



St Mary's Catholic Primary School Mackay

2019 Annual School Report



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

System

Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton

Principal

Wesley Rose

Address

42 Juliet St
South Mackay
Mackay 4740

Total enrolments

375

Year levels offered

Prep – 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. An obvious strength is the positive atmosphere that exists in our school; the children are loved, respected, and well taught. Students are offered a holistic 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; 'Making Jesus Real' philosophy; curriculum competitions; excursions; social activities; Opti-Minds; music, artistic and physical education specialists; guest speakers and leadership opportunities. We provide an education that promotes the personal development of each child. Initiatives such as Project Compassion, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, NADIOC week and our 'Mini Vinnies' group promote compassion for others, responsibility and self-respect for the whole school community.

Parents are regularly encouraged to participate in school activities and attend Friday assembly.

Family socials are regularly organised as well as holistic support offered to families.

Our school is part of Southern Suburbs sub-district representative sport. Our students aged 10-12 years are invited to trial in a variety of representative sport.

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. Our school has a specialist classroom music teacher, who teaches foundational music concepts to our Prep – Year 3 students. The children have access to a music specialist and instrumental program through Musicorp, where children from Year 3 have the opportunity to learn a variety of musical instruments. Students are also invited to become members of our choir and verse speaking groups.

Children participate in our school's camp program. The Years 5 and 6 students participate in camps that foster their leadership development.

In term 3 we host a local artist in residence, who works with our students to develop their artistic abilities. Over three sessions, students produce an artwork that is shown at our annual Art Exhibition, which is a highlight of the school calendar each year.

Our Year 5 students are invited to learn all about photography in our camera club. Students discover the potential of their camera and prepare some photography pieces for our annual Art Exhibition in late term three.

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 Torres Strait Islander Week is 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 art 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" (MCEETYA 2008). We aim to develop the students' knowledge, skills and dispositions around ICTs. A variety of ICT devices are used across the school, including desktop and laptop computers and iPads. Our 'Makerspace' offers students the facility to immerse themselves in a myriad of technology; including robotics, coding, green-screen animation and movie making. 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.

Social Climate

Strategies to Promote a Positive Culture

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 intends.

St Mary's implements the diocesan Religion Curriculum. The religion program encompasses the four strands, with a defined focus on Scripture and understanding the '3 worlds of the text'. Our staff explore ways to develop students understanding of Catholic Social Teachings, both in Religion and other subjects. Catholic Social Teachings aim to promote a more just and respectful approach to living one's life.

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 programs and teaching practices. Despite the changes, our school Mission and Vision statement has remained central to our curriculum.

Cyber Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategies

At St Mary's we use a proactive approach to tackling bullying. The "Making Jesus Real" philosophy forms the base for developing a positive, cohesive and faith-filled learning environment. We have very comprehensive Behaviour Management Anti-Bullying guidelines, to which all staff, students and parents commit. Our school has implemented Diocesan policies on acceptable ICT 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. Our wellbeing club is one such example. The school community is kept informed of current cyber safety concerns through our school newsletter.

Strategies 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. The St Mary's P&F Association is a very active group within the school community. The Association meets regularly. They have introduced various fundraising initiatives such as the Trivia Night, which contribute significantly to enhancing the educational offering at St Mary's. With an emphasis on parental engagement, 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. The 'Just One Thing' campaign asks families to list ways that they can be engaged in the life of the school. 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 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.

Reducing the school's environmental footprint

We have a recycling program, and recycle paper, cardboard and containers for change. Teachers and students use electronic media to produce work and monitor their photocopy paper usage throughout the year. We have 120kw of solar panels, which dramatically offsets our power consumption. Most of the school has low-energy LED lighting installed.

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. For the past several years, the school has experienced very strong enrolment numbers and all classes are now at capacity. 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 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
4. Our school has a dedicated learning support team and volunteer parents who assist those students with diverse learning needs.

Our learning support program and ESL programs 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.

Average student attendance rate (%)

96.49 %

Management of non-attendance

The school roll is marked twice per day. The parents of a student who is absent without 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. Each term, students who have not met school targets receive a letter advising of their low school attendance. At the end of the year, all parents receive a detailed report on their child's attendance.

Staffing Information

Workforce Composition

Workforce Composition	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff	Indigenous Staff
Headcounts	25.00	23.00	1.00
Full-time equivalents	21.30	11.55	1.00

Qualifications of all teachers

Qualification – highest level of attainment	Percentage of staff with this Qualification
Doctoral / Post-doctoral	
Masters	
Bachelor Degree	96.00 %
Diploma	4.00 %
Certificate	

Major Professional Development Initiatives

Our extensive Professional Development Initiatives include;

- Professional Learning Teams PD with Gavin Grift
- Several teacher assistants participated in literacy intervention training.
- Religion: Bishop's In-Service Day "*Caring for our Common Home*"
- Religion: 2 staff attended the MJR conference in Sydney.
- Principal attended Leading with Integrity for Excellence training.
- Delegation of 5 teachers attended the PLC summit in Melbourne.
- Delegation of 5 teachers attended the High reliability schools conference in Brisbane.
- Development of a Professional Learning Community (PLC): Through the PLC process, teachers are supported to work collaboratively to enhance student learning. This has seen all teachers receive time during the teaching day to work in a professional Learning team, focusing on the curriculum, instruction and assessment needs for their students.

The percentage of teacher participation in professional development was 100%

Total funds expended on Professional Development

The total of funds expended on teacher professional development was \$ 127,500

Average Staff Attendance and Retention

95.41 %

Percentage of teaching staff retained from the previous school year was 96.77 %

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

GO

Search by suburb, town or postcode

Sector Government Non-government

SEARCH

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Results

Our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for Years 3 and 5 are available via the My School website at www.myschool.edu.au.

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 and Value Added

Each term, teachers meet with the leadership team to discuss various aspects of their teaching and learning. This year we have embedded the use of professional learning communities. Professional Learning Communities promote broad leadership by enabling teachers to collegially share ideas for improving instruction and by opening up their classrooms for all teachers to learn about effective instructional practices. Transforming a school into a professional learning community can have a very positive impact for students and the results include:

- increased levels of student engagement
- lower rates of absenteeism
- greater academic gains in maths, 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.
-

Strategic Improvement Progress and Next Steps

Strategic progress in 2019

Our goals for 2019 were;

Numeracy: By the end of 2019, students are better able to understand and comprehend relevant Mathematical language. After an analysis of our PAT-M Maths data, it indicated that understanding mathematical terminology was a significant challenge for many of our students. As a whole-school, we addressed this by focusing on the explicit teaching of mathematical vocabulary, clearly identifying and listing relevant mathematical terms in unit plans. We used the resource, "My word book", a teaching reference to help teachers appropriately align the scope and sequence of key mathematical terms across year levels. Mathematical language was displayed in all classrooms, giving students ready visuals about the mathematical language we were learning about. While good progress was made, further embedding of our processes is needed to see lasting change in student achievement.

Literacy: By the end of 2019, St Mary's will implement a whole-school Spelling approach. To address this goal, we formed a spelling review team, to review the current spelling practices across the school, with

view to recommending a whole-school approach to the teaching of spelling. The team investigated other schools who had performed well in spelling, and consulted research on high-yield spelling strategies. Following this, the review team recommended that explicit, systematic spelling instruction should occur in each classroom and that the whole-school resource “soundwaves” would be used to facilitate this. We set ambitious targets to try to reduce our ‘below year level expectation’ students and strengthening the number of ‘above year level expectation’ students. Our Semester 2, 2019 spelling data show that while there was some promising growth in particular year levels, this has not been replicated across the whole school. Further efforts are needed to refine and embed our whole-school spelling approach.

Religious Education: By the end of 2019, schoolwide processes will reflect MJR (Making Jesus Real) and its connection to scripture. Based on this goal, we have linked our behaviour management card system to the MJR philosophy, which has provided our students with frequent reminders of MJR terms. Our report card section, ‘social attitudes and work habits’ was adjusted to reflect the MJR terminology. We also nominated two MJR ‘champions’, being the APRE and a classroom teacher, who attended the MJR conference and continue to promote MJR in our school. Students also now use the MJR journal in Years 3-6. Year level religion unit plans have also been adjusted to reflect the MJR perspective and an explicit focus on scripture is outlined in each unit. We have achieved good success in this goal, as the MJR way of life is now explicitly evident in many of our school processes.

Strategic Priorities for 2020

Following our NSIT review and discernment by the leadership team, staff and school board, the following 3-year strategic priorities have been identified for 2020;

- To prioritise the Catholic Identity of the school through symbols, rituals, curriculum approaches, artworks and physical spaces.
- To enhance student literacy and numeracy achievement by prioritising a collaborative approach to teaching and learning.
- To strengthen the health and wellbeing of the students and staff.
- To enhance student learning through building improvements, innovative learning environments and increasing staff capability.

More specifically, our 2020 goals to address these strategic priorities are;

- By the end of 2020 students will have demonstrated their understanding and application of CSTs and the Catholic Virtues of Faith, Caring, Encouragement, Hope, Respect, Love, Justice, Persistence, Wisdom.
- To identify and use intervention strategies and high impact pedagogies to enhance literacy and numeracy achievement.
- By the end of 2020, the school is to have an accurate picture of the wellbeing of staff and students, as evidenced from the ‘Be You’ survey. Based on the results of the preliminary baseline data, we will respond to one aspect/area that needs attention.
- To effectively manage the design and construction of the St Mary’s three-stage building project.

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction

Please find below some comments from our recent parent survey:

- A beautiful school that welcomes everyone. A small friendly community that my child feels safe in.
- Staff seem to be very happy in their jobs at the school and are friendly to parents even if they don’t teach their children/know them as such. So far our experience with the school has been a positive one and our child is really enjoying her first year of school. Thanks St Mary’s!
- The welcoming feeling, parent/teacher connection, principal/parent connection, education and nurture my child receives, my child’s wellbeing put first.
- I love that St Mary’s is a community and everyone works together. It has a lovely welcoming feel. My children are becoming wonderful students because their teachers and the people around them push them to do their best.
- I love the culture of the school; this is a great school.
- St Mary’s has a friendly and respectful atmosphere. Staff are very dedicated to encourage the students to reach goals and improve in every aspect of their schooling and home life. Staff are very approachable and have a genuine concern for their students.
- St Mary’s School feels like a family. Everyone is very welcoming and happy to participate in anything the school tries to implement.
- The thing that appeals to me most about St Mary’s is its commitment to keep the Catholic values that helps in instilling good behaviour in children, personal development and well-being programs. I also like the cultural diversity in the school, which is supportive of my personal values and my religious beliefs. I am also happy with the school curriculum as a whole.

- Friendly staff; excellent implementation of curriculum; participation in extra-curricular activities including touch football, run club, Rock Pop mime, good behaviour management structure; clean schooling environment.
- Our family enjoys the inclusive nature of the St Mary's community; we appreciate that the 'character' and moral integrity of our children is also being developed and that the focus is not only on academic or sporting achievement