



Our Lady of Lourdes School

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Annual School Community Meeting Principal's Report 22 November 2022

Good evening and thank you for your attendance at our Annual School Community Meeting, reporting on the year that is rapidly drawing to a close. This was the third year that COVID has impacted on school life. We began the year with the threat of cases looming, with other schools having their first cases in the first week of the school year, resulting in full school closures. It was a very uncertain time, and we had to keep getting our heads around the changing rules, have plans in place for what might happen, and be agile and ready to switch at any time to remote learning, or a hybrid model of face-to-face and remote learning. We still have 'At-home Learning Packs' prepared, ready to send home at a moment's notice. Fortunately, they were not needed. The cases at our school were steady and prolonged, with a really tricky month where we had lots of staff affected at the same time, and then students away sick over a longer period after that. It is tricky to manage curriculum delivery and assessments when absenteeism impacts on class work.

On the CEWA COVID Reporting form, we have had 160 positive cases reported, with the dubious honour of being the first to test positive going to Mrs Sarre, and the first staff member to be lucky to get it a second time being Mrs Rabjones. Some of us have not had it yet! Although school events and activities are back to pre-pandemic 'normality', we continue to notice long term effects on the interruption to our lives, and I am sure this will still be evident in years to come.

I would like to acknowledge our staff, who always go above and beyond to support student engagement and learning. Our teaching staff who plan and assess and are always learning and adapting to meet the needs of all our students. Our wonderful Education Assistant team, who are behind the scenes a lot of the time, always willing to do whatever is asked, and whatever is needed. People are always organising ways to celebrate special events and occasions. Our shared lunch Tuesdays, Easter morning tea, Melbourne Cup lunch, celebrations for birthdays, or just when we all pull together to set up for something like Father's Day or Mother's Day breakfasts, Sacraments or end of year activities. Christmas concert rehearsals and group chats show the level of commitment (or maybe the level of commitment to ensure we limit embarrassment on stage on the concert night). People are always offering to help each other and for this I am so grateful. Your children are in good hands. Special thanks, also, to my Assistant Principals and Administration Team.

One of the main functions of the ASCM is to report on school activities and progress towards achieving school goals, as outlined in our Catholic School Improvement Plan. We continued to collaborate with the Parish for Sacramental programs and continued to focus on prayer in the classroom and as a whole school. Our 'Education' goals were to keep making learning intentions and success criteria explicit to students to ensure learning is 'visible', we refined the whole school spelling program, explored Talk4Writing as a whole school approach to writing, and continued with Mathematics intervention. We have been working towards embedding the use of 1:1 devices in Years 4-6 as part of digital learning integration, where devices are used to support and enhance learning, not to replace what can best be done with pen and paper, but to add value. Devices at OLOL are used as tools for learning, not 'toys' or free-time activities. We continued to celebrate NAIDOC week and have Acknowledgement of Country at all gatherings, including meetings and assemblies. Staff cultural awareness is growing as we engage with professional learning around cross-cultural competence. Continued focus on staff and student well-being was highlighted during our inaugural 'well-being week', and this

will be a feature again next year. One of our strategic intents is that a culture of learning and respect for all creation permeates the school. One element of this intent is our care for the environment, evidenced by our waste-wise, water-wise and recycling initiatives. I know that many parents have been 'encouraged' by their children to consider the appropriate bin for an item of rubbish. How wonderful that our students are so concerned to help guide us in our care for the world.

Our Teaching and Learning vision guides our planning: **At OLOL we strive to develop Christ-centred confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners who are active and informed members of the community.**

Our 2023 Catholic School Improvement Plan will focus on consolidation of whole school processes and programs, aiming to embed initiatives already commenced. It will also have a focus on incorporating 'Mercy' traditions and charisms into school like, will investigate differentiation strategies in English and Mathematics and will have a continued focus on contemporary learning and digital integration. Our school will be involved in a School Compliance Review (Audit) linked to registrations standards in June. Preparation for that will occur during Semester 1.

In 2022, Playgroup on Monday morning continued to be a much-loved feature of our weeks. A regular group of Mums, Dads and Bubs came along for messy play and fun with each other. Thanks to Kate Beard for her outstanding facilitation of this introduction to our school for our youngest members and their parents.

Our Year 6 Art Project is now in its 7th year, and although we were unsuccessful in achieving a QCE Award for this initiative, it continues to bring colour and life to our school. From the mural representing our school values in the undercover area, our mosaic with our school motto, multiple pieces in the school hall representing memorable elements of primary school education, areas where our students travel from to attend at OLOL and representation of our historic faction names, surf boards as a tribute to our Surf Camp and MJR experience, this year our students illustrated 'What brightens your mood' as part of a collaboration to project artwork on the skate park in Bunbury to raise awareness about mental health. It is wonderful for our Year 6 students to 'leave their mark' at the end of their years with us. Thank you to Hayley Thompson and Gill Brady for coordinating this project.

The STEM family challenge, now in its 6th year, was 'out of this world' literally! I am sure the projectile from one family catapult is still orbiting the earth. Once again, our parents go to the next level to engage with this activity, making memories for their children. I had a conversation with one grandfather, who told me that making a catapult with his grand-daughter was a highlight of his year, getting to spend time with her creating something together.

We continued to have sports coaching sessions facilitated through Sporting Schools and Healthways grants, with coaches guiding students in football, cricket, athletics, and ultimate frisbee sessions, and basic sporting skills by MBA. Lapping Legends remains a great way to encourage activity and working towards goals, facilitated by parents every Friday morning before school. Lunch time Lego club provides an alternative activity for students who choose this avenue for creative expression.

Extension opportunities were provided this year, with Creative Edge challenge, writing extension, reading extension, ICAS Assessments and Chess Club. Students selected to participate were identified by the classroom teachers, based on assessments and observations, and students were extended in their learning, facilitated by Mrs Houston.

On the sporting front, the Winter Carnival was a great day. For the second time, we took a team to participate in the Interschool Cross Country, after holding our own school event. The Interschool Athletics Carnival was back at the Bunbury track this year.

A large group of students and staff attended the community ANZAC commemorations this year. We continue to give service and look beyond ourselves with our Social Justice initiatives, including 'Winter Blanket Appeal', 'Socktober' and 'Vinnies Christmas Hamper' appeal. We thank our generous community for supporting these outreach initiatives.

The Catholic School Advisory Council commenced the year undertaking compulsory annual online training in Child Safe procedures and practices. The group continued to review the school budget to ensure we are keeping on track. The number of students enrolled has the greatest impact on school budget, and this term our students numbers, including 20 Pre-Kindy students, reached 250. Most of our early years classes are full for 2023, however there are some places in Years 4 and 5, if you know of anyone who is interested in joining us.

Focus areas for the SAC this year were a ventilation audit, reviewing the Educational Continuity Plan for COVID and Remote Learning, investigation of the expansion of hard-court facilities and support for an upgraded sound system – funded by the P&F. They also assisted with advice managing LSL requests and replacements, additional EA time based on student need, COVID updates and rapidly changing rules, repairs to brick paving to comply with safety requirements, upgrade of water fountain outside Year 1 and hot water for coffee in the staff room. The group worked through the new CSAC Guidelines, and invited student leaders to attend one of our meetings to give a 'student voice' to our deliberations – this was a highlight for our group this year. We also reviewed demographic data and began Capital Development planning to prepare for the future of our school. The exploration of solar panels to reduce our power bills and lessen our impact on the environment is part of our planning for next year. The new Guidelines state that an effective Advisory Council should have between 4 and 6 elected members. We currently have 7, so to align with the guidelines, we will reduce our numbers by 1 to commence the 2023 school year. I would like to acknowledge and thank two retiring members, Jenelle Commisso and Gemma Denton for their contribution to our group, Gemma for 6 years as Treasurer (I am hoping for puppies, kittens or cute kids in her report tonight). Gemma has always managed to provide us with a simple explanation for those budget discussions when all heads seem to bow over the numbers and people nod in agreement, awaiting Gemma to say that all is OK – thanks for explaining things to us in language we can understand, and Jenelle for 4 years as an elected member, several years as P&F (uniform) representative, and a long history of willingness to cook sausages, help direct cars to B&B parking, and general help for any/all school/P&F activities (and also her ability to always bring chocolate to our meetings!).

Our retiring P&F Executive have been outstanding in their roles. Never before in my 30+ years in schools, have I ever seen three sisters take on the roles of President, Secretary and Treasurer, Monique, Annie and Celeste. There was no evidence of any sibling rivalry, or claims of 'I'm telling Mum on you' at any of our meetings, instead the toddlers and babies were passed seamlessly from lap to lap during meetings, to allow for reports to be delivered or minutes to be typed. Thanks to their adopted-sisters, Olivia, Janica and Rachel for their incredible work this year as well. I feel compelled to include Emma Tyrrell in the P&F group for her tireless work, too, particularly with the Entertainment Book and Book Fair. Monique will give an account of the P&F activities for the year, but I still need to acknowledge the impact their work has made on the school, particularly with the new sound system, the support for the Year 5 classroom furniture, and the very visible evidence of a job well-done – the new, soon to be completed, basketball/netball/four square court. On top of that, the outstanding success of Mother's Day breakfast, Father's Day breakfast, Grandparents Day, Colour Run and the Disco, really fit the brief of the role of the P&F being 'Fund-raising and Friend-raising'. How lucky are we to have opportunities for all family members to engage with our school community and activities.

In 2022, we welcomed Clare Crapella as Year 6 teacher and Maureen French as Pre-primary teacher. Billy Boucher, Sophie McNaughton and Kristy Wood joined us as Education Assistants. During the year, Rebekah Sarchett left to have her second baby. Kristy Wood will be leaving us at the end of the year, and Cheryl Scott will be reducing her teaching days from 5 to 1 and having a change of pace. Thank you, Cheryl, for all your years as a classroom teacher. Fortunately, it is not 'goodbye', just a more relaxed Cheryl who comes to school one day each week. We welcome Nicola Cross who is joining us as Year 6 teacher three days per week, and Reily Lucas, who will be in Pre-primary four days each week. Matilda Worsfold will be working as a part-time Education Assistant in Kindy.

This year, Mona Dykstra and Jen Clarke have completed 20 years of dedicated service to our school and community, and we thank them for their work over such a long period of time. Many students have been impacted by their care and devotion to their roles. Thank you, Mona and Jen for being part of our OLOL family for so long.

As we look to the future, an expression of interest for a Capital Development planning process has been submitted to CEWA and plans are underway to prepare a Master Plan and start to detail how to go about achieving this vision for the school. Proposals include a Multi-Purpose Learning Space, for specialist teaching and learning, an office upgrade to make a more welcoming and functional first point of contact for the school and a wellbeing space for staff and students. The re-vamping of the Pre-primary classroom to increase the size and link the room to the toilet facilities, future expansion of Year 1 and 2 classrooms to enable more play-based investigative learning in line with NQS (National Quality Standards) and future expansion of senior classrooms to allow for contemporary future-focussed teaching and learning. Although years away, it is exciting to begin the process to continue to upgrade our school and facilities, to provide the best possible learning environment for our students.

With a little less than three weeks of the school year (with students) to go, I admit to feeling like it was just yesterday when we began 2022. On reflection, a great deal has been achieved and lots of experiences have been lived – some (like the pandemic) are forgettable, but others are very memorable, and add value to our lives together here at OLOL.

We still have many activities to look forward to as we conclude the school year. Our Community Carols night and End of Year Awards nights and Graduation are two opportunities to celebrate the skills and talents and successes of our students. Thank you to each and every one of you who are part of the OLOL family. It is a great privilege to be part of this community.

Wishing you all the best for the upcoming festive season and holiday period of recharge and renewal with your lovely families. At the end of the day (and year!) the students are why we are here, and everything we do is based on the needs of the students. If we remain child-focused and Christ-centred in all our decisions, we will achieve our vision of providing a school environment where our aim is to be 'Many Minds – One Heart, in Christ.

Thank you

Angela Hegney
Principal