



SAINT HELENA'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Something Beautiful for God

2021 Annual School Community Meeting

Principal's Report

General

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2021 Principal's Report to the St Helena's Catholic Primary School community.

We are a truly faith-filled learning community that seeks to explore and impact God's world by providing a foundation from which all can enjoy learning and enjoy life. During this year we have articulated and shared our Vision for Learning for all members of our school community, "In a world envisaged by Jesus, we are active and engaged learners working together in a safe and respectful environment." We strive daily to live this ideal.

As another year draws closer to its end, it is good to stop and reflect on all we have shared during the year... the successes, the challenges, the learning, the relationships, the questions, the quality conversations, the robust discussions, the decisions, the opportunities for growth and so much more.

Catholic Identity

The fact that we are Catholic remains a non-negotiable aspect of our existence. We are a Catholic school before all else. For us, being Catholic is about making our faith real in our interactions with one another and with those in the local and wider community. In so many ways, it is about doing and being "something beautiful for God".

At St Helena's, we have provided experiences and opportunities for staff, students and families in 2021 that have encouraged and supported us all on our faith journey. This has been achieved through:

- A workshop for staff focussed on 'Gratitude in the Christian Life'.
- Building staff members' knowledge and skills by provision of relevant and contemporary professional development through the CEWA Accreditation program.
- Teachers working to fully implement the revised Religious Education program developed by Catholic Education WA and mandated by the Bishops of Western Australia.
- Continuing to strengthen our Mini Vinnie's program and its outreach into the community.
- Celebrating key liturgical seasons and feasts including Holy Week, St Helena and our faction patrons, Mary MacKillop, All Saints Day.
- Weekly Gospel reflection in each class.
- Singing our praise to God each week during Liturgical Singing.
- Sharing in our parish based, family focussed, school supported sacramental program.
- Raising awareness of various Catholic charitable agencies and contributing \$2 185 as donations towards LifeLink, Caritas, Catholic Missions.

Our school prides itself on reaching out to those in need. Through numerous fund-raising and collection initiatives throughout the year, we have helped to make those in need feel a little better. I especially affirm our Mini Vinnies in 2021 for their outstanding work and I thank Mark DiBlasi for coordinating this on our behalf. I also thank in a very special way Mary Calverley from the Parish community for driving our connection to this program.

St Helena's continues to work hard to maintain a strong relationship with the parish. Throughout the year, students were prepared to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation in collaboration with the Parish. In collaborating with our parish, we recognise that we are part of a wider faith community. I would like to thank each of the class teachers involved in the 2021 Sacramental Program as well as Paulette Lambert and members of the Leadership Team for their work in this area. I also extend thanks to our Parish

Sacramental Co-ordinator, Hannah Wager, for her outstanding coordination of the parish sacramental program

Education

Staff at St Helena's seek to equip students with a clear understanding of who they are as individuals and what they can contribute to the world by developing learning and teaching programs designed to develop children's spiritual, cognitive, physical, emotional and social wellbeing. Students are encouraged to become self-motivated learners who can work independently, cooperatively and happily to gain all they need to be their best possible self.

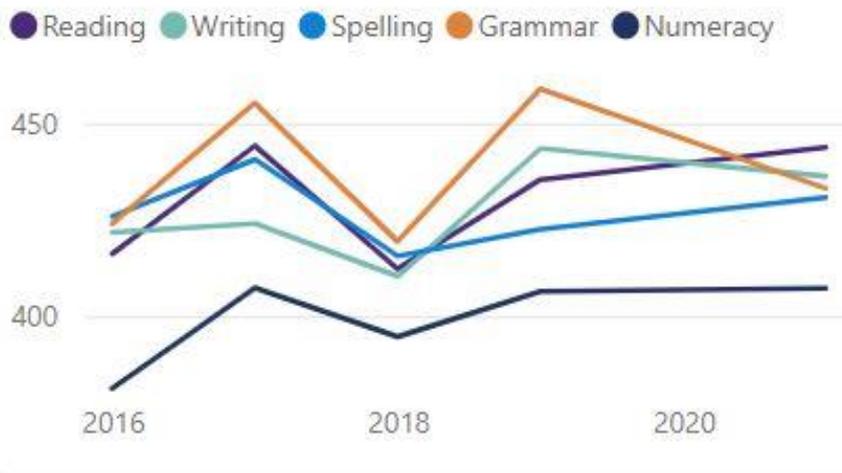
At the heart of our staff's everyday practice is a focus on building relationships with each other and with their students and families. Staff recognise the significant influence they have in creating safe and supportive learning environments to maximise the learning potential of all students and understand the importance of being explicit with their teaching while also developing students' creativity and achievement.

At St Helena's, we have provided experiences and opportunities for staff, students and families in 2021 that have encouraged and supported us all on our learning journey. This has been achieved through:

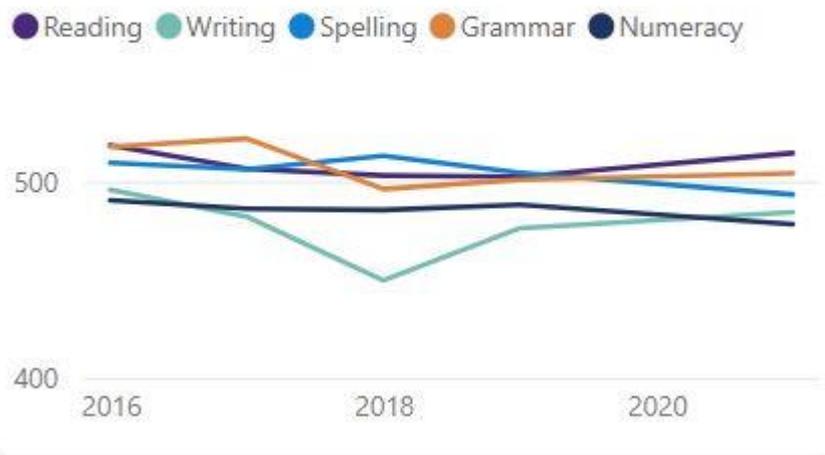
- Establishing a clear Vision for Learning that will strengthen and direct all educational imperatives.
- Ongoing focus on implementing the guiding principles, quality areas, standards and elements of the National Quality Standard, which capture aspects critical to the provision of quality early childhood education.
- Focusing on the incorporation of children's ideas and interests into the teaching and learning program in the early years so that each child's agency is promoted.
- Ongoing structuring and embedding of an inquiry approach to learning that supports students to be active and engaged learners.
- Staff engagement in professional development to establish shared knowledge and understanding of assessment and to develop common principles of practice and protocols for assessment.
- Sharing specific teaching and learning opportunities to assist staff and students to develop an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community cultures, values and traditions.
- Significant investment in staff attending professional learning across a wide range of areas.
- Maintaining focus on the effective and responsible use of ICT to enhance learning.
- Hosting a Cyber Safety workshop for Year 5 and 6 students and all parents.

After the cancellation of NAPLAN in 2020 due to COVID-19, 2021 has again seen students in Years 3 and 5 participate in the assessment program. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists school planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs. The tables below provide an overview of our students' performance over time.

School Achievement over Time for selected Year Level



School Achievement over Time for selected Year Level



As a staff, we will continue to focus on improving student achievement and teacher practice in areas of concern, with a particular focus in Years 3-6 in 2022 and 2023.

Accompanying this report are annual reports from our specialist staff – those responsible for Students with Disabilities, Learning Support, Extension, Physical Education, Science, Music, Visual Art and Design Technologies and Italian. I ask that you please take the time to read these reports and learn about the wonderful work that has taken place in each area during 2021.

St Helena's offers a diverse academic programme without losing sight of what our core business is – assisting students to be literate and numerate in a Catholic environment. Students will experience success when they are taught and assisted by highly dedicated and professional staff. I thank our exceptional staff team for their dedication and recognise how blessed to have them working to support our students. I am equally proud of our students who

continually seek to be courageous in their learning, not afraid to make mistakes and learn powerfully from them.

Community

St Helena's is a community. We believe staff, students, parents and the wider community form a valuable part of our total community. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and strive to build a culture where parents play an active part in our school life and where school staff and parents view each other as partners in the educational process.

The St Helena's community places the highest priority on the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people. Founded in Christ and sustained by faith, St Helena's seeks to fulfil its mission of enabling each student to come into the fullness of their own humanity. This includes paying attention to the inherent dignity of children and young people, and their fundamental right to be respected, nurtured and safeguarded by all. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. Because of this, we are committed to:

- The actioning of our Code of Conduct
- Professional learning & development for staff and parents in regard to child safety
- Ongoing review of the effectiveness of child safety practices within the school

At St Helena's, we have provided experiences and opportunities for staff, students and families in 2021 that have encouraged and supported us all on our journey as a united community. This has been achieved through:

- Continuing to prioritise CEWA's Child Safe Framework and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Updating all staff members' training in mandatory reporting requirements and procedures.
- Working as a staff to more authentically listen and respond to the voice of the child in all aspects of school life.
- Focusing on establishing and embedding a shared understanding of student wellbeing and positive relationships.
- Establishing a Well-Being committee and Middle Leader and inaugurating termly Wellness Week activities.
- Providing many extra-curricula programs and activities – Catholic Performing Arts, Wakakirri, Gardening Club, Chess Club, Mindfulness, Liturgical Dance, St Helena's Got Talent, Mini Vinnies, Robotics.
- Providing support for Wheelchairs for Kids, Cancer Council, Autism Awareness, Aboriginal Literacy Foundation and RSPCA.
- Garnering feedback from all members of our school community, staff, students and parents/caregivers, through the NSI School Climate Surveys.
- Celebration of key events, e.g. Mother's Day, Father's Day, Sorry Day, NAIDOC Week
- Joining with Ellenbrook Public School for various events including Careers Day, ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas Carols.
- Continuing to provide services through our Social Worker and Helping Minds to support the mental health and well-being of students.

Stewardship

Living the Catholic social teaching principle of stewardship requires us to care for people, the environment and other resources. "Steward" accurately defined is, "to plan, to manage, to administer," and stewardship is "the act of being a manager or a caretaker." Quite simply,

stewardship is recognising that everything we have and everything we are is a gift from God and being grateful and generous with those gifts.

At St Helena's, we have provided experiences and opportunities for staff, students and families in 2021 that have encouraged and supported us all on our journey as good stewards. This has been achieved through:

- Establishing six Middle Leader positions for staff that allow leadership to be dispersed and promote school wide leadership practice.
- Engaging teaching staff in goal setting and reflective practice through a structured annual performance and development process.
- Ensuring robust processes so finances are managed effectively and comprehensively by adhering to policies, procedures, budget requirements and financial reviews.
- Maintaining all school facilities and resources to the highest standard of safety and upkeep.
- Ensuring a building program that is affordable and meets the current and future needs of the school.
- Securing approval of Stage 8 of our Capital Development Plan which includes a Music Room, bike store and amphitheatre.
- Promoting and encouraging various sustainability programs within the school to care for our Earth.
- Working in collaboration with the School Advisory Council and the P & F to support the present and future needs of the school.

Connie the Wonder Dog

I think all would agree that the outstanding highlight of 2021 has been Connie, our well-being dog. The joy and excitement this special little dog has brought to our school community is almost beyond words. No one could have imagined the positive impact that Connie has on each school day. Thank you to all those who had faith in this initiative and gave it their full support. Connie is an integral part of our school community and she is loved by all.

Areas for Improvement in 2022

The following areas for improvement (2022) have been identified from the St Helena's current strategic plan as well as through data collected from this year's Climate Surveys and staff feedback.

Catholic Identity

- Embed the St Helena's motto and values within all aspects of the school community and its life.
- Build staff and student understanding of a 'world envisaged by Jesus' through the integration of faith, life and culture.

Education

- Embed the Vision for Learning as a driver for improved teacher practice and enhanced student learning with a particular focus in Years Three and Four.
- Develop a rich data culture that fosters student learning, enhances teacher capacity and builds school improvement.

Community

- Take proactive steps to provide for the pastoral needs of our students to enhance student engagement.
- Partner with our parish and priests to more authentically reflect an active and engaged faith community.

Stewardship

- Commit to fulfilling and promoting Christian responsibility for care of the Earth as our common home.
- Eliminate single-use plastics and reduce general waste.

Acknowledgements

A sincere thank you to all St Helena's families for your ongoing support of children, staff and the Leadership Team throughout the year. Family life, as we all know, is busy and at times very demanding, however we hope St Helena's will continue to be a place where you can enjoy good support, quality relationships and multiple opportunities that support your children to thrive and flourish.

As a school Principal, the quality of my staff and the potential we have for making a profound difference in the lives and the learning of the children in our care has always been and continues to be of paramount importance to me. Our school relies on staff who are not only very good at what they do but understand that students learn best when they are working in a safe, respectful, supportive and creative learning environment. I feel very blessed to work with the calibre of staff who serve the St Helena's community unstintingly and as each semester goes by, we are seeing the incredible fruits of all our planning, hard work and collaboration.

I sincerely thank each member of the St Helena's staff for their ongoing commitment and dedication to our school. I thank in a special way Sascha Saulsman and Albert Borrello, members of our Leadership Team, for their expertise, advice and support in helping to lead our school, both are outstanding educators and leaders who are a gift to this community. I also thank Tracy Papenfus, Rebecca Delauney and Tracy Detata for the work they do in the administrative and financial areas of our school. The varying layers of compliance that are now part and parcel of school life make running a school a complex and complicated task and these three women are an invaluable part of our school team.

With a sense of gratitude, I acknowledge staff members who are leaving St Helena's at the end of this school year – Paulette Lambert, Esther Lee, Victoria Rowland, Karen Jones, Mel Waddington, Albert Borrello, Teagan Dallimore and Samantha Summers. Each one has been a valued member of our community and we have been blessed through their time with us. Together, we wish each one every happiness and blessing in the years ahead.

Special thanks are extended to Fr Bona, our Parish Priest, and to Fr Kenneth who was our Assistant Parish Priest until recently. Both have supported our school in 2021 and are very much valued for their faith leadership and gentle encouragement.

I thank the members of our School Advisory Council for the work they have done in fulfilling their function of bringing the voice of the community into the school. The Council has provided valuable support and input throughout the year, and I thank each one for their contribution to the work of the Council and for their dedication and support.

I particularly offer gratitude to Melinda Webb who has been a member of the School Board/School Advisory Council for four years, three as Chair. Melinda's wisdom has gently guided us to lead and grow St Helena's. Melinda, your support of me in particular has been deeply valued. You have made yourself available under all circumstances and been a source of strength, clarity and drive on many occasions. As you end your time with us, I thank you for all you have contributed to St Helena's and wish you well for all that lies ahead.

I extend my thanks and appreciation to the St Helena's P & F Executive for their outstanding efforts in 2021 to continue to build community and raise funds to resource our school. The generosity of our P & F never ceases to amaze! Their work has often come at great expense to their own families and energy levels and yet they have remained committed to their role with great stamina and focus. Thank you, Kylie, Mary, Lindsay, Jacinta and Mitch.

At the end of this school year, I also recognise the wonderful students of St Helena's who bring enormous pride and joy to each day. In a special way, I mention our Year 6 Graduands. Let our prayer for each of them be that our gracious God will continue to bless and guide them as they go forth from this place.

I acknowledge all those who help our school in whatever way they can. As I have already said, this is very much a community school, and many people help to build our community. Your generosity in assisting in lots of different ways has not gone unnoticed and you and your efforts are appreciated.

Closing

As a school, we continue to strive for excellence, understanding that we are a Catholic school before all else. As we draw close to the end of another school year, it pays to remind ourselves that amidst the joys and sorrows of our everyday lives, amidst the busyness and activity of school life here at St Helena's, God sits at the very centre of it all and if we can individually and collectively continue to learn to trust in God, then everything else has a way of falling into place and our path ahead becomes clear.

Lina Bertolini
Principal