

Principal's Report



2016 AGM Principal's Report

For the last few years our system has been reviewing initiatives and progress against an acronym of LEAD.

LEAD standards for

Learning –

is what we do. We are committed to learning at every level.

Engagement –

is essential. We are committed to Catholic Education's mission through positive relationships with all.

Accountability –

is not optional. We have personal and collective responsibility for our systems' success

Discipleship –

is our calling. We are committed to deepening our relationship with Jesus.

My report this year and moving forward will reflect on the year the **LEAD** lens.

This year the major project undertaken by the School Leadership Team, with advice from the School Board, was the development of a School Strategic Plan which when finalized will establish our School's direction and priorities for the next three years. The Strategic Plan will be published on our school website during the Christmas holidays after final processing.

Our School's Strategic Plan aligns with the LEAD lens under the areas of focus on display behind me.

Learning

Education

This year Saint Maria Goretti's Catholic School has continued to focus on improving the educational programme we offer to our students.

Our Literacy focus has progressed with work continuing on programmes such as Words Their Way and Letters and Sounds to improve phonemic awareness and spelling, with results showing continued improvement.

Our Comprehension programme has continued with the focus this year aimed at our Big Write programme which has engaged students in the writing process to improve how students approach and structure writing tasks. The work that has been produced has been pleasing.

Literacy Pro which was introduced in 2015 has continued to be used for students in middle to upper primary or where required, to meet developing and improved reading abilities, range and comprehension.

Our Third Wave Programme has continued to support children to achieve improved understanding in support of classroom teaching. The success of the programme is noted in the data which shows a reduced number of children in the Stanine 1 and 2. Teacher assistants have worked closely with students to also improve results. Regular assessment and recording and monitoring of data has assisted with future planning. Teachers are continuing to look at student growth and effect sizes.

The improved support structures in the Third Wave program and improved learning environment in the classrooms with the support of the Reading Recovery program have led to a marked improvement in learning outcomes which will continue to improve into the future.

Visible Learning – is a deliberate attempt to make the learning Intentions and the Success or assessment criteria explicit - has been a focus this year with students focusing on success criteria when they are working on tasks. The aim being for the students to improve the quality of the work produced and focus on continuing this improvement. You may know this as the 3 Stars Chart.

The success of the educational focus is seen in the results achieved in NAPLAN. At Year 3 we have achieved national standard in all but one area – a significant improvement on recent years and where we are aiming to be long term. Year 5 results showed a modest improvement but will be above national within two years.

At the start of this year we reintroduced the school Visual Arts Programme. This programme engaged, inspired and enriched all students, exciting their imagination and encouraging them to reach their creative and expressive potential. Over the year, the students developed knowledge and skills to plan, produce, present and design artwork independently and collaboratively. Students worked from an idea, an intention, an imaginative impulse or a particular artist. As students created artwork they actively responded to their developing work and the works of others using visual arts language.

Some of the highlights of the year included the Artist in Residence who worked with the Year 6 students to create abstract acrylic paintings. They explored how to create texture and depth in a painting. The Art Exhibition on Open Day was a great success and the students were thrilled with the chance to show their parents their beautiful artwork. The Year 4 students received rave reviews for their vibrant Anya Brock animal paintings along with the Year 3 Dr Seuss sculptures and the Year 1 Dale Chihuly hanging installation. We received positive feedback from the parents, who commented on the high quality of artwork that was produced by the students.

Thanks to Miss Monique Ford who as the art teacher has completely re-structured the Art program and should be very proud of her achievements. The positive feedback from the Art Exhibition which was held as part of the 60th Anniversary celebrations was overwhelming.

The music program at St Maria Goretti's Catholic School is now in its fourth year. There is a whole school focus on singing, and a number of good results are very evident. Many students have shown improved scores in their singing assessments, and a culture of singing well has been established within the school. Upper primary boys now consider it normal to sing in front of their peers.

In Term Three the Year Five class choir sang at the Vasto Club in Balcatta as part of the Catholic Performing Arts Festival. They conducted themselves gracefully and respectfully throughout the morning excursion, and gave an excellent performance. The choir received an Honourable Mention which is the highest award possible, and the adjudicator commented on their lovely tone production and "sweet and effortless" singing.

Whole school hymn singing, held weekly, is a celebration of our Catholic identity as well as music education. Students have learnt to sing the Our Father, or “Maman Gnala” in Nyoongar, the local Aboriginal language. Several students have proudly identified as aboriginal and volunteered to help lead the singing with clapping sticks. This has been incorporated into whole school masses, such as this morning, which was a moving experience of faith and unity.

Miss Mercer will leave us at the end of this year to pursue her passion to support Aboriginal children and will leave a huge hole in our school’s learning environment. You should be incredibly proud of what you have achieved during our time in our school and we appreciate what you have done for our children.

This year the sports program has focused on teaching the children physical education to promote healthy active living. On Friday’s two classes combine to have 1 whole hour of sport together. This change gave the students a better opportunity to have more game time and better preparation for sports carnivals.

this year was the second year of 40-minute swimming lessons over two weeks and our second Swimming Carnival. The swimming carnival is a great event that gives the students an opportunity to apply the skills they have learnt in swimming lessons. Each year the students keep getting better and better. The swim teachers gave our staff extremely positive feedback about the students’ improvement.

Later in term 1, students in year 6 and some from year 5 participated in the annual WACA Cricket Carnival. Students participated in a sportsmanlike manner and gave their best efforts in all of the games. Our boys team finished in fifth place and our girls took out the district trophy.

In the overall trophy where points are combined from the boys and the girls, Saint Maria Goretti’s Catholic School won the shield.

Congratulations must go to all the students that took part as winning the shield is a tremendous achievement.

Early in term 2 we hosted our recently introduced annual Cross Country Carnival. Students ran in trying conditions as the weather couldn’t decide if it wanted to be sunny or raining. They gave of their best efforts in their races and cheering for the other children. The results from this carnival lead to the selection of the team for the Interschool cross country carnival at Good Shepherd Kelmscott. Saint Maria Goretti’s Catholic School had great results with many children in the top 10 and we took home 4 medals.

Late in Term 2 our Year 5 & 6 students competed in the Winter Sports Carnival. Big congratulations to the Year 5 Netball team for winning their grand final and taking home the shield.

Term 3 was the term for Athletics! After a fantastic School Carnival, the selected students trained very hard and gave of their absolute best. The children excelled in the team events – for the first time in many years we won the overall carnival!

Overall, 2016 has been a tremendous year for the sport program. We took home 3 shields, which is more than any other school in our sporting region – Congratulations to Miss McCagh and her legion of helpers.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) - Little Scientist.

This year Miss Pavicic in Kindergarten was part of a pilot project for the Catholic Education Office which aims to facilitate children's curiosity for **science, technology, engineering and mathematics** through age-appropriate, fun and playful experiments already in their early years.

The program sparks teachers' and educators' interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and encourages them to implement the ideas and concepts from the workshops while exploring together with the children in their care.

The feedback from the Pilot leader was very enthusiastic for the progress made and much credit goes to Lee-Ann for this initiative.

2017

Our goals for 2017 are contained within the soon to be published Strategic Plan however the big ticket items will include:

1. STEM project which focuses on Information Technology
2. The introduction of an extension program to support and extend the learning of children at the top end of achievement.
3. To continue to embed:
 - a. Reading Recovery
 - b. The Literacy Project
 - c. Third Wave Processes

Engagement

Aboriginal Education Plan and Community Relationships

Aboriginal Education

In 2016, the school focussed on formalising its approach in Aboriginal Education through the development of an Aboriginal Education Plan as part of the school's Strategic Plan. The areas of focus identified were Community Engagement and Connections, Education Intentions, Staff Recruitment and Development, Cultural Identity, establishment of an Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

An Aboriginal Advisory Committee was established in June with representation from the School Board – Mr Danny Penny -, P&F – Mrs Simone Northcote -, Principal, Aboriginal Education Consultant – Mrs Leanne Mcdonagh – and myself. As part of their role, the Aboriginal Advisory Committee has begun developing a school Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Aboriginal Families as First Educators Program, Playgroup continued to run with varying numbers. In Term 3 it was decided to trial a move offsite with the Aboriginal playgroup on Wednesday to work alongside the Rivervale Aboriginal Elders Health and Wellbeing Group at the Rivervale Community Centre. This move proved successful in two ways, firstly the organisers of the Elders Health group, ARCHE Health, saw it as an opportunity to develop cross-generational relationships and were very supportive of the playgroup and secondly we were successful in gaining three new families. Playgroup will return to the school this week as we lead into Christmas.

Through the Aboriginal Families as First Educators Program we were able to employ an Occupation Therapist, Miss Nicole Glanville, who works across all three playgroups to work with the children to achieve their developmental milestone and with their parents to help them assist with their child's development. Last term the school employed an Aboriginal Family Liaison Officer, Ms Candy McKay, whose role it is to outreach into the community to encourage their engagement with Playgroup and to support Playgroup facilitator.

The school recently held its NAIDOC Celebrations with an assembly on Monday 7 November which saw the Years 5 class develop and introduce a school based Welcome and Acknowledgement to Country with the assistance of Gina Williams, Aboriginal language singer and songwriter. The Year 6 Class also performed a Torres Strait Islander Dance which they learned from Indigenous dancer and choreographer Simon Stewart, as part of their Aboriginal studies they were doing in class. As a lead into the NAIDOC assembly, Gina Williams performed with the whole school during hymn singing and then during the assembly her song Wanjoo, which Ms Gabrielle Mercer has taught the students.

The school was very fortunate to have present during Book Week Author Josie Boyle who shared with each class the many stories from the Aboriginal Dreamtime.

Goals for 2017

1. To establish a School Reconciliation Action Plan.
2. To grow the Parents as First Educators - Playgroup.
3. Implement the elements of the Strategic Plan

Nurturing

In Term 3 Miss Monique Ford was employed as the School's Wellbeing Officer under a National School Chaplaincy Programme grant.

The role aims to improve student wellbeing through the implementation of the KidsMatter framework – an Australian Commonwealth Government initiative. KidsMatter is a flexible, whole-school approach to improving children's mental health and wellbeing. A Wellbeing Advisory Team was established this term which consists of Monique Ford, Jacinta Horrocks, Christine Hayes and myself.

Thus far the Wellbeing Advisory Team have gathered data from our school survey which was completed by students from Year 1 to Year 6, school staff and parents to form baseline data which will feed into our Strategic Plan

Yesterday the first Parent Engagement Meeting took place. The aim was to gather parent feedback on ways St Maria Goretti's Catholic School can extend its relationship with parents for 2017. This exercise provided us with valuable insight into the opinions of the parent community of which we will use for our 2017 planning.

Before the end of this year the well-being officer's role and areas of focus will be developed within the Strategic Plan Structures.

Accountability

Building and Infrastructure

2016 has seen:

1. The completion of Stage XI which was the building of 2 new classrooms and the renovation of the administration block this project culminated in the official Blessing and Opening and 60th Anniversary celebrations which were held earlier this term. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Official Opening and 60th Anniversary Advisory Committee for all their hard work and dedication which resulted in a fantastic day for all. The committee consisted of Mr Simone Northcott, Ms Kirsty Douglas, Miss Jacinta Horrocks and Mrs Leanne McDonagh. I would also like to acknowledge the fantastic work undertaken in the background by Mrs Marion Pasini and Mrs Sharon Hindle.
2. A very significant part of Stage XII has been completed with the entire project due for completion on 21 January 2017. Stage XII will see the construction of 4 new classrooms, the room renovation of 4 existing classrooms, the rebuilding of the car park, the replacement of the boundary fencing and the construction of the new fire tank service.
I have been through the new classrooms and am very excited at these fantastic facilities. Children will be returning in 2017 to these new facilities.
3. Stage XIII - while we are awaiting the final funding arrangements I am sure that this stage will commence early in March 2017. This stage will see the library extended, a permanent wall established at the rear of the chapel, or classrooms and areas in the part of the school currently being used will be renovated to match the new buildings and the surface level in the quadrangle will be raised to the top of the steps and flatten to form a netball/basketball court area.

By September of next year, we will have completed all infrastructure development and we will have fantastic facilities that will be the envy of many schools!

Increased Enrolments

As highlighted within our Strategic Plan increased enrolments is a key element to continuing to extend the learning experiences available to our children.

The majority of the advertising components have now been completed and it is anticipated that with the completion of the car park re-development and the greater advertising presence our numbers will grow to a point of financial viability.

Accountability 2016 has been the year of the audit.

This year the school has been audited for Registration – which occurs every 3 years (previously every 5 years) we were one of the first cohort of schools to be audited under the new process. We received a glowing report and full registration.

The National Quality Standards have continued to be a focus in the Early Childhood Area. All staff were involved in a Professional Development day where they learnt about each Quality Area in the National Quality Standards and what it should look like in their classrooms. Throughout the year all of the quality areas have been addressed through the quality improvement plan with a high emphasis on building collaborative partnerships with families and the community. In September, the National Quality Standards were audited as a part of the school audit system and passed.

Personally I had my third year Principal's Review and although the process is complete I am awaiting the official letter which will be shared with the community upon receipt. Under my contract I am reviewed in my third and eighth year before the position being declared vacant in my twelfth year.

Goals for 2017

1. The introduction of the Code of Conduct which is part of our System Agreement with the Government will be embedded early in 2017. The Code of Conduct will govern the action of all staff, parents and visitors to our school with the overriding theme of protection of children and provide each child with a safe place.
2. Fortunately, at this stage I do not believe that we are to be held to account by any outside agency but this is subject to change.

Discipleship

Catholic

Another successful round Sacramental program was held this year. We continued to follow the Sacramental Model introduced by the Archbishop of being Parish based, Family focused and School supported.

In the first Term our Year 3 students celebrated their making of Reconciliation. In Term 2 our Year 4 students received the Sacrament of the Eucharist. In Term 3 our Year 6 students made their Confirmation.

We thank Fr Nelson for celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. At the end of Term 2 Fr Nelson was appointed to St Benedict's Parish in Applecross and last term we welcomed Father Michael Quynh Do to our parish as our new Parish Priest and spiritual leader.

During Term 3 Fr Quynh celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation with our Year 6 students.

As part of our Strategic Plan we started to work towards engaging parents with the school based religious celebrations – this has been a very successful initiative with up to 30 parents and friends supporting the children in the celebrations and joining the staff for coffee afterwards.

Our focus for 2017 will be on:

1. Deepening the faith opportunities available to staff.
2. Continuing to engage parents with the school based celebrations.
- 3.

2016 has been a fantastic year for our school.

Many initiatives started over the last three years have begun to take hold and to become embedded in the life of the school, our educational outcomes are improving, our building programs are taking shape and our Strategic Plan is being developed to capture our future!

But it is our people who make our school what it is!

I would particularly like to acknowledge Mr Deepak Shakya who is our wonderful web master. Deepak is a parent who has designed, maintained and grown our website, Facebook and social media presence. His direct influence on our school's profile and social media presence has been immeasurable and I thank him sincerely. He is so obliging and skilled it is unbelievable.

To all those who have helped improve our school this year to our Board members – I would like to express my gratitude to Jeff for his support and

guidance over the past two years. His support and leadership during the Building Panel visit was outstanding. To Simone who finished her three years on the School Board all of which as Secretary goes our gratitude and appreciation. Parents and Friends Executive and the many parents and friends who have helped develop and extend our school I thank you.

To our children who have worked so hard this year without being distracted by our building program. This year the school was relocated, the oval was reduced in size and we had to split the recess and lunchtimes and yet they have continued to give of their best in their learning, at sport and in their socialization.

To our staff you are a credit to your chosen profession you could not have given more generously to our children, school and parents.

Our school has a fantastic future!