

St. Elizabeth's School Dandenong North

REGISTERED SCHOOL NUMBER: 1762



2011 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

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Contact Details

ADDRESS	111 Bakers Road Dandenong North VIC 3175
PRINCIPAL	Ms Christine Ash
PARISH PRIEST	Fr. Tadeusz Ziolkowski Sc
SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR	Ms Sue Hatley-Smith
TELEPHONE	(03) 9795 5258
EMAIL	principal@sedandenongnth.catholic.edu.au
WEBSITE	http://www.sedandenongnth.catholic.edu.au

Our School Vision



St. Elizabeth's Parish School is a Catholic Parish Primary School striving to make faith real in the world for all within our care. Parents and Staff support our students to grow to their full potential as active participating members of the faith community following Christ's example.

Our educational purpose is to meet the needs of the current generation by supporting all our students to become independent and self motivated. We encourage them to be learners who have a deep understanding about themselves, others and the world around them. We strive to develop their capacity to build and maintain relationships and actively and positively contribute to the global community.

As teachers we see ourselves as a community of lifelong learners committed to the provision of innovative learning opportunities for every student. We believe that focussed teaching brings about powerful learning. We take advantage of contemporary tools and learning environments to support the provision of relevant, rich and personalised learning opportunities.

School Overview

Located in the South Eastern Zone of Catholic Education, St Elizabeth's Parish School in Dandenong North is bordered by the suburbs of Wheelers Hill, Rowville and Noble Park.

St Elizabeth's school was built in 1977 in what was then the outskirts of Melbourne with support from the Presentation Sisters.

The Dandenong North community is characterised by cultural and socio-economic diversity. Over the years, St Elizabeth's has changed its enrolment size as the South Eastern corridor boomed and younger families moved out to find cheaper housing options. Today, the school takes a few enrolments from a transient population, the occasional enrolment of new arrival to Australia but most of our students have been in the area for 2 generations. Some enrolments come from families moving back in towards the city in response to commuting times and the availability of established community resources in this area. We anticipate that this trend will continue to have an impact on school enrolment given that many of the houses in this area are being extensively extended and renovated.

Recent enrolment numbers indicates a stable enrolment of around 370. An analysis of current intake data shows we have many nationalities represented in our school family and the socio-economic and cultural diversity of the school represents both our strength and our challenge. The staff strives to support students to value social and cultural difference in people and to develop relationships based on mutual respect, social equality and cooperation. St Elizabeth's Parish School is growing its partnership with parents and our community is very supportive and welcoming to new families.

St Elizabeth's School parents represent a diverse range of occupations and educational backgrounds. This reflects the social and economic diversity of our area and many of our parents make a significant commitment to send their children to a Catholic School. Families come to St Elizabeth's because they want their children to learn to be people of Faith and integrity; happy, independent and successful in making the most of their skills and talents and committed to being active citizens of the world.

Our Parish Church is located right next to our school symbolizing the very strong commitment we have to partnership between parish and school and enables participation in the Celebration of Eucharist to be an essential and regular feature of school curriculum.

The main school building is a brick construction built in 1977 with additions added as our needs changed. Our current additions in 2010 under the Federal Government 'Building the Educational Revolution' Project have transformed our learning and teaching environment so that we can better offer personalised, contemporary learning to all our students. We encourage our students to be active and responsible in their learning and our teachers understand that only by working together can they provide a dynamic curriculum tailored to each child's current and future needs.

The main school buildings comprise flexible learning spaces where 2 or more classes can work together as Learning Communities. In addition, the Level 3 Area and the Level 4 areas include spaces called Learning Links where small groups, individuals, large multi-class groups and whole level communities are able to participate in a variety of activities. St Elizabeth's buildings are also designed to support the integration of technology as a critical component of contemporary learning in the 21st Century.

A new Performing Arts Centre was constructed in 2004 fully funded by the school. As part of the BER project we have expanded the size and function of this space so that it can truly offer students a place to showcase their learning through the Arts.

Purposeful learning demands that our students see a real connection between what they do in school and what is happening outside the school.

Continuous learning with clear purpose and connection to the real world is critical to developing the capabilities, dispositions and literacies required to live full lives in diverse communities and deal with issues and change in the twenty-first century
(MCEETYA, 2005a, p.5)

To ensure that their learning is seamlessly linked to the real world we have focused on providing children with facilities which enhance their interaction with the community beyond the school now and will do so well into the future.



Principal's Report



The year 2011 will be remembered by all in the community as the year that we moved into our new learning spaces. We delighted in the extra spaces and the way in which we could use that space to support our students in learning about their world. The flexibility of the spaces and the new furniture in those spaces supported us in our endeavours to develop a very contemporary approach to learning for all our students. In doing so we are taking the very best of traditional education but making sure that it sits beside deep and powerful learning which uses contemporary approaches and utilizes contemporary learning tools.

As always, the school maintained a tight focus on what is our core purpose, teaching and learning. All our data, including teacher assessment, which we take regularly throughout the year and the once off NAPLAN test, showed that we have continued to increase our students' connection to their learning. Our results demonstrated that students across the school are doing very well in Literacy and Numeracy. This was especially true of those students who come from a non-English speaking background.

We continued to organise our learning and teaching in learning communities with 2 teachers supporting each of the 2 home groups in each community. We believe that this way of structuring learning opportunities allows for children to be very secure in their connection to school yet allows for everyone in each level to develop lots of friendships. Each year starts with SWEL week and in 2011 it was a great opportunity for everyone to get to know each other and to create the rules that made for a safe and harmonious learning environment for the year.

Staff continued the partnership we have developed working with Lane Clark with a clearly developed focus on assisting our students to gain independence in learning with a strong understanding that learning is a life-long attitude.

We found that our involvement with the Walker Learning Approach is a powerful way of meeting student's needs. Children are involved in 'Investigation Time' and they have opportunities to learn through rich purposeful play. This play allows them to explore ideas in a creative way and leads to better learning outcomes across all areas of the curriculum.



The rich program involving the Arts Program continued with Cross Arts nights and our Wakakirri production 'Can't Stop the Beat, Can Stop Cyber Bullying' involving 80 children from Middle and Senior school. Carols by Candlelight was staged in both the church and our newly extended Performing Arts centre.

The school continued to be proactive in supporting our students in the development of their technology skills to support learning and we greatly improved our capacity to support the Smart Boards, Net books, Laptops, PC's and Electronic Tablets that make up our ICT resources. S.T.E.P.S radio show continued to prove that children can be as entertaining to listen to as adults and there was much talent displayed by our Radio Team.

All our students enjoyed a variety of excursions and incursions but the Level 4 children absolutely loved their trip to Sovereign Hill for an overnight camp. The journey itself was designed to maximise

learning and students really enjoyed the V-Line trip to Ballarat even if it meant getting up a bit earlier than normal.

Our school enjoyed ever increasing support from parents. When you look at the range of activities we provided for our students you also see the many ways in which parents were involved. From pancake cooking to footy coaching, from helping with literacy activities to fundraising, all are supported by our parents and together in partnership we have provided a very rich learning environment for our students.

As a Catholic School we strive to make faith real for our students and over the year we have met together in our learning communities, our church and our homes to celebrate our faith and to give thanks for all that we have been given. Our Yr 6 students moved on to various colleges and schools at the end of the year with a sense of confidence and hope, ready to make a real difference to their own lives and the lives of those they will meet.

School Education Board Report

Annual General Meeting: Chairperson's Report.

This year has been one of enlightenment for me personally as the school Education Board has given me the opportunity to become more involved in the decisions of the school. This has been a learning time, one which I have enjoyed. I would like to thank the School Education Board and the Staff of St. Elizabeth's for their dedication and work.

Claude Fazio
(Retiring Chairperson 2010)

Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Enriching and deepening the personal engagement in faith across the whole school community between the school and the Parish.

Intended Outcomes:

- To improve student engagement and understanding in Religious Education in both staff and students.
- To strengthen the links between the School and the Parish.
- To celebrate the multicultural nature of the faiths in the community



Achievements

St. Elizabeth's School has implemented a range of programs and activities that supported the connection of school and parish, involving families and students in the Sacramental program as part of our work on deepening our personal engagement in faith

During 2011 we: ~

Welcomed Ms Elisabetta Salierno to the role of Catholic Education Coordinator

Commissioned staff and welcomed new students and families in February.

Held Sacramental Programs and Information nights for Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation,

Continued to promote Professional Learning activities in Religious Education.

Supported by Nazareth College students, held Eucharist and Confirmation Reflection Days.

Participated in the St. Patrick's Day Mass and Mission Mass with the Student Leadership team.

Celebrated First Reconciliation and Eucharist.

Welcomed Rev. Peter Elliot visiting our Confirmation candidates.

Celebrated whole school and class masses.

Celebrated Family Week.

Held regular meetings with school staff and Parish Priest and Catholic Education Coordinator prior to class masses.

Celebrated the Liturgical year with the parish.

Participated in Social Justice Initiatives e.g. Project Compassion, Christmas Shoebox project.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

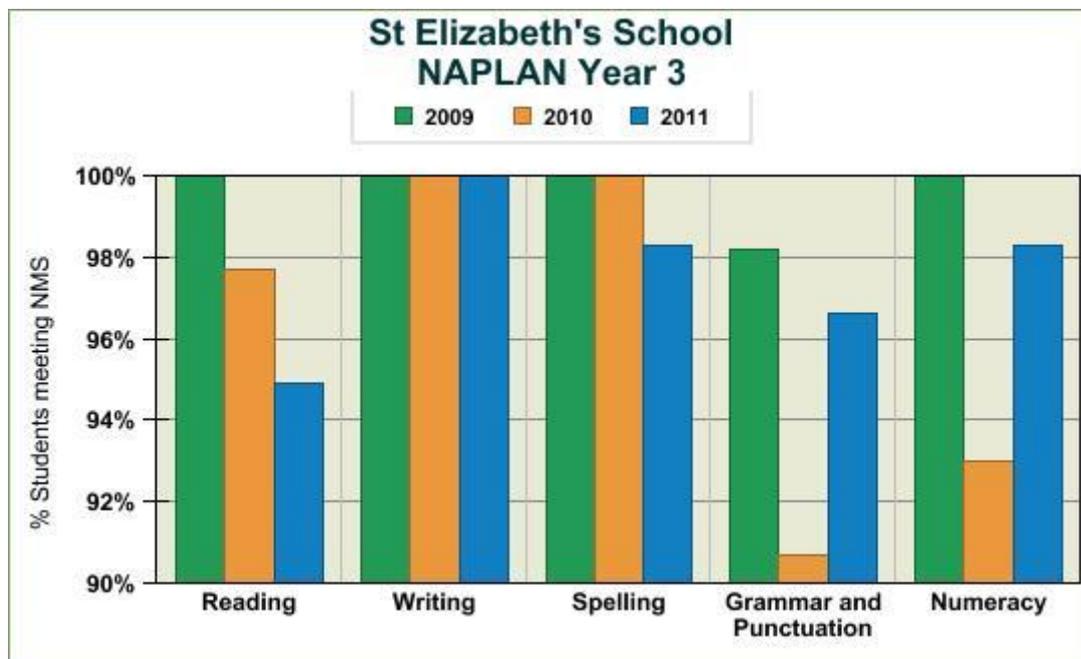
To improve student learning efficacy and engagement

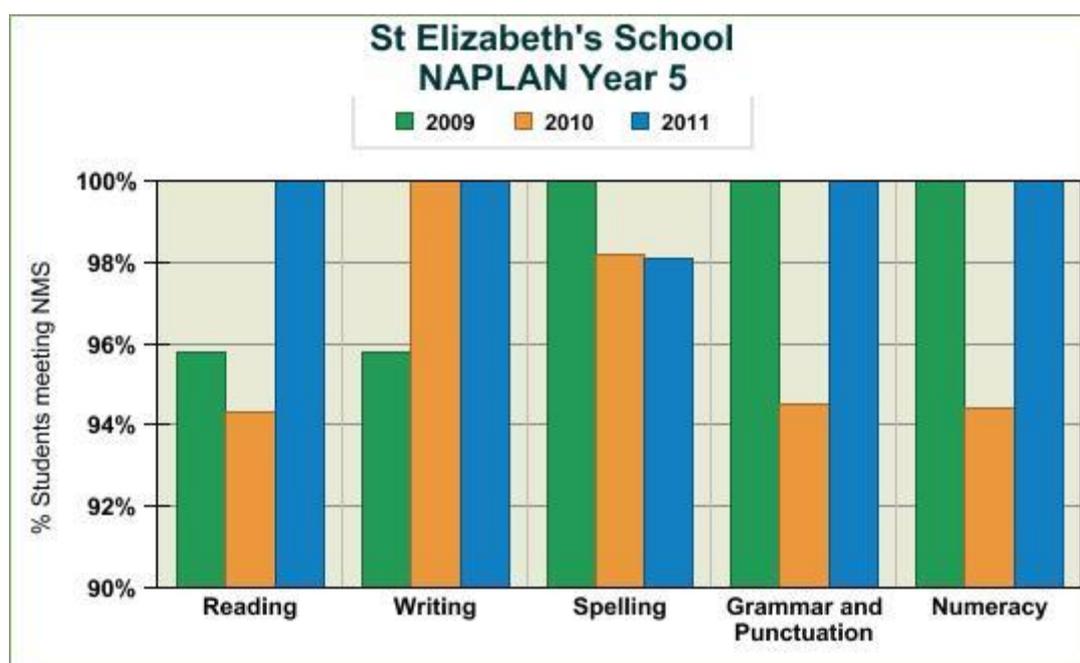
Intended outcomes

- To improve Literacy Standards in Years 3-6.
- To improve Mathematics standards in years P-6.:

Achievements

- We worked with Lane Clark to become skilled in using processes that support deep and independent learning.
- ◊ We made the Contemporary Learning Schema the framework for all our planning of programs.
- ◊ We improved our ability to track individual student progress and we began to team teach across the levels.
- ◊ We encouraged staff to use learning journals and e-portfolios with students.
- ◊ We engaged Kathy Walker to lead us in embedding the Australian Developmental Curriculum.
- ◊ We supported students reporting to their Parents at Goal setting Interviews and Goal Progress interviews. We encouraged teachers to listen to student's feedback and to collect self-assessment data from students before and after the planning of units of work.
- ◊ We involved staff in peer appraisal using Learning Walks.
- ◊ We used an action research approach to implementing Inquiry processes in Mathematics.





PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS IN YEARS 3 & 5

NAPLAN TESTS	2009	2010	2009–2010 changes	2011	2010–2011 changes
YEAR 3 READING	100%	97.7%	-2.3 %	95 %	-3%
YEAR 3 WRITING	100%	100%	0 %	100%	0%
YEAR 3 SPELLING	100%	100%	0 %	98%	-2%
YEAR 3 GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	98.2%	90.7%	-7.5 %	97%	+6.3%
YEAR 3 NUMERACY	100%	93%	-7%	98%	+5%
YEAR 5 READING	95.8%	94.3%	-1.5%	100%	+5.7%
YEAR 5 WRITING	95.8%	100%	+4.2 %	100%	0%
YEAR 5 SPELLING	100%	98.2%	-1.8 %	98%	-0.2 %
YEAR 5 GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	100%	94.5%	-5.5 %	100%	+5.5 %
YEAR 5 NUMERACY	100%	94.4%	-5.6 %	100%	+5.6 %

NAPLAN results show that given the range of culture and languages that our children present with, we have very high levels of achievement in all aspects of Literacy. Children in Years 3 & 5 demonstrated a higher level of success than last year. Our Numeracy Results were much improved in both Years 3 and 5 and this may reflect the emphasis we have put on Numeracy and the explicit teaching of mathematical genre.

It is important to remember that comparing NAPLAN results from year to year, is not the most effective way to measure a school's performance as each year the cohort of children changes. What we do at St Elizabeth's is add NAPLAN data to the large amount of evidence we collect on the progress of each individual. That way we can compare the progress of each student not only from month to month and year to year but even day to day.

Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

To maximise students' sense of wellbeing and connectedness to school and their learning.

Intended outcomes:

- To strengthen student's connectedness to teachers, peers and learning

Achievements

Priority given to the Wellbeing of students with our highly qualified and experienced Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Ms Nan Perazzo, working with staff and students.

The You Can Do It program was embedded as part of the school culture.

All staff was given additional training in using the Adlerian approach to student wellbeing.

We continued to deepen our use of the practice of Restorative Justice

We streamlined the documenting of playground incidents by creating a data bank accessible by all staff.

We provided a parent/student seminar on Cyber Safety for all Yr 5 & 6 children.

Established the protocol of developing sociogram pre and post Term 1 & 3 to ensure all social behaviours were monitored and support provided for children not being accepted by others.

We continued to support the use of Circle Time and class meetings.

We continued to develop the Buddy Program.

We extended the Induction program for Preps by bringing them in on Bookweek for Story Time.

Continued to develop SWEL week at the beginning of Term 1 so children were involved in forming strong relationships in their classes and across the levels.

Developed a School Veggie Patch and a team of helpers called Garden Gurus.

Developed our Inquiry units to involve students in planning and designing units of work.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE

91 %

Extra Curricula Activities

The school offered Out of School Hours Care run by Youth Leadership Victoria in the morning from 7am and after school from 3:15pm till 6pm.

The Learning Resource Centre was open in the winter term for lunchtime activities.

Interschool Sport and participation in District events was a regular feature of the calendar.

Keyboard and Guitar lessons were offered both in and out of school hours.

Zumba and Dance lessons were offered in and out of school hours.

Walk/ride to school morning.

Mothers day stall.

Father's day stall.

Father's Day Pancake breakfast.

Cross country practices were held before school.

Carols by candlelight for school and parish communities.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Student's attitudes to school continued to be very high. Almost all indicators placed our students in the top 25% as scored by all primary schools in Victoria. These surveys conducted by Insight SRC continue to show out student's motivation is amongst the highest in the state. In many cases, this reflects the strong encouragement that children receive from home. Students also recorded a higher level of satisfaction with connectedness to peers in this year's survey as opposed to last years (83% to 89%).

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To continue to build a collaborative learning culture.

Intended outcomes:

- To create a culture of empowerment and distributive leadership.
- To strategically implement staff professional learning

Achievements

St Elizabeth's staff pride themselves on being a committed learning community and is constantly seeking to improve their pedagogy. 2011 was our third year we as a Contemporary Learning Research Project School. The work done by our school supports Professional Learning across the whole Catholic Primary School sector.

We were a pilot school for the 'ICON Change Team' approach under the guidance of Dame Professor Pat Collarbone (from the UK) and supported by staff from the Catholic Education Office Melbourne.

We built Leadership into our school organization by having 3 navigators to support the work of Jason Micallef, the Teaching and Learning Coordinator. We worked towards empowering staff to make leadership a part of their normal practice and focused on embedding a model of distributive leadership into our school.

We conducted tours for staff from other schools interested in our teaching approach which is student centred and driven by our practice of teaching to the needs of students. The staff are well on the way to learning how to manage this effectively but it is a challenge that all in education are grappling with.

Staff developed an internal research project looking at the importance of breaking open the language of maths. In presentations made to the whole staff, level teams clearly demonstrated the importance of getting students to talk about solving mathematical problems as a critical step to success in maths and each team demonstrated effective strategies for colleagues to enable them to use these effectively into their practice.

The role of Events Coordinator was created to support staff in planning for events such as Cross arts and camp and excursions.

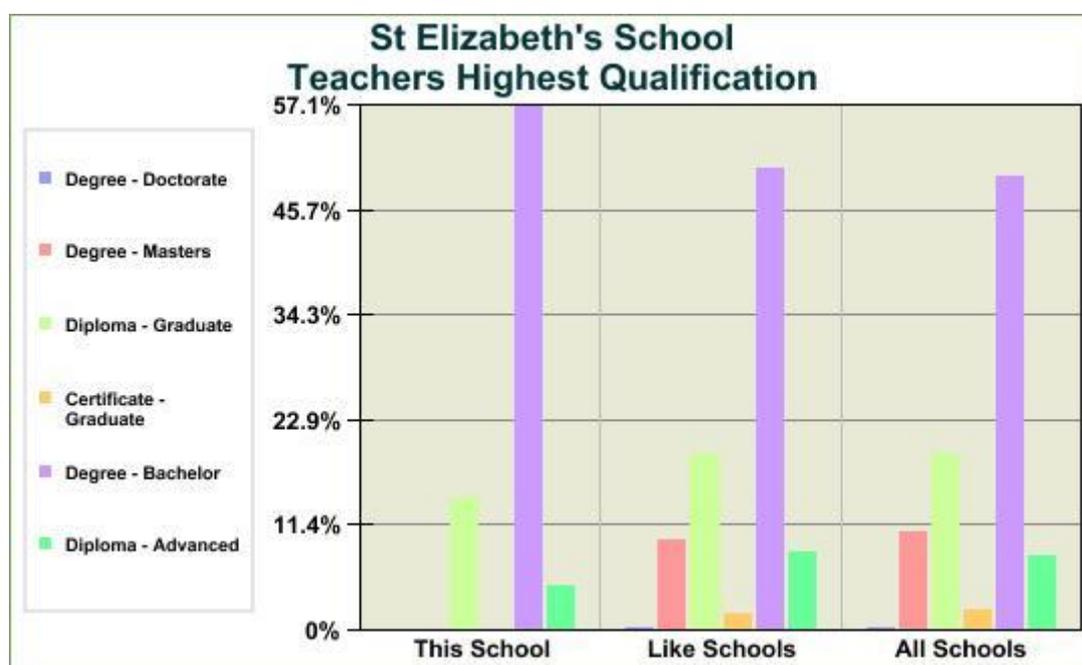
We continued to focus on using our analysis of survey data to drive our pedagogy and our professional culture.

We implemented the induction process for new and returning staff and are continuing to monitor its effectiveness.

We successfully applied for a Work Safe grant to build a Veggie Garden to promote healthy living themes in our school experience for staff, students and parents.

All staff participated in pre - Annual Review meetings to set professional goals and an Annual Review meeting at the end of the year, producing evidence to show their progress towards their goals. The Core team, Principal, Deputy, Learning and Teaching Coordinator, and Religious Education Coordinator, met weekly to discuss and plan the implementation of our School Annual Action Plan.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE	92.23 %
STAFF RETENTION RATE	73.91 %



EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

DESCRIPTION OF PL UNDERTAKEN IN 2011

- Contemporary Learning Research Project
- Literacy-Data Management
- RE and Sacramental Programs (CEOM)
- Mathematics-National Numeracy Review Recommendations
- AGQTP Quality learning and Teaching
- Developmental Play- Kathy Walker
- Lane Clark Seminar (Whole staff 2 day seminar)
- Staff Conference (Prayer and Scripture Links)
- Rugby
- Evidence Collection and Data Management
- Mentoring (ACU Multi-Modal project)

- Student Wellbeing
- RE Liturgical calendar
- Cluster PL (Principal, Deputy, REC, RR Teacher, Student Services)
- AUSVELS (Principals)
- Numeracy (P.A.R.Ts)
- Reporting Workshops
- Capacity Matrices
- Personalised Learning in the Classroom
- Learning Walks
- First Aid Training, Anaphylaxis Management and Asthma Management

NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL

In 2011 all staff participated in internal PL and 25 teachers participated in external PL.

AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL

\$2301.00

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Staff continue to express strong levels of satisfaction with their work at St Elizabeth's. Teaching is a complex work and demands are high for quality performance at all times. In 2011, staff demonstrated that they were satisfied with their work at a level that is equal to the majority of all Victorian teachers but they acknowledged a greater satisfaction in how they were managing those high levels of work demands.



School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal: To strengthen the connection and communication with the school's culturally diverse communities.

Intended Outcomes:

- To strengthen home and school partnerships
- To improve the communication processes with the school community.

Achievements

The newly created position of Community Coordinator has been a most effective use of our resources as Ms Trixie Martin has been a vital part of our drive to increase partnerships with parents and the wider community. The Community Coordinator is responsible for supporting the Parents and Friends Group, welcoming others into the life of the school community and building partnerships with external agencies.

We have increased the number of parents attending events and offering help in a wide variety of programs across the school. We have a policy of only accepting assistance from parents who have successfully applied for a Working with Children Check and in 2011 over 50% of our school parents had a current Working with Children Check.

In 2011 we launched the school's Facebook page and encouraged Parents to access information about the school using this social networking site responsibly.

We continued to develop a database of the skills and talents that school family members are willing to share with the school to further purposeful learning across the curriculum.

We used the school based Radio Station, STEPS, to provide a vehicle for student reports, interviews and items. This keeps our community informed and engaged with the students and their learning.

Staff and students offered invitations to the parent community to join in a variety of learning activities, literacy, numeracy, giving demonstrations, supporting WakaKirri etc. Many of our parents were more than happy to be involved.

The decisions and activities of the School Board were publicised to the wider community through the newsletter and on the website.

The numbers attending the active Parents and Friends Group were steady and we continued to raise money for new playground equipment through activities such as Mothers and Father's Day stalls,

chocolate drive, Christmas Hamper and Easter Egg raffle. The Parents and Friends had a Christmas luncheon at a local eatery.

The Community Tuck Shop opened for the first time since it was refurbished and children enjoy healthy eating options at First lunchtime or recess on Wednesdays.

We continued to work in partnership with Nazareth College in First Eucharist Day, Confirmation Reflection Day and the Level 1 & 2 & Yr 11 Literacy program. We were thrilled when this group of VICAL students presented the children in the Junior school some beautiful hand crafted pieces of play equipment. We also supported Nazareth in managing its Community Service activity, hosting 40 Nazareth students over 3 days.

In the Sporting department, with the help of many of our parent volunteers we participated in Inter-schools activities each week. Sports included Cross Country and the Athletics days. We also continued working with sporting associations such as Hawthorn Football Club and Cricket Australia to support volunteers within school based sports programs.

Many parents were part of the 2011 Committee which supported the Wakakirri Group in the first round and the finals at the Melbourne Convention Centre. They also made costumes and scenery and helped backstage.

PARENT SATISFACTION

Once again, the parents sampled for the Insight SRC surveys showed a strong level of satisfaction with the school. Areas we improved on included the way the school manages transitions into school from Kindergarten and out of school to Secondary Colleges and our added extra-curricular activities.

Financial Performance

REPORTING FRAMEWORK	MODIFIED CASH \$
Recurrent income	Tuition
School fees	-
Other fee income	133,396
Private income	62,791
State government recurrent grants	703,052
Australian government recurrent grants	1,918,622
Total recurrent income	2,817,861
Recurrent Expenditure	Tuition
Salaries; allowances and related expenses	1,947,481
Non salary expenses	481,705
Total recurrent expenditure	2,429,186
Capital income and expenditure	Tuition
Government capital grants	-
Capital fees and levies	297,009
Other capital income	-
Total capital income	297,009
Total capital expenditure	346,066
Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)	
Total opening balance	220,000
Total closing balance	165,000

Note that the information provided above does not include the following items:

System levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and diocesan supplementary capital fund (SCF) supported borrowings for primary schools. The information provided is not comparable with other educational sectors. This VRQA template is not comparable to the ACARA school-level income reporting requirements which are to be reported on the MySchool website. ACARA school level reporting requirements will require system level income from Government grants and some private income to be allocated by school. This will be a small adjustment in relation to the total level of school resources. At this stage, recurrent income from Government sources, school generated income and capital expenditure are to be reported by schools. Additionally when assessing the private income of the school include both recurrent and capital school fees.

Future Directions

St Elizabeth's School was founded by the Parish and we will continue in the future to maintain a close connection to the Parish Community.

St Elizabeth's is committed to developing a contemporary approach to learning and teaching. That means using best practice in our pedagogy and providing the most effective affordable tools for learning. We will continue to learn how to keep the best of traditional teaching methods alongside new ways to develop deep, rigorous and purposeful learning options for our students. We focus on engaging our students by delivering learning at their point of need as best as we can. We are committed to exploring 1:1 use of ICT tools to enable this to become possible. We commit ourselves to professional learning that will increase our student's motivation to learn and to delivering programs that support them to be responsible and independent learners.

The learning environment that best supports both focused teaching and group inquiry is available to us in this setting but it requires teachers to continually reflect, learn, relearn and experiment. We will continue to plan programs and projects with our aim that every student achieves success at their highest potential.

Our work in partnership with parents will continue to be a critical factor in ensuring every student's success in learning. Our goal is to develop a strong supportive partnership with parents, assisting them to be aware of current research in education and keeping open and honest communication with them at all times. We will use the best of ICT developments to ensure we work together.