

Principal Address:

What a year at St Mary's, at the end of last year I spoke about transition and how 2019 was a year of great change for our community. As I settled into the principal role halfway through the year, I would be the 3rd leader of the school for the year. The strength of our wonderful community has ensured our children were not impacted by this change and continue to come to our school each day so happy and excited.

Catholic Identity

Throughout 2019 St Mary's has continued to provide an exemplary Catholic Education to our students, with the continuation of our Religious Education, Liturgical and Sacramental program. Our students participated in First Reconciliation and Confirmation. Father Larry has led our school masses along with Miss Miotti and supported by Mrs Smith. Our Fruit of the Spirit program continues to be a great focus each day in providing a framework of how we interact with each other. We have started Liturgical singing in the church, which will continue throughout the year. Finally, our values of Respect, Challenge, Faith and Teamwork have been unveiled and will form a huge part of our life at St Mary's. Our Catholic Identity is such an integral part of our learning in and out of the classroom.

Education

Our Teaching and Learning program has remained very strong this year: Visible learning is at the forefront of our class pedagogy, throughout all subject students understand what they are learning and how they can be successful. Our improvement of students as reflected by our data is outstanding and our next goal is becoming very specific in how we continue this growth at the upper end and intervene with children when concepts don't click straight away. These two aspects are well in the planning for 2020

Our school has finalised of our ACARA digital technologies project, led by Miss Kennedy. Our teachers are now leaders across the diocese in integrating the Digital Technologies curriculum and this will only grow stronger in years to come. This will continue to be a focus for the school during 2020 and beyond, with Miss K taking a lead role.

2020 will see a focus on our Vision for learning and Strategic plan with Wes to speak about dates shortly. This two documents will shape our school and its evolution over the next 3-5 years.

The commitment of our teaching staff continues to amaze me, we are a small school, but we are hit all the marks of a school 3 times our size. I must thank our Teaching staff, From our senior teacher Miss Miotti to our classroom and specialist staff to our in class general and special needs assistants who go above and beyond for our children. Coupled with this our the magnificent Administration staff in Beth and Maree who are honestly the best functioning office team I have seen in any school. I cannot thank you all enough. I was talking to a staff member last week who said that she would come in on her day off and complete a project for the love of it and our school. Then she mentioned how other people have their love projects around the school. And I thought, that is what our school is all about, so much love. Your care and concern for our children is second to none and it is a privilege working with you.

Community

I tell you what, I thank the big guy upstairs for our community, for you guys everyday. I just love it, we as teachers are so incredibly lucky to work in this environment. To our board led by Wes Teakle and P&F Led by Gemma Suckling thank you for your amazing support of our school. Your intentions are so aligned with our school values to support and sustain our learning community to the highest standard. It is such a pleasure to work with you and the rest of the parent teams. To all those parents who just pitch in a help in whatever way is needed, we are all so grateful to you. As we continue to improve our school and grounds throughout 2020, your tools and know how will come in very handy! This is actually a call for any people who have spare trees/log lying around, please come and see me afterwards.

Our partnership with our wider Community remains so central to who we are. We have strong links with The Northampton and Brookview Hospital and the Meals on Wheels service, just to name a few. This shows our community that living out the Gospel values comes through our words but importantly in our actions. Community outreach is a central part of our mission and our hope is that each year, we will continue to grow these partnerships and foster new relationships.

Stewardship

Our Low fee initiative has been in place now for 12 months and whilst this has caused one or two headaches in working through finances, it has ensured that we are able to provide a low cost and affordable option of Catholic Education for all. Never has it been truer that fees are not a barrier to a quality Catholic Education. Importantly there will be no fee increases for the 2020 school year.

This year is going to be huge we plan to upgrade our place spaces around the school, complete a new strategic plan, finish and integrate our vision for learning pedagogical document, and start a refurbishment of our learning environments and furniture in line with an engaging 21st century school for our students. We will also embed our values and our numbers notch just over the 60-student mark.

St Mary's is a school where our students can learn, inquire, think critically and creatively in a supportive and nurturing space. Most importantly our students can be happy and engaged in their learning, with an in-built desire and eagerness to know more. To become lifelong learners.

Thank you for your attendance tonight and I look forward to working with you in the future.