2019 Principal’s Report

Kelly Campbell

The Living Leading Learning statement inspires St Margaret Mary’s School and Preschool to enrich, ‘thriving people, capable learners and leaders for the world God desires.” (CESA 2019). The staff began the year with a whole system gathering of staff from Catholic Education SA at the Entertainment Centre. In this gathering, and our early professional learning our staff explored the LLL statement and the mission we have as Catholic Educators to live St Margaret Mary’s School **Vision for Learning.**

All children are unique and capable.

They thrive in safe, engaging and hope filled environments.

Meaningful and rigorous learning inspires children to see the wonder of life and to be ethical, global citizens.

They experience these in relationship with themselves, others and God.

In 2019, I was welcomed into the St Margaret Mary’s community as the new Principal, after Anne McGowan’s retirement at the end of 2018. I feel privileged to lead this community in the important educational, spiritual and physical development of all the children in this community.

We continue to work in partnership with the Croydon Park Parish in the Sacramental Preparation Program. This complements the rich Catholic Tradition of St Margaret Mary’s School. We offer opportunities for prayer and reflection for all students and staff and invite families to our community prayer, liturgies and Masses. Staff, led by our APRIM David Hillard, have been using the Redesigned Crossways Curriculum RE document (parts that have been released) to plan for learning in the classroom. All staff participated in our reflection day that focussed on ‘wisdom’ for our own spiritual enrichment. All classes participate in reflection days, with our year 6 students meeting with Whitefriars for the 2 day Journey to Emmaus Program. Social Justice activities continue to be a very important part of our school calendar and identity, led by our Student Leaders.

Both St Margaret Mary’s School and Preschool offered a term 3 intake in 2019. This was made possible in the Preschool due to the change in funding model, in agreement with the SA state government. This now provides a comprehensive early learning pathway for children who turn 4 (for preschool) and 5 (for school) before October 31st. We increased one of our preschool groups in term 3 to accommodate the extra enrolments and we started our first Foundation (term 3 intake) class with 14 students in term 3. Due to the larger numbers of enrolments for term 3 preschool, we have strengthened our enrolment policy to ensure students who are also enrolled in our school have preferential enrolment over those intending to attend another primary school.

Our Early Learning Program is strongly supported by our vibrant Playgroup (Tuesdays and Fridays) and Occasional Care that runs on a Wednesday morning. Both programs have been strongly supported within our community and provide a great transition for these early stages of learning.

The school invested heavily in hardware and infrastructure for our student ICT program in 2019. All Year 5/6 students now have a 1-1 laptop for use at school. Students and staff are using this technology as a tool for student learning across all curriculum areas. 5 laptop trolleys were purchased to better maintain the devices and we saw a big reduction in repairs of devices in 2019. At the end of the 2019 year, the old ICT room was decommissioned and laptops and trolleys are now in each area of the school for student use. The Preschool and Reception classes predominately use iPads to access ICT learning. Cybersafe Families worked with all Year 3-6 students around cybersafety and a parent session was also offered.

St Margaret Mary’s School completed NAPLAN online in 2019, with all tests (except Year 3 writing) completed online. There were some Australia-wide technical difficulties with the practice test and Year 5 writing test, but our students were able to complete all test successfully. Considering it was their first attempt of online testing, we were very pleased with their achievements.

In 2019, we are invested heavily in targeted intervention to improve student literacy levels. St Margaret Mary’s has a high percentage of students with an EAL background (English as an Additional Language), and we developed a whole school approach to teaching literacy. All teachers are using Readers and Writers Workshops and we have introduced Phonics Workshops in Years R-2. In addition to the Quality Differentiated Teaching Practice Educational Support Officers are trained in the specific intervention program, MacqLit, for children in Tier 2 (not quite meeting benchmarks), and this forms the basis of our literacy support for students. This is a specific support program for students in that age group with needs such as Dyslexia, language disabilities and EAL. MacqLit is an Australian Program developed by Macquarie University and is highly regarded and well-researched. R-4 teachers also began regular ‘warm-ups’ in phonemic awareness, an important skill needed for reading and language development. We were very pleased with our EAL results in 2019 with a greatly increased number of students in the Beginning and Emerging stages making progress in their literacy levels. Literacy remains a focus for our teachers and students.

Teachers continued to deepen their knowledge and practice in the teaching of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). All our staff attended a Professional Learning Day with the Catholic North West Catholic Community group of schools and St Margaret Mary’s School Lead Learners (Alicia Boylan, Kellie Byrne and Rebecca Braidwood) planned learning for students through the lens of the General Capability, *Creative and Critical Thinking*. This was the second year of this project and teachers worked in their year level teams to plan innovative and relevant units of work for students. The Year 5/6 students were also fortunate to benefit from the Aboriginal Cultural Residency Program in 2019, working with Martin Pascoe in film making and story-telling projects celebrating their identity and heritage.

In 2019, Catholic Education SA allocated funding for Students with a Disability (what is often called Special Education) based on our NCCD (Nationally Consistent Collection of Data of Students with a Disability). This was a change from how schools used to be funded. All of our staff were involved in professional learning to increase our understanding of student support. We gathered our data on all students to assess their levels of adjustment to a ‘mainstream’ curriculum (Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice, Supplementary, Substantial or Extensive). We also assessed which disability category applies to the student (physical, cognitive, social/emotional or sensory). An average of 18% of students at St Margaret Mary’s School were a part of our NCCD in 2019. These students were supported through intervention programs, adjustments in the curriculum with the teacher and/or ESO support, wellbeing and mentoring programs, Individual learning plans and 1-1 support when necessary. The majority of this support is school funded.

The Mid-Autumn Festival was a fantastic success and I truly felt privileged to be a part of this community event. The children looked great in their autumn colours and/or traditional dress. Every student was involved in the festivities through class activities and activities on the day. The Hon Peter Malinauskas attended and we had very positive feedback from him and Minh Tan Pham (his advisor who attended with him).

*Just wanted to say thank you for the amazing day today at St Margaret Mary's School's Mid-Autumn Festival. As Peter said in his speech, it's times at schools like today that really reminds us how lucky we are to live in a diverse community.*

Congratulations to our Preschool team for being awarded STATE WINNING ENTRY in the 2019 Primary Maths Association Maths and Numeracy Challenge, in the Preschool category. This was a great achievement as it was the first time St Margaret Mary’s entered the competition, and it is open to government, independent and Catholic schools across the state. 3/4KD (Kathy Day’s class) also entered the competition in the year 4 class category. This is the most hotly contested section, and although they did not win, we were so proud of all their hard work and focus on maths. Michelle George (Preschool Educator) was also awarded the Educator Award for Professional Reflection – another great achievement!. This was a wonderful reflection of the professionalism and dedication from all teachers involved. The feedback from the children was really positive, enjoying maths and the application of numeracy. The 3/4 classes also worked with EdAlive, utilising the maths online program offered, for practise in number sense and automaticity.

Planning and preparation for our Building Project was a major focus for 2019, with the intention of beginning works early 2020. We were fortunate that we were awarded a $1million assistance grant from the Australian Government, and this has allowed us to tender for a builder to complete stages 1A, 1B and 2A in 2020. Essentially this is the refurbishments of the administration building, Year 5, 6 classes upstairs, adding a balcony and façade to the MacKillop Building. We will also demolish the middle building of the school and make this a flexible learning space between the classes. We will build new toilets and a new classroom downstairs. The current downstairs classrooms will become the community hub/library space. We had planned to also include a new nature play space but budget restrictions have moved this to the next stage of our Master Plan. At the end of 2019 the administration moved into a temporary space near the library with a temporary entrance to the school created.

Schools are always incredibly busy and St Margaret Mary’s School and Preschool students were involved in many learning an enrichment activities in 2019. Some of these included:

Buddy program Carnevale Swimming, class and interschool carnival

Harmony Day Soup Making (Moore St) Hutt St walk

Vinnies Winter Appeal Student Leadership Team Catholic Education Week

Sports day Interschool athletics Senior Reading Coaches

5/6 Camp Netball carnival School soccer

Touch football carnival Lacrosse carnival Tennis clinics

Tennis carnival Cross country carnival volleyball clinics

Instrumental tuition Performing Arts/dance Book Week

5/6 coding sustainability Catholic Schools Music Festival

Class excursions Children’s University Premier’s Reading Challenge

Community Event Remembrance Day Class prayer and liturgies

Reflection days Sacramental Preparation Nature Play incursions

Thank you to all the staff at St Margaret Mary’s School and Preschool. Every member of staff is important in building our community and supporting the children and each other. Thank you also to all the volunteers who help out on excursions, work with the school board, listen to reading, help cater for events or help with maintenance. The personal care and attention to every member of our community is certainly something which sets us apart.

Thank you to all the parents and carers for entrusting your precious children in our care. We are truly blessed to be in a supportive and inclusive community.

Thank you for your continuing support,

Kelly Campbell

School Principal