



# St Monica's School Footscray

## 2020 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 0477

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## Contact Details

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## Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Karen Colla, attest that St Monica's 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.

06/05/2021

**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](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

## Our School Vision

*The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me,*

*For He has anointed me.*

*He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,*

*To proclaim liberty to captives and to set the down trodden free*

*To proclaim the year of God's favour*

*Luke 4:18-19*

St Monica's Catholic School is a learning community that exists to make a difference in the lives of our children by:

- Embracing and modelling a Christian Catholic tradition
- Celebrating, respecting and valuing our diversity.
- Valuing and acknowledging our students' development through education
- Promoting life-long learning to allow our students to thrive actively in an ever- changing global community.
- Upholding a strong a view of social justice that builds trusting relationships

## School Overview

St Monica's Parish and School have a long history in Footscray, tracing their beginnings to before 1852 when the first land grant was made for the building of a Roman Catholic Church. St Monica's is a small and intimate school with an enrolment of 131 students, organised into six, classes. The curriculum is rich in experiences and challenges, with a wide range of resources, both human and material.

Just over eighty-five per cent of our children come from language backgrounds other than English and from 24 cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This diversity is source of inspiration and pride to St Monica's. It engenders an environment of welcome, acceptance and cooperation. The parents, students, clergy and staff respect each other and the important role each has in educating our children and developing our community. From the first Irish settlers through to the present community, with its richness of perspectives and cultures, we are drawn together by our faith and desire to make a difference for our families, community and country.

The school benefits from its hardworking, supportive and engaged parent body. Parents work closely with teachers in the development of their children. Building and maintaining positive relationships between all community members has a high priority at St Monica's.

St Monica's students are engaged learners. From Prep to Year Six our students make the most of every learning opportunity. As a group, they are incredibly supportive of each other. The senior students display excellent leadership behaviours. We are incredibly proud of them.

The school has 22 staff members: 18 teachers and four administration staff. They are actively supported in their roles by the Parish Priest and School Manager, Fr Philip Le.

The school sits on a hill overlooking the Maribyrnong River. Its three buildings span over 100years of education in Footscray. The 1908 (North Building), 1937 (South Building) and 1996 (Administration and Hall) were totally renovated in 2011 and now compliment the contemporary learning practices in the school.

The area directly abutting St Monica's is seeing a residential renewal. What was once an industrial precinct is being redeveloped as multi-storey apartment buildings with an expected population of 5000. We wait with anticipation to see how this growth will impact and add to our school community.

## Principal's Report

Across 2020 we saw the best of our community as we faced the challenges of the Coronavirus pandemic. Through school closures, family illness, remote learning and job and income losses St Monica's community continued to work together to support our children's' engagement in learning.

During 2020 we had seven 'welcome' to school events. School closure and remote learning tested our responsiveness to need and provided an excellent opportunity to work in partnership with our families.

Regular onsite celebrations, assemblies. Mother's Day Breakfasts, hobby clubs and disco's moved to the online space. One of our biggest successes was our online Sports Day with every student participating and generating points for their team.

Our families were providing regular feedback to staff. This enabled us to modify online learning routines and supports for families to further support our students.

Regardless of the challenges presented, St Monica's staff were open and proactive in creating learning and wellbeing routines that were adaptive and responsive to student and parent need. They epitomised every desirable educator character trait. Nothing was too much trouble. Their brainstorming sessions during planning clearly reflected our school Learning Powers — creativity, persistence and risk taking.

2020 shone a spotlight on the strong culture of Family Engagement the school community has built over the past decade. The partnerships between students, families and teachers enabled our community to achieve much more than we could have done working in isolation.

## Education in Faith

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**To grow as an authentic Catholic learning community demonstrated by our action to witness, serve and celebrate**

*Build staff, student and parent understanding of meaningful ways to live through dialogue and action based on Catholic faith and tradition.*

*Build on teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills of Catholic faith and scripture, with focus on The Pedagogy of Encounter.*

*Use Catholic Social Teaching as the basis for our conversations around Social Justice. — build in level specific agencies and projects.*

### Achievements

Over the course of the year St Monica's worked to make visible Catholic Faith based values through Social Justice Action, Professional Learning and Liturgical engagement across the community. We were able to hold our Opening Mass before our periods of remote learning. This saw our whole community gather at Mass and then come together for a shared meal.

The sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation were postponed until 2021, but families remained in contact through online assemblies around Easter and Pentecost and our St Monica's Feast Day.

Teachers continued to engage in professional learning, including readings and online professional learning opportunities.

Our end of year celebrations included an outdoor liturgy for our graduation class and their families.

Social Justice action in 2020 focused on providing support to the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Footscray.

#### VALUE ADDED

- Opening Mass
- Easter Liturgies
- Feast Day Celebrations
- Graduation Liturgy
- Social Justice Action — Senior Enterprise Unit

## Learning & Teaching

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**To enhance learning & teaching so that we challenge and support all learners and cater for individual needs.**

*Build the rate of growth, learning outcomes and engagement for all students through meaningful and contemporary pedagogy.*

*Strengthen teacher capacity to implement effective and personalised learning based on the use of student data to identify the point of learning need across all areas.*

*Use Visible Learning understandings to build teacher Capacity: with particular focus on developing Assessment Capable Learners*

*Continue to support teacher development through the continued roll-out of feedback / coaching for all staff members — and embed practice to include coaching by leaders and peers.*

### Achievements

- Moving to remote learning created an imperative to develop an online learning presence. Over the course of the remote learning periods teachers were able to create learning opportunities that supported students in all areas of the curriculum. All specialist areas provided online content; Italian, Art, Music & Performing Arts, P.E. and Digital Technology.
- Literacy and numeracy learning was supported through Google and Zoom meets. Students engaged in whole class and small group sessions with teachers and support staff. Online tools, including jamboard, SeeSaw, Google meets, Zoom, Miro and Kahoot were utilised to support sharing of learning.
- Continuing our learning gained through the Visible Learning' Project. Through this project we sought to ensure learning was supported using a shared language, explicit teaching and targeted feedback at both student and staff level. The focus for 2020 was to develop 'Assessment Capable Learners.'
- Working with the 100 Story Building continued both onsite and online, providing stimulus for students and professional learning opportunities for teachers to improve their understanding and skill in the teaching of narrative texts. We were proud to have two students' work included in the '2020 Early Harvest Magazine.'
- We continued to be able to engage in a number of on site learning experiences including the Australian Ballet STEAM program, Science incursions; Netball, Cricket, Badminton and AFL sports clinics throughout the year.
- Professional Learning continued, mostly online with all teachers having undertaken 'Seven Steps' writing professional learning.
- Collaborative Planning continues to support the implementation of effective learning activities across levels. The focus on assessment based planning ensures that classroom activity matches the needs and strengths of our students.
- Peer coaching was also a support to teachers seeking to improve and refine their practice. This was particularly successful during remote learning, where feedback from students, families and colleagues led to improvement in practice and delivery of content.



## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In the absence of NAPLAN, school based assessments were used to determine student achievement in 2020. Assessments used included;

- PAT Reading
- PAT Maths
- Essential Assessments — Maths
- Essential Assessments — Reading
- Maths Online
- Running Records & Benchmarking
- Teacher observations and records
- Pre and post assessments

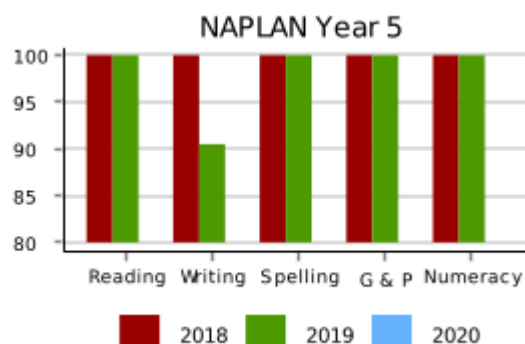
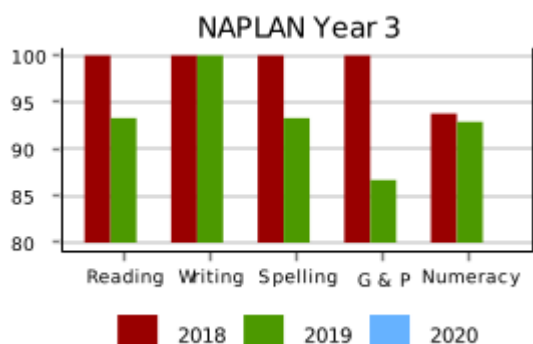
In Term Four 2020, year-end assessments showed 88% of our students made 12 months growth, or more, since the same time in the previous year. This is an excellent outcome when the interruptions to learning are taken into account.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018	2019	2018 – 2019	2020	2019 – 2020
	%	%	Changes	%	Changes
			%	*	*
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	86.7	-13.3		
YR 03 Numeracy	93.8	92.9	-0.9		
YR 03 Reading	100.0	93.3	-6.7		
YR 03 Spelling	100.0	93.3	-6.7		
YR 03 Writing	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	100.0	0.0		
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	100.0	90.5	-9.5		

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

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

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



## Student Wellbeing

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

#### **To improve our students' social and emotional wellbeing.**

That all students feel valued and confident in their day-to-day interactions with peers, staff and the community at large.

- Develop socially skilled and empathic learners who display responsibility and resilience and maintain positive relationships
- Build a skill set of social and emotional behaviours that allows students to work effectively with others.
- Continue to move the students from compliance to empowerment through engagement in real life problems within the school and the wider community

### Achievements

The wellbeing of all of our students continues to be of the highest priority in our school, and we are proud of the way our staff and students embrace all opportunities provided to them, particularly through the challenges of 2020. A designated Deputy Principal role in the area of Student Wellbeing is implemented to ensure a proactive approach is taken in regard to welfare and behaviour.

Across the year students, staff and families continued to focus on our three school expectations:

- We are Safe
- We are Respectful
- We are engaged in All Learning

These expectations apply to all levels and across all learning areas.

All new staff completed four days of the Berry Street Education Model Professional Learning. This philosophy underpins our School Wide Behaviour Plan.

During 2020, school leadership took on the specific role of coordinating any extra support students and families needed relating to remote learning. A whole school list was prepared which enabled us to track all students each week. Families were phoned weekly by leadership or teachers and staff emails and SeeSaw contact details were provided to facilitate communication.

In doing so, staff reported an increase in student and teacher connection. Wellbeing activities were also incorporated into the remote learning curriculum.

Families were provided with the opportunity of accessing Chromebooks through the school if required. For Junior students 'Paper Packs' were prepared as an additional support to learning and maintaining engagement. Monthly we would organise 'special' packs with stimulating activities to all year levels to provide a break from routine. This included Holiday Activity packs which continued once on-site learning resumed.

Throughout Remote Learning the opportunity was seized to enhance and develop Student Voice through different avenues. Our Senior Student leaders were instrumental in developing and running our Hobby Clubs during remote learning periods. These 12 clubs were open to all

students and ran weekly during remote learning. They were so popular that they were continued when on-site learning resumed.

Both Pre-school to Prep and Year Six to Year Seven transition programs were run across the year. While these transition sessions looked different to previous years, prospective Preps were invited to come on-site for up to eight sessions across the last term to help them and their families transition into primary school. Teachers from the Junior team visited our prospective Prep students' kindergartens to support transitions into school for all students.

#### VALUE ADDED

- Hobby Clubs
- Sporting Clinics
- School Discos
- Themed Days online
- Cooking with the Kids sessions
- Friendship Catch up Meets
- Holiday Packs

#### STUDENT SATISFACTION

School Surveys were not administered in 2020.

Student Feedback via student forums and feedback sessions showed that:

- Students feel they have increased their ability to engage with learning in the online space.
- Students feel their parents are more informed about their learning due to the remote learning program.
- Students feel that they have many opportunities to engage with their peers and feel they are listened to accepted by their peers.

#### STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student Attendance is an important part of engaging students in learning. St Monica's has a number of policies in place to support consistent practice around supporting attendance.

Tracking students throughout remote learning was especially important and several strategies were put in place to ensure we remained connected with students and their families. Teachers expressed any concern regarding students' absences during the morning roll at Google Meet with school administration and a call was put through to parents. Consistent non-attendance at 'meets' or lack of work submission was followed up by members of the leadership team. Consistent messaging to parents occurred each day when a student was absent without an acceptable reason.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	86.1%
Y02	87.7%
Y03	91.3%
Y04	89.4%
Y05	90.2%
Y06	90.0%
Overall average attendance	89.1%

## Child Safe Standards

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

St Monica's regards the safety of each student a key responsibility of all in our School Community.

St Monica's Vision outlines the desire for our children to thrive in a community of trusting relationships. The newly legislated Child Safe expectations reflected our goals in

Making the safety of all children an explicit feature of our school

Making explicit the expectation that each person who joins or works with our school community will do so in a way that ensures the safety of our children is maintained.

### Achievements

Across 2020 St Monica's Community;

- Continued to provide teacher and staff learning in Child Safety. This included exploring the **Protect** Framework as well as reviewing and modifying our Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Student Code of Conduct to ensure their intent is lived out in daily practice.
- Continued to use our Behaviour Expectations of Safety, Respect & Engagement, to ensure a safe and respectful environment for learning.
- Inducted all new and sitting School Advisory Committee members in our child safe policies and practices.
- Continue to ensure that all Contractors with a continued relationship with the school have completed a company Code of Conduct process.
- Ran sessions for parents on obtaining Working With Children Checks and induction sessions for family members wishing to volunteer.
- Used the Child Safe Employment guidelines provided by CECV during all appointment processes.
- Ran online Cyber Safety sessions during periods of remote learning.
- Ensure students engage in personal safety sessions across the year that include cyber and non-cyber instances.
- Worked to build students' confidence and sense of self advocacy to support them speaking out about areas that concern them.

# Leadership & Management

## Goals & Intended Outcomes

**To build a performance and development culture that engages, challenges and supports staff to actively contribute to the school's growth.**

*Develop shared understandings around expectations of Staff, Students, Family Members,*

*Develop a robust system for individual professional learning plans*

*Build a shared, consistent understanding of the practice of Lead Teachers (AITSL)*

## Achievements

Of the many roles of leadership in 2020 one of the most important was to support the members of the community; students, families and staff, move in and out of remote learning with as little disruption to learning as possible. This required regular communication with all groups. The members of the Leadership Team are to be commended for their role in supporting St Monica's Community in 2020.

- The focus of Leadership in 2020 was very much that Two Deputy Principal positions are supported — Learning and Teaching and Student Wellbeing & Diversity — to provide a broader base for leadership engagement.
- Religious Education Coordinator forms part of the leadership team.
- Coaching leader — peer and peer to peer continued. Remote learning supported this with feedback sought from families, students and colleagues.
- Collaborative planning with curriculum leaders in Level teams continued throughout on-site and remote learning. This shared time supported teachers staying connected, sharing learning and working to achieve maximum outcomes for their students.
- Professional Learning Conversations agendas were flexible and focused on being responsive to need, especially around remote learning issues. This allowed staff to raise concerns and have them addressed as quickly as possible. Wellbeing of students, families and staff were a focus of these conversations on a regular basis.
- Staff used their Professional Learning Plans and the surrounding conversations to guide learning across the year. Many of these focused on issues with remote learning and supporting students at risk during these times.

### EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

#### Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

- Children with Autism; Sue Larkey — online
- Seven Steps Writing -- online

- Berry Street Education Model -- face-to-face and online
- Deputy Principal Network -- face-to-face and online
- Learning and Teaching Network -- face-to-face and online
- Religious Education Leader Network -- face-to-face and online
- Diabetes Information and Injection Training -- face-to-face
- Teaching the Sacraments -- online
- Wellbeing -
- ROSEA training — online
- Dylan Williams; formative assessment -- online
- ATSI Network -- online
- Ron Ritchhart; The power of making thinking visible -- online
- John Hattie & Raymond Smith; Mindframes for leaders — online
- Protect Framework; Child Protection — online
- Zart Art; Bookweek Activities — online
- Zart Art; Online learning support — online
- Wellbeing Network -- face-to-face and online
- Learning Diversity New Leaders training-- face-to-face and online
- Principal Network -- face-to-face and online
- Child Safety; Information Sharing Briefing -- face-to-face
- Wellbeing; Andrea Downie -- online
- Visible Learning ; Assessment Capable Learners - in house

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2020	18
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$2392

### TEACHER SATISFACTION

Our school's strong culture of professional collaboration continued to be highlighted throughout remote learning and on the numerous returns to school. Level teams met online regularly and were part of the onsite supervision roster that allowed them to meet up with their team and supervised students. Many staff members saw this weekly face-to-face contact as a key wellbeing strategy. Level planning continued face-to-face and online; with team members meeting online and via phone each day to catch up and share successes and concerns. Professional Learning Conversations continued weekly either online or face-to-face as restrictions mandated. This provided a regular touch point for staff.

The leadership team supported teachers throughout remote learning by making regular check-ins and being available daily for any questions, concerns or practical support.



Staff reflected that they felt supported throughout remote and on-site learning. They noted the continued planning sessions, onsite support, positive feedback from families and opportunities for professional learning online increased their effectiveness in supporting student learning.

#### TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	80.9%
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#### ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	76.9%
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#### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	18.2%
Graduate	27.3%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	54.5%
Advanced Diploma	45.5%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

#### STAFF COMPOSITION

Principal Class (Headcount)	1.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	19.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	12.2
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	5.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	3.1
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

## School Community

### Goals & Intended Outcomes

**To build family connectedness to the school with a focus on improving student outcomes.**

*Build on the collaborative partnerships with families, outside agencies and the wider community.*

*Develop a greater range of collaboration / feedback tools for families. — including news / student data / newsletter / learning*

*Develop greater strategic intent in building 'positive relationships — with a learning / wellbeing focus' with the families of children deemed to be 'at risk.'*

### Achievements

St Monica's supportive and engaged family community is a huge asset. Much of the success of the school can be attributed to the positive and proactive manner with which our families engage in the life of the school. This was particularly evident in the year's periods of remote learning.

Families gave regular feedback that allowed staff to modify and improve remote learning practices supporting both students and supervising parents.

Teachers constantly responded to parent questions and concerns. Timetables were drawn up to provide time for meets with families of children with additional needs. Pupil Support Group meetings also went ahead using a variety of online tools.

Staff researched a number of meeting apps to determine the best fit for purpose and took onboard parent feedback around ease of use.

The school utilised a range of free and easily accessible tools to connect with families;

- SeeSaw
- Zoom
- Google Meets
- Whereby
- Skoolbag

These formed the core of our communication repertoire, remaining consistent across the year.

Cyber Safety sessions were offered to parents across the remote learning periods as a practical aid to support learning at home.

St Monica's School continued to engage parents with our weekly 'Themed' sessions that invited everyone to dress up and join in the fun. Other events included;

- Mother's Day Breakfast — online
- Community Conversations; what has remote learning taught you? / where to from here?
- Weekly assemblies
- Weekly 1 min video news from the principal uploaded to SeeSaw
- Hobby Clubs — online events where parents are welcome

- Weekly coffee catch up; online chance to catch up with leadership
- Weekly check-in phone calls from leadership member to see how families were managing lockdown
- Father's Day Breakfast -- online
- Golden Time Activities — time to step away from the screen and focus on self.
- Sports Day -- online

## PARENT SATISFACTION

Feedback from families across 2020 was actively sought to improve our practices and increase the positive impact of our learning programs. This feedback included SeeSaw posts and emails to teachers, admin staff and leadership. It was also contributed to in our two Community Conversations.

This feedback included the following comments;

*The response by the teachers at St Monica's as we went into the first and then the second lockdowns was great. Children were enabled very quickly, with technology and equipment that would help with the remote learning experience. The communications from school leadership and teachers to parents and students were sufficient to get an idea of what was coming or might be coming, and how we were going to try to deal with the challenges ahead.*

*The school day was structured and predictable, with a nice balance between class-style, smaller group tutorial-style and student-led teaching. Parents and students knew what was expected and what was required.*

*The sports day was a highlight. Fun and varied, and giving both parents and students the opportunity to smile (and sweat ... a bit) and work together on challenges.*

*Management of the back to school approach was also clear and structured.*

*Well done to the principal and the teachers as I understand from colleagues, family and friends that the experience across other schools was not the same.*

## Future Directions

St Monica's continues to continually improve its practices by working to realise the goals outlined in its School Improvement Plan and implementing the actions identified in the Annual Action Plan.

Teachers have begun developing plans to address the needs identified in end of year assessments. These include, but are not limited to;

- Deepening our understanding of Wellbeing to improve student health and learning outcomes.
- Evaluating our assessment tools in Reading and Numeracy, with a focus on diagnostic as well as summative detail.
- Developing an Induction Program for a new cohort of beginning teachers
- Exploring the potential in our new ICON Reporting Platform and associated Parent Portal