



St Thomas' School Sale

2020 Annual Report to the School Community



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Contact Details

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Anita Little, attest that St Thomas' 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 2020 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.

08/06/2021

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

2020 was a year unlike any other that we have experienced.

In its third year of operation, Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL) was challenged to provide timely advice, service and direction to Catholic primary and secondary schools across the Diocese, in both metropolitan and regional areas, throughout a prolonged period of rapidly changing circumstances.

The events of the year were as momentous in the Diocese of Sale as anywhere in Australia. The region was affected by fierce bushfires and drought, which put significant strain on families and communities. We farewelled Bishop Patrick O'Regan, and eventually welcomed our new Bishop, Greg Bennet. Our schools, offices, and churches faced the additional challenge of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, including extended periods of lock-down.

The resilience shown by our professional and local communities has been extraordinary. Schools successfully adapted to a new, remote style of learning and teaching faster than anyone would have thought possible. Throughout all the disruption and social distancing, we kept faith in each other, and ensured that our colleagues, students, and their families were encouraged and supported.

As an organisation, we maintained our focus on developing and maintaining rigorous reporting and accountability structures, to comply with our regulatory requirements. With pastoral support from our Parish Priests and expert advice from the DOSCEL Secretariat, our highly-committed school leadership teams were able to maintain their focus on creating safe and welcoming learning environments, whether at school or online.

We continue to prioritise the provision of educational opportunities for every student, to nurture them, and enable them to encounter God and to develop a knowledge of the Catholic faith and tradition. We invest in leadership and support for school communities, to promote expert learning and teaching practices. We collaborate with, and involve our school communities in our pursuit of the best spiritual, social, emotional, physical and academic outcomes for students in our Diocese.

We aspire to see our students thrive in the world; to be confident, competent and connected.

I am thankful for the contributions of everyone involved in Catholic education in our Diocese in 2020. It has been an honour to work alongside you as we bring life to our vocation of Inspiring Faith, Inspiring Learning.



Maria Kirkwood

Chief Executive Officer

Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Ltd

Our School Vision

Our school is a place of faith and learning.

School Overview

St Thomas' is located in the city of Sale, 216 kilometres east of Melbourne. It is one of two Catholic primary schools located in Sale.

St Thomas' has an enrolment of 318 students of which approximately 30% are Catholic. The student population is primarily from an English-speaking background, with 20% of children included within the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data. Twelve students comprise our indigenous population. Our current SES score is 95, and we continue to cater for students from both disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds.

St Thomas' provides education for many mobile families including families from the RAAF and Esso. It is proud of its history and culture and is well regarded in the township of Sale and beyond.

St Thomas' was officially opened in 1970 with Sister Therese Condon from the Sisters of Sion as Principal and fewer than 100 children enrolled in Grades Prep to Grade Four. There were only six classrooms, a Staff Room and an office. Boys in Grade Five and Six attended St Patrick's College, Sale until 1978. The school quickly grew in size and now operates fourteen classrooms. It boasts a variety of learning spaces, a well-resourced library, an Art, Music and Japanese learning space, sports stadium and large grounds. Technology is accessed in each classroom.

At St Thomas', staff collaborate to create innovative teaching environments that personalise learning for students. Learning adjustment takes place at all levels to support and challenge children with their learning. Data informs teaching and professional learning. Evidence based teaching strategies are used to engage and motivate students. Student achievement and wellbeing are key priorities accessed and supported through quality teaching.

We offer specialist programs in Music, Physical Education, Japanese and Visual Arts and share our skills in these areas with our school and wider community. We participate in sports days at local and state level and value participation in community events.

Principal's Report

The school community began the year with much enthusiasm and worked cohesively to support each other during the periods of Remote Learning and face to face teaching.

Teachers, students and families quickly adapted to the use of technology as the main platform for teaching and learning.

English, Math and Religious Education became the main foci for remote learning, with physical education, outdoor learning, visual arts and music encouraged to support the overall wellbeing of students and families.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges for all stakeholders however, the school community was supported by Diocese of Sale, Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL) during the year. Leadership and staff were regularly informed about the changing context of COVID-19 pandemic and the need to keep safe through effective health practices. Student and staff wellbeing were key agenda items and various supports were put in place to manage mental health.

I am very proud of the efforts of all staff to ensure learning continued at home to meet the needs of all students. Regular communication between home and school fostered positive relationships and partnerships between the home and school.

Catholic Identity and Religious Education

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To promote the Catholic Identity of the school through dialogue and a recontextualisation of faith and scripture.

Outcomes:

- That staff build their capacity to engage in conversations focused on the post-critical belief, recontextualisation and what it means to be a dialogical school
- That staff capacity to know and confidently teach and assess the RE Curriculum *"o Live In Christ Jesus* is strengthened.

Achievements

The 2020 year allowed families to partner with teachers to deliver the Religious Education curriculum during remote schooling. It was a perfect opportunity to show families how the Catholic faith, traditions and scripture could be recontextualised to have meaning and relevance to their current daily context. It was also an opportunity to break open conversations about God, the life and mission of Jesus with families as they went about delivering the lessons prepared by teachers.

Deliberately, starting the day with prayer, whilst learning at home, promoted our Catholic Identity, whilst RE lessons allowed families to explore scripture and elements of Catholic Social Teaching with their children.

Teachers from Foundation to Year Six continued to collaborate in preparing units of work and to deepen their understanding of the RE curriculum and the Catholic faith. They explored a variety of resources to ensure the teaching of RE at home was inviting and manageable.

With little opportunity to participate in Masses and whole school liturgies, the classroom became the focus for prayer.

VALUE ADDED

St Thomas continued to outreach a number of different community organisations throughout the 2020 year. They included:

- Fundraising for Caritas Australia;
- Gathering of non-perishable items for distribution by St Vincent De Paul Society;
- Consolidating relationships with school families and providing support during the uncertainty of 2020.

We celebrated our Catholic Identity through acknowledging 50 years of Catholic Education within our local community and ensuring our students recognised their story through displays and sharing of memorabilia.

Learning and Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To ensure quality teaching is enacted across the curriculum.

Outcome:

Teachers engage in evidence based practice to identify and implement teaching strategies to improve student outcomes.

Goal:

To improve learning outcomes for all students.

Outcome:

That all students achieve improved outcomes and the set target band is achieved.

Achievements

The advent of Remote Schooling in 2020 year provided an opportunity for teachers to reflect upon their practice and to gather clarity about their role as educators. With parents taking partial responsibility of implementing the curriculum during the school year, teachers needed to determine the best means of ensuring all children accessed learning with the support of their parents or guardians. Learning goals and success criteria needed to be clear to parents and students during this time and teachers needed to be adaptive in how they would deliver the curriculum. Explicit teaching and working exemplars were frequently provided virtually to ensure students and families were aware of expected outcomes.

Catering for variability became paramount during Remote Schooling, and it was within this context, that teachers needed to call upon their knowledge of individual students to ensure they catered for them effectively outside the classroom. Motivating and engaging students to continue learning in varying home environments proved to be challenging and rewarding. Communication and feedback, teacher to student, student to teacher, teacher to parent and teacher to teacher, needed to be relevant and targeted to build upon the learning taking place at home and upon returning to school.

After each period of Remote Schooling, re-establishing friendships with peers and relationships with learners became a key priority. Summative and formative assessments were implemented to determine the individual learning needs of students and to re-evaluate learning goals and overviews for each term. Opportunities to discuss student learning with families about student attitude, effort, engagement and achievement provided information to teachers and a platform for further learning to take place.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student reporting during the first and second semester was based on the evidence gathered from students by teachers upon their return to school after each period of Remote Schooling. It was difficult to determine the reliability of work samples completed at home and thus, as mentioned above, teachers engaged in both summative and formative assessments when students returned to school quite rigorously.

PAT data, Progressive Achievement Tests, were completed for all students, together with Fountas and Pinnell Reading assessments.

Individual teachers also completed online assessment tools to triangulate data to inform their judgements when reporting achievement against Victorian Curriculum Standards and for future planning.

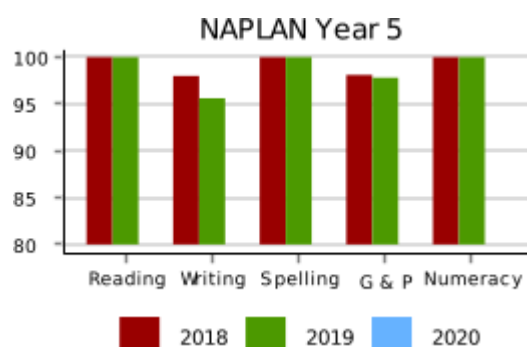
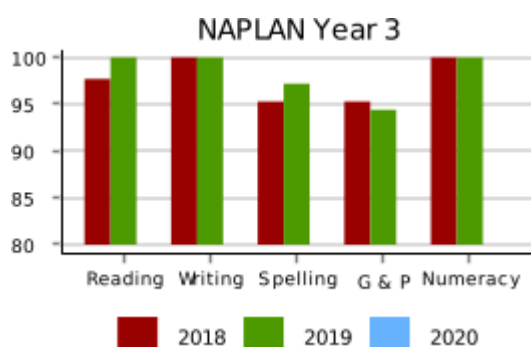
The data suggests there was growth in student learning, particularly amongst students identified as lower performing. Higher achieving students, though performing well, did not experience as much growth, suggesting they continually need to be challenged. This was evident in both English and Mathematics data.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018	2019	2018 – 2019 Changes	2020	2019 – 2020 Changes
	%	%	%	%	%
				*	*
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	95.3	94.4	-0.9		
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 03 Reading	97.7	100.0	2.3		
YR 03 Spelling	95.3	97.2	-0.9		
YR 03 Writing	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	98.1	97.8	-0.3		
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Reading	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Writing	98.0	95.6	-2.4		

* 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.



School Community and Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To create effective and safe learning environments for all learners.

Outcomes:

- That the school works in partnership with the community, supporting student achievement and wellbeing.
- That all staff acknowledge the importance of effective relationships between all school stakeholders and actively supports the work of the Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour team.

Achievements

It was a difficult year for families who previously enjoyed participating in the life of school through regular visits to classrooms or volunteering. It was necessary to ensure that the sense of school community and belonging was encouraged during the year amongst our students through activities within the classroom and when possible, as a whole school. Photos of children participating in a variety of activities were shared regularly via the newsletter, and we encouraged families to share their learnings and family celebrations with each other during remote schooling. Families of individual classes became creative and explored a variety of forums for sharing news and connecting with each other.

Student wellbeing continued to be a focus throughout 2020 as we worked to support children and their families during the stop and start nature of the school year. We encouraged all stakeholders within our school community to uphold our three pillars of Respect, Resilience and Safety when challenged by the restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 context. We were delighted by their response.

VALUE ADDED

To build upon and maintain a sense of community:

- We celebrated 50 years of Catholic Education in the Sale Community initiating activities for students at school focused around the seventies theme and displaying memorabilia gathered over the years.
- We held class based activities within school grounds such as athletics and dress up days.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Insight SRC data continued to show that students within the junior and senior school feel connected to their peers and safe at school. Learning confidence was similar between both

cohorts and students indicated that teachers encouraged learning. Students in the lower grades felt teachers did make learning interesting, enjoyable and inspiring.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Parents are to provide a dated and signed written note, an email, phone call or return a completed absence form via the School App or school diary to the classroom teacher or administration, explaining why an absence has occurred. The principal/deputy principal will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimize absences. Reminders are placed in school newsletters and notifications sent to parents, explaining the need for written communication. Student reports indicate the number of days absent and teachers may comment or follow-up absenteeism during parent/teacher interviews.

The Attendance Roll is completed twice a day, with an SMS message sent to parents/guardians if their child/children are marked absent in the morning with no formal explanation as noted above. Administration staff will follow up with a phone call to parents/guardian if they have not responded to the SMS message. Administration will notify the Attendance Officer/Deputy Principal if a pattern of non-attendance emerges.

During Remote Schooling, teachers would email their families in the morning indicating that the school day was starting and parents were asked to respond by email that their child would be participating in learning for the day. If no response was received for the day, administration staff or teachers would follow up with a phone call. Parents were still expected to notify staff of absences via the School App, email or phone call to admin. Teachers were expected to communicate with each family throughout the week. The roll would be marked each day.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y01	94.2%
Y02	94.0%
Y03	94.4%
Y04	93.4%
Y05	92.8%
Y06	95.2%
Overall average attendance	94.0%

PARENT SATISFACTION

The 2020 Insight SRC survey data regarding parent satisfaction follows a similar pattern to the data represented in the last four years.

The data indicates that parent teacher partnerships are positive; parents felt they could approach staff about various matters pertaining to the school and their child. They indicated that children felt connected to their peers and were engaged in their learning.

Parents also indicated student safety and behaviour management were strengths of the school.

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To create effective and safe learning environments for all learners.

Outcome:

The school meets all legislative compliance requirements.

Achievements

The school continued to focus on the implementation of the Child Safety Standards and to communicate with staff, students, parents and the wider community and organisations about the purpose and obligations associated with the Standards. Staff worked closely with the Diocesan office to complete risk assessments for offsite and onsite activities and of course, implementing the guidelines associated with COVID-19.

The newly appointed Child Safety Officer continued to support leadership, administration and teachers with the documentation required for student and school community activities, ensuring COVID Safe Management plans were in place as well as supporting students with very specific and high risk medical needs. Their role also extended to leading the newly appointed Intensive Support Team, responsible for developing Intensive Support plans for individual students in liaison with families, school staff and external agencies.

A child safety register was developed and a Child Safety Professional Learning plan was developed for the 2021 year. Staff continued to complete various online safety modules or workshops, such as Mandatory Reporting, Anaphylaxis training and First Aid.

With the advent of Remote Schooling, we developed a particular focus on cyber safety and the responsible use of individual student email addresses. Families were encouraged to use the E-Gov website and to regularly communicate with their children about using personal devices safely while at home. Students and staff participated in a series of online workshops about being safe online.

Leadership

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal:

To build an effective organisational climate that leads and sustains school improvement.

Outcomes

- That Leaders have clarity around their role and can articulate how their role supports the Diocesan Strategic Plan (DSP) and the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP).
- That Middle Leaders have clearly defined roles, boundaries and authority, working with the leadership executive to drive school improvement.

Achievements

During a challenging 2020 year, the leadership team worked diligently to support staff in their work. A changeover of leadership and an inability to fill classroom teaching positions, saw leaders who would normally work outside the classroom, return to the classroom for the first six months of the school year. It was an opportunity for them to model good practice and to be regularly present at planning tables sharing their knowledge and expertise with their colleagues on a daily basis within a flexible, collaborative classroom environment and during Remote Schooling. Leaders worked hard to balance their roles, and our priority was to ensure the learning needs of students were being met with teachers collaborating effectively to implement learning plans.

The learning and teaching agenda of the diocese and school, continued to be maintained as teachers sought to cater for variability within changing learning contexts that presented themselves as a result of COVID. High impact strategies such as explicit teaching, the use of learning intentions and success criteria, and feedback, provided a framework for teaching and learning throughout the school year. School leaders supported staff through listening to the feedback they received from parents and assisted them to act upon it. Many parents truly became active participants in the teaching process. It was an opportune time for teachers to build their relationships with families and to develop a broader picture of each of their students. Teachers actively sought to engage in conversations about learning with leaders, and sought to be guided around the key priorities when students returned to classrooms.

The year was chance for leaders to also learn more about the needs of teachers and the complexities involved in leading and managing staff during an eventful year, where the "norm" was challenged. Learning how to adapt to the changing needs and emotions of all stakeholders, students, parents, teachers, head office allowed them to see the many factors that impact on teaching and learning and the operations of the school.

As leaders, we completed the year, with a deeper understanding of each of our stakeholders and a desire to make 2021 a positive and productive year.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

- Learning and Teaching Network Meetings for School Leaders.(online)
- Learning and Teaching Network Meetings — English and Math Learning Progression Workshops(online)
- Learning and Teaching Network Meetings — Learning Adjustment Workshops(online)
- Middle leader Collective meetings(online)
- Weekly Professional learning and Development meetings led by school leadership
- Masters of Clinical Teaching Study
- Understanding Dyslexia and Significant Difficulties in Reading - (online)
- Japanese Language Conference
- Zart Art Workshop
- RE Accreditation(online)
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Mandatory Reporting
- NAPLAN online training
- WSAPB leader and team training
- Diocese of Sale Leadership program
- NCCD learning Modules
- CPR and First Aid updates
- Intensive Support Team Training
- Staff formation — Recontextualising Scripture
- Anaphylaxis briefings

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2020

29

Average expenditure per teacher for PL

\$1100

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Teachers demonstrated a respect for their students and went about their work collaboratively and confidently. The Insight SRC survey of staff suggests that there is still more to be done by leadership to empower teachers in their daily tasks, for although staff felt supported by leadership and their peers, teacher self-efficacy was an area for further improvement.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	90.5%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	84.2%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	12.0%
Graduate	24.0%
Graduate Certificate	12.0%
Bachelor Degree	76.0%
Advanced Diploma	20.0%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

STAFF COMPOSITION

Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	27.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	19.7
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	13.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	10.8
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1.0

Future Directions

We look forward to working with all stakeholders to meet the needs of all children at St Thomas'. Our focus will be to target our teaching, invest in evidence base practice, within a culture of collective efficacy.

Child Safety will continue to be priority and our challenge will be to develop a comprehensive consequences' framework when implementing the Whole school Approach to Positive Behaviour Initiative.

We also look forward to making a decision around refurbishing our current facilities.

We call on God's Spirit to support our decision-making and to be present in all that we do, to ensure we are living faith filled community.