



PRINCIPAL REPORT TO
St THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
COMMUNITY MEETING
NOVEMBER 2017



St Thomas More
Catholic Primary
School
Vision Statement

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a community growing together in faith where children are offered opportunities to know and to love Jesus, to seek wisdom and to develop respect for the rights and dignity of all.

Good evening everyone and thank you so much for making the time to come along, amidst the busyness of family life and after a long work day.

As our Board Chairperson Pat has described, while we certainly celebrate the wonderful community here at STMCPs and the opportunities that it affords us as part of our teaching and learning here, in the final analysis our work here is of course part of something much, much bigger.

It pays to remind ourselves that amidst the joys and sorrows of our everyday lives, amidst the busyness and activity of school life God sits at the very centre of it all and if we can individually and collectively continue to learn to trust in Him, then everything else has a way of falling into place and our path ahead becomes clear... As a Catholic school we are called to be a community that serves one another both within our school and outside our school community as well. This idea of sitting at the feet of another and serving, is a powerful challenge to us all but one nonetheless that lies at the heart of what it means to be a Christian person in an authentic Catholic school. It has been such a privilege to work alongside so many people, children, staff and families who have embraced this idea of Christian service in our school ... with little fuss and fanfare but with genuine compassion, care and generosity.

At this end of the year it is good to take a moment to look back and to celebrate it all... the successes, the challenges, the learning, the relationships, the questions, the quality conversations, the robust discussions, the decisions, the opportunities for growth and so much more. Teaching and parenting is of course, a privileged, sacred trust and it is very clear that the closer we can work together, the more fruitful the opportunities for each and every child continue to be in our school.

A sincere thank you to all of our school families for your ongoing support of children, staff and the Leadership team throughout the year. Family life, as we all know, is busy and at times very demanding, however, we hope St Thomas More will continue to be a place where you can enjoy good support, quality relationships, and multiple opportunities that support your children to thrive and flourish.

As a school we are committed to providing excellence in learning through the provision of best practice in curriculum, differentiated and data informed and influenced learning programmes and a continued commitment to school improvement.

Our Annual School Improvement Plan targets the areas of LEARNING, ENGAGEMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY and DISCIPLESHIP. We have made improvements in these areas and can be well pleased with the improvement gained through this strategic plan.

Our Learning Goal this year focussed upon improving Teaching and Learning across the whole school in the area of writing. Part of this was to have all students in PP – Year 6 to have been assessed and shown progress against the BRIGHTPATHS Criteria. I am happy to be able to say that we have achieved this goal across our school. In school results, and standardised testing show that the teaching and learning with regard to writing have improved across the school. We achieved scores well above the National Mean in Writing in the NAPLAN Tests. We will continue with the Writing Focus in 2018 to ensure consolidation of the learning and continue to work on a consistent approach across the school with regard to the teaching of writing.

The Engagement focus has been on the continued support of the 0-6yo playgroup program, which continues to be a success. We have more than 10 families who regularly attend. We are looking at ways of expanding the playgroup program into the future, with hopefully at least one more session being trialled in 2018. The school has continued to work on looking at creative ways of using the school capital resources (buildings) in ways that will enhance our whole learning program. This has been done across the year on many levels, staff, student, parent, School Board, P&F. Whereas no definite plans have been put into place, many ideas have been thrown around with regard to using our space in the best ways that we can.

The School Improvement Goal with regard to accountability has to with improved communication across our school and also to continue to promote a consistent message on what is happening within our school. We have instigated LEARNING WALKS within the school, where teachers are released from their class for a period of time to go and observe specific lessons in other classes. This allows teachers to learn from each other, provide relevant feedback to each other and to enhance a positive trusting relationship with their colleagues. These Learning Walks will continue in 2018.

Our goal with regard to discipleship has been to continue to develop the positive relationship between the school and our parish. The School has been working on ways that we can try to have more of our families engage with the parish. A lot harder and more complex than it sounds. We are, and will continue to work closely with Fr Mars to find ways that we can continue to enhance our relationship with the parish and have more of our students engage develop their faith.

- Our school NAPLAN results this year were most pleasing, with sound results being shown by our year 3 class and the year 5's. We have very few students who are at or below the minimum standard in any of the 5 assessment areas. We are working as a staff to interrogate, not only our NAPLAN Data, but many other forms of Data that exists within our school to drive a Learning Program that caters for all students. We have seen our students grow (academically) at a better than expected rate in many cases, and are, looking at ways to explain this so that we can continue to develop our Teaching and Learning Program. All classes have done very well as cohorts in the very recent standardised testing that we complete to help inform the end of year formal report. Our continued whole school curriculum focus on writing in 2018 should see us continue to improve in the National Assessment Program where we are currently well above National Means in year 3 and 5.

Students Learning will be maximised when they learn in an environment where high standards are expected and accepted. Over the period of the last few years, as a school, we have lifted what we expect from the kids, and also what we will accept from them. We do have high standards of behaviour, manners and respect here at St Thomas More. It was great to have the input of all key stakeholders, staff, parents and students in the update and review of the St Thomas More Behaviour Management Policy, which, through this process became, the STM CPS Positive Behaviour Policy. The BUZ Program, which in the past has been presented by non teachers from Nutureworks, has been adopted by the staff and taught on an as needs basis, and integrated into lessons everyday. We believe that this has been a positive in our school with regard to the Social and Emotional growth of our school community.

We are most fortunate to have such a supportive parent body, in particular our two parent organisations in our Parents and Friends Association and our School Board.

Our School Board continues to provide outstanding leadership and development for the school. I believe our school demonstrates best practice in the synergy that is promoted between our School Board under the Chairmanship of Pat Moran, along with Sharyn Bucat, Kirstie Kitis, Liam Smith, Joel Lawrance, Maureen Harrison, Louise Sheridan and Amber Fairbrass and our P&F Rep, Lynda Byrne. Fr Mars, Karien, Mike O are the School based members of the School Board, with whom the school could not do without. Without people like this our school simply would not function, let alone be the great place that it is today. The unique learning and teaching environment that is present in our school doesn't just happen. It is due to the commitment, support and outstanding work provided by the school board. Thank you all. I would like to acknowledge and thank Kirsite Kitis who, after 3 years of

service to our school board, has decided to step down. Kirstie has been a wealth of knowledge, ideas and provided great support to the school board, myself as principal and our school community in general. Thank you Kirstie.

Our P&F Association under the Leadership of Sonia Kenyon and Jen Murphy have been a wonderful support to our school community. Along with Nat Bell and Aoife Cosby, the P&F executive have raised huge amounts of money again this year to help our students and teachers with resources both inside and outside the classroom, that are over and above what the school budget will allow. Thank you to Lynda Byrne who completes her 1 year term as the P&F Representative on the School Board.

I believe that Jen and Sonia are standing down from their positions on the P&F Executive. Thank you so much for all the extras you have provided to our school community in your roles over the past years. I am extremely grateful and appreciative of the work the P&F has undertaken under both your guidance. I look forward to working closely with the new P&F chair or chairs and am sure that the wonderful work undertaken by Sonia and Jen will continue well into the future.

The School Leadership Group, including the School Board are continuing to explore ways in which we can continue to offer effective, enjoyable and relevant learning programs into the school, into the future. We are confident that we will be able to maintain the current specialist programs, Music, Art, IT, Phys Ed, and LOTE, that many single stream schools simply do not have operating with specialist staff.

Please continue to support our P&F and School Board in the many tasks they undertake to maximise the facilities and learning potential of each child, and I thank you all on behalf of the staff.

My sincerest Thanks and Appreciation goes out to the whole STM CPS staff. Every role fulfilled here at the school is essential to our school's success and I feel honoured to be a part of this dedicated group, no matter what role they perform at St Thomas More.

We are fortunate to have such professional office staff in our Admin/Finance Officer, Karien Rollinger, and her Admin Assistant, Rita Willmott, who ensure our office administration operates at such a high level of efficiency.

A special Thanks to Mr Michael O'Brien, who works exceptionally hard in his role the Assistant Principal, coupled with the Religious Education Coordinator and the Phys Ed Teacher.

Next year, we welcome a new assistant principal to our school. With full support of the school board, we have employed an outstanding candidate, in Mrs Nicolle Achmad. Nicolle joins us from Notre Dame Catholic Primary School in Perth and will be a valued addition to our school staff and with her family, a wonderful addition to our school community. We look forward to welcoming Nicolle and her family in 2018.

Thank you also to Terri Ross and Nicole Teague who have taken on extra responsibilities this year on top of their classroom teaching. Terri and Nicole have been our Curriculum Leaders and been great support to the staff, but to me especially. We have two excellent curriculum leaders who are well and truly respected and driving our school learning program to be the best that it can possibly be. I look forward to both Nicole and Terri continuing in their roles in 2018.

Our Sacramental Programmes are an important part of our school priorities. Once again, we have joyfully celebrated Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. Thank you to Fr Mars, staff, parents, students and parish for working as a team to enable our students to take this important step in their faith formation. As I said earlier, one of our School Improvement goals this year, and will continue, is to enhance the relationship between the school and parish. Thank you again to Fr Mars for being so willing to allow us to try new and sometimes different things.

St Thomas More has continued to FLOURISH with the composition of all the students and families that make up and bring joy to our school community. We have recognised that to FLOURISH is the number one wish of all in our school community and have designed our school core values of FAITH, LOVE, OPPORTUNITY, UNDERSTANDING, RESPECT, INCLUSIVITY, SERVICE and HONESTY with this in mind. As the Principal, I wish to have a flourishing community, students, parents and staff. I do believe we are doing a great job of this currently.

Finally, to all parents, for their support and involvement in the school, thank you very much. As I have previously mentioned we are very fortunate at Saint Thomas More to have such dedicated and positive support from our parent body. I would also like to especially thank your children, for their many unique and special gifts they bring and share in our school.

I would like to wish you all the best for the festive season and the new year and look forward to working with you all again in 2018.

THANK YOU,

MARTIN MAJOR PRINCIPAL.