

Principal's Annual Report 2020

Tena Koutou Katoa, Talofa Lava, Kamusta, Malo e lelei, Mauri, Malo ni, Faka talofa atu, Greetings to all.

2020 has been a year full of disruption for us here at St Joseph's School. Not only were we affected by interruptions on our teaching/learning programmes and our opportunities for sport caused by the world-wide Covid-19 pandemic, we also endured the construction of our new six classroom block which meant our students had no court area to play on for three terms of this year; the latter willingly endured when we see what a wonderful teaching facility we will have at the beginning of next year.

I want to commend my staff this year who went above and beyond in providing teaching/learning opportunities as part of distance learning through Alert Levels 3 & 4. Several of them had their own children at home and yet they managed to teach from a digital landscape each day. We all are now very familiar with zoom meetings and precautions to keep ourselves safe and well.

This year we began with 14 classroom spaces: four in Aroha/Y0-2, three in Ako/Y3-4, four in Piripono/Y5-6, and three in Arāhi/Y7-8. The number of students in each year group varies from year to year and this determines the number of teachers in each area. We continue to be supported by our dedicated support staff.

Earlier this year we also said goodbye to Mr Mike Hooper, our caretaker of 16 years, who has moved out of the area, and we welcomed Mr Peter Jones in his place. We welcomed Mr Samuel Kim onto our staff as a beginning teacher in Years 5&6/Piripono while Mrs Mairéad Gallagher-Pile was on maternity leave. Mrs Shirley Kavanagh also joined us for the year as our Reading Recovery teacher and Mrs Alison Murphy resigned as teacher aide. While Mrs Anna Francis and Mrs Sarah Hughes leave us to follow their passions in education, Mrs Ashley Clarke and Mrs Kerri Eglemeer leave to become first time mums.

Mrs Karen Nunes took long service leave which enabled her to try new things and decide to move on next year. Karen was with us 11 years and we have appreciated her valuable contribution to our school. After 6 years, Mrs Jody McCort has decided to take another teaching position in our local area. Jody has been very active in the promotion of sport in our school and she will be missed. Finally, after 39 years service to St Joseph's School, and having been a student here before that, Mrs Trisha Kenny retires from her role as Team Leader of Year 5&6/Piripono so that she can spend more time with her grandchildren. Trisha will be back in 2021 in a part-time capacity. So lots of changes for staffing for the beginning of next year.

During 2020, our professional development has continued to be focused on collaborative practices in teaching and learning. The fruits of this will be evident next year as the bulk of the school will be working in three open quality learning spaces. We have continued to work with Cognition, having Jacque Allen as our PLD provider. which has not only built a close working relationship with her knowing our school but grown teacher practice and relationships needed to teach in these spaces. This year we have also been involved in a Massey University research project around Developing Mathematical Inquiry Communities (DMIC). This in-school professional development has strengthened our approach of teaching mathematics through a problem solving lens for all of our students. Most importantly, all of our teachers have completed a Religious Education paper through The Catholic Institute (TCI); despite Covid-19. I congratulate them on this commitment to developing their knowledge for our Catholic faith. Individuals have also completed a postgraduate MindLab paper so I can assure you that we, as educators, continue to be active learners.

We belong to the South Auckland Catholic Schools Community of Learning/Kahui Ako, and this year we had two teachers on our staff holding within-school roles. This years' focus was on Collaborative Practice and Wellbeing. Wellbeing has been a major focus as we faced the year of Covid-19. For many families this has not been easy and we have seen the effects on some of our students at school.

Attendance in some cases has been a factor and anxiety of coming back to school, especially when parents couldn't enter the school grounds, another. We have strived to make St Joseph's School a happy place where all children are welcomed and loved. During that time, my deputy principal, Mrs Lori Mravicich, and I tried to greet and farewell children at the gate each day. We continue to promote the inclusion of all students and to emphasise restorative practices when dealing with behaviours as modelled through Jesus' life and gospels.

Digital practices continue to strengthen for both students and staff. The Covid-19 teaching experience contributed to this through the digital capability needed to continue our teaching/learning programmes. Back at school, while practising physical distancing, assemblies were delivered through a digital platform. Our Steam Room continues to provide a variety of activities for our students to improve their digital technology capabilities. Unfortunately, our afterschool Robotics programme had to be abandoned during Terms 2&3, but was reinstated in Term 4.

While we were very pleased with the learning engagement of most of our students during Covid-19, our 2020 student achievement data reflects the year that it was with 81% of all students achieved At or Above their expected NZ Curriculum level in Reading, 76% in Writing and 74% in Mathematics. We strive to continue to improve learning outcomes reflecting "Excellent education befitting our Catholic character". Our "Tiny Joes" transition to school programme for our new entrant enrolments continues to be well received.

The school continues to promote ways to support our cultural richness. This year we have 11% Maori, 11% Filipino and 23% Pasifika; the largest group being Tongan. This year our kapa haka and Pasifika groups have missed opportunities they would usually have to perform but I want to thank Mrs Anna Francis and Mrs Ashley Clarke for supporting our kapa haka group, and Mrs Lori Mravicich and Mrs Nia Alia for training our Pasifika groups, throughout the year. This year we can proudly say that every child in our school knew it was Matariki, celebrating a week of interactive activities and learning about Maori myths and aspects of tikanga, accumulating in an assembly at which our kapa haka group and a group from Holy Cross School performed. We were unable to hold our usual Pasifika Week due to Alert Levels but our children enjoyed a Pasifika day at the end of Term 3, where they proudly wore their traditional costumes and performed for the school at a closed assembly. It is always great to see the pride the children have in their cultures.

We continue to have a close relationship with our St Patrick's Parish community who support us in so many ways. We have had a variety of priests this year with Fr Robert getting stuck in Rome, but are now enjoying his regular visits again. The parish secretary, Mrs Nancy Fox, continues to do an amazing job managing our school preference forms and following up with families after they have enrolled their children in our school. The Parish continues to support our students' needs through sponsorship.

We continue to promote the charism of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions (RNDM) and we continue to fundraise to support the Mission Sisters' projects, particularly in Vietnam and India, on our Mission Day. Mission Day is a much loved tradition looked forward to and enjoyed by all of our children each year. This year particularly so as we have had fewer opportunities to celebrate as a school.

I wish to thank our Board of Trustees. We are very grateful to have such a dedicated group of people supporting our school, particularly in this year's building project. I wish to acknowledge our retiring board chair, Aaron de Farias, for his support and encouragement to me personally, as principal, but also to the benefit of our school. Aaron has been a board member over the last 7 ½ years.

We were so lucky that our biannual school fair went ahead the weekend before we went into Lockdown. Ms Carla Van Tiel, PTA Chair, and her helpers did an amazing job coordinating the event. This year's focus was more about the children and having fun. We continue to be blessed by a wonderful parents community whose voluntary contribution is such an important part of our school life. Time seems to be

so scarce in our days that making time for our school is a valued gift. Parents contribute to school life by being available for so many activities: KickStart Breakfast, road patrol, supporting trips and sports events, covering playground duties, repairing and putting away resources, as well as running the second-hand uniform shop here at school. We are so grateful for their generous gift of time to our school.

Although we cannot capture everything in these pages, this magazine highlights activities our children have been involved in over 2020. There were many events that did not take place either: no Mathex, no St Anne's Shield or other interschool sport competitions, fewer class trips... These classroom pages reflect some of the wonderful learning opportunities they have experienced.

I continue to be proud to be part of the St Joseph's family. We have a school that lives its Vision Statement: "To be in right relationship with God, ourselves and others, and creation". This year of Covid-19 only made us stronger in our pastoral care of our school families. Your children are loved here.

To our 2020 graduating Year 8 students: *"God is writing a beautiful story in your life, and the timing will be perfect."* - *Stephanie May Wilson*. We wish you many blessings as you take your next step forward in your life journey. Remember where you came from and be proud to carry the St Joseph's Catholic values with you into your future. You will be wonderful disciples of Jesus Christ. You hold your key to happiness. Continue to be missionary, stay faithful, and follow your dreams.

Wishing all of our St Joseph's family many blessings for this holy Christmas season.

Stay safe, keep well, be happy, and God bless you all.

Ursula Hall
Principal

*"May each one seek only God in everything and know how to live by faith and holy surrender.
Love God, dear children! Let us go forward in all humility and charity. Once again courage."*

- **Euphrasie Barbier 1870**