



ST JAMES
THE APOSTLE
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



MELBOURNE
ARCHDIOCESE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St James the Apostle School

Hoppers Crossing North

2021

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1829

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Mary Abbott, attest that St James the Apostle 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 2021 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 Schools.

05/04/2022

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

Governing Authority Report

2021 has been a momentous year for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, with Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) assuming governance and operations of 290 schools which previously operated under unincorporated structures.

MACS was established to ensure these schools continue the mission of Catholic education to proclaim the Good News while equipping our young people with the education, knowledge, skills and hope to live meaningful lives and enrich the world around them.

Our schools were again asked this year to respond to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. Although asked to implement many measures to keep our staff and students safe, our schools were able to continue delivering a high-quality Catholic education through the resilience and dedication of our principals, school leaders and teachers.

Alongside this important work, we were also able to deliver a new policy suite for schools to ensure our students are safe and which enhance the consistency and transparency of school decision-making, while preserving school autonomy and respecting the local context of our schools.

School Advisory Councils have been established to actively support the principal and embed the life of the local Church in the life of each school. It has been wonderful to see so many parents and members of the wider parish community engaged in these critical forums.

Thank you for the support you have given our schools in 2021. We look forward to continuing to work with you as we strive to provide the young people of the Archdiocese of Melbourne with the best kind of education possible, one that fosters a formation of the whole person that is deeply and enduringly humanising.

Yours sincerely

Jim Miles

Executive Director

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd

Our School Vision

As a Catholic learning community of hope, inspired by the Gospel, we are empowered to embrace excellence through innovation.

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 Pirotta mssp.

Principal's Report

In 2021, St James the Apostle School was able to complete a building project to refurbish and secure the administration area and renovate the learning community near the Play Plaza.

The staff and learner developed many skills during remote learning which are being transferred into the learning communities when we returned to face-to-face teaching. Throughout remote learning our Diversity Leader, Christie Maloney ensured that interventions continued. She supported the Learning Support Officers (LSOs) by overseeing activities they could do and providing feedback.

Our sacramental program was able to continue throughout remote learning with the dates for the actual sacraments being moved a few times due to restrictions. The Year 5 and 6 camps went ahead which was a highlight for the learners and staff.

2021 was another year that presented challenges but also one where staff and families worked together to enable the best outcome for the learners at St James the Apostle. We also found ways to come together as a community through Google Meets for sacraments, Parents & Friends, Staff Meetings, regular email update and the newsletter.

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To build assessment-capable learners
- To develop connections with members of the local community
- To deepen pedagogical and content knowledge

Achievements

- Strengthening of curriculum planners used by teachers to plan units of work, based on MACS Religious Education Framework and the mandated text *To Know, Worship and Love*.
- Development of learning progressions, in the form of rubrics, to assist with planning, assessment and reporting in Religious Education.
- Consideration of learners' diverse needs, including the plurality of religions, when developing Religious Education units in line with the school planner and system Framework.
- Facilitation of planning by the Religious Education Leader, with particular focus on how the *Pedagogy of Encounter* could be built into units of work.
- Provision of professional readings from journals and other high-quality sources to develop teachers' knowledge of the Catholic faith and contemporary pedagogy.
- Strengthening the work of Religious Education Leaders across the parish primary schools through regular meetings, including with our Parish Priest.
- Provision of professional learning, both in person and online, in the areas of scripture, Catholic tradition and liturgy.
- Increased availability of online resources for staff and learners, including access to *Australian Catholics*, and shared online drive of RE resources.
- Family faith development workshops continued online, with families in Years 3, 4 and 6 engaging with Catholic tradition in the context of the sacraments of initiation.
- School communication, including e-news and social media, included information from the parish and opportunities for families to learn more about Catholic tradition.

VALUE ADDED

- Sacraments of initiation were celebrated across the school, including for learners who missed out in 2020.
- Social justice projects were planned and carried out by different year levels:
 - Year 6 running the Mission Market for Caritas Australia and Paulist Missionaries
 - Year 4 organising a special fund-raiser day for Catholic Mission during Socktober

- Year 3 developing advertising for Project Compassion
- The traditional Stations of the Cross were re-imagined as an online moment of prayer by the Year 5 Learning Community.
- Speakers and presenters from outside the school community were invited to address learners, both in person and remotely.
- Staff and learners were invited to celebrate the liturgy across the year, including for the beginning of the year and end of the year.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To deepen pedagogical and content knowledge
- To build assessment capable learners

Achievements

- Learning Leaders involved in Professional Learning around Learning and Teaching, Literacy, Numeracy and ICT Network cluster meetings.
- Staff engaged in Visible Learning professional development facilitated by Corwin.
- Continued involvement in Visible Learning Professional Learning, with learning intentions and success criteria used in teaching and learning activities
- Staff participation in Book Club to further develop understanding of Visible Learning.
- Staff professional learning in Inquiry Based Learning, supported by consultant Deborah Vietri
- Scope and Sequence for capabilities, inquiry skills and concepts developed from Years 3 to 6
- Support to plan learning units and sequences of learning with teams of teachers from Years 3 to 6.
- Introduction of strategic and systematic synthetic phonics in Years Prep and 1.
- Learners invited to participate in The Great Australian Spelling Bee.
- Throughout the remote learning period, learners participated in Battle of the Books Reading Challenge, with learners receiving awards for exemplary results.
- Learners invited from Years 5 and 6 to participate in STEM Mad Challenge, with learners progressing to second stage.
- Participation in Australian Mathematics Competition.
- Weekly facilitated 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.
- Teaching teams expected to use data in their planning sessions to organise teaching and support student learning.
- Twice-daily learning meetings held with learners.
- Targeted and differentiated small group Meets to support student learning.
- Use of platforms such as Google Classroom and Seesaw to provide ongoing learning, connection and communication for students and families.
- Staff learning related to differentiated instruction, such as classroom organisation, assessment; and teaching and learning.

- Teachers were supported in using the data to create and facilitate focus groups to improve student outcomes.
- Literacy Intervention continued during Remote Learning with students having one to one instruction with an LSO three times a week.
- Program Support Group meetings continued to support students with additional needs.
- Implemented evidence based literacy interventions with Macqlit and Minilit to support phonic development.
- Teachers differentiated learning tasks for learners during the remote learning time using either the Seesaw (Years Prep to 2) and Google Classroom (Years 3 to 6) platforms.
- Clear Track Data Management System to track growth.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

When comparing the NAPLAN growth data of the learners in Year 3 (2019) and Year 5 (2021), the following observations can be made:

Relative growth in Grammar and Punctuation:

- 85.19% had medium to high growth over the two years

Numeracy

- 88.89% had medium to high growth over the two years with approximately half of those learners achieving high growth

Looking at the relative growth in Reading :

- 83.63% had medium to high growth over the two years

Looking at Spelling:

- 79.63% had medium to high growth over the two years

Looking at Writing:

- 79.22% had medium to high growth over the two years

To track student progress St James the Apostle Catholic Primary School used:

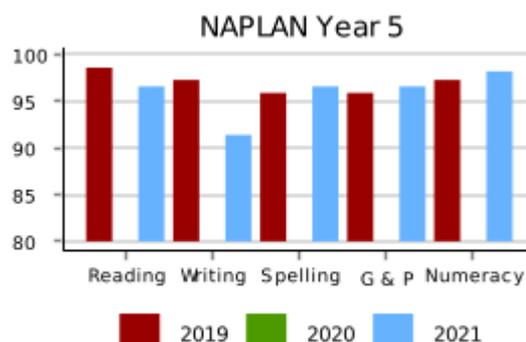
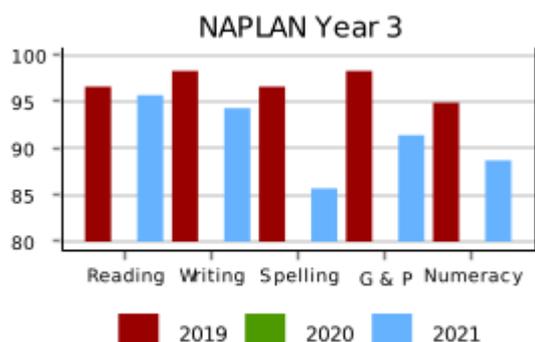
- Record of Oral Language
- Learning Framework In Number
- Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) Reading Comprehension & Mathematics
- Benchmark Assessment System
- Success In Numeracy Education
- Westwood
- TORCH
- Speak Up

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	98.3	-	-	91.4	-
YR 03 Numeracy	94.9	-	-	88.7	-
YR 03 Reading	96.6	-	-	95.7	-
YR 03 Spelling	96.6	-	-	85.7	-
YR 03 Writing	98.3	-	-	94.3	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	95.9	-	-	96.6	-
YR 05 Numeracy	97.3	-	-	98.2	-
YR 05 Reading	98.6	-	-	96.6	-
YR 05 Spelling	95.9	-	-	96.6	-
YR 05 Writing	97.3	-	-	91.4	-

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To develop connections with members of the local community
- To deepen pedagogical and content knowledge

Achievements

- The four school expectations connected to Positive Behaviour for Learning (We are safe, we are learners, we are respectful and we are responsible) reinforced through whole school messaging and learning experiences.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) as a whole school approach continued in the language and learning experiences at school. The learners revisited PBL lessons linked to the Behaviour Matrix when returning to onsite learning to reinforce the expected behaviours.
- Inquiry learning in Term 1 focussed on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)
- Student Representative Council members (leaders from Years 3-6) led different aspects of school communication.
- Staff professional learning in Child Safety, Mandatory Reporting - including the PROTECT Protocol (Victorian Government) and Reportable Conduct.
- Staff completed the practical component of the Applied First Aid training to complete the Certificate of Attainment started in 2020.
- Remote learning incorporated social and emotional learning in teacher facilitated home group Google Meets. The Google Meets during remote learning supported the connectedness between learners and their peers and staff.
- Leaders completed Child Information Sharing Scheme professional learning modules.

VALUE ADDED

- Positive Behaviour for Learning lessons connected to the Behaviour Matrix.
- Social and emotional learning linked to Inquiry learning.
- Daily Google Meets during remote learning

STUDENT SATISFACTION

The 2021 MACSSIS student data suggests the following:

- 81% of students in Years 4 to 6 feel that their teachers have high expectations of them as learners, including the high expectations of effort, understanding, perseverance and persistence.
- 72% of students had a positive mindset about themselves as learners.
- 74% of students feel valued as members of the school community.

The scores in these three areas increased from the last MACSSIS performed in 2019.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

In 2021, school attendance was recorded differently depending on whether learning was onsite or remote. When students were onsite learning, school attendance records were kept twice a day. During remote learning, school attendance records were kept once 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/guardians 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).

When onsite learning, the school sends out an SMS on the morning of an unexplained student absence to the parent/guardian and asks parent or guardian to reply to the school SMS to confirm the message has been received. If student absenteeism increases, or if student absenteeism remains unexplained, the School follows the DET Attendance Guidelines - Every Day Counts.

When remote learning occurred due to COVID-19, the recording of student attendance was still a requirement. Student attendance was collected once a day. The attendance data was collected based on learners attending online Google Meets or engaging with the online platforms. Unexplained absenteeism was followed up by home group teachers and deputy principals.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	94.5%
Y02	94.3%
Y03	93.7%
Y04	94.4%
Y05	95.7%
Y06	92.6%
Overall average attendance	94.2%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To further develop a Child Safe school.

Achievements

- Remote learning child safety processes put in place and communicated with all members of the school community: learners, staff and families.
- Staff training plan for each school term to focus on Child Safety, including addressing the principle of inclusion, revisiting school policies and procedures, revisiting the PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to all Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools protocol, Reportable Conduct and Child Safety risk management concerns.
- Staff completed the Victorian Government Mandatory Reporting eLearning module.
- Copies of photo identification for all staff taken to accompany Victorian Institute of Teaching registration and Working with Children Checks. This included emergency teachers.
- All volunteers and contractors are required to have a current Working with Children Check. They were also required to sign the school's Code of Conduct. This included all the contractors associated with the school's building works.
- Clear message of St James' zero tolerance to any form of child abuse and the importance of child safety advertised in recruitment of staff.
- Staff recruitment processes involve referee checks, involving a focus on child safety.
- Communication with the school community about child safety issues, and reminders about child safety issues, including the car park, were included in the various school communication platforms.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To build assessment-capable learners
- To deepen pedagogical and content knowledge

Achievements

- Leanne Lourey was appointed English Leader and was able to assist staff with planning activities for remote learning and when returning to on-site learning.
- David Hurn, Deputy Principal, in his role as the Learning & Teaching Leader engaged the services of Deb Vietri to work with Year 3 to 6 staff on Inquiry. Much of this work was done remotely.
- John Hein, Mathematics Leader, moved during the year to another school. Leanne Lourey took on this role. With John leaving the Leadership Team saw an opportunity for staff to be part of leadership at St James. Support roles for English and Mathematics were advertised internally and Rebecca Kerr (English) and Shannon Attard (Mathematics) were appointed to a POL 1 position and given a day a week release to work with Leanne and staff.
- Michael Polh, Religious Education Leader, continued to plan activities with staff online and in person to prepare for the sacramental program. In his other role as ICT Leader, Michael ensured that clear communication was sent to staff regularly during remote learning.
- All teaching staff attended an online Annual Review Meeting which enabled them to reflect on 2021 particularly through remote learning.
- Teachers participated in various Professional Learning activities both on- and off-site or online.
- The school has maintained its financial viability.
- The school has maintained low class sizes in 2021 to assist learners throughout remote learning and when returning to on-site learning.
- A 2021 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. This was important in providing consistency across the year levels but also to maintain connectedness during remote learning.
- Staff Meetings and PLT 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 Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

Due to restriction many PL opportunities were done online.

- Language Assistant PL - Ayesha Albuquerque, Claudia Tizzi & Chiara Ratti
- Leaders Conference - January
- Western Region Diversity Leader Network - Christie Maloney
- Western Region Principal Network - Mary Abbott
- Western Region Deputy Principal Network - Renae Stone & David Hurn
- Western Region Wellbeing Network - Renae Stone
- Western Region Mathematics Network - John Hein then Leanne Lourey
- Western Region Literacy Network - Leanne Lourey
- Western Region Religious Education Leaders Network - Michael Polh
- Western Region Technology (WesTech) Network - Michael Polh
- Pathways to Principalship PL - David Hurn
- Visible Learning PL - All staff
- Governance Meeting - Mary Abbott
- NAPLAN online PL - David Hurn, John Hein, Michael Polh & Angela Anderson
- Learning Support Officers (LSO) Meeting - All LSOs, leaders
- Finance Meetings - Marion Spratling
- ROSAE PL - Christie Maloney
- EAL Curriculum PL - Leanne Lourey
- Deb Vietri - Inquiry - Years three to six
- Disability Standards - all staff
- NCCD moderating
- School Advisory Council forum
- ECSI PL - Michael Polh & David Hurn
- Level 2 First Aid training - All staff
- Emergency Management Training online - All staff
- Child Information Sharing Scheme eLearning modules - Mary, Renae, David & Christie

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021	62
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1200

TEACHER SATISFACTION

The annual survey of staff MACSSIS 2021 (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools - School Improvement Survey) showed that:

- staff felt confident that the school leaders work in the best interest of the school, with a 90% positive response
- school leaders are knowledgeable about learning and teaching practices, with a 73% positive response
- school leaders are respectful towards staff, with a 92% positive response
- staff feel comfortable approaching members of the school leadership for support, with a 86% positive response

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	68.8%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	93.9%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	33.3%
Graduate	13.3%
Graduate Certificate	6.7%
Bachelor Degree	90.0%
Advanced Diploma	16.7%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	46.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	37.0
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	24.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	19.8
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

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

- To develop connections with members of the local community

Achievements

- In 2021 many school community events were organised but cancelled due to COVID-19 and the restrictions put in place.
- The Parents and Friends Committee (P&F) continued to meet regularly throughout the year. The P&F meetings were held online, using Google Meet.
- The P&F meetings were made up of P&F office bearers, general members, principal and deputy principals. The P&F fundraising efforts were reduced greatly by COVID-19 restrictions. Icy poles in Term 1 and Subway orders did occur. A Christmas raffle was a contributor to the P&F fundraising efforts.
- The various means of school communication were an important element of keeping all members of the school community connected during remote learning and the restrictions that followed when learners transitioned to on-site learning. School communication methods included email, school Facebook page, phone calls, Seesaw announcements, the large electronic sign in the school carpark and school newsletter.
- School community worked together to keep learners safe when returning to onsite learning. COVID-19 restrictions meant changes to the carpark and before and after school pick up and drop off procedures.
- During remote learning, families were able to be actively involved whilst supporting their children using the online platforms of Seesaw and/or Google Classroom.
- Family workshops were held online using Google Meet. This included sacramental workshops.
- School assemblies and celebrations were live-streamed to the community due to the COVID restrictions around gathering and having people onsite.

PARENT SATISFACTION

The 2021 MACSSIS family data suggests the following:

- 82% of families perceive that the school meets their child's developmental needs
- 84% of families perceive that the social and emotional learning climate of the school is positive
- 73% of families have a positive perception of student safety at school.