Mission and Religious Education

Religious Education at St Joachim’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.

During 2013 a number of important school events took place, however, undoubtedly the most significant was the 75th anniversary celebrations in July. We suitably marked the occasion by celebrating the last 75 years but importantly acknowledging the present and future of our great school.

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

- Participation in the Holland Park Mt Gravatt Sacramental Program – First Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist.
- Celebrated the St Joachim’s 75th anniversary with Mass, breakfast & open classrooms.
- Regular class prayer in each classroom.
- Whole school liturgies and prayer rituals included:
  - All Saints Mass, Remembrance Day liturgy, Carols Evening, Year 7 Graduation and End of Year liturgies will take place during Term 4.
- Year 5 & 6/7 students joined the parish each week for Prayer of the Church.
  - Weekly Mass attendance during Lent.
- Introduced the practice of whole school meditative prayer each Monday afternoon.
- Familiarisation with the new Religion Curriculum for full implementation in 2014.
- Fundraising included: Project Compassion, Caritas, St Vincent de Paul, The Biggest Morning Tea, Catholic Mission, Micah Projects & Books for PNG.
- Formed a new partnership with Micah Projects and Brisbane Common Ground.
- Connected with St Joseph’s School, Cluncurry - a Josephite school in central north Qld with a high indigenous student population.
- Participated in Anzac Day ceremonies locally and at Anzac Square, Brisbane CBD.
- Catholic Education Week activities with Our Lady’s and Villanova students.
Learning and Teaching

During 2013 the staff were involved in significant professional development opportunities to explore the Australian Curriculum. Of particular note was the launch of the St Joachim’s Vision for Learning & Teaching and subsequent design and painting of the mural in the undercover area.

In 2013 literacy has been a specific focus for staff professional development, budget and resourcing. Literacy is an essential capability for academic, personal and social success and effectiveness for all students.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008) recognises literacy as an essential capability for students in becoming successful learners, confident and creative individuals, active and informed citizens and as a foundation for success in all learning (subject) areas.

At St Joachim’s teachers recognise that success in any learning area depends on learners being able to have strong literacy skills including listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts.

In 2014 literacy will continue to be a focus for staff professional development, however, numeracy will also be an important school initiative.

The new Religion Curriculum, The Arts and HPE curriculums will also be a focus in 2014.

Other significant achievements within the learning and teaching domain have been:

- Provided all teachers in Years 2 – 7 with the opportunity to attend the Reading to Learn Professional Development Program. The Reading to Learn Program is designed to enable all learners, at all levels of education, to read and write successfully, at levels appropriate to their age, grade and area of study. The Reading to Learn strategies have been independently evaluated to consistently accelerate the learning of all students at twice to more than four times expected rates.
- Implemented the Australian Curriculum learning areas of English, Mathematics, History and Science.
- Provided professional development sessions on curriculum differentiation with a particular focus on Gifted & Talented education.
- Professionally printed and displayed the St Joachim’s School Vision for Learning & Teaching posters in each classroom and learning space.
- Planned for the implementation of the 1 to 1 iPad program in 2014.
- Full participation in the Raw Art program across the school.
- Engaged in the Consistency of Teacher Judgment program:
  - Teachers met with other teaching professionals (from other Catholic schools) to share assessment tasks and discuss professional judgments i.e. what constitutes ‘at expected’ or ‘above expected’ levels in reporting.
- Participated in the UNSW competitions.
- Involved all students in Year 3 – 7 in the St Joachim’s School Musical ‘Masquerade’.
- Year 5 students attended the 2-day KidsConnect IT Conference.
• Developed a new *School Wide Positive Behaviour Support Program* (draft).
  o This has taken considerable review and development time, and will be launched at the beginning of 2014.
• Year 5, 6 & 7 students attended school camp at Wildeco Outdoor Adventure Camp, Landsborough.
• Health and Physical Education:
  o Implemented a Sensory Motor Program (Learning Connections) & Perceptual Motor Program in the Prep and Year 1 classes.
  o Inter-school sport included netball and touch football.
  o Cross-country, swimming and athletics carnivals.
  o Handball, skipping and goal-a-thon competitions.
  o AFL Auskick Clinics.
  o Swimming lessons.
Professional Practice and Collaborative Relationships

An initiative that began in 2012, and continued in 2013, has been the collaborative relationships the school has formed with allied health care professionals including occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, optometrists and audiologists. These professionals have greatly assisted the teachers to adjust and differentiate (where necessary) the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners.

The strong partnerships that exist between home and school have been fundamental in each student’s overall development. Parent satisfaction surveys have shown that 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 Pastoral School Board and P&F Committee have both been extremely supportive of the school’s strategic plan and vision.

Other significant achievements have been:

- Acknowledged and farewelled Sr Kari osu after 9 years of leadership of the Holland Park Mt Gravatt Parish.
  - Archbishop Mark Coleridge has announced that Rev Fr Joseph Thottankara MCBS (Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament) will be the new Parish Priest of Holland Park Mt Gravatt commencing in January 2014.
- Introduced a new screening initiative in the Year 1 classes: hearing, vision and occupational therapy.
- Collaboratively developed Individual Health Care Plans with parents and health care professionals for students with specific medical needs.
- Engaged the school, parish and wider community in the 75th anniversary celebrations.
- The Pastoral School Board assisted the Principal to:
  - Review school policies and procedures.
  - Assist with the Master Plan for building and maintenance.
  - Examine budget expenditure.
  - Assisted in setting of 2014 school fees.
- The P&F assisted the school and community to:
  - Build community spirit through a range of social events for students and parents.
  - Provided a strong forum for community and parent feedback.
  - Raised funds for the purchase of ICLTs and landscaping.
  - Delivered an excellent fete.
  - Maintained excellent services in the grounds, tuckshop & uniform shop.
Strategic Resourcing

St Joachim’s School is thriving with student enrolments predicted to reach 315 in 2014. This is a healthy sign and allows for our school to provide excellent educational and personnel resources for the students of St Joachim’s.

The development of the St Joachim’s 2013 – 2016 School Strategic Plan has been written to ensure the school continues to provide quality education and remain true to our vision and mission.

Other significant achievements have been:

• Collaboratively engaged the Pastoral School Board to maintain the 2013 budget, develop the 2014 budget, allocate resources and review the school fee structure.
• Significant funding was allocated to the professional development of staff and PD opportunities were clearly aligned to the school’s strategic goals and annual action plan.
• Increase the number of class grouping from 10 classes to 12 classes.
• Fitted out the extra 2 classrooms with necessary furniture and resources.
• Separated the Year 5/6/7 composite class into Year 5 and Year 6/7 classes.
• Purchased flexible furniture for the Year 5 and Year 6/7 classroom that reflect contemporary learning and teaching approaches.
• Collaboratively developed a landscaping master plan.
• Maintained the grounds and facilities.
• Designed a new OSHC facility and second purpose built prep classroom. This project went out to tender in early October and construction will commence before the end of Term 4, 2013.
• Introduced sustainable environmental initiatives:
  o Nude Food Fridays – students and staff are encouraged to bring food in washable containers in order to reduce waste.
  o A new industrial recycling bin delivered and is well utilised.
• Completed the installation of the interactive data projectors in each classroom.
• Purchased ICT equipment for student use including iPads and laptops.
• Upgraded the teachers’ laptops to mac pros and provided each teacher with an iPad for educational purposes.

Chris Thomas
Principal
4 October 2013