



# **Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2013**

## **ANNUAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY REPORT**

Year: 2013

School Name: Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School

Suburb/Town: Lenah Valley

Address: 10 McCann Crescent

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Principal: Mr Nick McGann

### **School Facts:**

School Sector: Non-Government

School: Primary

Year Range: Kinder-Grade 6

Total Enrolments: (Prep- Grade 6) 178

Girls: 82

Boys: 96

Indigenous Students: 5%

Student Attendance Rate: 96%

Teaching Staff: 14

Full time equivalent Teaching Staff: 9.4

Non-Teaching Staff: 7

Full Time equivalent Non-Teaching Staff: 3.5

### **SCHOOL PROFILE AND HISTORY**

Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School is a co educational, single stream Catholic primary school established by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1961. Our mission is to provide, in a Catholic education environment, a lived experience of the gospel value of all embracing love.

As a Josephite school, Immaculate Heart of Mary, has a strong focus on outreach to the disadvantaged. This is evident in the large humanitarian enrolment within the school community. The school also has an extensive learning support program, which provides individualised and small group learning opportunities for all children, including those who have English as another language.

The core values and mission of the school include a strong emphasis on promoting the value of each child in the school as well as a very recognisable culture of caring and supporting all students and families. The school aims to provide an educational foundation for each individual to reach his or her full development as a person, intellectually, spiritually, physically, morally and emotionally. The school also provides an excellent extra-curricular program to support the traditional teaching and learning programs in the school and this includes Physical Education, Music, Library and specialised Art.

## **CATHOLIC CULTURE AND ETHOS/RELIGIOUS LIFE**

The main focus of attention in the area of Religious Education has continued to centre on the Archdiocese Religious Education Curriculum "Good News for Living". We aim to provide substantial learning experiences for the students in programs for the Liturgical Calendar of the Church, incorporating Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas. Our mission at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School is to follow Jesus, our Teacher, by providing a welcoming and supportive environment where we strive to live the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, justice, compassion and peace. The promotion of these Gospel values is evident in our modelling to our students, by word and example, to become fulfilled and responsible members of society. The partnership between parents and staff working together is an essential part of the development of relationships within our school community. We aim to develop within our community an attitude of respect and acceptance where all members are valued. As an educational community, we aim to challenge students to express their opinions and communicate effectively and creatively, so that they may become resourceful and effective problem-solvers with a commitment to life-long learning. We are committed to providing the best possible educational opportunities for our part on Spirituality.

The Values and Virtues Program was again a significant component of our Religious Education curriculum. This program is integral to building relationships within our community based on the values of the Gospel. These include hope, love, forgiveness and hospitality among many others. The values are explicitly discussed and taught using scripture, song and real life experiences. Students are encouraged to 'make it real' in their daily lives.

We continue to maintain the charism and spirituality of our Founding Order – the Josephite Sisters. During the year, we supported outreach programs such as CARITAS, and other 'causes' for which the school has an affinity including a number of student led initiatives to support the purchasing of street-swags. As a Catholic school it is important for us to celebrate as a Christ-centred community. We gathered throughout the year to celebrate prayer in class groups and as a whole school. We support the Parish Sacramental programs of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation, which are significant celebrations in the Parish/School year. Parents are vital participants in the programs and we encourage them to support their children through preparation and celebration of the Sacraments.

As an important part of the school/family/parish partnership, we strive to foster co-operation, support and communication. We encourage students and their families to attend Parish Masses, Holy Days and significant Feast Days. Special liturgies are held to celebrate important events such as Holy Week, The Assumption, ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, Advent, the Commissioning Mass at the beginning of the year and the Graduation / Thanksgiving Masses at the end of the year.

## **STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT**

### **Student background**

#### **School ICSEA value:**

#### **Distribution of Students**

Bottom quarter Middle quarters Top quarter

#### **NAPLAN Results for 2013**

<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>IHMS Score</b>	<b>Similar School Score</b>
Reading	435	409
Persuasive Writing	417	406
Spelling	431	401
Grammar and Punctuation	431	411
Numeracy	419	386

<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>IHMS Score</b>	<b>Similar School Score</b>
Reading	455	483
Persuasive Writing	454	465
Spelling	485	481
Grammar and Punctuation	476	478
Numeracy	452	477

During 2013, we focused on a number of strategic and operational goals as identified from the school annual plan. A goal has been to enhance student learning by engaging in improvement strategies that draw from the critical reflection of our school community as it responds to various questions and issues about student learning. This ensures knowledge remains current and that we can cater for all educational needs, learning styles and challenges presented at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School.

Students with special needs, talents and gifts are given appropriate opportunities, challenges and experiences to develop their potential and to satisfy their learning needs with various activities throughout the year.

Individual education programs (IEP's) are provided for students who are assisted in our educational support programs.

Multilit (Making Up Lost Time in Literacy) is an intervention reading program that was introduced recently and has been specifically designed for teaching students who are experiencing some difficulties in the acquisition of appropriate reading skills.

Grade Six students continue to be involved in leadership programs which develop their skills and experience in assisting and supporting younger students. These programs include the 'Making Jesus Real', program. This program aims to provide opportunities for Grade 6 students to participate in leadership activities which promote values, character building and Christian living. The program enables students to explore co-operative group sharing activities and encourages them to show initiative in decision-making and problem solving tasks. It encourages affirmation of others and develops leadership potential through understanding the responsibilities of being effective leaders.

## **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

We continue to be in the midst of a pedagogical transition from instruction to active learning, with increased capacity for and attention to personalised learning, collaborative learning, globalised learning and project-based learning. In 2013, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School continued to promote the need of learning spaces for instruction and presentation; spaces for talk and private study; spaces to access resources; rooms to move; technology that is 'just in time' and flexible; tools for communication and flexibility in space location and resources. We are confident that these new spaces will be flexible and adaptable with furnishings and equipment that can be rearranged with speed and ease, as well as having the capability to switch between individual and groups settings.

The school has a fully operational attendance policy which is consistent with The *Education Act* which requires that a child who has turned five on or by January 1 in any year must start school (Prep) in that year, or be provided with home education. Students are required to be in full-time attendance at school unless they are receiving approved home tuition, correspondence education, or have been granted an exemption by the Education Department. Our aim is to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly and without unnecessary or frivolous absences. All student absences are recorded in the morning by teachers, and are aggregated on our database and communicated to the Department of Education as required. The Principal contacts parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.

## **CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

The students of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School receive a Catholic education which encompasses the following learning areas: Religious Education; English; Mathematics; Science and Technology; History and Geography; the Arts, which includes Music and Drama; Health and Physical Education and ICT.

We aim to:

- Guide students in their discovery of a Christian way of living within the family of God within our Catholic tradition.
- Assist students to develop and grow academically to the best of their abilities and capabilities.
- Encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Provide equity and equal opportunity for all students.
- Provide a well-balanced curriculum, which acknowledges and addresses the needs of students in a climate of social, cultural and technological change.
- Assist students to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and respect for others.
- Encourage students to learn co-operatively and collaboratively and to maintain a positive attitude to learning.

To provide and maintain a positive environment we aim to:

- Become witnesses of the Gospel values of truth, justice, freedom, love and service.
- Create a friendly, safe and supportive school community where everyone is treated with dignity.
- Provide a balanced and broad Catholic educational experience which stimulates learning, encourages excellence and respects individual differences.
- Support staff through structures that allow for personal and professional growth.
- Give every opportunity for parents to enter into an educational partnership with staff and to share in their children's spiritual, emotional and intellectual development.
- Support staff, parents and students in times of grief, illness and stress.

During 2013, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School continued the transition to the Australian Curriculum. This involved team planning, moderation of assessment and a focus on general capabilities and cross curricula teaching opportunities. All staff were involved in systemic professional development that centered on Australian Curriculum implementation.

The focus on planning involved extensive professional development and dialogue surrounding backward design. This approach to planning enabled

the learning sequences and assessment to be authentic and purposeful.

Consideration was also given to the general capability of thinking. Staff engaged in collaborative planning and considerable discussion to explicitly and directly teach the skills of thinking within their existing learning sequences.

### ***Primary Enrichment Groups (PEGS's)***

This literacy program allows all students to work in small ability based groupings. This allows students to focus on skills and knowledge that is directly related to where they are on the learning continuum. Students may need expanding in some areas, consolidating in others or the time to work on a new skill. The program incorporates students from Grade 1 – Grade 6 and classroom teachers, learning support staff and the Principal working with groups.

### ***Targeted Programs***

Learning Support is directed towards children within Targeted Programs. These programs are designed for individuals, pairs or small groups to work on the challenges presented to them in literacy and numeracy. Children move in and out of these programs as their learning develops. Assessment is an integral part of the establishment of Targeted Programs. The Learning Support teacher with support from Teacher Aides work with children to move them along the learning spectrum.

### ***English as Another Language (EAL)***

Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School is a multi cultural school where many students do not speak English at home. These students are catered for within classroom differentiation and specific English classes. Our community is fortunate to have a dedicated Presentation Sister who actively teaches and works with EAL children and families both academically and pastorally.

### ***Assessment***

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning cycle. Students are regularly assessed within the classroom setting. Students from Grade Two to Six are involved in the annual PAT (Progressive Achievement Test) testing which produces standardised scores in mathematics, comprehensions, spelling and vocabulary.

Prep children are involved in the PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) testing. This establishes children who are 'at risk' academically and allows their progress to be monitored though the year. Students in Grade Three and Five are involved in the nation wide NAPLAN testing. Standardised testing such as PAT and NAPLAN does not take into account the large humanitarian population at the school. These students who are learning

English dramatically affect school scores. Research states that it takes up to seven years to successfully learn English however, students are only exempt from testing for their first twelve months in Australia.

In 2013, we became a participant in the Mathematics project titled "Action" (Accelerating Catholic Tasmanian schools to Improve Outcomes in Numeracy). All students from Prep to Grade 6 participated in an individual interview with their class teacher. The purpose of the interview is to find out precise information about each child's mathematical knowledge, so that his/her teacher can be more specific when planning learning experiences to meet his/her individual needs. The interviews have an associated learning framework, which describe a very important step-by-step pathway through a range of mathematical concepts.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School also continued to utilise the Science Program, 'Primary Connections' to support the teaching of Science in conjunction with the Australian Curriculum. Primary Connections is an innovative and exciting approach to teaching and learning which links the teaching of Science with the teaching of literacy in Australian primary schools. Primary Connections supports teachers to improve students' scientific literacy, as well as their learning outcomes in both science and literacy. Linking science with literacy enriches the learning experience for students.

The Primary Connections 5Es teaching and learning model is based on the theory that students learn best when they are allowed to work out explanations for themselves over time through a variety of learning experiences structured by the teacher. Students use their prior knowledge to make sense of these experiences and then make connections between new information and their prior knowledge. To help students make the connections between what they already know and new information, each Primary Connections unit uses five phases: Engage, Explore, Explain Elaborate and Evaluate.

Information Technology was an area of the school curriculum that also progressed significantly in 2013. During the year a number of new student iPads were purchased which allows for a mobile lab to be used in classrooms for whole or small groups. Interactive whiteboards continued to be a teaching tool to support various learning areas and staff also participated in substantial professional development to support the addition of interactive whiteboards into classroom pedagogy. Our goal and focus is to implement lessons and planning which will facilitate the integration of IT across all curriculum areas. The purchasing of a number of new iPads and other new initiatives to support their implementation into mainstream classroom was also a significant focus and introduction to the IT program in the school.



## **NEW SCHOOL INITIATIVES**

### ***POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT***

In 2013, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School continued the implementation of the program recognising the positive behaviour of the children at the school. 'Positive Behaviour Support' (PBS) is a program that focuses strongly on a whole-school approach to behaviour management. PBS is assisting the school to generate strategies and systems for developing positive, effective and caring school environments.

The program commenced with collaborative sessions between teachers and the student leadership group. They were challenged to come up with some beliefs that are associated with positive behaviour at the school. They came up with what we now call the 'Three R's' – Respect, Relationships, Responsibility. These beliefs are vibrantly displayed across the school in banners and student made posters, demonstrating how this positive behaviour is recognisable. Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School is identified as a PBS school in the following ways:

- \*Behavioural expectations are clearly displayed;
- \*Students are able to state the behavioural expectations;
- \*Students are recognised for appropriate behaviour;
- \*All staff know the expectations;
- \*Data is collected and used for decision-making;
- \*It is a team-based program, where families are actively included.

### **DATA-WISE MATHS STRATEGY**

Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School will also implement a Mathematics intervention strategy titled "Data-Wise" in 2013.

*"Data informed decision-making" is a way of holistically approaching education. We realise that students are people and not data points. If nothing else, the paradigm of data-informed instills the idea of collaboratively looking at the facts and deciding the best course of action for moving forward to enable students to achieve optimal educational outcomes" (Turner and Lindsay).*

This intervention is part of a Federally funded National Partnership that will focus on the effective use of evidence based approaches to lift the performance of students who are falling behind in literacy and/or numeracy.