

Community AGM 2016 Principal's Report

Welcome everybody to the 2016 AGM and tonight I will be presenting my third annual report on our wonderful school. Before I get started I would just like to once again thank all of the wonderful people who make St Mary's a great school, the staff, parents, our Parish and of course the wonderful students. I feel truly blessed to be in the position of leading such a fantastic school and community.

I would also like to state my sincere apologies for having to get rid of our lovely courtyard tree. It was a very sad day and a decision I really did not want to make, but unfortunately the tree was very unhealthy and was a major growing concern for the safety of all of our children, staff and parents. In the New Year, together with our parent bodies and the community we will decide what to replace the area with, I am open to any great ideas.

In tonight's report I will be highlighting a selection of areas that I consider vital to our ongoing improvement and growth in accordance to the Catholic Education Strategic Direction which catch phrase is LEAD – Learning, Engagement, Accountability and Discipleship. I will be highlighting a wide range of items which we should celebrate and will be outlining the school's direction into the future.

LEARNING

When it comes to learning St Mary's is committed to enhancing student achievement and wellbeing. The staff are dedicated to using best practise in their teaching and are constantly learning and developing the Science and Art of the teaching profession. As a whole staff we have further developed our understanding and implementation of explicit teaching of Reading Comprehension Strategies, conducting balanced Numeracy and Literacy lessons and further developed skills in the art of tracking and analysing student data.

By continually learning and becoming better teachers we continue to strive to achieve better educational outcomes for our students. In addition to this whole school focus

teachers have also further reviewed their own individual practises using the ATSL National Teaching Standards and attended several Professional Learning days to further their competencies.

When reviewing the data the staff identify and celebrate the wonderful things that are occurring in our school. We also set goals for the areas of improvement. Under the Learning umbrella this year our goals were focused on improving the Reading Comprehension Levels of our students and also the Number Concepts in Mathematics.

In order to achieve these goals several initiatives were introduced:

1. Firstly we continued with the Reading Recovery program. Mrs Riethmuller has run this program extremely well again this year and has achieved some excellent results. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation of Mrs Riethmuller's commitment and determination to see this program succeed. The Year 1 students who were selected, based on data, made exceptional progress in reading and writing. In some cases coming into the program at Reading Recovery Level 0 and exiting at Level 16, which is a huge achievement. I am proud to say that this program will continue in 2017 and many more students will benefit from Mrs Riethmuller's tutelage.
2. We also introduced the Macqlit Program to students in Years 2-6. This program is a well-researched initiative from Macquarie University and teaches children how to read and spell words using appropriate strategies and filling the gaps in children's learning. I would like to thank Mrs Cooper for setting up and running this program in 2016. The results from this program have also been extremely pleasing with some students catching up to their peers and exiting the program. This program will also be continuing in 2017.
3. Mathematics support was also provided by myself to support students in Years 3-6 with basic facts and strategies used in mental mathematics, which Dr Paul Swan has promoted. This has seen a boost in confidence with these students who worked hard and their Mathematics Standardised Testing improved at least one stanine from the start of the year.

4. Other initiatives that continued in 2016 were the IT programs such as Mathletics, Readings Eggs and the Lexile Program. These programs have had very positive feedback from parents, students and staff. These programs continue to increase student motivation and engagement and make it easier for staff to track student progress. In 2017 Kindy to Year 1 students will take on Maths Seeds which is an early years IT program more suited to this level.

Considering all of these initiatives I would now like to comment on some of the data and improvements:

Reading Comprehension Levels

When it comes to reading levels we have achieved sound results across the school and continue to make improvements. At the beginning of 2016 the staff set year level reading targets and set a whole school goal which was that 70% of all students from PP-Year 6 will achieve Proficient or highly proficient against the targets. Although Term 4 results have not been finalised yet we are happy to announce that at the end of Term 3 we had 72% of all students achieving a proficient or highly proficient results which is a cause for celebration. I think we can safely assume that these results will further increase when the Term 4 results are collated.

Mathematics

In Mathematics the staff again set year level mathematics goals in the area of Number and basic numeracy skills. We used the MTS Online Summative Test which is an end of year test for each year level. The whole school goal was that 55% of all students from PP-Year 6 will achieve Proficient or highly proficient against the targets. The Term 3 results again have been very pleasing to see and our achievement so far is that 62% of all students have achieved proficient or highly proficient in this Mathematics strand.

NAPLAN

Our NAPLAN 2016 results were sound in all areas and as a school we achieved great results in Grammar and Punctuation. There has also been a marked improvement at the Year 3 level compared to previous years in Mathematics, Spelling and Writing. In all other areas we achieved average results in relation to similar schools across the nation. In viewing the NAPLAN results we have a need to continue to focus on

Reading Comprehension and in particular questions which require the children to infer meanings.

Taking into account all this data and professional discussions with staff, St Mary's will continue to have a focus on Reading Comprehension and Mathematics in 2017.

In 2016 we also introduced the Protective Behaviours Program, led by our Health Specialist Mrs Millington. This program seeks to prevent child abuse by providing greater awareness and understanding, as well as providing tools and strategies for individuals, organisations, families and communities to address and deal with these issues. A big thank you to Mrs Millington for launching this program and thank you to the many parents who attended our information evening in Term 2. Together we can work collectively to continue to keep all our children safe and protected.

In 2016 we also saw the introduction of our new classroom which was set up with a one-to-one IT program as well as new furniture allowing for improved flexible learning to take place. This initiative has seen the students highly engaged with the curriculum and improving 21st Century skills such as collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. In 2017 St Mary's will continue to improve our teaching pedagogy by further integrating IT into the curriculum and further promote 21st century skills. To make this easier for teachers we will have a one to one IT program from Years 3-6.

ENGAGEMENT

In 2016 one of the main goals for St Mary's staff was to engage families more in the learning process and keep them up to date with their child's learning. To do this all classroom teachers committed to having a technological link with parents and the wider community.

We believe the staff have achieved this goal through sharing many learning experiences on a regular basis through the use of the Seesaw App. Feedback from parents and staff have been glowing about how the school uses this application to keep parents involved in the learning process.

The school website has also been maintained and updated effectively to provide parents and the wider community with the latest news and developments of our wonderful school. The school also introduced a Twitter feed which also updates to our website for parents to be immediately updated with the latest news and events.

I would also like to thank the work the P&F has completed in helping the school achieve this goal by researching and establishing the P&F Facebook Page this year.

St Mary's has also continued to establish partnerships with the wider community. Some examples of this is Two Dogs continuing to support the Kindy Vege Patch and the Waste Wise Program, Collgar Windfarm supporting the installation of new outdoor blinds to the Year 4 class and also Evolution Mining who have supported the purchase of our new Chicken Coop in the Kindy area. We continue to also have a strong relationship with Cummins Theatre who provide expertise in the Arts Learning area and provide real life experiences for our students. I would like to thank all of these business for their generous donations throughout the year.

Further to building wider partnerships we also continued to achieve our aim of promoting and encouraging parents to be involved in their child's learning and to continue to build community. St Mary's in collaboration with the School Board, P&F and St Mary's Parish organised many activities this year such as:

- Parent Information Evening
- Parent interviews
- Numerous Sacramental parent information nights
- Sacramental Commitment Masses
- Mother's Day morning tea and Father's Day breakfast
- Open Day and morning tea
- Grandparents morning tea
- Numerous sporting events throughout the year
- We are also looking forward to our End of Year Concert.

I would also like to thank our wonderful P&F association, under the leadership of their President Craig Lane. They have done a tremendous job in raising funds for our school, to date a total nearing \$20,000 has been raised, if the last action is supported tonight, which is a wonderful achievement. The P&F have also thought of the future direction of the association and I am sure this will be further expanded upon in Craig's address later tonight. I sincerely thank all the parents who have attended our P&F meetings this year and also to the parents who continually assist in giving their time and making decisions for the betterment of our students and our school, it is greatly appreciated and I would encourage further parents to become involved.

I would also like to thank Kat White and Estelle Madaffri for taking on the role of coordinating the Canteen as well as Erica Carlson for tirelessly ensuring the rosters and helpers needed were available. Thank you to all parents who worked in the Tuckshop this year or provided delicious food for our students. A big thank you also goes to Jasmine Holmes and her helpers who ensure our uniform shop runs smoothly and is well stocked throughout the year. Thank you also to our wonderful school banking volunteers, especially Daina Sutherland and Erica Carlson. Ladies your efforts this year have been greatly appreciated by myself and the wider community.

ACCOUNTABILITY

This area focuses on the belief that our school has a personal and collective responsibility for our system's success. To improve our system we, as a school, need to maintain a physical environment that is safe, welcoming and comfortable for all community members, especially the students.

I would like to publically acknowledge and thank the wonderful work that our school cleaners Anjoeen and Richelle have done this year ensuring our facilities are kept neat, clean and tidy. Thanks also to LB's Garden and Handyman Services for their installation of all the reticulation and maintaining our grounds for 2016, they continue to look fantastic.

To the staff

The staff continue to demonstrate great commitment in their roles this year and all are focused on providing opportunities for our students to help them reach their full potential. I would like to especially thank all of our new teachers Miss Main, Miss Prowse, Mrs McDonald and Mrs Morris – they have done a tremendous job this year and settled well into the St Mary's Community – I think we have some of the best graduate teachers in the state, supported of course by the wonderful experienced teachers beside them. Thank you also goes to our wonderful new support staff, Mrs Withers, Mrs Sangalli and Mrs Tomljanovich – you have all worked tirelessly in supporting the teachers and our students. Having a staff that work hard, support each other and laugh together is one to cherish and I am very lucky to lead such a great bunch of people.

Often what makes the difference in students' progress and performance is the relationship that the students have with their teachers and how much they feel they belong at school. At St Mary's every child is valued and all staff go out of their way to create classrooms and environments that are welcoming, safe and comforting for your children whilst also providing many challenging and stimulating learning experiences. Thank you to the staff for your continuous and great commitment throughout the year.

I would like to also take this opportunity to acknowledge our very professional and dedicated School Board who meet twice a term to ensure that the financial health of our school equals the achievements of our students. The board at all times focuses on what are the best outcomes for our school and in particular how we can best provide a facility that serves the needs and developments of the children in our community.

I have enjoyed working together with both the School Board and P&F this year and I especially like to thank Tracey, Alison and Craig for their dedication in leading these parent bodies and meeting with me on numerous occasions throughout the year. I would also like to thank both secretaries, Daina and Kate, they always get the minutes and agendas out on time and ensure I keep organised. Thank you also to Mugove and Emma who both do a fantastic job as Treasurers and ensure the money is all

accounted for and the school budgets are kept on track. Unfortunately we have a number of parents leaving their positions on the Board this year – to Tracey, Alison and Kate, thank you so much for everything you have done for our school while you have been on the School Board, your time, effort, support and thoughts have been greatly appreciated and you will be missed greatly. I look forward to working with some new faces in 2017.

DISCIPLESHIP

Under Discipleship we are called to enhance opportunities for our community to experience personal faith development. We have achieved this in 2016 by continuing to teach the mandatory Religious Education units of work in addition to ensuring the students were involved in many activities of Catechesis such as Re-enactments for Holy Week, Liturgies, School and weekend Masses, Prayer, Altar Serving and Christian Service.

Faith experience and educational excellence are central to our school's vision but also balanced by the opportunity to grow as a whole person and to become a lifelong learner. This year children have celebrated the Sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharist and Confirmation and participated in school retreats and class or school liturgies for which we thank Father Zyga, and Sister Leonie. Additionally the children and families have been involved in the weekend Mass readings, parent information evenings and a number of other faith development opportunities this year. I would also like to further thank Father Zyga who meets with students at least once per term to strengthen our relationship with the parish but also to get to know the students on a personal level and assist them with their Religious Education and faith journey.

Staff development and faith formation has continued to be a focus of our school life. In 2016 the staff participated in a day with Sister Margaret Scharf titled 'The Call to be Mercy in the Year of Mercy'. During this day we learnt about what the Year of Mercy is all about, how the spirit of mercy is at work in us and how we can share the spirit of mercy within our school. Staff also had time to reflect on their own faith journey and further develop their relationships with their colleagues.

It is also vitally important as Disciples of Christ that we ensure our students understand and demonstrate their commitment and involvement in community and social justice activities. Our goal this year was for the students and school to participate in social justice issues across the year and make the issues relevant to all of them. A big thank you to Mrs Hirt for organising many of these events and fundraisers with the help of her wonderful RE Ministry.

We have demonstrated our commitment to Social Justice in 2016 through:

- Project Compassion
- Life Link Day
- Staff Christian service
- Annual food drive for Merredin's Churches Fraternal
- Catholic Missions Project (Socktober) – raising money for the Catholic Missions in Cambodia

In addition to these events St Mary's also supported and provided awareness of other worthy causes for our local community such as Cystic Fibrosis, Diabetes and Give Me 5 for Kids. I would like to thank our wonderful community for their generosity and support of all these events throughout the year.

Further Thank yous

I would like to thank Father Zyga, Pauline, Zoe, Leah and Bianca for their continual support within the leadership team and leading in their areas of the school – your advice, support and assistance have been an enormous strength for the school and for this I thank you all.

Thank you also to all the parents and Parish members who have contributed in any way to the continual improvement of our school and the betterment of our children.

As my report draws to an end I would like to acknowledge the work and dedication of the school's administrative staff, Teresa, Cindy and Lorraine. Each and every day they ensure the school runs smoothly, that I am organised and each child is accounted for in every classroom. Thank you very much for your support and service to the school this year.

I would like to also thank those staff who will be unfortunately leaving St Mary's at the conclusion of 2016.

Cindy Sangalli – thank you for taking on the Administration Officer's role while Teresa went on her well-deserved holidays and also for working in the Year 3 classroom for half of the year, your work is very much appreciated.

Gail Rose – what can I say I am a lucky man but also the school has been very lucky to have such an experienced teacher willing to work half days on a Friday afternoon all year. Thank you Gail for being a wonderful teacher and supporting the learning in the Year 4 class.

Leah Hirt – wow what a wonderful asset you have been for our school, not only writing our beautiful school song but also that wonderful voice and guitar playing is sorely going to be missed at school and the Church. Thank you for your amazing job over the last two years, you have been a fabulous teacher and willing to take on new challenges and set up our new classroom. We wish you and your husband every success as you return home to Victoria. You will be sorely missed by the entire St Mary's Community and Parish.

Teresa Cutri – I really don't know where to start. Teresa you have been a part of St Mary's staff for 21 years but your time and involvement here has been much longer than that. I would like to thank you for everything you have done for our school over the years. You have worked hard in the front office for several principals and your wealth of knowledge about the community and families will be greatly missed. Thank you for keeping me organised as well as the staff. You have been the ultimate role model for the Church and staff at St Mary's providing much needed knowledge and experience about everything that is Catholic. You will be sorely missed by all staff, parents, and students. We wish you all the best on a relaxing and fulfilling retirement. We look forward to seeing you around the school as you endeavour to lead and organise the 90th anniversary celebrations – I can't think of anyone else who would be more perfect for the role. Thank you again for the fantastic service you have provided St Mary's School and wider community. You will be sorely missed by all.

A final big thank you of course goes to our wonderful students. I would like to thank them for trying their best to reach their full potential, being children who are amazing, thoughtful, love coming to school and putting a smile on everyone's faces every day and continuing to do ordinary things extraordinarily well. Thank you.

I would now like to announce the staffing for 2017.

HASS & Science:	Mrs McCormack	History / Geography P-6 Civics & Citizenship 3-6 Economics & business 5-6
Health:	Mrs Millington	
PE & Performing Arts:	Mrs Criddle	
REC:	Mrs O'Malley	
Macqlit Program:	Mrs Cooper	
SWD Coordinator:	Mrs Millington	
Admin Officers:	Mrs Ryan & TBA	
Library & IT:	Mrs Discenza	
AP:	Mrs Riethmuller	
Pre-Kindy:	Mrs Millington & Mrs Jefferys	
Kindy:	Mrs Grant, Mrs Jefferys & Mrs Tomljanovich	
PP:	Mrs Morris, Mrs Lane & Mrs Discenza	
Year 1:	Mrs Craine	
Year 2:	Miss Prowse & Mrs Withers	
Year 3:	Miss Main (new classroom)	
Year 4:	Miss Walsh	
Year 5:	Mrs McDonald	
Year 6:	Mrs Smith	

I thank you and wish you a very safe and holy Christmas.