



St Mary's School Alexandra

2020

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1512

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Trish Etccl, attest that St Mary'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

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Alexandra, offers the richness of Catholic Education and tradition to the growing child in an environment where its example is the centre of all learning.

St Mary's School community should experience and promote the gospel values of love, empathy, trust, respect, honesty and fairness.

We aim to develop the whole child, spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

Our school adheres to and acknowledges the Australian democratic values and principles.

School Overview

St. Mary's enrolment remained stable in 2020 with 15 enrolled students in February. We see this stability in numbers being a result of our school providing the local community with a supportive and successful learning environment. The school operated with eight class groupings, one Foundation class, two Year 1 / 2 classes, three Year 3 / 4 classes, one Year 5 and one Year 6 classes. The school was in its final year of its School Improvement Plan after the 2016 School Review. Our review with both the Catholic Education Office Melbourne and the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (VRQA) was postponed until 2021 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The 2020 Annual Action Plan and School Improvement Plan centered on:

- Strengthen the Catholic Identity of the school community.
- Ensuring all our students experience success in their learning.
- Supporting and enabling all our students to flourish.
- Creating and sustaining a school culture based on shared vision, effective teamwork and continuous improvement.
- Developing the partnership between family, parish and community.
- Collaborative teamwork of staff based on shared vision for continuous improvement.

Key Strategies:

Staff, students and parents continue to work closely together to ensure that every student is given the opportunity participate in an engaging curriculum which enhances the children's learning outcomes. Data analysis has become a key focus for our Teaching and Learning and provides us with information which supports student learning.

The parish / school community continued to work together to enhance Catholic Identity. Opportunities for the parish and school to interact, learn and grow together were planned to support the growth of our faith community.

The focus of student wellbeing continues to be enhanced by the KidsMatter Framework and Be You. St Mary's began its journey with KidsMatter at the commencement of 2013. The KidsMatter Framework has enabled students, staff and parents to work together to ensure students not only feel safe and secure but also have a voice in their learning journey. This initiative has also contributed to our capacity to meet the Child safety standards set out in Ministerial Order no 870.

Social and Emotional Learning is a key component of each classroom's learning environment.

Lessons focused on specific social/emotional skills have proven to be beneficial. Throughout 2020 our school implemented programs and developed resources to support our commitment to the National Consistent Collection of Data. We continued to have a Learning Diversity Leader who coordinated our approach and assisted the school with scaffolding and differentiating learning to meet government and systemic requirements. We were able to meet accountabilities through, professional learning for staff, adjustments in programming and ongoing evidence collection. Our school has over 40 children who are supported by this approach. 2020 saw all children in Years 3 to 6 receiving 1:1 Chrome Book computers and Junior classes had shared access to iPads and Notebook computers.

We also continued to have an Information Technology coordinator to co-ordinate the school's programming and policy development.

This included implementing our remote learning platforms during the multiple lock-downs during the COVID 19 pandemic. Our achievements in the area of technology are an illustration of our school's commitment to ensuring that our children continued to learn when they were unable to be on-site at school. As part of this we offered many families access to school devices and internet connections to assist our children working from home.

Principal's Report

It is my pleasure to present the Principal's report for 2020. This year has been like none other in recent years, where the influences of the world have had such a dramatic impact on the goals, priorities and actions of the school. We have been so fortunate as a community that we have managed to work our way through most difficulties. As we continue to negotiate our way through the disruptions and restrictions associated with COVID-19, I take this opportunity to report on our achievements and reflect on the way in which the St Mary's Catholic Primary School community has responded to supporting not only our children, but each other during this time. Underpinned by Christian values, our school has continued to thrive on our school's core values of 'Respect, Compassion, Responsibility and Excellence.

As Catholic educators working together with parents, the school has continued to inspire in our young children a relationship with Jesus and that by making a positive contribution to society, we express our faith and give life to our community. It is through these times, especially this year, where the St Mary's Catholic Primary School community has been at its strongest, rallying together to stay connected during a time of physical disconnection—a time of cancellations, postponement of events and restricted access to school. It has been through strong partnerships, networks and quality relationships with Catholic Education Melbourne, staff, families, parish and the wider community that we were supported during this time of uncertainty and some isolation.

Catholic Identity

Collaboration with a dedicated team from the parish and school has helped the school overcome some hurdles presented this year in the terms of celebrating the Sacraments, students attending Masses and Liturgies, school visitation by our Parish Priest and the connections with the wider parish. I take this time to thank Fr Vinh Nguyen and Maureen Cowan, our Religious Education Leader, for their support throughout 2020. Together we continued to draw on the knowledge at hand and made consensual decisions in the best interest of all. Thank you to our families for your support, especially when last minute changes were needed! Staff participated in the Staff Commissioning Mass at the beginning of the year and though many courses were cancelled staff have continued their study towards Accreditation by participating in Faith based Accreditation courses.

Education

Implications of COVID-19 have seen us move rapidly into a new era. Each teacher and learning support officer has demonstrated true professionalism as they continue to face the enormous task of adapting to teaching and learning in a world where educational norms as we know them, keep changing. Together our staff transformed learning in a matter of days. They adapted to working and learning from home and then back to school again, developed increased technology skills, adhered to new levels of hygiene, social distancing and maintained strong relationships with students and families when physical distancing made things all the more difficult.

Ensuring meaningful learning experiences for our children is always at the forefront of our planning and systematic delivery of the curriculum. A real positive this year has been the agility demonstrated by staff in developing their own capacity through incredible commitment and creativity. I wish to acknowledge the role of teachers in our school, and the remarkable impact they have on the lives of our students. I take this opportunity of thanking families for supporting children and the school during the time when children were working from home. Rescheduling or tweaking your work/life balance may have presented some challenges, but hopefully those magic times with your children brought you much delight and created memories that will last forever.

Board

The work of the School Advisory Board is a vital aspect of the school's operation. I sincerely thank all members for their time to meet voluntarily and all the work they do for our community. Thanks to the following board members this year, Chair, Dan Crane, Minute Secretary, Caolan O'connor, Fr Vinh Nguyen, Natalie Stewart, Phoebe Parker, Tammy Fallon, Amanda Nickells, Karen Power and Christina Irwin.

In 2021 and 2022 we are looking forward to implementing our school improvement initiatives identified during the review process in July 2021. This year with the impact of COVID 19 our School Action Plan was modified due to the need to focus on home learning for a period of time and also the influence of the social distancing measures that we put in place. Moving forward, it will be important that we continue to leverage technology to enhance our programs. Anytime, anywhere learning where students and parents can access the curriculum and teachers can monitor progress online in real time is just one positive outcome that will continue to develop in the future. One thing we can be certain about when considering the future, is that significant change will continue to occur, and that our children, staff and even parents, will need the skills to adapt and continually learn together. As teaching and learning continues to evolve, I encourage everyone to embrace change so that our children are well-equipped in moving forward safely with confidence, skill and support. It is important to acknowledge that 2020 has been a very different year for all our students, staff and parents. Restrictions of adult access into the school has brought many changes to the daily drop off and pick up routine. Although we have missed daily family involvement in and around classrooms, children have coped exceptionally well, demonstrated resilience and adapted to the new norms swiftly. The level of independence in our Kindergarten and Pre-Primary students has been amazing. Each child has grown so quickly, and we are so proud of them, as they are of themselves.

Kind regards

Trish Etccl

Acting Principal

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- **To strengthen the Catholic Identity of the school.**
- **That student engagement in RE is strengthened.**
- **That staff capacity to engage students in a rich and relevant RE program is strengthened.**

Achievements

- Build upon staff capacity to engage students in rich and relevant RE programs through explicit planning and PLTBuild student voice opportunities through the whole school SRC.
- Connect students and families to various online platforms to prayers, songs and performing artists such as(Andrew Chin) during remote learning times.
- Conduct liturgical and prayer services online during times when Mass was unable to be onsite.

VALUE ADDED

- Connecting RE across the curriculum: Ask big questions; explore big concepts; take action that matters.
- School and class Masses/services: Teachers planned and student's actively participated - increased understanding of rituals, celebrations, liturgy and sense of the sacred for staff, students and parents.
- Continued to teach RE lessons during remote learning.
- Religious Education Leader appointed.
- Continued to update RE resources as required.
- Meetings with REL, Deputy Principal and Parish Priest.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- **Build staff capacity to design and implement innovative curriculum and pedagogy in our Catholic context.**
- **Use student learning evidence to measure and inform the teaching and learning.**
- **Build a teaching and learning culture that has high expectations for all learners.**
- **Continue to develop student voice in their learning: self-reflection, goal setting, etc.**
- **Continue to embed current initiatives for the improvement of reading, writing and numeracy.**
- **Deepen understanding of the developmental nature of the Victorian and RE curricula.**

Achievements

- CEM Literacy Coach visiting twice per term.
- Improvement in staff capacity, reflective practice, embed practice.
- The transfer of effective practice to mathematics and across curriculum.
- PL: online Curriculum design, target teaching, evidence based learning.
- Development of a assessment schedule, tracking, and exploration of what tools will measure growth.
- Staff learning and teaching with an agreed whole school teaching and learning cycle.
- Consistent data analysis and collection to ensure accurate measurement of individual progress.

LITERACY:

- Provide ongoing support for students after the Reading Recovery program.
- Develop strategies and programs to support students at risk and those who need extension.
- Development of consistency in the teaching of Literacy across the whole school.
- Engage families in Literacy and how to support their children.
- Continue the current focus on Writing across the whole school.
- Develop consistent approach to moderating and embedding assessment.

MATHEMATICS

- Revisit the strategies implemented through the 2018 Numeracy Coaching for all staff to embed the professional practice and learning and teaching.
- Increase resources for Numeracy and ensure classrooms have effective access and staff sharing of resources.
- Ensure that we are embedding more problem-solving, worded problems, open-ended and differentiated tasks in daily maths sessions. (as indicated in PAT Maths and NAPLAN data)

- Continue using the Key Ideas for Concept Development in Mathematics planning as this helps to create a common language.
- Consistent best practices and pedagogy around Mathematics to increase student engagement and achievement.
- Continued professional development, both internal and external, for all staff.
- Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely (SMART) goals that can be measured through a variety of assessment tasks.
- Provide maths intervention for students who require focused and explicit support.

ENGAGEMENT

- Develop further student voice in learning/self-reflection/goal setting.
- Increase connections with the community to enhance student learning.
- Provide ongoing authentic and explicit learning for all students to promote engagement.
- Explore emerging technologies to enhance student learning and engagement.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

2020 PAT M data showed:

- Around 30% of Year 1 students are a year above standard in Maths.
- 56% of Year 2 in 2020 PAT M scale scores were higher than 105.1.
- 65% of Year 5s were below expected level in maths.

2020 PAT R data showed:

- 57% of Year 3 students were above expected scale score of 113.0.
- 19% of Year 4 PAT R data showed students at expected level, majority being above.
- 84% of Year 5 PAT reading showed them above expected level and scale score of 125.7.
- 89% of Year 6 PAT R data shows above scale score of 129.7.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018	2019	2018 – 2019	2020	2019 – 2020
	%	%	Changes	%	Changes
			%	*	*
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	91.7	96.2	4.5		
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	96.2	-3.8		
YR 03 Reading	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 03 Spelling	87.5	100.0	12.5		
YR 03 Writing	95.8	100.0	4.2		
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	96.0	88.2	-7.8		
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Reading	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Writing	92.0	88.2	-3.8		

* 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

- **Embed SEL as a vital part of planning for the whole school.**
- **Develop students' abilities to be independent, responsible, resilient, purposeful and confident learner.**
- Link Catholic faith and values more explicitly within SEL.B
- Build teacher capacity in teaching and learning of SEL. e.g. explicit links between Wellbeing and Religious Education.
- Direct teaching of growth mindset.
Camps and outdoor education -postponed due to COVID 19.
- Visual and Performing Arts-creativity and personal strengths-whole school incursion by the STOMP dance company cancelled due to COVID 19 restrictions on visitors to the school.
- SEL and Buddy time documented in planner.
- Learning Diversity leader developed teacher capability to identify student needs.
- Whole school behaviour management approach.
- Develop a Child friendly version of our Child Safety policies.

Achievements

- Appointment of a Wellbeing Leader and Learning Diversity Leader at the school.
- Connections made and implemented between SEL and the Religious Education Curriculum.
- PSG Meetings continue through lock down online.
- Professional Development for staff related to discipline, bullying and the National Safe Schools Framework.
- Regular meetings with the deputy/principal re student wellbeing.
- Contracted Speech Pathology.
- OT through Scope Benalla.
- Continued development of student voice through our Student Representative Council.
- Resources provided for staff to support wellbeing programs.
- Use of technology to promote student personal learning.
- NCCD data collection and funding support received via NCCD.
- Professional development for staff in NCCD.

VALUE ADDED

- Horizons of Hope documents enabled staff to make more explicit link articulation how the Catholic faith connects with SEL learning-self-awareness and awareness of others. Theme: God has given me gifts. How can I use them to serve God, others and me? Perspectives: My Story, Your Story, Our Story-understanding the perspectives of others enables us to help each other.
- Explicit teaching, parent meetings, newsletter articles about how a growth mindset impacts on our learning and our lives; we learn through challenges.
- Activities that promote student connections and engagement.
- Newsletter information to assist with Positive Parenting.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Our 2019 CEMSI Survey data informs us that:

- 79% of our students feel our teachers understand their effort, persistence and performance. This being above the average result for Catholic Education Melbourne.
- 72% of our students feel our teacher/student relationships are positive.
- Our student safety rating by our children is well above Catholic Education Melbourne's average.
- 83% of our students rate our school positive for its care and interest in students.
- 88% of our students believe that they have a caring adult who they can seek within our school.
- 83% of our students rate our student voice and student leadership as positive.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Procedures for monitoring school attendance

1. Notification of an absence can be made by phone or via email on 5772 1500 (message can be left out of hours) or email at admin@smalexandra.catholic.edu.au Parents can also notify the school via Operoo or Seesaw.
2. Parents, guardians and/or carers are required to notify the school by 9.20am of the reason for any absence from school on the day of absence.
3. Where the reason for absence is known, the reason is recorded by administration and the teachers are notified of the absence and reason for this.
4. Attendance at the school is checked twice daily by admin/ reception officer and records are printed and filed.
5. The attendance reports are accessed by admin/reception officer to follow up students who are absent without explanation.
6. If a student is absent without explanation, the school admin / reception officer will send an SMS notification to the parent/guardian for an explanation as soon as possible on the day of absence.
7. Information about the number of days of absence are recorded electronically on the Nforma program and on student reports that are sent to parents twice yearly.
8. Where the rate of absenteeism is of concern, the school will follow up with the parents/guardians by a phone call or email from the principal, deputy principal or a member of leadership.
9. Parents are required to provide up-to-date contact details and notify the school of any changes to contact details or address. This can be done via Operoo, phone call or face to face.

Procedure for late arrival at school

When a child/ren arrive late for school at St Mary's they are required to be signed in at the office prior to going to the classroom.

Procedure for leaving school before the normal departure time

Students who leave school prior to the scheduled finishing time, must be signed out at the office prior to leaving by their parent or guardian.

Procedures for communicating about attendance expectations to parents/guardians

All parents are informed as required about the importance and expectations of attending school via an email or phone call.

Attendance record keeping

Records about attendance, including records about students who have been absent from school without reason for long periods of time are printed and filed in the reception office and leadership are notified by admin / reception officer.

Attendance improvement strategies

Leadership and classroom teachers work with families and students where school attendance is irregular.

This includes opening communication with families, notifying MACS Student Wellbeing for further support and possible inclusion of outside agencies such as Family First.

During COVID-19

1. Children or family check in twice a day with their classroom teacher online. Attendance details were entered into the roll electronically.
2. Children attending onsite were recorded twice daily and this was recorded into the roll by admin.
3. Children who could not participate in their online learning or attend school due being absent for the day the reason was recorded and marked in the roll electronically as per normal procedures if a child is absent from school as mentioned above.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	87.8%
Y02	92.4%
Y03	88.0%
Y04	85.6%
Y05	93.1%
Y06	87.5%
Overall average attendance	89.1%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To work in line with our Child Safe Policy in meeting systemic standards.

Achievements

St Mary's continued to be committed to Child Safety and the wellbeing of children in our care. We create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

We continued to work within the guidelines of the following policies:

- St Mary's Child Safety Policy
- St Mary's Wellbeing Policy
- St Mary's Complaints Policy
- St Mary's Parent Relationship and Code of Conduct Policy
- St Mary's Bullying Policy
- St Mary's Social Media Policy for Staff
- St Mary's Privacy Policy
- St Mary's Excursion and Camp Policy
- St Mary's Anaphylaxis Management Plan

Training & Awareness Strategies

- Staff meetings and training in relation to Child Safe.
- Staff completion of Mandatory Reporting online module
- Principal Briefing on Child Safe conducted by Catholic Education Office Melbourne
- Parent information letters and flyers in school newsletter
- Interviews for Parent Volunteers and Contractors in relation to Child Safe Policy
- Staff training in First Aid and Anaphylaxis
- Induction for new staff to develop awareness of Child Safe policies.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To create and sustain a school culture based on shared vision, effective teamwork and continuous improvement.
- Promote a collective, faith based leadership grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- That the feedback and appraisal practices be strengthened.
- Ensure staff's commitment to our Catholic School Vision, and understand their role in the provision of an engaging and inclusive learning and teaching environment.
- Develop strategies to build the leadership capacity of all staff members and teams.

Achievements

- Staff meetings and PLTs were restructured to address Learning and Teaching needs.
- To reinforce a team approach through Level teams and School leadership team.
- Continuation of a Whole School Learning and Teaching Guide to support Staff and our student learning.
- Leadership team meetings fortnightly or more frequently as required.
- Budget's organised to facilitate student learning and engagement.
- Funding applied for Numeracy for 2021 to allow the Numeracy Leader to be released one day per week for planning and coaching.
- Regular meetings with the principal consultant from CEM.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

- Learning Diversity Network
- NCCD
- Wellbeing Network
- Teaching and Learning Collective
- Lyn Sharratt - Visible Learning
- Staff PLT's - Wellbeing, Numeracy and Literacy
- Deputy Principal Network
- ICON
- Finance Cluster
- Rural COP
- ICT Network

- Mandatory Reporting
- Disability Standards
- CPR and Anaphylaxis
- Spelling online

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2020	20
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Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$160
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TEACHER SATISFACTION

Our 2019 CEMSI Survey data reflected the following staff responses:

- 79% of staff gave our school positive endorsement.
- 90% of our non-teaching staff gave the school positive endorsement.
- 88% of staff gave a positive endorsement for leadership/ staff relationships.
- 80% endorsed the schools leadership as effective.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	80.5%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	81.5%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
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Masters	7.7%
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Graduate	0.0%
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Graduate Certificate	0.0%
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Bachelor Degree	23.1%
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Advanced Diploma	15.4%
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No Qualifications Listed	76.9%
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STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	20.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	12.9
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	14.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	12.7
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To develop dynamic family, parish and community partnerships.
- Ensure that the actions of the school community reflect and connect to Catholic social teachings.

Achievements

- Online platforms & Learning portfolios, display of children's work.
- Continue improving our two-way communication with school families and the parish community communicated online due to COVID 19 restrictions to visitors onsite.
- Develop and implement an ongoing process to capture a variety of formal and informal feedback from parents and students.
- Develop a range of resources to inform parents and support them to become more involved in their child's learning at all levels e.g. Information packs, Family Mathematics Nights etc.
- Parent Teacher Interviews twice a year.

PARENT SATISFACTION

Our 2019 CEMSI data reflects the following:

- 81% of our parents give a positive endorsement of our school.
- 89% of our parents endorse our school ability to meet their child's needs.
- 91% of parents endorse our school's social and learning climate.
- 89% of parents endorse the safety of our school.
- 100% of our parents would recommend our school to others.

These are pleasing results and place our school in a positive frame of mind when considering our future.

Future Directions

The goals and strategies listed below have been identified as key areas for development for 2020.

Education In Faith

- Provide ongoing staff training and pedagogical support.
- Develop clarity around the school's mission for staff, students and families.
- Build staff capacity in contemporary approaches to R.E teaching.
- Support staff with Assessment and Reporting in RE.

Learning & Teaching

- Review and strengthen staff induction and mentoring processes with regular feedback.
- Use student learning evidence approaches to measure and inform the teaching and learning.
- Build our capacity to differentiate our learning across the school.
- Embed current initiatives for the improvement of reading, writing and numeracy.
- Ensure more problem solving and worded questions are implemented into Mathematical teaching and learning.
- Explore emerging technologies to enhance student learning and engagement.

Student Wellbeing

- Embed SEL as a vital part of planning across whole school.
- Link Catholic faith and values more explicitly within SEL
- Develop students' abilities to be independent, responsible, resilient, purposeful and confident learners.
- Embed Child safety policies and procedures.

Leadership and Management

- Review and strengthen staff induction and mentoring processes with regular feedback.
- Provide ongoing support from leadership team in building teaching capacity and enable regular collegial conversations.
- Ongoing implementation of Technology / ICT development plan.

School Community

- Strengthen the input of all stakeholders in the life of the school.
- Develop resources to inform and support parent involvement in their children's learning.
- Implement more local excursions and guest speakers to include the wider community.
- Use information and communication technology to further communications to school.

Facilities and Grounds

- Outside painting of buildings and pressure washing areas that can't be painted.
- Continued maintenance of garden and grounds.

- Continue with internal cleaning in line with COVID 19 requirements.
- Continue to enhance and improve all school facilities and grounds.