PRINCIPAL’S REPORT FOR MATER DEI SCHOOL COMMUNITY – NOVEMBER 2015

It is with pleasure that I present this report for 2015. At this stage of each year we review and report against our Strategic Renewal Plan that was developed in 2012. This plan guides our activities for a 5 year period to the end of 2016. This plan was developed under the guidance of a special taskforce with members representing staff, School Board and P&F. It was prepared in conjunction with BCE’s new 2012-2016 plan for the Archdiocese, and in consultation with the school community.

The plan is designed around four broad strategic priorities for school development through 2012-2016. From this plan, we detail our annual action items for the year and it is in this context that I present my report. There are many other ongoing programs, activities and events that contribute to, and shape the very nature of Mater Dei, and we also acknowledge and thank the many people responsible for these continuous areas of work.

Priority 1:
Mission and Religious Education

Mater Dei is a parish Catholic school where we will endeavour in partnership with parents to foster a Catholic Identity and Faith Community true to the Gospel Values of Jesus our teacher and mentor.

Therefore we intend to:

- nurture the Faith and Spirituality of staff, students and community members as they grow in the love of God.

- further develop Social Justice and Mission programs to put our beliefs into action.

- integrate a contemporary religious education curriculum that supports the mission and vision of our school community.

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<tr>
<th>Goals 2015</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
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<tr>
<td>To create a cohesive and integrated approach to the faith formation of the students with particular</td>
<td>Liaised with the Parish to streamline the practical aspects of the Sacramental program this and appeared to allow a more streamline experience for families.</td>
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<td>Reference to the sacramental program.</td>
<td>Linked Year 4 classes with Parish support people to enhance the understanding and knowledge of the Sacrament of Confirmation and First Communion.</td>
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<td>Year 3 – aligned the teaching of the Religious Curriculum sacramental unit in the same time frame as the children participating in this sacramental experience.</td>
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<td>Linked with the Parish with regards to family sacramental preparation nights. Ensured parents knew and understood the new sacramental policy.</td>
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<td>School participated in Parish feedback sessions to review this year’s sacramental program and to plan for 2016 in light of the new sacramental policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acknowledged the participants in the newsletter and acknowledged participants at assembly with a liturgy.</td>
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**Ensure high quality Religion curriculum through the BCE validation process.**

Planning sessions conducted with the APRE and EORE; teachers planned and refined RE units.

Specific focus content areas for year levels were finalised. Vertical alignment of knowledge concepts was sequenced to allow deepening of conceptual understanding from one year level to the next.

Moderation with other schools for annual Consistency of Teacher Judgment process affirmed the rigour and level of understanding amongst our staff in providing quality Religion Education experiences.

Preparation and nomination for the validation of the school’s RE program has commenced and will be completed in 2016.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution and thank Fr Tuong for the caring manner in which he continues to nurture our parish and school community. He has been actively involved in the school since his appointment as parish priest at Mater Dei in August 2011. We thank him for his input into the liturgical program at our school and for his humble leadership of all at Mater Dei. I would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution our APRE, Renae Collier, has made to the religious life of our school and the leadership provided in the development of our RE Curriculum in collaboration with the teaching staff. Thank you too, to the teaching staff involved in the spiritual formation programs this year – Renae Collier, Louise Scott, Julie Towler, Sherryl Shaddock, Bronwyn Sikavica, Dina Nona, Terry Wally and Jacky Dittmar.
I also thank the many people who work in the Parish and support our school in all of our endeavours. Particularly, Richard James the Parish Manager and the work done by the Sacramental team.

**Priority 2:**

**Learning and Teaching**

*Mater Dei is a community committed to providing quality inclusive learning and teaching for all. We aim to provide learning that is personalised, active and interactive. As a result of this, we hope to develop successful, creative, confident and informed learners who will shape and enrich our world.*

Therefore we intend to:

- Continue to implement the Australian Curriculum within the context of the BCE learning framework catering for the specific and diverse needs of our student population in an environment which nurtures, challenges and supports skills for life-long learning.

- Implement a holistic and accessible pastoral care program relevant to our school community needs and appropriate to the changing structure of schooling.

- Support staff and students in the ongoing acquisition of skills and pursuit of excellence in the use and application of Information and Communication Technology.

- Implement current curricula based on best teaching practice that is data-informed and evidence-based.

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<td>Implement consistent teaching practice in English so every student has made visible progress in their learning</td>
<td>Participated in the Delivering Excellence in Learning and Teaching English project funded and supported by BCE.</td>
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<td>Reviewed and modified processes and tools for data collection. Increased frequency and reflection on data to inform teacher planning.</td>
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<td>Created a data wall for Prep – 2 to make data evidence visible.</td>
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<td>Familiarized teachers with the benchmarks and targets set by BCE in relation to reading and comprehension skills.</td>
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| Ensure high quality curriculum and teaching practices that address the Australian curriculum ICT capabilities across all learning areas | Implemented 1:1 laptop program in Years 4-5. Enabled 1:1 school laptop access for Year 6.  
Prioritised professional learning for teachers particularly involved in laptop programs; this focused on the integration of ICTs and building teacher capacity.  
Extended professional learning for Prep-3 teachers focusing on assistive technology to maximise learning gains in Literacy.  
Explored the creation of resources through the Learning Management System (LIFE) supported by BCE. This enabled students to access Web 2 tools and collaborate online in a safe environment.  
Accessed Digital Citizenship, Cyber Safety, e-safety interactive modules and webinars to support students in being safe and responsible citizens in an online environment.  
Mid-year invitation experience to parents to view e-learning in action. Reporting via newsletter.  
Familiarisation program for Year 3 students to prepare for the transition to a 1:1 environment in 2016.  
Shared best practice for ICT integration amongst Year 4-6 staff.  
New initiatives undertaken i.e. QR codes to record students’ development of art work for Sustainability festival. | Dedicated professional development sessions to increase teachers’ understanding of effective and expected practices. Engaged BCE consultants (Kim Summers, Maureen Burton and Peta Rowe) and school DELT team, to lead professional development. Focus of learning was ‘Gradual Release Of Responsibility’ and ‘Context Text Model’ in English.  
Planning sessions were allocated for teachers to align instructional practices with research based practices and the Australian Curriculum.  
Introduced the Review and Response meeting process to review instructional practices used at Tier 1 (in the classroom by the teacher) and plan for further strategies to progress student learning. |
Familiarisation with the Australian Curriculum Technologies

Professional development for staff to introduce the two strands of the Technology Curriculum.

Investigated the links between Technology curriculum and other learning areas (i.e. Science).

Expanded opportunities for children to be involved in programming and coding with Robotics in senior years and Bee Bots in junior years.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Jacky Dittmar for her work as Curriculum Support Teacher and Renae Collier as Literacy Leader. Both of these teachers capably lead others in the development of year level programs that reflect the intent of the curriculum. Terry Wally, and in Term 4 Bernadette Moodie, as Support Teacher Inclusive Education, have also supported teachers as they plan for the diverse learners in their classes. Both Terry and Bernadette have also linked strongly with our Guidance Counsellors (Cathy Mills in the first part of the year and then Kim Wilson), outside agencies, and families, as we work as a team to support those children with special needs so that all students can access the curriculum.

I would also like to acknowledge the teachers and school officer support staff at Mater Dei for their dedication, motivation and professionalism in their approach to delivering high quality learning and teaching experiences for children in their care. A large part of our work this year was driven by our involvement in the ‘Delivering Excellence in Learning and Teaching’ project and I would like to commend the staff for the way in which they have engaged with this professional development and continue to reflect on their own instructional teaching in order to ensure progress for all learners. I affirm these key professionals in our school and with great confidence know that the children at Mater Dei are being well educated now and into the future.

Priority 3

Professional Practice and Collaborative Relationships

Mater Dei is a community committed to promoting professional teams who develop and maintain current, relevant and best teaching practice.

Therefore we intend to:

- Identify staff qualities and capabilities, and align relevant professional development.
- Develop a long term plan to facilitate development of professional standards and staff well-being.
- Implement appropriate coaching and mentoring programs.
Mater Dei is a community committed to developing and maintaining collaborative communities with professional, spiritual and local affiliations to support holistic outcomes for all students.

Therefore we intend to:

- Identify affiliations that support the long term goals of the school.
- Implement formal networks and arrangements to support collaborative partnerships.

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<td>Support peer mentoring and coaching through observation, feedback, professional dialogue and reflection</td>
<td>BCE consultant (Michelle Young) worked with staff to introduce and model the process for teacher feedback and observation. Approximate half of the teaching staff participated in a two day coaching course. Established goal setting cycles each term with designated coach to assist teachers in developing their teaching capacity in English. Designated time for peer observation and feedback. Promoted teachers’ understanding of themselves and others in the working environment to develop a culture of connection and trust. Focus areas included Myers Briggs personality types, how to have professional/difficult conversations, developing a staff protocol and introduction to emotional intelligence.</td>
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I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who have been involved in the numerous ongoing school community activities throughout the year. These have included the Trivia Night, Music in The Moonlight, Mater Dei Race Day, School Discos at the beginning and end of year, the morning teas and various social activities, the work of the ‘Class Parents’, the school working bees, Mother’s and Father’s Day stalls, the tuckshop operations, the instrumental activities, the Dance school, the Directory production, School Banking and Sustainability work. These successful events and ongoing activities have helped to both maintain and enhance Mater Dei’s sense of community. Much of this work has been coordinated by the dedicated members of the P&F. I am very grateful to Nicole Quinn (President), Beth Toon (Vice President), Sheleigh Pallister (Treasurer) and Belinda Power (Secretary) for their leadership of this group, and to all of the other parents who have taken a lead role in the various sub-committees. The work of this group of people has a significant
impact on the positive nature of our school and the expansive opportunities afforded to the children. I give thanks for your dedication and enthusiasm toward the many projects that have taken place this year. For those who are stepping down from P&F positions this year, I sincerely thank you for your valued contributions.

We have also continued to support parish and pastoral activities such as the sacramental program, children’s masses, the Multicultural Mass and celebrations, community meals and other support for families in need, and continued to link with organisations such as the local Respite Centre, St Vincent de Paul, Caritas and Project Compassion.

Priority 4

Strategic Resourcing

Mater Dei is a community committed to maintaining integrity, respect, accountability and excellence through its implementation of policies and practices.

Therefore we intend to:

- Embed sustainable environmental practices into our school structure and processes.

- Continue to plan for the allocation of school resources informed by stewardship, contemporary learning and the changing needs of our students.

- Focus our attention on information and learning management systems and technology to enhance engagement with learning, teaching and evolving technologies.

- Prioritise resources and budget allocations to support our goals in achieving best teaching practice.

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<td>Prioritise school funding and resource allocation to support whole school goals</td>
<td>Held a Stewards of the Earth Festival in July and initiated inter-school (BCE and EQ) sustainability conference.</td>
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<td>Appointed Literacy Leader and funded staffing for e-learning coordinator.</td>
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<td>Appropriate funding expended to support professional learning goals for staff.</td>
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<td>Funding was allocated to update teacher laptops and annual and ongoing maintenance of existing technology platforms.</td>
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Developed a systematic way of tracking technology hardware and its obsolescence.

Completion of new student amenities and Administration block.

Investigated in conjunction with the P&F, building services and landscape architect, the redevelopment of the existing Prayer Garden to be completed in 2016.

Prepared a Block Grant Authority application to secure funding for an Undercover PE space over existing tennis court.

I would like to thank the Leadership Team (Renae Collier, Jacky Dittmar and Terry Wally) for their commitment and support of the strategic planning for our school community. Each role-holder brings a much valued perspective and insight into planning and decision making to ensure our school is a place of forward thinking and continual development.

I would like to thank the parent body and in particular, the P&F, for their financial support. The P &F contributions enable us each year to provide fantastic resources and facilities for the children. These will be outlined in the President’s report to follow.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the significant contribution of the P&F executive: Nicole Quinn (President), Beth Toon (Vice President), Belinda Power (Treasurer) and Sheleigh Pallister (Secretary) and all the members of each of the committees. The personal time commitment given by this group must be recognised. Many extra hours happen behind the scenes to assist our parent group to be involved and active members of our community. I particularly thank Nicole for her strong leadership and support of the school as President for the last 2 years. The school community is much richer for her efforts and contributions.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the secretarial staff and ancillary staff. Theresa Fry, Treena DellaVedova, Sciobhan Bingham, Marie Whitten and John Empson are tremendous in their enthusiasm and work ethic. They are responsible for so much of the operational aspects of our school (Administration, Tuckshop and Grounds) and provide support to so many people in our community.

Farewells

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who will be finishing their current role at the end of this year.

**Rachael Reaves and Tania Jeffery** will be finishing in their current capacity as class teacher and school officer at the end of this year. We thank each one of these staff members for the gifts and talents they have shared with us during their time at Mater Dei. Our school
community, and most importantly, the children, are all the more richer having had experience and the opportunity to work with these dedicated people. We wish them Rachael and Tania many blessings as they go forth from our community.

**Departing Families**

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the families and the children who will be ceasing their association with Mater Dei at the end of this year. We hope that you can look back with fond memories of your time with us and that you remember positively the partnership you had with this great community. We wish you all the best as you transition to new school communities in 2016.

**With thanks**

I would also like to take this opportunity to say farewell. The journey of Principalship over the last 4 years at Mater Dei has been an experience that will hold special memories for me in the years ahead. It is with a great sense of appreciation and gratitude that I reflect on the past 4 years. Mater Dei has been a wonderful community that I have had the privilege of leading. I have been very committed to this role and I am very proud of what I have achieved and learned along the way. I have been well supported by staff and families, and my work has always been grounded in wanting to make a positive difference for the children at Mater Dei. Coming together with a shared sense of purpose that what we do together, makes a difference in the lives of others has always been the motivator of our work together.

I have the greatest respect for the staff in the many and varied roles for their commitment to their work, for their sense of welcome, presence and purpose. The staff are relentless in their efforts to bring quality to what they do. I have enjoyed the professional and personal connections made amongst this group of people and pray a special blessing for each and every one of them now and for their future days ahead.

I have been completely in awe of the parents who commit their time, talent and energy to grow, sustain and nourish all in this community both at times of celebration and at times of immense sadness. What a gift you are to each other in continuing to form and shape this special community. Parents, you value quality education and you work in partnership with staff to support your children.

And most importantly, I thank the children at Mater Dei. They have given me great joy and I have always been proud of knowing the children and their achievements. As the years continue, I look forward to hearing of their successes in whatever they may do, knowing that they have been given a wonderful start in their educational journey within this community, and that this education has been grounded in faith, academic and social/emotional development.

I wish you all a happy and Holy Christmas and every blessing for the New Year and beyond. Best wishes for a relaxing and safe holiday break.