importance of a shared leadership approach.

6.2.5 Shared leadership
Recommendation 5: That a shared leadership approach be used when implementing school improvement.

Shared leadership, is the fourth element of the school improvement model. The findings indicate that a shared leadership approach, where the principal takes leadership of the strategic direction of the school and the teachers take leadership of pedagogy, was significant in effecting change for school improvement. Previous research, Leithwood et al (2007); Crowther, Fergusan & Hann (2009); and Spillan (2012), also recognise that shared leadership supports improvement processes where using leadership skills across the organisation assists members of an organisation to take collective responsibility and ownership of change.

This research, however, identified specific elements that support the implementation of a shared leadership approach, in a school setting, and these are presented in the following guidelines.

Guideline 1: That when implementing school improvement principals and leadership teams utilise a shared leadership approach, providing opportunities for staff to take leadership of different aspects of school improvement processes.
This shared leadership approach acknowledged staff for their expertise and experience as leaders and gave them the opportunity to lead and use their skills at different times in the improvement process. Even though Principals and Leadership Team members have specific roles of leadership giving staff leadership opportunities further develops staff leadership capacity and confidence as a leader. It also promotes the idea that school improvement and leadership of improvement is not just the domain of those in elected leadership positions.

Guideline 2: That principals and leadership teams provide time and resources for staff to share their expertise in pedagogical practice with other staff.

This shared leadership approach particularly identified the expertise of staff as leaders of pedagogy. The provision of structured time and resources to staff to enable them to share their expertise of leaders of learning with colleagues ensures the opportunity for this exchange of skills and expertise and continues to build the leadership capacity of staff.

Guideline 3: That staff be given the opportunities to lead the professional development of their colleagues, recognising their skills and expertise in particular areas.

The recognition of staff as experts in particular curriculum areas and pedagogical practices fosters an acknowledgement of teachers as experts in the field. Through the use of staff to lead professional development, rather than bringing in other experts to lead staff development, distinguishes and appreciates the importance of their proficiency and expertise as a teacher. It also adds to the importance given by the Principal and Leadership Team to the role of the teacher in sharing ideas and knowledge between teachers.

Guideline 4: That teacher leadership is recognised as a leadership approach that acknowledges staff expertise as leaders of learning in the classroom and may include processes such as team teaching, classroom observation, leading professional learning communities.

The research found that teacher leadership was particularly identified as a significant leadership approach that was influential in effecting change for improvement specifically in classroom practice. As teacher leaders, staff led and took ownership of pedagogy by sharing best practice with colleagues, leading innovation and supporting the implementation of these practices in the classroom. This leadership approach allowed staff to work collaboratively, utilising and recognising staff expertise as leaders in the classroom and having them involved
in decisions that directly affected classroom practice. The findings indicated that staff felt valued for their expertise and confidence to lead learning with colleagues to effect change in pedagogy.

A commitment and alignment of values was identified as fifth leadership element of the Anderson School Improvement Model.

6.2.6 Commitment and alignment of values
Recommendation 6: That when effecting school improvement there is a commitment to and alignment with the values of the school and the vision for improvement

Of further significance was the importance of staff commitment to the school’s values. Staff were particularly motivated to support the school’s vision when they could see an alignment of the vision with the school’s values and historical religious traditions.

When applying a commitment and alignment of values, the following guidelines might assist the implementation.

Guideline 1: That school improvement processes need to be driven by moral purpose reflected in the values articulated by the school’s vision and mission.

Leadership that identified the moral purpose of the school was a strength of this research. Through this recognition and an alignment with the values of the school, articulated in the school vision, there was a real purpose and consistent understanding of what the school improvement process wanted to achieve. All staff were working in the same direction with a commitment to achieving the vision. This alignment also strengthened the school’s identity and culture and was a great motivator for staff interest and participation in the improvement process.

Guideline 2: That principals and leadership teams ensure the vision for improvement is embedded in the teaching and learning practices.
In order to live out the vision of the school it was important that the vision was reflected in the way staff implemented the vision in their classroom practice. This alignment ensures a consistent understanding of the schools values and strengthens the school’s identity which when enacted in the teaching and learning practices leads to improved outcomes for students.

Guideline 3: That principals and leadership teams provide the opportunity for staff collaboration and professional dialogue to discuss ways the vision can be implemented through the pedagogical practices in the classroom.

In order to achieve an alignment between the school’s moral purpose, vision and values it was important that opportunities for collaboration were provided for staff. It was found that this professional dialogue between staff supported the application of enacting the vision in the pedagogical practices in the classroom. Again linking with the element of collaboration, smaller teams and structured time provided opportunities for this increased engagement giving time for clarity of understanding and a consistent approach for staff ownership of enacting the vision in their classroom practice.

Guideline 4: That when developing a vision for school improvement in faith based schools, consideration be given to the values of the school’s religious founder and the school’s historical traditions.

A further specific finding of this study was the importance of linking the school’s values to the religious founder of the school. As the study was completed in Catholic schools, staff were very connected with the history of the religious founder of the school and when they could recognise the link of this history to the values it had a significant impact on staff motivation to be involved in the improvement and their ownership and leadership of implementing the vision in their own classroom.

The next element of the Anderson School Improvement Model identified the importance of developing a strong learning culture when leading school improvement.
6.2.7 Learning culture

Recommendation 7: That, when leading school improvement, a learning culture be developed that focuses on a consistent whole-school approach to learning.

The sixth element of the model recognises that it is essential when leading school improvement to develop a learning culture that supports a whole-school approach to learning. The findings indicated that this whole-school approach motivated staff to consider the good of the group and to think beyond their own classroom for a consistent approach to improvement.

The following guidelines might assist the implementation of this recommendation.

Guideline 1: That principals and school leadership teams ensure that a whole-school approach to teaching and learning is adopted when implementing school improvement.

In developing a learning culture, this research identified the importance of a whole-school approach to teaching and learning. This would ensure all staff were working together in an agreed and harmonious direction that provided a consistent approach for students to their learning.

Guideline 2: That when leading school improvement processes, time be allocated for collaboration and sharing of resources between staff.

The consistent approach of developing a learning culture was best achieved when time was given for collaboration and sharing resources between staff. The research found that this collaborative time allowed open dialogue amongst staff and built teamwork and trust to share innovative classroom practice for improvement. This approach is consistent and connects both the elements of collaboration and shared leadership that have already been recommended.

Guideline 3: That continuous improvement be a characteristic of the learning culture of a school.

Participants in this research acknowledged that it was important that the learning culture focused on continuous improvement. In developing a learning culture and whole-school approach to learning there was a real interest from staff in the students and their different learning styles. As teachers they focused on continually trying to improve and tailor the
curriculum to meet the learning needs of students and this in turn improved student learning outcomes. This interest also increased their motivation and willingness to participate in the improvement process.

The final element of the Anderson School Improvement Model recognises the importance of reflection and evaluation in school improvement processes.

6.2.8 Reflection and evaluation

Recommendation 8: That when leading school improvement, time be provided for reflection and evaluation in school improvement processes

As the final element of the model, reflection and evaluation were considered crucial in the school improvement process. It supported participants understanding of change processes and built teacher capacity and flexibility to adjust to change.

To implement this recommendation, the following guideline will provide assistance.

Guideline 1: That schools provide regular structured opportunities and time for reflection, evaluation and discussion on challenges experienced in the improvement process.

The findings indicated that it was important that time be given to staff for collaborative reflection and evaluation for the purposes of addressing the challenges and experiences within the change process. This allocated time provided staff with flexibility to adjust to the changes involved in the improvement process and to dialogue with others for clarity and understanding of the process. This in turn built staff confidence in the process, an acknowledgment that staff had something to offer as part of their reflection on the process for improvement and also build teacher capacity for sustainability of the improvement.

These recommendations support the leadership of improvement processes in schools. Further suggestions may assist recommendations for school systems and external providers.
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND PROVIDERS

The following recommendations for systems and providers of professional development programs in leadership and school improvement are proposed and presented.

1. School systems focusing on school improvement consider resourcing schools with funding to provide time for staff to meet and collaborate. This would include time to use a structured process for school improvement, as well as time for professional dialogue between staff, so that staff can develop an agreed clear vision and strategic direction and share resources to improve pedagogical practice.

2. System leaders provide leadership formation programs to principals who wish to incorporate the elements of the Anderson School Improvement Model in their school. This model identifies significant elements of leadership essential for school improvement.

3. School systems give consideration to the continuity of leadership in schools who have embarked on a process of school improvement. A change of principal within a school improvement process places pressure on the change process and a lack of continuity may affect the engagement of staff in the improvement process.

4. School systems explore new and contemporary options for leadership succession in schools to ensure a commitment to continuity for schools that are involved in sustainable school improvement.

5. School Systems enhance staff wellbeing by further exploring a shared leadership approach in schools. By acknowledging the expertise and experience of staff as leaders, staff wellbeing, in terms of feeling valued and job satisfaction, build staff confidence and involvement in change processes.

6. Consultants in school systems use the elements of the Anderson School Improvement Model as a framework to discuss and examine the leadership practices of principals to support them in their leadership development of school improvement processes.
7. Institutions, such as, universities or private providers, who are involved in the provision of professional development in leadership and school improvement to consider the elements of The Anderson School Improvement Model.

8. Institutions involved in teacher training consider formation programs to build teacher capacity to be leaders of pedagogy in schools for school improvement. These programs could involve coaching and mentoring skills.

A further set of recommendations pertaining to future research and derived from the findings of this study follows.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
In the light of this study, several implications for future research are identified.

1. Research to test the applicability of the Anderson School Improvement Model in other school settings to see if these leadership elements effect change for improvement.

2. Investigate the impact of school structures on the utilisation of time for staff collaboration, reflection, evaluation, and professional dialogue as a contributing factor to school improvement processes.

3. Further research into the influence of shared leadership on teacher capacity to lead school improvement.

4. This study involved the experiences of teachers and principals involved in school improvement processes. Research the experiences of students and community members involved in school improvement processes.
6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the current educational landscape, leadership in schools is significant in supporting school improvement. The focus both nationally and internationally on school reform and change highlights the importance of leadership, fostering a broad educational vision, training and recruiting quality teachers, as well as leaders and teachers working together to promote student learning and achievement (Fullan, 2009). This research has shown that certain elements of leadership play a vital role in influencing change for school improvement. The proposed model for school improvement focuses on seven elements of leadership that were found to influence school improvement: establishing a core team to lead the process, identifying a clear vision and strategic direction, priority given to shared leadership which is enhanced by a collaborative approach, commitment and alignment of values, developing a strong learning culture that focuses on continual improvement and support through reflection and evaluation of improvement processes. These elements, when combined, provide a fertile environment in which principals and teachers can take collective responsibility for change to improve schools. This shift of understanding, from principals taking sole responsibility for improvement to the notion that leadership needs to be shared, recognises that both principals and teachers have roles and expertise that can influence change for school improvement. The findings of this research are therefore relevant to school systems in areas of identifying moral purpose, professional and leadership development, and building teacher capacity as leaders of learning as they continue to strive for excellence across schools. It also has implications for identifying models of devolved leadership that have the potential to strengthen the capacity of educational leaders to lead educational change for improvement.
REFERENCES


Harris, A. (2008). Distributed leadership: according to the evidence. *Journal of Educational Administration, 46*(2), 172-188.


APPENDIX 1: ARCHDIOCESE SCHOOL STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

First published October 2005, This version 31 January 2012
APPENDIX 2: LEADERS TRANSFORMING LEARNERS AND LEARNING
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Teacher leaders....

Convey convictions about a better world by
  • articulating a positive future for all students
  • contributing to an image of teaching as a profession that makes a difference

Facilitate communities of learning by
  • encouraging a shared, school-wide approach to core pedagogical processes
  • approaching professional learning as consciousness-raising about complex issues
  • synthesising new ideas out of colleagues' professional discourse and reflective activities

Strive for pedagogical excellence by
  • showing genuine interest in students' needs and well-being
  • continuously developing and refining personal teaching gifts and talents
  • seeking deep understanding of significant pedagogical practices

Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by
  • standing up for children, especially disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups
  • working with administrators to find solutions to issues of equity, fairness, and justice
  • encouraging student 'voice' in ways that are sensitive to students' developmental stages and circumstances

Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by
  • working with the principal, administrators, and other teachers to manage projects that heighten alignment between the school's vision, values, pedagogical practices, and professional learning activities
  • building alliances and nurturing external networks of support

Nurture a culture of success by
  • acting on opportunities to emphasise accomplishments and high expectations
  • encouraging collective responsibility in addressing school-wide challenges
  • encouraging self-respect and confidence in students' communities

Facilitate school capacity-building by
  • contributing to school revitalisation processes in forms manifested in the six COSMIC C-B dynamics
APPENDIX 4: ETHICS APPROVAL FROM THE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Human Research Ethics Committee
Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Michael Bezzina  Sydney Campus
Co-Investigators:  Melbourne Campus
Student Researcher: Anne Anderson  Sydney Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Leadership for School Improvement
for the period: 6/12/2012-31/12/2013
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: 2012 301N

Special Condition/s of Approval
Prior to commencement of your research, the following permissions are required to be submitted to the ACU HREC:
CEO approval

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (2007) apply:

(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
   • security of records
   • compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
   • compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
   • proposed changes to the protocol
   • unforeseen circumstances or events
   • adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than low risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of negligible risk and low risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a Final Report Form and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an Annual Progress Report Form and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: ........................ Date: ..........07/01/2013..........
   (Research Services Officer,  Melbourne Campus)
APPENDIX 5: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT: Leadership for School Improvement
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Associate Professor Charles Burford
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Anne Anderson
PROGRAM: Doctor of Education

I .................................................. (the participant) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this interview phase of the research and realise that I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty. I understand that the interview will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and later transcribed to text.

The interview will be held during 2013 and will last no longer than forty five minutes. It will be conducted at my school at a convenient time.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: .................................................................

SIGNATURE ................................................................. DATE ................................

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: .................................................................

DATE: ................................

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: .................................................................

DATE: ................................
APPENDIX 6: INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS IN SURVEY

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS IN SURVEY

TITLE OF PROJECT: Leadership for School Improvement
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Associate Professor Charles Burford
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Anne Anderson
PROGRAM: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in a doctoral research project aimed at exploring the influence of leadership on improvement processes in Catholic secondary schools. The research is being conducted in schools that have used the school improvement process of Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS). As a staff member who has been part of the IDEAS process in your school your views are essential in building a complete picture of how leadership, within this process, impacts on school improvement.

I would like to invite you to participate in an online survey if you were present at your school when it began the IDEAS process. The online survey, accessed by a link at the end of this invitation, should take little more than half an hour, and is comprised largely of statements that require you to rate, in terms of your agreement, a series of statements. There is also space for you to elaborate on your response. The survey will not require you to identify yourself using any personal information.

The results of the research are intended to provide schools and system leaders with an in-depth understanding of different leadership approaches that have led to the success of school improvement. It will also provide insights into particular leadership behaviours that impact on school improvement and may contribute to and influence the models of leadership development schools and systems use for the future. Once the research is completed you will be provided with a summary of the research findings. The full research results will be published as a thesis document and will also be provided to the Catholic Education Office Sydney. The research may also be published in another form or communicated to a wider audience.

You are, of course, perfectly free not to participate in this research, and need give no reasons. Simply do not follow the link provided at the end of this letter, which takes you to the survey. Even after starting you can choose to discontinue at any time without penalty. In accepting the invitation to participate I would hope that you would benefit from the opportunity to reflect on areas of interest related to your work, and to develop further knowledge and insight about your work. There are no identifiable risks to you, your employment or your relationship with the school in being involved in this survey.

It is important for you to know that all information gained during the study will be confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the research. Although the information collected could possibly identify the participants this is not the intent of the research and will not be used to identify respondents. I will use codes when working with the data or creating any documentation. All original data generated from
the research will be securely stored at the University during the study and for 5 years after completion of the research. After this time the data will be destroyed in accordance with University procedure.

If as a participant you have any questions about the study in general or about particular procedures within the study, you can contact me at St Ursula’s College on 9502 3300, by email anne.anderson@syd.catholic.edu.au or postal address, 69 Caroline Street, Kingsgrove 2208. Alternatively, information can be sought from my Principal Supervisor, Associate Professor Charles Burford at the Australian Catholic University on 02 9701 4166, by email charles.burford@acu.edu.au or postal address, Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield, 2135.

The Human Ethics Committee of Australian Catholic University has approved this study. Approval has also been given by the Catholic Education Office Sydney to conduct this research.

If during the course of the study you have a complaint or concern, or have a query that the Principal Supervisor or Research Student has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

NSW and ACT: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
North Sydney Campus
PO Box 968
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059
Tel: 02 9739 2105
Fax: 02 9739 2870

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will, of course, be informed of the outcome. The ethics application number for this research is 2012 301N.

I would love to have the benefit of your insight, as I want as complete a perspective as possible. For the purpose of this study those staff who were present when the IDEAS process began are invited to complete the survey. Your completion of the survey at the link below signals your informed consent to participation. I thank you in anticipation for your contribution to this important study. The link to the survey appears below. It would be appreciated if the survey could be completed by >>add date>>.

LINK GOES HERE

Yours sincerely

Anne Anderson
Student researcher

Associate Professor Charles Burford
Principal Supervisor
APPENDIX 7: INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS IN INTERVIEW

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS IN INTERVIEW

TITLE OF PROJECT: Leadership for School Improvement
PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR: Associate Professor Charles Burford
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Anne Anderson
PROGRAM: Doctor of Education

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in a doctoral research project aimed at exploring the influence of leadership on improvement processes in Catholic secondary schools. The research is being conducted in schools that have used the school improvement process of Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS). As a staff member who has been part of the IDEAS process in your school your views are essential in building a complete picture of how leadership, within this process, impacts on school improvement.

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview. The completion of the interview should take no more than forty-five minutes during school hours, so as to minimise inconvenience to you. The interview will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and later transcribed to text.

The results of the research are intended to provide schools and system leaders with an in-depth understanding of different leadership approaches that have led to the success of school improvement. It will also provide insights into particular leadership behaviours that impact on school improvement and may contribute to and influence the models of leadership development schools and systems use for the future. Once the research is completed you will be provided with a summary of the research findings. The full research results will be published as a thesis document and will also be provided to the Catholic Education Office Sydney. The research may also be published in another form or communicated to a wider audience.

You are, of course, perfectly free not to participate in this research, and need give no reasons. Similarly, you can choose to discontinue at any time without penalty. In accepting the invitation to participate I would hope that you would benefit from the opportunity to reflect on areas of interest related to your work, and to develop further knowledge and insight about your work. There are no identifiable risks to you, your employment, your education or your relationship with the school in being involved in this interview.

It is important for you to know that all information gained during the study will be confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the research. Although the information collected could possibly identify the participants this is not the intent of the research and will not be used to identify respondents. While I will be recording and transcribing the interview I will use codes when working with the data or creating any documentation. All original data generated from the research will be securely stored at the
University during the study and for 5 years after completion of the research. After this time the data will be destroyed in accordance with University procedure.

If as a participant you have any questions about the study in general or about particular procedures within the study, you can contact me at St Ursula’s College on 9502 3300, by email anne.anderson@syd.catholic.edu.au or postal address, 69 Caroline Street, Kingsgrove 2208. Alternatively, information can be sought from my Principal Supervisor, Associate Professor Charles Burford at the Australian Catholic University on 02 9701 4166, by email charles.burford@acu.edu.au or postal address, Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield, 2135.

The Human Ethics Committee of Australian Catholic University has approved this study. Approval has also been given by the Catholic Education Office Sydney to conduct this research.

If during the course of the study you have a complaint or concern, or have a query that the Principal Supervisor or Research Student has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

NSW and ACT: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
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PO Box 968
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059
Tel: 02 9739 2105
Fax: 02 9739 2870

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will, of course, be informed of the outcome. The ethics application number for this research is 2012 301N.

I would love to have the benefit of your insight, as I want as complete a perspective as possible. For the purpose of this study, you will be asked to complete an “Informed Consent” form prior to the commencement of the interview.

Thank you again for your contribution to this research.

Yours sincerely

Anne Anderson
Student researcher

Associate Professor Charles Burford
Principal Supervisor
APPENDIX 8: INFORMATION LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Dear (Principal)

You may be aware that I am currently enrolled in a Doctor of Education course at the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield. My research focuses on the influence of leadership on improvement processes in Catholic secondary schools. I am specifically focusing on the schools that have used Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) as an improvement process. As your school has utilised this process I am writing to ask whether you would be willing to have your school involved in the study.

The research involves surveying staff who were present when the IDEAS process was implemented and are still members of staff. The survey will be administered online, should take little more than half an hour, and is comprised largely of statements that require participants to rate, in terms of their agreement, a series of statements. There is also space for them to elaborate on their response.

The research also involves interviewing yourself, and volunteers from a representative group of staff - one member of the executive, one middle manager, two members of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) and two members of staff in an attempt to gather a range of experiences and perceptions of those involved in the school improvement process. The interviews will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and transcribed to text, and should take no more than forty five minutes during school hours, so as to minimise inconvenience. For the purpose of this study, participants will be asked to complete an “Informed Consent” form prior to the commencement of the interview.

I would also like to gather a range documents that will provide evidence regarding the IDEAS process, how it was implemented, and the ongoing reflections and experiences of the school community.

Staff are perfectly free not to participate in this research, and need give no reasons. Similarly, they can choose to discontinue at any time without penalty. There are no identifiable risks to participants in being involved in this study. In accepting the invitation to participate I would hope that you see your school community benefit from the opportunity to reflect on areas of interest related to your work, and to develop further knowledge and insight about your work. The school based work will take no longer than two or three days in total and interview times will be negotiated to avoid disruption to the school routine. In any reporting or discussion of this research, individuals or schools will not be identified. For your information, I have attached a copy of the Catholic Education Office approval for the research.

Each participating school will receive feedback on the results of the research at the completion of the study. It is important for you to know that all information gained during the study will be confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the research. Although the information collected could possibly identify the participants this is not the intent of the research and will not be used to identify respondents. I will use codes when working with the data or creating any documentation. All original
data generated from the research will be securely stored at the University during the study and for 5 years after completion of the research. After this time the data will be destroyed in accordance with University procedure.

If any participant has any questions about the study in general or about particular procedures within the study, they can contact me at St Ursula’s College on 9502 3300, by email anne.anderson@syd.catholic.edu.au or postal address, 69 Caroline Street, Kingsgrove 2208. Alternatively, information can be sought from my Principal Supervisor, Associate Professor Charles Burford at the Australian Catholic University on 02 9701 4166, by email charles.burford@acu.edu.au or postal address, Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield, 2135. The Human Ethics Committee of Australian Catholic University has approved this study.

If during the course of the study you have a complaint or concern, or have a query that the Principal Supervisor or myself has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

NSW and ACT: Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
North Sydney Campus
PO Box 968
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059
Tel: 02 9739 2105
Fax: 02 9739 2870

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will, of course, be informed of the outcome. The ethics application number for this research is 2012 301N.

I would love to have the benefit of your insight, as I want as complete a perspective as possible. I am hoping your school can be involved in the study and would appreciate your advice at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Anne Anderson
Student researcher
Welcome and thank you for the expertise you will bring to this research.

The survey consists of four parts, Part A, a short introduction and Parts B, C and D which require you to rate, in terms of your agreement a series of statements. There is also space for you to elaborate on your response.

PART A: Introduction

* 1. Where you are currently teaching?
   - Bethlehem College Ashfield
   - Casimir College Marrickville
   - Domremy College Five Dock
   - Marist Sisters Woolwich
   - Our Lady of Mercy College Burraneer Bay

* 2. How many years have you been at this school?
   - 1
   - 2
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6-10
   - 10-15
   - 15-20
   - Over 20

* 3. To which group do you belong?
   - Principal
   - Executive or Leadership Team
   - Middle Management - Subject Coordinator or Year Coordinator
   - Teacher
* 4. Have you ever been a member of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT)?

- Yes
- No

Leadership for School Improvement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school vision for learning was developed by the collaboration of staff and students</td>
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<td>In developing a clear vision for learning the staff felt their contribution to the process was valued</td>
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<td>The IDEAS process promoted teamwork within staff</td>
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<td>Staff took ownership for developing the school vision and school-wide pedagogy</td>
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<td>My classroom practice has changed as a result of adopting the learning framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having been involved in the IDEAS process I would describe the school as a professional learning community</td>
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<td>The IDEAS process has enabled the school to develop a clear vision for learning at the school</td>
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<td>The new learning framework for the school has improved student learning outcomes</td>
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<td>The school-wide vision and learning framework has been successfully integrated into the curriculum areas in which I teach</td>
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<td>The process of developing the school-wide pedagogy provided the opportunity for reflection and evaluation</td>
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</table>
* 6. The IDEAS process has been successful in developing a school-wide pedagogy and vision for learning at the school. Why or Why not?

* 7. PART C: Evidence of successful change and improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school improvement process built stronger relationships amongst staff</td>
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<td>The professional conversations amongst staff regarding student learning has improved since the development of the school vision and learning framework</td>
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<td>The IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) took an active role in leading the school improvement process</td>
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<td>Staff were very engaged in the development of the school vision and learning framework</td>
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<td>The Principal worked alongside staff in the development of the vision</td>
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<td>Staff feel more confident in taking leadership for student learning</td>
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<td>The school allowed/provided professional development opportunities for staff that has had a direct impact on student learning</td>
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<td>The vision for learning at the school is now evident in classroom practice</td>
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</table>
There is evidence of new innovative approaches to student learning as a result of the new vision and learning framework

Staff were well supported in developing the school-wide pedagogy

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**8. Can you give examples of the way the school improvement process was led?**

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**9. PART D: Contribution to successful change and improvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>There is an atmosphere of trust between the school leadership team and the staff</td>
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<td>Staff feel valued for their expertise and experience in leading learning</td>
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<td>Parallel leadership is evident in the way learning is led in the school</td>
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<td>All staff are committed and have taken ownership for the school vision for learning</td>
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<td>Leadership of learning is distributed amongst staff reflecting their skills and talents</td>
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<td>The school vision helps to prepare students to be responsible citizens for the future</td>
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<td>The values of the school community are lived through the school vision</td>
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<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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<td>There is a shared language for learning at the school</td>
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<td>The development of a school-wide pedagogy has highlighted the</td>
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<td>importance of a strong learning culture in the school</td>
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<td>There is an increased culture of reflection, evaluation and continuous</td>
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<td>improvement in the school to support student learning</td>
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<td>Staff new to the school are inducted and supported into embracing the</td>
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<td>school vision</td>
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<td>The focus of leadership in the school is on student learning and</td>
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<td>student needs</td>
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<td>Decisions regarding student learning are made collaboratively</td>
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<td>The expertise of teachers is recognised and valued</td>
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* 10. Give an example of the way the vision and learning framework has contributed to school improvement.

**Leadership for School Improvement**

**Final section**

**Thank you for your participation in this survey.**

**As part of this research, further detailed information is necessary. It would be most appreciated if you would agree to be interviewed regarding your experience with the IDEAS process in your school. The interview would take approximately 45 minutes.**
If YES, please complete your contact details below.

11. Yes, I would like to be interviewed, my contact details are:

Name

Email Address

Leadership for School Improvement

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Please click on the submit button.