

Principal's AGM Report



St Joseph's School
TRAMMERE

COVID 19

As I reflected on the year 2020, it is hard not to describe it as unprecedented. 2020 had great promise. The school was starting the new year with a special project, called the eastern star program. Much of 2019 had been used to prepare and plan across the 5 primary cluster schools for this program to be launched in 2020. Little did we know that an announcement on Wednesday 11 March (Week 7 of Term 1) by the World Health Organisation, declaring a pandemic was the beginning of lockdowns and border closures across the world this would create a year like no other. Our focus changed and there was a real need to prepare for the start of e-learning or online learning. At the end of the term staff had to quickly adapt and take on approach to teaching and learning one without their students being present, face to face, instead screen to screen.

This meant schools across SA were closed before the end of term 1 for 4 days to allowed teachers to prepare and plan the for delivery of e-learning for all our students starting first day back in Term 2. This period of time was very stressful for all staff and our families. Leadership work hard to develop an e-learning platform and program to be rolled out immediately. Teachers quickly learned about MS Teams, SeeSaw and the use of Zoom. This provided a strong collegial approach and I was extremely proud of the way everyone supported each other during this uncharted period in time. The school was set up to accommodate students who were unable to work from home remotely. This would be the way classes needed to be setup by providing physical distancing and an individual space for students to manage their own online learning. Staff would then be rostered on to supervise, while other teachers worked either from home or in their own classroom. The holidays provided time for teachers to prepare and be ready for this new approach.

However, within the first week of our return we had 95% of our students back at school. Overall, e-learning lasted a few weeks and by the end of week 3 - 99% of the students had returned to class and face to face learning.

One of the main differences in 2020 was that no parents, volunteers or services were allowed to enter the school grounds and all events and social gatherings were to be cancelled. This lasted a majority of 2020, creating very minimal activities and events for families to come to school and be in community with us.

Star Program

We had spent a great deal of time in 2019 preparing for the launch of the Eastern Star Project. The 5 catholic primary schools in the eastern area, were selected by CESA as centres of excellence to deliver new, rigorous and benchmark programs, in Literacy, Numeracy and Wellbeing. The star program has demonstrated the commitment of the cluster schools to work together to ensure every child thrives academically, socially, spiritually and emotionally. Key to the program has been the appointment of Star Coaches to mentor and guide teachers on contemporary teaching research and best practice.

Our school in 2020, appointed the services of Linda Clune. She is a registered teacher with over 20 years' experience working with primary school aged children. Linda's practice is based on Dyslexia Solutions and Structured Multi-Sensory Literacy. She has introduced a highly sequenced, cumulative, synthetic phonics-based methodology to our teachers as she works across the school with all staff to improve our reading, writing and spelling skills for high impact teaching. 2020 saw a year of high end PD for teachers as they were able to be released to work one on one with Linda and observe her modelling the program. This approach has allowed the school to develop whole school shared agreements and provided a common language of learning for all our students as they progress through the school years.

We also managed to obtain the services of Lisa-Jane O'Connor as a Numeracy coach. Lisa Jane is the president of the Primary Maths Association in SA and has work with the 5 schools in 2020 and will continue in 2021 She worked closely with the coaches as well as 2 champion teachers from each school to closely develop a new and improved inquiry approached to Numeracy. Lisa-Jane is also working with staff as they dive deeper in to developing a improved understanding of the maths curriculum to obtain a better understanding of base 10 and the literacy of mathematics.

Master Plan

During 2020 the Final Master Plan was officially completed by Grieve Gillett Andersen GGA along with WAX Landscape Design. The comprehensive process took around 18 months to complete with the final result being a 3 staged building program to include short-term, medium-term and long-term projects

GGA carried out a series of workshops with different stakeholders, which included the Parish, as well as facilitating feedback and discussion sessions with the school community. Once establishing the core issues to be addressed in the master plan, Wax design contributed to the final workshops as landscape consultants.



Architectural rendering of the Parish Hall
St Joseph's Trannere Playspace



WAX Design Concept Plan

Part of the master plan was looking at potential land acquisition sites. The school focuses on land to the north and west of the school. This process involved registering the land and late in 2020 the opportunity to purchase 9 Birkinshaw Ave occurred. The settlement of the property would be early in 2021 and has now become a future project for the school to build a multi-sports space in the bottom yard to include a new hard play surface for netball and basketball as well as a larger grassed soccer pitch. The total area increase for the school will be 850 square metres.

During 2020, the school leadership team put in an expression of interest for a commonwealth capital grant. It was pleasing to see that we were partially successful with the school securing a grant of \$500,000 to contribute to stage

one of the master plan. The original application request was for 1.3 Million.

During the year, the school engaged GGA to work on developing the short-term project. This project would include: refurbishing the parish hall, our OSHC space, design a new adventure play space, demolish the existing kitchen and make good the parish hall as well as create new entrances to the school grounds from Magill Rd and Birkinshaw Ave. The aim of the project would be to start in 2021, which is part of the requirements for the government grant.

Staffing

In 2020 we saw a lot of staff changes. Many happened during the year and at the end of 2020. This included two staff members retiring, Frank Colagrossi (28 Years) and Cynthia Thompson our APRIM (11 Years) . We also had two staff members resigned from Catholic Education to take up positions in the Department, including Scott Perry (8 Years) and Michelle Bennett (7

Years). We farewelled these staff members and thanked them for their commitment and service to the school community over the years.

Thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the school community, the school board, students and especially staff for the way we all navigated through 2020. I would like to thank in particular Tanya Barrett (Director of Learning) for all her support and leadership, especially when we didn't have Janet Price our Business Manager (OS for 3 months) and Cynthia Thompson (3 months for sick leave). It was no doubt one of the most challenging periods that I can recall. It was so pleasing to see how we managed through each issue, worked successfully to solve issues and continued to be agile and flexible in all the decisions that needed to be made, sometimes immediately.

I would like to thank Fr Roy and the parish team for their support during this difficult year and look forward to working more closely with them in 2021

As hard as it was, I felt we have come through this period with a lot more resilience and a better understanding on how we can use technology to assist with our learning. I hope we can work through 2021 and make it a great year for our school. 2020 would certainly be a year to lock away and now look forward to the future.

We have many new and exciting programs to deliver and we are all especially excited by seeing the master plan start to take shape and come a reality.

Adrian Grbin

Principal of St Joseph's School, Tranmere