

## Principal's Report:

As I begin my first report as Principal of Good Shepherd School, I reflect on a year that has been like no other. It was an incredible privilege for me to be appointed to this school. School began for staff on the 30<sup>th</sup> January and it was my first opportunity to meet them all. I knew very quickly that this was the place that I needed to be at as the welcome that I received was both warm and genuine. The first day with students and parents was no different. I was greeted by families in a similar way. I am looking forward to working with all our families to continue the great tradition of learning and community that has been developed by those who have come before me as well as those who are currently here.

Over the Christmas holiday period, the junior block was fully refurbished. The students returned to bright, clean and fresh classrooms. A big thank you to the staff for their patience and generosity as they waited for the rooms to be completed and then the work they carried out to ensure that they were ready for the students on the first day of school.

The COVID-19 pandemic that was declared mid-March has shaped our year in a way that is almost impossible to describe. Parents were given the choice of keeping their students home, which was then followed by enforced school closure before the holidays, disrupted the way we would normally expect students to learn. New methods of teaching and learning needed to be explored and this is when the outstanding nature and ability of our staff shone through. I was continually amazed by the way the staff adapted to the continually changing conditions and expectations to ensure that the students were still presented with meaningful learning opportunities. I was also amazed at the lengths they went to so as to stay connected to their students. I also appreciate the tremendous sacrifices many of our parents made to ensure that their children maintained a learning programme at their home. When the restrictions were lifted, it was great to see the students return, even though there were still lots of things that had to remain in order to keep the students safe from the virus. As the year has progressed, most of the restrictions have been lifted although we are still unable to fully welcome parents for all school functions. We look forward to 2021 being a more 'normal' year.

The main strategic focus of the school this year has been building community. This has proved to be extremely complex due to the pandemic however, we would like to congratulate the Executive of the P&F who have done all in their power to make certain that a strong sense of community is a central part of our school. I thank Rebecca D'Andrea and her Executive along with those who

continually volunteer to organise activities and events that benefit our students. This will continue to be a central focus of our school life when we move into the new school year.

It is humbling to note that we are a school of choice in this area. Our enrolments remain strong with a full cohort beginning Kindy this year and the same expected to take place next year. We are in the very healthy position to maintain these enrolments.

Our Catholicity is the central focus of our school. It makes us who we are and gives us our identity. We are a Catholic school, and we are proud of it. Our obvious connection to our Parish, having the Church and School sitting side by side, adds to the positivity. Fr Aloysius and Father Paul are outstanding pastors and work closely with us so that our Catholic identity is not only seen by all but is lived by all. We thank them for their contributions and their leadership.

COVID-19 made us rethink the ways that we were going to be able to celebrate the Sacraments this year. The Year 3 students participated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time on a Saturday. The Year 4 students received the Eucharist for the first time in two separate Masses in order to satisfy COVID requirements as will the Year 6 students when they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Thank you to all the staff for their work in preparing the students and to the parents for their understanding.

Although teaching and learning has been a challenge this year, I would like to, again, congratulate the staff for the work they have carried out this year. They are hardworking, dedicated and diligent in their work and our school community is very lucky to have them here. Our students are presented with opportunities that are appropriately challenging but, at the same time, supportive. Our Physical Education, Science, HASS, Music and Sensory Motor programme, as well as the work that is carried out in classrooms, help our students to grow and develop. I thank all staff for their efforts and for the gifts they bring to our school.

A big thank you to our School Board who carry out fantastic work to make certain that our facilities are top class and that our finances are in a good place. They are enthusiastic in their support for initiatives that are presented to them and are open to what we are trying to achieve. Thank you to Nathan Barns, School Board Chair, and the members of the Board for their contributions to our school community. This year, the school employed a maintenance coordinator, and his arrival has seen many aspects of maintenance that were usually unseen now

being given attention to. Mr Bentley, our groundsman, does an outstanding job in making certain that the grounds are always in immaculate condition.

I would like to thank the members of the Leadership Team, Lisa Deans and Renae Butler, for the work they do in supporting all staff so that they have the resources they require to do the work they need to do. I would also like them to their support of me as I have attempted to understand the routines that make our school the place it is. I would also like to acknowledge the admin staff who are the most obvious face of our school. Their efficiency and dedication are beyond reproach. Thank you to Adelina Kusabs, Jenny Lazzaroni, Connie Mezzatesta, Siobhan Darge and Angela Donisi for all they have contributed.

Finally, thank you to the students at our school. They are a credit to themselves and their families and they add to the fabric of our community. I wish all our Year 6 students all the very best as they leave our school to move to secondary school. I also acknowledge the contributions of those families who are leaving our school and wish them well for the future.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Holy Christmas and a positive start to 2021.

Mark Powell  
Principal