



2025 Principal's Report

Inspired by Christ, we aim to graduate confident, capable and compassionate individuals who are ready to go out into the world and lead with their head, their heart and their hands.

Be your best self in 2025!

Catholic Identity	Education	Community	Stewardship
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Reflecting on 2025, St Mary's has continued to thrive as a learning community. Despite the inevitable complexities that arise in any school year, our staff have consistently demonstrated professionalism, resilience, and a deep commitment to student growth. Their daily presence and purposeful engagement have been instrumental in our success.

We've made deliberate progress in cultivating a workplace culture defined by mutual respect, psychological safety, and shared purpose. These values have translated into strong, respectful relationships between students and staff. Relationships that are evident in the way our students interact, learn, and express appreciation for their teachers.

St Mary's is not just a place of work, it's a community I am proud to lead. The calibre of the people here, and their collective dedication, make this role both meaningful and energising.

I also want to acknowledge the vital role our families play. Your trust and partnership are deeply valued. In a world that is increasingly complex, we know that student wellbeing and achievement are best supported when school and home work in alignment, when communication is open, expectations are shared, and our values are reinforced beyond the classroom.

Catholic Identity

At the beginning of the year, we were delighted to welcome Fr Wayne into our school and parish community. Fr Wayne's support, guidance, and friendship have been deeply appreciated throughout the year. His commitment to nurturing the faith of our students and wider community is truly evident, and his ability to engage with our students in a way that resonates with their level of understanding has made a meaningful impact.

This year, 21 students at St Mary's participated in our sacramental programs, with 5 receiving Confirmation, 7 celebrating their First Holy Communion, and 9 undertaking Reconciliation. These milestones are a testament to the spiritual journey our students continue to embrace. The school remains a vital presence within our parish community, and I wish to express my sincere thanks again to Fr Wayne for his ongoing pastoral support and wise counsel throughout the year. I also extend heartfelt appreciation to Mr Skehan, Mrs Wright, Mrs Jendrzek, Mrs Watts and Mrs O'Connor (and their Education Assistants) for their

leadership and coordination of these important programs. Their dedication has ensured that each experience was meaningful and well-supported.

Our commitment to nurturing a faith-filled environment remains strong. We continue to promote the “Spirit of Jesus” in everyday actions, encouraging students to reflect His presence in their thoughts, words, and deeds. The Making Jesus Real (MJR) initiative continues to be a central pillar in this mission, helping students internalise and live out these values.

The Mercy values of forgiveness, courage, respect, compassion, service, justice, excellence, and determination are deeply embedded in our school culture. These values also underpin our outreach efforts, which this year included support for Project Compassion, Catholic Missions, and the Our Lady’s Assumption Parish’s Hamper Appeals.

On August 15th, we commemorated the Feast of the Assumption with a whole-school Mass, followed by classroom activities focused on Mary, a shared lunch, and a vibrant mission market led by our students. Through games and fundraising activities, over \$1000 was raised to support the Parish Pastoral Council’s hamper initiatives, directly assisting families in the Donnybrook community. I would like to acknowledge Mr Skehan, Mrs Wright and all staff who contributed to the success of this special day.

This year, our staff were trained in *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis’ call to care for our common home. We introduced its message through classroom discussions and whole-school activities that encourage stewardship and sustainability. As we look ahead to next year, we are excited to build on this foundation by expanding student-led initiatives, strengthening community partnerships, and weaving *Laudato Si’* themes even more deeply into our curriculum. Together, we will continue to nurture a culture of care for creation within our school community. Thank you to Mrs Wright for her efforts in introducing this initiative to our school.

Education

This year has been a rewarding journey as our dedicated staff have continued to refine and expand their expertise in delivering rich and effective teaching programs. From using resources such as Maths Trek, Talk for Writing, OCHRE Education and Letters and Sounds, to the use of AI tools for engagement and assessment practices, our team has embraced new ideas, assessment strategies, and technology to enhance student learning. It’s been especially heartening to witness the collaborative spirit as experienced staff supported new colleagues and those beginning their careers in mastering these approaches.

Our commitment to academic excellence has seen our high-achieving students thrive through enrichment opportunities. They took part in the BEBRAS Challenge and the Australian Mathematics Competition, showcasing their problem-solving and analytical skills. Additionally, a group of Year 4–6 students represented our school in Tree Talks, a writing and speaking competition that assessed their ability to craft compelling content and engage audiences. Selection for these events was based on both classroom performance and standardised assessments.

Physical education and sport have remained a strong part of school life. Students participated in a wide range of activities including swimming, winter sports, cross country, athletics, and various clinics. A special thank you to Mr Skehan for his outstanding coordination of these programs and events, and for his preparations leading into Interschool Athletics where we took the win for 2026.

Mr Skehan also continued to inspire through the Music program, where students have made great strides in playing the Loog Guitars and other instruments. The bucket drumming continues to be a favourite with the uplifting beats creating much energy throughout the school.

Social and emotional learning has deepened through our ongoing implementation of the RULER approach (Recognise, Understand, Label, Express, and Regulate emotions). This framework equips students with tools to navigate their feelings, build empathy, and respond thoughtfully to challenges. Our students continue to build their capacity in understanding others' perspectives and strengthening their strategies for being their best selves.

In Term One, our Year 3 and 5 students completed the NAPLAN assessments, which provide valuable insights into literacy and numeracy development. We were proud to see our Year 3 students performed above the national, state, like and CEWA average in all assessments. Comparatively to like school across the state, our Year 5 students performed at or above like schools in reading, numeracy and grammar, however, performed below in writing and spelling. In comparison to the national average our Year 5 cohort did not perform as well as we would have hoped, and we recognise this is an area for development.

In addition to NAPLAN and school-based assessments, our students from Year 1-6 also completed PAT (Progressive Achievement Test) assessments in both reading and mathematics at the end of year to explore student and cohort growth. The trend over time suggests that a high proportion of our students are consistently achieving above expected growth compared to like students and standardised measures. This data has provided much to celebrate.

Next year, we will move away from Letters and Sounds and Sound Waves and begin transition to the MultiLit Suite. The MultiLit suite, which sits alongside Mini and MacqLit, is a research-based literacy program designed to support students at various stages of reading development. It includes three key components:

1. PreLit – Aimed at Kindergarten students, PreLit focuses on foundational skills such as phonological awareness, oral language, and print knowledge. It prepares children for formal reading instruction through engaging, play-based activities.
2. InitialLit – Designed for Foundation to Year 2, InitialLit is a whole-class program that teaches phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. It provides structured lessons that align with the science of reading, ensuring all students receive high-quality instruction from the start.
3. SpellEx – Short for Spelling Extension, SpellEx supports students in Years 3&4 with explicit instruction in spelling rules, morphology, and etymology. It builds on phonics knowledge and helps students become confident, accurate spellers.

The MultiLit Suite is highly beneficial for schools because it is evidence-based, systematic, and inclusive, catering to both mainstream and intervention needs. It helps close literacy gaps early, supports teacher consistency, and improves student outcomes. Schools benefit from its structured approach, professional development support, and alignment with curriculum standards, making it a powerful tool for literacy success. Year 5-6 classes will transition to SpellEx when it becomes available. Our staff have been trained in the MultiLit Suite over the term and are preparing for implementation next year.

Community

Earlier this year, our school community gathered for the P&F Sundowner at Station Square. An evening filled with connection and support was had by all involved. It was heartening to see so many families engaging positively with the school and generously offering their encouragement. A sincere thank you to our P&F team for coordinating this event.

At the start of Term Two, our staff completed professional development in the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) held in Manjimup. This trauma-informed approach enhances student engagement, emotional regulation, and academic success, aligning well with our ongoing RULER program. Beyond the training itself, the day provided a valuable opportunity for staff to reconnect, reflect, and strengthen the collaborative spirit over a shared meal and nighttime festivities.

Throughout the year, we've enjoyed a variety of events that brought together students, families, and the wider community to celebrate our school. Highlights included our Mother's Day and Father's Day gatherings, the school disco, book reading night, sporting carnivals, and the much-loved Christmas concert and Graduation evening (happening soon).

Term Three saw the return of St Mary's Got Talent, now in its second year. This event gave students a platform to showcase their musical and performance skills, and it was a joy to witness their confidence and creativity flourish. A big thank you to Mr Skehan for his dedication in bringing this event to life.

Our school choir, led by Mrs Wright, continues to thrive. Despite the commitment of giving up playtime, our students have embraced their regular lunchtime rehearsals with enthusiasm. Their performances at the hospital and for the residents of Tuia Lodge have been a standout and we look forward to seeing them in action at our Christmas concert. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Mrs Wright for her ongoing leadership and passion.

Stewardship

Work Health and Safety (WHS) reforms across the Catholic education system continue to shape how we operate at a school level. These changes have prompted us to review and refine our practices to ensure a safer and more supportive environment for staff and students alike. This year, we've made considerable progress in responding to staff safety concerns and managing notifications effectively.

Our efforts have included a range of improvements across the school grounds. We've upgraded our electrical circuitry to meet current safety standards, undertaken tree management to reduce environmental risks, and addressed roofing concerns to ensure structural integrity and safety. We've also focused on reducing hazards related to slips, trips, and falls, and provided training in manual handling to support staff in their daily tasks. Importantly, we've increased our attention to psychosocial hazards (those factors that can affect a staff member's physical or psychological wellbeing). This includes stress, workload, interpersonal relationships, and other workplace dynamics that can impact mental health.

A major facilities upgrade this year was the completion of the roofing structure over the basketball court. This project, made possible through a generous grant from Talison Lithium Pty Ltd, was finalised early in the year. While there were some minor challenges with footings and plumbing during construction, the end result has been a fantastic addition to our school. Enhancing the project further, an anonymous donor kindly funded the installation of lighting, and additional padding was purchased to complete the space, making it safer and more functional for student use and out of school hours hire.

This year, we again participated in the twice annual Assessment of Wellbeing in Education survey. The survey measures the wellbeing of students from Year 3-6 against the following criteria: Hope, Religious Wellbeing, Happiness, Health and Resilience. Most notably again, our students believed they had strong friendships within the school, have positive relationships with their teachers and are educated within a caring environment. The survey also identified students who are at risk against measures for bullying, worrying and sadness and allowed us to intervene and put processes in place to support them. We look forward to continuing this worthy and informative initiative in next year.

Due to class sizes at St Mary's that are too large to combine and too small to remain financially sustainable, the school is unable to submit a balanced budget for 2026 and predicted beyond. Despite this and after thoughtful consultation with Catholic Education and the School Advisory Council, St Mary's has made the decision to transition to straight year-level classes across all grades starting next year. This is an exciting development for our school. It will bring changes to staffing arrangements, classroom allocations, and resource distribution, reflecting our commitment to providing the best possible learning environment for our students.

To help secure future enrolments (an essential step toward achieving a balanced budget), St Mary's has once again launched two impactful social media campaigns. These focus on:

1. Showcasing the positive initiatives and outstanding individuals that make our school special.
2. Promoting St Mary's as a seamless Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 educational pathway, aligned with Bunbury Catholic College.

These campaigns have been developed in collaboration with the Catholic Education marketing team, ensuring strong and strategic outreach.

This Year, we welcomed a new staff member in Mrs Tina Patane. Tina was employed at the beginning of Term 2 to support Mrs Humphries in the office two days per week. It has been great to have Tina join our team and her capable and positive approach to the role has been much appreciated. From welcoming me at my car with an umbrella on the rainy days to offering support in those times when my receding hairline was getting me down, she has certainly set the standard for which Mrs Humphries should aspire (note this comment is made with tongue in cheek and reflective of the positive relationships we have in the office).

Unfortunately, this year we do say goodbye to three staff members.

Firstly, to Mrs Mel Eastcott. Mel is quick with a laugh, capable and always willing to do what she can to support our students. She has formed positive relationships with our staff and students, non-greater than those who need it most. We look forward to having her around our school in a casual capacity for the time being. And congratulations again on your recent wedding!

Next, to Mrs Liana Clynick. Liana has been of huge support to our school in recent years. She is flexible, creative and willing to go wherever is needed. Thank you, Liana, for the love you have shown our staff, students and community. We look forward to working with you again in a casual capacity in 2026.

We also say goodbye to Miss Chelsea Moore. Since joining in 2022, Chelsea has made a meaningful impact in both Kindergarten and Year One, bringing warmth and dedication to early childhood education. More recently, she has led wellbeing initiatives, helping foster a supportive environment for students and staff. Chelsea's contributions have been deeply valued, and she will be greatly missed. On behalf of our school community, we thank her for her commitment and wish her all the best in her return to Perth.

Whilst we farewell some, we do welcome others. Next year we welcome Mrs Jasmine Grafton to our team. Jasmine is a passionate and dedicated educator with experience across diverse settings. She has recently relocated to town with her family, and her two daughters will be joining us in Year One and Kindergarten next year. With her strong commitment to learning and a caring, pastoral approach, Jasmine is sure to make a valuable contribution to our students and the wider school community.

We also welcome Mrs Bronte Ukich. Bronte is a graduate who is inspired by learning and innovation, and who comes to us with a strong sense of faith and vocation. Bronte has much experience in working with children, especially during her time as camp school leader. Bronte holds specialised training in Students with Disabilities and has also held volunteer positions supporting those with additional needs. Again, I am positive Bronte will make a valuable contribution to our school community.

In conclusion, as we reflect on the year, I'd like to sincerely thank our School Advisory Council for their ongoing guidance and thoughtful support. Their contributions have helped shape many of the decisions that benefit our students and school.

A heartfelt thank you also goes to our Parents and Friends committee, whose commitment to building community and raising funds has made a meaningful difference to our place, St Marys.

To our dedicated staff. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our students and for nurturing the Christ-centred, child-focused learning community that we offer here at St Mary's. Whilst I do not like to single out individual staff members, on this occasion I am going to make a special thank you to Mr Graham Manderson. For those of you who do not know Graham, he is our sole grounds and cleaning staff member. No job is ever too big for Graham, and he continues to go out of his way to ensure the smooth operations of our school and our classrooms. His problem solving is second to none and willingness to go above and beyond his role for our staff, students and community is just so much appreciated by all. So, on behalf of everyone, thank you Graham.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge our leadership and administration team of Mr Skehan, Mrs Wright, Mrs Humphries, and Miss Moore, for their tireless efforts behind the scenes. Their work ensures our school runs smoothly and continues to grow as a place of excellence and care.

Lastly, at St Mary's we aim to graduate confident, compassionate and capable members of society. There will be ups and downs along the journey, but we believe we have the people and processes in place to support our students in becoming the next leaders of society who are prepared to go out into the world and lead with their heads, their hearts and their hands.



Thank you all for your support this year, and I wish you all a safe and enjoyable Christmas break with your family and friends.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Gammon
Principal