

HOLY ROSARY ANNUAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEETING
WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 22, 2017

ANNUAL SCHOOL PRIORITIES REPORT - PRINCIPAL

Welcome everyone and thank you for attending tonight's meeting, I appreciate the opportunity to report to you on what has been a good year. I would like to begin tonight, by remembering Bek Rowe, who passed away earlier this year - a beautiful and intelligent girl who was a wonderful staff member, taken too soon. Keep happy thoughts of this wonderful person, in your hearts.

I would like to thank all of the people in our community that have been so supportive. People have given generously of their time and expertise in many ways and all of that has made a real difference.

My report does not focus on statistics as they are available elsewhere. Rather, it provides me with an opportunity to report on some of the things which have taken place this year, and to thank a whole lot of people who made these and many other great times possible.

I would like to thank Our Lady of the Rosary parish for their continued support of the children of Holy Rosary in the form of liturgical and sacramental celebrations. The parish-based sacramental model here is a very strong one. We thank parish administrator Kaye Shervington, as well as our staff involved for a successful sacramental year.

This year we farewelled Father Peter who did a great job, and we welcomed Father Peter who is doing a great job! Peter has settled in really well, in to what is his first parish - a big ask especially when so many decisions have had to be made what with building and the like. I would like to express my thanks to Father Peter for his commitment to our school community. It is no small task to proclaim to nearly 500 children and their parents, as well as to our staff. Father Peter's daily 9.00am masses are a great opportunity for all of our classes to attend the Liturgy in its pure, and simple form. These are important moments on their faith journey and we thank him very much for your support of the children in these capacities. He is a welcoming presence in Our Lady of the Rosary. I for one am so very grateful for the fact that we are a part of Dominican parish with a beautiful charism, led by great priests of the Dominican Order. We understand that Father Chinh will be resident here with him in the new presbytery which looks amazing! We look forward to his presence also. We are very pleased that they will both have a lovely place to call home.

As a Catholic parish community school, our school is here because of God, and it is here for children. The spiritual, sacramental and faith dimension is therefore central to our existence. In light of that I would like to express my appreciation to Pat Winton who in his capacity as Assistant Principal Religious Education contributed to leading and supporting the faith life of our community this year. Pat's presence as acolyte, and leading that decade of the rosary each Thursday in the Veritas Garden makes visible our faith and commitment. Thank you Pat.

To Brother Stephen, whose role is a diverse one in this community, working with parents, teachers and children in a range of programmes, your support is greatly appreciated by this community – thank you Stephen.

To Geordie Thuijs, Assistant Principal Administration who joined us last year, your energy, drive and commitment sees this school community engage ever more deeply with the process of whole school improvement. By that I mean, improving everywhere! Your work in this space has been highly regarded and appreciated.

Everything that the three of you have done this year to aid in the improvement of student outcomes, on every level, has been appreciated – thank you.

Thanks to the people around here who do a lot of feeding and clothing – Leanna, whose huge list of canteen volunteers is unparalleled – and so is the food! Your upbeat attitude proclaims to so many Leanna. I just don't think that there is a tuckshop anywhere like yours! Thank you very much.

Susanne Zerk runs an amazing Uniform Shop. What you have done with such a small space is remarkable! Thank you indeed.

Thanks to our admin staff – Laurie, Mel and Michele who embrace many responsibilities in the administration of our school. This is no mean feat and at times can be challenging and complex. Thank you all very much.

Academically our literacy and numeracy initiatives continue to be focused through both professional development and through our professional learning community meetings. Our inclusion for 2017 as one of fifteen Catholic Schools involved in the Principals as Numeracy Leaders (PANLs) project, a school improvement focus which is well researched, and backed by Edith Cowan University, coupled with professional development focused on mental maths and mathematical vocabulary, has done a great deal to improve what happens in the classroom. The work done in this area will continue to be embedded over at least the next year. It will accompany our 2018 focus on literacy – in particular reading and writing. The Brightpath Project, well embedded here, focuses on the teaching and assessment of student writing and is paying real dividends, with more to come next year.

The focus on improving communication has been quite remarkable. The new newsletter, Blogs, P&F Facebook, Seesaw – all have been introduced in such a way as to have a major influence on the quality, the method and the frequency of information and feedback to parents and guardians, so that as far as possible, people do know what is going on, and why and how. This has involved a lot of work on the part of staff and parents. Thank you all. Our continued focus in 2017 on the effective and responsible use of ICT in class has moved remarkably quickly, with a high standard of improvement evident at every turn. We have moved at a cracking pace and I thank Caroline Mullins and Geordie, supported by a great IT team, for leading the charge.

A professional development focus on enrichment and extension of our students within the classroom continues to be an important area for 2017 as we further refine our skills in differentiating instruction to increase the level of engagement of our students.

Sonia Thomas, Brother Stephen and Geordie Thuijs have led a reimagined enrichment programme which has reaped big benefits for the children involved. Thank you for this initiative which has become stronger and stronger! Masterchef this week is going to provide ample evidence of highly engaged and happy children!

Kathy Tanham is involved in this school improvement journey and we thank her for the gracious way in which she supports the children as well as her proactive use of resources provided by the HRC or P&F. The Levelled Literacy Intervention programme is in use this term and is paying real dividends.

At a faith level - the most important level - 2017 sees the continued embedding of 'Making Jesus Real' or MJR as it is better known. MJR has gained traction at Holy Rosary and is unequivocally Christ centred, who is child centred. In schools where MJR truly is real, the effect on all members of the school community is substantial and significant. I really do believe that we are becoming one of them. We are also in the process of reviewing our Guidelines for Religious Education. With system approval and support, our intention is to continue to link the great resources from our Dominican tradition, from Making Jesus Real, Caritas and Catholic Earthcare for example, to the outcomes in the Guidelines. I believe that this initiative will play a central role in engaging all

who come in to contact with our programme in Religious Education, seeing it in light of the great work we do today.

We have continued to enjoy much success in the sporting arena with a lot to celebrate – Rob Flexman runs an excellent programme, but Rob would be the first to admit that without the support of the many staff involved and the many parents involved it would not be what it is. The programme is much more than a primary school sports programme. Rob has made it his business to seek and secure opportunities for our children to do different and challenging things, such as tennis and the triathlons for example. Thank you Rob and thank you everyone who has been involved.

Music continues to evolve at Holy Rosary and I thank Michelle Kirwan for keeping an open mind and embracing the different and delightful opportunities which come our way. Many of our children were involved in individual items in the annual Catholic Schools Performing Arts Festival, with some outstanding results. Musica Viva, a study for this year in classical music, formed a whole school focus for term three culminating in workshops with a classical quartet from Brisbane. It was a very different experience for the children, and by her own admission, for Michelle – but it was an excellent experience indeed for all.

Liturgical singing has seen real improvement over time, of our students being engaged in this important Christian activity. Michelle again has been open to changes, with more live music and more music which proclaims to children, and this is borne out

in the way in which our children sing at mass. The voices of the children soaring across the exquisite Our Lady of the Rosary Church is something to treasure.

Our school choir too is taking form under Michelle's leadership. Numbers have grown and they sound wonderful. Long may it continue!

Edudance continued as well this year, moving in to the music and movement space, and again, it was such exceptionally good fun as well as being a major exercise in building the co-ordination and team skills in the children. This will continue next year, building on the skills taught each year.

Music is evident across our school from Three Year Old Kindy through to Year Six and the programme will continue to evolve next year. So to Michelle, a great year – thank you!

The profile of the Science learning area is good here and I thank Tanya Skinner for ensuring that it is an effective programme, faithful to the inquiry-based model of science education. Children certainly are challenged by this subject.

Italian remains the language of choice here. Anna Prestianni is our teacher of Italian and Anna we thank you for the work that you have done in LOTE.

Holly Butson has truly made the library resource area her own. Holly I think you were made for that role. Under your leadership the library is a thriving and friendly space – fantastic job Holly!

To the Siena team, I thank each of you very much for exceptional work supporting extraordinary children. The school is the richer for your commitment and support and for the children you work with.

I would now like to acknowledge members of our team who leave us at the end of the year. Pat Winton is leaving – but not our school! Only the leadership team. Pat is retiring from leadership and returns to his first love, which is the classroom. Pat has been in the role of assistant principal religious education for 14 years – something of a record in any one school. We thank Pat for his contribution, his kind and caring nature, and look forward to his continued presence across our school, leading the Rosary on Thursday mornings, as well as in the classroom.

Emma Schwemmer, who has been on maternity leave for three years, has resigned and moved with her family to farm in South Africa. What an incredible adventure. When I spoke to her before they left she said there were monkeys living in the house! They have their work cut out! Emma enjoyed her time at Holy Rosary and did a couple of short term stints during her leave. Children were always pleased to see her smiling face! We thank her for her contribution to the lives of our children and wish her only good things.

Farewell Blair! At very short notice Blair came on to the Kindy team this year and they have enjoyed her there as much as she has enjoyed them! Your calm demeanour and smiling face have been appreciated by all in Kindy – thank you. The picture you seen on the front of this agenda was taken by Blair – what a talent!

Jen Rudyard leaves us, but only for a year. Jen and her family are off on a very big adventure! Jen has accepted a secondment to St Joseph's Kunnunurra where she will make an immense difference to the lives of the children in the Kimberly. Jen we admire you, we will miss you and we know that you are going to have the most amazing time.

Edel Waldron is leaving after just a year with us. Edel has been a real find, and it is fair to say that we have loved getting to know her. Edel has been a great staff member and a great teacher. We are sorry to see her go, but I'm sure we will see Edel here in the role of relief teacher!

To Alessia Irdi, part of the Siena team, we thank you for your important contribution to the lives of the Siena children. Your intelligent, calm approach to the education and inclusion of our junior primary children leaves a lasting legacy. We hope very much to work with you again.

To Suzanne Zerk, your transformational approach to the Uniform Shop has seen amazing results! Your solution focused way of sorting things out in what is a tiny space, has amazed me. You

are organised and forward thinking. You have made a real difference. Thanks very much Suzanne!

To every one of our team leaving, we thank you, and we say that we will miss you. On behalf of our community I would like to express our appreciation for the significant contribution that you have made to the children in our care. Some of you have been here for a short time, others for much longer but your focus has never wavered - the children are at the centre of the picture and every contribution to their faith, well-being and development that you have made will always remain with them.

And to our staff for 2018. Mrs Capelli and Mrs Ledger remain on leave at this time as they continue their respective recoveries. We wish them only good things as they continue with their treatment. Please keep them in your prayers.

We have staff members joining and rejoining us. Lydia Della-Santa is taking over the Uniform Shop. Lydia has form in this area and we are very pleased to welcome you to our team Lydia.

Kate O'Neil, who taught music here late in 2016 while Michelle was on leave, returns, this time as a class teacher. Kate is very excited about coming back to Holy Rosary. She loved her time here and jumped at the opportunity to return and share her gifts with us.

Tess Jacobs who completed an outstanding final practicum with Trish Norman, joins the junior primary team. Her energy and

enthusiasm are infectious! We are delighted to welcome Tess for 2018.

Hayley Bayliss, who was part of the Three Year Old Kindy team in 2015, also returns, this time to our four year old Kindy. Hayley is an excellent assistant. She is versatile and positive, she loves her work, and loves Holy Rosary. We look forward to her return.

The school has a very good reputation. There are a lot of good things happening here, and this is attracting staff of high calibre, for which we can all be thankful. We want our children to have the best education – in all its facets – that we can give them.

Our staff and class lists are made available on Friday. The lists will be on the classroom doors at 8.30am. Please note that a couple of classes will be swapping rooms so don't get confused! It is important to note that Friday's information about staffing and classes 2018 is made public in good faith. Due to circumstances beyond our control, things sometimes do change over the break, but the information which will be shared on Friday reflects the situation as we know it.

I would like to thank the members of our School Board, led so capably, by Jonathon Woolfrey. Jonathon has been influential in encouraging Board thinking to look more to the long term visioning for the school, and we are enjoying this journey. Thanks Jonathon. I appreciate the great job Ross Tolley has undertaken as Board Treasurer. This is an important responsibility of the School Board and his expertise has been invaluable. Managing

finances and making future plans means that this has been a difficult and challenging time and as such it has been a big year for the Board with representation on staff appointment panels, financial decision making and much discussion about the future of the school. We are fortunate to have people so supportive of the aims of the school who are prepared to serve the community in this way.

Simon Devlin has done a fantastic job as HRC President this year. His good humoured approach to almost everything has made the meetings both interesting and enjoyable. His recruiting skills have extended to firstly recruiting his father Peter as the Treasurer, but then keeping him there for another year – impressive! Every HRC meeting has been an opportunity to discuss matters of real significance, and witness the support that exists for the direction the school is taking. The extensive work of the HRC – and it has been huge this year - to support the education of the children – and the parents – through fundraising, underwriting the purchase of resources, arranging expert information sessions, partnering the school in the reframing of classrooms as contemporary learning spaces, is invaluable. What was initially a six year timeline, is now going to be completed in one third of the time! This is incredible support. The role of the P&F is to build community, to support the school in its initiatives and to empower parents in their role. All these are critical to a successful school, and I believe that our P&F gets that and experiences a lot of success accordingly. To all of you – thank you so much. The survey sent out earlier this term has provided valuable feedback and is already informing the conversation about where to focus P&F energies next year. Simon

steps down as President this year, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to you Simon for two fabulous years of leadership for the P&F, but also for being so open to change, welcoming new ideas, and being such a good friend to the school. With all your other responsibilities it has been a big ask! Thank you Simon.

And overall, our parents have provided terrific support for what we do in the school. We couldn't do what we do, without you. From the Pastoral Care, in times of great sadness when families have needed our support, to class duty, tuckshop duty, making playdough, assisting on excursions, in art classes, listening to children read, banking, coaching, building – it is a long list!

We have a lot to be thankful for. Our children have been involved in wonderful spiritual, sporting, cultural and academic pursuits, and have thrived. I believe that we have worked hard to continue to effectively implement our school priorities. A good Catholic education in these times is really interesting and diverse, with wonderful opportunities made available to children by their dedicated teachers and assistants.

But in it all, there is no substitute for quality of teaching and learning, and most of all, the quality of relationships. To that end I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the energetic, committed team of teachers and support staff we have at Holy Rosary who have done so much to ensure that the education made available to children is both rich and varied.

In conclusion, in the Dominican tradition it is all about Truth, Love and Knowledge and I thank everyone involved in making Holy Rosary the place that it is, where we work together to support the children in our care to embody that vision. Thank you very much.

Mark de Kluyver

November 2017