



St Paul's

Mount Lawley

Annual Community Meeting
Principal's Report
2023

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2023 Principal's Report to the St Paul's Primary School community. At St Paul's, we provide a nurturing and well-rounded education to our students and faith in God is the foundation of our educational approach. We are very proud of our school and I'm pleased to share with you about 2023 at St Paul's.

As the year draws closer to its end, it is a good opportunity to take time to reflect on all that the St Paul's community has shared during 2023. We take time to reflect on the successes, the challenges, the learning, the opportunities to build community and relationships, the discussions, the decisions and the growth that we have experienced as a school.

After what seemed like a long time of restrictions, it was refreshing to start the year without having to give a 'COVID Update'! Being able to have so many parents and community members around the school and in classrooms this year, as well as being able to see many of the events that had to be cancelled over the last couple of years return, had a really positive impact on our school community. For a strong and close community like ours, opportunities to come together and connect are integral to who we are so thank you for embracing the return of many of these opportunities throughout 2023.

This year has seen a lot of things happening around the school, involving a significant amount of time, expertise and effort from many people and I am incredibly grateful to all who gave of themselves for the good of our school and the benefit of our students. Catholic Education Western Australia prides itself on being Christ-centred and child-focused and we use four pillars to encompass what we do. I intend to use these pillars, Catholic Identity, Education, Community and Stewardship in this report.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

St Paul's Primary School is first and foremost a Catholic school. For us, being Catholic flows through everything we do. Student life at St Paul's is enriched by our close relationship with St Paul's Parish and inspired by the life and teachings of St Paul.

At St Paul's, we are truly blessed to have the invaluable support of our Parish Priest, Fr Tim, and our Assistant Priest, Fr Mariusz. Their commitment and dedication to our school is second to none and the positive impact they have on our students' understanding of our faith and the true meaning of what it is to be Catholic is inspiring. Their ability to engage and teach our students is a gift. This, combined with our strong Religious Education program and the quality of our teaching staff has once again led to our students achieving some amazing results in the Religious Education Assessment this year.

This year, students were once again prepared to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation, Eucharist and Reconciliation in collaboration with the parish. This year, the Very Reverend Fr Vincent Glynn, Episcopal Vicar for Education and Faith Formation presided over the Sacrament of Confirmation at our parish. Father Vincent also came to visit the candidates on their retreat day prior to receiving the Sacrament. For both the Sacrament of Confirmation and Eucharist, Father Tim had our amazing parish choir, which took the Mass to a whole other level. I would also like to

acknowledge our teaching staff involved in preparing the candidates this year (Mrs Sonia Todaro, Miss Kate Ellery and Mrs Donna Speake), as well as Ms Hayley Sheppard for coordinating each of the Sacraments and supporting the teachers and parish.

At St Paul's, we strive to provide experiences and opportunities for staff, students and families to encourage and support each of our faith journeys. Some of the elements that have supported this in 2023 have been:

- A professional development event for staff focused on St Paul.
- Regular celebration of Mass, including whole-school Masses as well as Upper Primary Mass.
- Immersion in various Catholic ceremonies, such as the Stations of the Cross, Benediction, May Crowning, Scapular Mass, etc.
- Delivering Religious Education Programs across all year levels.
- Involvement in daily prayer, class prayer with our priests, retreats and excursions.
- Reinstating our Parish School Masses this year. After suspending these during COVID restrictions, it was great for our community to have these back. The morning teas after Mass worked so well due to the generous support of our parents and were a great way to get the community together.
- A staff reflection day centered around the Eucharist.
- House assemblies to connect with our patrons and school values.
- Raising awareness of different Catholic agencies and donating towards them.
- Attendance at the LifeLink Art Installation at the Cathedral.
- Supporting those in need in our community through the St Vincent de Paul Society Christmas Appeal.

EDUCATION

St Paul's is truly privileged to have such a dedicated team of educators who deliver an exceptional education to all our students. Our staff go above and beyond because of their commitment to our students. One of the gifts of St Paul's is our small community which allows us to know and support each and every student through their educational journey. Our support and enrichment programs help us meet the needs of every child in our care. Our commitment to tracking our students' progress across their time with us to ensure we are helping each individual reach their potential helps us to refine our practice to identify what needs to continue and what needs to be reconsidered. Partnering with parents is an integral part of the way in which we educate our students.

At St Paul's, we strive to provide experiences and opportunities for staff, students and families with the aim of getting the best out of our students as they progress along their learning journeys. Some of the elements that have supported this in 2023 have been:

- A school-wide focus on problem solving in Mathematics. Our work in this area has resulted in a whole-school approach to problem solving and improvement in how we have been able to develop our students' ability to solve problems and think creatively and critically.
- A school-wide focus on Literacy using the CEWA Literacy Framework to head toward an agreed-upon consistent stance on best practice in teaching Literacy at St Paul's.

- A school-wide focus on wellbeing, incorporating learning about and using Character Strengths in classrooms.
- Continued refinement of our support and enrichment programs to best suit the needs of our students and help them reach their potential.
- Refinement of reporting practices and the move to End of Year Reports. Collaboration with another local Catholic school has also been conducted to engage in professional discussions and moderate assessment tasks for consistency of grading.
- Data analysis to identify areas of strength and focus.
- A range of incursions and excursions linked to the curriculum.
- Parent-teacher meetings and Learning Journeys to keep parents informed and connected with student learning.
- Student involvement in a variety of competitions – Interschool Spelling Bee, Speak Up, Change Maker, Maths Olympiad, Italian Competition, Bebras, Interschool Chess, etc.

I am pleased to inform you that St Paul's students have once again scored well above the mean across the different assessments that have been conducted. Below is a snapshot of our school's means against the national means for NAPLAN and the Religious Education Assessment.

This year, the NAPLAN assessments entered a new time series. Five new NAPLAN scales were introduced with each scale representing increasing levels of knowledge and skills in the test domain. Four new proficiency levels for each test domain and each year level were introduced: exceeding, strong, developing and needs additional support. With the new time series, comparison with data from previous years cannot be made. We have needed to look at the data in different ways to identify the value we have added across tests at St Paul's

NAPLAN

READING	St Paul's	National
Year 3	468	404
Year 5	549	496

WRITING	St Paul's	National
Year 3	447	417
Year 5	533	483

GRAMMAR	St Paul's	National
Year 3	467	409
Year 5	570	496

SPELLING	St Paul's	National
Year 3	454	404
Year 5	528	490

NUMERACY	St Paul's	National
Year 3	455	407
Year 5	526	488

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

	St Paul's	CEWA
Year 3	510	402
Year 5	612	466

Detailed analysis of our NAPLAN data as well as data from other assessments administered across the school has been undertaken to identify areas of strength and focus.

I would like to thank all the St Paul's staff for all of their hard work this year in ensuring our students have the best and richest educational opportunities we can give them.

COMMUNITY

The community we have here at St Paul's is an incredible gift and something that draws people in. I often get feedback from new families that it is the small school community that attracts them to St Paul's. We try to create an environment where each member of the community feels connected and that they belong.

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children, so we put strategies in place to build a culture where the school and our parents work closely together. We strive to keep parents informed and involved in their child's education.

At St Paul's, we strive to provide experiences and opportunities for staff, students and families with the intention of continually building a supportive and united community, centred on the best interests of our students. Some of the elements that have supported this in 2023 have been:

- Administering our School Climate Survey. The survey gathered some rich and useful information to obtain a snapshot of the school climate and how different elements compare to when this was previously administered. The people who

ran the survey (NSI Partnerships) reported wonderfully positive data and highlighted truly impressive growth, particularly with our parents/caregivers and middle primary students.

- P&F events throughout the year. Our incredibly generous and active P&F have run many events throughout the year that have helped foster a sense of community eg. Welcome Picnic, Mother's Day and Father's Day events, disco, Quiz Night and Gin Fundraiser, etc.
- Exciting partnership with Perth Glory. This year saw us begin a first-of-its-kind in a primary school program with Perth Glory. Our Year 4-6 students had the unique opportunity to participate in a program that involved on-field sessions with Perth Glory players and coaches, as well as in-class sessions to learn from the players about different elements of being an athlete and part of a team.
- Continued focus on ensuring familiarity and compliance with our Code of Conduct, CEWA's Child Safe Framework and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- A focus on wellbeing across the school, including school-wide work on Character Strengths.
- A focus on empowering everyone to be a part of creating a warm and welcoming environment at St Paul's.
- Numerous extra-curricular programs, such as before-school soccer, after-school tennis, Chess Club, Catholic Performing Arts (liturgical dance, choir and band), Lego Club, community outreach initiative making blankets for those in need, surfing, etc.
- Whole school events, including feast day, Early Childhood Mother's and Father's Day events, etc.
- Parish School Masses and morning teas.
- Leadership opportunities for all Year 6 students.
- St Paul's representation in a variety of external sporting competitions eg. State Swimming, Bruce Cup National Tennis, Primary Champion Schools Triathlon, etc.

STEWARDSHIP

We commit to stewardship as a fundamental dimension of Christianity that implements the social teaching of the Catholic Church. We recognise that everything we have and everything we are is a gift from God so we are thankful for and generous with these gifts.

At St Paul's, we strive to provide experiences and opportunities for staff, students and families to support us on our journey as good stewards. Some of the elements that have supported this in 2023 have been:

- Our building project this year is seeing the redevelopment of the outdoor space outside the toilets, a brand new learning space for Art and Science, a new outdoor learning terrace, refurbished Year 4-6 classrooms with a new flexible breakout space, alterations to the downstairs classroom to allow more light and air, a new communications room, etc. My thanks go to the community for your patience this year as we have undertaken this build. Building in the middle of a small site while the school continues to function has seen its challenges. I

also acknowledge Yvonne Liebeck as it was her vision and work prior to the build starting that made this project possible.

- Redesigning and redeveloping the Early Childhood playground, including a new bike path, playground equipment, cubby and shed. I'd also like to acknowledge the generous support of our P&F and a grant received through Patrick Gorman that made this project possible.
- Working closely with the City of Stirling to have much needed new turf installed for our grass area.
- Developing a maintenance plan and addressing some of the maintenance issues.
- Student retention in the upper years. This year, we have worked hard with the support of the School Advisory Council to gather feedback from parents about what they are looking for in the upper primary experience at St Paul's. We have conducted an information session to highlight the invaluable opportunities and key elements that make St Paul's the school of choice for upper primary. We have also identified different initiatives to promote student retention and begun implementing these.
- Having Numeracy, Literacy and Wellbeing coordinators in the school to help lead and implement relevant development and strategies across the school.
- Ensuring our finances are managed effectively and comprehensively through adhering to policies, procedures and audits.
- Close collaboration with our School Advisory Council and P&F to support the present and future needs of the school.

FOCUS AREAS FOR 2024

Next year, St Paul's is due to have a new strategic plan developed. This will involve gathering information and perspectives from various stakeholders and identifying the areas of focus for the next few years. Some focus areas will continue from the current plan into the new one and other focus areas will be added.

Some of the possible focus areas for 2024 are expected to be:

Catholic Identity

- Continuing to build on our strong link with and involvement in the parish.
- Focusing on how we can best show our commitment to the poor and marginalized.

Education

- Continuing our work with refining our whole-school stance and approach to teaching elements of Literacy.
- Continuing to refine feedback on student learning and assessment.

Community

- Continue to refine opportunities for connection within the St Paul's community.
- Continue partnerships with organisations to offer opportunities to our students.

Stewardship

- Continued focus on developing the school's profile and retention of students in

the upper years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank the St Paul's community and all the families that make up that community. Our community is truly a gift and the generous support of our parents significantly contributes to this. The strong partnerships forged within our community enable us to offer amazing opportunities and an environment that people feel at home in and belong to.

Teaching as a profession is an incredibly demanding vocation that requires a huge commitment and has an impact on many other elements of life. At St Paul's, we are privileged to have very dedicated and skilled staff who go above and beyond and I would like to thank each and every one of them. We would not be able to offer all the additional opportunities and events that we do without their generous support. Their commitment and skill certainly don't go unnoticed as they consistently place the needs of our students above all else. I encourage you to go out of your way to share your gratitude with our staff as this year comes to a close. We acknowledge the immense trust that our parents put in our staff as you leave your children in our care.

I would like to express my immense appreciation and thanks to Hayley Sheppard for her invaluable support throughout the year. Having Hayley's expertise, support and presence on the leadership team this year has been a gift. Hayley's contribution to the school and our community has left a positive impact. We wish her every success as she moves on from St Paul's.

One of the things that has made my job so enjoyable this year is the office team that I have had the privilege of working with. Rose Williams and Amy Gardiner as our Administration Officers, as well as Prelean Bismark as our Finance Manager, create such a welcoming environment for everyone who enters the office and provide such amazing support for me. I would like to thank them for all that they do for our school.

It is with much gratitude that I acknowledge the St Paul's staff who will be leaving us at the end of the year – Neil Hamilton-Browne, Morena Bonotto, Cheryl Brown, Prelean Bismark and Hayley Sheppard. Each one of these people have been valued members of our team here at St Paul's and a blessing to our school. We wish them every success and happiness with where life takes them from here and will take further opportunities as the year closes to farewell them.

I would also like to acknowledge Yvonne Liebeck who has been on leave this year, however, officially retires at the end of the year. Yvonne brought such a great pastoral presence to the school and implemented many initiatives while she was here. The very building project that has been happening this year is because of Yvonne's vision and hard work in getting it to the point of the build going ahead. We wish Yvonne all the best in her retirement.

I would personally like to thank all the members of our School Advisory Council this year who have so generously given their time, skill and expertise to support me as Principal. They have brought the voice of the community to the school and assisted in strategy and planning for our school. Their generosity has meant that we have

achieved so much this year, so thank you! I would like to particularly acknowledge Carla Chatzopoulos for her fantastic leadership as Chair of the council this year. I would also like to acknowledge Louise Johnson and Carla Morris-Luck who are stepping down from the council after their significant contribution and time on the council.

Our thanks and appreciation also go to our P&F for their impressive efforts to not only fundraise for our school but also to build community. I particularly thank Junior Soliano and Brad Geatches who make up our executive, but also all our class reps and people who gave their time to attend meetings and volunteer to help organise events. I acknowledge that all of this puts extra demand on your families and energy levels so thank you! Your contribution to making St Paul's such a special place is much appreciated.

Having such strong community involvement here at St Paul's means there are so many other people who cannot be individually named whose support makes St Paul's what it is, so thank you all!

CLOSING

As you can see, St Paul's constantly strives for excellence and endeavours to provide so many rich and varied opportunities for all in our community. It is important as we come to the end of the year to take time for ourselves and our families. I encourage you to take the time to stand back and ensure God is at the centre of everything you do.

As I move onto my next adventure, I would like to sincerely thank the community for your acceptance and support of me as I have taken on the role of Principal. I believe God places us where He needs us to be and I am thankful that He has brought this community into my life. I am excited about what the future holds for my family and I.

Thank you for a fantastic year and I look forward to hearing about what 2024 holds.

Pete Merry
Principal