



St Monica's School

Footscray

2021

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 477

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Nathan Owen, 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 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.

28/03/2022

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

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 120 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 19 staff members: 14 teachers, 3 education support officer sand 2 administration staff. They are actively supported in their roles by the Parish Priest Fr Philip Le.

The school sits on a hill overlooking the Maribyrnong River. Its three buildings span over 100 years 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 on future school enrolments adding value to our school community.

Principal's Report

St Monica's Community displayed its best qualities during 2021. Across the year we celebrated the strengths and talents of our community, as we worked to support our students and their families.

We continued to gather as a community, face-to-face and online, to build and maintain the relationships we understand to have such a powerful impact on our students' growth and wellbeing.

In 2021, as always, our focus was on our students'; their wellbeing and academic growth. All staff are focussed on providing a learning experience that targets the needs of our students and encourages them to reach further, try harder and achieve more than they thought possible.

We welcomed a significant number of new staff in 2021. This influx of new ideas and thinking was crucial in creating new learning opportunities to engage and connect during remote learning and 'return to school' periods. Two new initiatives were the new phonics initiative and new online home reading library to support reading and spelling in the Junior and Middle schools.

Regular celebrations continued; assemblies. Mother's Day and Father's Day Breakfasts, liturgies, hobby clubs and disco's moved from on-site to online and back again as advice changed, in another year punctuated by lockdowns and remote learning.

A special mention must be made of the contributions and efforts of our departing Year Six cohort. These incredible young people experienced almost half of their Senior years via remote learning. Despite this, they maintained connectedness and focus on their learning. They are exemplary models of St Monica's expectations of Safety, Respect and Engagement.

We thank all our community members for contributing to our strong culture of Family Engagement we have 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 Liturgy, Professional Learning and Liturgical engagement across the community.

We began using the 'Faith & Life' model to design integrated Religious Education and Inquiry units of learning to provide 'real world' opportunities for students to link 'Faith Life' with their everyday experience. Professional Learning in 'Faith & Life' was conducted for staff during regular weekly Professional Learning sessions.

The sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation were celebrated in Term One, after being postponed in 2020.

The sacrament of Confirmation was conferred by Bishop Martin Ashe in late November.

The school community also celebrated Lenten and Easter Liturgies and Advent Liturgies. Where possible these were streamed to allow families to participate online.

A special online liturgy for St Monica's Day, on August 27, was celebrated online for all students and their families.

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

VALUE ADDED

Eucharist & Reconciliation

Confirmation

Easter Liturgies

Feast Day Celebrations

Graduation Liturgy

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.
- 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

A significant number of our classroom teachers were beginning teachers. They required a focus on structured, supportive planning sessions in the early stages of the year. This intense focus created a strong platform for growth and independent action in the latter half of the year.

Maintaining a strong and engaging remote learning / online learning presence. Over the course of the three 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.

Implementation of new Phonics Program. Growth Stats*

Working with the 100 Story Building continued both onsite and online, providing stimulus for Senior students and professional learning opportunities for teachers to improve their understanding and skill in the teaching of narrative texts. We were proud to have one student's work included in the '2021 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, Badminton and AFL sports clinics throughout the year.

Professional Learning continued, mostly online, with all teachers having undertaken 'Seven Steps' writing professional learning, Little Learners Love Literacy (phonics) Program.

Collaborative Planning continued 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

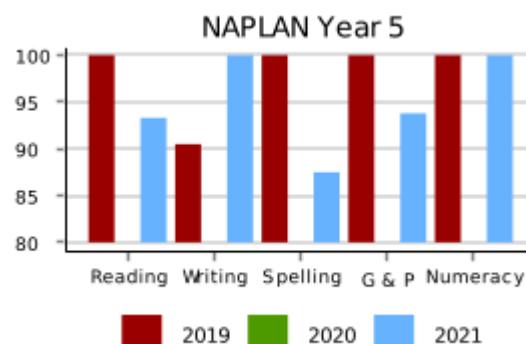
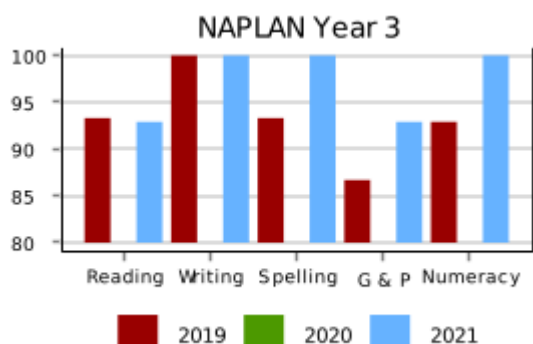
- Naplan - students at St. Monica's on average grew more than the state average from 2019-2021 in reading, writing and grammar, but below the state average in numeracy and spelling
- Students and teachers transitioned in and out of the remote learning periods with ease
- Students were provided with opportunities that supported students in all areas of the curriculum. All specialist areas provided online content; Italian, Art, Music & Performing Arts, and P.E
- 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.
- Professional Learning continued, mostly online, with all junior and middle teachers and learning support officers training in the Little Learners Love Literacy systematic synthetic phonics program
- 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 a students' work included in the 2021 Chapter Book
- We continued to be able to engage in a number of on site learning experiences including the Australian Ballet STEAM program, Market Fresh, Science incursions; Netball Victoria and AFL sports clinics throughout the year.
- 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.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	86.7	-	-	92.9	-
YR 03 Numeracy	92.9	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Reading	93.3	-	-	92.9	-
YR 03 Spelling	93.3	-	-	100.0	-
YR 03 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	-	-	93.8	-
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Reading	100.0	-	-	93.3	-
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	-	-	87.5	-
YR 05 Writing	90.5	-	-	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

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 2021. A designated leadership 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 online. This philosophy underpins our School Wide Behaviour Plan.

During 2021, school leadership continued to manage 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 contacted weekly by leadership or teachers and staff emails and SeeSaw contact details were provided to facilitate communication.

Wellbeing activities were also incorporated into the remote learning curriculum. Special consideration was given to setting up online 'meets' for the significant number of students who are 'only' children, and would otherwise not interact with peers outside of regular online learning activities.

Families were provided with the opportunity of accessing Chromebooks through the school if required.

As Senior Camp was cancelled due to sudden lockdown restrictions, the Senior team organised a 'Virtual Camp' experience for the same dates. Camp Supply Packs were created for all students and delivered by staff ready for the beginning of the camp experience.

For Junior students and students deemed 'at risk' Paper Packs were prepared as an additional support to learning and maintaining engagement. Teachers would deliver these packs if parents were unable to print or collect personally.

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.

Transition sessions looked different to previous years. Prep interviews and Parent Meetings were run online. Prospective Preps were still able to access at least four onsite sessions before the end of the year.

VALUE ADDED

- Hobby Clubs
- Sporting Clinics
- Camps - off site and virtual
- Themed Days online
- Cooking with the Kids sessions
- Friendship Catch up Meets
- Holiday Packs

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Feedback and responses obtained from the 2021 MACSSIS survey indicates that students who were surveyed across the school highly value the school belonging (connectedness), awareness of learning dispositions and the importance of teacher - student relationships.

Moving forward, as indicated within our MACSSIS data that attention to improvement for embedding more opportunities to celebrate our catholic identity. It is also acknowledged that student voice is an area when attention could also be made to increase student engagement.

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.

Due to COVID-19, student attendance requirements were modified for students learning remotely. Please comment how this was managed during that time as well as how it is normally managed. Tracking of student attendance continued throughout remote learning, most important 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. We also provided regular and consistent messaging and communication via our weekly newsletter.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	91.7%
Y02	96.4%
Y03	95.8%
Y04	96.9%
Y05	94.4%
Y06	95.4%
Overall average attendance	95.1%

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

St Monica's 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

Supporting a staff that had a significant number of new, inexperienced teachers was a focus for leadership in 2021. Inducting staff in St Monica's expectations and culture were important first steps in the year. Supporting staff during the regular move into and out of remote learning also required significant planning and coordination.

One of the key successes in 2021 was in how every staff member, regardless of number of years of experience, or time at St Monica's, stepped in to support and lead when needed. In normal years this would be applauded. In an environment with lockdowns, remote learning and five classroom teachers (out of seven) leaving throughout the year (four for parental leave) this is particularly noteworthy.

The Administration Staff managed the rollover to the new HR / Finance administration software ICON with incredible professionalism. The smooth transfer and implementation is a credit to the Administration Team.

A new Deputy Principal and Religious Education Coordinator were welcomed in 2021.

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.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

Children with Autism; Sue Larkey — online

Seven Steps Writing -- online

Respectful Relationships -- online

Deputy Principal Network -- online

Learning and Teaching Network -- online

Religious Education Leader Network -- online

New Religious Education Leader Induction
 Wellbeing Cluster- face-to-face and online
 ROSEA training — online
 Little Learners Love Literacy - online
 Protect Framework; Child Protection — online
 Zart Art; Bookweek Activities — online
 Wellbeing Network -- face-to-face and online
 Library Network -
 Learning Diversity New Leaders training-- face-to-face and online
 Principal Network -- face-to-face and online
 Principal Conference - face-to-face
 Child Safety; Information Sharing Briefing -- face-to-face
 Amount - check ICON & SAS figures

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021	18
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$2400

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Teachers at St Monica's continued to deal with and adapt quickly to the requirements of school lock down and the demands that remote learning constantly presented. Students were enabled very quickly and smoothly, with technology and equipment that would help with the remote learning experiences. Communications from school leadership and teachers to parents and students continued to occur in a well-measured and consistent manner in order to sufficiently deal with what was coming or might be coming, and how we were going to collectively manage the challenges ahead.

The school day continued to be well structured and predictable, with a balance between online remote learning, smaller group tutorial-style and student-led teaching. Parents and students knew what was expected and what was required.

Feedback and responses obtained from the 2021 MACSSIS survey indicates that staff across the school highly value the value collective efficacy, staff / leadership relationships, staff safety and support that is provided within teams.

Moving forward, as indicated within staff MACSSIS data attention to collaboration around school improvement strategies is considered a priority.

Staff have also acknowledged that deepening their understanding and appreciation of Catholic Identity continues to be an area of growth where learning, culture, faith and life find a meeting place.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	54.8%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	83.3%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	22.2%
Graduate	0.0%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	88.9%
Advanced Diploma	0.0%
No Qualifications Listed	0.0%

STAFF COMPOSITION

Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	21.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	15.2
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	5.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	3.9
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.

St Monica's joined the Sunshine Family Engagement Cluster as an associate school for a trail year to explore if this group could enhance our family engagement practices.

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; Our Vision - what do we envision for our children and community?
- Weekly assemblies
- Hobby Clubs — online events where parents are welcome
- 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.
- Sacrament Programs
- Grandparents' Day

PARENT SATISFACTION

Feedback and responses obtained from the 2021 MACSSIS survey indicates that families across the school highly value the school climate, student safety and clarity of school communication.

Moving forward, as indicated within our MACSSIS data that attention to improvement for family engagement, catholic identity and barriers to student engaged be provided through connection, belonging and inclusion.

We also acknowledge the considerable interruption to student learning occurred due the COVID-19 pandemic and that families actively sought to improve our practices and increase the positive impact of our learning programs. We continued to seek feedback from families throughout the year, which included SeeSaw posts and emails to teachers, administration staff and leadership. Management of the back to school approach was also clear and structured in an organised and covid-safe manner as per school operational guidelines.

Future Directions

St Monica's continues to 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 mid-year and 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 in evolving coaching and mentoring for a new cohort of beginning teachers
- Creating and developing Curriculum Impact teams for Literacy and Mathematics
- Deepening our understanding of the science of reading through a knowledge-rich curriculum
- Exploring the potential in our new ICON Reporting Platform and associated Parent Portal