



St Mel's School Shepparton South

2021 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1568

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Christopher Summers, attest that St Mel'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.

20/03/2022

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

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd identifies learning and teaching as two parts of the same action designed to ignite the 'spark of the divine' in every child. We seek to provide safe, supportive and secure environments that value diversity, promote care, respect and co-operation. In 2021 our schools went into overdrive once again to plan and prepare for a learning model that would respond to the continuing impact and uncertainty of Covid-19.

Bishop Shane established Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd in 2021 to assume the ownership and operation of Catholic schools which previously operated as an unincorporated body. This change in our governance structure coincides with a time of increasing challenges that call us to imagine new and inspiring structures that will meet the needs of a changing Church.

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd governance requirements meant that schools would now develop School Advisory Councils to support the principal and school Leadership Teams to ensure the smooth running of our schools and continue the life-giving relationship between our schools and parish communities.

During extremely challenging times our schools were able to maintain their focus on each child, implementing the Victorian Curriculum and the Sandhurst Source of Life Religious Education Curriculum while providing outstanding pastoral support both on-site and through remote learning.

Significant investment in new learning facilities and school infrastructure through the Catholic Capital Grants Program and the hard work of our school communities have ensured the provision of high-quality learning and teaching facilities for both staff and students.

I continue to be extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2021 of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd- our schools and personnel in the Catholic Education Office. They continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools, bringing the 'spark of the divine' into focus every day.

Paul Desmond

Executive Director

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd

Our School Identity and Vision Statements

Identity Statement

St Mel's is a proud Catholic school and kindergarten striving, learning and achieving together, through Christ, our light.

Vision Statements

St Mel's strives to:

- * Build a community illuminated by our Catholic Tradition and grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- * Nurture the spirit, mind, and body of each learner.
- * Create learning environments that invite learners to inquire, explore and discover.
- * Embrace all families working in partnership with parish and community to engage in life long learning.
- * Rejoice in the diversity of our community and celebrate its uniqueness.

Graduate Outcomes

At St Mel's we endeavour to educate students who:

- * Demonstrate openness to faith and willingness to act justly.
- * Are open to nurturing their personal spirituality.
- * Are curious engaged learners, risk takers in their learning and life long learners.
- * Are literate and numerate.
- * Have good self-awareness and confidence to explore possibilities.
- * Understand their responsibility in caring for all God's creation.
- * Show understanding and appreciation of the diversity of society.
- * Are respectful, cooperative, and can communicate and work with others harmoniously.

School Overview

School Overview

At St Mel's we acknowledge that the child is a capable person, who from birth can readily manage multiple relationships, both Divine and human, that is willing to make meaning of the world about them.

In collaboration with the child, parent, teacher and community, St Mel's works to create engaging learning experiences that are founded on the theories of past and current researchers such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Cavaletti, Robinson, and Malaguzzi.

Learning at St Mel's is organic and fluid, creating opportunities for the child to experience success in learning via play, the arts, literature, numeracy, physical activity, sciences - learning is multi-disciplinary and is accessed in an environment that is welcoming, homely, challenging and encouraging.

As a learning community, St Mel's takes co-responsibility for all it's citizens, citizens of the world, allowing each member to live life in the abundance of God's love, in union with young and old, with the expectation that all can LEARN.

We not only welcome all those who chose St Mel's as a place of learning, a place where relationships are formed and built upon, but more so we hope to create a community where ALL belong.

Principal's Report

Dear Parents and Friends

I would like to take this opportunity to thank St Mel's community for your continued support over the past 12 months. It has been a privilege to lead St Mel's with much being achieved and much more on the horizon yet to do. Leadership isn't an easy gig, and you don't always get it right, but the rewards of seeing the kids grow; learn and flourish is what makes being a principal an exceptional honour. The support from our school board, parents and friends, school staff, and students is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

What a strange year it has been? Covid 19 has had such a stranglehold on us all and has dictated pretty much everything we do. School life has been very different, however, our students continued to learn, grow, inquire, and became more resilient and appreciative of what they have.

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to all in our community for the response to the demands that this year has put on families, especially those juggling work commitments, having to supervise online learning, or facing financial hardship. Our call to well-being has been outstanding. Whilst there have been many negatives there have been many positives which we, as a school, will learn from and adapt to suit our needs.

The past 12 months at St Mel's has seen much more than just surviving COVID. Our children have been given many opportunities to explore the world about them. The teaching staff has worked hard to improve pedagogical practices, adapting to changes to give our children the best strategies to learn and apply their thinking. As parents, you should be proud of your children's efforts.

St Mel's is a community that is committed to its Catholic Traditions, always striving to create learning experiences that meet the needs of the child and allow each student the ability to succeed and grow as an individual. We continue to rely on the support of our parents, adults, and friends to build the community that we have. As an Education Community, we are dependent on the support of the parent to ensure we are not working in isolation, but rather in unison. As a community, we have worked hard to foster a positive and trusting relationship, and continue to share the ideas, vision, and conversations that will further enhance best practices and learning opportunities.

In the next 12 months, we will embark on a journey of discovery. Our vision, mission, pedagogy, and strategic directions will be examined and eventually re-done to ensure we evolve as a community of learners. New strategic plans will be created that will enrapture past, present and future educational thinking and creativity. It's exciting times, and we call on all in our community to embrace the challenge.

I thank all parents that entrust their children to us. It is our honour to share this time in your child's life. More so I wish to thank you the members of St Mel's Parish Education Community and Parent Social Club. Thank you, Melissa Hamilton (PEB Chairperson) and Mel Shiels (social committee deputy chair) for accepting the call to lead. All committee positions are currently available.

To quote Pope Francis: "The future is, most of all, in the hands of those people who recognize the other as a 'you' and themselves as part of an 'us.' We all need each other."

May we respond to the Pope Francis' call for solidarity by being aware of the blessings in our lives and seek to share those blessings with our community—especially the least among us and those who most need our support and care.

This is what St Mel's is renowned for and is what we will continue to do.

God Bless.

Chris Summers

Principal

Catholic Mission and Identity and Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

CATHOLIC IDENTITY ~ Action Plan 2021

To develop an authentic culture of service to others, reflecting the life that Jesus led.

To embrace the diversity of our community while maintaining and deepening our catholic traditions, identity, teachings and Mercy charism (history). (2017 - 2021)

Achievements

Review of 2021

Unfortunately, due to Covid we had to cancel our bi-annual feast day celebrations with Andrew Chinn. Instead, Danae Napier our Catholic Identity Leader led us beautifully in the morning with a liturgy focusing on the importance of Building Community and what this means for us as a community of learners. Using the picture storybook 'What we'll build' each unit was able to develop goals and intentions with a particular focus on the actions of Jesus and how he built community through love, action, and gratitude.

National Apology Day Breakfast ~ Feb 13th. We had a good contingent of students representing St Mel's at the Apology Day breakfast held online in the school library. Our students shared a 'maccas' breakfast and showed great respect during the online ceremony. This significant event seems to be getting bigger and bigger in Shepparton. Our students were amazing ambassadors for their school and for some, their culture. Well done to all those involved.

Raising money for the missions or Caritas has been difficult this year due to Covid, however our community have continued to be supportive of those doing it tough at the moment. Random donations of food, clothing and household products have been greatly appreciated over the course of the year.

The Catholic University in Leuven, was commissioned by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) to design a process and tools, based on sound research, to accomplish the goal of understanding our current Catholic identity and where the school community might like to see itself in the future. Chris Summers and Danae Napier met with David Walker from CES Ltd to unpack our 2019 data results. The data we receive helps us to build a better picture of where we are in terms of us as a catholic school and how we can continue to build our catholic identity in an ever-changing and secular society. The challenges are there but like all catholic schools, St Mel's is working hard not to lose sight of who we are and how we can express our catholicity.

Our children who are growing into an increasingly pressure filled world need to be self reliant, questioning and reflective. We have found this to be ever present when teaching students about the Gospel stories of Jesus.

We look forward to building our faith community in 2022.

VALUE ADDED

Value added activities

- ~ Building community through our feast day and liturgy
- ~ Unpacking ECSI survey results with David Walker.
- ~ Commissioning of student FIRE carriers with Michael Chisholm
- ~ One staff member completed their accreditation to teach in a Catholic School.
- ~ Introduction to the new source of life units.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

LEARNING AND TEACHING

To develop a culture of goal setting, exploring different options in learning, taking action as needed and reflection on our teaching practice, to improve our pedagogy, student learning and parental engagement.

To provide a guaranteed and viable Teaching and Learning plan that enables St Mel's students to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. (2017-2021)

How well do our students display interdependent learning skills and how do we know?

Achievements

Achievements 2021

We began the year with a staff planning day. The staff took the time to unpack our school philosophy in light of the Storybook 'What we'll build' by Oliver Jeffers. It was great to delve deeper into our philosophy and look at it from the perspective of the journey we are on and where the staff are at in their understanding. With such a high turnover of staff in the past 12 months, it became obvious we need to keep reflecting and revisiting our philosophy and ask the difficult questions... Who are we? Is what we are doing making a difference in our student's learning? These reflections continue to drive our focus on learning and teaching.

We continued Lisa Burman's work from the past 12 months with staff this year sharing her love of story writing and strategies to help us embed good writing practices across the school. Lisa has worked closely with staff to model good teaching and learning in all areas of the literacy curriculum. Professional learning was completed via Zoom meetings held throughout the year. Consultants such as Lisa help to engage the learner and instill the confidence of teachers to continue to be the best educators they can be.

Staff participated in PD a new spelling approach 'Words our Way' and have adopted many of the strategies and approaches to building student spelling awareness and strength. Jane Stock our Deputy Principal was instrumental in driving this approach, and we are starting to see some progress.

Whilst there have been negatives this year there have been many positives which we, as a school, have learned from and adapted to suit our needs. Using online learning platforms, virtual meetings, and attaining a new level of cleanliness and hygiene have all worked in our favour and will help us moving into 2022. The past 12 months at St Mel's has seen much more than just surviving COVID. Our children have been given many opportunities to explore the world about

them. The teaching staff has worked hard to improve practices, adapting to changes to give our children the best strategies to learn and apply their thinking.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

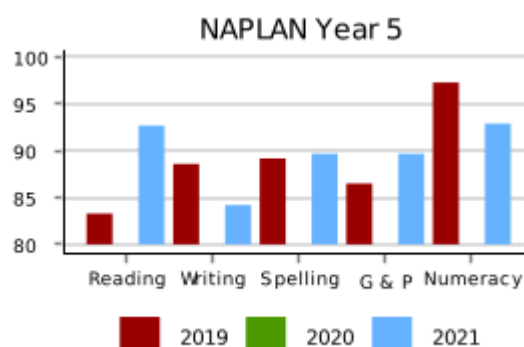
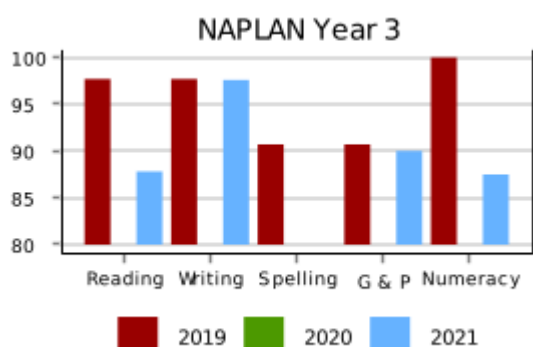
The International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) independent skills-based assessments with a competition element were offered to students that wish to complete these. The assessments comprise Digital Technologies, English, Maths, Science, Spelling tests and Writing, commencing at Year Two. We had a number of students who competed in the ICAS competitions and saw great results.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	90.7	-	-	90.0	-
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	87.5	-
YR 03 Reading	97.7	-	-	87.8	-
YR 03 Spelling	90.7	-	-	80.0	-
YR 03 Writing	97.7	-	-	97.6	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	86.5	-	-	89.7	-
YR 05 Numeracy	97.3	-	-	92.9	-
YR 05 Reading	83.3	-	-	92.7	-
YR 05 Spelling	89.2	-	-	89.7	-
YR 05 Writing	88.6	-	-	84.2	-

* 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.



Pastoral Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To encourage stronger ties with all parents to empower our community to DREAM BIG

St. Mel's fosters a spiritual, healthy, safe and hope filled community that nurtures and develops the dignity of each individual. (2017 - 2021)

How do we foster a culture of acceptance and inclusion amongst the whole school community using PBIS model and approach?

Achievements

Achievements 2021

Pastoral Wellbeing is a very complex and difficult job, demanding much time and school resources. It is though one of the most important areas of school life to get right. The complexities some families face day to day compound the need to ensure all children are kept safe, loved and supported at school. Thankfully we have a very dedicated and experienced team of teachers who lead this important area at school.

Mr Chris Quinn continues in his role as Senior Leader: Pastoral Well-being / Special Needs. Chris leads our pastoral well-being team, which comprises Mrs Elisabeth Rodriguez who continues in the role of Pastoral Well-being and school chaplain. We have also employed Melinda Ryan in the role as chaplain and well-being support to help Lis with the demands of family and student support.

Mrs Cherie Malanati continues as our Learning Diversity coordinator and curriculum support person. Cherie has a background as a speech pathologist and has worked extensively with children with high needs and traumatic backgrounds.

St Mel's follows a School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) Framework which provides a broad range of systemic and individual strategies for achieving social and learning outcomes whilst addressing behaviours of concern.

Our Behaviour Support Team (BST) continued to follow the work we did with Dan Petro throughout 2020. Throughout 2021 we strategically worked with Steve Hicks to ensure our systems, structures and strategies that support the implementation of our three school expectations: Respect everyone and everything; Be your best and Help others succeed. The importance of the framework was highlighted for the team as we recognised the variance in perspective that each individual can bring to a situation. Implementing such a framework builds opportunity for consistency and clarity for students and teachers when addressing behaviours of concern.

A tragic downside to the pandemic has been the economic disaster, especially for those who have lost their jobs. Our thoughts and prayers were with all in our community who were doing it

tough financially throughout the year. I'd like to thank our school Well-being Team; Lis Rodrigues, Melanie Ryan and Chris Quinn for the incredible work they did to ensure families were being supported.

Dealing with the 'hidden' pandemic quickly became our school's priority and our well-being team, along with incredibly kind members of the Shepparton community, began a coordinated response to help deliver meals, household essentials, and pharmacy supplies. We continue to monitor and support many families in our community.

VALUE ADDED

Wellbeing and Engagement 2021

- ~ Implementation of our PBIS / BST team to ensure our supports and systems are in place
- ~ Continue to liaise and work with Steve Hicks & BST team
- ~ Student Leadership Teams
- ~ Online school production 'Under the Big Top'
- ~ School Excursions to Aquamoves, Dookie (Mt Major), Canoeing
- ~ Year 6 Retreat Dec 2021

STUDENT SATISFACTION

In 2021 St Mel's participated in formal and some informal feedback from students. This included an internal survey midway through the year to ascertain student satisfaction, especially in terms of remote learning, and how we could as a school, better improve engagement, student well-being, and learning opportunities.

The information gained was invaluable in terms of how we could improve online learning for our students and what online learning platforms were being most effective. Parent feedback was also essential to determine which families needed support; emotionally, academically and at times, financially. Like many schools, St Mel's was hit hard by the pandemic, causing stress and anxiety for our entire community.

Examples of student survey questions and responses are below:

1. What do you enjoy about learning from home?

"I like learning from home because I get to spend more time with my mum".

2. What don't you like about learning from home?

"I don't like to be at home for my learning because I don't get to see my friends".

As a school, we were very satisfied with our efforts in supporting our students during the pandemic. Our teachers worked tirelessly to ensure all students had many engaging opportunities to continue their learning and in some cases, thrived. Staff support was phenomenal, and they went above and beyond their usual duty of care.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

During periods of remote learning, student attendance was recorded through the learning platform Google Classroom and daily phone calls or video conferencing ensured students were best engaged in their learning.

On-site learning was provided for essential workers and students deemed most vulnerable. Parents used Google forms to sign up.

On average, we provided on-site learning for approximately 20-30 students across the school.

Whilst on-site our usual practice of recording student attendance remained the same and is explained below.

Student attendance rate	Percent ¹
All students	91%
Indigenous students	-
Non-Indigenous students	-

Student attendance level (proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time) ²	Percent ¹
All students	71%
Indigenous students	-
Non-Indigenous students	-

- Please note that unexplained attendances are followed up by a telephone call to parents to seek why the absences are occurring and how we can support the family in ensuring a quick return to school.
- Student Absences are recorded on semester reports.
- Extended unexplained absences have been reported to DHS, following the 'every day counts' policy, with letters being sent home to parents.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL	
Y01	90.1%
Y02	88.8%
Y03	92.2%
Y04	93.6%
Y05	89.4%
Y06	90.7%
Overall average attendance	90.8%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

St Mel's School promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all students.

All students enrolled at St Mel's, and any child visiting, have a right to feel safe and be safe.

The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse.

We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

Achievements

Achievements

In 2020 St Mel's was externally assessed and reviewed by the VRQA as part of their Full School Review process and for the implementation and enactment of Child Safe Standards under Ministerial Order 870. The governing authority approved St Mel's as being compliant in all areas of child safe practices including the implementation and commitment to policies, codes of conduct, reporting and response procedures and induction of volunteers.

Commitment to staff training to minimising risk and recognition of child abuse is held once a term at the first full staff PLC. All staff annually complete online Mandatory reporting modules and forward completion certificates to the school principal.

All staff has read and signed the Code of Conduct as a part of our ongoing updates, along with policy familiarisation and the completion of e-modules for mandatory reporting, disability discrimination, anaphylaxis, and asthma.

All volunteers complete volunteer agreement forms and a volunteers register is maintained along with working with children's check (WWCC). Volunteers are inducted and sight and sign Childsafe policies and code of conduct.

Students regularly participate in lessons to empower and respond to any issues concerning their safety and wellbeing. This directly links to Standard 7 Empowering Students.

A dedicated Child Safe team has been formed with regular meetings being held to discuss and / or address Child safe practices. Jane Stock, Chris Summers, Chris Quinn, Cherie Malnati, Melinda Ryan and Liz Rodriguez are part of this team.

Staff formally participate in PD run by CES Ltd, Steve Hicks and Francis Brown.

Our school website and weekly newsletters outline our commitment to Child Safety.

The annual school calendar and information booklet include St Mel's commitment to Child Safe practices.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To ensure that we maintain our current practice and philosophy when developing and planning future teaching and learning programs, in light of a change of leadership.

To be inspirational leaders who develop genuine relationships across the community and provide authentic leadership opportunities in order for all to reach their full potential. (2017- 2021)

Achievements

Leadership Achievements for 2021

Mrs Danae Napier has been employed as Catholic Identity Leader. Danae has a wealth of knowledge regarding Catholic Identity and implementing sound teaching and learning strategies.

Mr Chris Quinn has been employed in the role as Senior Leader: Pastoral Wellbeing / Special Needs. Chris will lead our pastoral wellbeing team, which comprises of Mrs Elisabeth Rodriguez who continues in the role of Pastoral Wellbeing and school chaplain. We have also employed Melinda Ryan in the role as chaplain and wellbeing support to help Lis with the demands of family and student support.

Mrs Cherie Malanati continues in her role as Learning Diversity coordinator and curriculum support person. Cherie has a background as a speech pathologist and has worked extensively with children with high needs and traumatic backgrounds.

Jane Stock is also very much a key person in her role as Senior Leader: Learning and Teaching. Her extensive knowledge of curriculum and understanding of helping students access the curriculum is second to none. We are very lucky to have such an amazing group of people working at St Mel's.

In 2021 our leadership team committed to regular meeting schedules to ensure all areas of school life were being attended to and all members were on the same page. These meetings were an essential component to our promise of delivering supportive management and leadership across the school. Good things were achieved, and good foundations were laid to help guide our future directions.

All year six students are given opportunities to build upon their own leadership capabilities with students being rostered on for meals on wheels, canteen duty, leading school tours and helping in the kindergarten.

The school environment, both classrooms and playground, reflects the school leadership's care for and commitment to providing an engaging and attractive place for students. Our philosophy

of learning has influenced both the utilisation of the current learning spaces and the design of the new learning spaces. Financial resources have been used purposefully to enhance the school's learning, physical activity, social cohesiveness and spirituality.

The needs and care of students and their families is paramount within the school community, evidenced by the many programs, structures, and processes to support the more vulnerable including students with additional needs. St Mel's has established strong relationships with allied and medical health specialists to support relevant students.

All staff had their goal setting meeting with the principal at the beginning of the year and Annual Review Meeting (ARM) in terms three and four to finalise staff intentions or class placements for 2022. The ARM is an opportunity to reflect on work practices and set goals for ongoing professional learning and growth.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

Staff Professional Learning 2021

- ~ Kath Murdoch ~ revisiting 'Power of Inquiry'
- ~ Lisa Burman PD Writing (online PD provided for staff)
- ~ Dan Petro BST & PBIS PD
- ~ BST & PBIS PD and support from Steve Hicks CES Ltd.
- ~ Child Safety Standard 7 Empowering Students
- ~ Right and Respectful Relationships PD
- ~ Individual Learning Plans (ILP's)
- ~ NCCD training
- ~ Students with Disabilities PD
- ~ First Aid Training

TEACHER SATISFACTION

In 2021 St Mel's participated in formal and informal feedback for staff. These included internal surveys to ascertain staff satisfaction, especially in terms of remote learning, staff workloads, and how we can as a school, better improve student engagement. The information gained was invaluable in terms of how we could improve online learning for students and what online learning platforms were being most effective. We were also able to put our finger on the pulse of how staff were feeling throughout periods of online learning and to see what we needed to do as a staff to improve staff well-being and morale. Like many schools, St Mel's was hit hard by the pandemic, and we had times of difficulty, causing stress and anxiety for staff.

Examples of survey questions and responses are below:

1. Can you please describe ways you have felt supported through times of remote learning?

"Communication has been very good, I have felt supported by members of leadership and work colleagues".

"At times, I have felt frustrated by the 'extra' workload and expectations placed upon us to learn new platforms and ways of delivering content to students".

Many formal structures exist, such as Annual Review Meetings (ARMs) which aim to support teacher's personal and professional growth. At St Mel's, the staff strongly believes that their professional growth is both encouraged and promoted. As we plan for future development we need to be aware of staff workloads and the importance of communication and role clarity.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	91.0%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	90.9%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	0.0%
Graduate	23.8%
Graduate Certificate	9.5%
Bachelor Degree	71.4%
Advanced Diploma	33.3%
No Qualifications Listed	14.3%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	3.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	25.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	20.2
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	20.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	18.6
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	2.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To embrace and rejoice with families in partnerships with the parish and community to engage in lifelong learning

To create and nurture within each person a deep respect and appreciation of all the resources made available to us by God our creator - now and for future generations. (2017 - 2021)

Achievements

Achievements 2021

Whilst there have been negatives this year there have been many positives which we, as a school, have learned from and adapted to suit our needs. Using online learning platforms, virtual meetings, and attaining a new level of cleanliness and hygiene have all worked in our favour and will help us moving into 2022.

I'd like to take the opportunity, to express my thanks and gratitude to all in our community on the response to the demands that this year has put on families, especially those juggling work commitments, having to supervise online learning or facing financial hardship. Your ability to adapt and take on the challenge of remote learning was simply amazing, and you all survived! And have, I believe, gained a new appreciation of what teachers do! ☺

The past 12 months at St Mel's has seen much more than just surviving COVID. Our children have been given many opportunities to explore the world around them. The teaching staff has worked hard to improve practices, adapting to changes to give our children the best strategies to learn and apply their thinking and as parents you should be very proud of your children's efforts. We certainly are.

Thank you to our school advisory board. We have an incredible team of members who work diligently in governance and leading strategically the direction of our school. Thank you, especially to Melissa Hamilton for being our school board chair and for being a great support. Thanks, Melissa.

Thank you, Mel Shiels for stepping into the role as vice-president of our parents and friends committee. It hasn't been much of a year to fund-raise or to enjoy the usual 'fun stuff' our community does.

To our staff...thank you. You give selflessly of your time and always go above and beyond. We are very lucky to have such a hard-working staff, and I am forever grateful for your commitment and generosity especially this year with all that was thrown at you.

Thank you especially to our executive leadership team: Jane, Quinny, Danae and Cherie. You have given much of yourselves, taken on the pandemic and have come out the other side still smiling and working hard to help make St Mel's the best school it can be. You're a wonderful team to work with, and I look forward to next year with enthusiasm for what we can do and achieve.

PARENT SATISFACTION

In 2021 St Mel's participated in formal and some informal feedback from parents. This included an internal survey midway through the year to ascertain parent satisfaction, especially in terms of remote learning, and how we could as a school, better improve student engagement, student well-being, and learning opportunities. Parents were concerned for their children's learning and needed opportunities to express their concerns and share with staff what was working or not working for them regarding home learning.

The information gained was invaluable in terms of how we could improve online learning for students and what online learning platforms were most effective. Parent feedback was essential to determine which families needed support; emotionally, academically and at times, financially. Like many schools, St Mel's was hit hard by the pandemic, causing stress and anxiety for our parent community.

Examples of survey questions and responses are below:

1. Can you please describe ways you have felt supported through times of remote learning?

"The school has been very helpful and supportive, and we thank the staff for the constant updates and phone calls".

"The well-being team at St Mel's has been amazing. Lis and Mel have helped our family throughout our greatest time of need".

As a school, we were very satisfied with our efforts in supporting many families during the pandemic. Our well-being team worked tirelessly to ensure all families had the support they needed and went above and beyond their usual duty of care. Generally speaking, feedback from our school board and parent community were overwhelmingly positive, and whenever a concern was raised, processes were put into place to mitigate further hardship or anxieties parents and families had. I was very proud of the way our staff team handled the demands of remote learning.

Future Directions

Pastoral wellbeing

To reconnect as an education community by inviting and empowering families, educators and children to engage in positive behaviour? Practices that foster the social and emotional wellbeing of our education community.

Actions:

- Rebuild connection with families through school newsletter, expo days, online Seesaw app
- Enhance staff wellbeing and sense of connectedness through timetabling and prioritising welfare experiences
- Embedding PBIS practices using a whole school approach
- Professional development of PBIS theory and practices for staff
- Engage the support and services of CES Ltd wellbeing consultant Steve Hicks

Leadership

To create a culture of leadership within our education community that is safe and encouraging and empowers parents, educators and children to be leaders of our teaching and learning philosophy.

Actions:

- Continue to build a safe culture where all can and want to contribute
- Re-establish a culture of leadership
- Set high expectations for educators to actively contribute to our professional learning teams and community
- Continue to establish new leadership team roles/expectations
- Collaborate with Janet Classen
- Continue to unpack and review our learning philosophy
- Professional development on inquiry learning for educators
- Encourage and empower parents to be more visible leaders within our education community (excursions, within learning suites etc)
- Support children to be leaders in their own learning
- Support children to be leaders within our education community

Learning and Teaching

To use evidence based assessments to inform and effectively plan fluid teaching and learning experiences that reflect the pedagogical practices of our school philosophy

in order for all children to experience success.

Actions:

- Review of assessment schedule
- Review of planning documents
- Continue to unpack and review our learning philosophy
- Professional development on inquiry learning for educators
- Analyse children's data
- Inquire into Response to Intervention programs
- Weekly area leader meetings
- Area leader networking days- twice termly

Catholic Identity

To reconnect as a Faith community and deepen our Catholic traditions, identity and teachings.

Actions:

- Rebuild connection with our Parish community through
- Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives more deeply in our daily school life and teaching and learning experiences
- Professional development for educators, focusing on catholic traditions and teachings such as scripture.
- Spirituality experiences for the whole education community
- Engage the support and services of CES Ltd Koorie Educator Michael Chisholm

Stewardship of resources

To be intentional with resources and create partnerships within our local community that foster and encourage reciprocal relationships.

Actions:

- Combine professional development opportunities for educators with neighbouring schools
- Contact local university/Tafe to share resources such as staff
- Building our finances - what can we do about it? How are we saving money? How do we prioritise where our money is being spent?

