



# ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY

**ST JAMES THE APOSTLE SCHOOL**  
**HOPPERS CROSSING**

**2019**

REGISTERED SCHOOL NUMBER: 1829



**ST JAMES  
THE APOSTLE**  

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**CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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## Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Mary Abbott, attest that St James the Apostle Primary 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 2019 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 School.

1 May 2020

## Our School Vision



## School Overview

St James the Apostle Primary School is a co-educational Catholic school in the western suburbs of Melbourne, situated within a growth corridor.

St James the Apostle School community is Christ-centred and encourages all to learn with strength and in gentleness. We aim to build a community based on openness, equality, respect, trust and a sense of belonging. The faith development, pastoral care and wellbeing of all in our community is one of our strengths in living out our vision.



Our school uses the Victorian Curriculum and the Religious Education Framework as a basis for our Learning and Teaching program. We have seven learning spaces, in addition to an art room, multi-purpose gym and contemporary resource centre. We have two adventure playgrounds, full-sized oval and other recreation spaces for our children to enjoy.

Our school has close links with St James the Apostle Parish and the other schools in the parish. The partnership between the three Primary schools and Thomas Carr College is valued. Regular meetings are held between the schools to offer support and to learn from each other. This is all done under the guidance of our Parish Priest, Fr Jude Pirota.

## Principal's Report

2019 was when we launched our inaugural Art Show. After a successful concert in 2018 it was decided that this would occur every second year and an Art Show would occur in the alternate year. The Arts are an important part of the curriculum and will be showcased in this way. The Art Show was a huge success with students showing pride in the work they had produced.



In Religious Education we continued to work closely with the parish of St James to implement the parish sacramental programs for Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. We are fortunate to have Fr Jude as our Parish Priest. Fr Jude is welcoming of all in the community and is very supportive of St James the Apostle school. Late in 2019 we welcomed Fr Silvio into the parish as an assistant priest. Fr Silvio is an educator who took an immediate interest in what is happening in the school.

In 2019, the school began working with the Corwin Group on Visible Learning. This is a three-year project of professional development for teachers and school leaders that explores how evidence can be used to create innovation in the learning environment. It is based on John Hattie's research and the principles of Visible Learning and visible teaching.

At St James we have been continuing to work with all in the community on Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL). This is an evidence-based whole school process to improve learning outcomes for all students. As a part of PBL, staff, students and parents have developed and implemented four school expectations:

- We are Safe
- We are Learners
- We are Responsible
- We are Respectful

These expectations are displayed around the school. I was pleased to host a number of morning teas for students who were 'caught' demonstrating these positive behaviours.

During the year we began to use the Integrated Catholic Online Network (ICON). ICON is a collaborative program of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria involving Victorian Catholic schools across the four Catholic Education Offices. ICON aims to support systemic improvement in an evolving education environment. ICON provides new ways of working for schools that optimise student learning and school administration. As with any new initiative there are some 'glitches' but as we become more familiar with the platform we are able to add more programs.

In 2019 the school applied for a Capital Grant to refurbishment and secure the administration area and to upgrade the learning community near the play plaza. Towards the end of the year we were informed that we would receive the grant. Formalised confirmation and timeline for construction should occur early in 2020.



I am fortunate to be a Principal in a school that has so many dedicated staff. The needs of the students are paramount in all that the staff do from; planning for learning, professional learning, team meetings, communication with families, attending extra curricula activities and the daily organisation.



I also knew that the school was in good hands when David Hurn and I went on a three-week pilgrimage to Israel. The pilgrimage was organised by the Western Zone Principal Network. We have both been able to share many aspects of our learning with members of the St James community.

*Mary Abbott*

## Education in Faith

### Goal

To strengthen and implement the school's Catholic Culture in its vision, pedagogy and contemporary practice in dialogue with the parish community.

### Achievements

- Explicit connections to the Catholic identity of the school were made in the School's new vision.
- Students in Years 4 to 6 were provided with access to the digital version of the Archdiocesan RE text, *To Know, Worship and Love*, and all teaching staff were given access to all levels of the text.
- Teachers began using the CEM's *Renewed RE Curriculum Framework* in planning for learning in RE.
- The needs of students, including the plurality of religions, were considered when developing new RE units in line with the new Framework.
- RE planning was facilitated by the RE Leader, with particular focus on how the *Pedagogy of Encounter* could be built into units of work.
- Teaching teams were provided with professional readings from journals and other high-quality sources in developing their knowledge of the Catholic faith and contemporary pedagogy.
- A shared drive of RE resources was created for teachers to access when planning and delivering RE learning activities.
- Development of the *Sacramental Preparation Policy* to ensure consistency across school and the Parish.



- Learning spaces were furnished with materials to assist with daily prayer and Godly Play.
- The work of Religious Education Leaders across the parish primary schools was strengthened through regular meetings, including with our Parish Priest.

- Students were prepared to celebrate Sacraments of initiation, with students in Year 4 celebrating Reconciliation (Penance) and Eucharist for the first time and Year 6 students celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation.
- Students were involved in activities highlighting the importance of social justice:
  - Year 6 Mission Market;
  - The whole school donating food and clothing to St Vincent de Paul for hampers for our local community;
  - Year 3 students leading the school's efforts for Caritas Australia's annual *Project Compassion* fundraiser;
  - Year 4 students leading the whole school's efforts for Catholic Mission's *Socktober* fundraiser;
  - Bottletops were collected across the school to assist local efforts in creating artificial limbs and other plastic-based products for the community.
- Christian Meditation was implemented across the whole school at 11:20am each day.
- Learning Communities were encouraged to attend daily Mass at least twice a term.
- Students were invited to participate in whole-school Parish Masses, including St James feast day, St Mary of the Cross feast day and Ash Wednesday.



#### VALUE ADDED

- Christian author, Andrew McDonough, visited students in Years Prep to 2.
- Students involved in a variety of off-campus experiences, including to Ta Pinu Marian Centre for Year 5 students and St Patrick's Cathedral, Mary Glowrie Museum and ACU for Year 6 students.
- Held Immersion and Reflection Days for students celebrating sacraments of initiation.
- Parents of Year Prep students were invited to attend Preps in Pyjamas faith formation evenings, where scripture and prayer were explored through their child's eyes.
- Families celebrating the sacraments were provided with faith formation opportunities.
- Students in Year 6 were invited to be part of the parish's Young Paulist group through out-of-hours events.



## Learning & Teaching

### Goal

To maximise learning growth for all learners to achieve success in a contemporary and innovative environment of high expectations and continuous improvement.

### Achievements

- Staff engaged in the first year of Visible Learning professional development facilitated by Corwin.
- Learning leaders facilitated professional development for teaching staff on creating effective learning intentions.
- Learning leaders involved in Professional Learning around Learning and Teaching, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Technologies Network cluster meetings.
- Staff in Years Prep to 6 involved in and supported through Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings to develop and consolidate use of assessments and data in creating and facilitating focus groups.
- Weekly planning sessions led by Learning Leaders for each year level.
- Staff provided opportunities to implement and use Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) English and Mathematics assessment data in teams.
- Awarded an Australian Government grant to develop a Makerspace.
- Teachers in Year Prep participated in Walker Learning professional development to implement Learning-Developmental Play.





- All staff were invited to attend and participate in reading comprehension professional learning sessions facilitated by CEM literacy consultants.
- Staff continued to implement the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, used to test reading and comprehension levels in students.
- A reading data wall (using PM decoding levels in Years Prep to 2 and Fountas and Pinnell BAS levels for Years 3 to 6) was established and referred to during planning.
- Levelled Literacy Intervention (LLI) implemented with groups in Years 1 to 3.
- Initial implementation of the Fountas and Pinnell Classroom resources to develop comprehension strategies in guided reading sessions.
- Interventions developing student phonological awareness facilitated in Years Prep and 1 resulting in an increase in reading levels by five to ten levels.
- Comprehension Interventions facilitated in Years 4 and 5 to assist with comprehending texts at different levels. This resulted in improved PAT scores averaging at 12-point growth in 12 months, doubling the expected growth of 6 points from Years 4 to 5.
- VCOP implemented in Year 6 to develop student's writing by explicitly teaching Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation.
- Students participated in English events such as Book Week celebrations and Melbourne Writers' Festival.
- Students in Year 2 attended Wyndham Cultural Centre to see the performance of Mem Fox's Possum Magic.
- Applied for and received a \$25 000 Mathematics grant from CEM.
- Learning Framework in Number has been implemented as an intervention and whole class settings in Years Prep to 4.
- Staff engaged with the Box of Facts to strengthen students' number knowledge in Mathematics.
- Staff opened Mathematics to the community through 'Maths Party Night'.

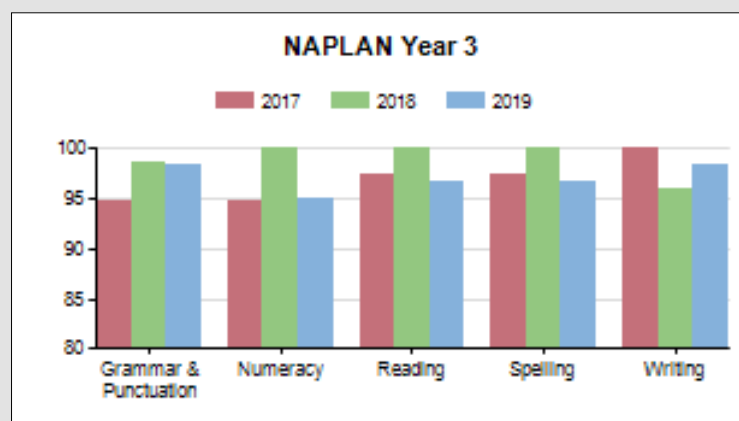


## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

When examining NAPLAN over the past three years, there have been some mixed results in our achievements.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2017	2018	2017 - 2018	2019	2018 - 2019
	%	%	Changes	%	Changes
			%		%
<b>Year 3</b>					
Grammar & Punctuation	94.7	98.7	4.0	98.3	-0.4
Numeracy	94.7	100.0	5.3	94.9	-5.1
Reading	97.4	100.0	2.6	96.6	-3.4
Spelling	97.4	100.0	2.6	96.6	-3.4
Writing	100.0	96.0	-4.0	98.3	2.3
<b>Year 5</b>					
Grammar & Punctuation	93.1	100.0	6.9	95.9	-4.1
Numeracy	95.4	98.8	3.4	97.3	-1.5
Reading	93.1	95.2	2.1	98.6	3.4
Spelling	97.7	95.2	-2.5	95.9	0.7
Writing	97.7	92.9	-4.8	97.3	4.4

## Year 3 trends

*Reading, Spelling & Numeracy*

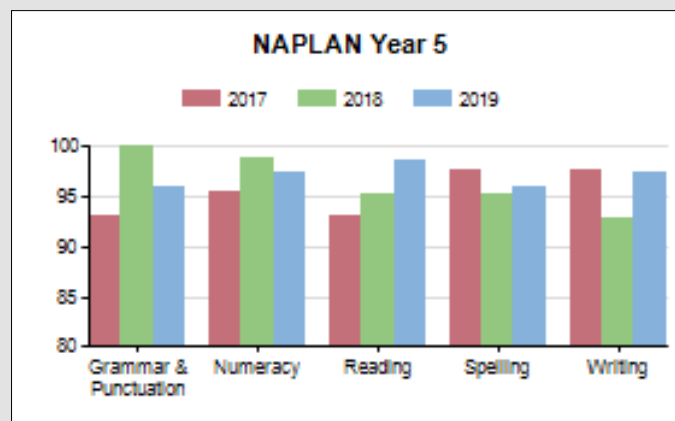
After an improvement in each of these areas in 2018 there has been a slight decrease in the number of students achieving the national average. The 2019 Numeracy data is in line with the 2017 data.

*Grammar & Punctuation*

Since 2017 the data has shown an increase in this area. Although there is a slight decline in achievement compared to 2018 there is an overall upward trend.

*Writing*

In 2019, student achievement improved in the area of writing. The data dropped slightly compared to 2017, however is gradually improving.

**Year 5 trends***Reading, Spelling & Writing*

The data has shown a positive result in each of these areas compared to 2018. There has been significant improvement in reading and writing with just under 100% of students achieving the national standard.

*Grammar & Punctuation*

The data has shown a slight decrease in achievement compared to 2017, however the overall improvement across the past three years has seen a growth of just under 4% in Grammar & Punctuation

*Numeracy*

There has been a slight decrease in numeracy results compared to 2018. Over the past three years there has been an average of 97.2% students achieving at the national standard.

## Student Wellbeing

### Goal

To develop a culture where wellbeing is integral to learning and consciously connected to student achievement.

### Achievements

- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) officially launched with the school community. A walkathon was held to celebrate and promote PBL.
- PBL Behaviour Matrix used to describe the ways community members can match the four school expectations: be safe, be respectful, be responsible, and be learners, in different areas, such as learning spaces, playing areas, gathering spaces and cyber.
- Students engaged in PBL lessons linked to the behaviours on the Behaviour Matrix. The PBL lessons supported social and emotional learning for students as well as developed a common language around school wide behaviour expectations.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning team met every fortnight, supported by CEM PBL coach. The team developed descriptions of student major and minor behaviours and a flow chart to detail staff responses to student behaviour. The PBL team received training in SWIS (School Wide Information System). Student minor and major behaviours tracked on school SWIS forms and the data inputted into SWIS for analysis and actioning by PBL team.
- PBL professional learning focus for staff conference. The professional learning facilitated by Dr David Collins, and Trevor Herny from CEM and Wellbeing Leader.
- Students participated in the Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum. This curriculum, aligned to the Victorian Curriculum and social and emotional learning, aimed to teach students about personal safety and awareness, including cyber safety and phone safety. The curriculum focussed on three key safety messages: **Recognise, React and Report**. Students' participation in the Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum was also one way of addressing Victorian Government Child Safety Ministerial Order 870, standard 7: Strategies for child empowerment and participation.
- Staff completed First Aid training, including CPR and Asthma training.



- Continued staff professional learning in Child Safety, including the PROTECT protocol (Victorian Government), Reportable Conduct and Mandatory Reporting.



- Continued Kindergarten to Prep and Year 6 to Year 7 transitions. Prep orientation sessions held in Term 4. Wellbeing Leader and Prep staff completed many kinder visits before the orientation sessions to get to meet the children in their 'known' kindergarten settings before attending school.

#### VALUE ADDED

- Positive Behaviour for Learning officially launched as a school wide approach. PBL visible to whole school community in messaging and action.
- PBL professional learning for staff
- PBL team training in SWIS
- Student engagement in social and emotional learning: PBL lessons and Daniel Morcombe Child Safety curriculum
- Continued focus on Child Safety

## STUDENT SATISFACTION

Students in Years 4-6 had the opportunity to complete the CEMSIS survey in 2019. 204 surveys were completed.

The student survey data represents that 77% of students felt that their teachers hold them to high expectations of their effort, understanding, persistence and performance. 71% of students felt that they are valued members of the St James school community and three quarters of the participants in the survey felt that they could go to an adult in the school if they had a concern about safety.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

School attendance records are kept twice a day.

From 2018 'schools needed to advise parents/guardians of unexplained absences, on the same day, as soon as practicable, including for post-compulsory aged students.' (DET, 2018)

Based on DET's Attendance Guidelines (2018), parents have the responsibility to:

- Ensure their child attends school and to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school, and the principal must record in writing the reason (if any) given by the parent.
- Inform the school in advance of upcoming absences.
- Ensure a child's education and wellbeing are supported by communicating openly with the school where a child has an ongoing medical condition that may result in ongoing absences or medical appointments during school hours. (p. 9)

The School sends out an SMS on the morning of an unexplained student absence and asks parents or carers to reply to the school SMS to confirm the message had been received. If student absenteeism increases, or if student absenteeism remains unexplained, the School follows the DET Attendance Guidelines – *Every Day Counts*.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	%
Y01	93.3
Y02	93.0
Y03	94.3
Y04	93.2
Y05	94.4
Y06	94.1
Overall average attendance	93.7

## Child Safe Standards

### Goal

To further develop a Child Safe school.

### Achievements

- Termly staff training plan to focus on Child Safety including: addressing the principle of inclusion, revisiting school policies and procedures, revising the *PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to all Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* protocol, Reportable Conduct and Child Safety risk management concerns.
- Copies of photo identification for all staff taken to accompany Victorian Institute of Teaching registration and Working with Children Checks. This included emergency teachers.
- Students in Years Prep to 6 learnt about child safety through social and emotional learning lessons, specifically by participation in the Daniel Morcombe Child Safety curriculum. This curriculum addresses strategies for child empowerment and participation.
- All volunteers and contractors required to have a current Working with Children Check. They were also required to sign the school's Code of Conduct.
- Child safety induction sessions conducted for new parents, and other family members or carers, who wished to volunteer at St James.



- Communication with the school community about child safety issues, and reminders about child safety issues, including the car park, were included in various school communication platforms.
- Clear message of St James' zero tolerance to any form of child abuse and the importance of child safe advertised in recruitment of staff.
- Child safety questions asked when completing referee checks for potential and new staff.

## Leadership & Management

### Goal

To develop and sustain a strong Performance and Development Culture (PDC) across the school.

### Achievements

- School employed Angela Anderson as English Leader. Angela's focus with staff was in the area of reading.
- David Hurn, Deputy Principal, was also appointed as the Learning & Teaching Leader.
- John Hein, Mathematics Leader, consolidated the work done by staff over the past three years.
- All staff attended an Annual Review Meeting which enabled them to reflect on 2019 and set professional learning directions for 2020.
- Teachers participated in various Professional Learning activities both on- and off-site relevant to their own personal learning needs and aligned with the school's Annual Action Plan.
- The school has maintained its financial viability.
- The school has maintained low class sizes in 2019.
- A 2019 Annual Action Plan was developed from the 2019 – 2022 School Improvement Plan.
- Timetable organisation enabled teams to plan together each week. This timetable also accounted for part-time staff availability to ensure they could plan with their team fortnightly.
- Staff Meetings and PLC meetings were timetable weekly and always had a professional learning focus.
- Resources are provided for each year level teaching team to engage in a day of planning for the forthcoming term, facilitated by the learning leaders.



**EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING****DESCRIPTION OF PL UNDERTAKEN IN 2019**

- Mathematics
- Box of Facts
- Mathematics Intervention
- Religious Education Leaders Network
- Deputy Principal Network
- Mathematic Leaders Workshop
- English Leaders Workshop
- Principal Network
- Learning & Teaching Network
- ICT Network
- Wellbeing Network
- Emergency management
- Child Safe protocols
- STEM
- NAPLAN online training
- ECSIP understandings
- Masters study
- School Vision
- Leading Languages Professional Learning Program (LLPLP)
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)
- Languages Assistant PL
- Diversity Leader Network
- Visible Learning - Leadership Team PL & All staff workshops
- ABLES Training
- Walker Learning
- SWIS Training
- Emerging Leaders PL
- ICON training
- Gifted PL
- NCCD PL
- Staff Conference
- Reportable Conduct PL
- Risk Management PL
- Pilgrimage to Holy Land
- Christian Meditation

**NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL in 2019**

42

**AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL**

\$2,243



### TEACHER SATISFACTION

In 2019 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese used a new survey for schools to receive feedback from staff, students and families. The Catholic Education Melbourne School Improvement Survey (CEMSIS) looked at all aspects of a school. Under this part of the report the responses pertaining to Leadership and Management will be used.

**Instructional Leadership** - The extent to which the school leaders set the conditions for improving teaching and learning at the school. The result from staff 57% was above the average for Catholic schools in Melbourne (56%).

**Professional Learning** - Perceptions of the quality and coherence of professional learning opportunities. The result from staff was well above the average at 73% (57% CEM).

**Collaboration around an improvement strategy** - Perceptions of the coherence of the school's improvement strategy. The result from staff was above the average at 67% (58% CEM).

**Collaboration in teams** - How well teachers work together in teams to improve teaching and learning. The result from staff was well above the average at 85% (67% CEM).

**Support for teams** - Teachers' perceptions of how well school leadership sets the conditions for teams to collaborate effectively. The result from staff was above the average at 69% (65% CEM).

## STAFF DATA

STAFF DATA	%
Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	66.8
All Staff Retention Rate	79.1

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	%
Doctorate	0.0
Masters	33.3
Graduate	11.1
Graduate Certificate	2.8
Bachelor Degree	88.9
Advanced Diploma	16.7
No Qualifications Listed	2.8

STAFF COMPOSITION	Headcount	FTE
Principal class	4	NA
Teaching Staff	53	46.2
Non-Teaching Staff	24	32.2
Indigenous Teaching Staff	0	NA



## School Community

### Goal

To promote and strengthen the collaborative partnership between home, school, Parish and the wider community to support learning and wellbeing.

### Achievements

- The St James Art Show exhibited artwork from all students. The art show transformed the school into an art gallery showcasing the visual arts talents of our students.



- The Walkathon officially launching Positive Behaviour for Learning was a fun community event that showcased the school expectations.
- Parents and Friends Committee (P&F) met twice a term with P&F office bearers, other committee members, principal and deputy principals. The P&F supported the school with fundraising initiatives, such as Subway, donuts, chocolate drive and raffles. The P&F ran the Mother's Day and Father's Day stalls.
- Parent helpers and other volunteers supported the learning at school and excursions.
- New parent helpers and volunteers completed Child Safety induction.
- The Mother's Day Afternoon Tea and Father's Day Breakfast was hosted by St James staff. These events were attended by many of the mothers, fathers or significant people in the lives of our students. Lots of delicious food was prepared and enjoyed.

- Prep families were able to engage with student learning in Religious Education by attending three 'Preps in Pyjamas' sessions.
- Maths Party Night was well attended by families celebrating Mathematics learning across Years Prep to Year 6.
- The Boys Night was held for students in Years 4 to 6. The purpose of Boys Night is for fathers or significant men in the lives of our students to participate in fun activities after school with their boys.
- Students had the opportunity to participate in school discos after school hours.
- Weekly visits to Mecwacare (nursing home next door to school) by Year 5 students and staff.
- Many Parish liturgical events were celebrated with the school community, such as Ash Wednesday and feast day liturgies.



- The Parish Fete was held in October. It was a great community event that enabled all members of the Parish and wider community to gather.
- Kindergarten visits by Wellbeing Leader and Prep staff.
- Staff participation in Wyndham Council hosted Schools Information Night (for 2019 kindergarten families), and Transition Swap afternoon (opportunities for kindergarten teachers to communicate with prep teachers).

- The Year 6 students planned and held a Mission Market in Term 4. The purpose of the Mission Market is to create and make items for sale with the proceeds being distributed to different missions or charities the students have learnt about.
- Our Christmas Carols night showcased students telling the story of Christmas through the singing of carols and liturgical songs. This was held in the evening with a picnic beforehand.



### PARENT SATISFACTION

Randomly selected parents had the opportunity to complete the CEMSIS survey in 2019.

Eighty surveys were sent to families, with 25 surveys being completed.

- 92% of parents felt that the staff, including the principal, were approachable at St James.
- 96% of parents felt welcomed when they enter the school.
- 84% of parents felt that the school valued parents' opinions and that they could reach out to the school for support.

## Future Directions

- St James the Apostle School will begin a building project to refurbish and secure the administration area and renovate the learning community near the Play Plaza. This was made possible through a Capital Grant.
- Our school will move into the second year of Visible Learning. This is a whole school approach.
- In the area of Mathematics, the use of Learning Framework in Number (LFIN) will be extended to all levels after its use in Years Prep to 2.
- In the area of Religious Education, a whole school overview of RE planning will be developed, along with further exploration of the *Pedagogy of Encounter*.
- In the area of English, we intend to identify and apply appropriate contemporary strategies for the teaching of reading, while implementing a school-based approach to spelling. In Years Prep and 1, we are looking to build phonic and phonological awareness knowledge.
- Throughout 2020, we aim to further develop connections with groups in the local community.



**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)