

**St. Mary's Catholic Primary
School
Ascot Vale**





2009

**Annual Report to the
School Community**

Registered School Number: 0954



School Contact Information

Address:	74 Roseberry Street Ascot Vale
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Our School Vision

ST. MARY'S ASCOT VALE **VISION STATEMENT**

20TH September 2007

At St. Mary's we believe that Jesus and the gospel values are central to our life-long journey in the Catholic faith. We value and support strong links between students, staff, families and the parish community by nurturing spiritual development.

We are a welcoming, inclusive and supportive community that values genuine relationships.

Each child has the right to feel happy, safe and valued as a creative and unique individual, in an environment where self-esteem, respect and resilience are fostered.

We educate children to become life-long learners, actively engaged in a changing world. In a stimulating environment, we implement innovative, consistent teaching and learning practices which cater for individual needs and encourage risk taking.

St. Mary's leadership and management teams value, support and empower all members of the school community.



School Overview

St. Mary's school was opened by the Mercy Sisters in 1913. It is one of two Catholic primary schools in the parish of Ascot Vale with its sister school being St Margaret Mary's, Maribyrnong. Both schools have been led by the parish priest, Fr Jim Clarke since 2002.

The majority of students complete their entire primary schooling at St Mary's with the current enrolment being 376. Since the last review; enrolments have increased by 17 students.

St Mary's has a culturally diverse population comprising sixteen nationalities with 38.2% of our students having a language background other than English. 90 % of our students are Catholic and 10 % non-Catholic. Of the Non-Catholic students, 62 % belong to other Christian faiths, 4 % belong to non-Christian faiths (Druze & Buddhism) and 27 % have no religious affiliation. The majority of students were born in Australia, with twenty-one students being born overseas, of these, sixteen are from non-English speaking backgrounds. In addition, seventy-six children who were born in Australia have parents from non-English speaking backgrounds. After English, the most commonly used language in our school is Vietnamese, followed by Italian, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and Greek. We have 11 integrated students, who have specific learning needs, chronic health issues or social-emotional needs. There are a number students requiring special support due to family issues such as divorce, separation and emotional problems such as anxiety.

The socio-economic background of our families is equally as diverse as the cultural background, ranging from double-income, professional backgrounds to those families who are dependent on government subsidies for housing and income. 19% of the families at St. Mary's, are eligible for the Education Maintenance Allowance.

The current principal is Mr. Daniel Mogg who has led the school since Term 3, 2006. Since that time there has been a complete change of the leadership team with the Deputy Principal, R.E.C and Curriculum Coordinator leaving the school. The Principal is supported by the Leadership Team comprising of the Deputy Principal, REC, P-2 Literacy Coordinator and Learning and Teaching Coordinator. This year, the school employs 14 full-time and 12 part-time teachers, 2 part-time secretary/school officers, 3 part-time integration/teacher aides, 1 full time secretary, 1 part-time maintenance officer and 2 part-time cleaners. The school has 14 grades comprising 2 classes for each grade level with four of these being job shares (0.8/0.2). Specialist areas taught are L.O.T.E., I.C.T., Performing Arts, and Health/ P.E. The teaching staff is predominantly female.

A strong sense of community permeates St Mary's School. As visitors enter through the front foyer, they are welcomed by a bright display of new staff and students as well as a portrait of our patron saint, Mary. The importance of community is also apparent in work of the Parish Education Board, the Parent's Auxiliary and the Father's Association.



Principal's Report

St. Mary's strong Catholic culture permeates every aspect of our school life. It is articulated in our Vision Statement and lived out by all members of our school community.

We pride ourselves in having 'Jesus and the Gospel values' at the core of our vision. This enables us to set clear direction and develop a positive climate that fosters strong relationships amongst students, parents and staff. Parent and student survey responses are extremely positive endorsing the direction of the new Leadership Team and supporting the school's Vision. Since the last review there has been significant growth in all 5 Spheres of Schooling.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In the Sphere of Education in Faith, it is apparent that the teaching and living of the Catholic faith is central to our school's purpose. The effectiveness of how Religious Education is approached is shown by our strong commitment to prayer, sacraments and the liturgy. This has been achieved through prayer experiences, the understanding of sacraments and their links to parish life. Under the leadership of our Parish Priest Fr. Justin Ford, our weekly school/parish mass is integral to the strong Parish/School link which is at the core of our school vision. Parents strongly agree (Insight SRC 82%) that their children have the opportunity to reflect on their faith, pray together, and celebrate liturgies and the sacraments.

The St Mary's community will build onto the strong Catholic Culture that has already been strongly established and continues to be fostered.

LEARNING & TEACHING

Over the last four years a major focus in Learning and Teaching has been to develop 21st Century learners. Central to this has been the development of Literacy, Numeracy and Inquiry-based practices that sets the two areas of 'learning to learn' and 'domain content' as being equally important. Our task has been to develop teacher understandings about the philosophies that underpin these areas through a whole school focus with the aim of coming to a broad agreement about successful pedagogy and practices. We have worked towards developing the learning and teaching strategies, as couched within our understandings, that enable teachers to differentiate the curriculum, in all Domains, to meet both the needs of our students as well as their interests.

In order to achieve this, we have made a strong commitment to providing ongoing, quality professional development, planning support across the domains and relevant resources (particularly in the area of information and communication technologies). The ongoing nature of this support has been crucial to the development and embedding of understandings about Numeracy, Literacy and Inquiry practices for both longstanding and incoming staff.

Our Insight SRC survey supports the consistency of our beliefs about Learning and Teaching as our results indicate that Learning is our school strength. To continue with our task in building teacher efficacy in this area we are committed to the professional support we have already demonstrated to be successful.



St Mary's Ascot Vale

STUDENT WELLBEING

A strong commitment to the wellbeing of the whole school has led to a positive, inclusive and safe school environment which is in line with our strong Catholic values and beliefs. Our holistic approach and P-6 practices and programs such as Bounce Back have contributed to students, staff and parents all feeling that St. Mary's is a safe and happy place to live and work. Meeting the needs of each individual and the development of the whole child is a key to this success. We aim to develop the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional needs of the child where *'self esteem, respect and resilience are fostered.'*

Student behaviour at St. Mary's is exemplary where the values of respect and care for one another are demonstrated daily. We acknowledge and celebrate this success as evidenced in our data (Insight SRC Parent & student Survey top 25% of schools – Classroom Behaviour.)

In future school improvement, we will continue to review and update our current student welfare policies to ensure they continue to be effective and relevant to our school community.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

We have a strong community spirit at St. Mary's developed through our positive and proactive partnership with parents and the parish community. In Particular, this can be seen in our daily whole school morning prayer session where we come together to give thanks for the blessings in our lives and ask for help and forgiveness.

Family members are always welcomed at St. Mary's and encouraged to play an integral role in their children's education. We also ensure that Catholic education is accessible, affordable and in particular, inclusive of our families who may suffer from financial hardship.

We provide our students with regular opportunities to reach out to the wider community and help others in need by being involved in various fundraising activities and other community services.

In the future, we aim to maintain the vibrant, dynamic environment we have created together over the past years by continuing to provide opportunities for our parents to be a part of our community.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

The new Leadership Team aims to successfully implement clear structures and practices in line with the School Vision Statement. A collaborative approach between students, staff and parents endeavours to promote shared decision making across all levels of the school. The congruence between our supportive leadership and role clarity indicates that the new leadership is providing the school with direction and purpose.

Our goal will be to continue to empower all in the school community to contribute to resolving issues, make decisions and therefore develop a sense of shared goals and values.



St Mary's Ascot Vale

ITEM 1

STAFF ATTENDANCE **Teaching Staff 89.99%**
Non teaching staff 98.89%
Overall 92.75%

The average attendance rate for teaching staff during the 2009 school year was 89.99% for teaching staff and 98.89% for non-teaching staff. Overall total staff attendance was 92.75% for the year. Staff absences were mostly due to illness or carer's leave. When a staff member was absent every effort was made to place a teacher who was familiar with the school into the classroom.

Staff attending approved professional learning activities during a school day/s have been classified as being in attendance.

Context for reporting

Staff attendance figures include staff on extended leave, such as:

- Long service leave
- Long term sickness
- Leave without pay
- Maternity leave

During 2009:

Staff have demonstrated a commitment through additional attendances at:

Yr. 5 & 6 three day School Camp
Yr. 3 & 4 two day School Camp
Organizing and attending excursions
After hours meetings
Extra curricular activities, such as Music Recitals
Representation on the Parents & Friends Association
Sacramental Nights
Graduation Ceremony
Afternoon and evening Parent Teacher Interviews
Prep Orientation Evening
Prep transition sessions
Interschool Sport
Parents & Friends functions

ITEM 2

STAFF RETENTION

The information presented here is the proportion of teaching staff retained from the previous year.

There was an 80.77% staff retention from 2008 to 2009

The data represents retention of individual staff members. Staff who were on extended leave (e.g. maternity leave, long-service leave, extended sick leave) have not been included in the calculation. Teachers employed on short term contracts are included. The retention rate of staff includes full staff teachers, part time teachers, integration aides, administration staff and emergency teachers.



St Mary's Ascot Vale

ITEM 3

TEACHER QUALIFICATION

All staff employed at St. Mary's school have appropriate qualifications as per the guidelines laid down by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Data collected by the Catholic Education Office and our school data indicates the following:

Teachers' Qualifications

Level	This School	All Schools
Degree - Doctorate	0%	0.2%
Degree - Masters	6.25%	7.96%
Diploma - Graduate	15.63%	23.55%
Certificate - Graduate	0%	3.71%
Degree - Bachelor	62.5%	67.3%
Diploma - Advanced	65.63%	46.75%
No Qualifications Listed	12.5%	9.04%

ITEM 4

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

This item includes replacement costs, teacher allowances and expenses, subscriptions and levies, journals and periodicals, catering for school functions and books purchased for the library.

The total expenditure of Professional Learning for staff in 2009 was \$65000. This works out to be approximately \$2000 per staff member. It is also important to point out that some of the Professional Learning that staff are involved in takes place after hours and as such does not incur replacement costs to the school.

Professional Learning that teachers were involved in was as follows:

- Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) – curriculum study and moderation training
- Student Welfare networks
- Religious Education Professional development
- Inquiry Curriculum Focus
- Maths – Zone Success in Numeracy Education
- Literacy – Reading Recovery Inservice
- Literacy – Zone Network Inservice Days
- Student Wellbeing PD
- Religious Education, Deputy Principal, and Curriculum Networks
- Religious Education Conference
- School Officer networks
- SAS [financial program] training

Professional Development underpins our teaching and learning practice and supports our school improvement. It highlights the commitment of the teaching staff to develop their own professional knowledge and practice.



St Mary's Ascot Vale

ITEM 5

STUDENT ATTENDANCE : 95.64%

The average student attendance rate for our students was 95.64%.

All non-attendances at school are recorded on the class roll. Teachers are expected to note the reason for absences. All parents are requested to send a note when a child returns to school after an absence or to ring the school office. These notes are also kept on record to substantiate the information recorded in the roll.

We believe that if students regularly miss days of school that they are at risk of missing out on key learning activities and may experience long term difficulties with their learning. We also believe that regular attendance helps children to develop social skills such as friendship building, teamwork, communication skills and healthy self esteem.



ITEM 6

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING NATIONAL MINIMAL STANDARDS:

Yr.3Reading	100%	Yr.5 Reading	100%
Yr. 3 Writing	100%	Yr. 5 Writing	100%
Yr. 3 Spelling	100%	Yr. 5 Spelling	100%
Yr. 3 Grammar & Punctuation	100%	Yr. 5 Grammar & Punctuation	100%
Yr. 3 Numeracy	100%	Yr. 5 Numeracy	100%

School Improvement Report data provided by the Catholic Education Office provides the percentage (%) change, where available, in the proportion of students in the school who met the national Literacy and Numeracy benchmarks, as assessed by the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), in comparison to the previous year.

Example: A figure of +10% in Year 5 Reading means there was a 10% increase in the proportion of students who achieved the national benchmark from one year to the next, e.g. the proportion went from 80% to 88%.

A figure of -10% in Year 5 Numeracy means there was a 10% decrease in the proportion of students who achieved the national benchmark from one year to the next e.g. the proportion went from 90% to 81 %.

SUBJECT AREA	% INCREASE/DECREASE
Yr 3 Reading	+1.9%
Yr 3 Writing	0 %
Yr 3 Numeracy	+3.8 %

SUBJECT AREA	% INCREASE/DECREASE
Yr 5 Reading	0 %
Yr 5 Writing	2.2 %
Yr 5 Numeracy	0 %

Proportion of Students meeting National Minimum Standard

	Year 3			Year 5		
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
Reading	98%	98.1%	100%	96.1%	100%	100%
Writing	100%	100%	100%	98.1%	97.8%	100%
Spelling	N/A	96.2%	100%	N/A	97.8%	100%
Grammar & Punctuation	N/A	100%	100%	N/A	100%	100%
Numeracy	95.9%	100%	100%	98.1%	100%	100%

**ITEM 7****Change in Proportion of Students meeting National Minimum Standard**

	Year 3			Year 5		
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Reading	-2%	0.1%	1.9%	2.2%	3.9%	0%
Writing	0%	0%	0%	0.1%	-0.3%	2.2%
Spelling	N/A	N/A	3.8%	N/A	N/A	2.2%
Grammar & Punctuation	N/A	N/A	0%	N/A	N/A	0%
Numeracy	-2.0%	4.1%	0%	4.3%	1.9%	0%

ITEM 8**VALUE ADDED**

The 'value added' section of this report refers to those school activities and programs that have a positive effect on the wellbeing and achievement of students and the school community.

The following are a list of curricular and extra curricular activities that we believe have had a positive impact:

Social Skills Programs

- Buddy Program
- Student Wellbeing focus at staff meetings
- Student Welfare Group
- Parent involvement within the school
- Weekly awards
- Acknowledgement of student learning via newsletters.

Catholicity

- RE program Prep – Yr.6
- Whole school, level and class Liturgies on a weekly basis
- Celebration of three sacraments: Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation
- Parent sacramental night
- Donations of food and clothing are given to the St. Vincent de Paul society for distribution to those in need, particularly through the Poorman's Mass.
- Casual clothes day to raise funds for Caritas (Project Compassion), Centacare-Catholic Family Welfare,

Health and Fitness Program

- PE program Prep – Yr. 6
- Interschool Sports Competition
- School Athletics Carnival
- After School Care Sporting Activities

School Camp & Excursions

- Year 5 / 6 school camp
- Year 3 / 4 school Camp
- Excursions across all grade levels
- Incursions across all grade levels



Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

- Computers in all classrooms
- Presentations using a data projector in assemblies

Music /Arts Program

- Prep – Yr. 6 music program
- Weekly Assembly performances.
- Dance classes are offered during the school week
- Opportunities for private/semi private piano and guitar lessons

Educational Programs

- Reading Recovery Program
- CLaSS Literacy program (Prep to Yr.2), Literacy program Yr.3 to 6 including professional learning team meetings
- Numeracy/Literacy support
- SINE Maths program
-

Building Community

- Prep Transition Program
- Fathers' Day Stall
- Mothers' Day Stall
- Parent morning teas
- Strong Links with Parents' and Friends Association
- Weekly newsletters to all parents.
- Elderly parishioner's Christmas lunch.

Many of our 'Value Added' activities are reported to parents via newsletters and presentations at assemblies. Our school newsletter is available online each week.

ITEM 9

PARENT, STUDENT & TEACHER SATISFACTION DATA

The staff of St Mary's has been aiming to develop Student Wellbeing in a variety of ways and this is reflected in the high quality of relationships at our school. This is demonstrated in the student Insight SRC survey that shows students feel socially connected to their peers (83%).

Our strong school relationship culture extends across students, parents and teachers and contributes to the positive emotional tone in the workplace (Insight SRC teachers 61%, students 60% and parents 74% - Approachability). A further contributor to high student connectedness to school (Insight SRC 68%) is the establishment of St Mary's Student Leadership Program which provides an opportunity for students to participate in school decision making. This view is supported by the teachers who believe that students can express their views and opinions and participate in school policy and decision making. (Insight SRC 67%).

At St Mary's we provide a safe and happy environment for all students. There is a strong belief amongst our students and parents that students are safe from bullying harassment (SRC data 75%, 97% respectively) which, in turn, reduces student distress (SRC 73%). The results from DEEM 2007 data confirm this idea with staff believing that there is an effective focus on student welfare in the school (62%)

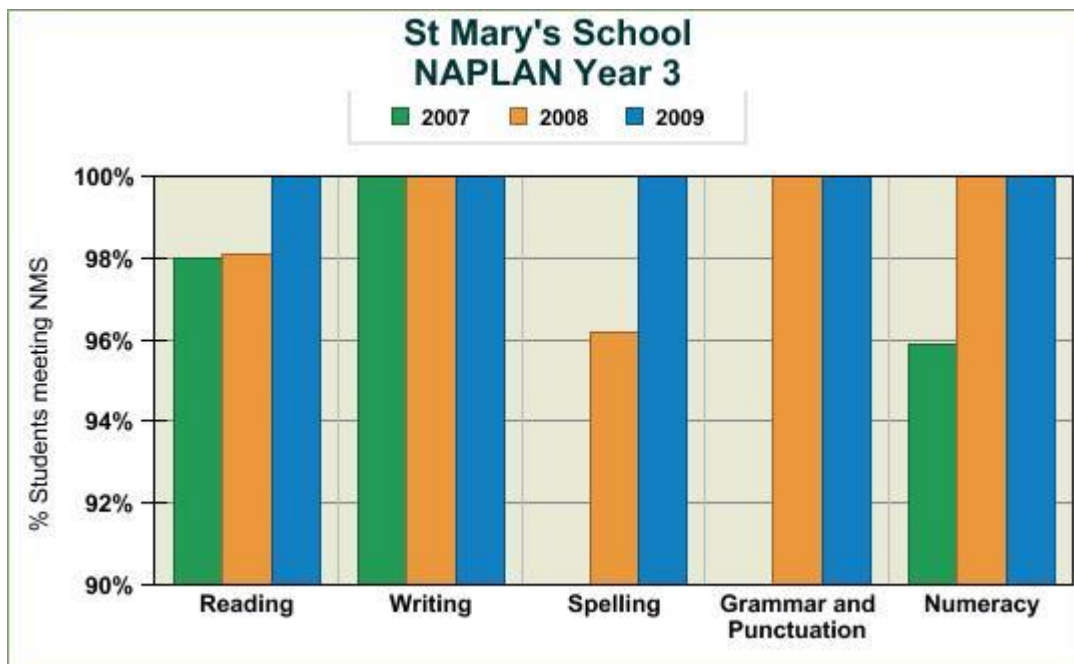


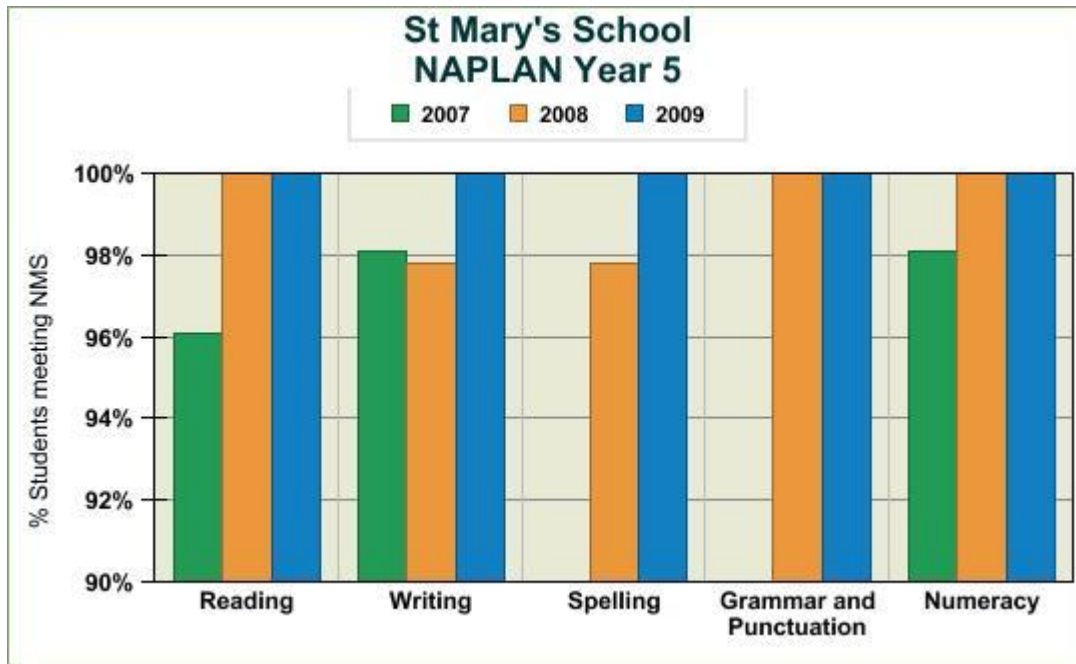
To ensure the physical safety of our students and protection from harassment, St Mary's has an agreed behaviour management policy with a common approach to discipline. This falls within the framework of agreed school rules and student negotiated classroom rules. Staff are confident in the effectiveness of this policy (Insight SRC 73%) and this is further supported by the low levels of student misbehaviour (Insight SRC 78%) and classroom misbehaviour (Insight SRC 66%). This is strongly supported by student and parent responses (Insight SRC 75% and 95%).

One of our goals for School community is *“to continue to develop strong relationships with the community to further home/school/ parish partnerships”*

The Insight SRC Range Graph reveals that the school is receptive of and understands the views and concerns of the parents (Insight SRC 80). This result is sitting on the cusp of the top 25% and middle 50%. The extent to which parents have an opportunity and/or are encouraged to make a contribution to school planning is ranked above the middle 50% of schools (Insight SRC Range Graph 72).

ITEM 10
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR 2007, 2008 & 2009







Financial Performance – Item 11

Reporting Framework	Modified Cash	\$
Recurrent income	Tuition	
School fees		\$282 637
Other fee income		\$131 721
Private income		\$58863
State government recurrent grants		\$493 672
Australian government recurrent grants		\$1 801 1562
Total recurrent income		\$2 768 455
Recurrent expenditure	Tuition	
Salaries, allowances and related expenses		\$1 129 583
Non salary expenses		\$308 390
Total recurrent expenditure		\$2 437 973
Capital income and expenditure	Tuition	
Government capital grants		\$925 330
Capital fees and levies		\$15 183
Other capital income		\$70 000
Total capital income		\$1 010 513
Total capital expenditure		\$952 374
Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)	Tuition	
Total opening balance		\$38846
Total closing balance		\$0
Non DEEWR FQ reported items	Tuition (includes boarding)	
System levies (payments)		(197,611)
Intra systemic transfer receipts (payments)		445
Diocesan capital fund (SCF) receipts (payments)		(19,292)

Note that the information provided above does not include the following items:

System levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and diocesan supplementary capital fund (SCF) supported borrowings for primary schools. The information provided is not comparable with other educational sectors. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is in the process of reviewing the Financial Questionnaire (FQ) during 2009, that may ultimately change the method of reporting these exclusions.



Future Directions

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Over the next four years, we aim to maintain and improve upon the structures and processes already in place. Through collaborative leadership and management practices we aim to:

- Address the way in which we manage professional development in line with the School Improvement Plan and targeting staff needs.
- Explore ways in which to address the feeling of excessive work demands whilst maintaining high student outcomes.
- Explore ways to improve empowerment among the staff whilst retaining a strong feeling of teamwork and ownership.
- Develop a staff mentoring program to ensure that support is provided for staff.
- Address parent concern regarding reports and our reporting processes.
- Continue working on preparations for the proposed masterplan.
- Continue raising funds through grants and fundraising.
- Maintain and update resources.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The St Mary's community will build onto the strong Catholic Culture that has already been strongly established and continues to be fostered.

We will strive to provide more effective planning with emphasis on targeted professional development for teachers. Professional development should be complimented by:

- The sharing of innovative ideas between staff
- Role-modeling and mentoring within the peer group
- Allocated Staff Meetings for external PD
- Building up relevant resources and the need to have a consistent purchasing plan to regularly update those resources

In addition to this we aspire to getting all classroom teachers accredited to teach RE in our school.

TEACHING & LEARNING

The St Mary's plan for the future must continue to build on the strengths identified in the data to date. We would also recommend that we;

- Investigate ways in which to improve Numeracy outcomes.
- Maintain and improve present initiatives in Literacy.
- Explore gender education and learning styles (brain theory).
- Continue to provide opportunities for teachers and students to further develop ICT skills and ways in which to incorporate these as a more effective tool to enhance learning.
- Increase the school and teachers' capacity to use data to recognize and respond more effectively to student needs.
- To continue to build teachers' skills to enable them to expand the repertoire of teaching approaches that stimulate learning and motivate students.
- Collection of school-based data on a central data base.
- Explore strategies to increase student motivation.

STUDENT WELL BEING



At St Mary's we highly value positive relationships that foster a feeling of well being throughout the whole school community. Hence we will aim to:

- Continue with the whole school approach to student engagement, learning, social skills and behaviour management.
- Review and update current student welfare/ wellbeing, behaviour policies and guidelines.
- Provide students with the opportunity to have input into the school routines and structures through class meetings and student leadership.
- Continue to survey students via DEEM survey to identify improvements and challenges.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

We want St. Mary's to keep improving. We want to maintain the vibrant, dynamic environment we have created together over the past years. As we continue to develop School Community, we will aim to have "Gospel Values" at the centre of our every endeavour. Thus, we will aim to continue to develop in School Community by:

- Keeping our entrance foyer bright and welcoming.
- Supporting the Parent's Auxiliary and the Father's Association.
- Reaching out to the Parish community through special events and communication through the Parish Newsletter.
- Supporting parents with acquiring 'Working with Children certificates so that they can continue to be involved through classroom help and other school activities.
- Providing the students with the opportunity to attend special functions, eg Social Justice forums and St Patrick's Day Mass.
- Supporting those in need, both within the school, parish and wider community.
- Working co-operatively with neighbouring schools and pre-schools.
- Continuing to provide as many opportunities as practicable for our community to celebrate together.
- Continuing to provide parent education.
- Accepting and celebrating cultural diversity.
- Fostering inclusiveness.
- Evaluating our performance and striving to improve in our efforts.