




SAINT HELENA'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Something Beautiful for God

2023 Annual School Community Meeting

Principal's Report

Good evening to Fr Bona, the Catholic School Advisory Council members, P&F Executive and Committee members, Parents/Carergivers and Staff. I am pleased to present to you my Principal Report for St Helena's Catholic Primary School in 2023. In line with our Vision for Learning developed in 2021, my Principal's report looks at the 4 pillars that underpin it.

	<p>Christ Centred Catholic Identity <i>At St Helena's, we value the visible expression of our Catholic identity and actively give witness to the values of the Gospel.</i></p>
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It has been wonderful to be able to come together in prayer on many occasions throughout the year, celebrating many Masses and Liturgies together. Thank you to Melissa Myles and Luke Vine for coordinating many of the Masses and Liturgies and to the staff who have also planned and coordinated celebrations with their students.

It has also been great to see that we continue to have a focus at St Helena's Catholic Primary School on raising funds for the less fortunate, and we are very appreciative of our School communities generosity in supporting Project Compassion, Catholic Missions, Life Link and of course Vinnies. The importance of embedding in our students the gift of charity is invaluable as they grow up in our world. We continue to foster in our students a need to develop a sense of caring, concern and responsibility towards others less fortunate.

This year we enjoyed celebrating our Faction's Patrons and we look forward to what 2024 brings as we continue to grow and celebrate these days in different ways, further enhancing the charism of each Saint. We continue to embed practices and traditions that will assist all in our community in a greater understanding of Catholic traditions, as well as providing them opportunities on their own faith journey.

It was lovely to be a part of our Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6 Sacrament preparations and celebrations this year in the Parish. I would like to take this opportunity thank our Sacrament teachers, Mrs Joanna Bukara, Ms Ann-Marie Conama, Miss Bianca Hearn, Mrs Christine Norman, Miss Jess Healy and Mrs Eva Viola, along with Miss Melissa Myles and Mr Luke Vine, for their time and commitment in supporting the Parish of St Helena of the Holy Cross in preparing the students for the Sacraments and your assistance with the Sacrament celebrations. Thank you to the Sacramental Coordinator, Hannah Wager for your tireless efforts in coordinating the Parish Sacramental Program.

The students and staff continue to be given opportunities that assist us in developing our understanding of the Catholic Faith and practices, to support us to enact our School Improvement focus in regard to further developing the students' knowledge of the Catholic traditions and preserving the Catholic Identity of St Helena's. As a staff, we participated in a Professional Learning Day on the theme "Why Catholic?". We continue to work with staff to maintain their Accreditation requirements in working and teaching Religious Education in our Catholic school.

As a School community, I would like to thank Fr Bona for his ministry as our Parish Priest. We are very appreciative of your presence in our School for Masses, Liturgies and Classroom visits, and your support and prayers for the School community. We look forward to seeing Fr Felipe in our school community next year as well, in our fast growing Parish of St Helena of the Cross.



Collaboration

Community

At St Helena's, we value staff, students, parents, caregivers, parish and the wider community working together to support each person to become the person God intended them to be.

As a School community we continue to prioritise student wellbeing across the school. A range of initiatives and practices are in place to support students with their wellbeing and social emotional learning. The Friendly Schools program has previously been implemented and will be a focus of implementation and reviewing in 2024. This year we have had Miss Abbey Lamb and for part of the year, Mrs Jemma Trimboli, in the role as Social Worker, working in collaboration with staff and parents/caregivers to support students with their wellbeing and social emotional needs where individual needs were identified. We are excited to be able to continue providing a Social Worker in 2024 at St Helena's, and with the departure of both Jemma earlier in the year and Abbey at the end of this year, we are pleased to announce that we have Elise Johnson joining us in 2024. Our Staff Wellbeing Team, lead by Kerry Krause earlier in the year and then Alison Newman have done a great job in ensuring wellbeing is at the centre of all we do at St Helena's.

We continue to promote student voice in and around the School and ensure that our practices promote inclusivity and the students feeling safe in their environment to speak up. We have this year created a Student Code of Conduct with our students and staff, lead by our School Improvement Team. We are also in the process of relooking at our commitment to our core values of Respect, Equality, Community and Care for the Earth. We are looking at expanding our student leadership structures in 2024, providing further opportunities for our students to develop their leadership skills.

We have worked extremely hard as a staff to continue to promote a positive home/school partnership and involve our parents/caregivers in the life of the School and their child/ren's learning journey. It is hoped that as we move forward our parents/caregivers continue to get involved as much as they can when the opportunity arises. "It takes a village to raise a child" is an African proverb that refers to an entire community of people needing to provide for and interact positively with children for those children to learn and grow in a safe and healthy environment. This is what we continue to strive for at St Helena's Catholic Primary School.

It was great to be able to offer some parent information evenings this year. Our Parent Information evenings at the beginning of the year were well attended. The opportunity to attend the Surf Online Safe Cyber Safety presentation and the Reporting Information session was taken up by some of our families. We continue to strongly believe in promoting these important opportunities, and encouraging parent/caregivers participation. Family support is vital so that we can work together to share the same important messages with our students so that they not only feel safe in their environments both at school and at home, but also to encourage them to learn about healthy and respectful relationships.

Thank you to our parents and caregivers that have assisted around the School in some way this year, whether in classrooms, at School events or in other ways. It is very much appreciated! I would like to take this opportunity to thank our P&F Executive Committee of 2023. Thank you to the Chair of the P&F, Gabriella Lupis, and to the rest of the P&F Executive Committee for your time and efforts. We appreciate all that you have done in organising events in 2023 to build on community. Thanks again to all those involved in any events this year at the School. As the P&F Committee all conclude their time on the committee this year, it is hoped that in the new year we are able to find some new parents/caregivers to step up onto the P&F Committee and ensure we can continue with a committee assisting with community events at our wonderful school.

We see the need to continue looking at this year's School Improvement focus on parent connection in the school community and proactively providing for the pastoral needs of our students and staff, placing the spiritual, physical and mental wellbeing of each person as a priority. We are very excited in 2024 to embark on implementing the Berry Street Education Model which will upskill our staff in catering for the emotional needs of all our students even further.



Voice & Engagement

Education

At St Helena's, we value evidence-based teaching and learning practices that are respectful and responsive to the diverse needs of all learners in an ever-changing world.

As a staff we continue to focus on providing the best possible learning opportunities to all our students, catering for individual learning needs and interests. We want all our students to be given the opportunity to learn and strive for personal excellence.

In 2023, staff in the Early Years reflected on the National Quality Standards to ensure ongoing improvement across the seven Quality Areas. As we continue to focus on quality improvement in the early years and across the School, inclusive practices and collaboration with parents/caregivers will be an ongoing priority to ensure the further development of a welcoming, Catholic school community.

We continue to collect and analyse a range of student assessment data to ensure the development and implementation of effective teaching and learning programs that cater for students' diverse needs. Mathematics continues to be an area of focus across the School. We will also continue to focus on whole School practices and the implementation of high impact teaching strategies to support all our students in their learning. We are wanting to see all our students demonstrating reasonable and significant growth, and we will continue to look at the data we collect to inform our teaching moving into 2024. We will also be focusing on consistency in our scope and sequence across all learning areas.

We continue to strive as a staff, both Teachers and Education Assistants, to provide the students the best possible support, wherever they are along their learning journey. We also will continue to look at ways we can challenge our students to excel even further in their learning as they grow as life-long learners. MacqLit, that was introduced this year as a reading intervention program, will continue into 2024 at St Helena's. We offer wonderful support and intervention at St Helena's for students requiring further consolidation of skills in literacy, numeracy, English as an Additional Language and those with additional needs. Thank you to all the staff who assist in supporting these students, you all do an amazing job!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Learning Diversity Coordinator, Miss Grace Dwyer and our Learning Support Coordinator, Mrs Krystie Clark, for your efforts this year in assisting with the collection of data, plans and assisting our students to progress, focusing on their individual goals. I would also like to acknowledge the work of our Middle Leaders in various Learning Areas. As we move into 2024 and we look at consolidating our staff structures and look at providing staff further opportunities to lead, we will be looking at our staff team structures and utilising the skills of all our existing and new staff in 2024.

Our Specialist classes of Italian, Music, Physical Education, Science, Visual Art continued in 2023 and will continue into 2024. Our focus on Sustainability too will be a part of the St Helena's way and I would like to thank Mrs Emma White for her initiative and many, many hours that she contributes to all things sustainability at St Helena's.

2023 has seen all our students benefit from various incursions and excursions throughout the year to complement the teaching and learning taking place in our classrooms. Our Year 6 students and staff enjoyed going on their adventure camp earlier in the year too. It is wonderful to see our Performing Arts and Sporting opportunities in the school, and the participation and enjoyment from our students is fantastic! Thank you to Miss Gabriella Panaia and Mrs Joanna Bukara for your efforts with the choir and dance groups. Thanks to Mrs Simone Hesse for your enthusiasm and coordination of so many sporting events throughout the year. We are very blessed to have so many talented and committed staff at St Helena's who selflessly give so much of their time to provide our students with so many opportunities. Our ExACT program, lead by Mrs Julia O'Meara has once again provided the opportunity for many of our students to excel. The introduction of the Coding Club this year by Miss Jess Healy and Miss Melissa Myles has allowed our students who have an interest in robotics an opportunity to excel in this area. Thank you to all our teachers who have taken on extra-curricular activities and thanks in advance to those keen to introduce new initiatives in 2024.

As we head into 2024, we will be continuing to focus on embedding St Helena's Vision for Learning as a driver for improved teacher practice and enhanced student learning, even taking the time to review our Vision for Learning in the educational landscape where identifying best practice is healthy and essential. We will continue to focus on developing a rich data culture that promotes student learning and enhances teacher capacity, which in turn will build school improvement.



Safety & Respect

Stewardship

At St Helena's, we value each individual and act with concern for the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of all members of our community.

Our Catholic School Advisory Council has been very supportive of the School and myself in 2023. Thank you to Tara Palm as Chair and to all the Advisory Council. I am always very appreciative to you all for your time and contribution to the Catholic School Advisory Council. There have been many conversations about the operations of the school and as we look at making future plans for the best interests of our students, staff and families. We have budgeted for an upgrade to the Kindergarten Playground in the new year, as well as looking at replacing some of our furniture across the school. We will continue to look at ways we can further enhance our spaces to provide even more collaborative learning environments for our students. We continue to commit to spending money on our technology resources throughout the school and look forward to integrating Digital Technology even more in 2024 at St Helena's. Thank you to Mark Sanders and Laura Brown for your time on the CSAC, as you both finish up this year on the CSAC.

Our staff have had many opportunities for Professional Learning throughout the year and the variety of courses and workshops that they have had the opportunity to attend as a staff and individually have been varied and in line with supporting them and the students in their care. We look forward to continuing to provide these opportunities in 2024, in line with supporting them on their professional growth.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with Discovery Kids, providing both Before and After School Care at St Helena's. We also continue with our canteen in 2024 and thank Eli for her efforts, along with those parents/caregivers who have given of their time throughout the year to volunteer. For the canteen to remain open and sustainable, we need to look at how we can get more assistance from our school community.

In 2023 we continued with 2 classes of Pre-Kindergarten due to the high interest in the community. We also had 2 streams through to Year 6, with 499 students and 341 families in the School this year. We have waitlists in many of our year levels and in 2024 we will welcome another full double stream Kindergarten cohort. Our Kindergarten to Year 6 enrolment numbers are estimated to be at 475. In the new year we will welcome a new cohort of Pre-Kindy students as well, starting with 1 day, on a Wednesday, that will add to this total as the year progresses.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our Teaching Staff and Education Assistants at the School. We are very blessed as a School community to have a committed and hard working staff who never say that anything is too much when it comes to helping our students. Doing what is best for each and everyone of them. On behalf of the School community, I would like to thank each and every one of you for all that you do in your classrooms and around St Helena's.

I would also like to acknowledge our Administration Staff of Bec Delauney and Tracy Detata for all that you continue to do in administration. Your work ethic, skills, knowledge and happy smiles are amazing. Thank you for all that you do and being the wonderful voices and faces of our School for the new families to the School and the friendly 'nothing is ever too much mentality' that you share with the entire School community. Thank you Christine Sheen, our Finance Officer for your efforts since starting with us in Term 3. I am so very thankful and appreciative of our entire team!

I would like to thank Simon Gilyead for his time and efforts in maintaining our grounds. We are very appreciative of Simon's efforts and the pride that he takes in his role. Nothing is ever too much and we are often complimented by our visitors to the School in the way our grounds continue to be kept so beautifully.

I wish to acknowledge our Leadership Team of Melissa Myles and Luke Vine for your support and leadership. I am very appreciative of all that you do to support, students, staff, parents/caregivers and myself. Your commitment to our school doesn't go unnoticed. You lead with the best interests of all our students, staff and families. Great leadership traits to have!

At the end of this year we will be farewelling Mrs Kathryn Preiato, Miss Melissa Carosin, Mrs Christine Norman, Mrs Shannon Howard, Mrs Aine Walsh, Mrs Casey Loong, Miss Abbey Lamb, Mrs Megan Dawson and Miss Holly Lombardi. We also farewell Mrs Rebecca Curel and Mr Mark Diblasi who will not be returning from leave at the end of the year. I thank all of these staff members for their contribution to St Helena's Catholic Primary School over their time with us and wish them all the very best for their futures. Some have been with St Helena's for a short time, many for a long time. You will forever have left your mark on the school community of St Helena's Catholic Primary School.

In 2024, Mrs Kerry Krause and Mrs Tracy Turpin will be on leave. Mrs Jess Parker, Mrs Katie Bogdanich and Mrs Audrey Clancy continue to be on Parental Leave. Miss Gabriella Panaia will be on secondment to Ngalangangpum School, Warmun. We wish you all the best – enjoy the adventure!

In 2024 we look forward to welcoming to the Staff Team of St Helena's Catholic Primary School the following new members – Ms Elise Johnson, Mrs Jacqueline Gunning, Mrs Sandra Markham, Ms Tamara Ellenbroek, Miss Rhiannon Watson, Mr Lewis Diep, Miss Rheannon Bellman, Mr Robert Vidovich, Mrs Anna Fletcher-Hackett, Miss Claire Robinson and Mrs Christine Rocca.

As I reflect on 2023 and look forward to 2024, I am grateful for the students in our school. I am grateful for our committed staff who have the best interests of all our students as their priority. I am grateful of our supportive parents and caregivers. As we look at the feedback from our School Climate Survey in 2023 and progress our School Improvement Plan and Vision for Learning into the new year, we look forward to continuing to build the community of St Helena's Catholic Primary School and celebrate 25 years of Catholic Education at St Helena's. We want to celebrate the many successes, look at ways we can enhance the learning journey of all our students in our village, and continue to grow a Catholic school that is Christ-centred and child focused. I am very grateful to be a part of this wonderful community, working together to do Something Beautiful for God, in guiding our precious students. Our students are the reason we do what we do, and we are very proud of them!

Wishing everyone a safe and Holy Christmas. May the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ this Christmas bring joy to everyone!

Peace & Happy Days!



Mr Santino Giancono
Principal