

Principal's Report for 2015

2015 has been a fantastic year for our school with many milestone achievements which I would like to speak of this evening.

The highlights have been:

2015 Evangelisation Foci

1. Active engagement of students/classes and enhancing their reverence and celebration of Termly:
 - i. Para Liturgies (K-Year 2),
 - ii. Liturgy of the Word (Year 3 – Year 4*) *until they have received the Sacrament of Eucharist*,
 - iii. Class Masses (Year 5 – Year 6 *and include Year 4 once they have received the Eucharist*)
 - iv. Whole School Mass.

I would particularly like to highlight the work of Gabriele Mercer, the Music Teacher, in improving not only the School Choir which did so well at the Performing Arts Festival but the whole school singing.

The singing at Mass is a credit to her.

2. Father Nelson has led the Staff in Professional Development on the understanding of Prayer and its structures.
3. Continued participation and building relationship with the Notre Dame Parishioners with our upper students celebrating special Feast Day Masses – Ash Wednesday, The Assumption.
4. The set-up of the new *Parish Sacramental Preparation Team* for each of the Sacraments (APRE, Relevant class teacher and a parent) to ensure the promotion and success of the *Sacramental Model* – Parish Based, Family Focused and School Supported.

Educationally

Our overarching goal since my appointment has been to improve student outcomes in the secular subject and to be at or above National Standards within four years.

2014 saw the introduction of a number of initiatives to service this goal including:

1. Our then new School Charter which is an agreed statement of our community's expectations and response to our primary purpose – the embedding of the School Charter has resulted in a safer more educationally focussed environment for all stakeholders.
2. The establishment of a new Chapel and timetable for the celebration of Mass or para-liturgy or Liturgy of the Word each week.
3. Professional Development and resourcing of our Science initiative led by Monique Ford. This initiative involved significant upskilling of the staff in the development and presentation of effective Science education programs built upon the Primary

Investigators Program. The training and improved methodology was supported, through the School Board, with a significant improvement in resources and text.

4. Sustainable budgets have been established in the key learning areas, for example Mathematics, Library, English, Music etc. this strategic approach to budgeting will ensure our children have access to outstanding, modern resources moving forward.
5. The Early Learning and Family Centre – Playgroup – was trialled.
6. A new Curriculum leadership team was formed

Last year provided the school with a very strong foundation on which we will continue to build on this year.

Many of the initiatives were continued to be nurtured this year and other new initiatives were introduced to enhance our journey of continuous improvement and to services our ultimate goal to improve student outcomes to be at National Standard over the next three years.

In preparing for 2016 the staff have reviewed 5 major focus areas from this year.

Literacy Project.

In March of this year the staff commenced a project whose goal was to improve student outcomes in comprehension. In March this year the children from Year 1 to Year 6 undertook the PAT R online test with the data being used to establish the baseline for each student, class and then the whole school.

We then undertook in collaboration with the CEO's regional and Literacy consultants a series of training courses and professional discussions to establish a whole school approach to the teaching of literacy.

The project resourcing was supported by the School Board through additional time for the leadership team, resources and most importantly the employment of additional Teacher Assistants.

The employment of Mrs Christine Hayes has enabled children across the achievement spectrum to reach targeted support.

I would particularly acknowledge Christine Hayes for her knowledge and leadership throughout the project.

At this point I would like to share with the community the statistics we are using to monitor the project.

But before doing so I would to explain two terms.

Firstly Effect Size – this is a mathematical equation used to measure growth and improvement between the starting point – in our case March - and the end point – in our case November. Through the use of effect size we are able to determine the success or otherwise on an initiative – our Literacy Project.

An effect size of 0.3es across the 9 months shows a positive impact on learning whereas the school average was 0.53 es in Comprehension and 0.913es in mathematics. This shows that the project as implemented has had a significant impact on student learning and it is for this reason it will continue to be our focus for 2016.

The second term is stanine which is a measure of attainment against a “normed” group. Or how you are going against your peers.

Effect Size

South Australian Spelling	0.63
Words Their Way	1.56
Stanine	
Pat Mathematics	4.1
Pat Comprehension	4.3

Our long term goal is to average as a school – 5.2 stanine which is mathematically significant. Currently the school average in Comprehension is 4.3 and in Mathematics 4.1.

A similar pattern is noticed in Mathematics due to the students improved literacy skills and more focused visible learning

As I said earlier we have a sound foundation on which we will be building a light house school. Our goal for next year is to see only children with a diagnosed condition in stanine 1 or 2 and 20% more children in Stanine 7 and above.

Other educational Initiatives this year have included:

1. The embedding of the Third Wave Program which all teachers and Third Wave Teacher Assistants have been fully trained – a model which has drawn attention from the CEO and other schools.
2. The introduction and embedding of Visible Learning which provides clear, explicit direct teaching in each subject area.
3. The re-introduction of Literacy Pro – previously Lexile readers – which many of you will have heard about from your children as the on-line reading quiz – tests - that are being done from Year 3 and above. Although some of the Year 2 children have also been introduced to the program which is run by the class teacher through the library.
4. The PATHS program was introduced to the school in order to support the children's social and emotional interactions – this will continue to be an area of growth next year
5. Early Childhood Education. The ECE teachers under the leadership of Jayde Frost are currently completing the National Quality Survey Audit which has enabled us to review what we are doing and to set new goals to ensure we continue to improve the learning opportunities for our children.
6. Sports Program. Special mention must go to Miss McCagh who has been the sports coordinator this year. Under her direction we have had a fantastic year from our Swimming Carnival at the beginning of the year through the Winter Carnival where we won Netball Year 5 Girls and across all sports we came third to the Athletics Carnival which for the first time we won – tying with Mary's Mount. It was a very exciting outcome with the day decided on the last event.
7. Another event worthy of note was the reintroduction of an Annual Week long school camp which flowed on from a full review of last year's camp. Great credit is due to Adriana Watters, the staff and children as this was an outstanding success.

Noteworthy Events

SEQTA Online Planning and Collaboration

This year the teachers responded to an invitation to pilot a new software program for our system which provides them with online planning and program development around our Visible Learning beliefs'. This pilot was highly successful and is now an option extended to all schools as an extension of our SEQTA Pastoral Care component. We are very fortunate to have such very dedicated hard working teachers who are constantly trying to improve the educational environment for your child

Obstacle-a-Thon

This year the inaugural event was held as a joint collaboration between Melissa McCagh, on behalf of the school, and Simone Northcott and Rae Jas on behalf of the Parents and Friends Association.

Not only did the children have a wonderful day but it was a very successful fund raiser.

Banner in the Terrace

The Year 6 class won the Banners in the Terrace earlier this year.

Year 5 Choir

This is the second year of the re-structured school choir and the children have been outstanding leaders at Confirmation and within the Performing Arts festival.

The children drew high praise from Bishop Sproxtton after the Sunday morning Confirmation Mass.

Playgroup

I would particularly like to commend Leanne McDonagh and Tenelle Climo on the Family and Early Learning Centre – the Playgroup.

The ladies are leading this initiative on behalf of our school as a pilot for the Catholic Education system. This initiative has been so successful that it is being rolled out to 11 schools across Western Australia – in fact the ladies are so highly regarded that that they were invited to Broome for the week to receive special training and to share their experience for the system.

For families in our school it has meant the opportunity to experience a facilitated “playgroup” each week where they can come together, enjoy the company of friends and their children at no cost.

The facility will continue to be offered next year.

Logo

As part of the push to re-build and re-brand our school through the School Board we embarked on a process that has resulted in our new logo – which has drawn significant praise from parents and those outside our community.

This will continue to grow in emphasis and importance as we move forward.

To everyone involved in this process I thank you, as extending our advertising reach into the wider community has been essential in our drive to become a double stream school with new facilities! As a double stream school the ability to offer a wider range of services including Third Wave and Extension and specialist subjects such as Art and a more extensive program become genuine options that are sustainable.

Facebook and Website

I would like to thank and acknowledge Mr Deepak Shayka a father from the community who has given so freely to create our Web and Social Media presence. In recent weeks he has been busy changing them to reflect our new logo and design.

Facilities

We are in the midst of a fantastic re-birthing of our school!

We now have outstanding Pre-Primary Rooms which are big roomy and purpose built for the future needs of our school! Our Administration Block was finished in the middle of the year providing facilities that will ensure the ongoing effective management of the school and most importantly providing a fantastic Training room which enables the staff to receive the best training in order to improve your child's learning environment.

Our new Early Childhood Playground

Everyone visiting our school has been glowing in their praise of the beautiful playground but most importantly the joy it has brought to the children which has made the time consuming process, the challenges and the hours of work worth every minute!

An ECE Playground is as essential to the children's learning as is a classroom to a Year 6 student and now they have the best!

Where to in 2016

Buildings –

It is going to be another exciting year as we move into the next building stage. When completed we will have:

1. 8 new classrooms
2. A new carpark at the front of the school

3. New firefighting system
4. New reticulation system

Next year we will be applying to begin the final stage, commencing in March and finished in January 2017, which will complete the re-building and refurbishment of our school to include a new Under Covered area, two new classrooms, four refurbished classrooms and an extended library as well as a new basketball/netball court in front of the library.

To ensure that we remain focused throughout the building next year we will be relocating the classrooms in the last week of school this year. More information will be released in coming weeks.

Educationally

Our major foci will be:

1. 2016 Evangelisation Foci:
 - i. Continued Professional Development and Faith formation provided by Father to the Staff on the structure of the Mass – responses and meaning.
 - ii. Introduction of Staff Reflection on scripture readings to develop a deeper relationship with Jesus.
 - iii. Focus on the readers for the different celebrations. Ensure they are guided/trained/taught correct way to speak to enhance our Liturgical celebrations.
 - iv. Resources to ensure/enhance the teaching of Religious Education successfully in the classes, i.e. class prayer table
2. To continue and embed the Literacy Project to ensure we maintain the improvement spoken to earlier.
 - i. As the children's standards improve we will need to continue to purchase and extend our resources to ensure the children have the best learning opportunities. This trend has already been noticed this year.
3. This year through the support of the Parents and Friends Association and the School Board we embarked on an ambitious program to upgrade the classroom computers to enact our decision not to move towards a user provided machine – as a number of schools have done. The Kindergarten to Year 3 with mini iPads are on site and awaiting the techs to do their magic. While the Year 4 to Year 6 classes will be using the new Surface Pro 4s which were recently released, next year we will need to continue to:
 - i. Buy aggressively to ensure enough machines are available for effective learning to take place
 - ii. Make Computer education a key focus for 2016 which will mean upskilling our teachers and providing them with the support to guide the children.
4. To continue to embed
 - i. the PATHS program
 - ii. The Visible Learning structures

in the life of the school.

To single individuals out for special mention is always dangerous because it is impossible to draw a fair comparison between what people do and what can be reasonably expected of them to do.

But I would ask each of you to consider all the fantastic things that have happened in our school this year and appreciate and value each person for giving of themselves so freely for the good of our children be they Father Nelson, staff, volunteers, Board or Parents and Friends members.

Our success can be seen in the students' improved educational outcomes, fantastic facilities and the demand to join our community. For the first time ever we are full in Kindergarten for 2016 – up by 20 children.

We have a fantastic school and should savour our success. Thank you!