



St Thomas' School Sale

2021 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1689

Table of Contents

Contact Details2

Minimum Standards Attestation2

Governing Authority Report3

Our School Vision4

School Overview5

Principal’s Report6

Catholic Identity and Religious Education7

Learning and Teaching8

School Community and Student Wellbeing11

Child Safe Standards14

Leadership15

Future Directions18

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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 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.

03/04/2022

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

As we entered with hope into 2021 we were again confronted by the impact of COVID-19. The experience of 2020 went some way to enabling us to positively address the challenges that this presented. Again, the strength of our staff, students and their families is to be commended as we moved into the second year of this pandemic.

Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (DOSCEL), now in its fourth year of operation, continued to work tirelessly to ensure our schools and faith communities thrived through this challenging time.

Our school communities and the DOSCEL Secretariat continued their strong focus on ensuring high quality outcomes for the students and worked to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment. The resilience shown by DOSCEL staff, parish priests, students, parents and guardians over the past year has been extraordinary. Schools have fully embraced the way of working and learning within this remote environment, ensuring colleagues, students and their families were encouraged and supported, giving witness to our Catholic faith.

Investment in school staff and their leadership teams is of the utmost importance. We continue to collaborate with and involve all members of our school communities in the pursuit of the best spiritual, social, emotional, physical and academic outcomes for students in our Diocese.

The focus on expert learning and teaching in support of the full implementation of the Victorian Curriculum and the Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum, *To Live in Christ Jesus*, allows our teachers and school leaders to provide educational opportunities for every student to grow, to be nurtured, to enable them to encounter God and to develop a knowledge of the Catholic faith and tradition.

Developing and maintaining rigorous reporting and accountability structures that comply with our regulatory requirements is a core focus of our organisation. 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 remotely.

I am thankful for the contributions of everyone involved in Catholic education in our Diocese and commend the commitment of our staff and leadership teams in nurturing and empowering the children in our care to grow into independent adults with faith in their future.

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 319 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 well-being 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

Throughout 2021, the school community united once more to support each other during periods of Remote Learning and face to face teaching.

Teachers evaluated how they delivered their teaching, listening to feedback from students and parents, and seeking to provide a variety of learning opportunities to engage and motivate students to learn at home. Families responded positively, however, the demand for on-site learning during lock-downs increased.

English, Math and Religious Education continued to be the main foci for Remote Learning, with physical education, outdoor learning, visual arts and music encouraged to support the overall well-being of students and families.

Teachers continued to communicate with families throughout the year to ensure parents were informed about their child's successes and challenges. Regular communication between home and school fostered positive relationships and partnerships with feedback indicating communication was appreciated.

Indeed, the COVID 19 pandemic posed challenges for all stakeholders however, the school community was supported by DOSCEL(Diocese of Sale, Catholic Education Limited). Leadership and staff were regularly informed about the changing context of the COVID 19 pandemic and the need to keep safe through effective health practices. Student and staff well-being, once again, 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, students and families to maintain enthusiasm for teaching and learning throughout another challenging school year.

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 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 "To Live In Christ Jesus" is strengthened.

Achievements

During 2021, Remote Schooling provided further opportunities for families to engage in conversations about Catholic teaching as parents of all denominations assumed responsibility for the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum. It was an opportunity for students and parents to acknowledge the place of Catholic Education and Catholic Social Teaching within the life of the school and how the message and mission of Christ resonated with their daily experiences.

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. All staff were supported by the Religious Education leader who provided a scaffold for key units of work and sourced a variety of resources to ensure the teaching of RE at home was inviting and manageable.

Prayer was included as a daily ritual for all year levels at home and at school with limited opportunities to participate in Masses and whole school liturgies during the year. An outdoor Mass to celebrate Year Six Graduation and the end of year was a highlight, and we also farewelled our parish priest who announced his retirement.

VALUE ADDED

St Thomas continued to outreach a number of different community organisations throughout the 2021 year. They included:

- Fundraising for Caritas Australia;
- Gathering of non-perishable items for distribution by St Vincent De Paul Society;
- Supporting local foster care children with donations of emergency clothing;
- Consolidating relationships with school families and providing support during the uncertainty of 2021.

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

As Remote Schooling continued to impact the 2021 school year, teachers once again, reflected upon their practice to ensure teaching and learning continued with additional supports to monitor the well-being of students and families.

Leaders worked collaboratively with staff to determine effective ways of delivering the curriculum and to set clear expectations around gathering evidence of learning and providing targeted feedback to students and families regularly.

Staff acknowledged the difficulty experienced by families, who juggled work, time and enthusiasm to assist with teaching and learning at home. Once again, learning intentions and success criteria needed to be very clear, and they would also form the basis for reporting to parents throughout the year.

Teachers made a deliberate effort to differentiate their teaching and provided many opportunities to support all students with their learning. Explicit teaching and working exemplars were frequently provided to ensure students and families were aware of expected outcomes. Small group teaching sessions were provided to cater for the variation of student ability.

After each period of Remote Schooling, re-establishing friendships with peers and relationships with learners became a key priority. Routines needed to be re-established and teachers took time to observe and assess student achievement and attitudes towards learning. 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. Teachers evaluated their learning goals and term overviews to re-engage children with learning.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Teachers used online assessments to assist with monitoring student achievement and growth. PAT Reading and PAT Math were key assessment tools, together with the Essential Assessment online platform, observations and student work samples.

NAPLAN results for 2021 indicated that students had met the minimum standards for all areas of English and Math, except grammar and punctuation. This strand will need to be addressed in 2022,

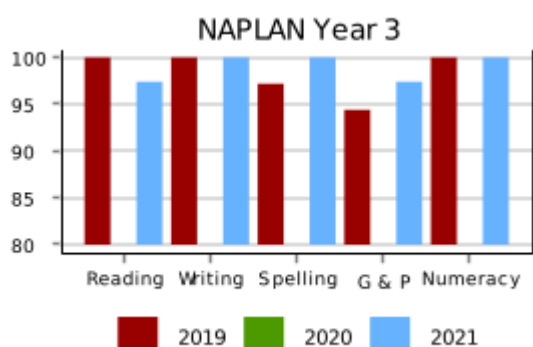
Teachers continued to support low achieving students with most individual growth occurring within this cohort.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	94.4	-	-	97.4	-
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Reading	100.0	-	-	97.4	-
YR 03 Spelling	97.2	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	97.8	-	-	97.4	-
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Reading	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Writing	95.6	-	-	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.



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 well-being.
- 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 another difficult and disruptive year for families who worked hard to balance their work commitments and supporting their children at home with learning. For some, it was difficult to sustain, and the school saw an increase in the number children participating in on-site learning with parents reaching out for support.

Again, it was necessary to encourage and maintain a sense of school community, whilst working within the boundaries and mandates of the COVID-19 context. Every opportunity was taken to share the life of the school with families via a variety of online and traditional platforms and likewise, families were encouraged to share their successes and celebrations.

Student well-being continued to be a focus throughout 2021. 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.

As a part of developing our Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Initiative, we introduced a means of digitally recording, monitoring and tracking patterns of behaviour for individuals and cohorts within the classroom and on the playground. This information is used to create intensive support plans and identify strategies to support students with their relationships and learning.

VALUE ADDED

With the slight easing of COVID 19 restrictions, it was our intent to reconnect with families to strengthen our sense of community:

We were able to:

- Celebrate Mass and the Year 6 Graduation with families;
- Invite families to the school athletics during Term 4;
- Continue to hold whole school activities on-site and share events via digital platforms.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Junior student Insight SRC survey data indicated a significant improvement in student teacher relationships, learning confidence, stimulated learning and connectedness to peers.

Senior data was very similar to the previous year, however, there was an improvement to students' desire to learn. They indicated there were fewer opportunities to work collaboratively.

Both cohorts appeared to be engaged with their learning.

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	91.8%
Y02	93.7%
Y03	93.8%
Y04	94.6%
Y05	93.2%
Y06	90.5%
Overall average attendance	92.9%

PARENT SATISFACTION

The 2021 Insight SRC survey data regarding parent satisfaction follows a similar pattern to the data represented in the last five 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. There was slight improvement in parent attitude with regard to the development of social skills.

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 off-site and on-site activities and implementing the guidelines associated with COVID-19.

The 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.

Staff continued to complete various online safety modules or workshops, such as Mandatory Reporting, Anaphylaxis training and First Aid. Leaders completed MARAM training which allowed various agencies to share information about children with respect to family violence.

With Remote Schooling continuing into the 2021 school year, we maintained our focus on cyber safety. Families were encouraged to use the e-Gov website and to regularly communicate with their children about using personal devices safely while at home and at school. Students and staff participated in a series of online workshops about being safe online. We reviewed our technology agreements and policies around the safe use of technology.

School audits of playground spaces and learning environments continued, and SALTO locks were installed across the school to ensure children and staff could be kept safe with access to school buildings restricted to unauthorised visitors if necessary.

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 2021 year, the leadership team continued to support staff in teaching, assessing and reporting student learning. Melbourne University's teaching and learning cycle formed the framework for reflective teacher practice and the implementation of the Victorian curriculum.

School leaders worked hard to maintain staff enthusiasm for teaching and learning throughout a disruptive year and Insight Survey data indicated significant growth in appraisal and recognition, teacher confidence and professional growth.

Teachers actively sought to engage in conversations about learning with leaders, and to be guided around the key priorities when students returned to classrooms. The year was another opportunity for leaders to 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 and head office, allowed them to see the many factors that impact on teaching and learning and the operations of the school.

Evidence based practices still remained at the forefront of teacher learning and all teaching staff and learning support officers embraced the Science of Reading and their responsibility to ensure all elements of the reading process were included within the teaching of reading. Professional learning in this space was to be used as a springboard for the teaching of Reading in 2022.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

- 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
- Masters of Instructional Leadership
- Understanding Dyslexia and Significant Difficulties in Reading - (online)
- Japanese Language Conference
- Zart Art Workshop
- RE Accreditation(online)
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Mandatory Reporting
- MARAM training for School Leaders
- NAPLAN online training
- WSAPB leader and team training
- Diocese of Sale Leadership program
- NCCD learning Modules
- CPR and First Aid updates
- Staff formation — Recontextualising Scripture
- Anaphylaxis briefings
- Certificate IV in Education Support
- Little Learners Love Literacy

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021	28
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1150

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Insight SRC Survey data saw the teaching climate experience positive growth. Teachers individual morale, confidence and general approach to work scored highly and there was an increasing number of staff taking ownership for school improvement and innovation. Teachers recognised their leaders to be empathetic and supportive of their needs.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	94.5%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE	
Staff Retention Rate	89.5%

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	18.2%
Graduate	18.2%
Graduate Certificate	13.6%
Bachelor Degree	81.8%
Advanced Diploma	18.2%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	28.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	20.3
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	14.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	10.7
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1.0

Future Directions

As we wait to hear whether we remain on our current school site or move to another, we will ensure that we continue to maintain our current facilities in a safe condition and that we move forward with our teaching and learning plans, with our children at the centre of decision-making.

We will continue to target our teaching and investigate evidence based practices that support all our learners. The Science of Reading will be further explored to develop the decoding skills of learners within the junior school and to support appropriate interventions in this space in the senior school.

Child Safety will continue to be priority.

Indeed, we look forward to working with all our stakeholders to meet the needs of all children at St Thomas'.

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