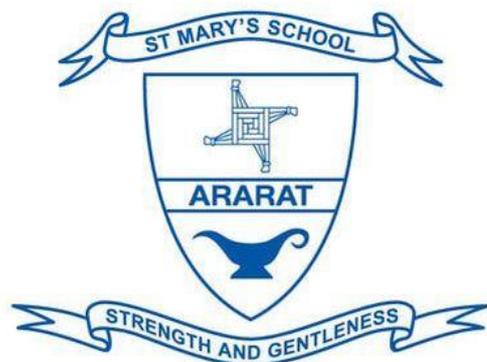


# ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

**St Mary's Parish Primary School**  
ARARAT

2020



REGISTERED SCHOOL NUMBER: 594



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## Contact Details

|                                      |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
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| <b>E NUMBER</b>                      | E2028                              |

## Minimum Standards Attestation

I, William Hill, attest that St Mary's Parish Primary School 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 2019 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 School.

March 2021

## Our School Vision

### ST MARY'S PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

- *St Mary's is a Catholic school community inspired by the Gospel, and in the spirit of the Brigidine tradition, we are committed to **learning for all, fairness for all and compassion for all.***

### ST MARY'S PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENTS

#### **Catholic School Culture**

- *We are inspired by Christ and our Catholic faith tradition to respond to the challenges of the Gospel in our world today.*
- *We are called to be the presence of Christ for one another and act for social justice with strength and gentleness.*

#### **Community Engagement**

- *We welcome all people in the Brigidine tradition of inclusiveness and belonging.*
- *We engage in meaningful and collaborative relationships with all members of our community to ensure the best outcomes for all.*

#### **Leadership and Stewardship**

- *We empower all to contribute positively to our world and be stewards of all God's creation.*
- *We embed a culture of collaboration with purpose and clarity to ensure high levels of learning for all.*

#### **Learning and Teaching**

- *We cultivate a passion for learning by inspiring and challenging each other.*
- *We engage and support learners at their point of need to ensure that all learners can reach their full potential.*

#### **Wellbeing**

- *We create a safe, inclusive environment that celebrates effort and achievement and promotes dignity and fullness of life for all.*
- *We identify, respect and celebrate the unique gifts of all people to nurture their wellbeing.*

## School Overview

St Mary's Parish Primary School is a Catholic co-educational school in the rural town of Ararat in the Western District of Victoria. The school is an integral part of the St Mary's Parish community and enjoys a close relationship with Marian College as our local Catholic secondary school, a school to which most students transfer once they have completed their primary education.

The origins of the school date from 1863 and from 1889 the school was led by the Brigidine Sisters. The current school, on the Moore Street site, was opened in 1963 and major additions took place in the 1990's and a result of the Commonwealth Government BER grant in 2011.

Presently the school has 132 students from 93 families. The majority of the students live in the Ararat town area itself through approximately a quarter of the student population live in the rural areas surrounding Ararat. A high proportion of the student population were born in Australia and come from homes where the primary language spoken at home is English. 4% of the school population speak a language other than English at home. A quarter of the students come from non-nuclear families; either sole parent, step-families or blended families. The school has high proportion of families from the lower socio-economic strata; the average SES is 89. Most of our parents have completed some form of post-compulsory education.

The School Improvement Plan for 2019-2023 stated the following priorities:

1. Exploring, shaping and articulating our evolving identity as a Catholic School Community.
2. Actively seeking collaborative and engaging partnerships with parents, carers, parish and the wider community to optimise learning and wellbeing.
3. Embedding the Professional Learning Community framework to drive learning, engagement and highly effective instructional practice for improved student learning and wellbeing.

To achieve these goals, the following **key improvement strategies** were identified:

### **PRIORITY ONE: *Catholic Identity***

1. Developing clearly stated Vision and Mission statements that are understood and shared by the school community and used as the foundation to guide decisions made by the school.
2. Explore, shape and articulate our identity as a Catholic school community in a way which engages staff, students and parents in dialogue with the Catholic tradition.
3. Facilitate the involvement and presence of the Parish Priest and the parish within the school community and our involvement with the Church.

**PRIORITY TWO: *Community Engagement***

1. Development of a productive and collaborative partnership with parents and carers to optimise learning and wellbeing.
2. Ongoing education of parents and staff in the intent of Child Safe practices and procedures.
3. Staff and school leaders take personal and collective responsibility for strengthening consistency of practice, trust and shared vision within staff to improve learning and wellbeing.
4. Development and implementation of a whole-school approach to Social and Emotional Learning.
5. Development of consistent understandings and practices for behaviour management.

**PRIORITY THREE: *Learning & Teaching***

1. Embed Professional Learning Community practices across the school to improve student learning and wellbeing.
2. Develop a clear and consistent school-wide approach to learning and teaching based on evidenced-based practices.
3. Embed the practices of Rtl across the school including consistent Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention strategies and structures for students of all abilities.
4. Active engagement of students in their learning and development of tools for measuring this engagement.
5. Build an effective and sustainable shared leadership model with opportunity for strengthening professional capability.

The **Annual Action Plan 2021** stated as its goals as:

**CATHOLIC IDENTITY:**

- Develop rich, student-centred liturgical practices that consider a dialogical and recontextualised perspectives

**LEARNING & TEACHING:**

- Embed the Professional Learning Community framework to drive learning, engagement and highly effective instructional practice for improved student learning and wellbeing.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

- Collaborative and engage partnerships with families, parish and the wider community to optimise learning and wellbeing.

## Principal's Report

This year has been a year like no other. The two long periods of remote learning and the restrictions enforced on schools due to the pandemic had a significant impact on our ability to address the priorities identified in our 2020 Annual Action Plan. As a school, we have had to be mindful of the wellbeing of both students and staff during a very difficult and challenging year and this has meant that we have often had to place a focus on areas and goals other than those that were developed in our Annual Action Plan.

During 2020 we had planned to place a focus on continuing to developing the priority areas identified in our 2019 - 2023 School Improvement Plan, specifically those that were elaborated in our 2020 Annual Action Plan. Early in the year, we continued to reflect on the revised Vision and Mission statements, developed at the end of 2018, to make sure we have a shared understanding of these and they continue to be reflected in our practice.

One of the priority areas identified in our 2020 Annual Action Plan was to improve on our teaching in English through the introduction of the OLSAL initiative (Oral Language Supporting All Learners). Led by our Learning Community Leaders and supported by Learning and Teaching consultants, our staff engaged in two days of professional development to build their understanding of OLSAL and how this might be effectively implemented in their Learning Community. One of the benefits of introducing OLSAL is that it has supported our efforts to improve our consistency in practice across the school as identified as one of the recommendations of the 2018 School Review.

In addition to the introduction of OLSAL, we have continued to embed the use of *bump-it-up walls* in each of our classrooms and the use of the writing *Essential Learnings* document for writing which identifies the key areas we guarantee will be taught to students from Foundation to Year Six. Given the COVID-19 restrictions, NAPLAN did not take place this year and our data is therefore determined from any assessments completed by Learning Communities and from the PAT assessments that were completed late in 2020. It is likely that with the extended period away from school that our students might not have made significant improvement in some of the key priority areas we had previously identified.

Our Learning Communities have continued to meet twice weekly to analyse a range of data sources, monitor the progress of every child and plan learning activities relevant to their needs. This has worked towards the achievement of our protocol, *'flexible use of staff, flexible use of space, flexible use of resources, flexible learning'*.

The COVID-19 restrictions have had a significant impact on our efforts to build on the Catholic Identity of the school. Given that we have been unable to hold gatherings of students beyond one class, we have not had the opportunity to organise whole school prayer and liturgies for much of the year. In addition, the restrictions and periods of remote learning directly impacted on our goals of further implementing the *Godly Play* strategy to support the teaching of Religious Education or to engage in Social Justice Initiatives.

Likewise, our Community Engagement focus has been negatively impacted by the COVID restrictions. These prevented us from continuing the work we started with community engagement consultant Tony Dalton beyond Term One. The period of remote learning did have some unintended but positive developments as it pushed us to build on our use of communication tools such as Seesaw, Facebook and video conferencing to engage with parents. Certainly, the level of communication between home and school has improved this year as staff have needed to communicate with parents more frequently to identify the progress their child is making and address any concerns concerning their wellbeing.

That being said, the restrictions have prevented us from having parents on-site and actively promoting increased levels of parent participation and engagement in the life and development of the school community. It will remain an important future goal to get more parents to come into school, volunteer their time and gain a better understanding of how the learning works at St Mary's.

2021 will mark a period of significant change in the development of St Mary's, particularly in relation to the leadership of the school. One of our Deputy Principal's, Chris McAloon has left to become the Principal of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Stawell, while the other, Christine Bulger, will be taking on the role of a Religious Education Learning Consultant at the Catholic Education Office, Ballarat.

This year will mark my last year as Principal of St Mary's as I move into a new role of the foundation Principal of St Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic Primary School in Melton South. A new Principal, Ms Roxanne Leed, currently the Deputy Principal at St Alipius Parish School in Ballarat will take on the role of Principal in 2021. I have no doubt that she will be a great asset to this school community as it seeks to continue its ongoing development and goal of becoming a great Catholic school.

We strive to be a welcoming and inclusive community, one that values and celebrates the many and varied talents that each member of the community contributes to the development of our school. We recognise that we must continue to build on the progress we have made whilst also addressing those challenges that require further attention. The school community has seen much transformation over the last few years and this will be the case during 2021 given the change in leadership. That said, the school community is supported by a skilled and dedicated staff group and an engaged and supportive School Advisory Council who are keen to be actively involved in the life of the school. I hope that with a more settled and normalised year next year, the school will continue to develop and improve so that we set all the students at St Mary's up for future success and after three years, I wish this great school community all the best for the future.

Bill Hill  
**PRINCIPAL**

## Catholic School Culture

### PRIORITY 1:

***Exploring, shaping and articulating our evolving identity as a Catholic School Community.***

### ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Learning & Teaching:

- Continued implementation of the Godly Play strategy in the school. Intensive training in Godly Play to support the implementation of the strategy across the school.
- Implementation of the new diocesan Relationships and Sexuality social-emotional learning program
- Professional development for teaching staff in the new diocesan Relationships and Sexuality program

### VALUE ADDED

#### 2020

#### **Continued focus on Prayer Life at St. Mary's (Term One):**

Weekly Whole School Prayer (teacher-led)  
 Mass to celebrate the beginning of School Year  
 Ash Wednesday liturgy and Mass  
 Learning Community masses

#### **Social Justice / Fundraising:**

School Community actively supporting Caritas - Project Compassion  
 Mission Day Walk & liturgy for Mission day  
 Immersion in online / student resources

#### **Religious Education:**

Development of Godly Play strategy  
 REL - Cluster meetings  
 Continued formation of beginning/graduate staff

## Community Engagement

### PRIORITY 2:

***- Actively seeking collaborative and engaging partnerships with parents, carers, parish and the wider community to optimise learning and wellbeing.***

### Achievements

- Maintained regular and effective communication within the school community
  - school newsletter, Facebook page & SkoolBag App
  - SMS notification system
  - Introduction of PAM (Parent Access Module - part of the SIMON program) to support communication and the transfer of documents between the school and parents
  - Completion of plans to introduce **SchoolZine** in 2021 to support the redevelopment of the school newsletter and a new school website.
  - Seesaw
  - parent/teacher video conferences
- New school handbook for prospective parents
- Maintained links with the parish community
- Maintained and developed effective and functional School Advisory Council with significant membership of school community parents. This year will see a number of new parents join this community for 2021
- Provided an Annual Report to the Community
- Redeveloped promotional and enrolment resources and materials particularly in the light of COVID-19 restrictions
- Staff professional learning with external consultant (Tony Dalton) on improving our community engagement (Term One)

## Leadership & Stewardship

### Achievements

We have continued to develop and refine Leadership structure during 2020, focussing on building improved levels of clarity into the different roles of Leadership that exist at St Mary's. Throughout the year, we worked hard to develop greater consistency through regular Learning Community Leaders meetings though the COVID restrictions have a significant and negative impact on ability to sustain and develop our shared leadership model of practice.

2020 has again presented significant challenges due to major changes in staff. One of our Deputy Principals left his role at the end of Term Three to take on a Principal position in another Catholic school and at the end of the year, our other Deputy Principal will be leaving to take up a role with the Catholic Education Office, Ballarat. The change in staff presented created some challenging decisions concerning the stewardship of our school and the appropriate staff structures. A collaborative approach helped to develop a staffing plan to address our budgetary challenges whilst maintaining a focus on embedding our PLC framework.

Throughout the year, the Leadership Team met regularly to reflect on areas for future growth. We worked collaboratively to embed the PLC framework within the school and develop this to fit the context of our school.

| <b>EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING</b>   |        |
|---|--------|
| <b>DESCRIPTION OF PL UNDERTAKEN IN 2020</b>   |        |
| OLSAL PD<br>Digital Education Professional Development<br>Visual Arts PD<br>NAPLAN VCAA Training<br>First Aid Training/Anaphylaxis/Cystic Fibrosis<br>Religious Education Conference<br>Godly play PD<br>Country Diocese Leadership Program<br>Classroom Behaviour PD<br>Bike Ed PD<br>Principal PD |        |
| <b>NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL in 2019</b>  | 17     |
| <b>AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL</b>   | \$xxxx |

## Learning & Teaching

### **PRIORITY 3:**

- Embedding the Professional Learning Community framework to drive learning, engagement and highly effective instructional practice for improved student learning and wellbeing.

### **Achievements**

#### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Due to COVID-19 Restrictions, NAPLAN Assessments were not completed during 2020**

## Wellbeing

### Achievements

St Mary's continued to promote the wellbeing of students, staff and parents. During 2020 we continued to benefit from having a school counsellor, provided through Centacare, who worked one day a week supporting children requiring additional levels of assistance. This was a positive development and helped a number of our students though due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the level of support that was available to students for much of the year was severely curtailed.

We continued to develop the role of our Wellbeing and Community Engagement Leader. Their focus was in the area of community engagement however, they were also able to provide targeted support to students as required.

There were also a variety of opportunities for children at playtime. Once a week our Visual Arts specialist ran a Visual Art program for children and the library being opened on certain days during the week at playtime, there were numerous opportunities for students who needed different options at playtime.

Staff wellbeing was an important focus and there were numerous opportunities for staff to engage with each other both in and outside of school time. At the beginning of every weekly Learning and Teaching meeting time was dedicated to building the wellbeing of staff and helping them get to better know their colleagues beyond their worklife.

**VALUE ADDED**

School counsellor  
 Continued development of Adventure play area  
 Supervised library program during recess  
 School leaders  
 Student buddies  
 Weekly shared lunches (Term One)  
 Visual Arts club

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

- Attendance roll marked twice daily (9.10am & 12.00pm) by all classroom teachers using SIMON and hard copy. Hard copy kept in classroom for Emergency management procedures
- Rolls collated twice daily admin officer and entered onto SAS.
- Summary absence data for the semester sent home with school reports
- Principal followed up with parents in relation to persistence unexplained absences.
- Principal and teachers to create targeted plan in collaboration with parents to support students who have had significant absences from school in order to address issues of attendance

| <b>AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL</b> | <b>%</b> |
|--|----------|
| Y01  |          |
| Y02  |          |
| Y03  |          |
| Y04  |          |
| Y05  |          |
| Y06  |          |
| Overall average attendance                           |          |

## Child Safe Standards

### Achievements

- All staff, the School Advisory Council members are expected to read and signed St Mary's Parish Primary School Code of Conduct.
- The St Mary's Parish Primary School Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct are available on our website.
- All classrooms have student-friendly posters on Child Safety.
- All visitors to the school must sign the Code of Conduct, provide a copy of a VIT/WWCC card and proof of identity. The school has a new sign-in process that updates our visitor records and provides identification badges for all visitors to the school.
- All incidents or communication related to Child Safety are recorded in the Risk Register.
- A Risk Assessment Register is regularly monitored and updated.
- The school has continued to develop its SMART (St Mary's Assistance Readiness Training) program for volunteers. This requires volunteers to participate in an induction/training program and complete an application form and reference check.
- All meetings have Child Safe as a standing item (School Advisory Council and all staff meetings). Child Safe practices and procedures are regularly updated and discussed with staff.
- All staff understand the Child Safe standards and have an up to date Child Safe folder with the information required to follow the correct procedures. This information is reviewed regularly.
- The school has a designated Child Safe Officer.
- The school has followed the CECV guidelines on Child Safety relating to the employment of new staff. References are checked and new staff participate in an induction procedure.
- The issue of Child Safety has been regularly communicated to the school community.
- The school has Child Safe protocols on the taking of student photo's.
- The school has clear procedures for excursions and visits outside school. These require an off-site checklist, risk management plan and permission slip and are entered onto the Student Activity Locator.

## Future Directions

Throughout 2020 our focus will be continue to be directed by the recommendations from the 2019 - 2023 School Improvement Plan and the 2020 Annual Action Plan developed from the targeted outcomes stated in this plan.

We will continue to work on embedding our Vision and Mission statements and developing a stronger understanding of this within the school community. This will continue to shape our educational philosophy, our learning and teaching processes, our staffing structures and the way in which we use our facilities and resources.

Our 2020 Annual Action Plan has identified three key areas of focus. We will continue to address the challenges identified in our 2017 ECSI survey data through the further development of the *Godly Play* strategy within the school. Two staff members will receive further specific professional development in this strategy so they can lead Godly Play sessions within the school and support the upskilling of other teachers.

A second area of focus is our continued attention on student writing. Our data indicates that our student achievement levels in writing require further improvement. Using the *Essential Learnings* document developed at the end of 2019 and our implementation of the OLSAL (Oral Language Supporting All Learning) framework from Foundation to Year Six, we will focus our attention on improving our children's literacy skills, notably in the areas of oral language development (speaking and listening) and writing.

The third and final focus of our 2020 Annual Action Plan is to continue to improve our Community Engagement. Throughout 2019 we worked with external consultant Tony Dalton, who has significant expertise in this area. We recognise that this is an area in which our school needs to make further improvement; we need to develop a shared staff understanding of the importance of effective community engagement and implement agreed practices within the whole staff group. This will, therefore, be a continued focus for St Mary's during 2020 as we seek to develop improved levels of engagement with both our parents and the local Ararat community.

During 2019, we implemented a new PLC framework within the school. While we have made progress in this area, we will continue to reflect on and refine our PLC/Rtl practice so this has a sustained and positive impact on student achievement levels. We will continue to develop our Learning Community structures. Acting on the best practice examples we have seen in other schools during our visits in 2019, we will refine and further develop some of our PLC processes.

A significant focus will be the implementation of a PLC process called WINN (*What I need now*) that will ensure that those of our students who have achieved the expected outcome

levels consolidate and depth their learning whilst those who require additional support to reach the expected levels of attainment will receive targeted intervention.

During 2019, we worked hard to engage our School Advisory Council and School Community Team in the life and decisions of the school. These groups play an active role in our school and we believe that it is vital that they have a voice in the future development and decisions of our school. We will continue to identify this as an area of focus during 2020.

## School Performance Data Summary

| TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Teaching Staff Attendance Rate | 86.0% |

| ALLSTAFF RETENTION RATE |       |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Staff Retention Rate    | 80.8% |

| TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS   |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Doctorate                | 0.0%  |
| Masters                  | 10.0% |
| Graduate                 | 40.0% |
| Graduate Certificate     | 0.0%  |
| Bachelor Degree          | 80.0% |
| Advanced Diploma         | 10.0% |
| No Qualifications Listed | 10.0% |

| STAFF COMPOSITION                     |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Principal Class (Headcount)           | 4    |
| Teaching Staff (Headcount)            | 19   |
| Teaching Staff (FTE)                  | 16.8 |
| Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)        | 12   |
| Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)              | 9.2  |
| Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount) | 0    |

### **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](http://www.acnc.gov.au)