



St Thomas'
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
A HEART FOR MIND AND SPIRIT

2021 School Improvement Achievement Report



St Thomas' Catholic Primary School acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, who have walked and cared for this land for thousands of years, and their descendants who maintain their spiritual connection and traditions.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



Image: Act with Justice
Artist: Eric Ellis
Story: Can be found on back page

ACT
WITH
JUSTICE



Micah 6:8

ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Vision & Mission

At St Thomas' Catholic Primary School, we follow in the tradition of the Sisters of Good Samaritan of the Order of St Benedict & in doing so we strive to be a community of **Faith, Justice, Compassion and Learning**.

Values

FAITH

We live our Catholic faith in our parish and school community through our prayers, words and actions.

JUSTICE

We welcome all to ensure an inclusive and respectful community built on service and fairness.

COMPASSION

We support all members of our school community and strive to nurture in ourselves and others, an understanding of God's unique plans for us.

LEARNING

We educate and inspire our children to develop their individual gifts in a contemporary, relevant learning environment.



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

It is with great pleasure that I provide the community of St Thomas' Catholic Primary School with the Achievement Report for the 2021 school year. This report reflects the achievements made throughout the calendar year against the explicit improvement goals established in our 2021 Annual Plan.

This year once again presented our community with challenges, disruption and uncertainty as we responded to the ever-changing COVID-19 landscape. Despite the restrictions that ebbed and flowed throughout the year, we remained relatively 'business as usual' in Queensland, especially compared with those living in southern parts of the country.

In 2021, we explored the value of JUSTICE, as we celebrated the theme, '**ACT WITH JUSTICE**'. Our spiritual journey throughout the year fostered and deepened our connections with the First Nations people's history and culture. The main symbol of this year's theme was a commissioned art piece completed by indigenous artist Eric Ellis. This art piece inspired us as we worked together to develop our school's Reconciliation Action Plan and our Vision for Reconciliation. *(Further information can be found within the Catholic Identity section of this report, and on the back page).*

Throughout the year we continued to foster and deepen our connection with our **Parish**. School House Masses were introduced, with families responding to the invitation in very pleasing numbers! More recently we farewelled our Parish Priest for the past six years, Fr Christopher Obi.

School life largely returned to normal for our students as we were able to once again hold events that are always memorable in the life of a school community, including some wonderful sporting opportunities. We ventured to Clem Jones Aquatic Centre for the first time for our Swimming Carnival, with our Year 2 students making a 'one off appearance'. We also held our Athletics Carnival under sunny skies at the Villanova Sporting Fields, and achieved yet another first, with our Prep students joining us for the day. We had various representative teams participate in Zone and District events and we finally got to participate in a GALA sporting day...the first in two years!

Throughout the year, teachers planned a range of incursions and excursions to engage our students in rich and deeper learning. A special highlight this year were the visits to Brisbane Catholic Education's Ngutana-Lui Cultural Centre. Our Prep, Year 2 and Year 4 students visited the centre, supporting our school wide focus and developing their cultural understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our Year 6 Student Leadership program took on a new look this year with the formation of four new ministries - Laudato Si', Wellbeing, Catholic Identity and Social Justice. Our Student Leaders set a positive tone for the school, supporting our school culture by modelling our high expectations. We look forward to celebrating and acknowledging their achievements at the Graduation Mass to be held in the final week of the school year.

Our dedicated team of teachers, school officers and non-teaching staff continued their tremendous efforts in nurturing the growth and progress of

all learners. Our many achievements throughout the year are a testament to their energy, commitment and professionalism. I take this opportunity to thank those staff members moving on at the end of the year and wish them all the very best.

Our active P & F, once again demonstrated their agility to find new ways to support the school and bring our community together. The Welcome BBQ, held for the first time at the Camp Hills Bowls Club, proved to be a huge success! We look forward to gathering at the same venue for our end of year function. The highlight of the year for our students was certainly the inaugural St Thomas' Colour Explosion Fun Run! The day provided students, staff and parents with a memorable day that raised funds for the school's lower oval refurbishment.

We look to the 2022 school year with great optimism and hope! The year ahead will see several facility upgrades, including two student toilet block upgrades, the lower oval project and an enhancement of our Year 4 learning spaces.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the many families that will transition on from St Thomas' at the end of this year. We wish you every blessing and hope that we continue to cross paths in the year ahead.

Travel gently,
Mike Armstrong
Principal



Catholic Identity Priorities

Goal 1. Nurture and promote the formation of staff and students.

Achievements

2021 Theme – Act with Justice

At St Thomas', each school year provides us with an opportunity to explore our Catholic Identity more deeply as we focus on a new theme that connects directly to our school's charism and Vision and Mission. In 2021, we explored the value of JUSTICE, as we celebrated the theme, 'ACT WITH JUSTICE'. Our spiritual journey throughout the year fostered and deepened our connection with the First Nations people's history and culture.

The main symbol of this year's theme was a commissioned art piece completed by indigenous artist Eric Ellis. Eric, a Kamilaroi and Warumunga man, and staff member of Brisbane Catholic Education's Ngutana-Lui centre, presented the artwork to the school community at the beginning of the year. The artwork is Eric's interpretation of our Vision and Mission, using indigenous symbolism to capture our school's story. A replica of Eric's artwork was also installed on a main wall adjacent to the Front Office.

Formation

Staff participated in the BCE Staff Formation Module titled **Formation for Mission** (Anthropology: In God's Image Likeness)

Students in Years 3 to 6 participated in BCE's Student Formation Program titled 'We are the Ripples', focusing on Justice, Peace and Reconciliation.

Goal 2. Deepen our understanding of the four areas of Catholic Perspectives in English.

Achievements

Catholic Perspectives in English

When planning, teachers embed Catholic Perspectives into the teaching and learning sequence of their English unit plans. Each perspective is explored as students engaged with literature and resources in English. They are challenged to think, feel, value and act in accordance with Gospel Values.



Learning & teaching Priorities

GOAL 1. Grow the engagement, progress and achievement for each student in Literacy and Numeracy.

Achievements

Curriculum Delivery Plan

St Thomas' comprehensive Curriculum Delivery Plan was reinvented to make clear and visible the cyclical process of curriculum delivery. This information directs the school structures and processes to ensure precise and responsive teaching in the areas of English and Mathematics.

Data Dives

Teachers participated in structured 'Data Dives' twice each term. Teachers discussed and analysed student progress and achievement data and responded to this information through both effective first teaching, flexible groupings of students and targeted and strategic goals.

NuMa Strategy

Teacher capacity was built through professional learning in the 4 key dimensions of the BCE Numeracy and Mathematics strategy.

Focus areas included:

- 4 Mathematics proficiencies, specifically problem solving & reasoning
- Using a range of mathematical representations to enhance the conceptual understanding of students
- Engaging in Maths Routines which elicit student mathematical thinking

Purchase of Mathematics Resources

A large scale audit was completed of the mathematics teaching and learning resources in all classrooms. A range of new concrete manipulatives and resources were purchased to support the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Literacy and Numeracy Assessment

Teachers built their capacity in effective assessment of literacy and numeracy, including formative and summative assessment against the Australian Curriculum and their understanding of the value of standardised testing. Teachers engaged in assessment moderation each term to ensure consistent and curriculum aligned judgements of assessment are made.

Assessment Capable Learners

Across the school, we aimed to ensure student achievement results were an accurate representation of their ability.

- NAPLAN Staff Team prepared and build capabilities of students prior to NAPLAN Online
- NAPLAN Parent Information Evening was held to explain the knowledge and skills students require to be assessment capable to parents
- Assessment Capable Learners staff meeting was held to inform teachers of identified focus areas and ways to support this strategy.

Learning & teaching Priorities cont.

Goal 2. Transform practice to wholly engage each student in deeper learning that is rich, rigorous, relevant and responsive.

Achievements

Inquiry Learning & Connected Curriculum

Teacher capacity and understanding was built of the new St Thomas' Cycle for Inquiry Learning. A Connected Curriculum approach was used to implement this process and promote deep learning experiences.

Online learning

A team of lead staff established an outline of a consistent approach to the use of Online Learning Platforms at St. Thomas'. This ensures students develop their ICT General capabilities with using a range of platforms and that consistent pedagogy is in place across all classrooms. Support was received from BCE ICT Engagement Officer to further develop teachers' knowledge and skills in the use of a range of Microsoft 365 tools.

STEM Week

All students participated in a range of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics opportunities through a whole school celebration of STEM Week in Term 3. These activities placed the spotlight on STEM and allowed students to engage in learning that is dynamic and relevant for our contemporary society.

Incursions & Excursions

Students engaged in rich learning through a range of incursions and excursions.

- Ngutana-Lui Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Studies Centre
- Australia Zoo
- SparkLab Science Centre
- Parliament House
- Starlab Astronomy and Earth Science education incursion
- It's Rocket Science educational incursions
- Mad About Science workshop incursions



Diversity & inclusion Priorities

Goal. Grow a community that values, celebrates and responds to individual identity and cultural diversity.

Achievements

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

A team of lead staff collaborated to develop and commence the implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan to build meaningful relationships, respect and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The RAP will continue to guide our school's annual actions to ensure we remain committed to our Vision for Reconciliation.

Vision for Reconciliation

On Friday 10 September 2021, as part of our annual St Thomas' Feast and Foundation Day celebrations, students and staff, in the presence of Mr Eric Ellis (*A proud Kamilaroi and Warumunga man*) launched our school's Vision for Reconciliation.

As a visible commitment to our Vision for Reconciliation, each student and staff member placed their individual handprints onto our Healing Hands for Reconciliation Wall. Our handprints are, and will be, a sign of our commitment to 'act justly', to heal the hurts and wrongs of the past and live peacefully through our words, prayers, and actions.

Class visits to Ngutana-Lui Cultural Centre

Throughout the 2021 school year our Prep, Year 2 and Year 4 students visited Brisbane Catholic Education's Ngutana-Lui Cultural Centre. The centre promotes reconciliation through developing the cultural understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Wellbeing Priorities

Goal 1. Create safe environments that nurture all aspects of wellbeing.

Achievements

Positive Behaviour 4 Learning

Implementation of the St Thomas' Positive Behaviour 4 Learning Matrix to define behaviour expectations using clear, simple, positively stated, student friendly language. This supports the consistency of behaviour across our school.

Teaching staff participated in professional learning workshops focused on:

- The explicit teaching of behaviours for learning from the school matrix in a variety of contexts.
- Effective classroom practices & responses

A team of lead teachers lead the review of the St Thomas' Student Behaviour Support Plan.

UR Strong Program (Friendology)

Implementation of the UR Strong program to support a positive school culture with a whole-school friendship strategy. This empowers students to show kindness and develop friendship skills linked to the Australian Curriculum.

Calm Springs

Implementation of a wellbeing space for students to access at lunch breaks. Teachers and School Officers volunteer time to provide students with a safe place to engage with other students and participate in mindfulness activities.

Staff Charter

All school staff participated in a process to develop a draft Staff Charter to guide the ways of working consistently across the school community. A team of staff then volunteered to lead the process to its full implementation and publication.

Goal 2. Advocate for the common good through social justice and ecological action.

Achievements

Year 6 Student Laudato Si' Leadership Ministry

The Laudato Si' Student Leadership Ministry was officially formed providing student leaders with a voice in promoting key actions across the school community. The students focused on reducing energy use across the school by collecting data and using findings to target key messages.

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School Energy Reduction and Management Plan

The school used the report from the study completed in 2020 to commence the implementation of the St Thomas' Energy Reduction and Management Plan. These actions are the catalyst to begin a new energy master plan for the short, medium, and long-term, with achievable targets for financial budgets and goals for the school community.

St Thomas' Vision for Laudato Si' (Our Common Home)

The school continued to access resources to support the formation of DRAFT St Thomas' Vision for Laudato Si'. This vision will ensure we continue to focus our priorities on advocating for ecological action through all aspects of school life.





This is a painting for the community of St Thomas' Catholic Primary School, Camp Hill called **'Act with Justice'**

The **HEART** shape at the centre represents the school's logo and motto (*a heart for mind and spirit*).

A **CROSS** lays on top of the motto and logo, representing the commitment to **FAITH, JUSTICE, COMPASSION** and **LEARNING**.

The **WAVE** symbol pays respect to **St Thomas**. Throughout the symbol are **TRACKS** leading to the **MEETING PLACES**, where students learn about the school's story.

Each Meeting Place uses the **'SITTING SYMBOL'** in school colours, to show the teachers and students gathered for **STORY TELLING**, learning about the school's values and traditions.

WHITE is the predominant colour used throughout the artwork reflecting the **'GOOD SPIRIT'** looking after the **COMMUNITY**.

Finally, the **RIPPLE EFFECT** pattern that moves outwards from each Meeting Place reflects the students taking their learnings with them on their **JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE**.

Eric Ellis

Kamilaroi and Warumunga Man