

# St Monica's School Wodonga West

## 2021 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1699

# Table of Contents

Contact Details .....2

Minimum Standards Attestation .....2

Governing Authority Report .....3

Our School Identity and Vision Statements .....4

School Overview .....5

Principal’s Report .....6

Parish Priest’s Report .....7

Catholic Mission and Identity and Education in Faith .....8

Learning & Teaching .....10

Pastoral Wellbeing .....13

Child Safe Standards .....16

Leadership & Management .....17

School Community .....20

## Contact Details

ADDRESS	137 Brockley Street Wodonga West VIC 3690
PRINCIPAL	Jacqueline Partington
GOVERNING AUTHORITY	Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd
TELEPHONE	02 6024 3151
EMAIL	principal@smwodonga.catholic.edu.au
WEBSITE	www.smwodonga.catholic.edu.au
E NUMBER	E3046

## 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 2021 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 Schools.

23/03/2022

**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](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

## Governing Authority Report

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd identifies learning and teaching as two parts of the same action designed to ignite the 'spark of the divine' in every child. We seek to provide safe, supportive and secure environments that value diversity, promote care, respect and co-operation. In 2021 our schools went into overdrive once again to plan and prepare for a learning model that would respond to the continuing impact and uncertainty of Covid-19.

Bishop Shane established Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd in 2021 to assume the ownership and operation of Catholic schools which previously operated as an unincorporated body. This change in our governance structure coincides with a time of increasing challenges that call us to imagine new and inspiring structures that will meet the needs of a changing Church.

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd governance requirements meant that schools would now develop School Advisory Councils to support the principal and school Leadership Teams to ensure the smooth running of our schools and continue the life-giving relationship between our schools and parish communities.

During extremely challenging times our schools were able to maintain their focus on each child, implementing the Victorian Curriculum and the Sandhurst Source of Life Religious Education Curriculum while providing outstanding pastoral support both on-site and through remote learning.

Significant investment in new learning facilities and school infrastructure through the Catholic Capital Grants Program and the hard work of our school communities have ensured the provision of high-quality learning and teaching facilities for both staff and students.

I continue to be extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2021 of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd- our schools and personnel in the Catholic Education Office. They continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools, bringing the 'spark of the divine' into focus every day.

Paul Desmond

Executive Director

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd

## 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 517 students. This consisted of:

Foundation- 70 Pupils

Year 1- 71 Pupils

Year 2- 61 Pupils

Year 3- 75 Pupils

Year 4- 84 Pupils

Year 5- 75 Pupils

Year 6- 81 Pupils

## Principal's Report

At St. Monica's Primary School we take great pride in our welcoming school community, engaging environment, and the diversity of our student and teacher base. We are a community rich in love and faith, and are proud to be part of the Wodonga Catholic Parish, with Sacred Heart as our Parish/church. Despite the change in governance structure, we have proudly maintained strong connections with our Parish.

2021 has been a truly demanding year once again, however crucially, even when faced with enormous challenges and un-chartered territory I commend the staff who always kept their focus firmly on the young people in their care, positively guiding, influencing and shaping young hearts and minds. Alongside the staff, the families of St. Monica's also flexed and changed and moved in and out of remote learning. Whilst we have experienced further bouts of remote learning due to Covid 19 we have provided a broad range of learning experiences, building on the individual gifts and talents of every individual. We have maintained our Vision of Every Child, every day, will be supported and challenged in a faith filled, welcoming and inclusive environment, underpinned by best practice and high expectations.

I am deeply grateful for all those in our St. Monica's Community. As I have said many times, no one's role is more important than another's and the sum of our parts is what makes our school so special.

Wishing you an abundance of God's blessings

Jacqui Partington

## Parish Priest's Report

The year 2021 has come to an end.

With prayer, hope and optimism, we look forward to 2022 as a year where things settle down in this new year.

This has been my first year of no longer wearing the hat of the Canonical Administrator for our schools, but as Pastoral Leader.

That being said, my heart is full of gratitude to all our CEW School leaders, teachers, staff, students and parents for the amazing job you've done to cope with this extraordinary time of our life.

Yes, it is a difficult time for everyone surely. I missed being present at regular school visits and liturgies because of the restrictions.

However, all of you working together to support each other, to keep going, to adjust and adapt to the circumstances even with very short notice, has definitely made this time of Pandemic more bearable. Kudos!

As a CEW school, you keep sharing the Mercy story, you remain faithful in your particular mission despite hardships as (St Francis) exemplified for us, you keep on 'learning to love and loving to learn' (St Monica's), you continue to 'Be true' to your ethos (St Augustine's) and you keep on track, living your 'Life in Jesus' (CCW).

As Christmas is a time of thanksgiving to God for his great love and care for us, I express my gratitude to all in our CEW schools, who have in more ways than one offered Fr Dean and I a warm welcome and hospitality as your Pastoral Leaders; keeping your connection with the parish by giving us an active role within Catholic Education Wodonga.

I thank God for all the very dedicated leadership team of our schools, especially in this unprecedented time in the history of our schools. Thank you.

I also thank all the teachers, teacher aides, specialists and staff, for your unwavering commitment to keep our schools going.

I also thank the parents and families of our students for your support and in more ways than one, acting as teachers of your children as well, while they learnt from home.

Of course, my gratitude goes to all our students who are not just part of our schools but also so generous in their skills and talents, unwavering in their energy and active in their commitment to live out and promote the identity and mission of Catholic Education Wodonga.

Once again, THANK YOU ALL. In the spirit of this season, I pray you all have a wonderful Christmas celebration of the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ - 'the Truth' upon which our Catholic Education is built and meant to impart and achieve.

Fr Junjun



## Catholic Mission and Identity and Education in Faith

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

In 2021 St Monica's Primary School targeted the following goals in Catholic Identity:

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

### Achievements

In 2021 St Monica's Primary School continued to participate in the Charism Action Research Project. Jacqui Partington and Ngaio Baker participated in termly core team meetings with Kylie Smith to create a strategic plan for the action research project. Staff worked together to build their understanding of charism and the specific charism of the school 'Mercy'. St Monica's Primary School being founded by Catherine McCauley and the Mercy Sisters. Staff at each year level collaborated on a unit of work to create a community understanding of the School Charism. Teaching of the units will begin in 2022 and each year afterwards.

St Monica's Primary School staff participated in the ECSI survey. The survey is due to be unpacked in 2022.

Faith profiles were identified within each classroom. Goals were developed to remain attentive to these faith profiles to maintain an inclusive environment honouring traditions of all.

We embedded a stronger focus on staff prayer and a shared responsibility to plan and lead prayer. Staff planned and lead prayer in pairs from across the school to assist in developing staff confidence and capacity to lead prayer. This also invited an opportunity for staff members to engage professionally that may not have had an opportunity to do so previously.

Leadership and Middle Area Learning Leaders engaged in termly faith formation sessions with Kylie Smith. Developing the need for leaders across the school to engage in what leadership looks like in a Catholic school and their responsibilities as Catholic school leaders.

2021 saw an increase of staff engaging in accreditation professional development.

### VALUE ADDED

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. Students had the opportunity to raise money for Caritas through Lent and participate in the Caritas K's walk. Although delayed and limited to one day rather than one week, students participated in Mission Madness and raised further funds for Caritas.

We strengthen our Catholic faith throughout the year with Masses and Liturgies. We continued to celebrate important Catholic events together or in a virtual format. Parish links (Wodonga Catholic Parish) continued throughout the year with various masses, liturgies and Priest Visits. We thank Father Junjun and Father Dean for their partnership, flexibility and continued support. Students continued to complete the sacraments with the wonderful assistance of the Sacramental Team in person and virtually. We particularly thank Dave and Marilynn for the wonderful work they continue to do for the children in CEW schools.

A large group of students were commissioned at our FIRE Carrier assembly. With special thanks to Michael Chisholm and Louise Levy for attending the ceremony. Students pledged to promote reconciliation in our school.

## Learning & Teaching

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

In 2021 St Monica's Primary school targeted the following goals:

- 1) Sustainably manage learning and teaching initiatives.
- 2) Focused processes and practices on improving teacher efficacy.
- 3) Systematically use data to plan and develop learning experience and evaluate teaching.
- 4) Targeted strategies to scaffold and extend learning for all students in all areas.
- 5) Promoting a culture of inspired and well informed teachers.

### Achievements

In 2021 St Monica's primary school continued to establish our implementation of explicit direct instruction across all learning areas. We refined our practice through effective observation and feedback cycles, strategic professional planning sessions and ongoing review and critique of our practice in line with researched evidence best practice.

We embedded data collection processes and practices to more accurately target the needs of all learners in literacy and numeracy. The extension of this process allowed us to identify 'next steps' for all learners in these key areas. This also supported the continuous implementation of our intervention program in literacy. This program has seen a significant reduction of students below standard in literacy. Along with deeper assessment processes we have continued to translate this information into real time assessment and reporting processes, allowing families access to clear, accurate and timely information of their learners progression.

An increase in teacher knowledge and understanding across key areas of instruction, science of learning and science of reading, has been identified via our organisational health data collection. This data also evidenced a continued alignment of teachers with the vision and direction of our school.

During lockdowns and stints of isolation, the school was able to implement a successful online learning program. All teachers, students and families embraced the opportunities to learn via ZOOM. This was a significant improvement on 2020 remote learning experiences, evidenced by parent, staff and student feedback.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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. Therefore, year 5 NAPLAN data collected in 2021 was comparative of the same cohort two years previous. Data trends presented in 2021 data are absent of 2021 year 4 and 6 cohorts.

NAPLAN data collected in 2021 clearly evidenced strong to high growth in reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy. Our school mean schools across all indicators presented growth and in numeracy, reading, spelling and writing evidenced 5 year trend highs in outcomes. Numeracy data in both year 3 and 5 showed significantly high growth.

The school utilises a suite of data sets around reading that track student growth from phonemic skills, to sound level, to word level, connected text level and reading comprehension skills. This data informs our learning objectives for each level and also is the entry data for students requiring intervention in the above mentioned areas. Students entry data is compared at the end of 10 weeks and students growth is tracked. Students exit once they have reached the achievement standards required. We have a plus one literacy specialist teacher in every area of the school to support the intervention administration and data collection. There are also similar data sets for writing that track transcription skills, but writing ideation is assessed by moderating samples across the school and within year levels.

In 2021 St Monica's implemented a numeracy intervention program that targeted supporting students in 3-6 that had experienced some challenges in numeracy learning progression. This program focussed on building conceptual understanding of place value, addition and multiplication. Pre and post assessments evidenced this program provided growth for all students that participated. Numeracy data collection was primarily collected via Essential Assessment. Data collected demonstrated an increase in students achieving at the expected standard. This has supported a checkpoint process across all learning areas to set and maintain benchmarks and targets for student learning.

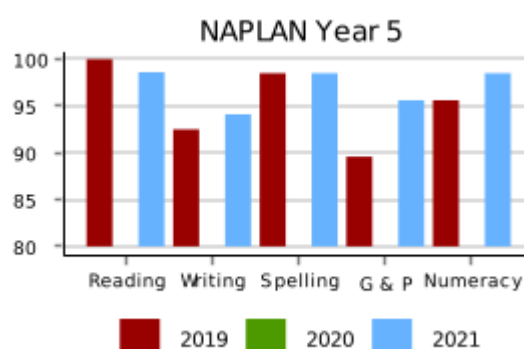
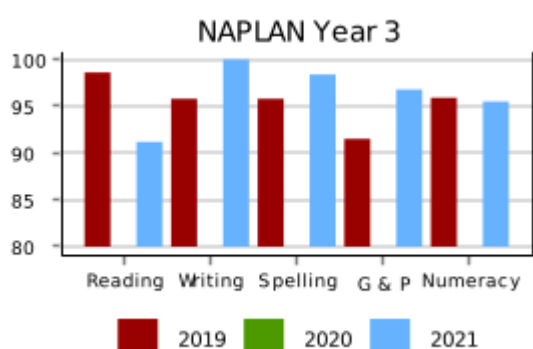
Scope and sequence development in integrated studies has successfully supported a more diverse and balanced delivery across the curriculum. Along with the implementation of SEL scope and sequence and refined Religious Education scope and sequence have allowed for a more intentional balance of curriculum delivery creating a richer more holistic learning experience for all students.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	91.5	-	-	96.8	-
YR 03 Numeracy	95.9	-	-	95.5	-
YR 03 Reading	98.6	-	-	91.2	-
YR 03 Spelling	95.8	-	-	98.4	-
YR 03 Writing	95.8	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	89.6	-	-	95.6	-
YR 05 Numeracy	95.6	-	-	98.5	-
YR 05 Reading	100.0	-	-	98.6	-
YR 05 Spelling	98.5	-	-	98.5	-
YR 05 Writing	92.5	-	-	94.1	-

\* 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 2021, the St Monica's Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Team 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 2021 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 Social and Emotional curriculum implementation. We also continued to lead a cluster of schools in the region regarding the statewide Respectful Relationships initiative.

### Achievements

This year all staff members were required to complete a series of 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 such as allowing our students to more deeply understand and celebrate the character strengths that they possess.

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. Our defence transition aide, Jacqui Boehringer provided invaluable support for our defence students, as did Ann McDonald in her wellbeing liaison role.

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.

### VALUE ADDED

We were fortunate to be able to provide camp experiences to the following year levels in 2021: Year 3, 4, 5 & 6. These outdoor programs allowed students to experience themes such as safe risk taking, communication, teamwork and resilience. We also used the final month of the school year to celebrate with our students and provide them with as many opportunities as we could facilitate. We had excursions, cross aged activities (Covid safe protocols) and extra curricular learning experiences for all of our students from foundation to year six.

### STUDENT SATISFACTION

Communication between school and home has continued to be a big focus for St Monica's throughout 2021. We acknowledge that it is vital for our students and parents to be regularly informed regarding all wellbeing needs and academic performance. 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 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	94.8%
Y02	94.2%
Y03	93.9%
Y04	93.8%
Y05	93.4%
Y06	92.6%
Overall average attendance	93.8%



## 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 2021 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

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.

I once again commend the leadership and Critical Incident teams for navigating another year of Covid 19 and the changing landscape as a result. We had two major leadership and management goals for 2021, the first being to continue to build confidence in staff, students and parents in enacting our shared vision. Our second goal was to continue to build high performing teams and individuals with shared leadership. I am pleased to report that despite the disruptions of Covid 19, we certainly made great headway in achieving our goals.

### Achievements

To attend to our two major leadership and management goals in 2021 we undertook a number of activities in a carefully planned fashion.

In regard to the first goal, the Leadership team supported the Senior team in developing and providing a structure to allow for student leadership. The principal, Deputy Principal and Leader of Catholic Identity all provided leadership formation for our student leaders. The student leadership group also undertook a leadership day with Kylie Smith from the CES. All staff were supported and encouraged to seek opportunities within all classrooms for student leadership.

Parent involvement and leadership was considered in a new context. Whilst there were very few opportunities for social connection, involvement with student learning, particularly through remote learning was enhanced and valued.

Opportunities were developed for staff to lead, particularly for those who did not hold a formal leadership title. The staff development profile was used to provide support and provide feedback.

To address our second goal of continuing to build high performing teams and individuals with shared leadership, a coaching focus for leadership & whole staff was further embedded through professional development opportunities. Explicit modes of leading- how and when these are implemented, for example instructional leadership, was explored. Consistently high expectations for all staff and students with shared responsibility and accountability was another focus for professional development. Supportive and challenging feedback to continue to develop reflective practice was another area that was strengthened through structures and processes in place to allow observation and feedback opportunities. The Leadership team also undertook a rigorous self reflection and checkpoint at the mid and end of terms.

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

#### Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions, the staff at St Monica's were unable to travel for any Professional Learning.

We were able to hold twice weekly profession learning meetings for staff which continued online during remote learning. Many of these sessions were facilitated by internal staff, whilst others were facilitated by guests, 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 regards 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. It was noted that our response to incidents on the yard requires more consistency at times.

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	80.2%
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**ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE**

Staff Retention Rate	78.3%
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<b>TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS</b>	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	13.8%
Graduate	24.1%
Graduate Certificate	3.4%
Bachelor Degree	58.6%
Advanced Diploma	13.8%
No Qualifications Listed	17.2%

<b>STAFF COMPOSITION</b>	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	49.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	39.9
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	26.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	20.5
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1.0

## 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 challenging time.

### Achievements

Online forums were very successful in engaging the community. We held many online forums from parent teacher interviews, literacy and numeracy nights, health and well-being forums and online safety forums, all of which were well attended.

#### PARENT SATISFACTION

Once again parents became an integral part of supporting the implementation of remote learning and were outstanding in this endeavour. Parents connected 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 this space. General parent feedback was very positive.