



2021

ANNUAL REPORT





# ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

WITH CHRIST WE LIVE LOVE & LEARN

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

2021 has been a year of successes, pivots, and leaps in process. Despite the continued uncertainty of COVID and as the world and Australia continued to grapple with the ongoing and ever-changing situation, we moved forward.

On behalf of the school community, we present the [2021 School Annual Report](#). A report that proudly highlights the school's performance this year.

**Parish Priest:** Fr Roy

**Principal:** Gavin Rick

**Assistant Principal, RE<sup>1</sup>:** Robyn Chambers

**Assistant Principal, L&T<sup>2</sup>:** Emma Ryan

**Board Chair:** Metta Weeks

**Joey's Community Connect President:** Noelle Halpin

## 2021 SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROFILE

### Demographics:

**392 students**

students from Prep to 6

**303 families**

from Goldsborough to  
Northern Beaches

### Student Diversity:

**11% of students**

First Nations Australians

**10% of students**

With a disability

**6.1% of students**

English as  
Additional Language/Dialect (EAL-D)

### Parent Engagement

**12**

Family events or initiatives

**200+**

Family engagements

i.e. volunteering, working with or initiating  
events

**First Nations,**

**Leadership & Resources**

Parent Feedback Top 3

### Communication

**42**

Weekly Principal Updates

**800+**

SeeSaw posts to families

**700+**

Family/teacher engagements

i.e. reading volunteering, excursions, conferences

### Staffing

**Staff ratio of 23:1**

**48 staff**

Teaching, non-teaching and  
service

**Safeguarding, First Nations, &  
General**

Staff Feedback Top 3

## NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENT

- Return of community events: fete, movie night and trivia night
- Fast and successful pivot to home learning during snap school closure
- Choir achievements at the Eisteddfod
- Families welcomed back to face to face assemblies
- Some Zoom assemblies and prayer rituals accessible to families
- Mercy Week focus on the inspired life of Catherine McAuley
- Reintroduction of Kitchen Garden
- Introduction of First Nations Family Cuppa
- NAIDOC celebrations and Sorry Day prayer
- Year 6 Easter Play and Year 5 Christmas Nativity Musical
- Student personal achievements within and beyond the school as highlighted on Facebook
- High family engagement in the *Partner With You Project*
- Opening of the playground
- Design and commencement of the covered walkways

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Principal Religious Education

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Principal Learning & Teaching



# FOREWORD

by Gavin Rick, Principal



7 December 2021

Dear families, staff and friends of St Joey's

The School Annual Report informs parents and the broader community of the school's successes, activities, and achievements throughout the year and meets legislative and regulatory reporting requirements.

In all my years of principalship, I have never been prouder than I was of our school community in 2021. What we achieved together, regardless of the continued uncertainty and threats of COVID, reminds me that challenges faced by staff and families in the spirit of camaraderie are essential to our school's success. The lessons learned are also priceless and life-changing, forever shaping who we are.

Our strategic intent to build a stronger partnership with families in 2021 came to life. We remain as committed as ever with a strong focus on this in 2022. We remained focused on our key areas of wellbeing and learning improvement providing a clear path for staff amidst possible disruptions.

The success of our school is measured in so many ways. This year we reached out through the *Partner With You Project* and, more recently, the Satisfaction Surveys. Your feedback was candid, sincere and highly valued and is shaping our future practices and direction. It helped us celebrate our work and provide valuable new ideas and insights. Together with staff voice, your voice matters, is valued and is being heard. *"I love the family friendly approach that St Joseph's has. The attention to detail is on point and they on top of the learning facilities. I love that my child enjoys going to school."*

In 2021 we drew on the skills, experiences, love and support from so many people. I can't thank the school community enough, especially our staff and families, for the beautiful way we pulled together to reconnect and rebuild our community after a time of disconnect. Being able to 'be together again' reminded us of the importance of human contact. When families and staff work together for the wellbeing and learning of children, great things can happen.

I continue to be in awe of our students' resilience, growth, and independence, particularly our youngest, who managed their independence earlier than hoped but stepped up to the challenge more than any of us forecast. It's our students who have championed 2021. With their wellbeing toolkits and learning powers they focused on their learning goals, navigated friendships and adapted when needed.

A complete account of both family and community events and the array of our wellbeing and learning activities are in this report. I commend the information provided by key personnel, and I encourage you to take the time to read and celebrate our achievements.

As I look to 2022, I am cognisant that we will face new challenges as COVID enters our city. Despite this, I know that whatever comes, we will do it together. As the school year draws to a close, I am ever hopeful that families can be together over the Christmas holiday season. I wish you God's blessings, wellness, love and connection, and I look forward to welcoming you with open arms on day one of the new school year in January.

God bless

Gavin Rick - Principal



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*by Robyn Chambers, Assistant Principal, Religious Education*

2021 was proclaimed the Year of St Joseph by Pope Francis. In addition, this year marked the launch of 200 years of Catholic Education in Australia. This set the scene for a blessed year. I proudly report on the many celebrations of faith across the year.

Leading in our mercy work were the **Mercy Workers (MWs)**. Much of the dedications below are thanks to the tireless work of our Mercy Workers who contribute and model kindness and the spirit of humanity.

## February

- Welcomed Fr Neil
- Year 6 as servant leaders
- First Nation MWs wrote letters to a community suffering a tragedy
- Year 5's nominated as trainee MWs
- Early Years MWs supported Preppies in the playground
- Pancake Tuesday fundraising
- Commissioned 2021 leaders and blessed community
- Ash Wednesday and acknowledge of Mercy Workers
- St Joseph Feast Day



## March/April

- Social Justice MWs fundraised for Carita
- Record of \$1930 raised from Colour Days
- Wearing BLUE, raised \$395 for NSW Flood victims
- Wellbeing MWs made cranberry chocolate shards for SAC gardeners
- Early Years MWs supported Year 1 reading
- First Nation MWs designed reconciliation icon
- Teachers reviewed Religion teaching
- Year 6 memorable Holy Week presentation



## April

- Year 4 ANZAC liturgy
- School and House leaders attended RSL Dawn Service



## May

- National Sorry Day liturgy – First Nations MWs prepared desert roses
- Playground Dedication – remembrance baskets with Prayer and Liturgy MWs preparing ribbons
- Social Justice MWs and SJS provided financial and pastoral support for Zion's sister Letasha who is fighting cancer
- Wellbeing MWs acknowledged parish volunteer Sylvia



## June

- Semester 1 finished with a bang celebrating sporting, eisteddfod, cohort and pastoral achievements



## July

- Welcome Fr Roy to our community
- NAIDOC Day of celebrations – smoking ceremony and dancers. Theme: Welcome to Country, Heal Country, Heal Nation
- CEW celebrations followed

## August

- COVID hijacked Family Week however Andrew Chinn will be back next year
- Made family banners
- Year 3 celebrated in their habitat
- Year 1 families returned as they celebrated their liturgy

## September

- Received wonderful news – Letasha was cancer-free
- Year 4 liturgy – Our Fathers celebration
- Year 5 and Prep buddied for liturgical celebration
- Mercy Day – Houses acted out stories to understand more about the incredible women who bear their names. Sing-off was won by Moran House and presented by Sr Faye Kelly

## October

- Prayer and Liturgy MWs sold rosary beads for Month of the Rosary
- Gathered to pray with children worldwide for peace and unity
- Mission Week preparations with guests and Director of Catholic Mission
- Made sock balls to empathise with children who are less fortunate around the world
- Promoted Mental Health week

## November

- With OSHC made 210 Mercy Bears to children in need
- All Souls' Day remembrance
- Prayed for peace and those lost
- St Vincent de Paul fundraiser
- Thanksgiving Liturgy
- Farewelled staff, students and families
- Pass the flame to 2022 leaders

## December

- Christmas concert





# WELLBEING

By Sharn Ward (School Counsellor)

Through the efforts of our Counsellor, along with staff and parents, the school Diversity team provided universal and targeted mental health and wellbeing support for students.

## The Brain and Emotional Regulation

Partnering with Pathways to Resilience, we launched the year, providing information about the brain to students. They learnt how the brain functions and the vital role it plays in emotional regulation. This set the scene for the year and has been foundational to our approach.

## Student Wellbeing Surveys

These important surveys, conducted in term 3, provided a valuable snapshot of how students were tracking and helped identify those needing to talk or support.

The data allowed us to identify trends, compare our results with previous results and compare our results with the Diocese. It continues to inform our mental health priorities, ensuring that we are meeting students' wellbeing needs.

## Wellbeing and Engagement Support Teacher

To assist the school in improving our capacity to work with staff and families to foster healthy wellbeing and mental health, we are excited to be introducing a part-time Wellbeing & Engagement Support Teacher in 2022.

## Friendology 101

Establishing and maintaining healthy friendships is a skill for life and one we will continue to prioritise in 2021. Our Friendology 101 work garnished positive results with students and provided staff and parents with a common language and practical skills in managing relationships.

The Joey's Community Connect (JCC) supported our work sponsoring the Parent Engagement workshops about the concepts of Friendology. In 2022, with the JCC's help, we will emphasise partnering with families to strengthen the common language and practical skills of friendships.

In addition, positive feedback from students, teachers, and parents has affirmed our commitment to a continued focus in 2022. We look forward to encouraging healthy and positive friendships and conflict resolution skills next year.

## Zones of Regulation

Emotional Literacy and the constructive expression of emotions is an integral part of human development. The Zones of Regulation concept and resources continued to support our learners in recognising their emotions as representations of different emotional states called zones. Students have learned different strategies to identify their feelings, label and name their emotions, and then assist them in moving to and staying in the green (optimal) zone for learning. In 2021 we explored calming practices (mindfulness and meditation), reasoning strategies, and sensory support for students to have a repertoire of strategies to move between zones. We also explored the impact of trauma on the lives of children and how to better provide support for students experiencing this.

## Annual Mental Health initiatives

We continued to actively promote mental health initiatives within our school community throughout the year. We acknowledged and promoted RU Okay Day and Qld Mental Health Week.

## Wellbeing Topics for Families

Across 2021, we provided families with information about wellbeing topics such as the Wheel of Well-Being (WoW) and being safe online such as current information and resources provided by the e-Safety Commissioner. This was through articles in the Principal Weekly Update and information posted to our Facebook page.

As our learners continue to face a world of demand and unpredicted change, especially with technology, our priority on wellbeing and learning will remain. ***Without a sense of personal wellness, readiness, and human agility, we cannot learn. The two are like a hand and a glove.***

We remain as committed as ever to fostering a school culture that focuses on the whole child. As we equip students with life skills that promote success for all and teach them about their mindset, along with understanding that their brain grows and changes through learning, they will have increased perseverance and commitment to learning. Wishing you wellness.



# CURRICULUM – TEACHING AND LEARNING

by Emma Ryan - Assistant Principal Learning & Teaching

2021 Learning and Teaching focus: <b>Improving Literacy</b> across all learning areas -		
<i>Religious Education</i>	<i>Literacy – Writing</i>	<i>Building Learning Powers</i>

<b>Goal by end of 2021:</b>  Strengthen and sharpen our “whole of school effective teaching practices” when planning, teaching and assessing Literacy so that there is clarity, consistency and expected student growth.	<b>2021 strategic initiatives:</b> <b>Focus:</b> We engaged two expert consultants to lead staff development in the areas of English planning, teaching and assessing, with a focus on the reciprocal nature of literacy, encompassing oracy (speaking and listening), writing and reading, and also acknowledging the foundational role of oral language.
	<b>Term 1–4</b> Jo Rossbridge, a consultant from Primary English Teachers Association Australia (PETAA), led staff in <i>Using the Power of Talk to Link Writing and Reading</i> . This involved professional development each term focusing on analysing data, developing plans and building capacity in ‘teacher talk’ about texts.
	<b>Term 1–4</b> Alan Howe, a consultant from Oracy Cambridge, led staff in a complementary project called St Joseph’s, a Talking School. This focused on oracy as an overt skill set: a focus on direct teaching to enable students to talk to get things done. Dialogic teaching focuses on teachers’ use of talk so that students learn effectively through talk.

## Learning partnerships with families

Learning workshops were offered to families on the topics of Friendology and Essential Assessment. The workshops were well attended and provided families with the opportunity to learn more about two resources that support student learning and wellbeing.

## Home learning

The work done in recent years to embed digital experiences into everyday learning had us well placed for the short lockdown in Term 3. The processes set up in 2020 meant that home learning packs were created and available to families in a fast turnaround time. It felt exciting to be “ahead of the game” again, allowing staff to adapt swiftly and provide students with the necessary resources to learn from home.

## Learning and Teaching Committees

We continued with sub-committee groups with Emma Ryan focusing on different learning areas:

Whole school approach to Literacy (Marita Brown and Jacqui Doolan);

- Oracy Implementation Team (Kate Duggan, Carmel Buckley, Karina Brady, Giovanna Hogan, Jacqui Doolan and Marita Brown);
- Essential Assessment (Karina Brady and Marita Brown).

## Reading coach

Marita Brown continued in her role as Leader of Pedagogy. In addition, as a Professional Learning Team Coach, she worked with teachers to develop the reciprocal nature of the teaching of Literacy to strengthen the links between oral language, reading and writing.

Current practice was evaluated by looking at data and the latest evidence for best practice. Teacher practice was adapted, and individual student growth was monitored.

## Speech Sound Pics Approach – Teaching Reading and Spelling (SSP)

SSP completely supports the teaching of Literacy through a reciprocal approach, and our teaching of it continues to evolve and improve. Our data shows that it continues to be highly effective and successful, hitting at and above our system achievement targets.

## Student data

Our Year 3 and 5 students participated in NAPLAN online testing, with one exception for Year 3, who completed the Writing test on paper. Apart from some technical challenges, the process ran smoothly with positive feedback from students and staff.



Overall, NAPLAN results were very pleasing, and the analysis has been completed.

**Year 5** - All students achieved above the National Minimum Standard in the areas of Numeracy, Spelling, Writing and Reading. In Grammar and Punctuation, a very high percentage of students achieved above the National Minimum Standard.

**Year 3** - A very high percentage of students achieved above the National Minimum Standard in the areas of Numeracy, Writing and Reading. In Spelling and Grammar, and Punctuation, a high percentage of students achieved above the National Minimum Standard.

Other valuable learning data has been gathered through standardised tests such as PAT Maths, Reading and Spelling. Also, in Maths, the Essential Assessment tool has enabled teachers to collect pre and post-learning data and measure growth.

We were very excited that the JCC sponsored a parent workshop on the Maths Essential Assessment tool. As a result, families can now tap into their child's results and monitor their progress.

#### **Extracurricular offerings**

A range of extracurricular offerings was provided this year by passionate and dedicated staff:

**Netball** - Sarah Hession and Kara Martin offered Netball to students in Years 5-6 during Semester Two, competing in the Mary Mills Cup.

**Rugby Union** - Shawn Brack and Mathew Magil coached the district (TCC) rugby union team.

**Rugby League** – Shawn Brack coached our school team who competed in the Jim Graham Cup



**Choir** - Nicole Tobin offered Choir to students in Years 2-6 competing at Eisteddfod.

**Gardening** - Alicia McConville offered Gardening Club to students from Prep-Year 6 throughout the year.

**Running** - Shawn Brack offered Running Club before and after school throughout the year for students in Years 4-6.

**Oracy** - Jacqui Doolan, Marita Brown, and Emma Ryan offered Oracy Club to students in Years 2-6 in Semester One.

**Calanna Speaking Competition**- Marita Brown, Sarah Hession and Emma Ryan offered Calanna Club to students in Years 4-6 in Term 3.

**Soccer Carnival** – with the help of volunteer parents, St Joseph's entered 4 teams in the inaugural Christmas Soccer Carnival.





# JOEY'S COMMUNITY CONNECT

*by Noelle Halpin (President, JCC)*

As parents, we worked alongside school staff in 2021 to further explore our complementary role of being partners with staff in our children's wellbeing and learning. As a result, our school began to look and feel like a community again despite some uncertainty at times due to COVID and even a snap lockdown. Thank you, parents, for working with the school in these times.

We engaged in the **Partner With You Project**, where we reflected on what we need and want as parents to enable us to be partners in wellbeing and learning. Twenty families attended focus groups, 152 families came forward for interviews, and 60+ staff and families attended design labs to explore the topic.

Families expressed great support and empathy for our staff and their role in our children's lives. They also provided ideas to assist staff in understanding the life of a busy parent. Ideas presented were candid, and an honest insight into what families of Joeys want and need from the school. The project has set a course for more work in 2022 as the project continues with developing a game plan of action. The project was a mammoth one. Huge thanks to Shelley Wild and the team at the Human Learning Collective.

A big highlight in 2021 was the **opening of our playground** and surroundings funded by JCC activities. This special space has been dedicated to the family members we have lost, particularly parents of late. Our children use this every day and get so much joy from it.





As I reflect on 2021, my heart is full, knowing that **so many families supported the JCC's activities**. In particular, the **core group of volunteers** who give their time and energy to make our school the best it can be. Contributions include:

- Mother's Day Messages, Day Spa and Card Making
- Trivia Night for parents
- Movie Night for families
- Fete incorporating a Father's Day raffle
- World Teachers Day Thank You Morning Tea and Raffle
- The organisation and running of the Second-hand Uniform Shop
- The introduction of Year Level Family Connect Coordinators (FCC)
- The sale of school umbrellas and school supporter shirts
- Joey's Business Directory communication
- Parent Learning Engagement Workshops: Friendology, SSP, Essential Assessment
- Partner With You Project

A heartfelt **"thank you"** to everyone who helped and supported these events, thank you to the wonderful school staff we have here at St Joseph's and my fellow JCC committee members.

The JCC is delighted at the response we had to these events for the 2021 year. The JCC is always looking for new ideas, suggestions, assistance as we plan similar events for 2022. We hope you and your family have received some level of benefit from the JCC this year and encourage you to get involved. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a safe, happy and healthy new year.



# SCHOOL BOARD

by Metta Weeks (Board Chair)

With social distancing measures in place and strict adherence to COVID safe guidelines, the St Joseph's School Board conducted face-to-face meetings throughout 2021.

I take this opportunity to share the main themes and details from our discussions about engagement and strengthening relationships within the Joseph's School community, some of the projects we've been involved with, and highlights from the year. I've also included some notes about the areas that the Board identified as strengths, threats, and weaknesses to inform the St Joeey's School Board and guide future growth.

**Partner with You Project (PWYP)** - Earlier this year school board met with Shelley Wild to discuss the PWYP, including Focus Groups, Design Labs, and high levels of community participation in the project. This meeting led to an open, honest and robust discussion. We spoke about national trends and the unique challenges experienced at St Joseph's School associated with declining parent participation and engagement. In addition, it was a valuable opportunity to share feedback and ideas based on our personal experiences as parents.

**The SafeST Committee**, initially formed in 2019, comprises volunteers and representatives from Catholic Education Services, Jacobs Engineering Consultants, St Joseph's School and Saint Augustine's College, including myself. We've worked closely with CES, Cairns Regional Council and Queensland Police Services to improve Safe Student Travel to and from school. This long-term project secured significant funding to help pay for changes on Severin, Scott, Draper and Loeven St. Special acknowledgement goes to volunteer Nick Hardy for his dedication, hard work that guided the success of this project.

Throughout the year, the Board have reviewed numerous **School Effectiveness Framework Documents**. In August, we examined the Cairns Catholic Education Community - Strategic Directions 2021 - 2025. In principle we agreed with the Vision, Themes, and Guiding Principles outlined in the document, however we felt that it failed to adequately address the importance of *student, staff and community mental health and wellbeing*. We addressed these concerns to Catholic Education, who acknowledged and appreciated our correspondence. Analysing this document helped us to reflect further upon the St Joseph's Way and our priorities.

Oversight of the **Covered Walkway project** was a focus of the Board this year, and it is lovely to see this long-awaited project commence. It is due to be completed early in 2022.

At our final board meeting of the year, we reviewed the year and the work of the School Board, identifying the following.

(+)	(-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenging an aspect of the strategic direction of CES and feeling heard</li><li>• School contribution to the SafeST Committee resulting in improved traffic infrastructure</li><li>• Staff learning and development</li><li>• Induction of new Board members</li><li>• Walkways design and funding sign-off</li><li>• Board review of School Effectiveness Framework</li><li>• Support and enjoyment of parent participation in the PWYP</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• COVID uncertainty</li><li>• Economic uncertainty in the region</li><li>• Parents reporting that there has been an erosion to the feeling of 'community'</li><li>• Fewer volunteers for school events</li></ul>

With sadness, I farewell the many friends I have made over the past six years at St Joeey's. I offer a special thanks to Gavin Rick, who has always made my family feel at home at school and within the parish community.



# BUILDINGS/GROUNDS AND FACILITIES

In 2021, capital works and improvements were undertaken. The funds raised through the JCC levy and school budget were allocated to prioritise:

Installation of new playground	Establishment of playground gardens	Display and soundproofing pin boards in Year 3&4 (Phase 3)	Annual aeration and topdressing of the oval	Maintenance of kitchen garden signage
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## 2022 Forecast:

- Completion of all covered walkways, including the installation of artwork to depict First Nations, The Mercy Sisters and the St Joseph's Way
- A landscape architect has been engaged to design and project manage the completion of the play space around the sandpit and develop an adjacent circuit-based activity play space in 2021. (JCC funded)
- Master planning for the enhancement of gardens and outdoor learning spaces
- Completion of display and soundproofing pin boards in Year 5 and 6