As the 2014 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 Director of Catholic Education, Dr. Tim McDonald continue to work on system wide change given his mandate from the Bishops to see him 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 2014. 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 under half a dozen new Assistant Directors. Because of this change several interim positions had been established until all the new teams were fully staffed and policy could be fully created. Our substantive Principal Mrs. Eileen Climo was successful in obtaining one of these interim positions; Principal School Advisor (PSA). Mrs. Climo has worked 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. Earlier this term, Mrs. Climo had her watershed moment when the acting position she has held for almost eighteen months was redefined and advertised as a permanent position. Mrs. Climo applied for this ongoing position. She was successful and will now be working as a School Improvement Advisor. Mrs. Climo’s position was advertised and a new principal was appointed to commence effective 1 January, 2014. I will continue to serve as Principal until the end of this year and will then revert to my substantive role as Assistant Principal.

The 2014 school year has seen overall school enrolments drop. At the end of this term we anticipate that student numbers will fall to be within the range of 425 – 435 students. We do seem to lose a number of students during each school year but always manage to ‘bounce back’, with New Year enrolments and full status in our kindergarten classes. Families sometimes leave without any forewarning. This has happened several times this year. Sometimes 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 we
will be double stream in all year levels to Year 4. However, smaller numbers have meant that we will probably have a split Year 5/6 in the future if numbers in these year levels do not pick up. The reality is that we gain very few students into the school through these year levels throughout the school year. Catholic Education Office Policy states that class sizes in middle and upper Primary can be up to 32 students and lower Primary has a ceiling of 30 students. The new Principal will be charged with the responsibility of endeavouring to get our enrolments back up over 450 which is the number required to guarantee full double stream status. Here I make the point that we are funded according to student numbers at census time and this heavily impacts our ability and capacity to employ teachers.

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: Student Well Being and Pastoral Care, Teaching Practices and Professional Learning. The QCS review for this year has led to the creation of a Foci Plan for next year. The staff will work towards student growth with regard:

- Further improving the integration of ICT to improve learning,
- Higher order thinking, self - reflection and on - going feedback will become more integral components of classroom learning cultures.

Staff will endeavour to:

- Work towards improving student behavior
- Share Professional development learnings with each other.

NAPLAN took place once again during the 2014 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.
In late 2013 / 2014 Catholic Primary Principal’s attended 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 have attended regional training early in 2014. From this point we have worked towards researching and writing our Quality Improvement Plan for ECE which is to be in place by the conclusion of the 2015 School Year. 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 from within the one building. As part of the 2014 – 2015 building process being undertaken to ensure our school provides correctly sized classrooms the Kindergarten Gold toilet area has been doubled in terms of toilet numbers. All of our Kindy children will access these toilets from within the Kindy building as well as from direct entry from the playground.

Our school continues to use 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 schools 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 continue to see an improvement in parent attendance at class liturgies in the junior and middle grades. Our 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 programme most appreciatively. I thank Fathers Robert and Rainier for their involvement in the life of our school. This year mission work has taken place for Caritas, Catholic Mission, and Saint Vincent de Paul through whole school and Junior SVDP mission work. We have also raised funds for John Pukuljarin - Pirin remote Catholic Primary School in the Kimberley and the Seminarians from Father Roberts region of the Philippines. We have donated money to the Art Centre at Christmas Island which is being facilitated by Catholic Education in WA. On top of all of these great works we have assisted in fundraising for secular causes like Cancer research, Breast Awareness and Motor Neuron research.

In 2014 we moved to establish an Information Technology committee. Representatives of junior, middle and upper grades together with our school coordinator Mrs. Anne Phillips joined with Nathan Fonceca of Perth ICT and parents. Their meetings are proving invaluable and a lot of good quality research has gone into setting up for the establishment of a 3 year plan aimed at developing our IT facilities in a viable and sustainable manner. No concrete plans are in place at present because the committee and Leadership believe the new Principal should have major input.

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 Cultural Immersion programme.
- **Our Performing Arts programme** was executed to perfection with the school achieving the fantastic distinction of six awards. We entered the choir, solo instrumentalists and ensemble instrumentalists and a School Band. 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. Our instrumental enrolments have grown significantly this year with many taking up flute, piano and drums in deference to the usual parade of students learning guitar.

- 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, cricket, gymnastics, 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 and girls soccer, basketball, athletics and cross country. I thank Mrs Peacham for providing a broad curricular experience for our children.

- The staff has hosted the annual Father’s Day Breakfast for 11 years and in that time it has grown to the point where this year we had in excess of 300 dads, grandads, mums and children attend a scrumptious breakfast. Mother’s Day was also wonderful with our Mum’s attending a lovely Mass and afternoon tea which was well organised by our P & F Committee.

- 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, Open Afternoon, The Biggest Morning Tea, Walk to School and Ride to School, Life Education Van and Saint John’s First Aid incursion.

- 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 Christmas Carols / Picnic on the Oval, The MJR / Christmas Assembly, St Andrew’s Day Mass / Farewell Morning Tea for Mrs Climo, Final Assembly / Volunteers Morning Tea, the Year 6 Mass and Graduation and Christmas Mass.

The P and F Committee have worked diligently this year. We have enjoyed much fruit from their labours. I particularly thank Sally Young, Jen Lynch, Gwen Carroll, Robert King and the general committee for all of their fantastic work! My personal highlights were many: the annual Welcome to Saint Andrew’s Night, the student Disco, the very successful first Parents Wine and Cheese Night and the Mother’s Day Afternoon Tea. I am also thankful for the timely response of
the P & F with regard the answering of 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 continuing development of the P and F Facebook page accessible by only registered Saint Andrew’s community members.

Several staff will be leaving us at the end of this school year:

- Jacqui Cooney has spent 9 years on staff at Saint Andrew’s and has been successful in obtaining a teaching job at John Twenty Third College Junior School in Mount Claremont which is 10 minutes from her home.
- Agatha Chin our LOTE (Indonesian) specialist has resigned from teaching at Saint Andrew’s having spent 14 years on staff.
- Liz Waddell has completed her one year contract and is leaving to have her very precious second child. The staff looks forward to hearing exciting news in February.
- On behalf of the entire school community I thank Jacqui, Agatha and Liz for all of their amazing contributions.

Interviewing panels were established and we have appointed several permanent members of staff: Miss Kelly Luby, Danielle Pozarowszcyk, and Danielle Wildman. Gabby Parrotte, Allyson Campbell, Zac Waddell, Jessica Watkins and Julie McMillan have been offered temporary teaching contracts for the 2015 school year. They effectively replace staff on parental leave. Kym Kilgallon and Joanne Rapinese will be returning to St Andrew’s at the start of 2015 with Caryn Tenney and Donna Troman returning later in the year. We have appointed a new Indonesian teacher for the 2015 school year. Natalie Belcastro is currently teaching 0.2 at Francis Jordan Catholic Primary School and will join us on the same FTE.

With the resignation of Mrs Eileen Climo the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia advertised to identify and appoint a new Principal effective 1/1/15. After a detailed process Mr Sam Fontaine has been appointed. Sam will take up the Principalship having been Principal at single stream Catholic schools. Namely: Saint Gerard’s Westminster, Majella Balga and Saint Dominic’s Innaloo. We pray that Sam enjoys a long, happy and successful time as he leads our school community.
At this his point I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work of the outgoing School Board. Father Robert, Judith, Vicki, Bede, Michael, Trish, Kate, Michelle, Nancy and Paula have all been fantastic supporters of the school and have contributed greatly during my eighteen month term as Principal. Thanks so much for all your invaluable contributions this year. We have accomplished a great deal – The new Year One building is underway and has been a major source of discussion and work, and a Maintenance sub-committee has been working under the guidance of Fintan Archer.

A special thank you to our retiring Board Chairperson Judith Birchall for completing 3 terms (6 years) of office on the School Board. Judith, both Eileen and I give special thanks for all the times you have dropped your studies and other fulfilling works and so kindly come to aid us! Judith I appreciate the confidential discussions and the listening ear and heart you have so generously given as both Board Chair and staff member. My thanks also to Michelle Hendry being the P&F Representative to the School Board. Sadly we had Board resignations from Paula Taylor and Michael McGarry. Both of these fine people were sad to leave our community. We give thanks to God for the wise counsel he provides in the form of Father Robert.

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
26 November, 2014