

Annual Community Meeting 2023 Principal's Report

Welcome to the St Jude's Catholic Primary School Annual Community Meeting for 2023. Thank you for your attendance this evening, it is important, and we value that you have made it a priority. This school is important to us all, and your presence makes that very clear.

As the academic year comes to a close, we are delighted to share with you our Annual Report, highlighting the accomplishments and progress that collectively define the journey of our school community over the past year.

2023 has been a productive and successful year for St Jude's Catholic School and our students have continued to flourish. This year we have endeavoured to be a community that is changing and equipping our students to make a positive difference in the lives of others today and into the future. Through high quality teaching and learning programs, extra-curricular activities, liturgies and mission programs, shaping the hearts and minds of our students is at the forefront and continues to be an important focus.

St Jude's is a very special place and so many people contribute to maintaining this vibrant community. I would like to acknowledge and thank the people who make a significant contribution to the spiritual, educational, social and emotional development of our students.

To our highly experienced and dedicated staff of St Jude's, as I have said many times before, your approach and commitment to your work exceeds all expectations. There is no doubt in my mind that your work provides a safe, supportive, pastoral, and educationally sound learning environment for every child here. You deserve to be acknowledged and thanked for all that you do. Aside from parents there is no other group that has a greater influence upon the overall education of our students than our staff. This highly professional group possess many qualities which include patience, versatility, initiative and productiveness. They are constantly striving to ensure all children feel happy and safe in their learning environment. I congratulate them all on their dedication, sheer hard work, care and love afforded our children. They are an extraordinary group of people. Through their involvement the children in our school benefit tremendously.

An exceptional characteristic of St Jude's is the commitment, enthusiasm and hard work of our parent body.

The current School Advisory Council is typical of this commitment. Under the leadership of Con Sgro, Treasurer Mark Duchesne, Secretary Bina Jesuraj, Shane Ballingall, Alison Pano and Fr Terry, it has continued to effectively guide the decision making and school finances. We thank all members of our 2023 SAC for their attendance at meetings and for generously sharing their expertise.

The Friends of St Jude committee is a vital element in the overall functioning of our school. From providing much needed resources and equipment to the building of community spirit through social activities, our FOSJ continually do their utmost to provide nothing but the best for our children. I am constantly amazed at what is achieved by this small band of people. On behalf of our children and the staff I thank Jasmynne Doherty, Renae Minjoot-Hoare, Mehma Jhuremelani, Jenny Hodges, and Rebekah Ballingall sincerely for your support this year and everything you do to make St Jude's the special community it is.

As partners in the education of our children, I wish to thank parents for supporting our school and staff. From your help at excursions, carnivals and other events or assistance in whatever capacity, your commitment to the children of St Jude's is very much appreciated. Students thrive in such a collaborative environment.

Our students are delightful children, they never cease to astonish me with their enthusiasm, perseverance and love of life. To see their endeavour, their smiles and hear their joy as they engage in their learning certainly warms my heart. Academically our students have continued to make sound progress and are to be congratulated for their excellent achievements. Thank you to our students for making our days worthwhile and rewarding.

St Jude's is fortunate to enjoy a close relationship with the St Jude's Parish. Fr Terry is a welcome presence in our school as he gives generously of his time to meet with the leadership team, participate on the SAC, attend school events, celebrate masses and sacraments. We thank him for his dedication to serving our school community.

In 2024 Jonnda Simpson will return to St Jude's in her role as Principal, to continue her wonderful work, leading the school. Highly respected and loved by the community I know her return will be welcomed by all. We also welcome back, Elena Fraser who has accepted a two-day classroom teaching position next year.

New to our school is Estelle Bollen who will be teaching three days a week in the early years. A highly experienced early childhood educator, Estelle is thrilled to be returning to her old primary school as a staff member.

At the end of this year, we farewell Mariko Waghorn, Jeanne Figredo and Sabrina Bailey. We thank them for their contributions to our school and wish them every success in the future.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

The Religious Education program continues to be the first learning area for our students. The teaching of Religious Education is alive and well at St Jude's. We are proudly a Catholic school first and foremost. Our Catholicity extends beyond the realm of learning doctrine and

embraces social teaching and living a life that reflects the teachings of Jesus. The Making Jesus Real philosophy is a practical approach that literally makes the teachings of Jesus real in our school. Our common language around this along with constant reminders to the children at assembly help them to realise what needs to be done to make Jesus real and enables this programme to have real impact in their relationships with each other.

Our students continue to broaden their understanding of social justice issues that face our society through fundraising activities. These have included the Caritas Project Compassion Walkathon, LifeLink Crazy Hair and PJ Day, St Jude's Day Mission Markets and St Vinnies Food drive, just to mention a few.

The liturgical life of our school is central in what we do. We are reminded of the liturgical season whenever we enter the school office, the staffroom or any of the classrooms through our sacred spaces. This year whole school and class masses have been reintroduced and allowed us to gather regularly as a faith community with parents and parishioners. Student leadership continued in the area of liturgy, with our Year 6 students, leading our school in prayer at assemblies and the rosary in the months of May and October.

Our school links with our parish are strong and enduring with our Parish Priest, Fr Terry playing a key role in helping our school grow in faith. I extend my appreciation to Fr Terry and the Jude's Parish for their partnership with the school. We are a parish school and our involvement with the parish is essential in maintaining the Catholicity of our school. My thanks go to Fr Terry and the catechist teachers in the parish for their support with the sacramental programs. The Sacramental programs were able to go ahead as normal this year, with the family faith formation evenings, student retreats and celebration of the sacraments. The sacramental masses were reverent celebrations that were both enriching and spiritually nourishing for our students, and well supported and attended by our staff.

Throughout the year staff members have participated in faith formation opportunities through the Faith Story and Witness Program, the Galilee Program and accreditation units. At the beginning of Term 4 our staff worked with Mario Borg, a member of 24:7 School Ministry who unpacked the meaning of sabbath. He explained how embracing the sabbath is important to our spiritual, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing and in what way this leads to effective stewardship.

This year our Year 3 and 5 students participated in the Religious Education Assessment. Our results were as follows:

Religious Education Assessment 2023

Year Level	St Jude's Mean	CEWA Mean	Perth Mean
Year 3	407	402	408
Year 5	501	466	473

Review of 2023 Priorities

- Staff to develop a deeper understanding of the theology and importance of rest, in order to serve the St Jude's CPS community through their work and living out their personal faith. **Achieved**
- Reinvigorate the sacred spaces in the school, to allow for staff and students to connect with their faith. **Continuing**

2024 Priorities

- Deepen the understanding of the Mercy charisms among both staff and students.
- Reinvigorate the sacred spaces in the school, to allow for staff and students to deepen their knowledge of the Mercy Charism.

EDUCATION

At St Jude's we continue to build a culture of learning together through collaboration, partnership and relationship building. This year our school joined with three Catholic EALD schools to form the Synergia Network. The aim of this group is to enhance the capacity of school staff to identify and understand the evolving needs of our students and develop culturally and linguistically responsive approaches that are applicable to our unique educational context. The collaboration included professional learning community meetings after school with the CEWA Languages/EALD consultant Marisa Schiavi and a conference where Elizabeth Lang, from Diversity Focus spoke about unconscious bias and cultural inclusion in multi-cultural environments.

This year our staff have continued to focus on embedding two evidence-based approaches, namely, the Talk for Writing approach and the Promoting Literacy development program. Talk for Writing has had an outstanding impact on schools. Typically, schools have found that children initially double their rate of progress. PLD's method is derived from the disciplines

of speech pathology, occupational therapy and education and maximises literacy learning outcomes for children.

Furthermore, we established a common understanding of how consistent authentic assessment processes enable accurate data collection that will directly inform the direction of student learning. Throughout the year there were dedicated meetings and time allocated to assist classroom teachers in using the judging standards to ensure consistency in assessment and reporting.

We are currently implementing a digital platform called Elastik that empowers teachers to pinpoint and address unidentified gaps in their students' learning in Maths, English and Science. This platform will save time by reducing the administrative burden, freeing teachers to do what they do best: stretch children to help them thrive.

NAPLAN

The Years 3 and 5 NAPLAN testing assesses the literacy and numeracy skills that students are learning through the school curriculum and allows parents/carers to see how their child is progressing against national standards. The assessments are conducted online and are tailored (or adaptive), which means that each test presents questions that may be more or less difficult depending on a student's responses. A student's overall NAPLAN result is based on both the number and complexity of questions they answer correctly.

We need to keep in mind that NAPLAN is just one aspect of a school's assessment and reporting process. It does not replace ongoing assessments made by teachers about student performance, but it can provide teachers with additional information about students' educational progress.

Our 2023 results indicate that our students have performed very well in the English learning area with excellent results in reading, writing, spelling and grammar, particularly in Year 5. Mathematics is an area that provides an opportunity for growth. As a result, numeracy is a focus for the school in 2024.

2023 NAPLAN RESULTS

Year 3				Year 5		
	School Av	State Av	National Av	School Av	State Av	National Av
Reading	397	394	404	505	490	496
Writing	421	411	417	529	478	483
Spelling	437	399	404	583	488	490
Grammar	406	400	409	507	491	496
Numeracy	393	401	407	465	483	484

Review of 2023 Priorities

- To embed the St Jude's Instructional Framework to ensure consistent practices across the year levels. **Continuing**
- Renovate and refurbish the Early Years outdoor learning environment to allow students to engage within the outdoor space to enhance the teaching and learning program. **Achieved**

2024 Priorities

- To review the ECE philosophy to ensure consistent practices in all Early Childhood classes.
- To implement sustainable and effective strategies to improve numeracy results across all year levels.

COMMUNITY

2023 provided opportunities for families to become once again involved in onsite activities in our school. Parental involvement remains a cornerstone of our school community. We appreciate the ongoing support and collaboration between parents, teachers, and students. Together, we have created a nurturing and supportive environment that contributes to the overall success and well-being of our students.

We provide a welcoming and approachable environment for all members of our school community, staff, parents and families. During this year we hosted numerous community-based events, including Parent Information sessions, parent teacher meetings, Mother's Day Morning Tea, Athletics Carnival, Harmony Day celebrations, Walk to School Day, Edu – Dance Concert, Open Afternoon, Colour Splatacular, Book Week Parade, excursions, Parish Sacramental Programs, FOSJ meetings and School Advisory Council meetings just to mention a few.

At St Jude's we regularly communicate between school and home via the newsletter, emails, SEQTA, SMS and SeeSaw. Reporting formally is conducted in various forms including one to one parent teacher meetings, written reports and learning journey afternoons.

We pride ourselves on engaging with the wider community at a variety of levels, for example, interschool Athletics and Interschool Lightening Carnivals, One Big Voice, Synergia Network, Partnerships with Mercy Connect and the Brookman Centre. At the beginning of this year St Jude's hosted a CEWA tour of our school with Catholic national and state leaders visiting our school.

St Jude's supports our school community through a number of initiatives including, the URstrong Program, Mercy Connect support in our classrooms, Breakfast Club, Foodbank fruit boxes, Harmony Playgroup and after school care.

We would also like to inform the community that the School Chaplaincy Grant for our school social worker Sr Sandra has been extended for a couple more years. We are fortunate to have Sr Sandra and I take this opportunity to acknowledge the very important work that she does. We are most appreciative of her dedication to supporting our students and families.

Review of 2023 Priorities

- Create meaningful links with Aboriginal Organisations within our local community. **Continuing**
- Supporting the pastoral and wellbeing needs of the students through the implementation of the URstrong program. **Continuing**

2024 Priorities

- Develop partnership with a local Aboriginal elder to teach staff about the significance of the Langford Area to the Aboriginal people.

- Supporting the pastoral and wellbeing needs of the students through the implementation of the URstrong program.

STEWARDSHIP

We are pleased to report several improvements to our school facilities, including upgrades to the student toilets, playgrounds and gardens, air conditioning, canteen, installation of LED lights in the EALD room and purchase of a new photocopier. This year many of our large projects such as the upgrades to our school grounds have been the result of successful grant applications. Further to this we are delighted to announce that St Jude's has recently received a further \$5 000 grant for bilingual books as well as a \$20 000 grant to upgrade our EALD facilities before the end of this year. These enhancements aim to create a conducive and modern learning environment for our students and staff.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the FOSJ for their generous donations for the basketball backboards, outdoor tennis table and bright game boards which will be painted around the school. These will not only enhance our school but also provide the students with more play options.

To assist with new enrolments, we consulted with the CEWA Marketing and Communications team to discuss strategies for increasing the number of enrolments. CEWA audited our strategies and reported that we already had in place many effective strategies which included increasing our advertising on social media and placing editorial articles in the local newspaper. Through these strategies we have been able to maintain our current numbers and fill our kindergarten for next year.

In Term 3 we sought feedback from our parents, students and staff via the NSI surveys. The aim of this process is to build and maintain a positive school climate in which our children will flourish. The data from the surveys has revealed that our parents believe that the St Jude's is a welcoming school, which provides an engaging environment, supportive staff, effective communication and that the school has clear expectations of behaviour and promotes a safe environment. Parents are highly satisfied with their child's progress and with the school. Our students reported that they feel valued by the school, that the teachers support their learning, expect them to succeed and challenge their learning. The students perceive school rules to be clear, reasonable and fair. They are confident that they can report incidents to staff. Feedback from staff indicates that they find working at St Jude's School satisfying and enjoyable. They feel that the school promotes an equitable and diverse workplace. The collective efficacy is high as staff believe they can teach well. Staff data showed that the school has in place policies that maintain a safe, respectful and orderly school environment. They feel that leadership respects staff and are concerned about their feelings and needs. Relationships between school, teachers, parents and staff are positive. The staff in the work collaboratively and receive

encouragement from one another. Staff are committed to the school goals and mission. There are high expectations for success.

Review of 2023 Priorities

- To provide staff with opportunities to learn about evidence-based practices in wellness to enhance their own wellbeing. **Achieved**
- Refurbish the school buildings and environment to ensure it meets the needs of our students, is welcoming and well maintained. **Continuing**

2024 Priorities

- Upskill staff through the Berry Street Program training to support students' self-regulation, relationships, and wellbeing.
- Refurbish the school buildings and environment to ensure it meets the needs of our students, is welcoming and well maintained.

Our Admin Team in the school office are second to none. Mrs Arlene Dique and Mrs Joleen Scott deserve a special mention and expression of gratitude for their interest in caring for the parents, staff and students at our school and the many tasks they juggle during any one day. These ladies greet everyone with a smile and go above and beyond to attend to any question or issue which is asked of them. Further Graham, Kristy and I are very reliant on their support so that we can effectively lead our school community. On behalf of leadership team, we offer our most sincere appreciation. Our work is made easier because of you.

To my amazing colleagues in leadership, Graham and Kristy, my sincere thanks for your advice and support. These two APs have had a lot on their plate this year, and I'm not sure what they were anticipating with Jonnda out, and Carmel in, but the school achieved so much this year. To say that I'm working with the most dedicated and passionate leaders in any school setting I've ever worked in would be an understatement. Graham and Kristy make this school work, they hold it together, and they are respected by everyone. I have truly appreciated the strength of our partnership.

Conclusion

As our Year 6 students finish their primary schooling at the end of this year, we thank them for their leadership of the other students in the school and for their assistance. Congratulations on your achievements and we wish you nothing but the best as you embark on this new journey.

Each year we have staff and families leave our school. We take this opportunity to wish all our departing staff members and families all the very best at their new schools. We hope that your time at St Jude's was memorable and wish you every success with your future endeavours.

We invite the following people forward to receive a token of appreciation for your service on the SAC or FOSJ committees:

- Jasmyne Doherty
- Renae Minjoot-Hoare
- Mehma Jhuremelani
- Mark Duchane

We will now present the staffing model for 2024.

In conclusion, it has been a privilege to work with the staff, students and parents of St Jude's School where the community authentically lives out the Mercy values and exceptional programs are taking place. I would like to thank everyone for making me feel so welcomed and supported.

I wish everyone all the blessings of Christmas and the St. Jude's School community continued success in the future.

Carmel Costin

Principal

22 November 2023