



St Thomas The Apostle School Blackburn

2021 Annual Report to the School Community



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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Angela Lacey, attest that St Thomas 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.

12/05/2022

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

St Thomas the Apostle School is a faith filled community that embraces diversity.

We endeavour to inspire confidence in all students to achieve, empowering them to prepare for the future, and contribute to our world, with a strong sense of kindness and respect.

(Adopted in July 2021)

School Overview

St Thomas the Apostle Parish was founded in 1952. The school first began in 1953 when the Sion Sisters taught 50 students in classes from Prep to Year 2. In 1957 the Loreto Sisters took over and ran the school for the next 30 years. They developed a tradition of excellent education, community spirit, kindness, gentleness and warmth. Since 1986, lay principals have been in charge.

St Thomas the Apostle School is a co-educational Catholic school servicing the Parish of St Thomas the Apostle Blackburn. St Thomas' is nestled in the leafy Bellbird area of Blackburn. The school adjoins Morton Park, which has public ovals, parking and playing areas. It is only a short distance from Blackburn Lake Reserve and within close proximity to Blackburn Shopping Centre, the Library and Blackburn Station.

The school has classrooms on two levels, with the Prep - Year Two students downstairs, and the Year 3-6 students upstairs. The upper level is accessed via stairs and also a lift. There is an administration area, and a learning centre. This learning centre on two levels includes a library, computer lab, small breakout learning areas and a 'Kids Kitchen'. Additionally, there is a teacher resource area, staffroom, meeting rooms, a school hall, various offices and small rooms for special learning programs. There is a dedicated Before and After School Care room based in a large portable at the front of the property. A kitchen garden is located in a small area adjoining the front area of the school. There are three playing areas, which include a P-2, 3-6 and shared passive play area. The school is secure, with gated access, and use of the ovals at Morton Park next door.

The school provides a dynamic sense of community and fosters a welcoming family atmosphere. St Thomas' has strong parent groups, who are vital to the sense of belonging in the school. Parents are welcome to participate in all aspects of the school, with the main support coming through the Parents' and Friends Association, Parish Education Board, Fair Committee and individual contributions in the classrooms through literacy helpers, and assisting with swimming, excursions or for special school events.

St Thomas the Apostle School is highly regarded in the local area. Community involvement is a feature of the school. Former students coach a number of netball teams after school hours and there is a very active tennis club. The biennial Parish and School Fete is well attended by the wider community, and supported by former students, school parents and parishioners. It is hoped to recommence this soon.

Principal's Report

2021 ~ Another year of change...

In 2021, we again experienced a year of change which we could not have imagined two years ago. Who would have thought we would experience a second year of such impact from COVID-19.

We began the year with the arrival of Fr Alo, our new Parish Priest, at Blackburn, but there were limited opportunities for him to get to know the school and parish due to Lockdowns. Our Preps too, began school with parents having a short visit to the classroom, then gathering off site to get to know each other. We experienced a short four day Lockdown in Term One, but we did manage to host the Prep and Year Six Picnic in the front playground. We also celebrated the First Eucharist Masses for our Year Five students who had not been able to gather together for this in 2020.

In Term Two, we experienced another Lockdown of 14 days. St Thomas' staff reverted to online learning and our students flipped from being in the classroom to learning online with their teachers. In Term Three, we did return to school briefly, then went into Lockdown, returned and then went into the extended Lockdown until the end of the term. In Term Four, the students did some learning online, then slowly returned to school, part time, over a few weeks. The teachers provided an excellent program to cover the essential learning areas, which was significant in assisting our students to continue their learning and keep connected. Everyone was finally on site together just after Cup Day and spent the remainder of the year happily catching up on events missed. We celebrated the sacrament of Eucharist with the Year Four students and Confirmation with the Year Six students. We were also able to film a recording of our School Performance 'Beyond the Autumn Mist', just prior to the end of the year. Our Art Show, which had been scheduled for July, was also filmed and is shared on our website. It was such an achievement to complete both of these well loved events, thanks to the support and dedication of the staff.

In Term Three, we participated in our Review, a chance to reflect on and assess the current achievements and areas for growth, leading to a new School Improvement Plan (2022-2025), with an Annual Action Plan to work on goals, strategies and actions. It was a different process to participate in this online, but our Reviewer did a wonderful job in capturing the voices of our community, our report and our data to plan and direct school improvement over the next four years.

The Education Board and Parents' and Friends Association continued to meet online. The Education Board was planning for the transition to the School Advisory Council in 2022, discussing the Terms of Reference and membership. The Parents and Friends Committee were able to run some fundraising activities, but the social activities were curtailed. Thankfully, at the end of the year, the Year Six students and families were able to celebrate Graduation and farewell each other in the traditional ways.

To support families in Lockdown, we offered parents sessions concerning Anxiety, the Growth Mindset, Cyber Safety, Happy Families and CPSV Webinars - all online. The students experienced many online virtual incursions - Museum Victoria, Podcasting, Science, History and Christmas which provided an interesting avenue for learning.

2021 was challenging, but I am so proud of the way in which the staff and parents managed Remote Learning, having gained tips and insights following the 2020 periods of online learning.

It is our hope and prayer that 2022 is a more stable and healthy year for all. We want our students to experience a full year at school again and build on the skills and resilience they have demonstrated in 2021.

School Advisory Council Report

2021 turned out to be a year equally as challenging as 2020. Hopefully the learnings from the previous year held everyone in slightly better stead to deal with the uncertainty and constantly changing landscape. On the upside, most of us also learnt how to be amateur virologists and immunologists as well as how much resilience ourselves and our children actually have.

In previous years the Education Board has focused on promotion of the school and community engagement. In 2021 this was expanded to also include connection and rebuilding of community, particularly for new families.

Unfortunately, recurring lockdowns, home schooling and social restrictions made this extremely difficult, so it will continue to be a focus in 2022. Thankfully the school community was still able to celebrate some traditions in person, but we all hope that in future more events can return to traditional and personal methods of celebration, including favourites such as the Fete and Mother's and Father's Day celebrations.

The upside to this was the resilience shown in creating alternate methods of celebration, such as the video enabled School Performance and the persistence of organisation to get things like the Graduation and smaller group Sacraments to occur during periods of lesser restriction.

It is also important to note the additional support able to be provided by the school for those that require it during home learning, which we all know can be testing. I would also like to highlight the tremendous work performed by the Carer's Group to provide a little assistance to those that would benefit from it within our community. I am particularly thankful for the brilliant meals that appeared when attention was turned toward a show of thanks and support to our health care workers. This is a tremendous barometer of the quality of community and care amongst St Thomas' families.

The Melbourne Archdiocese of Catholic Schools (MACS), who effectively run Catholic education, have taken a refreshed view of good governance to ensure the best possible educational, social and wellbeing outcomes for our children. As a result the previous Education Board structure is being updated to School Advisory Councils (SAC), with slightly reappointed responsibilities, but still with a focus on an advisory role to support the school and Principal in achieving quality educational outcomes, whilst delivering on a Catholic ethos and culture.

Our Board focused on the transition to this SAC framework including reviews and amendments to the terms of reference and standardised school policies. One thing was clear and that was the desire of the school community to ensure a strong link with the school's Parents' and Friends association and St Thomas' parish.

Time was also spent focusing on the various curriculum plans, Respectful Relationships and RE programs, policy reviews and Child Safety frameworks to ensure the best possible environment

is maintained for our children's development. Alex Pettolino, the school Business Manager, also provided several informative sessions on the school's financial position.

During 2021 the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) undertook their quadrennial review of St Thomas' and it is a credit to Angela and all her staff that the school received a very favourable review finding.

The Board would like to acknowledge and thank Peta Fulton for acting as Deputy Principal and a valuable member of the Education Board, during a really trying year, as well as welcoming Ms Rhiannon Coco who joins the school in that role in 2022.

We would also like to pass on our best wishes to the teachers, learning support officers and other staff who have departed St Thomas' and thank them for their contribution to the education of our children, and welcome all of the new staff to our community.

Similarly we say a fond farewell to the families who have finished their time at St Thomas' and warmly welcome new families with a little one in Prep this year - again, we hope to make welcoming you, and the families who were new to the school in 2020 and 2021 a part of the welcoming and social community at St Thomas'.

I would also like to express the gratitude of the broader school community to those stepping off the Education Board: Bec Heine, who spent three years on the Board, including one year as Chairperson, Cam McLellan, who spent three years on the Board including one as Deputy Chairperson, Pat Broderick whose daughters have now all moved on to secondary education and who spent two years on the Board, Caroline O'Sullivan, who spent two years on the Board and was our CSPV Rep, and Gavin Mendis, who spent four years on the Board as the P and F Rep.

I would also like to welcome Shane Murphy back to the SAC, as well as new members, Anna Cheung, Chris Greenland and Mark Calabro, with Stephanie Pierce as the P and F Rep. Olivia Brace is also a Parent Rep, having continued on from 2021. The SAC is intended as a body to help represent the broader school community's views to the leaders of the school, so if you have ideas, opinions, suggestions or questions about the overall direction or specific policies of the school, please share these with a member of the SAC.

Lastly, but certainly not the least, we would like to thank Angela for her leadership of the school through a turbulent time and all of the excellent work of the teachers, learning support officers and office staff who provide such a wonderful environment for our children, particularly during the protracted periods of home learning.

Cameron O'Donnell

on behalf of the 2021 Education Board: Olivia Brace, Patrick Broderick, Peta Fulton, Rebecca Heine, Angela Lacey, Fr Alo Lamere, Gavin Mendis, Cameron McLellan and Caroline O'Sullivan

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To deepen the Catholic faith journey of the school community within the contemporary world.

Intended Outcomes:

- That students, staff and parents will make a direct link between their lives and the teachings and practices of Catholic Traditions.
- That students and staff will be fully engaged in the teaching and learning of Education in Faith.

Achievements

- The year began with our new Parish Priest, Fr Aloysius Lamere, arriving from Sydney. Fr Alo is a priest of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, who lead our parish community.
- Despite a term of Lockdown and some activities being restricted or reduced, we invited Fr Alo to pray with the students outdoors on a number of occasions, and to speak with the students about Advent and Christmas.
- Fr Alo is looking forward to getting to know the students and staff more as we are able to gather together in 2022.
- Teachers at St Thomas' School foster the unique role of the Catholic School, and Religious Education is at the core of the curriculum.
- The Religious Education Leader (REL) conducts Level meetings to assist staff with the planning of the sacraments. The REL updates/purchases Religious Education resources to promote engagement with the learning.
- A Professional Learning Day was conducted in Term Four, with a focus on Spirituality.
- The updated (new) school vision was contributed to by all stakeholders and launched in July 2021 in line with our school Feast Day.
- At Professional Learning Team Meetings (PLT Meetings), we spent time deepening knowledge of assessment of the RE Curriculum Framework, specifically the three strands and five content areas. These are reported on each semester.
- There is a whole school approach to Sacramental Programs, so that all students have an awareness and understanding of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation, when the specific groups of children are receiving these sacraments.
- Three Parent and Child Workshop evenings were held, led by the school and parish staff for Reconciliation, online for Confirmation and Eucharist.
- Last year, due to the COVID restrictions, we completed the celebration of First Eucharist Masses for our Year Five students early in 2021 - this was unable to occur in 2020.
- Reconciliation was celebrated in May and Confirmation was celebrated by Bishop Emeritus Les Tomlinson in June with attendance numbers restricted, however both were beautiful celebration. First Eucharist Masses were celebrated in August.

- Each class shared the key events of Holy Week through a series of images and symbols placed around the school garden and playground areas prior to the holiday break. The concept of the Stations of the Cross was more clearly understood, and the stations were very meaningful.
- Assemblies begin with our School Prayer and often include a special liturgy to celebrate children receiving sacraments, or commemorate occasions such as ANZAC Day.
- There is daily meditation, prayer and reflection. All classrooms have a prayer table, prayer cloth and candle.
- Connections were made during planning sessions for the integration of the curriculum focus area of Inquiry Learning units with Religious Education. Continued implementation of the Catholic Social Teaching principles was incorporated in our units of work.
- Our students are continually encouraged to be aware of and embrace social justice projects. They participate in raising awareness and funds for organisations such as Caritas (Project Compassion), CatholicCare and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.
- The Year 5 and 6 students ran their Market Day following on from their 'Earn and Learn' unit, about financial mathematics. This was a great success with the whole school purchasing the items prepared to raise money for the 'Assist-A-Student' program, a focus of St Vincent de Paul. The 5/6 students, supported by their teachers and parents, did a fabulous job!
- The weekly Newsletter always includes a Reflection on the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday or other religious events/activities.
- The Principal and REL met regularly to discuss Religious Education and maintain ongoing communication with the Parish Priest. These meetings develop the parish / school partnership, as well as providing an opportunity to discuss education in faith, upcoming events and broader school, parish and Church matters.
- The Principal and Chair of the parish Conference of St. Vincent de Paul speak regularly to maintain and support the joint parish and school social justice initiatives.

VALUE ADDED

The completion and launch of the School Vision commenced as we re-entered remote learning at the start of Term Three. The School Captains had input into the celebration planning for this, which were placed on hold as we were unable to gather as a whole school. The Vision will be the focus throughout 2022.

Our Review highlighted a strong Catholic Identity, reinforced by our MACSSIS Survey Data (out of a score of 100):

Family Responses

Emphasis on Catholic mission - 94

Emphasis on Catholic beliefs - 94

Emphasis on religious practices - 100

Staff Responses

Prayer at community events, meetings, Assemblies etc - 85

Student responses

Pray together - 94

Encouragement to respect the religious beliefs and practices of others - 78

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The goals for the year were to:

- Build knowledge of the curriculum;
- Build knowledge and use of a range of data sets; and
- Build knowledge of the progression of learning.

Underpinning this were three aspects to facilitate progress towards these goals:

- To create consistency of practice; and
- Ensure effective communication exists between all stakeholders; to specifically
- Improve student learning.

Intended Outcomes:

- That students will be engaged, independent and confident learners in a stimulating contemporary learning environment.
- That literacy and numeracy outcomes will be improved.

Achievements

All students participated in one to one assessment with their teacher/s before school commenced to ascertain reading accuracy and comprehension levels.

The staff participated in four days of professional learning this year (outlined below), with face to face meetings early in the year and online meetings when in remote learning. Staff also engaged in professional learning online at other times across the year.

o Term One: Spelling

o Term Two: Review preparation

o Term Four: Creation of the School Improvement Plan and Religious Education - Spirituality

- Our Remote Learning program for the students was outstanding! Parents regularly commented about the quality of the program provided, the regularity of the interactions with the students, the well-being activities and supportive linking of the staff to the families.

Number Intervention, Reading Recovery, and our tutoring programs were all conducted online during remote learning.

- Having been unable to hold our usual Performance in 2020 due to the pandemic, we prepared for this during 2021 and it was filmed, then shared with the families.

We could not hold our biennial Art Show with guests in 2021, so we photographed the students' work and this is shared on our school website.

A number of students receive funding through the NCCD process. In order to support the child's learning and development, a Learning Support Officer (LSO) works within the classroom to

provide additional assistance. Personalised Learning Plans are created for most of these students, detailing the goals to be achieved in the short and longer term.

- The usage of ICT is both classroom based and a specialist area. A Chromebook purchasing program was implemented for Year 3-6 students whose use of a device more sophisticated than iPads became apparent in the 2020 Remote Learning periods.
- Student Learning Conferences were held for Years 1-5 students at the conclusion of Term One and then again for P-6 students in Term Three, with written reports provided in Terms Two and Four.
- The staff provided many opportunities for the students to be involved in extra curricular and special events including: a Year 3-6 Athletics carnival, the Open Water Learning Experience for Years 5/6 and Water Safety program for 3/4s, the International Competitions, the garden and chickens, Dress up Days and fundraisers, and various incursions and excursions.
- Our Year 5/6 students attended Camp Rumbug in Term One, which was a wonderful experience for all after not being able to go on camp in 2020.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The students complete a reading and comprehension assessment prior to the start of the school year. The teachers use this data to group the students for teaching in small Focus Groups.

Prior to most Maths units, the students participate in a Pre test to find out what they know, then they work on specific tasks to build their skills, with one group per day working in a Focus Group with the teacher. The Post test demonstrates the learning to the teacher.

During remote learning, the teachers and LSOs conducted regular assessment of the students in reading, sight words, writing and number through online meetings and through their work.

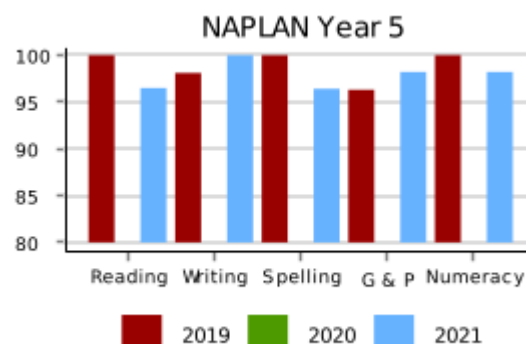
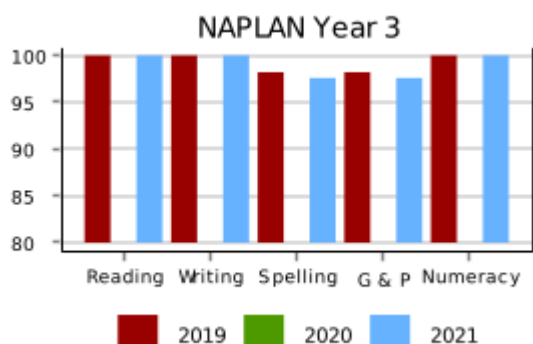
When we returned to school in Term Four, the PAT-R and PAT-M formal assessments were conducted with students to ascertain their levels in reading and number. The Prep - Year Two students also completed the twice yearly Reading Assessments in November.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	98.2	-	-	97.6	-
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Reading	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Spelling	98.2	-	-	97.6	-
YR 03 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	96.3	-	-	98.2	-
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	98.2	-
YR 05 Reading	100.0	-	-	96.5	-
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	-	-	96.4	-
YR 05 Writing	98.1	-	-	100.0	-

* 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

Goal:

To develop students who are resilient, engaged, confident and motivated learners.

Intended Outcome:

That students will be empowered and challenged to be active, engaged learners.

Achievements

The year began with a focus on the ongoing professional learning of all staff in the Child Safe Standards.

- We held our Leadership Training session with Year Six students
- Student Leadership through the SRC and the Year Six Leadership roles began
- During remote learning, we shared articles, webinars and specific agencies with parents to provide accurate, regular communication to families (medical, psychological and anxiety information) as well as support to families of a practical nature (websites with activities to enjoy together, Family Challenges, etc).
- We held live online Assemblies each week during Remote Learning
- When we returned to school, our focus was on wellbeing and routine

VALUE ADDED

- Despite the long Lockdown in Term Three and part of Term Four, we created a virtual Art Show (see our website) and videoed our School Performance, as we were not able to gather to watch it as a community. The DVD will provide the chance to sing along for many years to come!
- Continued focus on the explicit teaching of social and emotional learning through 'You Can Do It!' Program Achieve
- All classes established their own reward system at the beginning of the year which provided a goal to work towards
- The students continued to link and build relationships through the Prep and Year Six Buddy program, Circle Time, and other Mindfulness activities
- The 3/4 students enjoy the responsibility of caring for the kitchen garden and our chickens

STUDENT SATISFACTION

The effort of the staff to prepare for and complete the Art Show and the School Performance (carried over from 2020 when this could not occur) with the students was outstanding!

Student responses

Supportive adults at school - 83

Family responses

Child feels like they belong - 85

Staff responses

Staff notice what is happening with students - 95

Parent Feedback

We would like to thank you for all your support, dedication, hard work and care you have given over this year. You have delivered an exceptional online program, and you always go above and beyond. X loves having you as her teacher and is very happy. She has really thrived and developed immensely in her academic and social skills. Thank you... we feel blessed to be in a school that has amazing teachers and community.

Thank you to you and your staff for all the detailed information and prepared remote learning tasks and support for our child and our school community during these Covid and uncertain times. It is greatly appreciated.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

During Remote Learning, we managed the attendance of our students in the same manner as we do when on site, Teachers completed the electronic roll first thing in the morning and the Office sent a message to any parent who had not phoned/emailed regarding their child's absence.

Teachers made contact with parents of students not attending online classes if they were off-line for more than two days.

Conversations with parents also informed us of any wellbeing or social issues occurring for the student.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	95.6%
Y02	96.4%
Y03	94.1%
Y04	97.0%
Y05	94.1%
Y06	93.2%
Overall average attendance	95.1%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

At St. Thomas the Apostle, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching:

that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.

(Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 9)

Achievements

As we were under Review in 2021, all aspects of Child Safety requirements and procedures were shared and discussed with the Reviewer.

The school's Commitment to Child Safety Policy and the Code of Conduct were reviewed by staff in 2019. These are included in all advertisements for positions and in Letters of Appointment.

- The Education Board revised the Commitment to Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct in 2019.
- The school has a Child Safety Team comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal and Student Wellbeing Leader.
- The Student Wellbeing Leader provides updates about procedures, documentation and expectations to staff at Staff Meetings.
- The PROTECT posters are displayed in the Staffroom for staff to refer to if they have any concerns regarding a child's safety.
- All staff complete the Mandatory Reporting online module in Term One each year.
- Every three years, the staff also complete the Disability Standards so that they are aware of the legislation and expectations for including students who have a disability.
- Child Safety remains a standard item at staff meetings, Education Board meetings and where parent or community involvement is planned.
- The Code of Conduct is displayed when signing in as a visitor / contractor.
- Risk Management of excursions and camps has been a priority.
- Following Board meetings, members were encouraged to discuss the Child Safe processes and policies proactively within the parent community.
- Child Safe procedures are in place for social and fundraising activities and events where children are present.
- The school implements the CECV Employment procedures and pro formas when seeking and engaging new staff.
- Volunteers and regular contractors complete Application Forms along with the provision of their Working With Children Check cards.

- A Working With Children Check register is maintained by the Administration Officers.
- Child Safety discussions are held for specific activities such as P-2 Swimming.
- Parents are informed about Child Safety requirements via the Newsletter and separate communications. It is discussed at Education Board and Parents' and Friends Meetings, and at the Prep Parent Information Meetings (before commencement and at the start of the year).
- The students participate annually in the National Day against Bullying and Violence and White Balloon Day.
- Child Safety ratios have increased for excursions and events, in that students are accompanied by an additional staff member/adult on all occasions.
- Risk assessment checks and procedures are expected and documented for all off site activities.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To embed a vibrant professional learning community, with a shared vision.

Intended Outcome:

That the elements of empathy, role clarity, engagement and learning will improve and be balanced.

Achievements

- Staff participated in professional learning twice per week to discuss the curriculum and practice.
- Ongoing support was offered for staff engaged in further study (Cert IV and Sponsored Study).
- The classroom structure for 2021 was: Prep x 2 classes; 1/2 x 3 classes; 3/4 x 3 classes; and 5/6 x 5 classes.
- Specialist classes for forty minutes weekly including Performing Arts, LOTE - Mandarin, PE and Digital Technologies.
- Intervention programs included Reading Recovery and Number Intervention, with further Literacy Intervention provided in LLI and Number Support offered.
- Our Graduate Teachers managed teaching online in remote learning very well, with excellent support from their team members and our curriculum leaders. Three completed their VIT Projects.
- Staff were allocated a Leadership Team member during remote learning as their contact person, to distribute the load and allow for regular check-ins.
- St Thomas the Apostle received excellent feedback from our parents and others for our remote learning program.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

The staff participated in four days of professional learning in 2021, with some face to face, but the majority of the latter part of the year online. Most staff engaged in professional learning online at other times of the year. The days provided were: 1. Term One: Spelling 2. Term Two: Preparation for Review, 3. Term Four: Creating the School Improvement Plan and 4. Term Four: RE Spirituality Day. Staff missed the professional interaction and collegial nature of meetings.

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021	30
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$195

TEACHER SATISFACTION

The staff are aware of their role in providing a safe environment for the students. They feel comfortable approaching the Leadership Team about core aspects of learning and teaching, and the well-being of the students. The staff have regular access to professional learning in a variety of ways, and programs implemented in the school align with the Annual Action Plan.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	83.7%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	84.0%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	25.0%
Graduate	15.0%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	90.0%
Advanced Diploma	30.0%
No Qualifications Listed	5.0%

STAFF COMPOSITION

Principal Class (Headcount)	3.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	34.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	23.6
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	28.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	28.2
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To promote inclusive Catholic school community, fostered by strong partnerships with parents, the parish and the broader community.

- That the school continues to deepen and enliven leadership by increasing awareness of the school's vision.
- That Parent Satisfaction on SIS is increased enhancing our community connectedness and promoting an 'outward facing' school culture.

Achievements

In Term One, we offered our Parent Helpers course and refresher, with volunteers ready to commence assisting in Term Two; unfortunately, we went into remote learning and even in Term Four, when we were back at school, parents were not permitted on site.

- In Term Two, Parent Information sessions were offered in cyber safety, gaming and social media as we had moved into this online space and the boundaries between learning and social time were less clear during lockdown with limited outdoor opportunities.
- We initially shared Assembly via recorded videos and then moved to live online Assemblies.
- Our community was connected via photo and video presentations for Mother's Day and Father's Day, and with other fun tasks from the staff.
- The celebration of the Year Six Graduation permitted families the chance to see each other and say goodbye prior to the move to secondary school.
- In response to COVID, there was greater awareness of staff, students and parents in supporting others during the Winter Appeal and Christmas Appeal for St Vincent de Paul.
- We promoted opportunities for social connection of new parents in the parent community through events including the Welcome Picnic for Prep and Year 6 buddies and their families and Wednesday Play sessions at the park in Term One.
- The Education Board is a strong feature of our engagement with parents in school life and it demonstrates excellent procedures and documentation. The Board prepared for the transition to the School Advisory Council, discussing the terms of reference and membership moving forward. Some meetings in Terms Three and Four were held online, but members had the final meeting of the year together.
- The Parents' and Friends social and fundraising activities included: a Chocolate Drive, Sushi for the children's lunches, the Mango Drive, the Dads and Kids Weekend away and the Family Weekend away to Traralgon. Other regular social activities were curtailed, so these will be a focus in 2022.
- St Thomas' Outside School Hours Care Program, run by Camp Australia, is a wonderful service for our families. They provided fantastic support for the families of essential workers in the Lockdowns of 2021.

PARENT SATISFACTION

Our parents have expressed their gratitude for the provision of such an excellent learning program in Remote Learning in 2021. The relationships between parents and staff have grown stronger through working together to support the students.

The MACSSIS results indicate the following:

Recommend the school to prospective families - 85 (average is 83)

Support to engage in your child's learning - 79 (average is 71)

Information about engagement opportunities - 79 (average is 64)

Child's sense of belonging - 85 (average is 84)

Staff approachability - 97 (average is 90)

Leadership approachability - 91 (average is 84)

Feeling of welcome at the school - 94 (average is 87)

Understand the school's processes and procedures - 88 (average is 73)

Future Directions

Following the School Review in Term Three, the school has created a School Improvement Plan (2022-2025) identifying the four priority areas outlined below:

- 1) Shared and consistent pedagogical practice
- 2) A culture of challenge and high expectations
- 3) Student engagement and culture
- 4) Strong collaborative learning partnerships

The key goals of the 2022 Annual Action Plan are:

- To embed shared and consistent pedagogical practices across all areas of the curriculum, particularly reading comprehension.
- To use data to design learning that challenges and extends the thinking of staff and students.
- To have authentic student voice and agency across the school. The key strategies and actions will be the implementation of the Respectful Relationships program, the implementation of the ReLATE program, and the Student Action Teams.
- To have strong, collaborative, learning partnerships within our school and wider community, with a particular emphasis on reconnecting with our parish and parent communities.