

## **2019 St Mary's Principal's report for AGM**

It is my absolute pleasure to stand here this evening as Principal of St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Boyup Brook to present my report for the 2019 school year. We have so much to celebrate and be grateful for as we come to the end of the school year and this evening's meeting is an opportunity for us all to reflect and rejoice in all that has been achieved in 2019. My report revolves around the 4 Domains/Pillar's of Catholic Education WA: Catholic Identity, Education, Community and Stewardship.

### **CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

Catholic Identity refers to the "catholicity" of our school. Here at St Mary's we keep Christ at the centre of everything that we do. This year our School Improvement Plan focus in this area revolved around helping our students gain a better understanding of how to interact and engage during liturgical ceremonies. We addressed this throughout the year with the use of PowerPoint presentations during the mass with the hymns and parts of the mass displayed so students could better participate in the ceremony. We feel as though this has worked well. Teachers prepared thoughtful and insightful liturgies that helped build on what the students had learned in RE lessons and helped them grow in their spirituality. This year we focused on teaching the children some new hymns that they would enjoy singing along to and a visit from well renowned liturgical singer/songwriter Andrew Chinn helped boost the children's interest and confidence in this area. Our school masses and liturgies are wonderful events that the students participate in through singing, reading and responding to the parts of the mass. We are hoping to train some of our older students that have received the Sacrament of First Eucharist as altar servers for our masses next year. This year saw many children receive Sacraments at our school. We had 4 current students and 1 former student baptized in a ceremony held at a Saturday evening mass here at the parish in Term 2. We had 3 students receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation in Term 1, 8 students receive the Sacrament of First Eucharist in Term 2, and 3 students receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in Term 3. In addition to this we had 4 staff members fully initiated into the Catholic Church at a wonderful ceremony on Easter Saturday night in St Brigid's in Bridgetown. I would like to thank Fr Roshan, our spiritual leader here at St Mary's. Fr Roshan covers 4 parishes but has made a huge effort this year in being present at our school for masses liturgies and other events, Thanks Fr Roshan.

Our students in Years 3 & 5 participated in the Bishop's RE test this year and made steady progress. Our Year 5 group showed steady growth from where they were in Year 3. We continue to strive to assist our students in "Growing Through Christ" each day.

### **EDUCATION**

The education of each and every child is the core business of any school and this year our dedicated and committed staff worked hard to ensure positive outcomes for all students. This section of my report deals with the gains we have made in educating the children this year as well as what our data is telling us we need to plan for in 2020.

This year our staff entered into a two-year regional professional development program with other Catholic Schools from the Bunbury diocese called the "Lynn Sharratt project". This program involved 4

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face to face professional development days, 2 in Term 1 and 2 in Term 3 with group projects to be completed as a staff in between. Literacy continues to be a focus area for us as a school and this year and as a result of our participation in this program we implemented a new school wide reading assessment program. The Benchmark Assessment system has enabled us to delve deeper into students individual reading level and gain a better understanding of where they are at. I would like to thank our P&F for funding the initial purchase of this resource.

Sticking with Literacy, our staff maintained strong guided reading and guided writing structures in classes and we reviewed how this was going as the year progressed. We use a program called Brightpath to assess student writing and inform our teaching in this area.

In the early years we continued to implement the Letters and Sounds program to improve phonological knowledge and understanding.. Middle and Upper Primary use the Sound Waves program which is an excellent follow on and one of the most effective programs in teaching spelling and reading skills.

Numeracy this year had a focus on problem solving across the school, particularly comprehension in problem solving, i.e. students being able to understand what a question was asking them to do. We implemented a range of strategies to teach and assess this throughout the year and while we have seen some gains we have decided to keep this as a point of focus for us in 2020. School wide we continued the implementation of the Stepping Stones program and this has helped ensure consistency in Numeracy across the school.

Our NAPLAN results this year in both Year 3 and Year 5 gave us plenty of information to ponder as a staff. Our current Year 3 students had a very wide spread of results in many of the assessments. This was not a surprise to us and this data along with our own data has prompted us to prioritise providing this class with some targeted support next year. Our Year 5 students made some progress from where they were in Year 3 but the gains may not have been what we would have expected. Again, we have examined this data and based our 2020 goals for this group around ensuring that the students are appropriately challenged and pushed to reach their potential fully.

Specialist subjects this year ran very well and added a lot of variety to student learning. This year we ran specialist subjects in Science, French, Music, Art and Sport and this year Music this year was enhanced by the wonderful purchase of a set of 24 Ukelele's by the P&F for our students, thanks again P&F. Mrs Gear introduced all year levels to this awesome instrument and it was wonderful to hear something other than the recorder coming out of the library on Wednesday's. Participation in sport is a wonderful way for children to develop many different skills and values and here at St Mary's our kids take part in swimming lessons, swimming carnivals, a triathlon, winter sports carnivals, minkey hockey carnivals, athletics carnivals as well as cross country running. While winning is not everything our kids did get to taste success in the swimming interschool, soccer and netta at the winter carnival and hockey at the minkey carnival. Thanks to all parents that volunteered their time to coaching the children in any sport.

To conclude in this section, Education, I would like to acknowledge our amazing and wonderful staff. I have been truly humbled by the hard work, dedication and commitment that our staff display towards our school and towards all students that attend each day. We are blessed with our staff here at St Mary's and while on this topic, I would like to announce our staffing and class structure for the 2020 school year.

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Kindy: Jane Wheeler

PP/1: Sue Sumner

Year 2/3: Margaret Evans

Year 4: Barbara Marsh

Year 5/6: Nicole Reilly (Mon, Tue, Thu), Scott Tweedie (Wed, Fri)

Support: Gemma Hester (Tue, Wed), Sharon Nield (Mon, Thu-Fri half days)

EA: Deb Corp (Kindy and 2/3, Library admin), Hayley Cook (L&G, Support, Chaplaincy)

Specialist subject days for 2020 are as follows:

Science on a Monday taught by Scott Tweedie

Music on a Tuesday taught by Rochelle Gear

French on a Wednesday taught by Madame Reilly

Sport on a Thursday taught by Mr Tweedie: please note all carnivals etc will be on Fridays.

Art on Fridays with Mrs Harvey.

Admin and Finance: Emma Fortune and Gemma Aird

Cleaning: Vicki Lawrence and Kerrie Parker

Groundsman: Ross Parker

### **COMMUNITY**

The next section of my report is community and this refers to how we build, maintain and sustain community within our school, how we engage with our local community and what we plan to do in this area moving forward.

The main focus of this section of the report is the work done by our outstanding Parents and Friends group who have been fantastic to work with. This year's meetings have been an absolute pleasure to attend, not just because of the copious amounts of lollies and chocolates that everyone brings along. The aim of the P&F at any school is not just to fundraise and donate financially to the school but also to help foster the building of positive, inclusive communities around schools. At St Mary's our P&F do both extremely well. From the welcome morning tea for new families at the start of the year to the unique and wonderful movie night last weekend, our P&F has worked hard this year to build community. The fundraising and contributions to the school have also not slowed down with the P&F paying for many educational programs such as Athletics, Reading Eggs and our new reading system to name but a few. Add to that Year 6 camp, Year 5 camp, teacher wish lists, sports equipment and way too many other items to list here and you get an idea of just how much our P&F actually does. I would like to thank Lizzie Twigg, P&F president, for being a most wonderful and positive person to work along with and Emma Fortune, Secretary, for her professionalism, enthusiasm and dedication. Both Lizzie and Emma will step

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aside from their roles on the P&F next year, we thank them for their many years of service on the P&F. I would like to sincerely thank everyone involved in the P&F for their contributions this year in making our school a better place for everyone. It is a privilege to get to interact with you all and the effort you contribute to our school really does benefit our students. Thanks also for approving the new couch for the library which will add a lovely vibe to this room next year.

As a school this year, we looked at ways to engage more with the local community. This is a very important area in terms of promoting our school and what we do to everyone in our community. This will continue to be an area of focus in 2020 and I cannot quite emphasise the importance of pushing our message out there for everyone to see. One huge contribution this year came from Mrs Reilly who took time out each month to ensure we had a well written article in every single publication of the Boyup Brook Gazette this year. Mrs Reilly volunteered to do this of her own accord and her articles together with the pictures we provided gave us a strong presence here all year. As Ben mentioned already we have a new website and Facebook page. I would particularly like to thank Tara Reid for her time and dedication in coming to school on several occasions to take photographs and drone footage of our school to be used on the website. Thank you for sharing your expertise in this area Tara.

Our students participated in many community events this year including the combined schools ANZAC service, the Shire ANZAC service, the Sandakan memorial service, Clean up Australia day to name but a few. Our Father's day breakfast was a lovely way to celebrate our dads and father figures and don't worry mums we will make sure to plan something special for you around Mother's day next year.

We continued to provide an engaging and free preschool program from Term 2 onwards in the form of Learn & Grow. The commitment and planning that Mrs Cook puts into delivering this each week is just phenomenal. Thank you so much Hayley for the effort you have put into this in 2019. Mrs Cook will continue to run Learn & Grow in 2020 with the day still TBC.

All of this effort has really helped raise our profile in the community and this is an area I plan on working even harder in next year. We are already seeing the benefits of our efforts with a healthy Kindy enrolment of 14 for 2020 at this point in time, (9 students from returning families, 5 students from 4 new families).

Student numbers this year began at 64 in February and finish at 67.

This community is a very unique and wonderful one to be a part of. It is a pleasure to come to school events and I look forward to welcoming more families to our school next year and building on what is already a very special community environment, thank you all for the contribution you each make to this.

### **STEWARDSHIP**

Stewardship is defined as the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property, in our case the school. In this section I will mainly talk about our school board and what we have done in 2019 to build on the great work of previous years and to sustain our school into the future.

We had a new chair this year in Ben Thompson and 2 new members join: Janis Beadle and Charles Caldwell. The atmosphere within our board meetings this year has been fantastic and has led to great

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outcomes for our school. Before I go into more detail I want to thank the school board for being such a wonderful, thoughtful, supportive and caring group. It has been an absolute privilege to work with you all and I look forward to more of the same next year.

As a school board we have discussed and dissected many different issues and items for our school this year. Our meetings were very productive and mainly focused around the finances of the school and the future of the school buildings and playground layout. We have accomplished many great things around the school and done our very best to invest in brightening up our school with various different works undertaken. At the end of term 1 we had the playground and basketball court lines re painted. This brightened up the playground nicely. At the end of term 2 we removed the old painted mural and painted the verandah floor outside the old classroom block. At the end of term 3 we had a new door installed in the senior classroom where previously there was a window and this has opened the classroom out onto the courtyard beside the library, giving it a breakout area that students can use. In addition to this the school board has approved the purchase of new iPads and laptops for our students ensuring that next year we will have 1 to 1 iPads available from PP to Year 3 and 1 to 1 laptops available for students from Years 4 to 6. This is a massive investment but one that the school needed to make in order to upgrade from older devices and provide our students with the best possible resources in this area. Once again I would like to thank our school board for their support in making these purchases. The new devices will be ready for students to use at the start of the 2020 school year.

In further, potentially exciting news at a school board level, after much consultation and discussion regarding our Year 2/3 and Year 4/5 classrooms as well as our Early Childhood block, we have submitted an application to Catholic Education WA to be included in their 2020 round of funding for building and renovation works at CEWA schools. While there is no guarantee that our application will be successful we believe as a board that the aforementioned classrooms need work done in order to give our students access to quality, modern learning environments. We made this decision and drafted our Capital Development Plan in consultation with Cathy Carr our Capital Development Consultant after I invited her to come and visit our school to look at our facilities in early term 1. Cathy agreed that we need to improve and modernize our classrooms and guided us through the application process. We are still in the very early stages of this and once again I would like to emphasize that just because we apply, this does not mean we will get anything. We are not the only CEWA school in this situation and there is not a lot of funding available for building/renovation projects in Catholic Schools. We will keep you posted as this process progresses and we should know by the end of Term 3 next year at the latest where we stand in relation to this. Please pray that our school may be able to secure some funding to help improve our learning environments for our students.

I would like to thank each and every board member for their time and commitment in being willing to serve our school through the board. I have really enjoyed our board meetings and everyone's support this year is something I am really grateful for. Thank you Ben Thompson for being the most laid back board chair ever and thank you to our secretary Emma Fortune for her organization, our treasurer Aliesha Bock for using her financial background to help our school and to all other board members for the many contributions they have made this year. I look forward to working with you all next year and continuing the great work we have started.

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I would like to thank the St Mary's and the wider Boyup Brook community for making my family and I feel so welcome here this year. Within 20 minutes of us arriving at our new home we had a knock on the door. It was Mrs Sumner with a bouquet of flowers for us from the school staff. Next morning, there was another knock on the door, it was Mrs Marsh with a dozen fresh laid eggs, which was great as we had not managed to get to the shops yet. We have been overwhelmed by the welcome and I thank you all.

To our staff: it is a privilege to come to work here every day with you all. Thank you for making this such a great year and hopefully it is the start of many.

To our parents: thanks for your support and for your involvement in our community, for your support and involvement in your child's education and for always being willing to help out around our school in any capacity.

To the 67 most important people associated with our school: the students. You are a wonderful group, you are the reason we are here and we will continue to work hard to serve you and help you continue to grow in your learning and Grow Through Christ each day. We will miss our graduating students next year and we will pay tribute to them at their graduation mass and dinner.

This year has without a doubt been one of the busiest years of my career and personal life. I would like to finish on a personal note. She is not here tonight but I want to put on record a huge thank you to my wife Aishling for being a rock of support all year. When I suggested that I apply for the temporary Principal position here at St Mary's, Boyup Brook Aishling had no idea where it was but was still willing to move here and has been extremely supportive of me in my new role as first time principal. Moving here with a 3 month old baby and two other small children over the summer holidays was a massive undertaking but we took it in our stride and have loved it. Thank you Aishling for being a great wife, for listening to me talk about work all the time and for looking after our kids and for all your support.

I am very happy to be remaining on as Principal for the foreseeable future and look forward to continuing to work with everyone.

I wish everyone in our community a safe end to the year, a peaceful Christmas and a happy new year.