



St Mary's School Altona

2020

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1273

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Sonia Riccardi, 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 2020 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.

09/06/2021

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

Our School Vision

*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 providing them with every opportunity to realise their potential and grow as strong, contributing members within our school and active citizens in the wider community.

Principal's Report

I am honoured to be presenting St Mary's Annual Report to the school community for 2020.

2020 will go down in history as a year like no other.

This year began with Kerin Thornloe stepping in to the Acting Principal role for the first semester. First term started much like any other, with all the excitement and chaos that surrounds the commencement of a new school year, with the added complexities of welcoming a new administrator. Kerin, with her great wisdom and experience, brought stability in a time of uncertainty after the community farewelled its much-loved Principal of 17 years, David Kelly.

Kerin quickly got to know the staff, students, families and climate and got on with the important work of improving student learning.

It wasn't long before our community would be dealing with the dramatic toll that COVID would bring by the end of first term. Students entered their Term 1 holidays a week earlier than expected to allow for teachers to begin making plans to transition to online learning for the commencement of Term 2.

Led by a most competent Learning and Teaching leader in Stefanie Harvey and our Curriculum Team, staff forged ahead in trying their best to prepare for the great unknown that was to be remote learning. Technology was prepared and distributed, along with a multitude of work packs as we tried to work out how to provide the most positive online learning environment we could manage in the limited time we had to prepare.

Our students, as expected, were as resilient as ever and we all did the absolute best we could in the circumstances. Teachers and students adapted as they went, tweaking, refreshing, re-working, even starting from scratch in certain areas, until they managed to find what worked for individuals and groups of students.

No one could predict how long this would last.

Remote Learning looked like it would last for all of Term 2 and it almost did. Students returned to school towards the end of Term 2 when we focussed most on their emotional wellbeing and getting them used to being back on site.

Unfortunately, this did not last long. We received word late in the holidays that we would be going into Remote Learning 2.0 at the commencement of Term 3. I would also be commencing my principalship as we head into another lockdown.

My first day onsite working with staff was spent looking at parent feedback around the first remote learning period. We analysed what parents felt worked well and also what they felt could have been handled better. Staff also looked at their own and each others' remote learning programs to decide what they would keep, change, stop and/or start. The rest of the day and the following day was spent in teams preparing for Remote Learning 2.0. This stage lasted for all of Term 3.

The overwhelming majority of parents noticed the changes made to Remote Learning 2.0 and were grateful that their opinions and feedback had been enacted upon.

It was exciting to receive news that students would be returning to school in Term 4. Preps - 2s commenced in Week 1, followed the remainder of the school in Week 2. Parents were not permitted onsite, but it was obvious that all were relieved to have the children returning to onsite learning. All were impressed with the way the children re-entered the school, saying their goodbyes to parents at the gate. The children proved to be resilient and independent and all teachers commented on how well the children transitioned to being back at school.

By the end of the school year, parents were allowed to return to the school grounds, albeit, at a distance from each other and with a mask. This enabled us to have parents attend the Year 6 graduation ceremony, following strict COVID guidelines, of course, which was a much-welcomed event given that the Year 6s particularly had missed so much.

We were all pleased to end the year on a positive note.

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

At St Mary's, we continuously strive to be a prayerful and active Catholic faith community. We intend to improve the learning outcomes of our students by building teacher's capacity to be reflective of their practice, analyse data, and design curriculum in a contemporary Catholic context.

In 2020, St Mary's began the year having prioritised Religious Education/Catholic Culture in our Annual Action Plan with the overarching goal being: To strengthen the Catholic identity of St Mary's as an active and prayerful, contemporary faith community.

Over this year, it was intended that we would work towards the development of our goal by adhering to the following key improvement strategies:

- Start to strengthen prayer in classrooms and at staff meetings/ gatherings
- Develop a plan for strengthening parish-school connections through prayer, liturgy, and sacraments
- Develop a whole-school approach to teaching Lent and Advent including assessment and moderation.

Achievements

As the reality of 2020 became evident, the degree to which St Mary's could implement intended strategies and build towards our goal of strengthening the Catholic identity of St Mary's as an active and prayerful, contemporary faith community was in many ways compromised.

In the area of strengthening prayer in classrooms and at staff meetings/ gatherings, each class began the year with a focus on developing a sacred space within their room as well as learning, practicing, and embedding prayerful behaviours within the school day. This included each class setting aside a prayer space, allocating a prayer table with religious artifacts, and co-developing a class prayer to be used to begin and/or end each day. At a staff level, prayer was reintroduced to the non-negotiable components of the meetings and was used to begin all staff meetings. The school leaders, beginning with the Religious Education Leader, took on the responsibility of embedding this practice in the first semester and focussed on presenting varied forms and vehicles for prayer in these forums. A staff meeting in March was also dedicated to unpacking different forms of prayer, ways of praying with children, and prayer resources to support the prayer life of staff and students both within and outside the classroom.

When working to develop a plan for strengthening parish-school connections through prayer, liturgy and sacraments, thought was given to revising the Sacramental program. To this end the parish archpriest Michael Kalka worked with our Religious Education Leader to develop a plan for three sacramental journeys within our students' primary school years, these were Reconciliation in Year Three, Eucharist in Year 4 and Confirmation in Year 6. It was planned that within each of these sacramental journeys would be a number of 'lighthouses', opportunities for the students preparing for their Sacrament as well as their families to be involved in the life of the

parish church. Examples of these lighthouses were commitment Masses, presentation of stoles, family faith nights, a MacKillop pilgrimage experience, reciting and receiving the Lord's Prayer at mass. These plans were communicated to parents early in Term 1 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on religious gatherings, no Sacraments were possible in 2020.

At St Mary's we began our development of a whole-school approach to teaching Lent and Advent including assessment and moderation in Term 1 with Lent. We made a school commitment to the focus and exploration of Catholic Social Teachings and the work of Caritas in relation to the three actions we are called to during Lent, prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. Staff and students were given opportunities to explore resources available online and stories of everyday people doing good works as a part of their mission within Caritas. A similar approach was taken in the lead up to Advent with the intention of working on this key improvement strategy, particularly the moderation of work samples, in 2021 when we hoped and expected to be onsite and more able to work collaboratively on this further.

VALUE ADDED

- Classes responsible for readings and prayers at parish Masses
- Staff commissioned at parish Mass T1
- Opening of the school year mass on a Saturday for the first time T1
- Staff meeting on Prayer T1
- Bishop Mark Edwards worked with each year level T1
- REL released from teaching to work with each team for the first two hours of the big picture planning day each term.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

At St Mary's in 2020, we aimed to improve the learning outcomes of our students by building teacher's capacity to analyse data and design curriculum in a contemporary Catholic context. We intended to achieve this by challenging every student to achieve expected growth which is driven by evidence-based teaching practices. Therefore, the focus was to extend on the work of 2019 in building teachers' capacity to engage in collaborative analysis of data so as to design a curriculum that supports and challenges every student to achieve expected growth and standards.

Over 2020, it was intended that we would work towards the development of our focus by outlining the following key improvement strategies:

- The school's curriculum leaders to participate in professional learning about facilitating Professional Learning Communities (PLC's)
- Further the work done in 2019 using data by releasing leaders to attend planning sessions across the term
- Use data for planning purposes, including developing a cycle for 'Learning Sprints'
- Implement Big Write / VCOP as a whole school approach to writing, incorporating elements of existing literacy programs such as The 7 Steps of Writing and Writer's Notebook
- Work with Jeni Wilson to continue to develop the capacity of teachers with regard to Inquiry planning and developing student-centred learning
- Develop and begin to implement a plan for gathering and analysing Wellbeing data.

Achievements

Due to the nature of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on the school year, decisions were made in Term 1 which affected which of the key improvement strategies were able to be realistically worked towards and which were able to be carried forward into the 2021 school year. Specifically relating to the key improvement strategies, broadly the following achievements were made:

- The school's leadership team and curriculum leaders participated in a one-day professional learning opportunity in March related to models of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and ways in which leaders could build up to facilitating these. That afternoon the first statewide lockdown was announced and formal learning moved to self-directed learning. Our Leader of Learning and Teaching was also able to begin the process of facilitating team planning meetings or PLCs by leading the development of team norms and agreements firstly at a staff level and later at a year level team basis in late Term 3 and into Term 4.
- Curriculum leaders were able to begin attending planning sessions across both onsite and online learning environments. In this time, the leaders were able to work with teams to investigate and implement targeted teaching strategies specific to the year level and abilities of their children based on the data presented. Leaders were also able to build teachers' capacity to analyse, generalise and develop teaching foci from a range of school-wide assessment tools such as BAS in literacy and PAT in Mathematics.

- At a school level as well as a team and individual level, there was evidence across all four terms of teachers using data for planning purposes. This included staff working together to develop a model or cycle for 'Learning Sprints'. These learning sprints were used initially as an intervention model in addition to classroom teaching but later in the year became part of the shared language of the teaching staff and a more common practice at a classroom level.
- Staff were introduced to the literacy model/strategy of Big Write / VCOP as a whole school approach to writing. They discussed incorporating elements of existing literacy programs such as The 7 Steps of Writing and Writer's Notebook after a presentation from a staff member from a neighbouring school (Lumen Christi) delivered a presentation at a staff meeting in March. The professional development that we had enrolled to prepare for the implementation of the program into the school was postponed and eventually cancelled. We made the decision to hold over all work on this key improvement strategy to the second half of 2021.
- Our Leader of Learning and Teaching continued to work and liaise with Jeni Wilson in an effort to continue to focus on developing the capacity of teachers with regard to Inquiry planning and developing student-centred learning. The majority of work in this area was done by the Leader of Learning and Teaching at staff meetings and planning sessions in the lead up to and including Big Picture Planning, the whole day planning that each team uses at the end of each term to prepare for Inquiry in particular, in the term ahead.
- When working to develop and begin to implement a plan for gathering and analysing Wellbeing data, we started with gathering data on attendance and student behaviour. Attendance data was collected within nForma as a part of marking the attendance roll and summarised on the midyear and end of year reports. The Curriculum Team worked on developing or refining documents and Google Forms for collecting and storing data on students who have been excited from a learning environment due to behaviour not consistent with school values or expectations as well as students for whom staff were required to run a 'Restorative Conversation'. There was an intention to seek advice on how to analyse these forms of data to inform school-based decision making and individual student wellbeing. There was also a plan to seek outside assistance in identifying and collecting other forms of Wellbeing data which may contribute to the aforementioned goals, this was considered work that could be held off given the interruptions and priorities of a COVID year and so was carried forward into the 2021 Annual Action Plan.

Other achievements that were significant and occurred during the 2020 school year were as follows:

- The school continued to provide as many opportunities for ongoing professional learning across all areas of the curriculum for all members of staff as possible. The learning related to this was designed to build both capacity and content knowledge of the Victorian Curriculum and was led by the in-house curriculum leaders.
- Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings were conducted whenever the school was in an onsite learning mode. This was to enable teachers to continue to engage in professional conversations about data, about best practice in both online and onsite learning environments. These meetings, when possible, also allowed staff to inquire, model and reflect on effective teaching and learning practices. Some examples of this in action occurred during PLTs focussed on using Reading data (BAS testing results) to create and use data walls in February, NAPLAN data analysis and developing familiarity with numeracy progressions in

March, analysing running records for Reading and results of Numeracy testing using the Essential Numeracy digital platform in October and then analysing Literacy and Numeracy data following PAT testing in November.

- In Literacy, staff continued to gather data around reading using BAS, PAT-R and focused reading groups early in 2020. The use of data walls was reviewed and strengthened to support the analysis of student data, measure growth and inform future teaching focus. Once involved in Remote Learning, staff continued to implement targeted reading groups using online support materials and meeting platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom.
- In Numeracy, the Mathematics Leader continued to attend network meetings and Numeracy focussed online learning opportunities and used these to inform staff meetings, PLTs and team planning meetings throughout the year. Resources were audited and purchased on a needs basis and digital resources and subscriptions were invested in. Initial consultation with CEM staff occurred to begin the process of using data more effectively in line with the Annual Action Plan and Literacy school-based initiative. This involved co-developing an outline/plan to move teachers and the school forward with assistance from CEM staff planned into the process, as well as our own Maths and Teaching and Learning leaders. Regular online meetings were scheduled with school staff and CEM Learning Advisors in Mathematics from the Western Region Office to track our progress and plan out how to take the next steps in our Mathematics journey.
- The school's Learning Diversity Leader continued to work closely with other POLs, classroom teachers, external service providers (such as Speech Pathologists, Counsellors and Occupational Therapists) and families to ensure that the individual learning needs of students were being addressed. A staff meeting was allocated in Term 4 to review our Personalised Learning Plan formats and the way we write and assess goals for these students within these documents.
- During Remote Learning, staff continued to cater for the needs of our students on the NCCD. Staff used a proforma provided by CEM specifically designed to record the adjustments made for these students while learning remotely. A staff meeting in March was also dedicated to catering for students with specific needs including working with gender diverse children in a Catholic primary school context.
- We maintained our commitment to Cyber Safety including continuing to work with the Cybersafety Team in March (at a class, staff and parent level) once again. We recognise this to be an important component of student learning particularly with the ever-increasing use of technological devices and access to internet and cloud-based apps and platforms as a part of daily life both within and outside of the classroom. The school's Digital Technologies Leader worked closely with classroom teachers to embed appropriate use of technology across all areas of the curriculum. Being that large sections of the year were shifted to remote learning, this took a larger focus than in previous years. All students from Years P-6 were involved in the use of digital learning resources on a daily basis over this time using predominantly Chromebooks and iPads to access, record and share learning.
- Resources, including these digital technologies, as well as reference materials, student reading resources and hands-on equipment, were continually updated to assist teachers in planning for and implementing a balanced curriculum in a contemporary learning environment.
- Staff engaged in professional and reflective practices including dedicating a staff meeting in July to the sharing of remote learning practices, stories of success, key learnings and an

unpacking of parent feedback data in relation to their child's and family's experiences of remote learning up to that part of the year.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Other than the analysis of 2019 NAPLAN data, student progress was measured and tracked via various school and internet-based assessment practices:

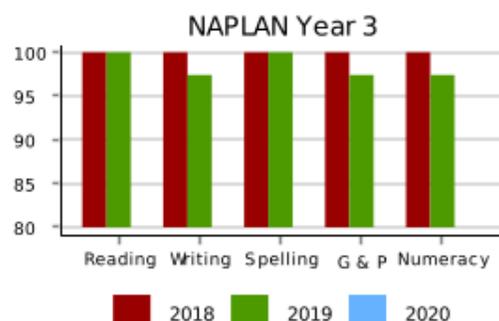
- In Literacy Running Records, Fountas and Pinnell BAS assessments, moderated school-based writing samples, regular spelling tests and summative PAT-R assessments were all used to assess and measure student achievement and measure growth. St Mary's used physical data walls and digital spreadsheets to display and track growth over time in the area of Reading comprehension.
- In Mathematics, and in particular Numeracy, regular assessments prior to the teaching of new units were implemented using Essential Numeracy and the results of these assessments were used to group students according to need, design relevant curriculum and target teach at individual and small group level. Post unit assessments were also implemented again using Essential Numeracy to both gauge the success of the ways in which the unit had been presented as well as track student progress over time. Later in the year, summative PAT-M assessments were used to assess and measure student achievement and measure growth over the previous twelve months.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018	2019	2018 – 2019 Changes	2020	2019 – 2020 Changes
	%	%		%	
				*	*
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	97.4	-2.6		
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	97.4	-2.6		
YR 03 Reading	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 03 Spelling	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 03 Writing	100.0	97.4	-2.6		
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	94.9	94.1	-0.8		
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Reading	100.0	97.1	-2.9		
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Writing	97.4	100.0	2.6		

* 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

Pivotal in the area of Student Wellbeing is always the desire to develop students as self-managing (independent) and collaborative (interdependent) learners who take responsibility for the learning, actions and wellbeing of themselves and others.

Especially important in the year of COVID were our ever-desired goals to ensure that students:

- felt more connected to the school;
- were more connected to peers; and
- respectful relationships across the community were prevalent.

Achievements

In the upside down year of 2020 we faced many firsts and many challenges. We began the year with an acting Principal who would be with us for 6 months. Mid year our new Principal took up her role in leading the school. Although both inspired us with hope for the future of the school, during this time of great change we were also faced with the pandemic and all of the uncertainty that it brought with it.

Our greatest achievement throughout the year was how we as a school community we pulled together to ensure the wellbeing of our students, our families and our staff during these times of great change; changes in leadership, and the COVID lockdowns.

From the get go, while still shell shocked about the news of the first lockdown, our staff embraced the challenges faced and moved into overdrive to provide sound learning opportunities for our students while still caring very much for the social/emotional needs of all community members.

Between Lockdown 1 and 2 we surveyed parents/guardians and students and used the results to adapt our methods of delivery in learning and teaching and also our general procedures. Our challenge then became how to maintain and in some cases, increase engagement in students. We found while some were thriving due to their changed learning environment, others were flagging due to the length of time spent at home in isolation, away from their peers,

In Term 4 our challenge was to re-integrate students and their families into what would be our new normal, if only in the short term, in terms of school life. We began our return to school with a focus on wellbeing, on re-establishing relationships and ways of working and just being together. Although family members were not allowed onsite we found ways to keep them connected with school life. We finished the year with many successes and new found hope for 2021.

VALUE ADDED

- Online class meetings were held at all year levels. Each meeting began with a wellbeing focus and allowed students to connect with each other and with their teachers
- Online friendship group meetings were also arranged in response to feedback which told us that the students were missing just chatting with and seeing their friends
- Regular 1:1 check-ins and support for those students most vulnerable; students with special learning and social/emotional needs attended online sessions with their class teachers and Learning Support Staff assigned to their classes
- Our vibrant and engaging Facebook page served to inform the members of our community about activities undertaken and helped to maintain connections between families. An example of this connection was our 'Community Teepee Building', which saw one family build a teepee as a family activity and then other families add to it and use it once it had been identified on our FB page
- Members of leadership made wellbeing calls to families simply to check in and see how they were going and assist with issues that may have arisen
- Student leaders engaged in online meetings with Leadership to discuss and organise community engagement activities such as National Buddy Day, Spring Into Happiness and Kindness Day and Guess the Staff member and House Team leader competitions to name a few.
- School assemblies were sent to the community via Google Slides, allowing for further community engagement. Students were awarded Principal Awards and Aussie of the Month, class news was advertised and competitions were run through these assembly documents.
- Our School Counsellor, although new to the school in Term 2, began to engage via Zoom with individual students.
- Wellbeing Wednesday was introduced in Term 3 following feedback from parents about students having difficulty completing tasks set by specialist teachers and from staff in relation to planning release. All class teachers were given release time on Wednesdays and specialist staff set tasks for the day and were available for students who had questions regarding the work set in their subject areas. This reduced pressure on families by allowing them to complete specialist subject tasks as a family. It also allowed class teachers time to meet with colleagues as well as giving specialist teachers their planning time. Students and families also reported that Wellbeing Wednesday acted as its name suggested and was a great way to re-energise.
- Students needing to be supervised onsite during lock-downs were well cared for by Learning Support staff, part-time teachers and members of leadership. They engaged in the same learning programs as those learning at home and a few extra activities to help them remain connected
- Seesaw and Google Classroom were the platforms used for student learning and family connections.

- Members of leadership manned each gate before and after school so that connections could be maintained with family members as well as to welcome and support students in their return to school each day.
- Birthday cards and awards were sent to students via post, something the recipients loved.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

While much of our data over the COVID lockdowns was anecdotal, we did survey students and parents/guardians between Lockdown 1 and 2, as well as having many discussions with staff throughout the lockdowns to evaluate our processes.

Parents/guardians were especially pleased with the use of Google Classroom, Zoom and Seesaw as methods of communication. It helped them to feel engaged in their child's learning and connected to the teachers. The Facebook page was also well received as parents were able to see photos of what other families/ friends were doing. Parents/guardians commented that the attitude of the teaching staff was understanding, flexible and accessible and they liked the Seesaw teacher demonstration videos, zoom calls, Seesaw in general, that were teachers accessible by email and the e-assemblies. In answer to the question "How informed and up to date did you feel throughout the remote learning experience?" 90 of 103 respondents rated us between 7 and 10 with an average rating of 8.2, indicating their positivity about their experience and the work that we did.

A great example of how we used student and parent feedback to change things up for our students and maintain engagement is demonstrated in [this video](#) created by our Year 5/6 teaching team for students as we were getting ready to launch into the second Lockdown.

In terms of staff, weekly check ins with individual teams throughout lockdowns meant that when issues arose they could be addressed in a timely manner and processes altered where possible. While life remained challenging for staff throughout COVID, this way of working eased some of the angst.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

St Mary's School teaching staff mark an electronic roll twice per day. Administration staff contacts parents /guardians 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.

During COVID lockdowns, teaching staff monitored and recorded student attendance. They contacted parents and notified members of leadership if students did not attend online learning sessions or hand in work tasks over a number of consecutive days. Members of leadership would also contact parents/guardians if attendance was an issue.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y01	95.4%
Y02	95.1%
Y03	96.2%
Y04	96.8%
Y05	96.5%
Y06	97.1%
Overall average attendance	96.2%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

In 2020 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 regard to these were also explained.
- 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, either face to face or by using online platforms, 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 which became especially important during the COVID lockdowns
- Our Junior School Council reviewed and ratified the Student Version of the Child Safety Code of Conduct

- Student Leaders discussed matters of Child Safety to ensure a safe environment for all students in Junior School Council Meetings

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To establish reflective practices (observation, feedback, mentoring and coaching) to enhance staff performance

Achievements

With major changes in administration this year, much of the planned focus in the Leadership and Management sphere was put on hold. Kerin Thornloe was flagged as a potential mentor to work with Leadership to begin the work around reflective practices, but given what 2020 brought along, this was not pursued.

With a great deal of experience and understanding, Kerin took on the role of formidable Acting Principal with gusto. She quickly identified the important work to be done, building a cohesive leadership team that would drive the necessary changes as outlined both in the Annual Action Plan and beyond.

Starting in Term 3, and in the middle of lockdown and Remote Learning 2.0, I spent some time getting to know the staff, predominantly over Google Meets, with the exception of those who worked onsite supervising the children of essential workers or those considered vulnerable. The Leadership Team met with teams weekly to ensure they were being supported to deliver the most effective teaching in trying circumstances and to offer any assistance with either the curriculum content and/or work through any difficulties with student wellbeing/attendance/learning difficulties.

Positions of Leadership (POLs) were due to be readvertised at the end of 2020, but given the year it had been, I asked the Consultative Committee to consider extending the current POLs for a further 12 months, which the team agreed upon. This would (hopefully) give me a full year to work with the existing Leadership Team before making decisions for the future.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

- This is a range of the Professional Learning activities that staff undertook in 2020. Many of the offerings were online for the majority of the year, thus our small expenditure by comparison with previous years:
 - CEM Networks - Graduate, Education in Faith, Student Wellbeing, Literacy, Numeracy, Learning Diversity, Deputy Principal, Principal
 - Design Principles
 - Seesaw
 - Leading Improvement for Learning
 - Highly Accomplished Leading Teacher Moderation
 - SMART Spelling
 - Child Information Sharing Scheme

- Faith Formation
- School Administrators Forum
- PAT Data Analysis
- CyberSafety

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2020	24
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$290

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Remote learning proved to be very stressful for all school staff. In order to support staff during this difficult time, the Leadership Team met weekly with year level teams, specialist teams and LSO teams. The purpose of these meetings was to check in to see if there were any concerns or worries that could be worked through together. It was also to celebrate any successes that they may have had. A number of staff members voiced their appreciation of these weekly check ins. They felt that they were extremely valuable as the issues raised usually pertained just to that group.

Although challenging to run, our remote staff meetings were also seen as worthwhile as it allowed all staff members to feel connected and up to date with information. Professional development that was run through this medium was viewed with mixed opinion as what we were able to achieve was very limited.

When reviewing our experience of remote learning, some staff commented that they found their teams had 'bonded' during the experience. They would say that they had many laughs during planning sessions and were often on the phone/computer with each other.

Many staff also reported that their technical knowledge had greatly improved during this time. They felt more comfortable and confident using platforms such as Zoom, Google Meets, Google Classroom and Seesaw.

Once we returned to on site learning, all staff received a voucher of a meal to be delivered to their home. It was given in appreciation of all the hard work that staff had done over the past two terms. Staff members were overwhelmed by the generosity of the gift and felt that all their hard work was recognised and valued.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	87.2%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	79.0%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	23.5%
Graduate	23.5%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	76.5%
Advanced Diploma	29.4%
No Qualifications Listed	5.9%

STAFF COMPOSITION

Principal Class (Headcount)	3.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	25.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	21.4
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	16.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	8.8
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Having and maintaining a strong sense of community has always been a major goal of the staff at St Mary's school. In 2019, following our School Review our very first commendation was as follows:

The explicit building of a strong and welcoming community is clearly evident at St Mary's Primary School. Students, parents and staff alike all express a deep connection and sense of belonging. Many families have their second generation of children enrolled in the school; evident of the school's long-standing reputation. (School Improvement Tool Report 2019)

In 2020, our staff worked extremely hard to maintain this sense of community, in a time when face to face interaction was impossible and extra people coming onsite was simply not allowed. This meant that we had to become creative and make use of technology to keep this strong sense of community alive and active.

Achievements

In order to maintain a connected and thriving community we implemented the following:

- Our newsletter was transformed into E News which is available online weekly keeping our families up to date with what is happening at St Mary's
- For the vast majority of the year, our weekly school assemblies which would have normally been held in the school hall were now sent out as a PowerPoint each week. Our student school leaders together with the Deputy Principal and Digital Technology leader would prepare it each week endeavouring to keep all the normal features of the usual assembly. It was reported that both students and parents enjoyed watching this each week
- For all the months that we were in lock down, a card was posted to any student/staff member who was having a birthday. This card was handwritten by a staff member and included personalised birthday wishes. We received a number of emails thanking us for taking the time to do this and reporting how excited their child was to have a card arrive in the post
- We have always had a Support Group for parents who have children with ASD. This group meets once or twice a term. During lockdown we attempted to hold these meetings via ZOOM. They were not always successful as finding a time that suited families who were both learning and often working from home was challenging
- The use of Platforms such as Seesaw allowed students, parents and teachers to stay connected
- Face Book also allowed us to maintain a sense of community. We started a Spoonsville Community (initiated by a student) that created much delight. We also had numerous reports and photos of our community contributing to a 'teepee' that was being built in the local wetlands. These photos were, in fact, included in a banner that spanned our entire front fence with the headline

Keeping our community connections strong -2020

- When we eventually returned to school, parents were not allowed onsite. To help ease the anxiety of both parents and students, the gates were manned by a member of leadership both morning and afternoon. This allowed for conversation to occur. Teachers were also dismissing their students from the same gate each afternoon and were also mindful of having a socially distanced chat when possible
- Of course gatherings for End of Year Mass, Year 6 Graduation and concerts were not able to be held in the same way as previous years. In order to involve families we were able to live stream these events so that as many people as possible could be involved. It was reported that many parents were grateful for the efforts we went to so that their children were still celebrating these milestones and that they were able to participate in some way given the restrictions we were facing

PARENT SATISFACTION

2020 proved to be a challenging year for everyone. COVID-19 impacted us all regardless of where we worked or lived. This is especially true for schools. The move to remote learning impacted students, teachers and parents in a way never seen before.

Parents, whether they were employed in the workforce or involved in home duties, now had to assume an additional role of home teacher for a good majority of 2020.

Following the return to school after our first lockdown, we surveyed parents about this experience. Never envisaging that this feedback would impact and improve remote learning when we were forced back into it later in 2020.

103 families responded to our survey. Generally the feedback was extremely positive.

Parents were grateful for the hardwork and dedication shown by the staff. Parents that needed them appreciated the access they had to Chromebooks and iPads.

A number of parents reported that they and their children valued the ZOOM/Google Meets the students had regularly. They felt that these allowed children to stay connected with the class.

Parents also felt that the online access to teachers was extremely valuable as they were able to discuss concerns/queries they had.

A number of parents commented that they appreciated the phone calls they received from a member of the Leadership Team. The purpose of these calls was to check in with families and to see how they were managing during lockdown and to see if there were any other additional

ways we could support them. If a leader felt that it was warranted, additional phone calls were made.

Parents also felt that the weekly online School Assembly as well as our regularly updated FaceBook page were both valuable ways to keep our community connected during lockdown.

These are some of the FaceBook comments that were made during lockdown.

- Thank you! We are so thankful and grateful to be a part of a wonderful school. Love the schedule J came home with yesterday. You all are fantastic x Stay happy and healthy x - J
- Me too... thanks for teaching my kids during this tricky time! The last few weeks in particular was a big ask and you guys kept things as normal as can be. My kids also learned the importance of hygiene and social distancing at school 🙌🙌🙌 truly thank you - O & L
- Thank you fabulous staff for putting our children before yourselves and continuing to teach while many were self isolating. Your efforts are greatly appreciated x - Z
- Thank you team St Mary's, just another reason our boys love their school so much 🙌 - H & O

Future Directions

St Mary's are committed to exploring how to work more closely with our student learning data in 2021.

We will be exploring more ways to ensure that all students are being sufficiently challenged in their learning. This means looking at data more closely and identifying students requiring extra support to either narrow the gap, if they are falling behind. This will be particularly important after the impact that 2020 would have had on students and their learning and wellbeing. To that end, the school will also increase the time allocation of a speech pathologist and school counsellor for the 2021 school year.

The school will spend time working on our Religious Education, increasing the use of prayer across many school settings and exploring ways of assessing Religious content knowledge. This will involve developing assessment tasks that are able to be moderated to ascertain what students know and therefore, build on their existing knowledge.

We will also begin to work with staff to establish their own individual learning goals for the year, in an effort to highlight the importance of seeing ourselves as learners at any age. These goals will be based on what they identify as a need for their current cohort of students, whilst aligning with the school's own identified priorities. This process will include regular evaluation and will also form part of staff Annual Review Meetings with the principal.