

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT 2015 ST ITA'S PARENTS AND FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION

Mission and Religious Education

Religious Education at St Ita's comprises of two separate, yet complementary, dimensions. The first is the **learning and teaching** of Religion in the classroom, and the second is the **religious life of the school**, which includes 4 components: Prayer & Worship, Religious Identity & Culture, Social Action & Justice, and Evangelisation & Faith Formation.

The following describes the school's achievements within the Mission and Religious Education dimension of the community:

- Due to the resignation of the previous APRE the role of APRE was filled very competently and successfully by a member of staff in an acting capacity
- The implementation of the new Religious Education curriculum across all year levels – teachers were released for planning and assisted by the acting APRE and RE- Education Officer BCE to produce contemporary units of learning
- Meditation practices continued in each class with Prep, Yrs 1, 2 and 3 students participating in the *Calm for Kids* program/ all classrooms were resourced with relevant materials to engage students in prayer and contemplative practices
- The focus for the year was *Be the Light* – the students were encouraged to follow the teachings of Jesus through being a light to others in their daily lived experience
- Creation of a sacred space in the school lobby with a changing focus aligned to the religious calendar and significant religious events
- Development of a set of Gospel Values (based on the St Ita's Hive of Learning) to make specific the values that are integral to our school mission and ethos
- Whole school liturgies and prayer rituals included:
 - Opening School Year Mass, Ash Wednesday Mass, Holy Week and Easter liturgies, Mass of the Assumption, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, St Ita's Feast Day, Anzac Day Ceremony, Remembrance Day, Catholic Education Week Mass, Liturgy for Grandparents, All Saints Day, Prep 2016 Orientation Liturgy, Christmas Carols Evening, Yr 6 Graduation Liturgy, End of Year School Mass, class Masses
- Participation in the Parish Sacramental Program

- Attendance at Family Masses has increased
- Fundraising as part of the Social Justice Ministry: St Vincent de Paul, Day for Daniel, Caritas and Project Compassion, Orange Sky Laundry Project
- Positive impact on school life through the Yr 6 Leadership Ministry Program

Learning and Teaching

During 2015 the staff was involved in significant professional development opportunities to assist them to implement the Australian Curriculum and improve student learning outcomes.

- Engaged with Literacy & Numeracy Monitoring Tools and the survey instruments of the TEACH element in the BCE DELT (Delivering Excellent Learning and Teaching) Strategy to monitor literacy and numeracy progress (PAT-R and PAT-M online assessment tools to gather literacy and numeracy data across the school), pedagogy, teacher practice and student voice
- A set of learning dispositions was created that supports students to develop an understanding of the characteristics of a successful learner
- The weekly student awards focus on the learning attributes of students as measurements of achievement and cause for celebration
- The set of Learning Dispositions is included in the Student Report to parents
- The 1:1 Laptop Program is successfully implemented in Yrs 4 & 5 with St Ita's continuing to be a showcase school for visiting teachers entering into the 1:1 program
- Five teachers attended the 2015 EduTech conference in Brisbane
- A BYOD initiative in Yr 6 provided an opportunity for these students to personalise their learning
- Provided professional learning on the philosophy of a *Growth Mindset*
- A successful partnership with a professional learning community from two other schools continues to develop to share and further advance quality teaching practices e.g collaborative planning, lesson study and Consistency of Teacher Judgement of student learning
- *Visible Learning* practices continue to maximize students' learning potential e.g. Learning Intentions, Success Criteria, Classroom Walkthroughs, and teacher showcases of quality teaching practice
- Implementation of a whole school approach to the teaching of reading comprehension and writing skills – development of writing and reading comprehension progressions from P-6
- Implementation of PreLit program to support early literacy intervention

- Continuation of differentiated curriculum experiences – the school’s “Tournament of Minds” (State Champions), and debating teams experienced a high level of success and Makey Makey opportunities were provided at lunchtime for students
- A PE teacher and a PE coordinator were employed to effectively implement the PE program
- A Performing Arts Teacher was employed to enhance the teaching of the arts – a very successful school concert was enjoyed by our community
- Introduction of a resident speech pathologist service to support students/families requiring specialist speech therapy sessions

Professional Practice and Collaborative Relationships

The strong partnerships that exist between home and school have been fundamental in each student’s overall development. Teachers are readily available to meet with parents to discuss and work collaboratively to address educational and social issues that arise within the school. The mutual respect that exists between parents and staff is to be commended.

The P&F Association has been extremely supportive of the school’s strategic plan and vision.

- A very professional and successful school concert gave the students an opportunity to showcase their creative talents and brought the community together in a spirit of collaboration
- The P&F assisted the school and community to:
 - Build community spirit through a range of social and fundraising events for students and parents
 - Provided a strong forum for community and parent feedback
 - Successfully applied for a grant for the construction of new fencing on Jubilee Oval
 - Supported the Technologies initiative through a significant donation to purchase Robotic and Makey Makey kits to enhance student engagement in ICT
 - Maintained excellent services for Sausage Sizzle & Pasta weekly lunches

Strategic Resourcing

St Ita’s School is thriving with student enrolments maintaining stability and with waiting lists in the Early Years’ classes. This is a healthy sign and allows for our school to continue providing quality educational and personnel resources for the students of St Ita’s.

The development of the School Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016 has been written to ensure the school continues to provide quality education and remain true to our

vision and mission.

- Shade structures were constructed in the Early Years play spaces
- MacAir laptops were purchased for all Yr 4 students (2015) as part of the 1:1 implementation program/60 iPad mini devices provided for Yrs 1-3/USB SuperDrives in all classrooms
- Jubilee Oval fence installed
- Renovation of 'old adventure playground' space to incorporate outdoor learning space and kitchen garden program
- Significant funding was allocated to the professional learning of staff aligned to the school's strategic plan and annual goals
- Block Grant Application submitted to refurbish the early years' classrooms

Conclusion

I acknowledge the continued support and commitment of the St Ita's community who contribute in so many ways through the various P&F fundraising and social events. To the parents who so generously give of their time through assistance at P&F events, classroom, sporting and excursion activities I am truly appreciative. Your involvement allows us to further enrich the lives of our students.

I thank sincerely the members of the P&F Executive for your support and for your wisdom as we work together in partnership to make just decisions to not only move our school forward but also to retain and nurture those values that are an important part of the charism of our school. To those executive members who are standing down from executive positions I extend grateful appreciation for your contribution to and support of our school.

Maureen Thomas
Principal