

St Monica's School Wodonga West

2020

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1699

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Contact Details

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Jacqueline Partington, attest that St Monica'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.

29/04/2021

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 Identity and Vision Statements

Every child, every day, will be supported and challenged in a faith filled, welcoming and inclusive environment, underpinned by best practice and high expectations.

School Overview

Catholic Education in Wodonga has a long and distinguished history. St Monica's Primary School is one of the largest Catholic Primary Schools in the Diocese of Sandhurst and continues to provide outstanding contemporary education to students.

Enrolment and Facilities:

Our last census recorded an enrolment of 520 students. This consisted of:

Foundation- 72 Pupils

Year 1- 73 Pupils

Year 2- 60 Pupils

Year 3- 77 Pupils

Year 4- 81 Pupils

Year 5- 76 Pupils

Year 6- 81 Pupils

Principal's Report

As I reflect on 2020, I am engulfed by feelings of deep gratitude and awe for all that has been achieved by everyone in our school community. What stands tall for me is the strong sense of community spirit and willingness to support each other amidst the challenges everyone has faced. I once again extend a sincere thank you and appreciation to staff, students and families.

For some of us 2020 has helped us to appreciate and find the wonder and the marvel in our ordinary everyday life - the joy of going out for a meal or a movie, a drive in the countryside, the infinite pleasure of being in the company of loved ones or friends. In a way, perhaps it has made the ordinary come alive for some, and in that case, the extraordinary will take care of itself. For others though, medical, family or financial pressures may have taken their toll and it may feel like little can be salvaged from the wreck they have found themselves in. Either way, during this crisis, the St. Monica's community has banded together to support each other and navigate a path in a cohesive and united manner. I am not surprised and I am deeply grateful.

Amidst the tumultuous year, we have forged ahead with our strategic plan with the key achievements outlined within. We have also worked towards preparing to introduce a new governance structure. CES Limited are now our new governing body and we give deep thanks to the Parish Priests who have governed our schools for many years. We particularly thank Fr Jun Jun for his contribution to our great school and we look forward to a continued strong Parish partnership within changed governing parameters.

Wishing you an abundance of God's blessings

Jacqui Partington

Principal

Parish Priest's Report

The year 2020 is indeed a year to remember because of the Coronavirus pandemic that has brought the world to its knees and has remarkably changed the world. For me, it is a year to remember because it also marked the conclusion of the role of Parish priests as Canonical Administrators of the schools in the parish. In a way, it is a relief for me as the Canonical Administrator to four schools in Wodonga, Corryong and Tallangatta.

And thanks to all principals and many others who, in the spirit of subsidiarity, have contributed to make the process, the transition and change of governance as smooth as it can be, especially in matters pertaining the relationship between the Schools and parish.

That being said, I am also encouraged by the fact that though I am no longer in that role, my presence and involvement in our schools is still expected in some capacity. I am glad schools are back onsite now. The fact that schools are back in having some school liturgies now which involve us priests gives me and Fr Dean a sense of normalcy. I hope and pray this keeps on track now.

As for Fr Dean, he is enjoying the warm welcome that the parish has given for him as well as the way our school has welcomed him in the liturgies he has led.

A big thanks to each of our school leaders, teachers, staff, students, parents and guardians for your resilience, hard work, dedication and ongoing commitment to our schools during this challenging time of our life. I also commend the way our schools have worked on to highlight the health and safety for our students and school community as we hopefully get to a new normal- whatever it would look like.

With hope for a Covid-free future, I pray that enlightened by the Mercy story and inspired by the humble life of (St Francis), we may all remain 'being true' (St Augustine), 'learn to love and love to learn' (St Monica's) and live our 'life in Jesus' (CCW).

When this Pandemic is over:

May we never go back to being indifferent to the sufferings of others.

May we never turn away from caring and helping others.

May we continue to show our respect for others.

May we never take for granted the true friends we have found this time.

May we continue to cherish the presence of our loved ones around us.

May our faith keep us going.

May our hope keep motivating us to live on.

May our love keep giving us purpose and direction in life.

Let us trust that in God's own time, things will be beautiful again.

God bless you all!

Fr Junjun

Catholic Mission and Identity and Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

In 2020 St Monica's committed to the following:

- Developing an understanding of the Charism of St Monica's.
- Continuing to create an inclusive environment, honouring the dignity, cultures and faith traditions of all.
- Building staff confidence through faith formation and an opportunity to understand our own spirituality.
- Building understanding that the earth and all life on it are part of God's creation. We are called to respect this sacred gift.

Achievements

- We promote a faith relationship with Jesus by providing opportunities for students to participate in Social Justice programs; Even amidst the difficulties of restrictions, students were encouraged to think of others.
- We strengthen our Parish links (Wodonga Catholic Parish) throughout the year with whole school Masses by taking each area to a parish morning mass, and we celebrated liturgies within each area throughout the terms, with students inviting their family and friends to attend these events. When we were impacted by restrictions we brought the parish to students at home, by recording masses to share with students and their families. We thank Father Junjun for his partnership, flexibility and continued support.

VALUE ADDED

- Due to Covid during 2020 many activities were not able to occur including, meals on wheels.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

At St Monica's in 2020 our key learning and teaching goals were to embed our structured literacy program and develop our understanding of explicit and direct instruction. This also required many changes to the structures of our curriculum, planning and management of data. We intended to establish highly accountable and effective data collection around the key aspects of literacy, which was completed with high effect. We intended to implement an early intervention program that complemented teacher instruction and was reflective of the three tier intervention framework. With extensive investment in staffing we were able to achieve that model in 2020 and maintain this model throughout COVID related shutdowns.

In 2020 we continued our focus on building teacher capacity through increasing understanding of best practice in learning and teaching, understanding the science of learning and using observation feedback cycles to promote peer to peer development.

Achievements

In 2020 we implemented a lot of our learning and teaching goals and managed to achieve more than expected in the teacher capacity and interventions spaces. We developed an understanding of explicit direct instruction as a staff and utilised this across all classrooms. We evidenced an increased engagement in learning and higher level of participation in learning tasks. In this space we also refined our use of retrieval practice to support the long term understanding and mastery of what was taught in class.

In the remote learning space our teams managed to deliver a strong program that continued to grow our students. We evidenced in literacy and numeracy strong levels of growth in students during these periods. Not all students were as successful but the effective use of data allowed us to determine who needed additional support when returning to school.

Across the school we implemented a lower variance scope and sequence across literacy and numeracy. This provided clear learning objectives for all students across all year levels. This was reflected in reporting to families. Each area was reported on rubrics that summarised the expected skills at each year level. This allowed for clarity and increased accountability to student development across these key learning areas.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

NAPLAN was not held as the Australian Government decided due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN assessment would not take place. However, as a school we collected high levels of data around reading and numeracy. Danielle Topalovic, is the designated Literacy Leader, who works to support teachers in planning and literacy teaching, as well as identifying students who require targeted support, using data. This data being collected, has evidenced literacy development as having good growth, in all areas of reading. The data tracks sounds (phonics), whole word reading and text level reading. There has been significant growth for all cohorts of students, except the Grade 5 cohort, where significant focus has been placed on developing skills that decrease instructional casualty and increase basic skills in phonics, to develop literacy skills. Conversely, the junior grades, that have a structured synthetic phonics approach,

are having high levels of success and decreased labels of intervention. All year levels have the support of Literacy Specialists who complete targeted intervention during the literacy block, to help students who need remediation and access the curriculum.

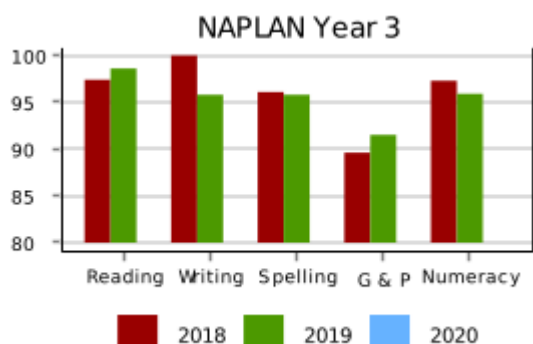
In numeracy we evidenced a strong growth of every cohort across the school. We are still seeing an average score lower than the expected standard in our 5-6 area and are implementing 2021 plans to support this space. Our 3-4 students experienced high levels of growth and as a cohort are achieving the expected standard as an average, this area will also remain a focus for numeracy intervention in 2021. All junior cohorts F-2 achieved an average at or above the expected standard.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018	2019	2018 – 2019 Changes	2020	2019 – 2020 Changes
	%	%	%	%	%
				*	*
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	89.6	91.5	1.9		
YR 03 Numeracy	97.3	95.9	-1.4		
YR 03 Reading	97.4	98.6	1.2		
YR 03 Spelling	96.1	95.8	1.9		
YR 03 Writing	100.0	95.8	-4.2		
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	97.1	89.6	-7.5		
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	95.6	-4.4		
YR 05 Reading	94.2	100.0	5.8		
YR 05 Spelling	97.1	98.5	1.4		
YR 05 Writing	87.0	92.5	5.5		

* 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.



Pastoral Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

In 2020, the St Monica's Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Team has worked through the goals as identified in the Annual Action Plan. This has been heavily supported by the school leadership team and general staff. As we worked through the complications and anxiety that were provided to us via the COVID-19 pandemic, it was a privilege to witness the level of care and understanding that our staff were able to extend to our students and their families. We are all deeply indebted to the work that they put forward in the 2020 school year.

As a school, we continually worked to ensure that all members of the St Monica's Community were welcomed, respected, included and feeling safe at all times. Our focus has continued to grow in an attempt to ensure that all staff are confident in the understanding that we are aiming to be a school of positive education, with the intent to have our students flourishing. OHS policy review and communication has also taken place during the school year, as has the continuation of our RRRR curriculum implementation and our leading of the statewide RR initiative.

Achievements

This year all staff members were required to complete a series of mandatory online modules to ensure they understood the requirements and responsibilities of student safety and wellbeing. Each member of our staff also completed e-Learning modules for NCCD, anaphylaxis, Type 1 diabetes, asthma, student wellbeing and mandatory Reporting. Our staff also revisited our staff code of conduct to ensure appropriate interactions towards and in the presence of children.

The Student Wellbeing Policy was once again reviewed and our curriculum implementation for Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships (RRRR) was further embedded and refined, even throughout the remote learning periods. Our Respectful Relationships initiative (as a lead school) was once again maintained and we continued to engage with other schools in our cluster to ensure that our students are developing an understanding of gender equality.

We also continued to explore what Positive Education meant for our staff and students as a school community and ensured that we were moving towards embedding many positive educational practices into our classrooms. We look forward to building on this further in 2021.

VALUE ADDED

It is our aim that families of children at St Monica's feel engaged with their school and are able to participate in their child's education, personal and social development. With the large number of Defence children in our school we have a responsibility to support these families and the social and emotional support that they require. This was facilitated through our classroom teachers, leadership and our wellbeing team. Looking towards 2021, we are extremely

fortunate to welcome Jacqui Boehringer to the role of Defence transition aide and Jacqui brings with her an immense amount of experience that will support the ongoing work of the DTA.

Danielle Topalovic continued to support all of our NCCD students and families in her role of Learning Diversity Leader. Danielle continued to work with all of our staff to ensure personalised student goals that promoted growth and achievement were both set and actioned throughout the school year. Maria Hutchings continued to support students and families through her role as our school Psychologist. Maria provided support to students through small group and individual student sessions.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Communication between school and home has continued to be a big focus for St Monica's throughout 2020. Teaching staff have continued with weekly group parent emails to allow for regular communication. This has been in conjunction with the fortnightly newsletter, LA meetings and on time reports that detail each student's academic and pastoral achievements through our Parent Access Module known as PAM. We acknowledge that it is vital for our students and parents to be regularly informed regarding all wellbeing needs and academic performance.

The LA meetings, along with ongoing check-ins were able to provide staff with an understanding of how our students were feeling about their schooling throughout the course of the 2020 year. Certainly, the impacts of remote learning and the ongoing pandemic increased the need for staff to continually check in with students.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student Attendance:

Student attendance is marked online twice daily using our learning platform, SIMON. This data is automatically uploaded into Simon and student attendance rates are available in real time. Staff regularly assess student attendance rates and in the event that they are concerned about the lack of attendance, contact to a parent or caregiver will be made by either the classroom teacher, Principal, Deputy Principal or reception. Parents are asked to contact the school if their child will not be attending on any particular day also. Whilst learning remotely, students were contacted via the administration office when listed as 'absent' and learning remotely. Attendance guidelines were moderated across Victoria to accurately represent the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic also.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	93.0%
Y02	94.8%
Y03	95.3%
Y04	95.4%
Y05	95.1%
Y06	95.4%
Overall average attendance	94.8%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Child safety continued to be a strong focus within our community and in particular, for our staff during the 2020 school year. All of our staff were trained in Mandatory reporting protocols, ensuring that they understood their responsibilities and the requirements of our vocation to keep children safe at all times.

Our staff and parent Code of Conduct has been initiated and communicated, with all staff, and all parents involved directly with children, signing off on the code of conduct. The importance of this was communicated to our community consistently throughout the year via our newsletter, facebook page and website. As a part of our recruitment processes, all prospective staff are referee checked and questions specifically asked regarding the suitability of the candidate to work with children. Our human resource officer ensures that our records accurately reflect any concerns or discussions that occur regarding child safety.

Achievements

Our staff were all briefed on the 'PROTECT' framework and have a clear understanding as to their responsibilities pertaining to identifying and responding/ reporting to all forms of abuse. In line with this, and as a part of our RRRR implementation, our students were able to engage in empowerment, participation and consent discussions. These discussions were able to support student understanding regarding what it means to be safe, who a trusted adult would be, who they can discuss concerns that they may have and that they have the right, at all times, to say 'NO' when they feel uncomfortable.

The ongoing development, refinement and improvement to all of our childsafe practices is occurring on a consistent basis. Communication to staff and our wider school community is paramount to ensure that any change in policy and/ or practice is understood and is able to be embedded as quickly as possible. Our school commitment to ensuring that these policies and practices support the needs of our students is of the highest priority and we look forward to being able to continue to improve and develop into the 2021 school year.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

I begin by making special mention of the Leadership and Critical Incident teams and Learning Leaders who have been charged with making many significant on the spot decisions to guide the way amongst an ever-changing landscape this year. I am proud to say that I have watched each one of them lead with humanity at the forefront, balancing care and concern for staff, parents, students and the wider community while creating a vision representative of those they lead. They should all be commended for their "crisis" leadership because I think they have been a fine example to us all.

Achievements

At St. Monica's we believe that Leaders at St Monica's co-create an inclusive, shared and collaborative culture, where student flourishing is the core purpose. Leadership is exercised in all areas of school life. This year we engaged an external consultant to work with the leadership team to plan and execute a high performance teams model to best meet the needs of our team and community. This work extended to involve all staff through a series of workshops and sessions ensuring our vision was co-created and lived.

We also prepared to apply for a State and Federal Government grant for the next phase of our Master Plan which is a purpose built Junior learning centre. We look forward to the results of our Grant application in 2021.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

We were fortunate to send 13 staff to Melbourne in January 2020, to complete the Sounds Write Training for our Junior School Area. We held twice weekly professional learning meetings for staff which continued online during remote learning. Many of these sessions were facilitated by internal staff, whilst others were facilitated by guest, expert presenters.

TEACHER SATISFACTION

This year all staff completed a school culture survey that was analysed at leadership level and then communicated and worked through with all staff. The results of the survey were broken down into what simply required acknowledging and what required an action. It was acknowledged that staff are aligned to the school vision and all staff are playing an active role in developing, strengthening and maintaining this. There was also an acknowledgement that our expectations have lifted and this has had a positive impact on student learning. There was also an alignment of staff values in regard to our school direction and whilst in its infancy, our

journey with Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) has proven to be positive. It was also acknowledged that the level of student behaviour has improved in classrooms and on the yard. The number of high level incidents are down and this can be connected to improved student engagement, along with an increased level of confidence from staff in working with students proactively.

Actions that have resulted from the survey include an increased emphasis on school wide leadership, not just from those that hold formal positions and a continued focus on building a coaching culture. More opportunities to work collaboratively with other teams was highlighted as an action alongside continuing to embed a culture of improved quality feedback loops. Ways to gather evidence on student motivation through student voice was also an area of note as was the intentionality of the integration of implementing the SEL curriculum. Increasing parent engagement across some areas of the school was also noted to be acted upon.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	89.7%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	83.3%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	15.6%
Graduate	25.0%
Graduate Certificate	3.1%
Bachelor Degree	53.1%
Advanced Diploma	12.5%
No Qualifications Listed	18.8%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	45.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	39.0
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	24.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	23.4
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Given the COVID crisis there was significant support from the school community to implement the remote learning program and support each other through a very difficult time. All areas of our school community should be commended for their generous support of the school and each other.

Achievements

Online forums were used to engage and connect with the community in a very successful manner.

PARENT SATISFACTION

Once again parents became an integral part of supporting the implementation of remote learning and were outstanding in this endeavour. Parents connected well with staff online and the remote learning program was adjusted in line with parent feedback. Parents engaged with online parent sessions and parent teacher interviews to a very high standard and should be congratulated for navigating a difficult space. General parent feedback was very positive.