LEADERSHIP

It is so hard to believe that we are already in Week Four of Term Three. I often struggle to capture the entire goings on in our school for this board report however I will endeavour to capture the essence of life at Our Lady of the Rosary over these past couple of months. Last week our new icons for the school arrived; we have had a lovely Mercy Cross designed for the front of our school. The purchase of this cross came about through the efforts of Yvonne Pearce a past board member and the work of our Year 5/6 students. After researching our Mercy story in Term One, the Year 5/6 six students canvassed for an icon that acknowledges the work of the Mercy Sisters in the history of our school. In 2012 Yvonne had started investigating the design of such an icon and supported us in seeing this project through. As well as our mercy cross we also have an outdoor icon for our school pillars that depict the behavioural expectations of all in our school community. These will be adhered to the large brick wall in the shade area and will allow quick reference at our recess and lunch assemblies.

Next week there will be a shelter built up near the school car park, this will provide shelter for a number of students who wait for parents after school. This term we had a night of extreme weather that meant we needed to keep the children that normally wait at the car park, in Mr Flynn’s room. This decision did cause some confusion and prompted us to look at our procedures when extreme weather or emergencies may occur before and after school. We have this on our OH&S agenda and last week I met with Rob Ferrie, our consultant for Emergency Management, to discuss how we might refine our procedures if incidents occur at these times.

This week Father Joe, Belinda Ryan and I met with Ezio Costa our architect to look at the 3D concept images of our new building. We will share these with members of the school board at our meeting scheduled for Wednesday August 7.

We have negotiated with Good Samaritan Catholic School in Roxburgh Park to relocate the Year 3&4 portables; these will be removed in the September holidays. The leadership team in consultation with the Year 5/6 and Year 3/4 teachers have been negotiating the best scenario for the placement of classes at the end of Term 3 and for 2014.

After many weeks of working with staff we have the following arrangements in place:
On Thursday September 12 and Friday September 13 the Year 5/6 teachers will be given time to pack up classrooms and relocate to the teachers resource room and half of the library.
The Year 5/6 children will be given a work contract and will work in classrooms across the school.
On Saturday September 14 we will hold a working bee for the Year 5/6 portables to be cleaned.
On Monday September 16 and Tuesday September 17 the Year 3/4 teachers will be moved into the Year 5/6 portables. This year level will remain in these portables for 2014.
The Year 3/4 children will be given a work contract and will work in classrooms across the school.

These arrangements will be shared in the school newsletter after this month’s school board meeting.

Refurbishments are continuing on the main building. The work completed on the roof of the main building has certainly been put to the test with all the rain we have had these past few months. Next holidays we will have all the ceilings in bag rooms redone and will begin replacing carpets and lino in classrooms.
We still have some enrolments coming in; at this stage we have a prospective enrolment of 285 students for 2014. We currently have 278 students so we are pleased to see this increase for next year.

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) has signed up for the ‘Better Schools Plan’, principals and Parish Priest will be notified of a briefing around the details of this agreement shortly. The following is a statement from Mr Ross Fox the director of NCEC.

Agreement on Commonwealth Government Funding for Catholic Schools
The National Catholic Education Commission has today welcomed the commitment of all state and territory Catholic education Commissions to the Commonwealth Government’s funding arrangements now known as the ‘Better Schools Plan’. This ongoing constructive engagement with the Australian Government enables planning to commence to implement the ‘Better Schools Plan’ funding arrangements arising from the Australian Education Act which was passed on 26 June.
Catholic schools will now have greater clarity on Commonwealth funding in 2014 and will be able to plan accordingly. Catholic education is confident that under this legislation no school will be worse off and these funding arrangements will deliver significant increases over time for every child in the Catholic system.
Catholic education is appreciative of the constructive way in which both the Minister for Education, Bill Shorten and Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd have engaged in discussions to resolve these matters.
The arrangements will progressively deliver increased Commonwealth funding to each State’s Catholic education system based on common measures of student need across all education sectors. To achieve full implementation of the plan, the Catholic sector will participate in the key scheduled reviews, particularly of indexation and SES methodology that are scheduled to occur between 2014–16.
Under these arrangements, Catholic education systems, like participating government education systems, will preserve their autonomy and ability to distribute funding according to identified local need.
Catholic education aims to act in the best interests of its schools, students, staff and families. It works constructively with government and all political parties to best meet the needs of Catholic school students. 1 in 5 or 735,403 Australian students currently attend 1,706 Catholic schools across the country.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our focus for this term remains on Literacy. This term we are exploring how to enhance our learning environments in order to support literacy learning. Teachers are becoming familiar with the National Standards for Teachers; we are looking at Standard 4, this provides indicators for teachers to reflect on how they create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments. All teachers and leadership have set goals in relation to improving literacy learning environments, teachers will collect evidence around these goals and discuss at review meetings over the next couple of weeks. Earlier this term our student support staff attended some professional development focused on reading. This session was facilitated by Martina Tassone who is the Literacy Education Officer appointed to our school from the Catholic Education Office. Our support staff have also set goals on how they can support students in the area of reading and will discuss these at their review meetings next month.

This year our school has been part of the More Support for Students with Disabilities Project (MSSD). Through this project we have been provided with funding for an extra staff member to support teachers in Literacy programs. Another tier in this initiative is to provide electronic devices to help support children with learning needs. We have been allocated a number of sound field systems that have been installed in classrooms. These systems assist children with a hearing deficit and also children with auditory processing issues. We have also been allocated a number of iPads to be assigned to children with particular learning needs. This funding for both staffing and for these devices has only been made available for 2013 and we are most grateful to the Catholic Education Office for their support in this area. As well as the funding in these two areas there has been some professional development for staff around software that supports student learning and how to use the different hardware effectively in classrooms. This term Mrs Leanne Rose Munro from the Catholic
Education Office provided part of this professional development. Leanne is also a consultant in designing effective learning spaces for schools so we were able to tap into her expertise in this area as well.

This term we have started up a Reboot Camp every Friday morning at 8am. This is a time for staff to meet with Dan MacDonald our ICT leader and explore the numerous apps on the iPads that support student learning. These gatherings can be a little challenging but lots of fun; they are well attended by a number of staff members. Breakfast is provided by Dan’s lovely wife Suzie and appreciated by all who attend.

Our coordinators for Mathematics, Literacy and Religious Education continue to attend team planning and support teachers in the delivery of quality programs. We continue to unpack the Australian Curriculum known in Victoria as AusVels. In fortnightly planning teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the language and structures of this curriculum document. All levels throughout the school are working on the History Domain and are immersing the children in some rich units of work.

**EDUCATION IN FAITH**

At the end of last term our Year 4 students made their First Holy Communion. This journey was closely linked with the Parish and we appreciated Father Joe’s engagement with the children as they prepared for this Sacrament. Our Year 3 students are currently immersed in their unit on Reconciliation and will present for this sacrament at the end of the term; children will be making their commitment to this sacrament at Masses over the next couple of weeks. Both children and parents will participate in a Reconciliation workshop with Sister Helen on Thursday August 29.

This term we had our Year 1 night with Sister Helen. This is a really special night for children and parents to learn more about the sacrament of Baptism and a chance for parent and child to connect in prayer. Unfortunately this was not very well attended by our Year One parents; first week back of term in the midst of winter may have been problematic for some families. We will work with Sister Helen on dates for 2014 that may suit this age group better.

Catherine Moore continues to work with all teachers in their planning of RE units. It is through planning that we are able to monitor and track the delivery of our prayer scope and sequence and design rich units of work that engage children in the doctrine of our Catholic Faith. The learning focus and standards for these units of work are taken from our *To Know Worship and Love* guidelines and are support by various resources used to engage the children in their learning. This term the Prep children are looking at the Old Testament and learning about God’s promises, they are looking closely at the story of Sarah and Abraham. The Grade 1/2 children are learning about the sacraments with a particular focus on Baptism and Reconciliation. Grade 3/4 children are focused on Reconciliation, this unit of work looks closely at our choices or actions and the consequences of these. The Grade 5/6 children are finishing off their unit on Prayer and are about to start a unit looking at Jesus – Who was Jesus the Man?

Each Monday morning we continue to gather in prayer. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for the time and effort they put into preparing these sessions and for the manner in which they lead our whole school community in prayer. It is wonderful to have parents joining us at this time and we hope to encourage more and more as time goes on. Last week we started our tree-planting day with a whole school prayer gathering. There were a number of visitors from the community in attendance and their feedback was full of admiration and praise in regard to the children’s behaviour and reverence.

Catherine Moore our leader in Religious Education will be on six weeks long service leave starting at the end of this week. Catherine will be travelling overseas and catching up with her son who is studying in Sweden. We wish Catherine all the best on her well earned break.
STUDENT WELL BEING

As mentioned earlier in this report we have purchased a beautiful icon that depicts the expectations of behaviour in our school. We are hopeful this icon will help promote a sense of pride amongst our students. It is a clear and simple means of stating what we believe to be important in our school. A big thank you to Belinda Ryan and Dan MacDonald for their work in refining the graphics for this icon and ensuring this project came to fruition.

As a staff we are continually monitoring children’s behaviour both in class and in the yard. Last term we noted there were a number of children who were at a loss during the outside breaks; these were mainly children who did not engage in physical type play. This term we have introduced some tubs of toys to encourage imaginative and cooperative play in the shade area. Children have been enjoying the opportunity to construct, share ideas and play games during recess and lunchtime breaks.

Belinda Ryan continues to provide a wonderful program that supports the social and emotional wellbeing of our children. This term in SEL the children will be learning:
- Skills to both establish and maintain friendships
- Working cooperatively
- Using verbal and non-verbal skills to behave appropriately in social situations
- Acknowledging achievements of others by giving compliments
- Using appropriate language and actions when dealing with conflict
- Listening to others in situations of conflict

This term we have also released Belinda from recess and lunchtime duties so that she is available to work with students who may be having difficulties during these outside breaks. We are currently tracking behavioural issues in the yard and will withdraw children having ongoing issues to work with Belinda or myself on their behaviour.

We have recently applied for a community grant titled Bully Stoppers. This is a government initiative to encourage schools and community groups to work together to combat this issue. We have invited the Kyneton Junior football club to work with us on this project. We are hoping to be successful in our application and should find out the result by August 16.

Last term the staff reviewed our discipline policy. We will be presenting this to the board at this month’s meeting for discussion and hopefully ratification.

COMMUNITY

I would like to take the opportunity in this report to acknowledge and thank The Preloved Pedlar for the wonderful way in which they support our school programs and our families in need. We are most grateful for the generous manner in which they work with our school community.

The Parents and Friends committee are working on our social event for the year. This will be held on Saturday October 5 and should provide a great opportunity for our school community to come together. We are very lucky to have Paul McCarthy, a renowned actor and comedian as one of our parents; Paul has again offered his time to provide entertainment on the night. We are hoping that staff, board members and the school community will get behind this event and organise tables for the night. All funds raised by the Parents and Friends this year are going towards the development of play areas in our school grounds.

The fete committee is up and running and being coordinated by Tanya Stocker. We had a good number of parents attend our first meeting at the beginning of the term; when stall coordinators are finalised we hope to
Welcome more to our meetings. Our Parish fete will be on Saturday October 26 and we pray for the same beautiful weather we were blessed with last year.

In week two we had a wonderful community day planting three hundred trees at the back of our oval. This was a celebration of National Schools Tree Planting day and was sponsored by Toyota. We were most grateful to Mr Brendan Smith who worked with the children throughout the day and to John and Ros Bradbury for their sponsorship.

On Tuesday August 15 our staff have the opportunity to work with Mr George Otero from the Centre of Relational Learning in Santé Fe, New Mexico. George works with school communities around the world exploring the possibilities on how communities can work together better. This night will involve staff members from all schools in Kyneton and will be a wonderful opportunity for us at Our Lady of the Rosary. This forum will be held at Sacred Heart College from 4pm to 6pm; our leadership team will have a light dinner and then continue working with George on a second session. During this time we will work on setting goals for the community sphere in our 2014 school annual action plan.

It has been another busy few months at OLR. I would like to thank our staff for the incredible number of hours they put in to providing learning opportunities for our children. I would also like to thank the wonderful children for the manner in which they go about their day to day interactions with each other and for the great pride they show in their school. I know there is often a focus on some of the negatives that arise in the daily happenings of children’s lives but overall we have beautiful children who genuinely care for each other; this is worth celebrating!