2011 Annual Report to the School Community

St Joseph’s Primary School
Trafalgar

Registered School Number: 4015
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Our School Vision

**Mission**

St. Joseph’s Primary school is called to serve the children of St. John’s Parish and the wider community of Trafalgar. Our faith community embraces the call to God’s mission in the spiritual tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Therefore, with trust in the providence of God, the school endeavors to nurture in students the capacity and desire to respond to the needs of our time with faith and courage.

**Vision Statement**

At St. Joseph’s school the Catholic faith is central to all we do. Therefore we support the faith journey of each individual member of the community, we build relationships that are mutually respectful, honest and open and we make learning meaningful and engaging.
School Overview

St Joseph’s is a small rural Catholic primary school with a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Students come from the surrounding areas of Trafalgar, Willow Grove, Yarragon and Thorpdale. The School was established in 1932 by the Sisters of St. Joseph and still maintains a strong commitment to nurture in students the capacity and desire to respond to the needs of our time with faith and courage. Whilst we are a Catholic school, many non-Catholic families choose to send their children to St Joseph’s, seeking the excellent care and education provided by the school.

Every child is unique. Every child has potential. These two beliefs underpin all that we do at St Joseph’s Primary school in Trafalgar. The school offers a comprehensive and innovative curriculum which is aimed at bringing out the best in every learner. The children are exposed to strong Literacy and Numeracy teaching and learning. We recognise that children have different gifts and talents and have varied learning styles and we endeavour to cater for the individual needs of each child.

Pastoral care is outstanding with every child given the opportunity to grow and develop. Christian values such as self-discipline, respect for one another, responsibility and tolerance are actively taught and promoted so that each learner progressively moves to independent self-management.

The school has a wonderful community spirit that fosters a strong sense of belonging. Dedicated and committed teachers work to build meaningful relationships with all the students. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in the life of the school and there are many opportunities for parents to be involved.

The school has spacious grounds, catering for football, soccer, netball and basketball as well as two large adventure playgrounds. The administration area has recently been refurbished and a new state of the art resource centre encompassing a new library/resource centre and the complete refurbishment of two classrooms was completed in 2010.
Principal's Report

2011 was once again an exciting and busy year at St Joseph’s with many events and achievements taking place throughout the year. One such major achievement was St Joseph’s receiving accreditation as a school with a performance and development culture. St Joseph’s was one of only two schools from the Sale Diocese to receive this accreditation. Achieving this recognition paid tribute to the hard work and commitment that the whole staff put into developing the school into a learning community that focussed on improving student learning.

The focal point for the year was to develop the students to be independent learners and thinkers and to create a school culture where strong leadership, professional learning and team work led to all in the school community being empowered to take learning deeper.

As a Catholic School in the Diocese of Sale we continued to actively promote our Catholic identity through strong prayer life, and liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Our school motto says “Follow Me” and we strive to promote a culture where we follow the example of Jesus by the care and compassion we show others. We are proud of the dedicated staff who work hard to ensure that the students in their care receive the best education possible in a caring Christian environment that respects the dignity of each child.

Director of Catholic Education Sale Diocese, Peter Ryan and Minister for Education, Martin Dixon presenting the Certificate of Accreditation recognising St Joseph’s as a school with a Performance and Development Culture.
Education in Faith

Goals and Intended Outcomes

To create independent learners by taking students from surface to deep learning in Religious Education

Focus areas: Liturgical life
Using thinking tools

Achievements

Christian prayer and Christian Life are integral to our school culture and are evident by the many opportunities provided by the school to gather, worship and pray throughout 2011. Class masses, special Feast days, Easter and Christmas and Sacramental celebrations allow us to join with parents and the wider parish community to pray and celebrate together.

Throughout 2011 staff knowledge was developed through meaningful dialogue and discussions during staff meetings and in our professional learning teams to support student learning, as we recognised the wide range of religious experiences of students at our school and the need to use effective teaching strategies to engage students in developing their understanding of our Catholic faith.

To support this development, Robyn Lewry from the Catholic Education Office worked with teachers to plan and implement relevant strategies and tools to enhance learning, with a particular focus on using assessment as a starting point. By using assessment techniques to ascertain the prior knowledge of students, the teachers were then able to plan learning sequences that incorporated the use of thinking tools and set personalised learning goals to take student learning deeper.

The staff too were inspired by the workshop given by Fr Elio Capra and as part of our reflections on the day, we now have a weekly Gospel challenge which is taken from Sunday’s gospel and is presented by the different grades as part of Friday Assembly. We also reflect on this challenge at staff prayer. In this way the message of the Gospel is made meaningful and relevant to our present time.

VALUE ADDED

It was evident that the teachers knew their students well, including their diverse religious backgrounds, by the way they planned meaningful and relevant learning sequences that deepened student learning in religious education. A learning sequence on Lent and Easter and the Missions highlighted the depth of expertise of teachers in ensuring that students are given opportunities to express prior knowledge and to then go deeper in their understanding.

Once again our many liturgical celebrations were well attended by parents and the wider community. Grandparent’s day was the stand out highlight for our school community with large attendances some even travelling great distances to attend this liturgy and celebration. The students are always very enthusiastic to lead prayers, gospel reflections and to read during liturgical celebrations.
Learning and Teaching

Goals and Intended Outcomes

To create independent learners
Focus areas: Surface to deep learning
           Personalised learning
           Collaborative approach

Achievements

In the verification report received as part of the schools accreditation as a school with a performance and development culture it was noted that “St Joseph’s has developed a clear vision of how it sees itself as an effective learning community. The school has demonstrated excellent communication processes, collaboration, professional dialogue and has developed strategies that foster trust and mutual support but within a culture of accountability and professionalism.”

In many ways, these words sum up the educational journey of 2011 where through a genuine collaborative approach to learning, teachers continued to develop their skills to improve the quality of their teaching. Evidence of capacity building in teachers was clearly identified in the wide range of innovative and creative approaches to learning and teaching that resulted in enhanced student engagement and achievement.

Planning for diverse student’s needs by incorporating a variety of thinking tools, self-monitoring and reflective practices and having clearly identified assessment tasks has strengthened the personalised approach to teaching and learning for students. All these practices empower students to take responsibility for their own learning and becoming independent learners and thinkers.

Throughout the year a major emphasis was on taking learning deeper. Inquiry based learning shifted the focus from facts and topics to the process and language needed for thinking and learning. High expectations were set and students were continually challenged to explain their understandings and create meaning for themselves about what they were learning.

Professional development for the year consisted mainly of internal workplace meetings with staff sharing experiences and expertise. The school once again utilised personnel from the Catholic Education Office to facilitate and assist learning opportunities within the school. Individual teacher learning plans were developed with the help of an external coach around the theme of creating independent learners. Staff meetings continued to have a real emphasis on learning and our Professional Learning Team meetings continued to provide an opportunity for conversations on teaching practices and analysing data.

The Performance and Development Culture accreditation continues to serve as a framework for school improvement. It continues to provide an impetus for further change and to move the school forward so that the students at the school access a curriculum that allows for deep learning and is personalised to meet the needs of all at the school.
ANALYSIS OF NAPLAN RESULTS

VALUE ADDED

The Naplan data shows that over the past three years there has been a mixed spread of results depending on the different cohorts of students. It must be remembered that in a small school, some cohorts consist of numbers with as little as seven students and with such a small cohort children’s learning challenges are highlighted by standardised testing. As a school we are aware of all children’s needs and have in place strategies to assist them. Over the past three years all areas have at times reached 100% of students at the benchmark and there has not been an area that has shown to be consistently below the national benchmark. Each year the school identifies an area to focus on to improve literacy targets. In 2011 the school identified writing as a major literacy focus and the results show that in both grade 3 and grade 5 excellent results were gained. The focus for 2012 is reading and spelling and the school continually works hard to raise standards.

Around the school there has been evidence of students becoming more independent and responsible for their learning. Students were able to articulate that they know what good learners do; they know what to do when they are stuck and they know how to be effective problem solvers most of the time.

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<td>+5.9 %</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>0 %</td>
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<td>90.9%</td>
<td>-3.2 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>YEAR 5 NUMERACY</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>0 %</td>
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</table>
School Community and Student Wellbeing

Goals and Intended Outcomes

To create independent and responsible learners

Focus areas: To build home/school partnerships
To build the capacity to learn and participate in life inside and outside of the school environment

Achievements

St Joseph’s is very proud of the warm, safe and friendly atmosphere at the school. Parent attendance at many different activities and functions is highly encouraged and teaching staff are approachable and welcoming of parents in the classroom. The Parents and Friends Association have always played an important role throughout the year, ensuring that many community events were successful as well as being the major fundraising body for the school.

As a result of parent feedback St Joseph’s focussed on enhancing the communication between school and home. A questionnaire was sent home and a series of staff meetings attended by personnel from the Catholic Education Office were held to develop our lines of communication. To this end, teachers made conscious efforts to contact each family at least twice a term and a decision was made to have diaries as a means of communication for 2012. The website too was updated with current newsletters available for parents to download, as well as traditional hard copies being sent home.

Another proactive initiative saw the school counsellor Jeff Steedman hold a series of workshops for parents around bullying and building resilience in children. He talked about the characteristics of resilient people and the role parents need to play in supporting their children to solve problems themselves. Jeff also worked with the staff around consistency and how to help children take responsibility for their behaviour, thus building on the theme of creating independence in the students at St Joseph’s.

The school had a variety of social occasions to build a sense of community. The trivia night was extremely well attended and very popular, a ladies night was held to give our mums a time to catch up and socialise while the school musical was a big hit, being a sell out with many families bringing along extended family members and friends to the performances.

2011 saw an increased number of activities being held where parents were invited to come along and see what their children were doing at school. Classes presented their work by holding expos, market days and video displays of work. One very popular activity was the literacy/numeracy night with a large number of parents taking the opportunity to come along and learn how numeracy and literacy is taught throughout the school. Parents and their children tackled a number of games and saw how the use of technology can be used to engage students and enhance learning.

| STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE | 95% |

2011 Annual report to the School Community
VALUE ADDED

Our school counsellor Jeff Steedman ran a very well attended workshop on resilience. The parents found this very helpful and at their request follow up sessions were organised. The feedback from the workshops was very positive with parents feeling that the sessions were valuable in helping them understand how to help their children become more resilient and confident.

Parent attendance at the different occasions where children showcased their work was high with many commenting on the enjoyment they derived from seeing the quality work the children had produced.

Parent and Friends meetings continued to be well supported and there was always a good response to requests for helpers or donations for the different activities that were held throughout the year. The many social occasions that the P& F facilitate were inclusive and fun as well as being fund raisers.

The upgrading of the website and the commitment by staff to making regular contact with every family and providing follow up has enhanced communication between the school and home.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

The students were generally very positive about their schooling. They were enthusiastic about being involved in the many different learning opportunities, in particular when these involved showcasing the work to different audiences such as parents or other year levels. High levels of engagement and motivation saw the students produce quality work which they proudly displayed.

Events such as the walkathon, athletics and swimming carnivals were eagerly anticipated and very well supported as were the excursions to the zoo and Tutenkanhem display at the museum.

In 2011 the senior students participated in an interschool debate for the first time. They are to be congratulated on finishing as runner up. The students were enthusiastic in practising public speaking and preparing persuasive arguments with much support from all in the grade.

PARENT SATISFACTION

During the year some concerns were raised by parents around levels of communication by the school. By the end of the year, these issues had been addressed and there was a general consensus that the school year finished on a real positive note with parents commenting that communication between the school and parents had increased and that problems that arose were promptly dealt with and follow up was provided.

The many community building activities such as the trivia night, ‘ladies night in’ and the concert attributed to a “good feel” around the place (as one parent commented). The staff too worked very hard to be proactive about building relationships between home and school by regularly personally contacting parents to let them know how their children were going at school.
Leadership and Stewardship

Goals and Intended Outcomes

To create independent learners by:
- Building an effective leadership team
- Clearly defining leadership roles
- To provide a school environment that allows for learners to develop independence

Achievements

In the report given by Melbourne University as part of our accreditation it was noted that "the school set about building capacity in a range of areas, including implementing a distributive leadership model and promoting teachers as leaders."

During 2011, the leadership team met regularly with the goal to improve student learning across the school. As part of this goal, members of the leadership wrote up their own role description, with a focus on how they are leading the learning in their specific area and how their leadership roles had developed and changed as their capacity as leaders increased.

The effects of building teacher capacity in leadership was highlighted when members of the leadership team presented the learning journey at St Joseph's over the past two years to an audience of fellow teachers and principals at an expo for schools from the Sale Diocese. Lead teachers in numeracy and literacy also developed their capacity in leadership as they planned for and led many Professional Learning meetings which met the needs of staff members.

In managing school resources, technology continues to be a priority area. The use of technology together with high quality teaching allows for learning experiences that are engaging yet challenging and allow for flexibility in curriculum delivery. Computers are another tool that allows students to develop independence in their learning. In 2011 another bank of laptops was purchased and the wireless network was completely upgraded in readiness for the ICON project.

| TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE | 96.6% |
| STAFF RETENTION RATE           | 95%   |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIPLOMA - GRADUATE</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEGREE - BACHELOR</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIPLOMA - ADVANCED</td>
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EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In 2011 most of the staff professional development came from the Catholic Education Office learning pathways team members working with teachers and from within the school staff as teachers worked collaboratively and shared their learning experiences with one another.

Teachers continued to attend network and cluster meetings for their specific areas and the school had closure days for RE with Father Elio Capra and a whole school planning day where we evaluated our school improvement journey, and to map out our future direction for the year.

| NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL | 8 |
| AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL    | $450 |

TEACHER SATISFACTION

As part of the Performance and Development Accreditation process staff was asked to fill out a questionnaire. Results indicated that 100% of teachers felt that their job provided them with professional growth and stimulation, that they felt supported in their teaching; that teachers were willing to share their classroom practices and ideas with colleagues; that they were expected to be accountable for their practices and that the school leadership team promoted collaboration and reflection and opportunities to gain leadership experiences.
## Financial Performance

Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Framework</th>
<th>Modified Cash</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recurrent income</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent income</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other fee income</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Private income</td>
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<td>State government recurrent grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian government recurrent grants</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total recurrent income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recurrent expenditure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries, allowances and related expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non salary expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total recurrent expenditure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Capital income and expenditure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government capital grants</td>
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<td>Capital fees and levies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other capital income</td>
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<td><strong>Total capital income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total capital expenditure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total opening balance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total closing balance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Non DEEWR FQ reported items</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>System levies (payments)</td>
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<td>Intra systemic transfer receipts (payments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diocesan capital fund (SCF) receipts (payments)</td>
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Note that the information provided above does not include the following items:

System levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and diocesan supplementary capital fund (SCF) supported borrowings for primary schools. The information provided is not comparable with other educational sectors. This VRQA template is not comparable to the ACARA school-level income reporting requirements which are to be reported on the MySchool website. ACARA school level reporting requirements will require school level income from Government grants and some private income to be allocated by school. This will be a small adjustment in relation to the total level of school resources. At this stage, recurrent income from Government sources, school generated income and capital expenditure are to be reported by schools. Additionally when assessing the private income of the school include both recurrent and capital school fees.
Future Directions

St Joseph’s will continue to develop its performance and development culture with the overarching aim of improving outcomes for all students.

We will establish a formal process for induction of new staff to the school and for staff moving into leadership positions or new roles within the school.

We will continue to extend the range of feedback sources, especially for student and parent feedback and we will ensure that teacher development plans are then informed by the multiple sources of feedback.

We will also provide opportunities for teachers to become more skilled in giving feedback to each other.

We will continue to support and nurture our students to be thinkers and deep learners who can work collaboratively and independently.

We also recognise that we have a responsibility to share our journey of becoming a school with a performance and development culture with other schools in our diocese.

Our community has been blessed with dedicated teachers, a positive learning environment, strong parental support and a vibrant sense of community. We value the community spirit and connectedness of families and will continue to build relationships and have open communication lines between home and school. We have a strong commitment to pastoral care and well being of students which will continue in the future.

We look forward to 2012 as we continue to build a vibrant learning community where our students continue to learn and grow.