

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE SCHOOL
COMMUNITY



**ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ALTONA**

2019

REGISTERED SCHOOL NUMBER: 1273

Contents

Contact Details	2
Minimum Standards Attestation	2
Our School Vision	3
School Overview	4
Principal's Report	5
Education in Faith	6
Learning & Teaching	9
Student Wellbeing	14
Child Safe Standards	18
Leadership & Management	19
School Community	23

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Kerin Thorneloe, attest that St Mary's School Altona 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 2019 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 School.

9th June, 2020

Our School Vision

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, ALTONA

We are a welcoming and supportive
Catholic Community.

We proclaim the presence of Jesus
Christ
in all people.

We value and celebrate our faith,
diversity, individuality and life-long
learning.

In the Spirit of Mary MacKillop.

School Overview

St Mary's has been an integral feature of the Altona community since the Sisters of St Joseph opened the first school in 1928. We have continued to build on this rich educational foundation grounded in the charism of Mary MacKillop. We proudly proclaim ourselves as a *Caring Catholic Community in Education*.

Our 2019 enrolments saw 281 children organised into 12 class groupings. The majority of our Year 6 children transition to Catholic Secondary Colleges, with most enrolling at Emmanuel College (St Paul's and Notre Dame campuses) and Mount St Joseph's Girl's College.

Our staff comprised 40 members in 2019:- 14 full-time teaching staff, 11 part-time teaching staff, 2 Education Support Staff (Administrative Services), 9 Learning Support Officers, 1 Library Technician and 1 School Services Officer (maintenance). The following specialist programs were offered during 2019:- Physical Education, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and LOTE (Italian).

We proudly value, acknowledge and explicitly promote the school's Catholic heritage and traditions. Displays throughout the school; the respectful manner of all interactions; and social justice in action are key features of St Mary's. Additionally, the welcoming nature of the school, the inclusiveness of its practices, the links to the parish and its commitment to supporting all families are evidence of this.

Our large classrooms are well presented with colourful displays designed to support student learning. The school utilises Digital Technology across all aspects of the curriculum, with students having access to a variety of tools, including Chromebooks from Year 3 and banks of iPads for the junior school. The Technology, Research and Information (TRI) Centre provides students with access to both hard and digital resources to further explore and expand their learning. The expansive playground and equipment provided offers a variety of play experiences and opportunities for all students.

Our pedagogical philosophy hinges on the belief that we are all learners and teachers. To this end, we aim to develop inquiring and reflective minds through learning and teaching approaches which empower our children to be lifelong learners. Experiential and 'hands on' activities underpin the school's approach to immersing and engaging students in their learning.

Our focus on personalised learning aims to differentiate learning, taking into account each child's needs, abilities and interests. This is provide them with every opportunity to realise their potential and grow as strong, contributing members within our school and active citizens in the wider community. Our curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum.

Principal's Report

I am very proud to present this report to the community which highlights the impressive work being undertaken by so many people at St Mary's School. It provides an insight into the school and documents its achievements during 2019.

The school community strives to create an environment of hope, friendship and love, where all feel welcomed and valued. There is an extremely strong and evident sense of community across the school with staff, students and parents working together to foster connections both within and beyond the school gates.

The school farewelled its principal David Kelly at the end of 2019 following 17 years of dedicated leadership. His tireless efforts and contribution in driving and supporting ongoing improvement at the school is much appreciated and valued. David has left a lasting legacy in the sense of community that he fostered. His farewells were a testament to the work, passion and care that he injected into this school community.

In 2019 the school undertook their cyclical School Improvement Review. Aspects of current practice, areas for improvement and evidence that progress is being made were reviewed using the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT). The process resulted in the school receiving a report which provided detailed, evidence-based feedback in relation to the nine domains of the framework for school improvement, along with a set of overall Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations. This report identified that Leadership has a clear and sharp focus for improvement, with initiatives and programs already in place that would support ongoing improvement in student learning and engagement.

In light of the learnings from the Review the school identified that the focus for the next School Improvement Cycle would be:

- Priority 1: Focus on developing the Catholic Identity of St Mary's school;
- Priority 2: More informed use of data to further support meeting the learning needs of each student; and
- Priority 3: Establishment of reflective practice to enhance staff performance.

These overarching priorities will inform professional learning, team meetings and accountability processes and procedures over the next 4 years.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank everyone who has been part of the life of St Mary's in 2019. It is obvious that your interest, enthusiasm, efforts and endeavours are what makes this community such vibrant, welcoming and inclusive environment.

Finally, thank you to all staff, whose efforts often go unrewarded. I know that all families are grateful for your dedicated work and proud of your achievements as you continue to learn and grow in your profession. I commend you for your commitment to enhancing student learning. I also acknowledge your efforts in providing an environment where all are valued, and students are encouraged and challenged to aspire for personal academic success and to become respectful, compassionate, resilient and active members of the community.

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The focus in this sphere in 2019 was to enhance the Catholic identity of the school and develop a deepening awareness of our connections to the Josephites, their charism and the story of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. This would be evident through:

- Students being actively engaged in their RE curriculum;
- An improvement in staff collaboration and confidence in teaching RE; and
- Behaviours of staff and students reflecting the school's Catholic ethos.

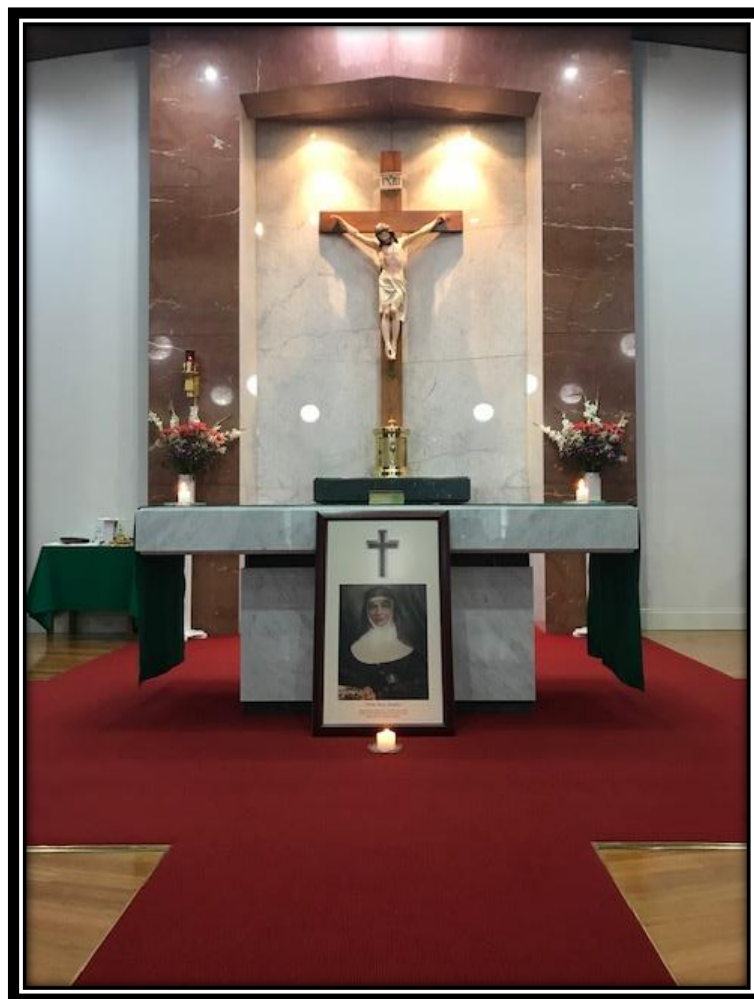
Achievements

The school's Religious Education Curriculum sits within the context of the Education Framework for the Archdiocese of Melbourne, *Horizons of Hope*, and outlines the learning and teaching for students at St Mary's School. The school's Religious Education (RE) program is timetabled with the knowledge, skills and behaviours described in the curriculum taught, assessed and reported on. Additionally, it is integrated into other areas of the curriculum where appropriate.

Features of the school's work in this sphere include:

- The school's Religious Education curriculum is designed so that links can be made between faith and life where possible. This is to address the outcomes of the *Enhancing Catholic School Identity* (ECSI) Report which indicated a slight increase in student preference for Values Education. Our intention when linking faith and life is not to boost values mindset, but to deepen a recontextualisation lens, so that students see their faith in the light of their modern world. In doing so they can be supported in coming to a new and deeper understanding of how to be a Catholic in today's world and identify that faith is still relevant in this modern, scientific society in which we live.
- Teachers were involved in a variety of professional learning opportunities to enhance their capacity to facilitate learning and teaching in RE utilising contemporary pedagogical approaches. These included the Religious Education Leader (REL) being involved in and facilitating planning sessions; staff meetings related to faith / life inquiry; and supporting staff to unpack and engage with scripture to situate these readings in today's context.
- The school's Sacramental program is comprised of a school-based program supported by parent workshop sessions. Involvement of parents in the programs is seen as a key component of the school's approach to ensure parents understanding of, and commitment to, their child's ongoing faith education.
- Staff are supported by the REL in the development and implementation of the Sacramental program and in planning the numerous liturgical celebrations in which the school is involved.
- Children attend weekday and weekend Parish Masses on a regular basis to enhance the connection between school and parish. They are enabled and encouraged to take an active role in these celebrations through presenting readings, being involved in processions and presentations and participation in the school's choir.

- Prayer is an integral component of the daily classroom practice, school assemblies and all meetings. This is done to explicitly promote the Catholic identity of St Mary's School as well as to build an understanding of the liturgical seasons of the Church year and the celebration of significant days and people in our Catholic faith tradition.
- The school endeavours to ensure that Social Justice is linked in with the Religious Education Curriculum. Whilst the school actively supports a variety of agencies (e.g. support for Caritas through Project Compassion, collection of food and goods for the Feast of the Sacred Heart, Christmas hamper donations in support of the St Vincent de Paul Society) staff strive to embed these actions in the context of learning and teaching in RE, not just a values education mindset.
- Staff were also involved in a variety of professional learning initiatives designed to support both personal and professional faith formation. These included staff meetings conducted by the Zone School Advisor – RE, staff attendance at an ACU course on Social Justice Teaching, participation in programs at the MacKillop Heritage Centre and a 2 day whole staff conference.



VALUE ADDED

- Weekly assembly begins with the school prayer
- Families are supported in preparing their children to receive sacraments through evening Parent and Child workshops e.g. Reconciliation and Eucharist (Yr 3) and Confirmation (Yr 6)
- Children are given opportunities to prepare and share prayers at our weekly assemblies
- The community celebrates whole school liturgies for Easter, Christmas and Feast days
- The Prep Transition program is used to make explicit links with our work as a Catholic School and the hopes and dreams of parents for their children
- The school choir is an important component of the major liturgical celebrations
- New prayer and liturgy resources purchased to support the development of the RE Program
- The school has a focus on living the faith not just learning about it. This is evident through the Social Justice stalls that are run by the Grade 5 & 6 students. The students' Inquiry and Religious Education units culminate in them planning, advertising, budgeting and running their stalls over three days. This work is linked into scripture, Caritas and Catholic Social Justice Teaching. Groups of students work together to create products to sell to the school community eg: toasted sandwiches, slime, smoothies. Students are able to purchase items before school and during breaks. All funds raised (usually over \$1,000) are donated to St Vinnies
- Catholic Education Melbourne School Improvement Survey (CEMSIS) data for staff, students and parents indicates over a 50% positive response in relation to the school's Catholic identity, indicating that St Mary's School acknowledges and promotes its Catholic heritage, story and traditions



Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The focus in this sphere in 2019 was to continue to use and analyse data to drive planning and differentiation in teaching and learning. This would be evident through:

- Improvement in teacher knowledge and capacity in use of instructional data leading to improvement in student learning outcomes;
- Development of consistent school-wide practices of data collection, analysis and tracking of growth; and
- Teacher planning and targeted teaching informed by use of student data

Achievements

Teaching and learning practices sit closely aligned with our Vision and are firmly embedded in a curriculum where students are well supported in developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to become independent 21st century learners. Our school-based curriculum, centred on an inquiry approach, has assisted us in creating an engaging and stimulating learning environment where students' individuality and learning styles are acknowledged and catered for. We provide many extracurricular learning experiences to further develop and promote student expertise, independence and interests. We also aim to empower students to make connections between their learning and authentic action.

Features of the school's work in this sphere include:

- The school has provided many opportunities for ongoing professional learning across all areas of the curriculum for all members of staff. The learning related to this was designed to build both capacity and content knowledge of the Victorian Curriculum.
 - Weekly Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings are conducted to enable teachers to engage in professional dialogue about data-informed best practice and have continued to allow for inquiring, modelling and reflecting on effective teaching and learning practices.
 - An ongoing focus on Literacy and Numeracy led to the appointment of staff to Positions of Leadership (POL) in these curriculum areas. The POLs facilitated staff meetings, worked with level teams and individual teachers to embed a whole school understanding and consistent approach to learning and teaching in these curriculum areas.
 - In Literacy, staff professional learning involved building further knowledge and understanding of both guided and shared reading strategies; the use of data walls to support the analysis of student data and inform teaching; a 10 week targeted guided reading program with Senior students to further enhance their capacity; and the purchase of a variety of resources to support the school's program.
- The school also employed a teacher in Terms 3 and 4 of 2019 to conduct learning sprint focus groups across the Middle and Senior grades of the school. The structure of Guided Reading was utilised with the school's Literacy Leaders overseeing the program.

- In Numeracy, an external consultant was engaged to provide student workshops and to engage with staff in the planning of targeted units of work; the school was involved in a CEM research project, *Multiplicative Thinking in the Middle Years*, designed to build the capacity of learners to work flexibly with the concepts, strategies and representations of multiplication and division as they occur in a wider range of contexts. The *Mathematics Probes* was introduced for use as a diagnostic tool, and additional classroom resources were purchased.
- The school's Learning Diversity Leader worked closely with other POLs, classroom teachers, external service providers (such as Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists) and families to ensure that the individual learning needs of students were being addressed. This was particularly focussed on ensuring that appropriate adjustments were being made for students in receipt of National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) funding.
- An external consultant was engaged to support teachers in developing and planning relevant and challenging inquiry units of work based on the school's throughlines. They also developed teachers' understanding of how to incorporate student voice and choice in the Inquiry units. This occurred through school closure days as well as involvement in termly planning sessions.
- Cyber safety continued to be an important component of student learning with Information sessions provided for students, staff and parents. The school's Digital Technologies Leader worked closely with classroom teachers to embed appropriate use of technology across all areas of the curriculum.
- Students in Years 3-6 further developed their use of their school's Google account to access Google Drive and begin to work more in an online space, with pivotal discussions being around the safe and ethical use of online spaces and information. SeeSaw is also used across all year levels for students to prepare and present their work. This platform gives an insight into student learning and increases parents' connection with students learning.
- A Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) night was held in August to engage and support families in developing an understanding of STEM across all aspects of learning.
- An area of the Technology Research and Information (TRI) Centre was converted into a *Maker Space* to support Term 3 Inquiry learning topic *Change and Innovation*. The space was well resourced with equipment for making and constructing, and provided teachers and students with space to create through either an independent or group design process.
- The school successfully applied for a grant to purchase robots with a strong focus of Digital Technology in Art and Performing Arts. Students painted with robots and used block coding to get robots to dance to music.
- Resources, including digital technologies, reference materials, student reading resources and hands-on equipment, were continually updated to assist teachers in planning for and implementing a contemporary curriculum.
- CEMSIS data provides evidence that students overwhelmingly believe that teachers:
 - have high expectations of them;
 - encourage them to do their best; and
 - take time to make sure they understand the required work.

- Staff CEMSIS data denotes that over 70% of teachers believe that:
 - professional learning over the past year has been designed in response to teachers' learning needs and led to improved practice;
 - student work forms the basis of discussions of teaching decisions;
 - specific instructional practices are discussed with level teams; and
 - teaching is modified based on data.
- Family CEMSIS data supports staff and student experience by demonstrating that overwhelming parents are of the opinion that:
 - teachers meet the individual learning needs of students;
 - activities offered at the school match their child's interests; and
 - classroom lessons are motivating.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an assessment for Year 3 and Year 5 students, testing knowledge and skills in Literacy and Numeracy. Data is interrogated to inform two major aspects of the school's program. Firstly, as an overall snapshot of the school's strengths and areas that for future focus. Secondly, an examination of individual student data and evaluation of how this compares with school performance data. Generally, NAPLAN and school based data correlates, but if there is a difference it provides the opportunity for further discernment to occur.

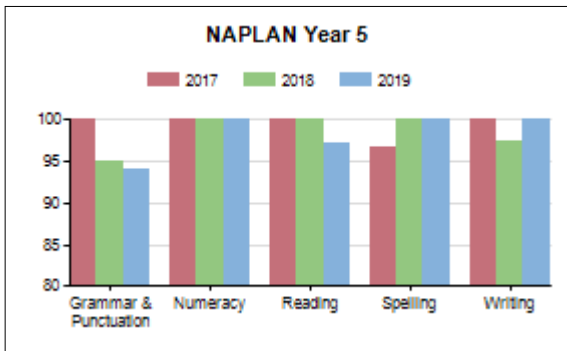
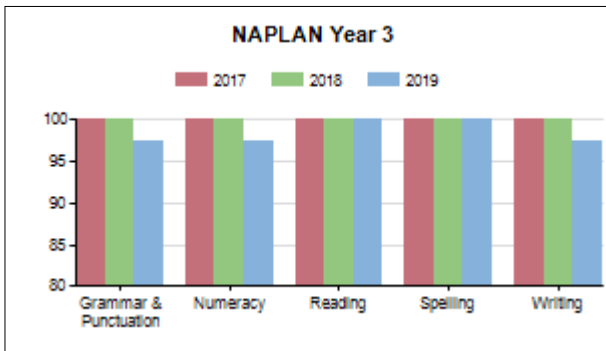
The tables below provide an overview of achievement over the past three years. Year 3 data shows high level of performance in all testing domains with over 97% of students achieving National Minimum Standards. Year 5 results remain strong across all domains despite a slight decline in scores related to Grammar and Punctuation. It should be noted however that over 94% of students were above minimum standard in all areas.

In comparison with the State, students from St Mary's School also perform well. Trend data demonstrates that, for the past three years, students' scores place them at or above the State mean in both Years 3 and 5. Overall, the school's strength is Literacy, with Writing demonstrating the most growth. Data also identifies that the school needs to continue to focus on the use of data to ensure targeted teaching to point of need in Numeracy.

Data available on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) My School website compares St Mary's student performance outcomes to students from a similar background. This is determined by parental occupation and education, Indigeneity and geographic location. The background of students has been shown to have an impact on NAPLAN results. Pleasingly, these results demonstrate that St Mary's students perform close to or above their comparison cohort. This speaks clearly of the success of the learning and teaching programs provided.

2019 student data indicates that Years 3 and 5 students in the top 10% band of the performance outperformed students from across the State in many of the areas tested.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2017 %	2018 %	2017 - 2018 Changes %	2019 %	2018 - 2019 Changes %
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	100.0	0.0	97.4	-2.6
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0	97.4	-2.6
YR 03 Reading	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
YR 03 Spelling	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
YR 03 Writing	100.0	100.0	0.0	97.4	-2.6
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	94.9	-5.1	94.1	-0.8
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
YR 05 Reading	100.0	100.0	0.0	97.1	-2.9
YR 05 Spelling	96.6	100.0	3.4	100.0	0.0
YR 05 Writing	100.0	97.4	-2.6	100.0	2.6



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The focus in this sphere in 2019 was to develop students as self-managing (independent) and collaborative (interdependent) learners who take responsibility for the learning, actions and wellbeing of themselves and others. The school was striving to ensure that:

- Students felt more connected to the school;
- Were more connected to peers; and
- Respectful relationships to be evident across the community.

Achievements

It is our belief at St Mary's that students who are happy, confident and are able to establish meaningful relationships are better placed to achieve positive learning outcomes. Central to our Student Wellbeing program is the importance of nurturing and developing the whole child. This incorporates all aspects of school community life from students' physical, intellectual, moral, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and the development of a safe and supportive environment in which they learn.

Features of the school's work in this sphere include:

- Student Wellbeing continues to be a priority at St Mary's which is reflected in the high quality of relationships evident across our school. The school and classroom environments are secure and friendly, staff and students relate most positively, and families and visitors are warmly welcomed to the school.
- The role of the Student Wellbeing Leader at St Mary's continued to be high priority in 2019, with the emphasis on developing and enhancing school practice. This is reflective of the school's ongoing commitment to identifying and addressing the varied social and emotional needs of the community.
- All students are engaged in weekly Circle Time sessions. The purpose of these has been to build rapport and provide a mutually respectful learning environment, where all are becoming more resilient. Content in Circle Time sessions is based on the Personal and Social Capabilities of the Victorian Curriculum.
- Ensuring that all students are safe and supported, staff members are trained accordingly in Asthma, Epilepsy, Diabetes, Anaphylactic management, Level 2 First Aid Training and Emergency Management Procedures. All staff are trained in processes and procedures for on and off site evacuations.
- The strong relationship culture thrives throughout our school community and continues to provide a positive emotional tone in the workplace evidenced by high levels of school, staff and student morale.
- Staff attended a conference facilitated by Andrea Downie. Through this professional learning opportunity staff developed further understandings related to Positive Education, strengths-based learning and mindfulness.

- Parent participation in a diversity of roles across the school affirms the important role of parents as partners in supporting the learning and development of their children. Building a staff understanding of the importance of increasing the active engagement of parents in their child's learning became a focus in 2019.
- Students have a strong belief that teachers listen to them and understand their needs and provide a stimulating learning environment. These two relational factors lead to greater student engagement and enhanced academic outcomes.
- Another contributor to high student connectedness was the opportunity for authentic student leadership roles. These include School Captains, House Leaders, Social Justice, Wellbeing and Choir Leaders. The school also has a Junior Student Council where students are given a voice and are able to participate in school decisions and give feedback to the school's Leadership Team.
- The school provided many activities designed to support student connectedness, health and wellbeing. These included *Walk / Ride to School days*; *Healthy Breakfast*; weekly, before school *Fun and Fitness* sessions; Year 6 and Prep Buddies' Program; *SAHARA* (a place where students can *Stay and Have a Rest Awhile* if lunchtime breaks become overwhelming for them); *Friendly Meeting Place* area in the playground; lunchtime library activities; and a Mindfulness program, *Peaceful Kids*.
- In 2019 the school provided student access to an onsite psychologist. Support was provided for individual students and their families in addressing mental health and anxiety issues. The psychologist also facilitated staff meetings to enhance staff knowledge and understanding of specific mental health conditions.
- The implementation of Restorative Practices approach to behaviour management at St Mary's continues to impact on building student understanding of ownership of, and responsibility for, their actions in addition to building connectedness across the school population. It informs and underpins the school's approach to behaviour management.
- Wellbeing articles are a regular feature of the school's eNews notifications to parents.

VALUE ADDED

- Student Leaders met with key staff throughout the year to develop personal and school responses to student voice, social justice foci and school improvement
- Three way conversations for reporting student achievement and growth has led to a developing focus on the student leading the conversation.
- Year 5 students are encouraged to build capacity in readiness for Year 6 Student Leader positions. These are determined by a nomination, application, presentation and a formal voting process
- School-based psychological support program available to support students and families during school hours
- Strong involvement in inter-school sport: swimming, athletics, cross-country, Summer and Winter fixtures
- The school provides a variety of out of school hours 'camp / big day out' experiences for students in all year levels. This includes breakfast at school for the Year Preps; an afterschool sport program with dinner and movies for the Year 1/2s; an extended day excursion from 9.00 am to 5.30 pm for the Year 3s; a two night camp for Years 4 & 6; and a 'Big Day Out' for Year 5s which sees students and staff engaging in a full day of activities at local venues and around the city from 9.00 am – 10.00 pm.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Student CEMSIS data indicates that St Mary's is placed at the CEM average in relation to *School engagement, Teacher-student relationships, School belonging, Student safety and Student voice*. Specifically this data provides evidence that:

- students acknowledge that teachers treat them respectfully and want to know how they really feel;
- support is provided from the adults to students in the school; and
- adults are approachable if a child has any concerns.

Family and staff survey data also ranked very positively in all domains related to Student Wellbeing. Family outcomes indicated that students at St Mary's treat each other respectfully and that it is unlikely that they would be bullied at school or online. Families also felt that students can always get help from an adult at school. Staff data places the school above the CEM average in the Student Safety Domain with evidence indicating that student wellbeing is a focus for whole staff discussions and that if there are concerns about a student, these are raised with leadership.

In the school's 2019 Review Report external reviewers commended the school for 'their explicit building of a strong and welcoming community St Mary's Primary School'. They also identified that:

- students, parents and staff all expressed 'a deep connection and sense of belonging';
- genuine, respectful relationships are evident between teachers, students and parents;
- St Mary's Primary School prioritises wellbeing, evidenced in the wrap-around services and programs that supports students social and emotional wellbeing; and
- the buddy program has had considerable impact in ensuring students are welcomed in the school community and that these friendships continue will beyond the formalised program.





STUDENT ATTENDANCE

St Mary's School administration staff contacts parents /guardian about any unexplained absences as soon as practicable on the day of absence. This is done via text message.

Families have continued to be very diligent in informing the school regarding student absenteeism and this very high level of attendance, as detailed in the table below, indicates the importance families place on ensuring children are consistently at school.

Reasons for student absence are documented within attendance rolls and parent notes filed for future reference. Days absent are reported to parents via each child's semester report.

2019 data demonstrates the school's high attendance rate

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	%
Y01	90.7
Y02	90.9
Y03	91.5
Y04	90.6
Y05	92.0
Y06	92.2
Overall average attendance	91.3

Child Safe Standards

Goals and Intended Outcomes

In 2019 our goal was to further our commitment to providing a safe environment for all students by actively implementing processes that establish expectations and accountabilities for people working with our students. Evidence of the achievement of this would be:

- That all students in our community are aware of their rights to feel safe, be safe and that they can speak to trusted adults if they do not feel safe;
- Continued encouragement of students to engage in conversations about welfare and safety; and
- Continue to build a culture of child safety within the school community where every day thinking and practice prioritises the safety and best interests of the children we work with.

Achievements

At St. Mary's School, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from, and inherent in, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

- Staff members have participated in regular professional learning, briefings and training sessions to ensure the school's legislative obligations related to Child Safe Standards are addressed and that the school's Child Safety Strategy remains front of mind. Sessions have included:
 - Online Mandatory Reporting Modules
 - Protect – Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending
 - Revisiting the school's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct
- Information was provided to parents to inform them of the Child Safe Standards. Their obligations and the school's expectations in regards to these were also explained.
- Child Safety Compliance sessions were held for parents who participated in the Classroom Helper Course
- St Mary's School Code of Conduct for staff, parents, Parish Priest and visitors signed annually by all
- A risk management evaluation is undertaken prior to any excursions or incursion. The required documentation is submitted to the principal for approval.
- The whole school participated in the *National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence*; *National Buddy Day*; *Spring into Happiness & Kindness Day*; and the *National Day for Daniel* to promote child safety awareness
- Cyber safety information sessions were facilitated by *Cyber Safety Project* for staff, students and parents. These sessions focussed on building skills for a successful and responsible digital life.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The focus in this sphere in 2019 was to build an organisational climate that promotes and develops collaborative professionalism. To support the achievement of this it was identified that the role of leaders was to:

- Build the capacity of leaders to engage staff in professional dialogue;
- Ensure all staff have a clear sense of direction, purpose and accountability;
- Provide opportunities for staff to work together collaboratively and to support one another's performance and professional development through challenging conversations and respectful feedback; and
- Empower staff to work through the issues/priorities of the school with collaborative professionalism

Achievements

All work within the Leadership and Management sphere at St Mary's is strongly informed by the school's Vision statement, with the explicit purpose of achieving the outcomes as detailed in the school's Annual Action Plan. Opportunities are strategically provided for shared decision making which in turn assists in developing strong relationships based on mutual respect and trust. The Leadership Team works with all members of staff to further enhance the school's climate as a motivating and stimulating learning environment where all are engaged and continue to develop their professional capabilities. Building a collaborative learning culture, with high expectations of all, has been, and remains, an important emphasis for St Mary's School leaders.

Features of the school's work in this sphere include:

- We continue to promote the Catholicity of our school to ensure that our Vision is lived throughout our school community. The learning needs and wellbeing of students remain central to all decisions made.
- Much of the focus of the Leadership and Curriculum Teams work in 2019 was focussed on the gathering and analysis of data, evidence and documentation in relation to both the School Improvement Framework Review and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority audit. Prior to the Review, staff voice was sought through both meetings and online collaboration. Following the review process, leadership and staff used the report provided to discern and develop the next School Improvement Plan. This was developed in light of the *Commendations*, *Affirmations* and *Recommendations* contained in the report. Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) Western Region Office staff assisted with and collaborated in this process.
- The timetable was adjusted to enable the Curriculum Team to meet during school time on a weekly basis. The Leadership Team also meet weekly after school.
- Annual Review Meetings (ARMS) are undertaken and documented to support the development of professional learning goals to encourage individual growth, self-reflection and goal setting, as well as promoting post graduate studies and lifelong learning. Staff members enhance their professional knowledge by attending weekly staff and Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings. At each of these a specific school focus, as identified in the Annual Action Plan, is addressed.

- Over the past year other major foci for the school's leaders were:
 - the development and implementation of an Assessment Schedule to ensure collection of appropriate data to track and monitor appropriate levels of student learning growth;
 - Changing the way in which level planning occurred. This was done to a) support 'big picture' planning for Inquiry units of work; and b) develop a more collaborative approach to planning with student data and shared ownership and responsibility for improving learning outcomes as the focus; and
 - The scheduling and facilitation of parent engagement sessions to ensure that parents were kept informed of the school's current practices to enable them to more fully engage in their child's learning.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

DESCRIPTION OF PL UNDERTAKEN IN 2019

Seven Steps to Writing
 Effectively Teaching Autistic Students / Autism 101
 Graduate Teacher and Mentor PL and network meetings
 Understanding ASD for Graduate Teachers
 Writing Conference that make a difference with Deb Sukarna
 What Makes an Effective Writer workshop
 Building Data Literacy
 Nationally Consistent Collection of Data Briefings
 SMART Spelling
 Coding for Beginners
 Living the Gospel
 Speech Pathology for Schools: LSO Intervention Program
 Exploring Multiplicative Thinking in Years 4 – 6
 Religious Education, Literacy, Numeracy, Learning and Teaching, Digital Technology and Student Wellbeing Leaders' Network meetings
 Mediation for Conflict Resolution
 eSmart
 Child Safety Briefings
 Mary MacKillop Colloquium
 Exploring Microbits
 Highly Accomplished Leading Teacher PL
 Administrative Officers' Summer Forum
 First Aid, CPR and Anaphylaxis Verifiers' Course

NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL in 2019

28

AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL

\$2,570

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Staff responses in CEMSIS indicated that staff at St Mary's feel safe in their roles and should they have concerns, they are addressed in a timely manner. They value the positive interactions they have with the students and encourage similar interactions between the students in their care.

Teacher data related to Staff-Leadership relationships domain demonstrates that school leaders are respectful, supportive when staff face challenges and treat staff fairly. It also indicates that leadership invite input from teachers in discussions about teaching and learning and that overall there is a positive culture in the school.

The School Review Report affirmed the work of the Leadership Team and identified that it was united in its implementation of a narrow and sharp focus for improvement. It recognised that the school has a clear intent to drive a strong agenda around using data to inform school decision making.

The information in the following tables demonstrates staff's commitment to St Mary's School through their high level of attendance and low turnover of staff. Their levels of expertise are also evident through their level of qualifications.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate

90.4%

ALLSTAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate

89.7%



TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	21.1%
Graduate	31.6%
Graduate Certificate	5.3%
Bachelor Degree	68.4%
Advanced Diploma	31.6%
No Qualifications Listed	10.5%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	23
Teaching Staff (FTE)	17.7
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	18
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	10.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1



School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The focus in this sphere in 2019 was to continue to promote our school as a community centre of learning. The expected improvements would be evident through:

- Enhanced partnerships between home, school and community;
- Parents being more fully engaged fully in the learning of their children;
- Improved parent understanding of contemporary learning and teaching, particularly in relation to the integration of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) across the curriculum; and
- Further involvement of students in the broader community.

Achievements

St Mary's School recognises the importance of each and every member of its school community. The ongoing focus on connectedness with families across all aspects of school life continues to be a strength of St Mary's community and remains a high priority. We value the contribution of all community members to the life of the school, and acknowledge how they contribute to the enhancement of student learning and wellbeing. We come together to share our faith, further develop an understanding of learning and celebrate achievements. All of these continue to grow and strengthen our sense of community. We also actively seek opportunities to promote the school in order to further build relationships within our own school community and the wider community.

Features of the school's work in this sphere include:

- We were successful in continuing to promote the school and make connections with the wider community. The focus of our transition program from Kindergarten to Prep ensured that ample opportunity was given for parents to develop an understanding of daily school life at St Mary's before their children started school continued to be an area of high priority. School tours were provided and an Information Evening conducted to provide and insight into the learning and teaching provided and the welcoming culture of the school.
- Our Transition program consists of a number of parts in including visits to kindergartens by school staff, Getting a Good Start (GAGS) sessions for students and their parents and Orientation Days seeing children coming to school in small groups and class groups. All of these are designed to help build familiarity with the school environment and community.
- One of our major school events in 2019 was the Arts Spectacular held in December, where students presented a Christmas musical event and their visual art was on display. This event was an outstanding success due to the hard work of our specialist teachers and our students combined with a great sense of teamwork involving all staff and other members of the School community. Feedback from families demonstrated that the night is valued and should be a regular feature on our school calendar.

- Other community events were held with all families welcome to attend. These included the Welcome BBQ, Prep / Year 6 Buddy night, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day stalls, Grandparents Day and End of the School Year Mass.
- The School Education Board continued to provide advice to the Parish Priest and the Principal in all matters of the school's operation. In 2019 the main focus of the Board's work related to the development of a Parent Code of Conduct as a component of the school's compliance with Child Safety requirements; a revision of the school's Enrolment Policy with an agreement to review it in 2020; and input and discussions related to the design of plans for the school's application for a grant for 12 new learning areas, breakout rooms and associated learning areas.
- The Parents and Friends' group continued their amazing support of the school community through their ongoing support and involvement in a wide range of activities. These included running food and drink stalls at our community events, providing Mothers' and Fathers' Day stalls, organising the mega Easter Egg raffle, Walkathon, School Disco, Bush Dance and lunches for special school events such as Footy Fun Day. This dynamic group raised in excess of \$25,000. These funds will be utilised to purchase additional Literacy and other learning resources for the school. Their endeavours are much appreciated by all.
- Parents are also actively involved in the school's Sacramental preparation program as discussed in the Education in Faith sphere.
- Informative newsletters and additional parent information resources were provided on a weekly basis
- The St Mary's School website was regularly updated and provided families with an insight into both student learning and life at St Mary's. Information related to the school's focus on Child Safety was a constant and prominent feature of the *Home* page. It also included practical information on the variety of activities being undertaken at the school; wellbeing resources for parents; tips and tricks for engaging in fun activities with children; and all general school information and policies that parents may want to access.
- Of particular note were the efforts of our students over this past year in Social Justice activities including fundraising for Caritas and local charities was very commendable. This included our Kits 4 Kids program, an initiative which saw our student leaders work with the student leaders from Emmanuel College to collect stationary items to be sent to schools in Vanuatu and our Year 5/6 Social Justice stalls.



PARENT SATISFACTION

CEMSIS data for families demonstrates St Mary's has a high level of parent satisfaction. Our data indicates that parents are effectively engaged with our school. Parents appreciate the strong academic performance of the school and show high levels of satisfaction about student engagement and achievement.

The School Review Report documents that parents reported a strong sense of community and that families are well connected to the school through regular communication, an active Parents and Friends' and the opportunities provided to meet regularly with teachers about student progress.

The school's strong connections to the Hobsons Bay Council was identified particularly in relation to the students' regular participation in the Junior Council.

Historical attendance records demonstrate that many families have their second generation of children enrolled in the school; evident of the school's long-standing reputation within the Altona community.

