



St Gerard's School

Dandenong North

2020

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 1566

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Paul Cowan, attest that St Gerard's School is 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 2020 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.

09/06/2021

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

Our School Vision

St. Gerard's is a Christ centred Community that believes in the Gospel values of faith and love. We endeavour to live our lives according to these values through ...

Inclusion

We are a multi-cultural school, which encourages the inclusion of all people. This inclusiveness both enriches and promotes the growth of our unique St Gerard's community

Community Spirit

Enlivened by the Spirit of God, we are committed to supporting with love and understanding the children in our care and their families

Education

We are committed to developing the potential of all students, which will empower them to achieve success, develop their self-esteem and inspire them into a lifelong love of learning that will help equip them for the contemporary world

Justice

Inspired by Christ's message of "love one another", we endeavour to foster a sense of peace, respect and equality, promoting justice for all

School Overview

St Gerard's Primary School, is a multi-cultural Catholic Primary School in Dandenong North. The school has high expectations for every student and strives to develop the whole child.

Our school's strategic intent is to provide each student with a highly effective and orderly contemporary teaching and learning environment, with a priority on building teaching capacity to ensure students are taught at their point of need with high expectations. Bound by Catholic faith and tradition we do this in partnership with parents to ensure all students have equitable opportunity regardless of background.

The current school population of 120 has students from many nationalities. Dandenong North has always been an area of high transition with families settling in the area, establishing themselves with a home, work and school and then moving to outer suburbs such as Cranbourne, Clyde and Narre Warren. This trend is increasing with the student retention rate falling.

The school has the following class structures: Prep (1 class), Year 1/2 (2 classes), Year 3/4 (2 classes) and Year 5/6 (2 classes).

St. Gerard's offer specialist classes in Physical Education, Visual Art and LOTE -Italian. These classes occur weekly and run for 60 minutes each. There is a Reading Recovery Teacher who supports Year 1 students with their reading. We also have 6 Learning Support Officers (LSO's) who work in the classrooms to support students with their learning needs.

In Year 6, students take on a formal leadership role. These include School Captains and Sports Captains. They also join a leadership group in the areas of Religion, Environment, Social Justice and Student Wellbeing.

St. Gerard's has continued to support a high proportion of students who are funded in 2020 under NCCD (Nationally Consistent Collection of Data) through Catholic Education Melbourne. In 2020, there was a large percentage of students funded under NCCD. In addition, there were other students who have a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) listed students from St. Gerard's with a Cognitive, Sensory, Physical or Social-Emotional disability.

St. Gerard's Primary school is very much a part of the St. Gerard's Parish. The church is located on corner of the school grounds, helping to ensure that children and their families see themselves and their school as integral to the St Gerard's parish community. St Gerard's is a devout Parish and school, with many families attending Mass on a weekly basis. Fr Shanthaiah (Parish Priest) takes a keen interest in the school and will visit classrooms (when invited) to work alongside the teachers and staff in developing faith and promoting a Christian way of life.

Principal's Report

I would like to begin by acknowledging, thanking and congratulating the St Gerard's school community for the way they responded to the unique challenges we all faced throughout 2020 due the COVID-19 global pandemic. With our school being situated in Metropolitan Melbourne, we encountered two lengthy periods of Remote Learning and the transitioning back to on-site learning.

As a school we were asked to find new ways to continue the learning of our students which was a steep learning curve for our teachers, staff and families. Time frames were often tight and new challenges would present themselves periodically. Despite the obvious impacts of COVID-19, a very big positive was the increased connection and engagement we had with our families. This was clearly evident during Remote Learning and when our students returned on-site.

One of the critical elements in the success of St Gerard's is the staff culture and desire to always improve. All staff are committed to further developing their capacity to deliver personalised and differentiated teaching in order to best meet the learning needs of every student.

A unique aspect of St Gerard's is our *Give Me 5* principles which are lived out and underpin all that staff, students and families do at our school. These principles of *Be Spirit Filled, Be Cooperative, Be Respectful, Be Positive and Be Your Best* are for all experiences and situations that we encounter each day at school both inside and outside the classroom.

From a school Governance perspective it was a year of change. Having farewelled Fr Brendan Arthur in December 2019, we welcomed Fr Dean Mathieson in January 2020. Fr Dean worked in our parish until August and throughout his time was very supportive of myself, the staff and the school. I thank him for his contribution to our school community and wish him all the best for the future. Fr Shanthaiah Marneni arrived in October and has also been a strong supporter of the school. Both Fr Dean and Fr Shanthaiah encountered lock down periods and still managed to support the school and parish spiritually which was a great source of comfort to our school community.

Lastly, I would like to personally thank the staff for their teamwork and dedication to our students and families.

I feel privileged and proud to be leading St. Gerard's Primary School.

Kind Regards,

Paul Cowan

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Celebrating and enlivening the principles, values, ideals and challenges of the Gospel and the Catholic faith within the life of the school community.

That students will be more compassionate and engaged members of our Catholic community.

Achievements

St Gerard's staff continued to move towards embedding the use of *The Religious Education Curriculum Framework* to enrich the content of the capabilities of the *Victorian Curriculum* with a Catholic perspective. This was taught through a contemporary curriculum, which was planned within the Inquiry Unit and relevant to the St Gerard's School Community.

The Religious Education Curriculum Framework was used to plan Learning Intentions and Success Criteria that matched the Religious Education achievement standards.

Staff moderated assessment pieces and Reporting Standards against the Religious Education Curriculum Framework in Professional Learning Teams.

Teachers used the Teacher Dialogue Tool and the Pedagogy of Encounter Diagram to initiate collegial planning for rich student learning.

The Faith Formation Leader oversaw the development of curriculum explicitly linked to the school's Give Me 5 principles. At weekly assemblies (on-site and online) explicit links were made to the weekly Gospel Readings, the school's Give Me 5 principles and everyday life.

VALUE ADDED

The following is a list of activities which were either conducted online during Remote Learning periods or on-site:

Beginning of the School Year Mass

Online celebrations for Ash Wednesday, Mary Help of Christians, Feast of the Sacred Heart, Feast of the Assumption, St Gerard Majella Feast Day and All Saints' Day,

All Soul's Day, End of Year and Graduation

The student St Gerard Magellan Award

Prayer Services/Special Assemblies include: The Passion, National Sorry Day, Refugee Week, Mission Week, Living Rosary, Harmony Day, Advent and Graduation

The Religious Education Leader assisted the teachers in planning programs

Prayer remained prominent across the school

Staff Prayer continued g online meetings

Student reflection days conducted for Confirmation and Year 6 Graduation

Social Justice Leaders promoted selected 'social justice' activities to students and community

St Gerard's Feast Day Talent Quest raised money for the Missions

Caritas Project Compassion Appeal

Liturgy Leaders lead and facilitated prayer both on-site and online

Soup was made using produce from the school garden to support St Vincent de Paul Soup Van

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Providing a challenging and personalised approach to learning that has depth and breadth, which fosters creativity and maximises student outcomes across the curriculum.

That student outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy will continue to consistently improve.

That student outcomes in STEAM will improve, resulting in deeper student engagement and learning.

Achievements

At St.Gerard's in 2020 we strove to provide teaching and learning opportunities and experiences, which took into account individual learning styles/preferences and individual needs. We endeavoured to do this when on-site and during the 2 Remote Learning periods we encountered.

Instructional improvements included the explicit teaching of skills and knowledge through differentiating the content, process and product of the curriculum. These instructional improvement strategies ensured we taught each student at their point of need. The use of ongoing assessment identified the needs of the students along the learning continuum. Flexible grouping of students, according to assessment results, was a critical factor in achieving gains in learning. The giving and receiving of feedback highlighted to the students what the next goal in their learning was to be, how to achieve it and when to know it has been mastered.

Oral language development remained a corner stone of the work in addressing the high English as an Additional Language (EAL) factor in our school. There was a focus on identifying students who had specific phonological awareness needs, designing and implementing a focussed and explicit program and monitoring their progress. As part of this focus, all Prep students were assessed on their Expressive and Receptive oral language skills. Speech Therapy and specific programs were provided for students across the school requiring additional support.

In our classrooms and when Remote Learning, the school endeavoured to provide opportunities for student voice. Students were encouraged to use learning protocols such as '*Think, Pair, and Share*'. This protocol encourages students to think deeply about a question or problem posed. Then they could '*Turn and Talk*' to a partner to express themselves aloud, listening to other points of view and make adjustments to their thinking and talking. Teachers would tune in to the discussions and guide thinking and talking carefully. *Interactive Read Alouds* proved to be an integral part of this process. These protocols and strategies were also used during *Google Meets* as part of Remote Learning.

All staff completed the Disability Standards of Education modules throughout the year and adjustments occurred in classrooms for individual students. The school implemented a highly differentiated mainstream classroom curriculum to cater to the diverse needs of our students. Students took part in researched based Intervention Programs aimed at providing early intervention to support their learning. Our Learning Support Officers (LSO's) received training in a variety of Tier 1 and 2 Intervention Programs including *STA*, Speech Therapy and *Talk Boost*. Our whole school Intervention Program was based on data collected in an ongoing capacity.

Our School Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) goal was to improve the Reading Comprehension skills of all our students. With Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) staff support,

the school started to investigate the Fountus and Pinnell Literacy program and explore strategies for targeted teaching.

Two of our Inquiry units throughout the year had a specific focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) with the Learning and Teaching Team helping build the capacity of our teachers to deliver rich learning opportunities for all our students. The Year 5 and 6 students were actively involved in the Lit STEM Program with Nazareth Secondary College which allowed them to share their learning with other schools and see what other schools are doing in this area of the curriculum.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

With NAPLAN Assessments not being conducted in 2020 our school continued to use the ACER PAT Reading (Years 1-6), PAT Maths (Years 1-6), PAT Grammar and Punctuation (Years 3-6) and PAT Spelling (Years 3-6) assessments to monitor school and year level trends as well as to inform us on the progress of individual students. All of these PAT assessments were conducted late in Semester 2 when students returned to on-site learning.

PAT Reading

The following shows the Year Level and percentage of students at or above the expected level:

Year 1 — 55%

Year 2 — 75%

Year 3 — 68%

Year 4 — 81%

Year 5 — 75%

Year 6 — 80%

Overall Years 1 - 6 — 72%

PAT Maths

The following shows the Year Level and percentage of students at or above the expected level:

Year 1 — 100%

Year 2 — 100%

Year 3 — 74%

Year 4 — 73%

Year 5 — 46%

Year 6- 46%

Overall Years 1 - 6 — 73%

PAT Grammar and Punctuation

The following shows the Year Level and percentage of students at or above the expected level:

Year 3 — 70%

Year 4 — 90%

Year 5 — 77%

Year 6- 63%

Overall Years 3- 6 — 75%

PAT Spelling

The following shows the Year Level and percentage of students at or above the expected level:

Year 3 — 83%

Year 4 — 100%

Year 5 — 100%

Year 6- 96%

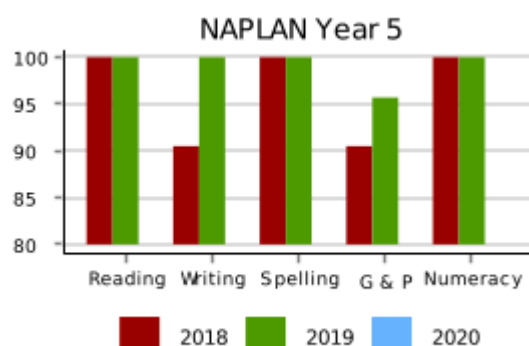
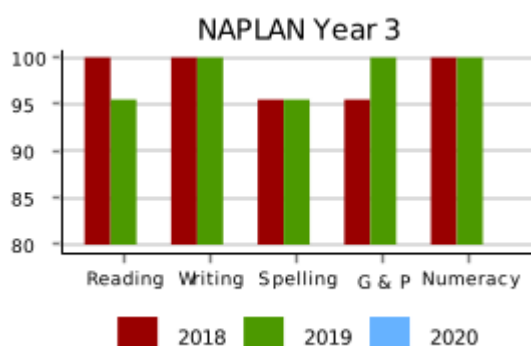
Overall Years 3- 6 — 95%

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2018	2019	2018 – 2019	2020	2019 – 2020
	%	%	Changes	%	Changes
			%	*	*
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	95.5	100.0	4.5		
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 03 Reading	100.0	95.5	-4.5		
YR 03 Spelling	95.5	95.5	0.0		
YR 03 Writing	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	90.5	95.7	5.2		
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Reading	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	100.0	0.0		
YR 05 Writing	90.5	100.0	9.5		

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Enabling students to thrive and flourish within an environment characterised by unity and quality relationships which fosters dignity, respect and hope.

That the web of relationships that make up the school community will be further enhanced.

That the capacity of students to utilize personal and social capabilities will improve.

Achievements

The first two weeks of 2020 focused on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and setting up a safe and supportive classroom. This focus culminated in a 'Give Me 5 My Classroom Rules' cooking night, which saw families come and work together on a common goal.

Students had lessons on each area of our whole school matrix and these integrated into our Monday morning Meditation where there is a natural link with the Sunday Gospel reading.

We continued to implement a whole school SEL program using a variety of resources. This is documented and stored centrally for easy access.

A Psychologist continued to work in our school facilitated through the use of Mental Health Plans under Medicare. A number of students accessed this service. Teachers were provided with strategies to help students and contact with the Psychologist was maintained through the Student Wellbeing and Learning Diversity Leaders.

The Student Wellbeing Team (SWT) which has representation from each year level, met every week to ensure policies, programs and strategies were embedded across the school.

A particular strength of the SWT has been the analysis of behaviour data using the School Wide Information System (SWIS) and the resulting consultation with teachers and parents in relation to this data. Behaviour Support Plans and Safety Plans were established with parent consultation being part of this process.

VALUE ADDED

The following items occurred throughout both Remote Learning periods and when school was on-site:

Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) was further embedded through staff Professional Learning.

A Student Representative Council was established.

Lessons on each area of the whole school matrix occurred.

Reinforcement across the school of Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL).

Continuation of our whole school Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) program.

Student Wellbeing team being able to meet weekly to ensure policies, programs and strategies are embedded across the school.

School Wide Improvement Strategy (SWIS) data collected and analysed.

Analysis of behaviour data and the sharing of it with staff and parents using SWIS.

Behaviour Support and Safety Plans were established for students in need of support.

'Give Me 5 My Classroom Rules' cooking night.

The use of Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) Student Wellbeing Resources for Remote Learning and when returning on-site.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

St Gerard's provided the opportunity for students to participate in Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) School Innovation Rapid Capture Surveys. These surveys were conducted after each of the Remote Learning periods (Terms 2 and 3). Below are some questions and a sample of responses.

Term 2

Question: What was the best thing your teacher(s) did to help you with remote learning?

Responses:

'They organized lots of work for us which would have taken a long time. This proves that they care for us a lot.'

'The best thing my teacher did was that she always held Google Meets so that we could ask questions, and she could answer them.'

'Explain my work on Google Meet.'

'I think the best things our teacher did to help us with remote learning was helping us clarify things on Google Meets and correcting our work after we've finished it.'

'The best thing that my teachers helped me with was when I didn't understand the work I asked my teachers, and they explained it to me, or they helped me.'

'Setting up Google Meets for the class to explain work and update us on important school related topics.'

Question: What did you most enjoy about remote learning?

Responses:

'I enjoyed the class meetings and specialist activities.'

'Being able to work with friends with a few tasks however also work with no distractions.'

'My mum got to see what I do at school.'

'I mostly enjoyed Maths and English.'

'Learning with my Mum.'

Question: What two digital platforms/tools/apps helped your learning the most?

Responses:

'Google documents and Google classrooms.'

'Seesaw, Literacy Planet and Reading A-Z.'

'Literacy Planet and Seesaw and Matific.'

'Literacy Planet and Matific.'

Term 3

Question: What strengths did you see in yourself during this time?

Responses:

'I was organised / good at time management.'

'I was persistent / worked hard / challenged myself, I was efficient and productive / got my work done.'

'I was persistent / worked hard / challenged myself.'

'I was independent / self-directed / confident in my learning, I was focused / less distracted.'

Question: Which parts of remote learning should we continue when school returns face to face?

Responses:

'Give all work on seesaw.'

'Worksheets on Google Docs.'

'I think we should continue having work online more often, I think remote learning has helped most of us with typing skills too.'

'Parts of remote learning that we should continue when school returns face to face is the same style of work.'

Question: What was different about the second remote learning period in comparison with the first?

Responses:

'The two periods were different because in the second remote learning period things were easier to understand than the first remote learning period.'

'It was different because everyone knew what to do unlike the first remote learning.'

'The two periods were different because in the second remote learning period things were easier to understand than the first remote learning period.'

'With the first remote learning I was a little shy but with the second remote learning I was ready for challenges.'

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

St. Gerard's Primary School acknowledges that education is compulsory for children and young people between the ages of 6 - 17 years, in accordance with Part 2.1.1 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, unless an exemption has been granted.

Parents & Guardians (Parents) must enrol their child/children, of compulsory school age, in a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.

Students are expected to attend the school, during normal school hours every day of each term unless there is an explained absence such as illness, appointments, bereavement, family holidays etc.

Parents must provide an explanation if their child is absent where there is no exemption in place. The St. Gerard's Primary School Principal will determine whether the reason for the absence is acceptable and ensure that the reason for the absence is recorded in writing.

St. Gerard's Primary School records every student's attendance twice each day. The school maintains attendance records electronically. The attendance roll is taken by the classroom teacher. Identification and follow up of unexplained absences on the day they occur is done through SMS messaging and telephone calls. SMS messages and telephone calls are made by School Office Staff and responses recorded electronically on the roll.

Throughout Remote Learning periods the attendance roll was maintained by the Principal to ensure on-site attendance by students of essential workers and those children deemed as vulnerable was accurate. Classroom teachers contacted the Principal where there were concerns about students non-attendance at online meetings and teaching sessions. These records were maintained on the school's electronic roll.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y01	92.6%
Y02	94.2%
Y03	96.1%
Y04	96.1%
Y05	96.1%
Y06	96.3%
Overall average attendance	95.2%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

St Gerard's continues to hold the care, safety and wellbeing of students as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from an inherent belief in the teaching and the mission of the Gospel. St. Gerard's acknowledges that creating a child-safe environment is a dynamic process that involves active participation and a shared responsibility from all within the school community.

Throughout 2020, our school has sought to further embed its child safety strategies through the ongoing review and implementation of policies and practices. Professional boundaries have been reinforced with all staff members and volunteers, as has obligations regarding the protection and reporting of allegations or disclosures of abuse.

Achievements

Child Safety Standards remains a regular agenda item at School meetings where the school's Child Safety Strategy, Risk Management processes and their effectiveness are reviewed. Staff participate in regular briefings and presentations on the school's Child Safety Strategy with a focus on classroom and student management, Duty of Care, and reporting requirements. As part of this, all teaching and non-teaching staff members participate in annual Child Safety Standards 'refresher training' and are required to read and sign the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct annually.

Volunteers, visitors and contractors are required to read and sign the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct when they enter the school site. Volunteers and visitors who will be working with and/or in direct contact with children are required to attend an Induction session conducted by the Principal or Deputy Principal, provide a current WWCC (Working With Children Check) and sign the school's Code of Conduct prior to undertaking any work.

Staff members have completed the Victorian Department of Education and Training on-line Mandatory Reporting module. St. Gerard's Code of Conduct' is reviewed each year and signed by all staff.

St. Gerard's continues to actively engage the school community in all aspects of Child Safety. Briefing sessions have been held with members of the school community to further disseminate requirements of Child Safety Standards, the school's Code of Conduct and its expectations of those who intend to participate in 'Child Connected Work'.

The school's Child Safety Strategy is communicated to new members of the school community at enrolment, with ongoing briefings facilitated via parent information nights, the school newsletter and website.

To achieve the school's rigorous child safety processes, the following are carefully attended to: Position advertisements, Position descriptions, Referee Checks, Key Performance Indicators

have a Child Safety focus, Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration (VIT), Working with Children Checks (WWCW) and National Criminal Record Checks (NCRC), Screening of Casual Relief Teachers (CRT's)/ Contractors and Volunteers.

The Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children at St. Gerard's against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

All staff, volunteers, clergy, visitors and contractors at St. Gerard's are expected to actively contribute to a school culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Fostering high quality leadership at all levels of the school that will inspire and unite all staff in their commitment to continuous improvement.

That all staff demonstrate an awareness of their roles as leaders within the school.

That staff efficacy, responsibility and opportunity in decision-making increases.

That middle leader instructional leadership continues to be strengthened.

Staff knowledge and understanding of Responses to Intervention and NCCD is further developed.

Achievements

The school's continued success in improving student learning, points to effective instructional leadership at various levels. The leadership structure includes the Wellbeing and Learning and Teaching teams. These teams had staff from all levels in the school and were the key drivers in these essential areas. This structure helped develop an enhanced leadership capacity and distributed leadership.

These two teams were overseen by the School Leadership Team comprised of the Principal, Deputy Principal/ Faith Formation Leader, Learning and Teaching Leader, Numeracy Leader, Literacy Leader and the Wellbeing/FEIL Leader.

Throughout 2020, meetings continued either face-to-face or online to stay connected, adjust to the challenges presented and continue to support our students, families and staff. This team approach was supported by a dynamic culture of high expectations and aspirations that saw all staff moving together in the same direction for the benefit of the students in our care.

A positive out of the challenges faced by the school leaders was an increased level of collaboration and support as they navigated through Remote Learning, transitioning back to on-site education and supporting our school community. Reflections on the experiences of 2020 has seen the school maintain some procedures and processes installed as they proved to be beneficial.

The Leadership invested time and money in developing the capacity of all staff to improve their capacity. This was done through both internal and external professional learning.

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2020

The following Professional Learning activities were completed either face-to-face or online depending on their timing throughout the year:

Functional Need Assessment Workshop
 School Marketing and Promotion Workshop
 Exploring Mathematical Pedagogies
 South Central NCCD Network Meetings
 Reading Comprehension using the Fountus and Pinnell Literacy Program
 Zart Art Workshop
 Southern/Eastern Regions 2020 NCCD Briefing
 Bike Education Workshop
 Southern Region Religious Education Leaders Network
 (TEACCH) Workshops
 Reading Recovery Network
 Deputy Principal Network
 Learning Diversity Leader Network Meetings
 Southern Region School Wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) Workshops
 Southern Region SWPBS/PBL Network Meetings
 Southern Region Principals Network Meetings
 Southern Principals Network Conference
 First Aid Training
 Building Capabilities with STEM Skills Workshop
 Southern Region Digital Education Network Meeting
 Southern Region School Administration Staff Network Meetings

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2020	26
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1018

TEACHER SATISFACTION

St Gerard's provided the opportunity for teachers to participate in Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) School Innovation Rapid Capture Surveys. These surveys were conducted after each of the Remote Learning periods (Terms 2 and 3). Below are some questions and a sample of responses.

Term2

Question: In mid-March how confident were you to teach through a remote delivery format? Score range from 1 to 10.

Responses: Response average was 4.1

Question: How confident are you now to teach through a remote delivery format? Score range from 1 to 10.

Responses: Response average was 8.3

Question: What have you come to more deeply understand about effective teaching?

Responses:

'To encourage students to present their work in a variety of ways (student voice). Keep passages of text and videos short. Give timely and effective feedback on students' work. Provide scaffolded research tasks for students.'

'Importance of clear specific directions.'

'Keeping activities simple with a clear explanation. Providing students with support tutorials and being accessible for students to contact. Limiting the number of online platforms, so students had a central point to access their learning. Being prepared before a Google Meet prior to presenting was also effective in running a smooth session.'

'Effective teaching, either remotely or face-to-face, is still based on having a clear vision about the purpose of what you want to teach and the understandings you hope the children will come to in a lesson, and planning an activity that supports that.'

Question: What have you got better at? In what ways have you grown and developed as an educator?

Responses:

'I certainly have become more confident using digital technologies, and being able to organise my teaching around that platform. It was interesting having an insight into the student's home-life, which reinforced how important it is for the school to have strong links with families. Parents are children's first educators and much of the on-line learning, particularly for children in the younger levels, was actually educating and guiding the parents.'

'Technology. I had previous knowledge but definitely had to improve in some areas. A lot more confident with technology now.'

'Planning for effective learning and teaching, setting more SMART goals. Using more teaching resources e.g. power points, slides etc.'

'I have improved in managing my classwork through Google Classroom, recording and sharing, more efficient with providing feedback with the use of rubrics and keeping stronger communication with families.'

'More effective learning and use of technology.'

Question: As staff members, what emerging practices occurred in collaboration and teamwork that you would like to sustain?

Responses:

'The team worked really well in finding activities and planning learning intentions and success criteria. We are going to continue to plan as a level and set tasks as a level.'

'LSO's were invited and involved in all communications. LSO's worked with the same teachers consistently and built good working relationships.'

'Sharing ideas and tasks.'

'Remote staff meetings were definitely more focussed and outcome driven.'

'Working on a centralised planner, planning activities together. Sharing of resources. Being introduced to websites that had great information and activities.'

Question: What positive emerging practices occurred in team unit/curriculum/lesson planning that you would like to sustain?

Responses:

'Working really well together as a team. Sharing of resources and working on the same planner. Sharing ideas and the communication about where to go next with different groups was very good.'

'Collaboration between team members in sending out work for students to complete.'

'Keeping our unit / lessons minimal with quality (not quantity). Spending time designing rubrics to self-direct students.'

'Cooperation and consultations.'

Term 3

Question: What is an area of practice change that you expect to sustain into the 'new' normal?

Responses:

'Providing timely and explicit feedback. Using the platforms accessed during remote learning. Provide many opportunities for Formative assessments for all students regularly.'

'Allowing students to complete more of their work online.'

'Using seesaw for assessment by using the video tool and journal.'

'Homework on Seesaw.'

Question: As staff members, what emerging practices occurred in collaboration and teamwork that you would like to sustain?

Responses:

'Working collaboratively in our team, keeping lines of communication open, sharing the workload and being open to new ways of doing things.'

'Planning collaboratively, working to the team's skills, efficient meetings and sharing of tasks.'

'The collaboration with other teachers from outside the school.'

'Online Staff Meetings as I am part-time.'

Question: What positive emerging practices occurred in team unit/curriculum/lesson planning that you would like to sustain?

Responses:

'Interactive activities for students, having a balance between school work and play. Sharing thoughts and ideas with activities. All united and on the same page with type of work we are providing for students.'

'Keeping the curriculum to the minimal through a cross curricular - project based learning environment. Focusing on what is important. Clarity in expectations through using rubrics and task sheets. Differentiated work tasks which allow students to manage their own learning and work on tasks to their potential.'

'Combination of onsite and offsite planning.'

'Team teaching.'

Question: What forms of professional learning have you found valuable during remote learning that you would like to continue?

Responses:

'Learning an effective way to upload lessons and work for students. More IT professional learning or offered a course to attend out of school hours. To become more proficient and improve my IT skills.'

'Having shorter in-services. When professional learning is done remotely, I am still available at the school before and after. Travel time to in-services could be spent at school doing what we do best.'

'PL's given remotely.'

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	94.2%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	96.0%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	13.3%
Graduate	20.0%
Graduate Certificate	13.3%
Bachelor Degree	66.7%
Advanced Diploma	53.3%
No Qualifications Listed	20.0%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	16.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	12.2
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	9.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	7.8
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	0.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Strengthening partnerships with families and the community that will unite all in achieving and celebrating enhanced student wellbeing and learning.

To increase the capacity of parents to engage in their child's learning through parent engagement strategies and a whole school approach to online 2 way communication platforms.

To increase the capacity of staff to engage parents in their children's learning.

Achievements

In 2020 the school focussed on the key improvement strategy to create and sustain a wide range of opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning and actively collaborate with the school. With two significant periods of Remote Learning, communication moved to online and digital modes. This proved to be a positive for our school community and by extension our children's learning.

St Gerard's continued to have a strong focus on family engagement and ensured that teachers built strong two-way communication with families with the emphasis on student learning and wellbeing. Teachers continued to collect and analyse data to ensure that family engagement in student learning was a focus in teacher planning.

St Gerard's remains a strong partner in the cluster of schools which includes St Gerard's, St Anthony's Noble Park and St Mary's Dandenong (SMAG). St Gerard's enjoys partnerships with a range of organisations and has been able to access services and supports for students, families and staff.

The school continues to have a strong relationship with Nazareth Secondary College. We actively engaged in the Lit STEM Collaboration and a number of students visited Nazareth to take part in a STEM session. Our Year 5 students also visited the college to take part in a 'Taster Day' to become familiarised with secondary school life.

St Gerard's has also strengthened partnerships with organisations to enhance student learning and wellbeing including, City of Greater Dandenong and the St Gerard's branch of the St Vincent de Paul society.

Seesaw, an online application, was the key factor to enhancing communication between school and home throughout Remote Learning and has continued to be the main vehicle since returning to on-site learning. It allows for communication between families and staff to occur easily and student work and achievements to be shared through video, photos and text.

PARENT SATISFACTION

St Gerard's provided the opportunity for parents to participate in Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) School Innovation Rapid Capture Surveys. These surveys were conducted after each of the Remote Learning periods (Terms 2 and 3). Below are some questions and a sample of responses.

Term 2 Remote Learning

Question: What was helpful in keeping your child / family connected to the school during the remote learning period?

Responses:

'Google meets and seesaw communication between teacher and students'

'Seesaw, Google meet, email and phone calls'

'Twice weekly sessions from his teacher and weekly phone call from his class teacher'

Question: What additional support would have been helpful for your child/family?

Responses:

'We are very happy with the support received by the school.'

'School and principal were great. Offered on-site when he knew I was going back to my school for the last two weeks.'

Question: How informed and up to date did you feel throughout the remote learning experience? Score range from 1 to 10

Response average was 7.8

Question: What other feedback would you provide to your school on conclusion of remote learning?

Responses:

'It was a nice experience to me to go to my child's level and teach him. I appreciate all teachers & management's efforts to make it successful.'

'Thank you to Paul Cowan and the staff at St Gerard's Dandenong north for constantly updating and supporting us through remote learning. We as parents found it initially challenging but with their daily support and communication, it was seamless.'

'Thank you to all the teachers and staff for their hard work preparing work for the students, as well as providing them with timely feedback.'

'Overall I think that the teachers, principal and staff did a great job, I love this school.'

Term 3 Remote Learning

Question: How informed and up to date did you feel throughout the remote learning experience?

Score range from 1 to 10

Response average was 8.1

Question: What other feedback would you provide to your school on conclusion of remote learning?

Responses:

'I think the teachers did an excellent job with each student. This second time was more enjoyable.'

'Thank you for all the work you have done to support our children in these difficult times.'

The school has done a very well job of keeping on track and making sure children are up to date with everything.

It was new for everyone at school and everyone equally has played an excellent role to keep us informed and continue the conversations with parents and kids.

'No further — they were amazing'.

Question: How has this experience added to your understanding of the importance of the partnership between teachers and parents in supporting children's learning?

Responses:

'This experience was very valuable for my understanding. Its give you an idea how your child think and work to complete his task.'

'We already knew the importance. This has just reinforced how important the partnership is.'

'It has helped me a lot since it is now easy to talk to teachers and have meetings with them since we are online.'

'It's effective if both parents and teachers support children's learning.'

Question: What was the biggest difference between remote learning period one and two?

Responses:

'The second time was more clear in terms of what to do, how to do it and more support of the teachers.'

'In remote period one, it was much harder since we were brand new to this whole things, but now it is slowly getting easier since we are getting used to it.'

'In remote learning 2, my child was able to adjust well in learning the lessons compared before.'

'As a family we knew what was expected for the week and the routine of subjects.'

Future Directions

Throughout 2020 we discovered and refined new modes of teaching, communication and engagement with our students and their families. Traditional modes were replaced out of necessity with some proving to be even more effective than what we had always done. In 2021, our school will be looking to maintain and embed some of these new practices, offer them as alternatives and strive to enhance the strong connection with our students and families that we currently have.

The re-establishment of programs that were key features of St Gerard's will be another main focus moving forward. Having our school community on-site to be able to attend our Monday Meditation sessions, Friday School Assemblies, school Liturgies, *Garden to Kitchen* program and Playgroup will further enhance our school. Re-connecting with our parish community and local groups will also be a focus.

At the centre of all decisions will be what is best for the continual learning of all our students.