As the 2013 school year rapidly draws to a close, it is amazing to reflect on what has been a very busy school year and to determine the educational direction of the school.

This year has seen our new Director of Catholic Education, Dr. Tim McDonald take his mandate from the Bishops and set in place his vision for Catholic Education. Tim has stated that the core objectives are ‘the delivery of an authentic and empowering Catholic Education that improves learning outcomes and life opportunities for the greatest possible number of Catholic children, families and communities across Western Australia’. There has been a great deal of system review undertaken in the period November 2012 – November 2013. The data that was collected has led to a newly established systemic working model at the Catholic Education Office (CEO) with multiple new teams established. Because of this change several interim positions have been established until all the new teams are fully staffed and policy can be fully undertaken. Our substantive Principal Mrs. Eileen Climo was successful in obtaining one of these positions; Principal School Advisor (PSA). Mrs. Climo has been working with Principals on the other side of the metropolitan area. However, she has taken a keen on - going interest in Saint Andrew’s and has been heavily involved in staffing issues, budgetary planning, school improvements and teaching and learning innovations. I am most thankful for the opportunity to take on the Principal ship of the school for Semester Two, 2013. As mentioned in a letter home to parents some weeks ago the Director has asked me to continue on as Principal in 2014 whilst Mrs. Climo completes her work at an interim PSA.

The 2013 school year has seen overall school enrolments remain steady within the range of 445 – 455 students. We do seem to lose a number of students during each school year but always manage to ‘bounce back’. Families leave because they sell and move house, transfer in jobs, the parents separate which impacts schooling, and occasionally they go due to the realization that we proudly provide a Catholic education. Looking ahead enrolments are looking positive with Kindergarten full and most classes to Grade 3 having very few vacancies. Our Year 4-6 classes have a number of vacancies.

The five year review cycle of our school continued through the Quality Catholic School (QCS) Review and Improvement Framework with the areas for review this year being: Catholic Life and Culture, Wider Partnerships, Reporting, Student Engagement and Accountability and Compliance. The QCS review for this year has led to the creation of a Foci Plan for next year. The staff will work towards further improving communication with parents through the establishment of Parent Representatives for each class. We will also move to create a broader set of opportunities for Year 6 students to engage in Student and Community Service. I thank all parents, staff and students who have been, and continue to be involved in this review process which only improves the educational outcomes for children enrolled at St Andrew’s.

NAPLAN took place once again during the 2013 school year. Educational testing of Australian students seems to be integral to national and international studies and is a determinant in funding in all states. NAPLAN results can show individual student progress over time which is helpful data for schools and parents and helps us to continue to improve our educational practice to provide the best education for the students in our care. This said there are some aspects of
NAPLAN that cause angst and concern for schools, parents and students. These include the practice of publishing league tables, which have flowed from the publication of all schools data on the Myschool site. This is truly unfortunate as the data is the result of one test in a subject area and given on one day of the school year. This does not give a true picture of a child, their strengths in sport, music, dance, art, languages, science, history, their personal characteristics or their effort. Parents should read the NAPLAN data with caution and as one measure of progress.

This year Catholic Primary Principal’s attending training in the implementation of the ‘National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education’ in the Catholic system. This vital training allows us as leaders to affect improvement in the Early Years sector of our schools from 2015 in terms of the following key pillars: programme and practice, child health and safety, physical environment, staffing arrangements, relationships with children, collaborative partnerships with families and communities and leadership and service management. The St Andrew’s ECE staff will attend regional training early in 2014. From this point we will work towards identifying which key pillar we are going to address in reviewing our current structures. Fortunately, we have a vibrant and highly qualified team of educators who work to maintain the highest standards of education. I am confident that they will adjust to the NQS ECE requirements and make necessary positive change. Our school will continue to operate 3 x Kindergarten groups next year. However, they will each be operating on an alternating three day / two day fortnightly basis.

Our school uses the Making Jesus Real (MJR) gospel values programme that has been created by Peter Mitchell, a Faith and Values RE Consultant from the Hobart CEO. Peter has seen his programme utilized by hundreds of school across Australia. In many MJR enclaves teachers stand up and become messengers of the programme. We at Saint Andrew’s see many benefits from incorporating the MJR values into the culture of our school. MJR supports the WA Catholic Education Units of Work. The staff and students have a common language based out of the programme. Children know what WEST people do; they understand Winners and Grinners, Prickles, Snowflakes, Go Carts and Patience, Tolerance and Understanding (PUT). MJR also helps us with evangelization and Primary Proclamation especially as we continue to build our ‘baptized Catholic’ population beyond 70% and closer to the desired CEO figure of 80%. We have seen an improvement in parent attendance at class liturgies in the junior and middle grades. Our new Parish Priest Father Robert Carrillo has a beautiful way with our young children and a significant number of our parents avail themselves of the opportunity of staying on at school to join in the children’s liturgy in the classroom. Through the sacraments of Reconciliation (Year 3) and Eucharist (Year 4) Father helps in the transition of the children and parents to the Parish Church environment. Our families embrace the Sacramental programmer most appreciatively. I thank Fathers Robert and Rainier for their involvement in the life of our school.

Late this year we moved to establish an Information Technology committee. Representatives of junior, middle and upper grades together with our school coordinator Mrs. Anne Phillips will join with Nathan Fonseca of Perth ICT and Bede Callaghan and Michael McGarry our parent representatives. Their first meeting will take place shortly. The committee will establish a 3 year plan aimed at developing our IT facilities in a viable and sustainable manner.
This year has been a busy one for staff and students. There have been a number of very successful events held and these need to be acknowledged:

- NAIDOC Week and National Sorry Day were brought alive by Mrs. Judith Birchall. We also hosted a visit from the Indigenous Team as a part of the CEO’s ‘Taking the Pulse’ programme.
- Our Performing Arts programme was executed to perfection with the school achieving the fantastic distinction of nine awards. We entered choirs, solo instrumentalists, ensemble instrumentalists, a School Band, and troupes in both the Liturgical and Creative Dance categories. I congratulate Mrs. Mulholland for coordinating our entries and thank the dedicated staff who had involvement with the children.
- We had another successful visit from the team at Musica Viva. Since this sensational programme was introduced into our school it has had a huge impact on the children. I believe it stimulates the ‘creative juices’ of the children and together with the music lessons leads to improved enrolments in instrumental lessons.
- On the sporting fields we have had another great year. The children have enjoyed opportunities for participation in athletics, cross country, basketball, hockey, cricket, AFL football, soccer, gymnastics, golf and daily fitness which has comprised amongst other events fitness tabloid games and lapathons. The school has been involved in several of these sports at interschool level with great success in boys soccer, basketball, athletics and cross country. I thank Mrs Peacham for providing a broad curricular experience for our children.
- The staff have hosted the annual Father’s Day Breakfast for 10 years and in that time it has grown to the point where this year we had in excess of 300 dads, grandads and mums attend a scrumptious breakfast. Mother’s Day was also wonderful with our Mum’s attending a lovely Mass and morning tea.
- Other events have included The Year 6 Camp to Ern Halliday, the excursions and incursions enjoyed by each year level, Open Night and PAF Concert, The Biggest Morning Tea, ANZAC and Remembrance Days, Harmony Day and Open Afternoon.
- Successful fundraisers were held for St Vincent de Paul, Caritas, Life link, Project Compassion and Father Robert’s missionary work in the Philippines.

In the final couple of weeks of the school year we will host the Carols / Picnic on the Oval, The Christmas Concert Assembly / Volunteers Morning Tea and The Year 6 Mass and Graduation,

The P and F Committee have worked diligently this year. We have enjoyed much fruit from their labours. I particularly thank Michael McGarry for all his work in establishing a working constitution for the Saint Andrew’s P and F to use, the annual Welcome to Saint Andrew’s Night, the student Disco, the very successful raffles which resulted in funds going to several well deserving agencies, answering funding requests from the Principal – Performing Arts assistance and Library assistance and several staff who required materials to help their students, following through on the P and F levy and the recent establishment of a P and F Facebook page accessible by only registered Saint Andrew’s community members. Thank you Michael, Tricia, Jennifer, Gwen, and all the committee members; we staff and students appreciate your efforts!

Today we said farewell to our school cleaners Tom and Jacqui who have been attached to our school through our cleaning contractor. There will be a number of staff leaving us at the end of this school year:

1. After 13 years on staff Mrs Nicky Sullivan is taking up a promotional role as an Assistant Principal at Saint Thomas’s Catholic Primary School in Claremont. We thank Nicky for her many fantastic years of service and acknowledge her powerful contributions to our school.
2. After 12 years at SACPS Mrs Kristy Graffin is moving on to Liwara Catholic Primary School in Greenwood where she will be a Year 1 classroom teacher. Kristy has been a teacher for 20 years and her positive influence in the lives of our parents and students will be sorely missed.

3. Mrs Margie Barton has had a series of short term teaching contracts that she has fulfilled in her time at Saint Andrew’s. Her sons attend Catholic schools in the North Beach – Sorrento area and Margie has accepted full time work at a government school in proximity to her home.

4. Mrs Kym Milner has decided not to take up a further temporary teaching contract in 2014 in order that she spends valuable time as a wife and mother. We have not lost Kym completely as she wishes to join our relief pool.

5. Miss Carly Liddell has been successful in gaining a teaching post at Saint Marks Anglican Community School in Hillary’s which is her old school.

6. Mrs Olive O’Brien has tendered her resignation due to illness.

7. We also farewell Mrs Renai Meinck who has completed a two term contract as the teacher of 6W and Miss Joanne O’Connell who has completed a one term contract as the teacher in 4B whilst Mrs Ioppolo has been away on long service leave.

8. Mrs Anne Marie Bramwell has tendered her resignation as our Uniform Shop Manager. Her last child graduates this year and she has recognised that this is the optimum time to move on.

On behalf of the entire school community I thank all of these staff members for their amazing contributions.

Interviewing panels were established and we have appointed several new staff on temporary contracts. The new staff are:

1. Mrs. Julie McMillan who has been working at Majella School in Balga.
2. Mrs. Gabby Perotte who is currently working at Sorrento Primary School.
3. Miss Kelly Luby who is currently employed at Ursula Frayne Junior School.
4. Mrs. Liz Waddell who is currently employed at Currambine Primary School.
5. Mrs. Allyson Campbell who is currently employed at Poseidon Primary School

At this point I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work of the outgoing School Board. Judith, Vicki, Bede, Michelle and Paula have all been fantastic supporters of the school and have contributed greatly with my transition to Principal. Thanks so much for all your invaluable contributions this year whether it has been Eileen or myself as Principal. We have accomplished a great deal – A Maintenance sub-committee has been established, the car park lighting is repaired, the new Year One building is currently going through Quantity Surveying and will then head to Council for planning approval with building starting sometime in Term 2, 2014 and the Car park upgrade is set for completion at the end of the 2014 Christmas holidays. A special thank you to Michelle Russell for completing 3 terms (6 years) of office on the School Board. Michelle, both Eileen and I give special thanks for all the times you have dropped your doctoral studies and so kindly come to aid us! My thanks also to Kate Mesiti and Michael McGarry for sharing the role of P and F Representative to the School Board. Father Robert has been on the board for a short period but we give thanks for his wise counsel.

In conclusion, I thank all members of our school community who contribute to the building up of our school in order to see our children grow into clever, mature and resilient contributors to the 21st Century. I wish you all the best for the coming Christmas season.

Warren Smith
Principal
27 November, 2013