2015 was the year that our community has been waiting for for forty four years. As I use the words of our previous Principal Mr John Bird, we have achieved “the fulfilment of a lifelong dream of so many of you for Year 11 and 12 here in this school”. It is of course not the only highlight of this year, but after such a long wait we are thrilled that we can now offer a quality catholic education to our students for all their compulsory years of schooling.

The Board and I would like to thank our community, Catholic Education of Western Australia, the many individuals and local groups that have supported us during this process. Planning is well underway for our first cohort of Year 11 students in 2016. We will be offering courses for ATAR and General students and have developed a varied offering of VET courses through our association with several outside providers. Our staff has been planning for our new courses and are keen to help our students achieve their aspirations for life after Year 12.

It is with pleasure that I summarise the annual operations for our school for 2015.

Learning

“Learning is what we do. We are committed to learning at every level.”

Our 2015 focus continued to be in the area of Numeracy and Literacy. Staff members have continued to work with student data and the following strategies were highlighted this year:

♦ Primary staff members adopted a numeracy strategy that allowed for learning intentions and reflections. The ‘I do, we do, you do’ strategy has been introduced in most classes.

♦ Staff and students have adopted the use of Australian Curriculum Vocabulary lists.

♦ The Numeracy Assist Program and Literacy Assist Program have been run in Years 7 and 8 to provide extra aid to students experiencing difficulty in Mathematics and English.

♦ Students in Year 9 and 10 have completed differentiated courses in Religious Education, English, Humanities, Science and Mathematics.

♦ Our Quality Improvement Plan has allowed staff to implement improvements in the Early Years in the educational program and ‘practice quality’ area and the ‘physical environment quality’ area.

♦ Students from Years 5-10 have been successfully conducting investigations, projects and research in the St Joseph's School da Vinci Club (CEWA Gifted and Talented Education program)

♦ Staff have accessed a number of professional learning opportunities including: Head of Learning sessions, Learning Area network meetings, Early Years training, Gifted and Talented education, Disabilities training, Special needs and ICT,

♦ The introduction of the 1:1 iPad program in Years 7 to 9.

♦ The employment of a specialist physical education teacher for the primary students in addition to the language and literacy specialists.

♦ The professional upskilling (including Cert IV in Assessing and Training) and formation of professional networks for secondary staff in preparation for Year 11 courses.

♦ 29 students were able to truly extend their learning beyond the classroom through their participation in the 2015 Canberra Trip.
**Engagement**

“Engagement is essential. We are committed to Catholic Education’s mission through positive relationships with all.”

Our focus in 2015 was to strengthen links with our families and parish. This year we have:

- Started our school year with a Community Mass for our families as well as an Opening Mass for our students during the first week.
- Worked collaboratively with our parish in the delivery of the Rosary during the month of May. Our students committed to reciting the rosary as members of the parish. We were pleased to welcome the parishioners who attended the Rosary at our Primary campus.
- Introduced class liturgies for all our classes on a weekly roster basis.
- Introduced our Mother’s Day and Father’s Day events.
- Continued the ‘Learning Journey’ afternoon in the Primary classes.
- Continued to work closely with the parish in the Sacramental program.
- Continued with our popular ‘Grandparent’s Day’ event.
- Engaged a Chaplaincy worker to work with students and families and complement the work of our Counsellor.

We have been very heartened by the parent support for our new activities and the increased parental involvement for our regular events. Parents have attended their child’s liturgies and the numbers for our Mothers’ Day and Father’s Day events were beyond our hopes.

These activities help provide and nurture the links between school, home and the parish. These links allow for us to work together for the benefit of our children and the strengthening of our sense of community.

We are fortunate at St Joseph’s School that our sense of community is very much enhanced by the work of our P&F Association. As they do each year, this small group of dedicated parents are involved in the community building and fundraising aspects of school life. They greet new families to the school, provide lunches and fruit at our sporting carnivals and this year, entertained us with their Rock ‘n Roll Fundraiser. It is through the efforts of this Association that our students were able to enjoy the new ‘Redwood Tree’ playground equipment, medical wristbands, secondary lunchtime sport equipment and the purchase of new books and resources from the very successful Book Fair. We thank this dedicated group of parents and those community members who have contributed in any way to enriching the lives of our students through your engagement with our school.

**Accountability**

“Accountability is not optional. We have personal and collective responsibility for our system’s success.”

We are blessed with a school that boosts pleasant and well-kept facilities to enhance our students’ learning. Our School Board works closely with our Business Manager and our Finance Committee. Together they ensure that we are able to run our school efficiently, balance our budget, as well as continue to grow and improve our facilities.

In 2015 some of our Capital improvements included:

- Completion of the replacement of all the old secondary lockers.
- Purchase of new student furniture on both campuses.
- Replacement of carpet in Secondary rooms 8, 10, 11 & 12.
- Replacement of carpet in Primary rooms 2, 3, 5 and 9.
- Replacement of white goods in the Secondary Home Economics classroom.
- Completion of the Primary meeting room.
- Installation of new TV in various classrooms.
- Upgrade of the Secondary wireless.
- Upgrade Secondary teacher iPads.
- Replacement of Primary playground shade cloth.
- Installation of Primary ‘Redwood Tree” (P&F funded) and playground steps to allow access to the sand play area.
- Replacement of part of the Primary fence.
- Roof improvements to Fermoy House.

As a view to growing our school in 2015 our School Board supported the inclusion of an extra class in the Early Years as we conducted two Kindergarten classes and two Pre-Primary classes in 2015 and will do so in 2016.

Our staff commitment to this domain of the LEAD direction includes:
- The continuation of the formal professional learning program in which our staff are engaged.
- Increased collaborative practices between teaching staff.
- Common programming for each year group.
- The use of common assessment across all year groups.
- Further professional development in the SEQTA capabilities that has allowed electronic marks books to be introduced in 2015.
- The further development of links with other schools to enhance the professional learning of our staff.

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. I would like to thank all the Board members, led by our Chairperson, Mrs Cecilia McConnell, not only for their many hours at meetings but especially for their witness to the ethos and values of our school and their contribution to building a catholic culture for our school community.

**Discipleship**

“Discipleship is our calling. We are committed to deepening our relationship with Jesus.”

At our Opening School Mass in February, I set our students the theme of ‘Service’. As Jesus restored the sight of the blind in the Gospel, today he opens our eyes to see the needs of others. In the contemporary story of the small boy throwing back starfish into the sea after a storm, the message is clear that no matter how little that help may seem, if we give ourselves to the service of others, we can make a difference. Students and staff were given a starfish badge to remind them of the importance of making a difference to the lives of others.

We are extremely proud that in following the footsteps of our Founding Orders, this year our students adopted the Christian Service Learning program MaJEC (Marcellin, Joseph, Emilie, Care). This ongoing program allows our students to experience the joy of living their faith in a practical and appropriate manner through service for others. Many of us wore our starfish badges this year to remind us, that in the spirit of our motto of ‘Fidelity’, we have an obligation to see the needs of others around us. Our staff has revisited our mission to build a community that is centred on Jesus Christ and inspires and nurtures our students to reach their full potential.

One of the aspects of being at St Joseph’s School that pleases us greatly is the regular contact that we continue to have with the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition and the Marist Brothers. We are blessed that despite the many years that these orders have officially left our school, they continue their association with us and we are able to welcome them as regular visitors. Of special note, was the visit this year by Br Gregory McCrystal. Br Gregory was the founding Principal of St Joseph’s School in 1971 and took much delight in seeing how we have grown since his last visit.

This year we were happy to welcome our two new priests, Fr George and Fr Simeon. With their help, we have been able to offer a weekly liturgy to our students in addition to the regular school Masses that we celebrate each term. We have also been able to ensure that our students have the opportunity to celebrate Mass as part of their year group retreat. We thank our priests for the time and commitment they have given this year to our school and community.

In conclusion, 2015 has seen St Joseph’s School continue to fulfil its Mission to “be centred on Jesus Christ” and to “inspire and nurture our students to reach their full potential in a Catholic School Community.” We now look forward to the chapter in our history which will allow us to continue this Mission into Years 11 and 12.

God Bless

*Mrs Carmen Cox*