



St Mary's School Thornbury

2021 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1108

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Chris Ray, attest that St Mary's School is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2021 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.

04/04/2022

NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Governing Authority Report

2021 has been a momentous year for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, with Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) assuming governance and operations of 290 schools which previously operated under unincorporated structures.

MACS was established to ensure these schools continue the mission of Catholic education to proclaim the Good News while equipping our young people with the education, knowledge, skills and hope to live meaningful lives and enrich the world around them.

Our schools were again asked this year to respond to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. Although asked to implement many measures to keep our staff and students safe, our schools were able to continue delivering a high-quality Catholic education through the resilience and dedication of our principals, school leaders and teachers.

Alongside this important work, we were also able to deliver a new policy suite for schools to ensure our students are safe and which enhance the consistency and transparency of school decision-making, while preserving school autonomy and respecting the local context of our schools.

School Advisory Councils have been established to actively support the principal and embed the life of the local Church in the life of each school. It has been wonderful to see so many parents and members of the wider parish community engaged in these critical forums.

Thank you for the support you have given our schools in 2021. We look forward to continuing to work with you as we strive to provide the young people of the Archdiocese of Melbourne with the best kind of education possible, one that fosters a formation of the whole person that is deeply and enduringly humanising.

Yours sincerely

Jim Miles

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

Our School Vision

St Mary's Parish Primary School Thornbury, as a sign of the presence of God, proclaims Gospel values centred on Jesus Christ as the model for life.

We are a welcoming spirit filled community that views the future with optimism.

By respecting the diversity and uniqueness of each person, we promote the self- worth and connectedness of individuals.

We value shared leadership that creates the structures for a broad, Inclusive and developmental curriculum within a safe, supportive and well-resourced environment.

Together with parents, we strive to provide life-long learners with the strategies and skills that instil confidence, equip them to journey towards their future and positively contribute to a changing world.

School Overview

"Learners Inspired To Learn"

- In 2021, St Mary's School had an enrolment of 213 students.
- The students were organised into 10 class groupings: 1 x prep; 3 x Yr 1/2; 3 x 3/4; 1 x 4/5; and 2 x 5/6.
- The school had 35 staff made up of 11 full time teaching staff (including the Principal and other leaders), 10 part-time teaching staff (5.88 FTE), 1 full time Administration Officer, 1 part time Administration Officer (0.44FTE) and 12 part-time learning support staff (6.59FTE).
- Our staff Leadership roles included 2 Deputy Principals; Learning & Teaching Leader; Learning Diversity Leader; Literacy Leader; Mathematics Leader; Religious Education Leader; Faith Development Leader; Student Wellbeing Leader; ICT Leader.
- Weekly specialist lessons were offered in Performing Arts, Physical Education/Sport, Italian and Visual Arts. We also had a STEM specialist working with children from across the school.
- Our families have a wide selection of excellent Secondary Schools from which to choose to further their children's learning. We are a priority Parish for Santa Maria College, Academy of Mary Immaculate College and Parade College, with children also having access to other Catholic Schools in our region. Local Government Secondary Schools include the highly regarded Thornbury High School, Northcote High School and Preston High School.
- During 2021, St Mary's School underwent our School Review as part of the MACS School Improvement Cycle. This Review highlighted strengths and challenges for our School which informed our School Improvement Plan for 2022 - 2025. We look forward to implementing our 2022 Annual Action Plan as the first year of the School Improvement Plan.
- A significant focus for the school has been to develop ourselves as an 'Evidence Based Learning School'. We plan for learning based on the evidence of what children have demonstrated they already know and can do. Learning is student centred. Children are supported to learn at their point of need.
- We work closely with our Parish to promote Faith and to build links with our broader Parish Community.
- Our historic building houses modern learning spaces.
- ICT is used across the school to enhance learning and engage learners. Children have the opportunity to develop their ICT skills appropriate to their age and ability. Children from Years 3 - 6 have their own chromebooks to enhance their learning.
- Before & After School Care is provided on-site by OSHClub, who also run a holiday program on-site.
- St Mary's is an inclusive community. We warmly welcome all who want to join us.

Principal's Report

Having begun as Principal of St Mary's at the start of 2021, I can take no credit for the wonderful School I have been welcomed into. But I can gratefully share some thoughts about the great things that I have been able to observe taking place in our School in my first year.

Having met with the staff before I met with any students or parents, I couldn't help but be impressed by their dedication to the children, their eagerness to prepare for the term and year ahead, and their willingness to support each other to meet the needs of the children. I was very happy to become a part of this team.

And then the children arrived! I was so happy to be eagerly greeted by the children as they arrived on their first day of term one, and their friendliness continued as I slowly got to know them all. There is something special about the children at St Mary's and it took me a little while to come to the understanding that they were clearly displaying their genuine gratitude, not just to me, but to each other and to all they came into contact with.

And despite the COVID safe measures which impacted on all schools during 2021, I was also very impressed by our Parent Community and their desire to act in the best interests of all the children. Though I have only been at St Mary's for one year as I write this Principal's Report, I really believe the community at St Mary's epitomises the concept of "It takes a village to raise a child".

And as I have learnt more about the school, I am still being impressed by the focus on genuine learning and on the wellbeing of our students. These things are easily seen and heard constantly around the school. We can see the focus on Learning Dispositions and the children are able to articulate the importance of each of the dispositions. The children are able to talk about their learning in such a way that clearly demonstrates they understand how they learn best. The children support each other in their learning and in making good behaviour choices. These things haven't come about by accident. There is an emphasis by the staff on developing these dispositions, these positive, growth mindsets with the children. And our parents are a wonderfully positive support for the children and staff.

I am very happy that I was appointed as Principal of St Mary's and I am very much looking forward to building upon the wonderful things in place here.

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal - To strengthen the identity and mission of the school as a learning community that is authentically Catholic in a contemporary environment.

Intended Outcomes

- That all learners are engaged in learning RE and make connections to life and faith within and beyond the community.
- That staff capacity to design and implement rich RE curriculum that helps learners make sense of life and faith is built.

Achievements

In working towards our intended outcomes we continued to develop an environment that:

- Provided authentic learning opportunities remotely as well as on-site in Religious Education, allowing staff and students to take part in all areas of the Religious Education curriculum
- Enhanced the prayer life of the school community by providing and modelling various forms of prayer
- Enhanced teaching and learning in the Religious Education Curriculum, particularly by linking Religious Education to other curriculum areas
- Further developed the understanding of Social Justice with community members being involved in activities outside our school community

Our 2021 theme for the year was, 'Be', which provided us with a wonderful platform to connect with ourselves, others, our parish and the local community. We celebrated the fact that, at St. Mary's, we are a place where all are welcome. Here, we strived to have all stakeholders be hope-filled agents of change who are outward looking and brave as we work together to make our school community and the world a better place. This is our calling in Jesus' mission to share the light of the world today.

We had very little opportunity to include our parish and the wider world in a physical way due to COVIDSafe measures in place, however, we ensured that school prayer life centred around praying together. Together with our Parish Priest, Fr Shabin, we introduced an online weekly Eucharist Celebration. Our on-site students participated in the Masses and led some of the prayers. It was wonderful to see family members join in each week.

We communicated with our parish and school community to look within ourselves and act with justice to ensure that we were a community that looked after each other. We made every effort to reach out to our community by actively raising funds, giving food and toiletry donations and making connections with other groups who were asking for assistance.

As this year again called all communities to work in new ways to remain connected, we focused, as a small community, on 'Being an agent of change' in the way we treated others, the living world, the wider community and ourselves. As a leadership team, we discussed the importance of having time to just be with each other and focusing on nurturing each other in a variety of ways.

Our newly appointed 'Social Justice Team' had a clear 'lens' of outreach support, to Catholic and secular initiatives, across the year. This team's role was not only to raise money, but it was also about educating all stakeholders about the call to act with justice and humility.

We continued exploring the concept of 'change for the better' in many authentic ways:-

- Religious Education sessions spoke to the heart via a platform when online learning occurred and rich gospel values sessions occurred when we returned to full on-site teaching.
- Sacramental learning occurred across all levels, Prep - grade 6.
- There was a very strong Wellbeing connection and the Religious Education Leader and the Student Wellbeing Leader worked together to ensure that wellbeing and spiritual nurturing were priorities during lockdown and when re-entering normal day-to-day school life.

Our school-based Sacramental Program for the three Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation were all taught across the year and candidates were well prepared for their sacrament. We were able to celebrate all Sacraments, in a variety of formats, in keeping with COVIDSafe measures.

We were able to conduct a Parent formation opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This allowed time for the parents to reflect and talk about the importance of journeying with their child at this time of preparation.

Praying together was a major focus for us and, as a staff, we prayed together with thought and consideration weekly. We also reflected weekly as a leadership team. All parent meetings started with prayer and various methods of entering into prayer have been modelled and used in homerooms. There is evidence that the time and thought being placed on this has made prayer a visible element in our staff room, leadership team and meetings, which has enhanced the classroom prayer experience for our students.

We continued to focus our attention in the area of Religious Education on the integration of faith and life within the curriculum. The Learning and Teaching Leader and Religious Education Leader planned big picture ideas that incorporated the learning outcomes of the 'To Know, Worship and Love' Religious Education Curriculum frameworks and the Victorian Curriculum into the classes by generating units of work. These resources help the staff to develop units that blend 'Life' and 'Faith' experiences authentically, where possible.

We prioritised our professional learning in Religious Education and targeted specific professional learning for teachers on-site.

The learning for staff has been in -:

- creating Learning Intentions and Success Criteria related to the learning in Religious Education, allowing students the opportunity to know how they can be successful.
- using IT skills and new online platforms for learning
- unpacking scripture
- generating interactive google slides.

VALUE ADDED

- Rich dialogue around how to use the new Religious Education Framework and the progression levels in real units of work
- Working closely with classroom teachers to ensure the development of relevant units of work to enhance students' capacity on-line or on-site
- A student Social Justice Team was established, with a staff member to lead it, creating opportunities for fundraising, resourcing and awareness-raising for local and global community charities
- Opportunities to pray together have become the norm
- The writing of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria making Religious Education align with every subject that is taught within the curriculum.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To ensure that students are engaged, empowered and connected to school and the global community.

- That all learning is focused on student growth and success.
- That learning in Literacy and Numeracy is maximised for all students.
- That students are authentically engaged, have a voice and are encouraged to take ownership of their learning.

Achievements

In working towards our intended outcomes we continued to develop strategies that:

- provided authentic learning opportunities, remotely as well as on-site, in all areas of curriculum, with a strong emphasis on out-door opportunities, physical fitness and well-being
- co-created the curriculum that was taught across the school in a remote model
- embedded quality learning for our students across the school by using Learning Intentions, Success Criteria and Learning Dispositions
- enhanced Teaching and Learning by using data to inform the learning
- further developed the concept of collaborative planning with members of the Learning and Teaching Team participating in planning sessions

St. Mary's is committed to aligning all initiatives within the Learning and Teaching Sphere with our philosophy of being an 'Evidence-Based Learning' school. We use solid research to support any new learning. We were able to create level teams of teachers who can plan together, use student data to inform the learning and learn from each other. Teachers worked together with the curriculum leaders to develop norms to guide their practice. They developed consistent documentation of and use of curriculum, this then enabled teams to develop clear, succinct and thorough learning, regardless if it was remote or on-site learning. We re-structured our planning for homeroom teachers during remote learning periods to a day each week to assist them to plan together and support each other in developing online learning for our students. All meetings followed an agenda and notes were recorded.

To support our Evidence-Based Learning we have looked at what high-impact strategies consistently improve the learning and highlighted the gathering of assessment data and how we use it to inform the learning.

We developed a diagnostic process to evaluate our Writing data and approach to the teaching of Writing. We pondered over trends, teacher voice on what our students were doing and thinking around this subject area. We asked students about the subject area and learning, and we prioritised three areas of investigation. These were: purpose, motivation and stamina. As a leadership team, we have developed a 2-year plan. The first step in this was to develop and generate a Writing Rubric to ensure consistency of students' progress. This rubric is used throughout the year to monitor growth across the whole school. The rubric sits firmly within the Victorian Curriculum under the headings of the 6 traits of Writing. We scrutinised many approaches and research around writing and we re-introduced the full process writing approach to address the needs of our learners. We gave more time for student voice by having structures

in place where students were writing for enjoyment and allowing them to control their writing to a published piece. We have seen and heard from students that they place an increased value on writing.

We continued investigating what Essential Mathematics pre-post test data looks like and how we can use it to find gaps, trends and growth. Our aim was to ensure excellence in practice, and teachers developed a shared understanding of what effective teaching and learning assessment look like in their homeroom and in their level (collective efficacy). This allows students to have a voice in their learning by actively setting goals for their next step of learning. In 2021, we began looking at the mathematical proficiencies by using an expert to assist us in understanding what they are and how we can use them explicitly.

To highlight to our students that they can be self-relegated learners, we continued using the language of our Learning Dispositions and setting SMART goals in the homeroom. To ensure that parents shared in this, we trialled term one Student-led conferences, over zoom, and developed a framework to introduce a new level of ownership of students' learning experiences and sharing this learning with their parents. These sessions put the students in charge of the parent-teacher conversations. With assistance, they developed scripts and talked about their learning and the next steps of their learning. We asked for parent feedback and a high percentage of parents were impressed by the articulation of their children. They all said that their child can confidently talk about learning.

Due to another year interrupted by periods of remote learning, ascertaining true assessment of learning was difficult. Therefore, when the students returned to on-site learning in term 4, each child was tested in reading, writing and mathematics. This data will be our benchmark for 2022 to more clearly measure the learning growth of our students.

Our school was one of 4 schools invited to be part of the Victorian Learning Commission program, where a small group of our students was taught how to analyse data and be part of the decision-making process in the area of Learning and Teaching. This was taken very seriously and as a school, we had an application procedure and an interview for student applications. For our first time the response was of a high commitment and standard - we had 28 applications for 8 positions. Due to COVIDSafe measures, the planned interaction with the different schools didn't occur, however, we had one day with Helen Butler, the facilitator, working with us at our school. Even during remote learning periods, the student Learning Commissioners continued to learn and work on their project, with the assistance of the Learning and Teaching Leaders and the two homeroom teachers, to generate 'student voice' to inform the review of our Writing pedagogy. Their input influenced our decision about areas of focus. The student Commissioners generated self-talk questions and learned how to read data, use the Writing Rubric and work alongside staff.

In 2021 a designated Teacher up-skilled St Mary's students in the curriculum domain of Design and Technology, supporting the learning within our inquiry model. Design and Technology is an approach to learning which incorporates Science, Technology, Engineering and Thinking skills. In remote learning we ran several small groups that participated in Catholic Education Melbourne's 'STEM MAD' competition (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - Make A Difference) with one of our teams winning one of the major awards.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

2021 NAPLAN data indicates that our school mean scores were above the State mean scores in Reading (Grade 3 & 5), Writing (Grade 3 & 5), Spelling (Gr 3) and Numeracy (Gr 3 & 5). Our mean scores were slightly below the State mean in Spelling (Gr 5) and Grammar and Punctuation (Gr 3 & 5).

Though our mean scores were generally above the State mean scores, our growth data, tracking the same cohort of children in Grade 3 2019 to Grade 5 2021, indicates that our average growth is not as great as the State average growth over that period.

We continued to make use of the data collected throughout the year to inform the next steps in student learning. Some of the initiatives we undertook as a result include:-

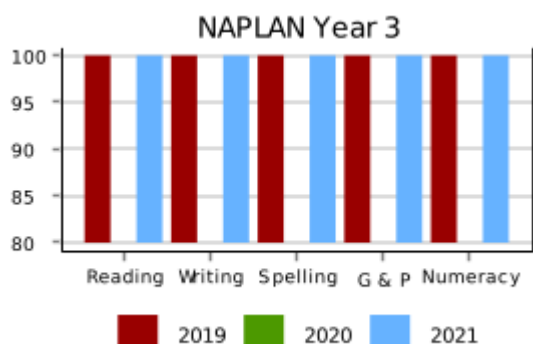
- To ensure that each student at our school had value added to their learning, we use a whole-school assessment and data schedule that is used to constantly monitor student progress.
- When the students were back on site we designed curriculum around explicitly teaching the next step of learning.
- All staff, including LSOs, can complete running records and analyse the evidence. This then gave teachers a quick and accurate record of what the next step of learning would be for their students in Reading.
- Pre-tests have been used to inform our teaching so that we can be more certain of each child's strengths and challenges in learning.
- A focus on students viewing their pre-test and developing SMART goals thus ensuring that they are developing their capacity to be self-regulated learners.
- Post-tests help us to measure learning growth and to evaluate teaching strategies and approaches.
- We have implemented learning sprints in all year levels. A Learning Sprint is a short (3-5 week) intervention focusing on extra support and tuition targeted at particular students with an assessed learning need. Preliminary data suggests that this process will add to the growth we see in all learning focus areas.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Reading	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Spelling	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	83.9	-	-	96.4	-
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Reading	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Spelling	96.8	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The Goal from our School Improvement Plan has been:-

- To improve student engagement and wellbeing through Social and Emotional Learning.

Our Intended Outcomes have been:-

- That students feel safe and connected to the school.
- That students are engaged, have a voice and are empowered through their learning.

Achievements

During 2021, staff were involved in Professional learning about the Zones of Regulation and Student Voice. Consultant, Erin McLindon, provided professional learning in the area of Zones of Regulation and all levels trialled this in 2021, ready to implement across the school in 2022. Using Zones of Regulation as part of Social Emotional Learning has a direct impact on academic success and engagement. At St Mary's we use the capabilities, which are linked to SEL, in our success criteria.

In 2021 Student voice was a focus through the Agile School Leadership program. When collecting data we concluded that not all stakeholders had the same understanding of what Student Voice means. Through professional learning, reading and use of focus groups, we devised a definition of 'Student Voice', 'Self Regulation' and 'Self Regulated Learner' for our school.

Students have voice through leadership roles and teams such as the Student Representative Council, Learning Commissioners, Captain roles and other leadership roles. Student Voice was further enhanced during 2021 by our involvement in the Victorian Learning Commission. In 2021 students had greater input into their learning through goal setting and they contributed to their school community by participating in surveys and focus groups to give input into school matters. Student-led parent conferences replaced our beginning of the year parent-teacher interview. The focus was on students sharing their goals and learning with their parents.

With regard to health & medical procedures - Operoo is the platform for parents/carers to list medical needs. Staff training in First Aid, CPR and Anaphylaxis is all current. Epipens are centrally recorded via the Epiclub portal and the school receives notification when these are due to expire.

A large focus with Student Wellbeing during 2021 was in supporting students, families and staff through remote learning and the transitioning back to school. While in remote learning we had wellbeing days and regular wellbeing sessions to check in with our school community. Social stories were devised and used in the junior school to aid the smooth transition back to the classroom. Extra support was given by leadership to Homeroom teachers with extra adults in each room.

During the periods of remote learning our community rallied to support children and families who had been hardest hit by the lock-down periods and the social, emotional, financial and spiritual toll. We had a number of "online" social events to aid connection to school and Fr Shabin weekly live-streamed Friday Mass from our school hall.

At the end of 2021, for the first time, St Mary's sought to gather data on student wellbeing using ACER testing. We were pleased with our results. One area of concern was safety and in

particular the use of stairs and transitioning between learning spaces. In Term 4 of 2021, we trialled a new way to line up and made clear expectations for use of stairs and movement in the school. This trial period allowed new protocols to be implemented for the start of the 2022 school year.

VALUE ADDED

In Term one, years P-6 began with a unit of work focusing on wellbeing and connectedness to school and community. A large part of this is developing relationships within our Homeroom and ways we belong to the local community & school.

While in remote learning the focus was on keeping our community connected even though we were physically apart. A number of initiatives were implemented to achieve this.

We connected with the larger community by creating messages of Hope along the High Street gate.

Fr Shabin streamed Mass each Friday so that we could pray together.

Our school captains ran assemblies both onsite and remotely throughout the year.

Upon our return from lockdown, the focus was on the wellbeing of students embedded in the curriculum. We continued to run our Prep-Grade 6 buddy program

Our onsite Psychologist was available to our school community throughout the year, either face to face or remotely.

We continued to focus on the importance of nurturing authentic partnerships and engagement with families to enhance social, emotional and cognitive development. Parent partnerships have continued to be enhanced by encouraging parent voice, particularly in relation to conducting Parent Support Group Meetings and the writing of Personalised Learning Plans.

Our Parents and Friends Group maintained a strong presence and initiated many of the actions to support families in need and provide opportunities to gather both onsite and offsite.

For the first time in 2021 we collected Wellbeing Data, through ACER, to gauge the needs of our students.

A new lining up procedure and use of stairs was trialled to ensure students felt safe in these areas.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

From our 2021 MACSSIS Student surveys, the areas of greatest strength indicated by our students include - 'School Belonging', 'Rigorous Expectations', 'Learning Dispositions' and 'School Climate'. The area of greatest challenge is 'Enabling Safety'.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student attendance/absence is recorded twice daily by classroom teachers using the Nforma online platform. This platform maintains a permanent record of student attendances and absences.

Parents are expected to inform the school, via letter, email or phone call, when their child is absent from school.

Parents are contacted via sms by 11.00am if their child is absent from school without explanation. Our Administration staff monitor absences in Nforma and make contact with parents when no explanation has been provided.

During the remote learning periods in 2021, children were recorded as attending 'offsite' unless their parents had informed us that they were unwell or for some other reason had not engaged in their learning. Children attending onsite during these periods were recorded as present at school.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	94.5%
Y02	96.9%
Y03	95.3%
Y04	96.6%
Y05	96.4%
Y06	95.4%
Overall average attendance	95.8%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The goal was to maintain a focus on Child Safety and the steps staff and other adults need to take to ensure the safety of our children.

Achievements

During 2021, staff participated in regular Professional Learning related to the safety and wellbeing of our students. These included:-

- First Aid/CPR updates including Anaphylaxis & Asthma management.
- Mandatory reporting update
- Risk management

We updated our policy and procedures for excursions with an emphasis on risk management with regard to children's safety.

During the remote learning periods, extra steps were taken to monitor safety and promote wellbeing including:-

- Regular well-being checks by staff
- Support for vulnerable and at-risk children to attend on-site
- Reinforcing of protocols when on-line - using learning tools, communication channels and on-line meeting platforms
- The school ran a transition program focused on supporting the well-being of students in returning to on-site learning

The school continued to develop partnerships and sought assistance from outside agencies to support students. Agencies included:-

- Berry Street
- The Brotherhood of Saint Laurence
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- DHS

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The Goals from our School Improvement Plan have been:-

- To continue to foster a professional learning community focused on success and growth in student learning.
- To effectively manage resources focused on improving student outcomes and school improvement plan priorities.

Our Intended Outcomes have been:-

- That quality teaching and curriculum processes will remain a focus to ensure staff are empowered, have ownership and contribute to learning success and growth.
- That staff professional development is ongoing, meaningful and reflects the school improvement plan priority.

Achievements

As 2021 began, St Mary's had a new Principal, Mtr Chris Ray, who joined our staff after 14 years as Principal at Our Lady Help of Christians School in Eltham. The Leadership Team consisted of Chris Ray (Principal), Amanda Gill (Deputy Principal and Learning Diversity Leader), Peta Nobelius (Deputy Principal and Classroom Teacher), and Sharen Maguire (Learning & Teaching and Religious Education Leader)

The Leadership Team continued to strive to promote school life and learning with Christ as its foundation and model. We sought strategic avenues and opportunities that were forward-looking.

We actively promoted our Catholic identity by holding clearly the Christian vision of integrating life and faith in all our dealings. We ensured that educational programs and celebrations were valued, with particular emphasis on these during the periods of remote learning.

We sought ways to respond to social justice and needs in our society, which evolved over the course of 2021 as COVID safe measures impacted in many ways.

We encouraged, supported and promoted a culture in the school that sought evidence to inform action. We sought and critically evaluated new ideas and practices in teaching, learning and assessment. We shared responsibility for monitoring and maintaining a positive school climate of fairness, respect and tolerance. We supported learners of wide-ranging capacities and encouraged the pursuit of excellence.

All staff participated in professional learning and development. We ensured that the directions outlined in the School Improvement Plan and Annual Action Plan were followed, whilst offering opportunities for all staff to be professionally supported and challenged. An important element of our professional learning was to support all staff in implementing a remote learning curriculum and we endeavoured to be responsive to the needs of all staff.

At every leadership meeting our major focus is the ongoing review of our Annual Action Plan to ensure strategies are fully implemented. This has guided our planning meetings and Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings. Regular reviews have been conducted to ensure that outcomes and targets are monitored and addressed.

We have also focused on building student voice through broadening student leadership roles and increasing the profile of the Student Representative Council. School and House Captains continued to be involved in decision-making in many areas in the life of the school. In 2021, our school continued as an active participant in the Victorian Learning Commission with student Commissioners giving strong student voice to our writing curriculum moving forward.

Weekly team planning and level meetings are embedded in our culture and as such provide for accurate planning to meet children's needs, professional learning and reflection on our practice.

PLT meetings occurred in all learning areas. The focus for PLT meetings is based on the evidence we see in student learning so that we can make informed decisions about the next steps in learning.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

The school showed its commitment to the ongoing Professional Learning of staff by providing opportunities for staff to engage in the following learning:-

- Middle Leaders Development with our North Central Cluster group led by Helen Butler.
- Victorian Learning Commission
- GRIN (Numeracy) training
- Development of St Mary's Writing Rubric
- NCCD Modules
- Primary English Teaching Association of Australia Conference
- First Aid Training - CPR, Anaphylaxis management, Asthma management, Injury management
- Developing Self-Regulated Learners
- Leaders participated in the following Catholic Education Melbourne Network Professional Learning programs:- Principal; Deputy Principal; Learning & Teaching; Religious Education; Student Wellbeing; Learning Diversity; Literacy; Maths.

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021	21
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1307

TEACHER SATISFACTION

From the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools - School Improvement Surveys (MACSSIS) conducted in 2021, the most positive responses were in the categories of 'School Climate', 'Collective Efficacy', 'Support for Teams', 'Student Safety' and 'Collaboration in Teams'. The category which least positive responses was 'Feedback'.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	77.4%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	84.2%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	18.2%
Graduate	31.8%
Graduate Certificate	4.5%
Bachelor Degree	81.8%
Advanced Diploma	36.4%
No Qualifications Listed	4.5%

STAFF COMPOSITION

Principal Class (Headcount)	3.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	30.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	21.7
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	16.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	14.9
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The Goal from our School Improvement Plan has been:-

- To strengthen family engagement in the school community.

Our Intended Outcomes have been:-

- That families are actively engaged as learners in the school community and genuine partnership is fostered.
- That there is improved engagement in the life of the Parish School and with the wider community

Achievements

St Mary's is a Catholic school where we endeavour to engage families and the community through a partnerships approach. We have promoted a shared vision and goals by:

- Leaders, staff and families working collaboratively to create and strengthen safe, child-friendly environments for learning
- Actively fostering and sustaining relationships with families to support students to thrive in learning and life
- Promoting the partnership between families and teachers in the children's learning journey
- Nurturing the complementary roles of families, teachers and other significant adults that contribute to the spiritual, emotional, social and cognitive development of the whole child
- Valuing parents and carers and engaging them as co-educators of their children
- Mitigating barriers to disadvantage and engagement (including social, cultural inclusion)

2021 presented challenges and new opportunities for the Community, and the school worked hard to be creative and inclusive during this period. Communication between the school, family and Parish communities was vital in continuing to establish new links and build on connections already in place.

Members of the St Mary's School community were engaged in the children's learning through participation and exposure to a wide range of opportunities which included;

- Parents and Friends re-established after lockdown
- Parent helpers re-established after lockdown
- Online Magic show for families during lockdown
- Cate Campbell online interview after Olympics during lockdown organised by P & F
- Display of positive messages on school fences during lockdown
- P & F 'Paint and Sip'
- P & F social event - Ladies Night
- Year 6 graduation dinner

- Paralympian Sam Bramham - online interview after the Paralympics during lockdown organised by P & F
- P & F Online Trivia Night
- Eucharist Masses
- Year 6 guard of honour
- Emma Carey - Author Visit online
- Wild Explorers - Australian Animals (F-2 Science) Online incursion
- Year 5&6 @ Santa Maria for performance viewing
- Easter Bonnet parade
- District sporting events
- Student Led Conferences
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- School Learning Reports
- Learning Program Support Group meetings
- Class and School Masses Online for families to join
- Sacramental celebrations
- Graduation Mass celebration
- Weekly Online School Assemblies
- Life and Faith Sacramental Formation Sessions for parents and children
- Prep Transition Program
- School Open Days and School Tours
- Class family social opportunities (Offsite and Onsite)
- Weekly Newsletter
- St Mary's Website
- OSHClub Before & After School Care Program
- Operoo — School Communication Platform
- Adjusted student Learning Platforms during remote learning periods

PARENT SATISFACTION

A major focus during 2021 was on maintaining connections between families and school during the remote learning periods and for the broader periods when parents had limited or no physical access to the school facilities.

- See-saw and Google Classroom were used as learning platforms, which allowed for two-way communication.

- The School newsletter consistently reflected changes and building of community capacity.
- School COVID guidelines related to learning and on-site procedures were frequently shared.
- Clear protocols for use of online learning platforms were shared with parents.
- School ICT devices to support remote learning were provided to families who required them.
- A survey was conducted with parents to gather information about remote learning.
- Alternative learning platforms were developed and shared with parents in response to learning needs and concerns raised.
- Much positive feedback was received and shared with the community.
- Wellbeing videos and weekly wellbeing information/challenges were shared - these included items for adults and children.
- School fee relief and adjustments were offered to families in need of such support.

Our Parent Community demonstrated its commitment to the School, to the children's learning and wellbeing, and to those in need.

- Parents made donations of food, vouchers and other items to help those in need. Staff also made many donations to support families in need.
- Social media was used to maintain connections and to open communication. This included supporting families through their businesses.
- Parents ran online sporting group activities for community members.

From the 2021 MACSSIS Family Surveys, the areas of strength highlighted were:-

- The School Climate
- The School's Catholic identity and how this is shared with our community
- How parents viewed the 'School Fit' for their child/ren
- Student Safety

From the 2021 MACSSIS Surveys, the area of most challenge was family engagement with the school.

Future Directions

Having been appointed as Principal from the start of 2021, I was looking forward to the School Improvement Review process which would be conducted during the year. The Review provided an indication of how the School has progressed over the preceding 4 years and provided guidance for decision-making over the next 4 years of the School Improvement Cycle.

I am excited by the wonderful learning and teaching that I see in action at St Mary's with children able to articulate their learning strengths and challenges and participating in goal setting to give voice to their own learning. I am excited every time I go into a classroom or head out onto the playground and see how well our children interact with each other and support each other. I am excited about the opportunities presented by our involvement in the Victorian Learning Commission project and how this empowers students to grow as self regulated learners. I am excited to see how our staff work closely together, making the most of their range of skills and knowledge to plan for the children's learning. And I am grateful that those elements of our School culture are so strongly embedded. I know that we will be able to build on those wonderful strengths as we move forward.

I am looking forward to establishing a School Advisory Council during 2022 to provide greater parent voice in the governance of our school. I am also looking forward to our Parents & Friends Association again becoming the strong community-building body that it had been for many years at St Mary's and I have great confidence that this group will continue to be a wonderful support for the School Community in the years ahead.

Chris Ray