



Principal's Report 2017

It is with great pride that I reflect on the highlights our 2017 school year. Certainly, we are thrilled that this year has seen the first Graduating Class of Year 12 St Joseph School students.

In 2014, we spoke with the parents of the then Year 10 students, explained plans for our application for Years 11 and 12, and asked for their faith that we will deliver a strong quality upper school experience for their children. On the 20th October, the families joined us in celebrating the successful completion of their child's education with a moving and beautiful Graduation Mass and celebration. This has been a year of many firsts- the first Year 12 classes, Leaver's Badges, ATAR examinations, Retreat, Formal Ball, Graduation and Year 12 Awards. You can imagine the pride of those twenty students, their families and our staff in the achievements of those students. We are excited that the delivery of a quality Catholic education from Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 is available in Northam, and I think that this inaugural group of students will always remain special.

At the start of this year, we launched our new Strategic Plan to our families and community. Designed under the Catholic Education Western Australia banner of LEAD, we have outlined school priorities for the next five years in the areas of learning, engagement, accountability and discipleship. This year, our School Improvement Plan set out the first year plan to achieve our long term goals.

It is with pleasure that I summarise the annual operations for our school for 2017.

Learning

Our 2017 focus on improving the literacy and numeracy capabilities of our students highlighted the development and adoption of quality intervention and extension programs. A significant goal for this year was the development of a whole school approach to pedagogy.

Some of the highlights for this year include:

- Our adoption of explicit instruction, in partnership with Dr Lorraine Hammond from Edith Cowan University, has meant that our staff have adopted new strategies and programs.
- Eight staff members, across both campuses, have worked closely with Dr Hammond on a regular basis to become established as key teachers.
- Primary staff have implemented Explicit Instruction and Daily Reviews during Literacy and Numeracy dedicated time.
- The PLD and Lexile programs have continued to grow and are now well established in primary classes.
- The MultiLit Program – MiniLit (PP to Year 2) and Macqlit (Year 3 to 6) has been established for all students in Years 1-6. This is a targeted Literacy intervention program.
- The primary data wall is well established and a significant tool for use in staff meetings and in tracking student development and targeting students in need.

- Year 12 ATAR and General courses were introduced for the first time.
- Further differentiation of the Mathematics and English courses allowed for the development of three distinct courses in Years 8 and 9.
- The staff numeracy committee has worked throughout the primary campus on the development of a detailed vocabulary glossary to be used across all year levels.
- Scope and sequence plans for Kindergarten to Year Six have been developed for Literacy and plans are underway for these to be developed for Numeracy and Technologies in 2018.
- Secondary students have adopted regular silent reading to reinforce the importance of daily reading by the students.
- Secondary staff are progressing towards a campus approach to lesson delivery.
- Our 2017 NAPLAN results indicate a general improvement and movement in an upward direction for most of the components. Significant upward trends were recorded for the Year 3 cohort. This was particularly pleasing and significant as this group of students have had the longest exposure to the new programs and pedagogy which we piloted while these students were in the early years. Our pedagogy is now established on the primary campus and becoming consolidated on the secondary campus.
- Staff have attended significant professional development in various areas, but in particular, in the Keeping Safe program. This program will be delivered to all students in 2018.
- The Early Years Team and parents from the P&F Association worked on the Early Years playground creating a nature play environment that encourages imaginative play.
- Students in Years 9-12 have been able to access the online OLNA Support program.
- We have taken on the 'Digital Technologies in Focus' project and the school will be participating in this ACARA activity. Staff will work together to develop a K-8 Scope & Sequence as part of this project.
- Students enjoyed a number of excursions and incursions that enhanced each Learning Area. Excursions included visits to the WA Arts Gallery, Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Kalamunda Historical Village, AQWA, Perth Zoo, Gingin Discovery Centre, Perth Observatory and Scitech. Incursions included Martin Chatterton, Dinosaur Science, and Forensic Science Workshop.
- Students from both campuses have continued their involvement in the da Vinci program. The Solar Car Challenge was a highlight as the Year 6 team were announced winners of their division and performed admirably in the Grand Final.

Engagement

In 2017 we have continued to develop and grow our Engagement with our parents and the Parish. This year we focused on improving student engagement in their learning and developing further avenues of communication with parents. We have:

- Established a Student Wellbeing Committee to monitor the emotional and social wellbeing of our students.
- Our P&F Association has become rejuvenated as the change to holding meetings during school hours has meant that many more parents are able to become involved.
- Our School Board continues to attract parents willing to hold positions or be co-opted for our Sub-committees.

- Our families have continued to support our Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparent's Day activities and attendance numbers have grown significantly.
- The re-introduction of our Community Masses held at St Joseph's Parish Church each term has been a meaningful way for our students and families to engage more with our Parish.
- This year secondary parents have been able to engage more with the SEQTA parent portal and electronic reports are available for secondary parents.
- We are looking to further enhance parent engagement as we are well on the way with our plans to redesign our website and introduce a social media avenue for our families.
- Our school Chaplains, Counsellor and Chaplaincy Worker have continued their work with our students and school community and secondary staff have been actively involved in their Student Wellbeing Committee. One of their projects has been the delivery of several activities to highlight the importance of tackling and speaking about Mental Health Issues.
- As a school we have continued to engage in the wider education community. We have hosted other schools as they shared our professional development days.
- This year our school hosted the Boards and Leadership Teams of La Salle College, Lumen Christi College and Holy Cross College. Three of our Year 12 students, Megan Ashman, Meg Lawrence and Gabrielle Ochtman were a marvellous credit to our school as they took on the responsibility of Guest Speakers for the event.

Accountability

Our School Board takes on the responsibility of managing and accounting for all the finances associated with the school and it is through their commitment that we are able to provide for the welfare of our students and community. In 2017 the Board has continued to work diligently on the establishment of our Capital Development Plan and has focused on making our school 'the school of choice in the Avon Valley' by enhancing the profile of our school. In all that they do, our Board members have remained true to our mission as a Catholic school and to building a Catholic culture in the Northam community.

In 2017 some of our Capital improvements included:

- The installation of a transportable classroom on our Secondary campus to accommodate an increasing number of classes.
- Refurbishment of the Primary Administration office.
- Replacement of computers in Primary computer lab.
- Installation of TV and Apple TV into Primary rooms 1, 2, 3, 7 & 13.
- Provision of lockers, desks and chairs for new classroom and increased numbers.
- Upgrades to guttering and downpipes and some internal classroom fittings.
- Installation of reverse cycle air conditioning to Primary rooms 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 12 (funded by P&F Association).
- Purchase of specialised equipment for Secondary Home Economics.

As well as our capital assets, our human assets are valuable and contribute significantly to our role of nurturing our students to achieve of their best. Staff wellbeing has been a focus for our school and the introduction of the Staff Wellbeing committee has ensured that staff needs are attended to and provision is made for staff to receive support from their colleagues. Our staff have continued to

contribute greatly to not only our students but to the School Improvement plan and the successful adoption of new initiatives at our school.

This year has seen the introduction of a school Code of Conduct and a Staff Charter. Our staff Code of Conduct is now well established and this year we have worked with parents and students on articulating the meaning of a Code of Conduct from the parent and student viewpoint.

Our P&F Association has again contributed significantly to our school. Now meeting during school hours, they have had a significant increase in members and consequently have enhanced our community with many welcoming and fundraising activities. The successful Meet & Greet and Barnyard Bingo are just two events that spring to mind, but this group have fed us on many an occasion this year and their efforts have resulted in the provision of reverse cycle air conditioning. We thank them for their hard work, their dedication and their wonderful sense of community.

I would like to thank our School board for their many hours of commitment to our school. In particular I would like to acknowledge the work of our Board Chair, Mrs Cecilia McConnell and Treasurer Mr Jaran Leask who both complete their tenure on the Board this year.

Discipleship

At the 2017 beginning of year school Mass I introduced our theme of 'Awaken'. 2017 is a special time for one of the founding orders of our school. On the 2nd January 1817 a young priest, Fr Marcellin Champagnat, moved into a house on the edge of the town of La Valla in France. He built some furniture for it himself, and invited two young men to become brothers who could educate and care for the children of the parish. Today, 200 years later, we sit here as part of Champagnat's dream-come-true. We are one of 53 Marist schools in Australia celebrating the life and achievements of St Marcellin Champagnat.

When we mention the word 'awaken' we may think of waking from sleep. I encouraged the students to think about the dawn. The moment when it is no longer dark, but not yet fully light. It is a moment when our vision sharpens and our senses slowly attune to the things before us - the arising movement and the emerging sounds. It is a twilight moment full of anticipation and expectancy in what lies ahead. The dawn is opening a door to a new day!

Our Awaken theme has been about embracing the new day with a clarity and hope to make Jesus known and loved. I reflected to the students that sometimes things are in front of our eyes but we can't see them clearly. We need to welcome every sunrise full of hope as we embrace all the opportunities the new day brings to let Christ shine on us.

In conjunction with our Awaken theme, MaJEC, our Christian Service Learning program, has continued to be a focus for us in 2017. In extension to this school program, we have established a relationship with another Marist School, Newman College. Our Year 11 students were provided with the opportunity to attend an Immersion Trip to the Philippines with the Newman College students to experience firsthand what life is like in a third world area and to see the Church's mission in action. We are very proud that we have a student who will be attending this trip.

The introduction of our Year 12 three day Retreat has also been a highlight of this year and of having the first group of Year 12 students. The success of this program affirms our belief of the importance of this opportunity for Year 12 students to reflect on their role of Discipleship as they move into their adult lives.

Finally as I conclude this year's report, I would like to thank our staff for all that they do for our children. I am sure you will agree with me wholeheartedly when I say that our staff are hardworking and dedicated. This year I have made it a point to ask many new families about their experience of joining our community. The overwhelming response is not only positive, but highlights the sense of community in our school and the sense of family that our staff bring to their work. Many a parent has will let me know that our Pastoral Care is second to none. This I know, and I am very pleased to see that our families also realise this. I am extremely proud of our staff and the extra that they give to our students.

I wish to acknowledge the work of our Priests, Fr George and Fr Simeon. Both these men make our school and its mission to provide a quality Catholic education, a priority in their own work. As well as providing our liturgies and Masses, our priests are regular attendees at our functions and assemblies. (I must really say that watching Frs George and Simeon play Bingo for the first time ever, was a highlight this year, especially when Fr George actually one a game!) Thank you Fr George and Fr Simeon for your presence in our community.

I would like to acknowledge the support and commitment that we receive each year from the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition and the Marist Brothers. They continue to keep our relationship alive by their visits and emails. We will always welcome them at our school and we are particularly proud to have them join us at Presentation Night this year as we graduate our first cohort of Year 12 students.

As we come to the close of our Awaken year I would like to thank our students. They are always there with a smile and a willingness to welcome each sunrise. I thank them for the wonderful ambassadors they are for our school and encourage them to continue to strive to reach their full potential in a Christ centred community.

I thank all of you, you are our community, for your support and look forward to working with you next year.

God bless