

Principal's Report AGM 2015

We began the year with a new teacher in year five and a new team for year 6/7 at the beginning of term 2. Very happy with the way these arrangements have given us the stability and consistency we have been looking for. We hope to build on this momentum even more over the next few years. Thank you David Colace for fulfilling your role so professionally and to Nicole Sanders whose experience and expertise has forged an effective partnership with Jodi Newton.

This term we farewelled Fr Don and welcomed Fr Emmanuel... a big change for our whole community but one where we can go forward with confidence building on past practice and looking forward to what Fr Emmanuel has to offer our whole community.

Our new entry to Holy Spirit School seems to now be with our Pre-Kindy Program beautifully set up by Emma Spinelli and managed by Christine Collie this year. To our kindy staff who work so well together and a special mention to Judith Sharper who has done such a great job in Kindy whilst Annamarie Willett has been on LSL.

To Elisha Martinovich and Jenny Connolly in Pre-Primary, Aleana Brennan, Annetta Priolo, Tiana Sgambelluri, Sarah Helmerhorst who do such a great job with the teaching and learning in their respective year levels. To our Specialists, Nancy Cassian, Alison Willmott, Julie Doyle, Rosanna Pieretti and our admin staff of Mary Pearton and Florence Yip we all pass on a vote of appreciation and thanks for all the hard work and dedication consistently shown in the work place environment. Thanks to Peter Thomas who looks after our gardens and grounds and general maintenance. Pete is really one of the staff and like most people who work here in a variety of roles actually feel part of a special group.

Our work here at Holy Spirit would not be as effective if it were not for the tremendous support offered to our teachers by our Education Assistants, Alley Merchant, Jane Parker, Claire Mannella, Connie Spinelli, Sandra Reynolds, Bernadette Flynn, Margaret Wray and Georgina Webster we thank you all for your efforts this year and into the years to come.

This year we bid farewell to Marian Giglia who retires at the end of the year. Marian has been teaching in the school for many years and more recently took control of the GATE program and a support role. We all thank Marian for all her work in the school and wish her a happy retirement. Gay Saunders also departs after her role as AP relief in year one and we thank her for all she has contributed to the school.

In 2016 we welcome Annamarie Willett back from LSL and Sharon O'Halloran in year 1 as AP relief.

We are fortunate at Holy Spirit to have a large group of independent teachers offering unique opportunities to our students particularly in the musical area. Our music and performing arts director Mrs Julie Doyle coordinates our entire school program including all individual and group music tutors that add an extra dimension to the school curriculum at Holy Spirit.

A number of staff have experienced personal challenges over this year with loss of family members, loved ones and demanding expectations. To come together and complete the year in the way you have is a credit to you all and a measure of the pastoral and collegial care that we as a staff have for each other and that is reflected by the majority of our parent group.

The development of a Strategic Plan, Curriculum and Improvement plan sets goals for the coming year and beyond. Having a robust Curriculum Focus is important to continue to improve skills and outcomes for the school. This year has been a year of preparation and planning to fulfil the Bishops Mandate and that under the Learning, Engagement, Accountability and Discipleship. With the future focus centred around the development of Literacy and Numeracy skills with the Leadership team opting for the Principals as Numeracy Leaders in 2016. This is a course that consists of four mathematical modules that looks at scope and sequence of concepts and understanding with the view of developing a sound base structure in the early years building through to year six. We are also adopting a similar approach to Spelling that will adopt the "Sound Waves" program throughout the school. In addition to these programs the P&F are assisting with the funding of high interest reading books in years 4-6 through the "Spring Boards Reading Skills and Comprehension" program. The P&F commitment for this program is in excess of \$5,000. This will really assist a recognised need and continue to build on the great work already achieved in our school.

The P&F have been amazing this year under the guidance of Jo Quinn, Linda Marissen, Barb Blayney and all our class reps. This structure has improved communication and effectiveness of the P&F and made our meetings an enjoyable experience throughout the year.

2016 will be an interesting year where we hope to see some work begin on our classroom refurbishment and how our plans develop for this. We are up to the concept design stage and will work what we can do and what finances are required. The goal is to absorb the computer room and use the space to enlarge the teaching areas in the junior school as well as refurbish the rooms with technology based in the classroom. Windows that let more natural light in around the undercover area is also part of the plan as well as new bag storage and entry/exit points. So our key goals for the 2016 school year can be summarised as follows:

1. Refurbishment of the Year 1,2,3 and Art Room buildings.
2. Create a Scope and Sequence for Numeracy.
3. Implement the 'Sound Waves Spelling Program across the grades.
4. Utilize 'NEXT LEARNING' to build teachers IT capacity in the classroom.
5. Improve communication to parents through IT and other avenues including the investigation of the 'SKOOL BAG' App. and upgrade existing IT capacity in the school.
6. Introduce students to the 'Kids helping Kids,' Wheelchairs for Kids program.

These goals fall under the Learning, Engagement, Accountability and Discipleship banner (LEAD) and will be the focus in 2016.

Class sizes are healthy for 2016 ranging from 25-30 students per class this is great news for us as many of our schools in the area and beyond are all down a bit on enrolments. We can celebrate some tremendous achievement in our focus areas as reflected again in some very positive NAPLAN data. The information provided by our testing and measurement processes continually challenge us as teachers and provide vital feedback that assists us with planning our curriculum strategies. The overall result from the Bishop's RE Literacy testing in Yr3 and Yr5 was also very positive and showing that our core area of faith development through our RE programs and activities is alive and well here at Holy Spirit School.

The Strategic Plan and Curriculum Plan for 2016 will give us focus and direction with a more stable outlook for the middle and senior year levels and real big ticket items to develop and areas to improve on. Through all of these processes and mechanisms we can look forward to Holy Spirit School living up to its vision and mission.

I look forward to working with the members old and new who will be on the P&F or School Board and look forward to the challenges that the new school year will bring. Thanks to Jo Quinn for her great work as P&F President and to Linda Marissen who has ably filled the secretary role for the last few years and to Barb Blayney who has been the P&F Treasurer. Thank you all for your kind donation of time and energy in leading our P&F to where it is today. A big vote of thanks to Simon Williams and all members of our School Board who also meet each month and quietly go about their core business of assisting me with the financial management and planning responsibilities here at Holy Spirit school. Thanks to Di Hansen who completes her term on the Board and to our P&F Rep Jo Quinn and our Parish rep Greg Williams.

Thank you all again for what you do for this great school and I wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a safe and restful break.

Steve Versteegen

Principal