

St Patrick's School Gordon

2021 Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 187

Table of Contents

- Contact Details2
- Minimum Standards Attestation2
- Governing Authority Report3
- Our School Vision & Mission4
- School Overview5
- Principal's Report6
- School Advisory Council Report7
- Catholic School Culture8
- Community Engagement10
- Leadership & Stewardship12
- Learning & Teaching15
- Wellbeing18
- Child Safe Standards20
- Future Directions21

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Minimum Standards Attestation

NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Governing Authority Report

The governance of fifty-six schools in the Diocese of Ballarat was transferred to Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) on 01 January 2021. Thus, beginning an exciting and challenging first year of governance under DOBCEL and continuing the long partnership between all schools of the Diocese and Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) of continual improvement of learning outcomes for the students in the schools of the Diocese.

COVID-19 continued to cast a long shadow over the communities in the Diocese. Our students, their families and our dedicated staff are to be commended for their ability to move from one mode of learning to another with very short notice. The true impact on learners may not be known for years. We may well reflect on the 'challenging and uncertain times of COVID' in a similar way to the those reflected on the Spanish Flu a century ago. We will remember with awe the commitment of our school communities, those who lead them and their staff. We will also speak of the resilience of the children of this generation in meeting a 'new normal' and often leading our wider communities in an optimistic response.

In 2021, our school communities and CEB have maintained a strong focus on reviewing and updating policies, procedures and practices that reflect the new governance model and continuing their commitment to providing safe, learning environments for all learners.

I thank the priests of our school communities for their ongoing pastoral care and ministry, without the demands of Governance resting on their shoulders. I acknowledge and thank the Principals of our schools for their committed leadership, care and support of their school community.

I commend this Annual Report to the School Community as a summary of the many achievements in supporting the learning needs of our students.

Tom Sexton

Executive Director

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited

Our School Vision & Mission

OUR VISION

St. Patrick's is a Catholic school that strives to educate the whole person. It is our Faith and Traditions that bind us, as we foster caring relationships between staff, students, school and home and the wider community.

OUR MISSION

As a Christ centred educating community, St. Patrick's school;

- Celebrates Catholic beliefs, values, practices and traditions
- Shares in the mission of the church, modelled on the leadership of Jesus Christ
- Works in partnership with all stakeholders in the education of our students
- Provides a contemporary curriculum which is stimulating, creative and challenging
- Nurtures each individual's intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical and social development, in an environment that is safe for all
- Respects the dignity and integrity of each person, promoting self-esteem, hope and a positive vision for the future
- Inspires and Empowers our students to make a difference in the world
- Educates and will support all, regardless of race, religion, social background or status

School Overview

St Patrick's Primary School is a dynamic school in a country setting open to all families within the wider Parish of Gordon community and welcomes families from Gordon, Mt Egerton, Wallace, Springbank and Ballan. We have a rich history of providing a Catholic Education dating back to 1890 with our current school operating from its current site since 1930.

We cater for children from Foundation (Prep) to Year 6 with a current enrolment of 49 students from 35 families.

At present St. Patrick's is building upon twenty-first century pedagogy to deliver a curriculum that engages all students in their learning journey across their seven-year primary education journey. Through our School Improvement Plan, our strategic intent is focussing upon the literacy levels of students across the domains of spelling, reading and writing. We are also continuing to build teacher's pedagogical knowledge around curriculum and further developing explicit teaching strategies.

St. Patrick's is currently reviewing and rewriting our school's Vision and Mission statement in light of our previous school review to ensure that they reflect our Catholic ethos in a progressive and modern society.

Across 2021 we began the process of engaging staff and families about the place of St. Patrick's within the Catholic community and how best we reflect who we are. This will continue across 2021 with a celebration to launch our new vision in early 2022.

Principal's Report

Throughout 2021 staff, students and families engaged in learning that was both on-site and remote. We had become adept at being able to transition into different learning styles, yet at the same time, continue to operate as a community. We began the new school year with a new principal, Mr Paul McDowell, and also nine new Foundation students who began their learning journey at St. Patrick's.

Term One was to be one of two terms where we were able to complete most of the term with face to face learning. We enjoyed our welcome to school barbecue from our Parents and Friends Committee and an equally exciting twilight sports carnival held for the first time under our new School House names. This year St. Patrick's instigated three houses - Patrick, MacKillop and Bunjil for children to both connect with their school's heritage and tradition and also to have the opportunity to have a new shield presented to the winner. A similar shield was designed for our other new athletic event for 2021 - St. Patrick's Cross Country, which was held in late Term Four.

Terms Two and Three saw only minimal on-site students numbers due to pandemic restrictions and families were connected remotely for the majority these terms. Learning continued through daily support for up to 4 hours per day as well as school organised drop-offs for materials and technology support. Whilst the impact on student motivation was at times a huge factor in some level of disengagement, families and staff were exceptional in maintaining routines for students. Two highlights of this period were our virtual and on-site Book Week dress up day which brought a level of humour to all along with the school organised Father's Day pie drive which saw staff deliver to each family food and drinks, along with gifts, so each family could engage in a new tradition we were establishing.

In terms of staffing in 2021 we advertised for one full time ongoing position and after consultation through an interview process with Catholic Education Ballarat, Miss Elizabeth McKew was appointed as a permanent staff member at St. Patrick's. With consistent enrolments projected for 2022, in Term Four Mis Eliza Smith was also employed in a full time ongoing position.

Term Four, with an easing of restrictions and a desire for schools to return to on-site learning, St. Patrick's was able to complete Term Four with the majority of students on-site on a daily basis. It allowed for staff, students and families to reconnect and end the year on a very positive note.

School Advisory Council Report

It is my pleasure to present my second chairperson's report on behalf of the St Patrick's Gordon, School Advisory Council (SAC).

This wouldn't be possible without my fellow board members, Parent Representatives: Sean Muir and Shary Tan, and Staff Representatives: Fiona Conroy and Principal Paul McDowell.

I sincerely thank them for their continued commitment and dedication, and I am happy to report on our school's journey across 2021. At the end of our year we sadly said farewell to Sean Muir who completed his term on the School Advisory Council, but we welcomed both Matthew Best and Jody Moran to our SAC for 2022.

2021 again had its challenges with home-schooling and event cancellations, but we made it through and with a Principal who is bringing us a much-needed sense of stability, strong leadership and vision for the future of our school.

Since the transfer to DOBCEL (Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited), the authority at school is now solely the Principal, who is:

- Advised by the School Advisory Council (SAC)
- Answerable to the Director of Catholic Education Ballarat (Tom Sexton) and the Central Zone Education Consultant (Kim Butler) and
- Spiritually Fr. Sajan is asked to offer support and advice. We look forward to working with our new Parish Priest, Fr. Justin Driscoll who commences his ministry in January 2022.

Enrolments at St. Patrick's continued to grow, and we had 9 students commence in 2021 with projected growth across the following years due to both the principal and staff providing excellent direction and educational opportunities for our students.

The School Advisory Council were advised and guided to be active participants in the new school Vision process, and we look forward to its launch in 2022.

St. Patrick's has continued to grow under the guidance of our principal and dedicated staff and as a Council we are pleased with the direction St. Patrick's has continued to take.

Catholic School Culture

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- In maintaining our Catholicity as a school in a contemporary time, St. Patrick's will revise and rewrite school Vision and Mission statements.
- To develop teaching units that are based upon Awakenings.
- To develop staff knowledge around Strand Based Enduring Understandings, Spiritual capabilities and Shared Christian Praxis
- For staff to develop understanding of scripture and its place in the curriculum

Achievements

The greatest success in St. Patrick's development of its Catholic culture in 2021 was the completion of the process to develop a contemporary and new Vision Statement. Through consultation with staff from Diocesan staff, staff, students and families where lead through a process that was focussed upon answering these 4 key questions:

- who we are
- our inspiration
- who we serve
- our purpose now
- our hope for the future.

The process commenced in Term Three after pandemic restrictions were eased and was completed in late Term Four. The voices of all were heard, participants engaged in dialogue and challenged each other to unpack meaning from each statement. Four alternate options were arrived at and then put to the wider community to have a final say of what they believe best represented St. Patrick's going forward:

- A vibrant community inspired by Christ to empower, educate and nurture - we seek excellence
- A vibrant community inspired by Christ to empower, educate and nurture excellence and enrichment for all
- Our Christ inspired school educates and empowers all to live enriched lives, embracing opportunities, and
- Vibrant, welcoming community inspired by Gospel values; we empower, educate and nurture excellence and enrichment for all.

St. Patrick's has entered 2022 with a new Vision and will celebrate it in due course. Our new Vision statement guides us into the next period of education and faith development for all.

Vibrant, welcoming community inspired by Gospel values; we empower, educate and nurture excellence and enrichment for all

VALUE ADDED

- Celebration of our opening and closing liturgy of the year in our parish church.
- Celebration of the Lenten season whilst at school before a return to remote learning
- Celebration of our Parish patron and school patron - Saint Patrick with our sister school St. Brigids at St. Patrick's cathedral in a liturgy celebrated by Bishop Paul Bird.
- Staff students and parents participated in our first Mission Fête as part of our social justice program in 2 years
- Parish celebration of three sacraments

Community Engagement

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Be active participants in the daily life of St. Patrick's Primary school and to promote the school in a variety of ways to the wider Gordon and surrounding community

Achievements

The committee executive consisted of Bron Kenna, Samantha Peoples, Nadia Pisak and Jody Moran. This was the second year for the executive with the goal to involve new parents and allow new members to join at the conclusion of 2021. The tireless efforts of the Parents and Friends was recognised by families with 2 parents joining at the end of 2021 to assist in new opportunities in 2022. From the end of 2021 Jody Moran will join the School Advisory Council with Sam Peoples stepping down. We welcomed Cathryn Ruthen, Rhonda Best and Alisha Reynolds to the executive for 2022.

The committee had arranged a twelve-month calendar of events to build upon the outgoing executive and despite extensive lock-downs was able to achieve some of their stated goals for fund-raising.

PARENT SATISFACTION

Throughout the 2021 school year staff had several opportunities to focus on the areas highlighted in the School Improvement Surveys 2020 results to ensure the expectations of families were being met and areas of need a focus.

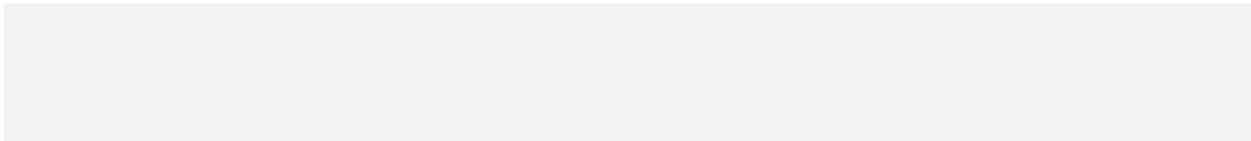
Communication through consistent modes was an area that was identified and in 2021 St. Patrick's streamlined all communication through 2 digital media platforms - that of the school website and mobile phone friendly application Class Dojo.

The old school website was retired and St. Patrick's engaged Schoolzine through Catholic Education Ballarat to develop and launch new website. This was completed in May and allowed the new school newsletter to be designed using this platform and be emailed to all families. Families were able to have access to the newsletter in a user-friendly form on their phones as well as a paper copy if required. Feedback was overwhelming supportive of both changes.

Class Dojo allowed families to be connected to their child's class and view:

- 1 - class activities and stories
- 2 - digital portfolio of their own child(ren)
- 3 - communicate directly with classroom teachers

Families have found this innovation an excellent way to be involved on a daily basis with their child's learning and the ability to have multiple family members e.g grandparents also connected to individual children, has created a more positive attitude towards school by families.



Leadership & Stewardship

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Enhance the development of highly skilled staff through engagement in evidence based practices within a culture of continuous improvement

Develop a new model of Leadership team to enhance our understandings of PLC

Establish new norms for meeting in teams with the whole staff.

Leading a school community with empty classrooms and the majority of staff working from home for such extended periods has certainly created a unique set of challenges.

Professional Development of staff, which is a requirement of the award, was largely not met, curriculum development goals had to be amended and an overall relinquishing of plans to allow for new circumstances needed to be developed.

I am pleased with what we have achieved this year despite the many obstacles we have faced.

Achievements

Despite the inability have all planned Professional Learning for staff in 2021, school was able to facilitate:

- One closure day for staff to plan using Awakenings documents to enhance teaching in Religion
- Participate in 4 online Master Classes in numeracy through Australian Catholic University
- Complete 4 half day staff professional development days in Literacy, developing norms for teaching spelling and writing

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

St. Patrick's invests in its teachers to ensure they are highly qualified and are able to meet the needs of their students in a contemporary learning environment.

In 2021, we had 3 key areas of teacher professional development:

- developing skills in reading, writing and spelling using through scaffolding literacy
- participating in a series of mathematics professional learning seminars that highlight ways to engage students in numeracy
- provide opportunities to develop units of learning following the Diocesan resource 'Awakenings' which comprises the Core Document and educational materials of the Religious Education Curriculum for the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat

Number of teachers who participated in PL in 2021	8
Average expenditure per teacher for PL	\$1200

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Organisational Climate

SIS (school improvement survey) data collected in 2022 indicated a 77% positive response to the leadership offered at St. Patrick's against the historical figure of 79%. With new leadership in 2021 the anecdotal score has shown an increase to 91% due to:

- Improved and consistent levels of communication both in digital and face to face form
- Collaborative review of School Improvement Plan with staff to ensure all are working towards the same learning outcomes.
- Classroom support in both resources and pedagogical knowledge

Teaching Climate

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	84.0%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	80.0%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	33.3%
Graduate	16.7%
Graduate Certificate	0.0%
Bachelor Degree	66.7%
Advanced Diploma	33.3%
No Qualifications Listed	16.7%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	1.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	8.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	5.8
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	5.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	2.1
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1.0

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: In order to improve student learning outcomes, we will develop and implement agreed shared pedagogical practices.

Intended Outcomes

- 75% of students to test at Stanine 5 or above in PatR (focus upon moving students from Stanine 4 to Stanine 5)
- To increase the pedagogical understanding of reading in the school
- To increase the capacity of teachers to effectively deliver a reading lesson
- To increase the capacity of teachers to identify student learning needs using data
- Increase the levels of engagement in the reading process for students
- For students to identify themselves as readers and have an understanding of their preferred text types
- Students to know and monitor their personal reading goals and their responsibility within this
- Enrich parent understanding of what reading looks like at school and how they can support their child at home
- Develop and foster a joy of reading
- Develop a collective commitment to using the teaching and learning model within the literacy block
- Develop collective commitments to literacy

Achievements

The school year had limitations across Terms Two and Three due to continued lock-downs that halted face to face teacher and student interactions and staff development was also impacted. Across Term One and into Term Four teachers at St. Patrick's consistently developed literacy programs that were based on our goal of developing agreed practices. The highlight of the year is that there is now complete alignment with practices across the school in all Year Levels. These are found in our:

- Development of consistent practise of the teaching and learning approach within the reading block
- Collective understanding of teaching and learning around a shared text
- Developing of an understanding of data as a starting point for learning of teaching
- Reflecting on teaching practice by videoing personal teaching and learning approaches to a shared text
- Development of consistent planning around literacy planning documentation
- Document whole school learning templates that align with the curriculum, identifying the lesson structure and informing the teaching and learning.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through the use of PAT data analysis in Reading, Writing and Spelling, staff have identified that growth has been achieved compared to the previous year:

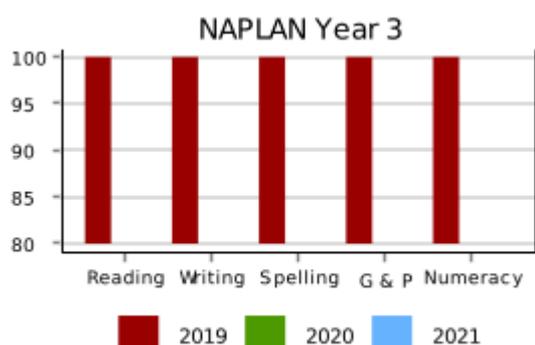
- 67% of children are at or above standard in Reading Comprehension compared to 58% in 2020
- 78% of students are at or above standard which is similar to 81% (2020)
- 78% of students in mathematics are at or above standard compared to 63% (2020)

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %**	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 03 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 03 Reading	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 03 Spelling	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 03 Writing	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 05 Reading	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 05 Spelling	100.0	-	-	**	-
YR 05 Writing	100.0	-	-	**	-

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To implement effective practices to promote, monitor and enhance well-being and community engagement at St. Patrick's

Achievements

As a school community we continued to unpack and explore our three core values, those of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience. Collectively students and staff worked through explicit examples of what each of these values looks like in all different contexts - classroom, yard, hallway, online and off-site and how all children and staff can exhibit them to uphold the value. This was a process that began in Term One and due to school closures was reached at the end of Term Four, Throughout school, from the entry foyer to classrooms, these values are displayed, referred to and celebrated at assemblies. We have been able to move away from school of rules to a community that knows those that work together respectfully can achieve so much more.

Families followed this journey through our digital pap Class Dojo whereby children received recognition with digital tokens each time they displayed a core value. Within this framework of positive recognition class milestones were reached when a certain amount of tokens were achieved such that a class had a class reward - special lunch, activity afternoon or casual clothes day. Parents were able to comment and follow each child's progress through Class Dojo and reinforce the school values at home. During remote learning awards were still attained by students for exhibiting our school values.

VALUE ADDED

- Family participation at opening school barbecue
- Family participation at Term one Athletics carnival
- Mother's Day pampering afternoon
- Book Week Dress Up day held remotely and on site
- Father's Day pie night deliveries to all families by staff for events to be held at each home
- Term Four Cross Country family evening and Santa visit

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Students at St. Patrick's through the 2020 School Improvement Survey showed areas of distress when compared to the 2017 data. This is explainable due to the constant use of remote learning and lock-downs, preventing students from forming social connections with peers and

teachers. Events were limited, apart from our Term One Athletics carnival and our end of year Cross-country. All other social outings were cancelled, and interschool sports were not scheduled. In late term Four when students were able to be on-site consistently, teachers noted that the level of social skills between students had regressed and were a point of constant attention.

In exit surveys for yea Six students they denoted that they had lost 2 years of opportunities during their primary learning and it was a point of great sadness for them.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Student attendance is recorded daily and non-attendance is followed up by first checking family notifications on Class Dojo and then a conversation with principal and siblings if appropriate. If no explanation is forthcoming on the absentee on any day, a text message is sent to families through school record contacts. The attendance and compliance for families at St. Patrick's is approximately 93% and is therefore currently not an area of ongoing concern.

Remote learning saw children check-in 5 days a week until 1.00pm with class teachers and specialist teachers on appropriate days. Attendance during this time was high with children allowed one non-contact day on a regular basis, which was offered family initiated.

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y01	96.3%
Y02	93.1%
Y03	95.0%
Y04	98.0%
Y05	95.9%
Y06	96.5%
Overall average attendance	95.8%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The VRQA Compliance Self-Assessment and Action Plan was revisited in 2020 to monitor our implementation and compliance with Ministerial Order no. 870.

St Patrick's School has developed policies, procedures, measures and practices in accordance with

Ministerial Order for managing the risk of child abuse including:

- the implementation of minimum standards for a child safe environment
- responding to allegations of child abuse committed against a child enrolled at the school or committed by an employee or a student, contractor of the school or other person connected with the school.

Achievements

- In 2021 St Patrick's School underwent the VRQA Compliance Review. As part of the VRQA compliance process all Child Safe Standards were addressed by the school and met VRQA Child

Safe requirements.

- Development of a new school website that has a dedicated section that has listed all of St. Patrick's responsibilities in regard to Child Safe standards and responsibilities.
- Rewriting of child friendly statements with students across Foundation to year Six which are now displayed throughout all learning areas of school.
- Each weekly staff meeting begins with the agenda highlighting issues related to child safety and students well-being.
- All policies have been presented to school staff, board members and school community members. These are on the school website and available to parents.
- St Patrick's School has also written and informed staff members of their obligations to the following documents:
 - St Patrick's Statement of Commitment Child Protection-Reporting Obligations
 - Child safety Risk Register-Risk assessment
 - Victorian Reportable Conduct Working Alone, In Isolation Policy and Procedure for Mandatory Reporting
 - St Patrick's School has informed staff about Standards 4 & 5 of the Ministerial Order 870 and provided educational and information sessions on the resource 'PROTECT' - Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Future Directions

St. Patrick's will continue to transform as a community of learners across 2022 and has these goals to achieve in the new school year:

- Completion of a School Master Plan to cater for future growth
- Celebration of our new School Vision
- Rewriting our School Mission statement
- Continued development of Scaffolding Literacy by staff through further Professional Development
- Continued participation in further professional development to improve teacher proficiency in Mathematics
- Develop a new model of Inquiry learning at St. Patrick's
- Continued development of outdoor spaces that lead to more hands on experiential play by students