



# St Mary's Catholic Primary School Mackay

2016 Annual School Report



Catholic Education  
Diocese of Rockhampton

## The School's story

System:

**Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton**

Principal:

**Michael Stewart**

Address:

**42 Juliet St  
South Mackay  
QLD 4740**

Total enrolments:

**371**

Year levels offered:

**Prep to Year 6**

Type of School:

**Co-educational**

# Curriculum Offerings

## Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

Our school is an exciting place to be. Parents send their children to St Mary's for a variety of reasons. Many people comment on the caring culture that permeates all facets of our school community. I believe an obvious strength is the positive atmosphere that exists in our school. The children are loved, respected, and well taught. We offer our students a rounded education that supports personal growth based on Christian values. Parents appreciate our inner city location.

## Extra Curricula Activities

At St Mary's we offer a great diversity of challenging activities. Children are given opportunities to participate in a broad spectrum of activities. These include: choir; outdoor education camps; spiritual development; sport competitions; You Can Do It! programme; curriculum competitions; excursions; social activities; Opti Minds; music and physical education specialists; guest speakers and leadership opportunities. I believe that we provide an education that promotes the personal development of each child. Initiatives such as the 'You Can Do It' programme, The Virtues Project, Project Compassion, The Biggest Morning Tea, NADIOC week, Jump Rope for Heart, promote compassion for others, responsibility and self-respect for the whole school community.

Parents are regularly encouraged to participate in school activities and attend Monday assembly. Family socials are regularly organised as well as holistic support offered to families.

The children have access to a music specialist and instrumental programme through Musicorp. The children participate in the You Can Do IT! Program. This assists children to be life-long learners and focuses upon the habits of successful learners.

Our school is part of Southern Suburbs sub-district representative sport. We participate in the following interschool competitions: netball, cricket, hockey, soccer, rugby league and basketball.

Children can nominate themselves to be part of our Opti Minds team. This promotes higher-order thinking and team work by asking the children to solve a problem.

Jump Rope for Heart is a part of the Health and Physical Education program. It highlights the need for children to become active and eat well.

Our school has two specialist music teachers. Children have the opportunity to learn a variety of musical instruments. Children are also invited to become members of our choir.

Children participate in our school's camp program. The Years 6 and 7 children participate in leadership camps.

During the year the children view a range of performances by the Queensland Arts Council.

Book Week is an important event in the school's calendar. Classes participate in many activities that promote literacy.

National Aboriginal and Islander Week are celebrated. We recognise the importance of multiculturalism as our society is made up of many different cultures.

The children have an opportunity to participate in the national competitions in Computing, Science, Maths and Literacy. There are also many local arts competitions.

## How Information and Communication Technologies are used to assist learning

At St Mary's we believe that it is essential that our students are equipped with ICT capabilities so that they can "participate in a knowledge-based economy and to be empowered within a technologically sophisticated society now and into the future. "The Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008) We aim to develop the students' knowledge, skills and dispositions around ICT's.

The nature and scope of ICT capability is not fixed, but is responsive to ongoing technological developments. Students need to use ICT with confidence, care and consideration, understanding its possibilities, limitations and impact on individuals, groups and communities.

Student should:

- Respect resources
- Use ICT equipment and resources for educational purposes under teacher supervision
- Follow teacher directions for accessing files, programs, email and internet resources
- Ask permission from your teacher before following online prompts

Respect others

- Respect the rights, beliefs and viewpoints of others
- Follow the same standards of behaviour online as you are expected to follow in real life
- Observe Copyright rules by respecting the information, ideas and artistic works of others by acknowledging the author or publisher of information from the Internet and not claiming the work or pictures as your own

Keep yourself safe online at school

- Keep your passwords and personal work secure
- Use the internet and email only under teacher supervision
- Use only school provided email accounts when communicating online

## Social Climate

Based on our shared values and beliefs, all learners at St Mary's are invited and challenged to be and become reflective, self-directed learners who are: producers, participators, investigators, communicators and problem solvers. Through modelling and living out of the values according to the Catholic ethos, religious education is the umbrella that oversees and permeates all that we do. We seek to inspire children to have Jesus Christ as their model and with the help of the Holy Spirit, be the best person they can be, as God wants them to.

St Mary's has made the progression to the new diocesan P-12 Religion Curriculum. This involved consultation with the staff and CEO representatives in order to write a school programme that is comprehensive and teacher friendly. The religion programme encompasses the four strands as well as a defined focus on religious literacy and numeracy.

Initiatives that have been introduced in the area of curriculum over the past few years have challenged the St Mary's staff to review and improve programmes and teaching practices. Despite the changes, our Mission Statement has remained central to our curriculum.

## Cyber Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategies

The school response to bullying: At St Mary's we use a proactive approach to tackling bullying. The "You Can Do It!" and "The Virtues Project" programmes as the base for developing a positive, cohesive and faith-filled learning environment. We have an Anti-bullying policy to which all staff, students and parents commit.

Students

- are educated to recognise bullying behaviour in themselves and others and learn how to deal with the situation in an acceptable and appropriate way
- both the victim and the perpetrator are positively and constructively supported by all members of the St Mary's school community
- are aware of the reporting procedures for bullying which are outlined in the behaviour management programmes
- organisation of counselling are arranged at the principal's discretion

Staff

- are educated in identifying bullying behaviour and how to deal with such behaviour

- will report all instances of bullying through the current behaviour management process.
- will remain alert for sign of distress in students during class instruction as well as during playground supervision
- will continue to have on-going in-servicing on the “You Can Do It!” and “The Virtues Project” programmes
- empower students to be a resource for countering bullying
- offer immediate support to the victim

#### Parents

- are provided with ongoing information about bullying through the newsletter
- are encouraged to follow the regular grievance procedures in order to address concerns
- are encouraged to watch for signs of distress in their child, which may include unwillingness to attend school, loss of personal items or regular sickness
- are encouraged to take an active interest in their child’s social life
- are encouraged to advise their child to confide in a trusted staff member
- are encouraged not to advise their child to retaliate physically or verbally
- are assisted to devise strategies to help with socialization
- are encouraged to access the resources in the parenting section of the library

#### Cyber bullying

- Assess the level of cyber bullying in the school
- Have an awareness campaign for teachers, parents, the community, students, and school staff to inform them about the forms that cyber bullying takes and how it can be prevented or stopped
- Engage students in the creation, dissemination, and application of a policy for acceptable use of the school’s information technology resources
- Spell out what constitutes cyber bullying, specifically prohibit the use of the Internet for bullying, include strategies for preventing and stopping cyber bullying, and specify the negative consequences for policy violations
- Educate students on how to avoid cyber bullying and how to respond to and report cyber bullies. Discuss with them the adverse consequences of bullying behaviour, including school discipline, civil litigation, and criminal prosecution
- Teach students not to give out any private information. Encourage them to report to an adult any form of cyber bullying that they witness or experience
- Provide professional development opportunities for staff and teachers on cyber bullying.
- Establish a relationship with local police and invite law enforcement to talk with kids about cyber bullying. Sgt Nigel Dalton visits students and parents each year.
- Educate parents about cyber bullying, Facebook and social media site concerns through our newsletter—what forms it takes and how their children may be affected.
- Ask parents, through the newsletter, to agree to be responsible for their children’s use of the Internet outside of school
- Inform parents and students of our mobile phone and electronic equipment policy which requires that these devices are signed in to the office in the morning and collected after school each day.

Our school has implemented Diocesan policies on Acceptable Use Agreements for students and staff. The school regularly communicates to parents and the school community about cyber safety issues. We also have appropriate policies in place to deal with the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices. Our school has a number of social/emotional learning programs in place to assist students in guarding against bullying at school. The school community is kept up to date

## Strategies used for involving parents in their child’s education

Our parent body continues to work tirelessly to provide a wide range of valued services for the school. Since the last review they have introduced various fund raising initiatives such as the Trivia Night. They have contributed significantly to the upgrading of facilities. Their contribution to the culture of the school is impressive. We have class coordinators who welcome new families and organise social activities for

families and parents during the year. We have an excellent reputation in our local area and many visitors comment upon the caring environment that exists in our school.

The St Mary's School Board is a group of stakeholders which seeks to work towards the achievement of the church's educational mission. It consists of a variety of people who have an awareness of the Catholic Church's educational mission and who together reflect on the implementation of policies and guidelines that are based on Gospel values. This gives direction to the school and promotes its special religious identity. The P&F Association of St Mary's is a very active group within the school community. The Association meets regularly.

## Reducing the school's environmental footprint

We have a recycling program.

Students collect food scraps to give to the chickens.

Students collect paper and put in recycling bins.

Teachers and students use electronic media to produce work.

We have solar panels.

## Characteristics of the Student Body

St Mary's Catholic Primary School was founded by the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy in 1924 and now caters for students from prep to year 6. The school is situated in South Mackay which is an inner city suburb with a mixture of older single residences and an increasing number of multiple dwellings, catering for older residents and single parent families. Adjoining a regional Catholic year 7 to 10 college, St Mary's is a convenient school for inner city workers with around a quarter of the school population coming from outside the traditional boundaries of the parish. Consequently the students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and cultural groups. Over the past few years, the school has experienced an increase in enrolments after several years of decline. This trend is due to:

1. New housing development in the area, which has led to a number of families residing in the area sending their families to the school
2. The fact that the school has become proactive in promoting itself and now has a very good reputation in the community
3. The school has spent a considerable amount of money in improving its facilities and has a very proactive P&F

Our school has a dedicated learning support team and volunteer parents (learning assistance program – LAP) who assist those students with diverse learning needs.

Our learning support program, LAP program and significant ESL program are an integral part of our school, with teachers depending on these programs to assist them with both the large number of students with learning difficulties and ESL students. It should also be noted that the staff are proactive in developing the skills necessary to support the large number of students with learning difficulties and ESL needs in their classes.

## Staffing composition, including Indigenous staff

### Workforce Composition of all teachers

| Workforce Composition | Teaching Staff | Non-Teaching Staff | Indigenous Staff |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Headcounts            | 24             | 24                 | 0                |
| Full-time equivalents | 20.47          | 11.02              | 0                |

## Qualifications of all teachers

| Qualification – highest level of attainment | Percentage of staff with this Qualification |
|---|---|
| Doctoral / Post-doctoral                    |   |
| Masters                                     | 3.8 %                                       |
| Bachelor Degree                             | 92.3 %                                      |
| Diploma                                     | 3.8 %                                       |
| Certificate                                 |   |

## Expenditure on and teacher participation in professional development

**TOTAL FUNDS** expended on teacher professional development according to Australian Government Quality Teacher Program reporting requirements.

\$ 99,800

### MAJOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Our balanced curriculum caters for a variety of learning styles.

All the teachers use iPads and interactive white boards.

Literacy and Mathematics continue to be a high priority.

Key staff regularly attend the ALEA Literacy conferences, and share their learnings with fellow staff.

Our thinking skills scope and sequence ensures that children are exposed to a wide range of thinking processes throughout their schooling. Graphic organisers are implemented across curriculum in all year levels. Professional development opportunities are openly offered to all staff.

The percentage of the **TEACHING STAFF INVOLVED IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

100 %

## Average staff attendance

Average staff attendance for the school year, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave for periods of up to 5 days.

96.08 %

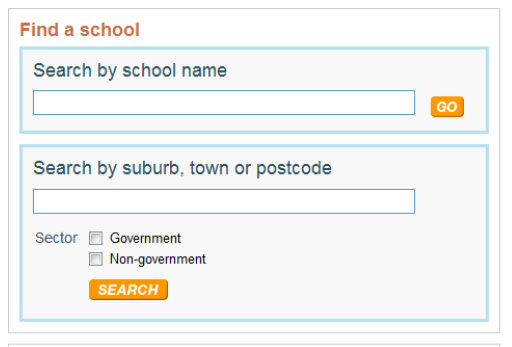
Percentage of teaching staff retained from the previous school year

90.48 %

## School Income

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>.

(The School information below is available on the My School website).



**Find a school**

Search by school name

Search by suburb, town or postcode

Sector  Government  
 Non-government

## National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Results

Our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for the Years 3, 5, and 7 are available via the My School website at [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au).

Read and follow the instructions on the next screen; you will be asked to accept the **Terms of Use** and Privacy Policy before being able to access NAPLAN data.

If you are unable to access the internet, please contact the school for a paper copy of our school's NAPLAN results.

## Key Student Outcomes

Twice per term, each teacher will formally meet with a member of the leadership team to discuss various aspects of their teaching and learning. This year we have teachers visiting other classrooms and observing each other. We are endeavouring to create learning communities. Teachers in learning community schools provide leadership by collegially sharing ideas for improving instruction and by opening up their classrooms for all teachers to learn about effective instructional practices.

Transforming a school into a learning community can have a very positive impact for students, the results include:

- increased levels of student engagement.
- lower rates of absenteeism.
- greater academic gains in math, science, history, and reading.
- smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds

For staff, the following results have been observed:

- reduction of isolation of teachers.
- increased commitment to the mission and goals of the school and increased vigour in working
- shared responsibility for the total development of students and collective responsibility for students' success.
- powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice and that creates new



knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learners.

- increased meaning and understanding of the content that teachers teach and the roles they play in helping all students achieve expectations.
- higher likelihood that teachers will be well informed, professionally renewed, and inspired to inspire students.
- more satisfaction, higher morale, and lower rates of absenteeism.
- significant advances in adapting teaching to the students, accomplished more quickly than in traditional schools.
- commitment to making significant and lasting changes and higher likelihood of undertaking fundamental systemic change.

## Student Attendance

### Average student attendance rate (%)

89.9 %

### Describe how non-attendance is managed by the school

The school roll is marked twice per day. The parents of a student who is absent with notice will receive a text message to request contact with the school. Continued absences are flagged by the administration staff and attended to by the school Leadership Team.

## Value Added

### The story of distance travelled

St Mary's Catholic Primary School has again achieved very pleasing results. Based on My School data, our school was identified as demonstrating above average NAPLAN gain compared to schools with similar students. This gain was deemed to be statistically significant and worthy of highlighting, this result indicated that we were in the top 300 schools in Australia. We have a wonderful learning support program. This has made a significant difference to many children who require learning support. Anecdotal and statistical data from the Years 3 and 5 tests support that St Mary's is succeeding in improving the academic performance of students enrolled at the school. They continue to grow and improve during their journey at St Mary's.

### The story of where you are going

- The staff is working together to continue to successfully implement the Australian curriculum.
- The staff is embracing change and we have a professional development component at staff meetings.
- To review our assessment framework to ensure that it is consistent across all years and incorporates a variety of assessment methods and tasks to cater for different learning styles.
- It is important that assessment tasks assess the understanding of skills as well as the application and extension of taught skills to problem solving situations.
- To encourage staff to include assessment plans in the teaching programmes to ensure continuous assessment throughout the semester.

## Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction

Please find below some comments from our recent parent survey.

From the warm and friendly office staff, to the principal and those who plan the curriculum, and to the beautiful teaching staff who care for my children day in and day out - what a fabulous bunch of people - I hope you receive plenty of praise - Thank you!

I am so happy with the caring staff here at St Mary's. The You Can Do It program is just fantastic. I am so glad we have decided to send our children here.

I feel St Mary's offers the children a safe and happy environment. The staff are always encouraging the students to do their best and encouraging a positive attitude. I think it is a wonderful school.

This is a great school