
Principal's Annual Report

St Emilie's Catholic Primary School

Tania Thuijs



Principal's Report

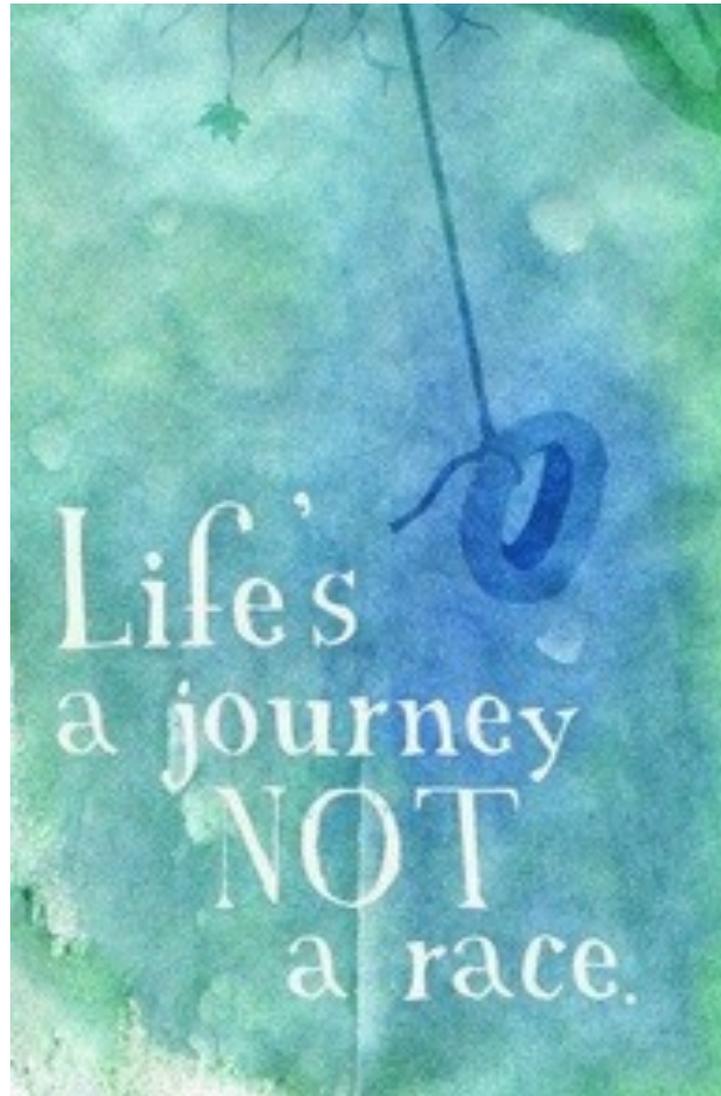
Board's Annual Community Meeting 2013

Good evening everyone and thank you so much for making the time to come along, amidst the busyness of family life and after a long work day.

As our Board Chairperson has described, while we certainly celebrate the role of technology this evening and all the opportunities that it affords us as part of our teaching and learning here at St Emilie's, in the final analysis our work here is of course part of something much, much bigger. It pays to remind ourselves that amidst the joys and sorrows of our everyday lives, amidst the busyness and activity of school life here at St Emilie's, God sits at the very centre of it all and if we can

individually and collectively continue to learn to trust in Him, then everything else has a way of falling into place and our path ahead becomes clear...

As a Catholic school we are called to be a community that serves one other both within our school and without. This idea of sitting at the feet of another and serving, is a powerful challenge to us all but one nonetheless that lies at the heart of what it means to be a Christian person and an authentic Catholic school. It has been such a privilege to work alongside so



many people, children, staff and families who have embraced this idea of Christian service in our school ... with little fuss and fanfare but with genuine compassion, care and generosity.

At this end of the year it is good to take a moment to look back and to celebrate it all... the successes, the challenges, the learning, the relationships, the questions, the quality conversations, the robust discussions, the decisions, the opportunities for growth and so much more.

Teaching and parenting is of course, a privileged, sacred trust and it is very clear that the closer we can work together, the more fruitful the opportunities for each and every child continue to be in our school.

A sincere thank you to all St Emilie's families for your ongoing support of children, staff and the Leadership team throughout the year. Family life, as we all know, is busy and at times very demanding, however we hope St Emilie's school will continue to be a place where you can enjoy good support, quality relationships, and multiple opportunities that support your children to thrive and flourish.

As a new Principal to St Emilie's in 2012, with eight new staff coming from other schools, the year was spent primarily getting to know all thirty-two staff, interacting with students and families, and really finding out what made St Emilie's school tick! I spent a good part of the year watching how the school vision was being lived out in classrooms, in the playground, staffroom, carpark, P&F and Board meetings.

Much time was spent listening to what had worked in the past, to what areas needed revisiting and what policies need re-writing.

We reflected on what parents were saying about their children's needs and what staff and students were saying about theirs. We listened to various stakeholders and what each thought we as a school were doing really well and where the gaps were. I observed the expertise that existed within our community and together with the staff, children, P&F and Board

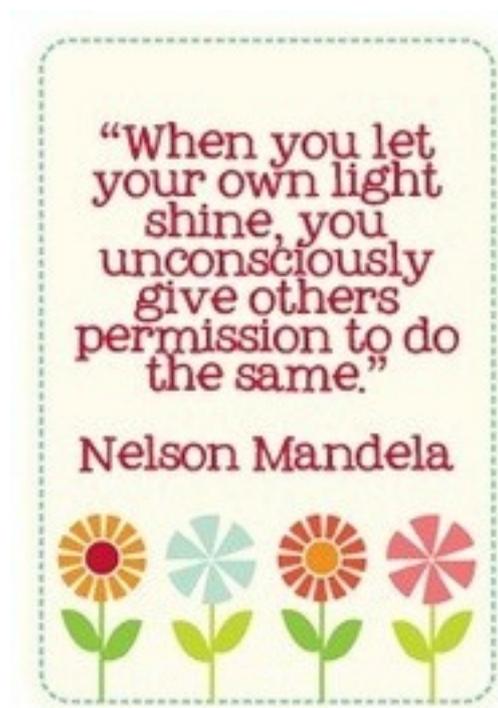
members, upon where we might need to head into the future. Change is an inevitable reality in life and schools are certainly not immune to the change process. By the end of 2012 there were a number of staff changes, with both AP's and the front Office person moving on, and two staff members leaving on maternity leave.

Your talent is
Gods gift to you
What you do
with it
is your gift
back to God

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From change however, comes opportunity, and while we were certainly sorry to say goodbye to friends and colleagues, Mrs Anne Aquino, Mrs Mary Urbano, Mr Stuart Munro, Mrs Maria Harvey, Miss Ruby Carroll, Miss Louise Corkhill, and Miss Ashana Wicks joined us to fill these positions in 2013, and each one of these staff members quickly settled in and have already made their special mark on St Emilie's.

As a school Principal, the quality of my staff and the potential we have for making a profound difference in the lives and the learning of the children in our care, has always been and continues to be of paramount importance to me. A key part of my role as Principal and as a member of our leadership team, is to continue to walk alongside, to lead, to model, to support and challenge each and every staff member to grow, both as people and as professionals. Our school relies on staff who are not only very good at what they do, but understand that students learn best, when they are working in a safe, respectful, supportive and creative learning environment. I feel very blessed indeed to work with the calibre of staff I do and as each semester goes by, we are seeing the incredible fruits of all our planning, hard work and collaboration.

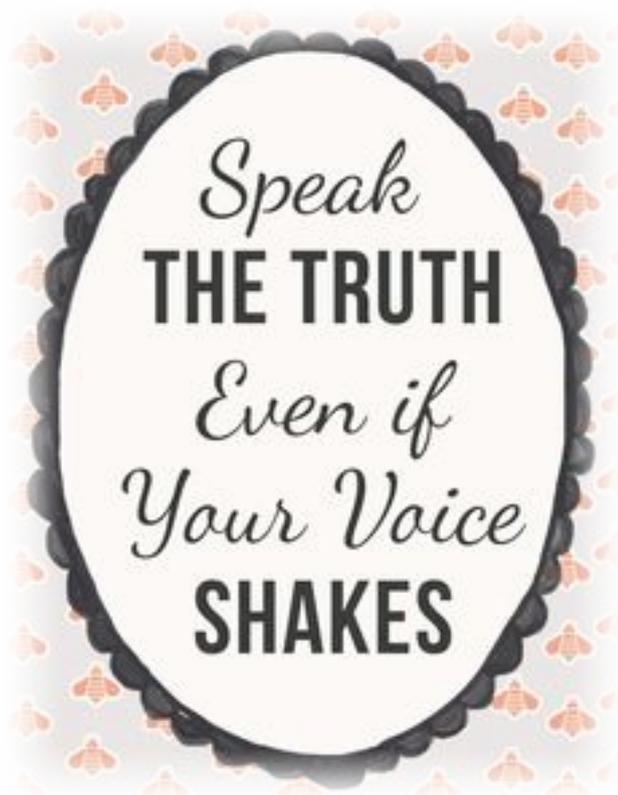


Some of the processes we have employed in regard to continuing to build teacher capacity in 2013 includes:

- Continuation of ICT Key teacher roles – Kara and Simone
- The appointment of Early Learning Key Teachers – Tanya and Julie-Anne
- Working closely with our CEO Liaison personnel – Julienne Kaye (NPP) and Hamish Valentine (PSA) to plan key opportunities for teacher professional development
- Maintaining the partnership with Luke George from the company 'Best Performance' to assist individual teachers (and the whole staff) to analyse NAPLAN data and building capacity around using this data in forward planning documents
- Providing opportunities for sharing teacher practice – as part of staff/curriculum/ PLC and shared Cluster mtgs

- Trial of Inter@ct curriculum model– a set of online, Inquiry based units based on the Australian Curriculum which is being used as a platform for shared professional learning and whole school alignment
- Encouraging a model of greater shared leadership and up-skilling of staff in key learning areas eg the development of school data teams in the numeracy area
- In 2012 – our NPP focus was on Spelling instruction, while in 2013 it has been on the alignment of assessment practises, in particular the introduction of an assessment tool called the MAI or Maths Assessment Interview). This 40 minute interview is completed 1:1 and provides comprehensive data for the teacher to Identify gaps in student knowledge and to support them in increasing knowledge and their repertoire of effective strategies. Anne Aquino, Alisha Thomas and Tracy Aroozoo have played a key role in leading and facilitating this process.
- Examining the Professional Development opportunities we offer staff – aiming to better align PD with their professional goals as well as our whole school key focus areas.
- Staff Appraisal process – using the AITSL standards as a foundation for setting practical and attainable goals in key areas each year. We are also looking at commencing eportfolios for staff to store evidence of their professional journey in 2014.
- Creative, mindful timetabling so that teachers have plenty of opportunity to plan together Identifying strengths and gifts of staff – individually and collectively for the benefit of students and our whole community

On behalf of the whole school community I sincerely thank the St Emilie’s teaching staff – teachers and teacher assistants, for the incredible job you do. You are a cohesive group of educators who have worked hard all year to achieve both our shared goals and your own personal and professional goals. Our children are indeed in very caring, capable and talented hands.



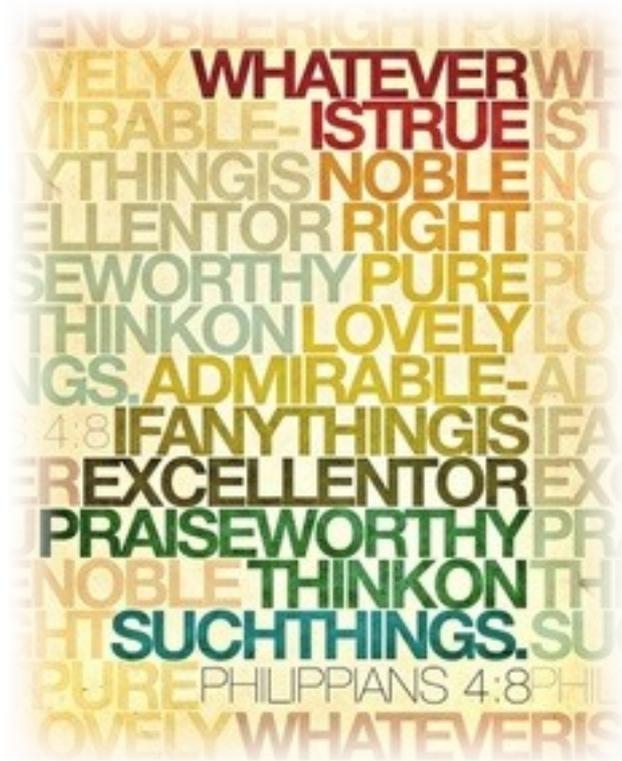
To the front Office Staff – many, many thanks for the wonderful roles you play in our school. Gillian, Mary and Ashana – a Principal could not ask to work with a more efficient, friendly, supportive, talented, professional and hard working team.

To my fabulous and hard working Assistant Principals – together we have certainly achieved much that we can be very proud of this year – much of it behind the scenes, but nonetheless so important to the richness, colour, progress and culture of our school. I continue to highly value your friendship, wise counsel, loyalty, maturity and dedication as we continue to move forward into the promise of an exciting educational landscape in the years ahead.

A special thank you to our groundsman Mr Glenn Cogger whom we have missed terribly over the last month while you have been on leave! Suffice to say it is a constant reminder to us all that one person really can make a difference! Glenn is a proactive and talented staff member who continues to make an excellent contribution to our school.

To our hard working P&F ... the executive team, Tina Pinnock, Alison McInery, Carmen Sherry and Karen Adams - and all class reps. A huge thank you for the significant and positive contribution you have made this year. You have been a small team who have worked very, very well together. As with all quality P&F teams, you have always operated from a place that has the very best interests of the children, staff and families at the heart of what you do and you worked collaboratively with both the Board and the Leadership team to achieve your goals, with excellent results. You have much to feel proud of and I have personally enjoyed working with you - individually and as a team. Congratulations and thank you.

To our School Board – Gary Millar our Board Chair, Sharon Jansen, Vice Chair, Emily Noteboom, Secretary, Wayne Allard Treasurer along with Jo Lavender, Simon Klass, Simon Harvey, Damian Heggarty, Veronica Stratton and our Parish Priest Father Chien. It has been a real pleasure to work with the Board this year and I sincerely thank them all for their time and considered input into a range of strategic directions that continue to benefit our whole



community, in particular, our children. A special thank you to Emily Noteboom who retires from the Board this year. Emily, your willingness to take on the secretarial role was very much appreciated. We will miss you next year! Thank you Damian for sharing your considerable electrical expertise in relation to the airconditioning of the hall and the school sign. Likewise I sincerely thank Gary for being such a supportive, hard-working and accessible Board Chair who has generously given much time in assisting to investigate the viability of many large capital projects. Your support, encouragement, enthusiasm and expertise has been very much appreciated by us all Gary.

Volunteers

Uniform Shop

Pat MacDonald and Chloe O'Leary have played a pivotal role in administering our school uniform shop throughout the year. As volunteer parents, these two women have been incredibly generous and extremely professional demonstrating a level of care that is second to none! Well done and thank you from all of us who benefit from your hard work.

Book Club

The Bookclub team made up of Jo Roberto, Michelle Shine and Carmen Sherry have had a wonderful year and done an excellent job. From book orders this year the school accumulated approx. \$1500.00 worth of Rewards Points. With these points, we have been able to receive some wonderful resources for our Kindy/Pre Primary children, some valuable resources for teachers we have been able to stock our library shelves with some fantastic BOOKS!!!

Congratulations and thank you ladies.

School Banking

Many thanks to Donna Cummins and Rachel Davies, who have once again run our school banking throughout the year. This service has been very much appreciated by families and children alike.

OSH Club

Thanks to Nicole Gartrell who is the program coordinator of the before and after school care here at St Emile's. The program has been well supported and continues to grow, offering a wonderful service for parents and children.

Director's School Audit 2013

Every four years Catholic schools are required to complete the Director's Compliance Audit. This audit is a requirement of the System Agreement between the Director, CEOWA and the Minister of Education. It requires the Catholic Education Office to audit Catholic schools for the purposes of re-registration. This audit commenced in March and was completed in June. We had a successful audit and special thanks go to the Mrs Gillian Norris, Mrs Mary Urbano and the School Leadership Team.

QCS - Quality Catholic Schooling Survey

Feedback from the system wide QCS Survey was very positive again this year. In addition to staff and students, thank you to those families who took part in the survey – your feedback is of course always very much appreciated.

The results as collated by an external company called INSIGHT indicated:

- A greater alignment between individual staff morale and school morale this year
- An increase in the empathy and clarity domains
- A significant upward change in the level of empowerment felt by staff this year
- A significant improvement in the area of staff appraisal and recognition
- Student data indicated that our Year 5 and 6 students are feeling positive, connected and that they have a sense of belonging in our school
- Students also indicated that the teaching is effective and that learning opportunities are stimulating.
- The 2013 data from families indicated that the school is receptive of and understands the views and concerns of parents.

Respondents of the survey over 2012 and 2013 continue to rate reporting as an area in which they would like more feedback. This year we have included a separate literacy and numeracy comment to the Semester 2 report. Three ways have been offered once each term and we also introduced an Open Classroom opportunity in Terms 1 and 3. This year a whole school Art Show was another way that student outcomes are reported to parents in an enjoyable community event.

National Quality Standard (NQS) – Early Years

In December 2009, all Australian Governments through COAG agreed to a partnership between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to establish a National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care. The National Quality Standard (or NQS) is comprised of guiding principles, quality areas, standards and elements and is linked the existing Early Years Framework. There are seven quality areas in the National Quality Standard, which capture aspects critical to the provision of quality early childhood education.

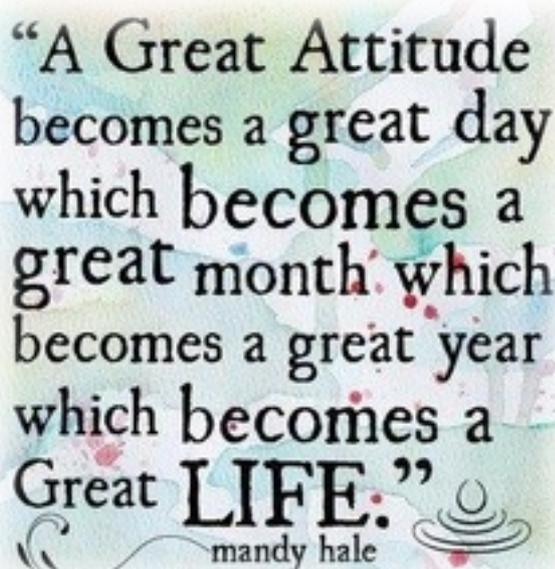
These quality areas are:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children’s health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements, including staff-to-child ratios and qualifications
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management

Each individual quality area contains a number of standards which are high level outcome statements. The National Quality Standard contains 23 standards with between two and six standards for each quality area. Under each standard sit elements. In 2014, St Emile’s, like all other primary schools, will continue to discuss where our particular areas of need are and commence an NQS self-auditing, self-improvement process.

Family Fun Night

We received very positive and encouraging feedback from families both orally and in written form after the family Fun Night in Term 1. It appears the name tags, the family games, the attendance of staff and the ice-cream van were all appreciated additions this year



“A Great Attitude
becomes a great day
which becomes a
great month which
becomes a great year
which becomes a
Great LIFE.”
mandy hale

Walkathon

Our first school walkathon was a fabulous success with children raising money for various class resources and school projects. Children 'buddied up' which afforded them yet another great opportunity for relationship building.

Buddy Classes

This year we established buddy classes as a way of forging multi-age relationships across our school from Kindy to Year 6. Students meet throughout each term to meet both academic and social outcomes.

Year Level assemblies

This year we introduced combined year level assemblies and we set aside Term Four for Edudance lessons rather than assemblies.

Winter Sport - round robin carnival

This year Year 5 and 6 students joined a local regional round robin Winter sports competition on a Friday afternoon. This has been a wonderful way of students developing their PE skills and connecting with students from neighbouring Catholic schools

Parent Workshops

There was a large turnout to the Year Six parent HUMAN SEXUALITY workshop earlier in the year and the feedback from parents in regard to the content, presenter and the opportunity was very good.

A large group of parents attended the CYBER SAFETY Parent Workshop

A number of families availed themselves of the opportunity to attend a parenting course run by our regional schools psychologist called CIRCLE OF SECURITY. Next year we have organised for our region of schools an internationally renowned speaker to work with teachers, students and families. We hope that St Emilie's families will avail themselves of this wonderful opportunity to reflect upon and further develop parenting skills.

Staff Changes this year

- Mr Leon Bolding was appointed as Principal of Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in Mullewa
- Mr Stuart Munro was appointed as Assistant Principal here at St Emilie's in Term 3

- Mrs Suzanne Gomes took LSL in Term 2 and Mrs Kerrie Cogger is currently taking her LSL this term.
- Mrs Tahne Green and Mrs Renae King commenced maternity leave at the end of Semester.
- Mrs Gillian Norris reduced her FTE by 1 day a week
- Miss Ashana Wicks has worked one day a week in the Front Office.

What is "The Abundant Life?"

Some may mistakenly believe that it is about wealth or prosperity.

Others may believe it involves health and wellbeing.

However, the abundant life is not about wealth, health, or prosperity.

It is not about bliss or freedom from suffering.

It is not even about life beyond death.

Nor can we measure it by the quality, quantity, or length of a life.

The abundant life is not a measure of life at all, but a way of living.

It is not about 'having', but about giving.

The abundant life is about abundant love and abundant giving;

it involves trust, courage, and sacrifice.

It shows in our willingness to give of ourselves freely and fully to others without expectations or qualifications,

letting our lives and our love overflow, to fill the voids and wants of a broken and hurting world.

The abundant life reflects God's gifts of love and life, as they become fully present in our lives.

Resting upon the hope and the promise, that in spite of death and suffering, life will prevail;

that in spite of hatred and violence, love and peace will triumph.

We live in the faith and assurance that God, who is the very source of our life and being,

really loves us, and made each one of us free to live for others and to love others.

The abundant life is the reflection of the abundance of God's love on earth,

manifested in and through our lives.

Luis G. Pedraja

Lord,

May we strive to live our lives abundantly as you have called us to do.

May our thoughts mirror your thoughts,

our words, mirror your words

and our actions mirror your actions – especially when it is most hard to do.

Make us like a tree Lord.

Sturdy

Deep rooted

Useful

Supportive to those in need

Shelter to those who are weary

Fruit for those who hunger.

Make us like an abundant tree where our fruit is plentiful and shared with all.

Finally Lord,

Grant us a simplicity of faith

And a generosity of service

That gives without counting the cost.

A life overflowing with Grace

Poured out from the One

Who gave everything

That we might show

The power of love to a broken world

And share the truth

From the living Word.

Lord, grant us simplicity of faith

And a yearning to share it.