



St Joseph's School Yarra Junction

2020

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1579

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Nicholas Boyhan, attest that St Joseph'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.

08/06/2021

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

Inspired by Jesus Christ,

St Joseph's school is a community;

Nurturing personal, spiritual and academic growth

Empowering all for a future of hope.

School Overview

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is nestled in a picturesque bush setting in Yarra Junction. The school, established in 1958, has a proud history of providing quality Catholic education in the Upper Yarra Valley. As part of the Parish of Sacred Heart Upper Yarra Valley, we provide an environment that follows the beliefs and teachings of the Catholic Church and the values of care, responsibility, respect, justice, collaboration and learning. These are evident in all aspects of our school life. Although a relatively small school, we are proud of the comprehensive, exciting and challenging curriculum that we provide to cater for the needs of all students. As well as providing proven literacy, numeracy and inquiry-based programs, the school also offers excellent sporting, visual and performing arts experiences. The school community aspires to excellence and values the development of the whole person. We pride ourselves on being a warm, welcoming and friendly community, inclusive of everyone. Partnerships between school, home and the wider community are greatly valued. We encourage participation and invite families to be actively involved in the school and parish community.

School enrolment numbers have fluctuated over the past decade moving from 137 in 2006, peaking at 186 in 2010 and dropping to 109 by August 2019. St. Joseph's commenced the 2020 school year with 121 children, an increase of 12 on the previous August Census.

The school consisted of six classes and 19 staff including both full-time and part-time in teaching and non-teaching roles. The classes were made up of the following multi-age combinations:

1 x Foundation Class

1 x Year One Class

2 x Year Two/Three classes

1 x Year Four/Five Class

1 x Year Five/Six Class

Classes range in size from the high teens to the low/mid 20s.

In 2020 the Specialist Programs consisted of 45 minute lessons in *Performing Arts, Physical Education, Japanese (LOTE) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths(STEM)*.

The Upper Yarra Valley Parish School precinct comprises St Thomas a Becket Church, the Presbytery and the five St Joseph's School buildings spread across 17 acres of beautiful bushland. The site remains mostly bush resulting from careful development over the years, sympathetic with the natural surroundings. With the support of the parish, the school community provides attractive and functional learning spaces for the students.

Principal's Report

The following Annual Report to the School Community is based on data and evidence from the 2020 school year. The Australian Government has requested that schools publicly report on a number of areas to demonstrate school performance. These requirements are outlined in this report. We hope that you find this information valuable and a reflection of the great achievements of St Joseph's School, Yarra Junction.

Following the departure of the former Principal, John Falkner, I commenced in the role of principal in November 2019, giving me an opportunity to get to know the community prior to the commencement of the 2020 school year. The year got off to a great start with the appointment of a new Deputy Principal (Katie Vranken) and Leadership Team (Terry Foley - REL, Simone Traynor - Literacy, Lisa Bourke - Numeracy, Liz O'Brien - Student Wellbeing). The school once again embarked on a productive year of teaching and learning.

Concerns began to grow in the community with reports of a Novel Coronavirus spreading from China, throughout parts of Asia and through Europe. By March a number of infections were present in Australia, borders began to shut and, towards the end of Term One the state went into lockdown. Our school was closed to all but children of Essential Service Workers and Vulnerable Children and remained that way until the second half of Term Two. A staged return began with Junior students returning onsite and then Senior Students returning for the last few weeks of term. Unfortunately, this did not last too long with another lockdown commencing prior to the commencement of Term Three, and the students remained at home for the entire duration of Term Three. Term Four brought about the end of school closures, and we were fortunate to have a smoother, albeit COVID Restricted end to the year.

Throughout these lockdowns, students took part in Flexible and Remote Learning. The school made Chromebooks available to students from Years Two to Six, and they used these to access curriculum content made available to them by their teachers, via the online learning portal, Google Classroom. Teachers met with students each morning via Zoom to conduct well-being check-ins, answer questions and explain the work for the day. As time went by, Staff and Students became more proficient with the use of these technologies and began to use this in interesting and innovative ways. Small group instruction was delivered, meeting learners at their point of need. Intervention strategies were implemented by teachers and Learning Support Officers, to address the individual needs of students.

While these lockdowns clearly had a negative impact on the learning and wellbeing of the students, staff did everything within their power to mitigate this impact and ensure the continuity of learning. While this was no replacement for face-to-face classroom learning, it was the best that could be done under the circumstances. An indication of the success of our approach during this time is the number of enrolments that we attracted to the school during Flexible and Remote Learning. Many parents transferring to our school highlighted the great things we were doing in this area as the reason for transferring their children. Enrolments by the end of lockdown peaked at 124. This was 14 students up on the same time the year before. Further evidence of success was seen in the many emails and letters of support and thanks received by the school and by individual teachers.

Despite the significant disruption caused by the Global Pandemic, the school maintained a focus on School Improvement. Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) was introduced to the staff as the new approach to behaviour management. Leaders worked collaboratively with colleagues from neighbouring schools as part of a Religious Education Learning Collective. They remained actively engaged with their colleagues from other schools and Catholic Education Melbourne

through their Professional Learning Networks (PLN), such as the School Improvement Learning Collaborative (SILC). Meetings moved from face-to-face to online. Staff engaged in professional learning, staff meetings and Professional Learning Team (PLS) meetings through video conferencing and webinars. The school never lost focus on the important work of School Improvement.

We look forward with hope to what we pray will be a better and brighter year ahead in 2021, involving greater participation in *face-to-face* learning and professional development for students and staff. We look forward to re-engaging our parents through our many groups, including Parents & Friends, Advisory Board and Grounds & Maintenance. Welcoming parents back on-site to partner in the learning and teaching process, the liturgical and sacramental celebrations and the social life of the school will also be wonderful.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Boyhan

Principal

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

That students are more engaged in scripture, traditions, prayer and liturgy across all learning.

Achievements

Throughout 2020 we worked to strengthen teacher capacity to model practice that links scripture, traditions, prayer and liturgy to people, cultures and beliefs.

Working with the Leadership Team and Catholic Education Melbourne personnel, the Religious Education Leader investigated professional learning for staff to link scripture to life and develop a shared vision.

Opportunities were provided for students and staff to encounter Jesus through scripture and the Eucharist. Staff further investigated the renewed Religious Education Curriculum Framework and Horizons of Hope Framework to embed Religious Education within the wider the curriculum.

VALUE ADDED

Leadership engaged in classroom walks and provided feedback to staff on student understanding in relation to Learning Intentions and success criteria.

Through professional learning we explored best practice in the teaching of Religious Education and the available resources to support this learning (eg RE Source, Liturgy Help, etc).

Principal, Religious Education Leader and Deputy Principal participated in The Hills RE Learning Collaborative focussing on assessment to drive teaching.

Weekly visit by Fr Michel to give students further insights into traditions and scripture

Class Masses with Fr Michel at the church when COVID Restrictions allowed.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

That every student maximizes learning growth in the core priority areas of literacy and numeracy

Achievements

Guided by our involvement in the School Improvement Learning Collaborative we have made deliberate use of data to inform the next step in student learning. This has assisted with the development of programs, focus teaching groups and case management meetings, Data was used to plan for individual needs and track growth and predict the future needs of learners.

Data was collated in our data tracking tool and displayed on our Data Walls. These were used as a starting point for meeting students at their point of need and to inform the next required step in their learning

The school used the following evidence-informed approaches to improve student learning:

- a comprehensive and consistent assessment schedule
- case management
- datawalls

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Since the commencement of our work in the School Improvement Learning Collaborative (SILC), we have seen steady progress in the student's performance in our NAPLAN Data. Our Year 3 to 5 improvement in Numeracy, Reading and Writing between 2017 and 2019 is in line with that of students in like schools.

The Year Threes were close to or above students in like schools in 2018 and 2019 in Reading, Writing, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy. They were below in spelling in 2018 but improved by 60 points from 402 in 2018 to 445 in 2019. In summary, we have seen an overall improvement of our Year Three students between 2018 and 2019. Likewise, our Year Fives have been tracking close to or above students in like schools in both 2018 and 2019.

It is unfortunate that we have not had access to 2020 NAPLAN Data to see how we have been progressing. Clearly, we would prefer to see our students tracking above or well above students in like schools. With an increased focus on the use of data to inform the next steps in learning for students and the implementation of a range of integration approaches we anticipate we will see this desired upward trend in the near term outlook. We look forward with great anticipation to the release of the results of the recently completed NAPLAN assessments.

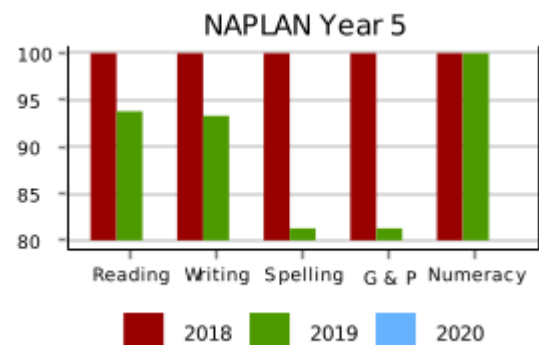
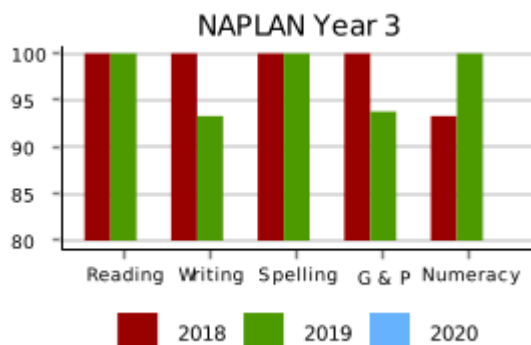
It is worth noting that, although 34.7% of our students are included in or NCCD Count, 100% of our students participated in our two most recent rounds of NAPLAN testing. This is in stark contrast with other schools in our area who exempt up to 40% or more of their students. Our data is an authentic representation of the performance of our cohort each year.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018	2019	2018 – 2019	2020	2019 – 2020
	%	%	Changes	%	Changes
			%	*	*
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	93.8	-6.2		
YR 03 Numeracy	93.3	100.0	6.7		
YR 03 Reading	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 03 Spelling	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 03 Writing	100.0	93.3	-6.7		
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	81.3	-18.7		
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Reading	100.0	93.8	-6.2		
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	81.3	-18.7		
YR 05 Writing	100.0	93.3	-6.7		

* 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

That students show more confidence and growth mindset in their learning capacity.

To build consistent expectations of behaviour between students and staff.

Achievements

Both staff and Students faced significant challenges in relation to Learning and Teaching throughout 2020. The degree of confidence and development of Growth Mindset varied hugely between learners. Increased stress and anxiety among students, their families and staff presented a significant challenge to our intended outcome in this area, particularly during our first lockdown.

As the year progressed and teachers and students became familiar with the new ways of working, a level of comfort was observable. It was pleasing to see how the majority of people were able to adapt. That being said, we were made aware by some families that heightened levels of anxiety were being exhibited by some students and these often correlated with a lack of engagement with learning tasks. In these situations, teachers reached out to families and offered strategies to improve engagement with Flexible and Remote Learning. Parents of children exhibiting high levels of stress and anxiety were referred to local support services.

Despite the COVID disruptions, including lockdowns, the leadership of the school participated in Catholic Education Melbourne professional learning in Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL). Learnings were shared with the staff, familiarising them with the philosophy underpinning PBL and many of the procedures and protocols of the approach. Staff began work on the development of a behaviour matrix to support consistent expectations of student behaviour in various school settings. We were pleased with the progress we made in this area despite the COVID disruptions.

VALUE ADDED

Students participated in Social-Emotional Learning prior to, during and following lockdown to develop learning confidence and growth mindset.

Students participated in Respectful Relationship Lessons throughout 2020.

The school reached out to families of students experiencing difficulties with learning and wellbeing during Flexible and Remote Learning.

Electronic Playground data collection assisted with identifying and addressing wellbeing issues.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

As evident in the 2019 Catholic Education Melbourne School Improvement Survey Data, staff-student relationships (85 percentile) continue to be very strong.

Many parents commented that their students were really missing their Teachers and Learning Support Officers when on Flexible and Remote Learning

There was a high level of student attendance at the morning class Zoom meetings where students got to chat with their teachers and classmates.

When discussing with students on their return many highlighted how happy they were to be back with their friends and teachers.

With very few exceptions, children's preference was to be at school rather than at home doing Flexible and Remote Learning.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Class Rolls are marked twice daily by 9:15am and by 2:30pm.

Parents/Carers are required to contact the school either by phone or email to report a student absence.

When a child is reported absent by their teacher without explanation from a parent/carer, families are contacted by telephone to confirm the child's whereabouts.

This information is then updated on the school electronic roll.

During Remote Learning, students who engaged fully or significantly with the learning tasks were marked with a full day attendance - Flexible and Remote Learning (Off Site)

Students who only partially completed tasks or only completed a few set tasks were marked as a half-day absence.

Students who did not participate in the learning for the day were marked as a full day absence.

Children of Essential Service Workers and vulnerable children were marked as present and this information was reported to their teachers via a Google Doc so they could update their rolls

Parents were asked to contact the school if their children were not participating in the learning.

Teachers made contact with families when children were not participating in the learning to attempt to connect the children with their learning and to do welfare checks.

Where teachers had concerns, they referred the case to the Principal or Deputy.

The school reported student attendance to Catholic Education Eastern Region Office periodically when this information was requested.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	93.2%
Y02	91.4%
Y03	93.3%
Y04	96.6%
Y05	92.7%
Y06	92.4%
Overall average attendance	93.2%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To provide for the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school.

To keep students safe all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the school.

Achievements

At the commencement of 2020 our Child Safety Policy and Procedures were revisited with the staff and all staff renewed their Child Safety Staff Code of Conduct.

The staff completed the yearly eLearn module - Mandatory reporting and other legal obligations

The staff were reminded of their obligations under the Child Protection and Child Safe Standards (PROTECT)

Students participated in weekly Respectful Relationships lessons with a focus on their right to feel safe and to be safe

The staff were required to prepare Risk Assessments for all events - reviewed by Leadership through a Child Safety Lens.

Procedures reviewed and refined to mitigate the risk of children experiencing any form of abuse eg different toilet facilities identified for adults and children at school community events

Rigorous reference checking for all new staff and thorough checking of VIT Registration and Working with Children Checks

All parents engaged in child-related work at the school are required to have a Working with Children's Check.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To develop a learning culture that supports reflection and purposeful implementation of contemporary practice.

Achievements

In 2020 the Leadership Team structured Professional Learning Meetings to include a focus on critical feedback and reflection.

Data coaching meetings were modelled to the staff through Professional Learning Team Meetings by members of the Leadership Team.

Staff were invited to participate in Case Management Meetings, presenting a 'child of wonder.'

An Essential Teaching Agreement (agreed practices) was developed and implemented, including practices for Flexible and Remote Learning.

Staff were further familiarised with the AITSL Standards and the Horizons of Hope.

Professional Learning was implemented to familiarise staff with the 14 Parameters.

Meetings were restructured to maximise the number of staff present for the development of Shared Vision and Understanding (P1) and Shared Responsibility and Accountability (P14).

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

In support of the ongoing professional learning of the leadership team and staff, Leaders continued to attend Catholic Education Melbourne Network Meetings and other staff participated in school-based Professional Learning during staff meetings, Professional Learning Team Meetings and via video conferencing and webinars.

As most all face-to-face Professional Learning Programs were cancelled, online was the preferred method for the delivery of professional learning.

All Staff completed eLearning Modules for Mandatory Reporting, Disability Standards, Evacuation Procedures, etc.

As Professional Learning sits at the heart of our School Improvement processes, it was critical that this proceeded throughout the year, including during lockdowns and school closures. The staff are to be congratulated on the way they engaged in Professional Learning in this different format.

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2020	15
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$57

TEACHER SATISFACTION

As the Catholic Education Melbourne School Improvement Surveys were not available in 2020, the usual data for assessing Teacher Satisfaction was unavailable. However, two data sets that indicates a high level of teacher satisfaction are Teacher Attendance and Teacher Retention.

With the exception of one staff member who spent some time off site due to illness, the staff enjoyed good health throughout 2020 and staff attendance was very good. They engaged enthusiastically in on-site and during Flexible and Remote Learning, delivering this at a very high standard.

We managed to retain all but a small handful of teachers at the end of 2020. One part-time teacher, living across town, had her time increased at a school she worked at close to home. A teacher on a contract made way for a teacher returning from Parental Leave and finally another teacher moved to Northern Victoria to work in a country school. The remaining teachers all appear to be quite settled and engaged in learning and teaching. A number of them have requested an increase in their time for 2021 and I have had a number of enquiries about requests for Ongoing Status

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	77.6%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	79.0%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	0.0%
Graduate	33.3%
Graduate Certificate	11.1%
Bachelor Degree	88.9%
Advanced Diploma	33.3%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	1.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	17.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	12.6
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	7.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	7.8
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To strengthen partnerships, with parents and the community, that address SEL, confidence and voice to promote learning and growth.

To encourage the development of relationships between parents, particularly those new to the school community.

Achievements

Prior to 2020 we could never have imagined the important bond that would be required between home and school in order for learning to take place during school shutdowns. No one anticipated the vital role parents would play in this process.

Our intended outcome of 'strengthened partnerships to promote learning and growth' had to be fast-tracked in order to ensure the continuity of learning. New communication avenues were opened in the form of class mailing lists and online learning portals to support the school community with the difficult task of Flexible and Remote Learning.

The collaboration between staff and families was outstanding. This led to great learning outcomes for students in cases where parents were able to communicate with staff and provide help, support and direction to their children. Many children were able to access one-to-one attention whenever they needed it and parents were able to draw on support from teachers when required. We are also aware that learning was not so easy for students where parents were working from home and/or their attention had to be shared between a number of children learning from home.

There is no doubting disruptions caused by the COVID Pandemic have limited our capacity ' To encourage the development of relationships between parents, particularly those new to the school community.' Prior to the onset of the pandemic, a conscious effort was made by the school and Parents & Friends Committee to focus on promoting social events within the school community, rather than focusing heavily on fundraising. Fundraising became even less of a focus with the economic downturn and people moving to Job Seeker and Job Keeper. Unfortunately we were also limited by restrictions in terms of what we could do with regard to Social Events and all plans for parent and family events were put on hold.

One very successful event we were able to hold was an Online Family Trivia Night. Parents and children competed as teams against other families and staff, answering a range of questions on sport, music, etc. This event was really well attended and was one of the few whole school social events for the year. The goal of developing relationships between parents will remain a priority for the school and Parents & Friends Committee in 2021.

PARENT SATISFACTION

2020 was a difficult and challenging year for parents at St Joseph's School. As Principal, my brief was to build community. Therefore, it felt quite counter-intuitive cancelling Parent Helper Programs, moving to Video Conferencing for meetings and asking parents not to enter the

school site unless absolutely necessary. Many functions, including Mother's Day and Father's Day Breakfasts, the School Disco, Twilight Sports and a range of other parent social functions had to be cancelled or postponed. To prevent parents from congregating, the car parks were closed and parents were strongly encouraged to use the Drop-Off/Pick Up Zone for transitioning their children in and out of school. The biggest challenge was requiring parents to keep their children at home for Flexible and Remote Learning.

We took these unpleasant but necessary steps very gently, providing regular and clear communication explaining the rationale for each. We kept our lines of communication open and enhanced them, providing multiple ways for parents to contact the school. Teachers made themselves available throughout the day and after-hours to engage with parents requiring feedback, help and support, especially during Flexible and Remote Learning.

In response, the vast majority of our parents were supportive and cooperative with the school. Many letters, emails and gifts were sent to the school, thanking staff for the support they had provided to families. When restrictions eased the parents put on a COVID Safe Morning Tea for the teachers. Critics were few and far between. When concerns were expressed, the vast majority of them were worded constructively and were done so with the best of intentions.

As restrictions eased again towards the end of the year, we were able to have our school photos and hold smaller community events like Parents and Friends Meetings, masses and the Year Six Graduation. These were much appreciated by the parents as they restored a sense of normality and a feeling of community. We look forward to more of these events and more on-site parent participation in the education of the children being possible in 2021. We are hopeful that this will build a higher level of parent satisfaction.

Future Directions

A comprehensive Annual Action Plan had been developed to guide the work of the school throughout the 2021 school year. This addressed the areas of Vision, Curriculum Mapping, implementation of improvement strategies in the core learning priority areas of Mathematics and Literacy, enhancement of our Catholic Identity and improved utilisation of data to inform teaching and improve student learning.

We look ahead to our next School Improvement Cycle 2022 - 2025 when a renewed school improvement plan will be developed to guide the Work of School Improvement for the years ahead. We will be working closely in the development of this plan with personnel from Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS). Its purpose will be to:

1. To satisfy legitimate expectations of government and sector authorities about accountability for the outcomes of schooling
2. To assist schools and teachers to improve student outcomes.

We will also be developing a School Master Plan for the provision of safe, contemporary and effective learning environments, where students feel comfortable, accepted and motivated to learn and explore. We will be consulting with Education Consultants, Architects, Parents, Students and the Parish and Wider Community to develop a long-term, comprehensive overview when determining priorities for the development of our buildings and grounds. This will be an instrumental document to support grant applications for the implementation of each stage of the plan.