



## ANNUAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY 2023 REPORT

### PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – ONDINE KOMNICK

Good evening, everyone and a special welcome to our School Advisory Council members, our P&F executive committee members, all parents and carers and last but certainly by no means least of all, our amazing staff.

I would also like to acknowledge the attendance of: Deputy Mayor James Rowe

You are all very welcome here this evening.

Before I commence, I must disclaim that CHAT GPT had no role in these words whatsoever. AI would never do justice in capturing the essence of this special place and what we have achieved together over the course of 2023.

Three years ago, in 2021, our staff developed a moral purpose for our school. This moral purpose formed the foundation for our three-year school improvement journey. As we come to the end of our first iteration of school improvement, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight and celebrate some of the successes we have achieved over the last three years, as a collaborative school community, working to grow the hearts and minds, of all students and staff at Our Lady of Mercy Primary school.

Our aspiration three years ago, was to increase consistency in teaching practices, in order to continue to improve our students' academic growth. To achieve this:

We developed a high impact instructional practice teaching model underpinned by evidence-based research

- We develop data processes to track student progress and support educator development
- We implemented an instructional coaching model so that our educators continued to improve their practice and
- We developed a digital staff space to enable the sharing of quality teaching and learning resources and information.

These lofty goals have been achieved and we are now well on our way to ensuring less variability in teaching practice across our classrooms.

Let's now journey back to the start of 2023 to reflect on and celebrate some highlights for the year under the four pillars of Catholic Education.

### CATHOLIC IDENTITY

---

We continue to grow a strong relationship with Our Lady of Mercy Parish and I regularly attend Parish council meetings. Our school works closely with the parish sacramental coordinator Jenny Watts, in preparing Catholic children to receive their Sacraments and we work closely too with staff from Mercy College, in the coordination of each Sacramental celebration.

## OUR LADY OF MERCY PRIMARY SCHOOL

---

We have held many fundraisers this year including our PJ day to raise money for Wheelchairs for Kids, Crazy Hair Day which raises funds for LifeLink, Mercy Day stalls to support Father Sam's charity initiatives in Africa and our Christmas hamper to raise funds for St Vincent de Paul. Through our staff free-dress Friday initiative, we have raised money for various charities selected by staff. These important social outreach programs provide us with an opportunity to support those less fortunate than ourselves, by being the hands and feet, the eyes and ears of Christ in our community.

Our class Mass program after three years of Covid, is now back to a regular schedule. Fr Sam pays a visit to the class who is preparing the Mass and we thank Fr Sam for his ongoing commitment to our school as our faith leader and friend.

This year we held a staff faith day on prayer through scripture which was a deeply meaningful experience for all in attendance. This professional development not only helps us to grow our own faith and religious knowledge, but it also translates back into the classroom where we have an opportunity to help shape the spiritual domain of each child's development.

A highlight of the year is always our staff Paschal Meal where we prepare our minds and hearts for Easter with the re-enactment of the Passover meal. When we gather as a community to share our faith, we know that God is amongst us. A very big thank you to our Religious Education Coordinator, Mrs Rossana Alviani for her enormous heart and for so passionately guiding, growing and placing our Catholic Identity at the front and centre of all that we do at OLOM.

### EDUCATION

---

2023 was about embedding and refining all the aforementioned school improvement initiatives. The Bishops of Western Australia in their Bishops' Mandate state and I quote that 'a Catholic School has to be, first and foremost, a good school.'

I believe that through our school improvement focus we are not only on the path to being a good school but to being a high performing excellent one.

Building on the strong foundations in the first three years of our school improvement journey, a future focus will be on developing a Year 3-6 Reading model founded on the Science of Reading. We have already commenced this journey with our Year 3 – 6 classes implementing paired fluency as the first component of a Reading model, under the guidance and passion of our Senior Cluster leader, Ms Jordan Challis.

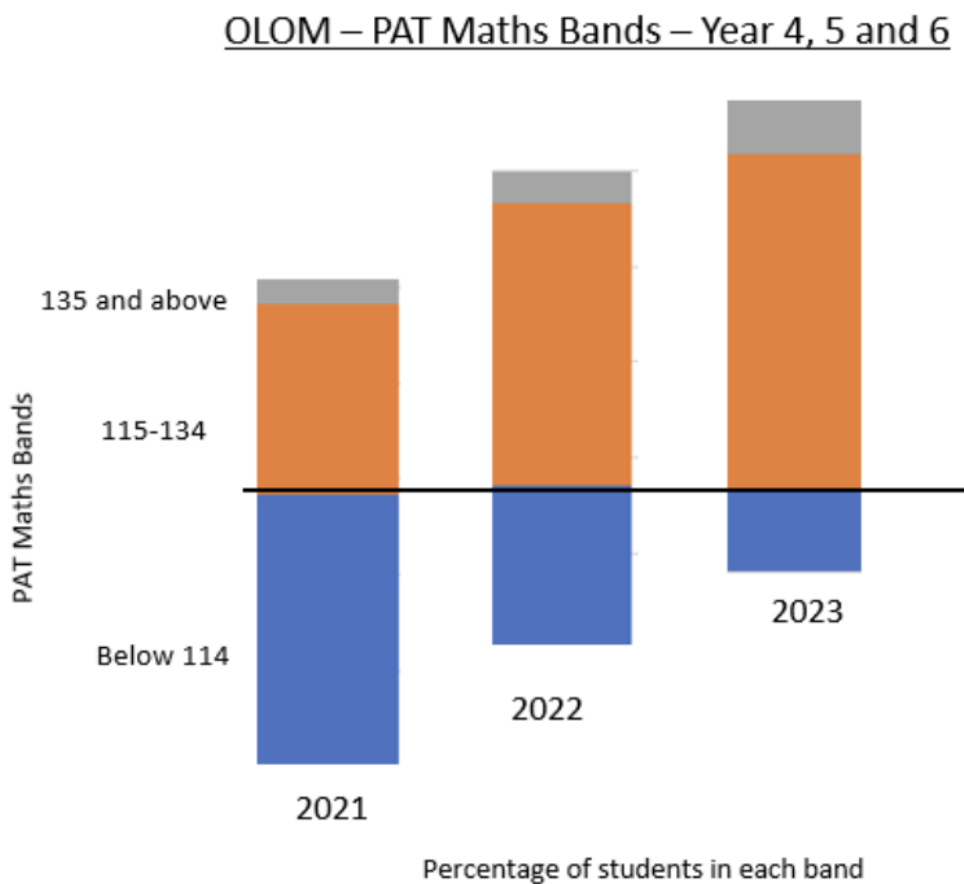
One of our proudest achievements this year has been the implementation of our STAR Class. This program caters for students who require extensive support across both academic and social/emotional domains. To see these children flourishing despite their challenges, is a gift to all in our community. This group would not be the success it is without the vision, determination, and meticulous planning for the set-up from our Assistant Principal, Ms Alison Ryan and the passionate leadership of the program by Mrs Mel Brown and our committed and dedicated Special Needs Education Assistants, Mrs Helen Ivanovski and Mrs Alison Fitt.

In 2024 we will be focusing on developing a guaranteed and viable curriculum, which specifies the key ideas, concepts, vocabulary and skills that students need to learn each year, with common

assessments tasks and subject high-quality lesson banks that teachers agree to use and iterate together. This bold school improvement goal will be ably lead by our model learner, professionally well-read and impassioned Instructional Practice Leader, Ms Katia Pirozzi.

We have provided opportunities for our students to grow knowledge and skills through extra-curricular activities. A group of Year 6 students developed an idea to grow vegetables to give to a foodbank that came to fruition under the guidance of our talented Education Assistant, Mrs Michelle Sadlo through the City of Wanneroo’s Leadership program. The project culminated in a presentation by our students of their project, in front of a large audience with many councillors present from the City of Wanneroo. Selected students from Years 3 to 6 participated in a Technology day at Mercy College lead by Mr Andre Micale and our Choir students participated in an inaugural concert with St Gerard’s at our school, under the direction of our Music teacher Ms Anna-Maria Agnello.

We cannot use Naplan data to our show the impact our school improvement has had on our results because the measurement scales have been reset from 2023 and a new time series has begun, which means we are unable to compare Naplan achievement prior to 2022 to that from 2023 onwards, however, we can show growth from our PAT data. Our high impact instructional practice was targeted in the learning area of Mathematics, and as you can see from the results, we are seeing marked improvement in academic outcomes.



We can attribute these improvements over the period to:

- The engagement of High Impact Instructional Practice in the learning area of Mathematics
- The implementation of daily reviews/warm-ups
- The development a Mathematics scope and sequence
- The use of engagement norms
- The implementation of Coaching

I would like to acknowledge and thank our Advocates who lead our school improvement goals with teachers in their clusters. Early Years Advocate Ms Rebecca Daqui, our Junior Advocate Mrs Prya Calleja and our Senior Advocate Ms Jordan Challis, have engaged in some outstanding work this year. The junior and early years team developed a new system for auditing and tracking improvements in the Early Years as required by the National Quality Standards and the senior group have commenced some inspirational work on our new reading model.

### COMMUNITY

---

Our P&F must be recognised for their efforts in building our community and in planning for friend- and fund-raising events. It is becoming more challenging to get families to volunteer their time for the many events that the P&F run. This leaves the bulk of the planning, resourcing and running of events to a handful of dedicated P&F committee members and regular P&F meeting attendees. We acknowledge and raise our hats to these amazing volunteers who give so much of their time to our school community. We are ever so grateful for their dedicated service.

We excitedly launched our new school uniform this year and we have been advised that some items of the uniform are already in stock with the remaining items expected to arrive in store, early in December. This new uniform was conceptualised with feedback received from students, families and staff. There will be a two-year change over period, however, we expect that given the enthusiastic reception of our new uniform, this process will be a lot quicker. The new uniform may be worn at the start of Term 1, 2024.

This year we joined with three other schools to host the very first Synergia Conference at OLOM. We came together with staff from three other schools to learn from one another and to grow our professional knowledge. Our schools connected around our high percentage of students coming from a background where English is their Second Language or Dialect.

We started a formal cultural group for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students called the Dadirri group, which is a beautiful word and concept that means inner deep listening and awareness based on respect. It is also used to describe your inner journey of where you are and where you are going, which wonderfully sums up the experiences that Ms Leigh Bowring so passionately leads our students in, to a deepen their understanding of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of Mrs Penny Henery as the Aboriginal Key Teacher in our school. Penny has planted a bush tucker garden and is encouraging staff and students by leading the way, in using herbs from this garden in cooking.

Our teachers and students are reminded during Wellness Week each term to keep a focus on Wellbeing. We thank our deeply committed Wellbeing advocate Mrs Bridgette Johnson and our Social Worker Mrs Hannah Thomas for their outstanding work each term in highlighting the importance of wellbeing for all in our school community, through the activities they promote in Wellness Week. Next year we will focus on incorporating a strength-based approach to wellbeing and we already have several ideas that Mrs Johnson and Mrs Thomas are excited about leading in this space.

### STEWARDSHIP

---

We were fortunate to be one of 4 schools chosen to be professionally developed in the Berry Street Education Model. The professional development was made available to us at no cost. This trauma informed model provides educators with the knowledge and strategies to build authentic relationships and calm and welcoming classrooms, that ensure all students are ready to learn.

Our school is becoming recognised for our fine educators and our strategic implementation of school improvement. Catholic Education Western Australia sent 20 of their senior system leaders to our school this year to view lessons and to learn from our experiences in implementing school improvement. This is a great accolade for all staff to own.

We underwent a government audit this year and I would like to acknowledge our School Advisory Council Chair, Mrs Melissa Stojanowski and our P&F committee for agreeing to be interviewed by the auditors. Our school passed the audit with no recommendations which was an outstanding feat, and all staff are to be acknowledged for their efforts in this process.

Last year I made mention of the unending list of skills that Mr McPhail brings to his role as Grounds Manager of OLOM. I mentioned his renovating skills like bricklaying and tiling but I failed to mention his deeply creative skills which are clearly on display in our new nature playground. Ray has fashioned an old truck into a state-of-the-art bespoke piece of playground equipment. Not only has he transformed this truck, but there is a rumour that there is a species of dinosaur born from his imagination, on the loose in the nature playground.

This dinosaur is aptly named Mcphail-i-sorus Rex. Ray you are a marvel, my only fear is that someone is going to recognise your unbelievable talent and head hunt you, but I know that your passion lies in providing the very best third teacher, our school environment, as the learning ground for our students.

With two beautifully manicured oval spaces, our students have had many more opportunities to play the most popular sport at OLOM – soccer and it has been wonderful to see a strong contingent of girls embracing the game at recess and lunch too, inspired, I am sure in part, by the Matildas World Cup successes.

Our nature playground is due to officially open sometime in Term 1, after it has undergone a safety inspection.

## OUR LADY OF MERCY PRIMARY SCHOOL

---

Adjustments to the Kiss and Drive area, with the addition of a dedicated Kiss and Drive lane, have made the area much safer for our students and those who use this facility. We had CEWA's Work Health and Safety Consultant audit our school and he took pictures of our Kiss and Drive because he said it is one of the best he has seen. Thanks must be extended to Mr McPhail who came up with the concept of the island division.

Unfortunately, we have had to put aside our plans to extend our Early Years building as we were advised by our architect that we would need to install a costly fire service if we went ahead with our plans. While we have incorporated this fire service into our 5-year maintenance plan, we were unable to afford this fire service together with the costs of a major build. We have now put in an Expression of Interest to renovate rather than extend our Early Years building, to provide our early years students with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment.

We will have a new staff member, Ms Amanda Neal join our amazing team in 2023. We warmly welcome her to our school knowing that God has especially sent her to us. We are interviewing for three more teaching positions this week and will therefore not be releasing the staff list for 2023 until the interview process is complete.

### FAREWELL

---

Tonight, we need to farewell one P&F member, Mrs Tamara Matthews who has been a good and faithful servant, spending three years as P&F secretary. Tamara's attention to detail with her minute taking, has been such an asset. She has served with commitment and loyalty despite a busy family and work life. We would like to present Tamara with a small token of our appreciation for showing the Mercy value of Service.

We will also be farewelling some staff members at the end of this year and they will receive their acknowledgement of service during the last week of term. Ms Jessica Taylor has been offered an ongoing contract at Aquinas, Mr Andre Micale has taken up a position at Mercy College, Ms Jessica Jost has secured a contract at St Augustine's and Mrs Sarah Cragg is reducing her teaching load and will be leaving our school, however, she has promised to return for the school disco, as she has been our most favourite DJ ever! We wish all these wonderful people the very best for their new adventures and thank them for their time and dedication to our school. We very proudly grow our teachers at OLOM and their ability to secure positions at top notch schools, speaks volumes to their engagement with our instructional practice model, data processes and coaching. Let's give them all a round of applause.

### IN CLOSING

---

In closing there are a few groups of people I would like to thank.

Firstly, to our present school improvement leadership team, Alison Ryan and Katia Pirozzi, thank you for your faith in our vision and your commitment to our school improvement journey. There is no I in the word TEAM and your selfless, passionate and determined drive to achieve our bold goals, ensuring that our staff have the opportunities to grow and engage with evidence-based practice so

## OUR LADY OF MERCY PRIMARY SCHOOL

---

that our students can flourish, is a wonderful example of your servant leadership. You should be incredibly proud of the projects you have lead and seen to fruition. I am truly blessed to lead alongside such capable and talented people.

Secondly to our passionate, dedicated and selfless Education Assistants and Teachers. Thank you for the outstanding work you do every day, and for giving so much of yourselves to your calling, so that our students can thrive. You are in the noblest of professions. Educating is hard heart work, but the rewards and joys of this vocation are immeasurable.

Last but certainly by no means least – the rest of the team. Leadership, teachers and education assistants are the face of the school and we often get recognised for the work we do. Tonight, I want to acknowledge all the support staff who are the heartbeat of our school – from the front office to the canteen and everyone in between. Sharon, Fran, Sue M, Rossana, Hannah, Sue G, Jeanetta, Di, Ray and Rob.

In the front office Sharon and Fran, are the advertisement for our school, you are the welcome that people feel when they open the glass doors and see the twinkle in your eyes. In finance, Sue, you are a rock to me and to many other staff members too. My knowledge of accounting practice grows through your tutelage but more than that, we draw inspiration from your calm demeanour and your words of wisdom.

Rossana, our RE Coordinator and timetable manager extraordinaire. You have a heart as big as the universe and an endless love for this place – the staff and the students, your second home, and that inspires us each day. Thank you for putting food on my desk when you notice the going is tough.

Han, our calm in the storm school Social Worker. You are a bundle of energy and positivity and your endless care for the wellbeing of all staff, students and their families, the extra mile you always go to for others, is truly inspirational, evidenced in the food you collect from a church each Monday to share with school families who might be struggling to put food on the table.

Sue G. our Marketing guru – your strategic thinking is astonishing and the clarity in your communication of our school improvement journey, has elevated our change story to another level. I am constantly learning from you.

Ray, 2IC and Rob your trusty wingman, our Groundsmen second to none, what more can I say. I hope you know how much I value your contributions to this school and the warmth you bring to our culture.

Jeanetta and Di, our extraordinary canteen family, you make the frantic pace of school life stop for a few moments when you engage in your warm, genuine and caring conversations with staff. Your monthly morning teas are simply the best! You are such an asset to our school community and we truly value your service and your presence on staff.

To this collective OLOM team before me, for me and for one another, you are the smile and the laugh that inspires us to dig a little deeper when we are lacking energy, you are the shoulder to cry on when faced with a seemingly unresolvable challenge and the ear that lends time to hear a story - you are all truly the heart of Christ in our school through your patience, commitment and support of one another and every student, every day. Thank you for your faithfulness and for your service. I am honoured to serve with a team such as yourselves, you are all the most extraordinary human beings.

## OUR LADY OF MERCY PRIMARY SCHOOL

OLOM is a remarkable place and to all families who contribute to making this community such a unique and special one, we thank you for entrusting your children to our care. There can be no grander purpose for our efforts and pursuits as educators and staff working at this school than to ensure, in partnership with yourselves, that your children receive an excellent education from which they will be able to chart a course to a prosperous future.

Finally, I would like to wish you and your loved ones a happy and holy Christmas. May our celebrations of the birth of the Christ child, open our hearts to His presence and His peace.

God Bless you all.

Ondine Komnick

### SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL CHAIR'S REPORT

Good evening, esteemed guests and beloved members of our school community. I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to Father Sam, whose unwavering guidance in our Catholic faith remains central to our shared journey. Our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment for Catholic and non-Catholic families is a testament to the values of integrity and gentleness, which form the cornerstone of our school's ethos.

I also want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed Principal, Ondine Komnick, and the entire cohort of dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff. Their unwavering commitment, tireless efforts, and steadfast dedication have been the driving force behind the remarkable achievements we celebrate today. Our school continues to thrive as a nurturing and enriching environment for every child in our care through their passion for education, compassion for our students, and unyielding perseverance. Their hard work and devotion are truly the bedrock of our school's success, and we are forever grateful for their exceptional contributions to the holistic development of our students.

Furthermore, I extend my most profound appreciation to my esteemed colleagues on the board, whose unwavering dedication and collaborative spirit have been instrumental in steering our school toward greater heights. Your collective wisdom, tireless efforts, and shared commitment to the values that define our school community have played a pivotal role in shaping our journey. Through your vision, guidance, and selfless service, we have been able to overcome challenges and pave the way for a brighter future for our students. Your continued support and partnership are a testament to the strong foundation of unity and shared purpose that defines our board. I am honoured to work alongside each of you in this important mission.

As I reflect upon my third year with the council, it becomes evident that our challenges, including unexpected resignations and the trials of the global pandemic, have not deterred us from our mission. Despite the uncertainties, our staff's dedication and our students' resilient spirit have brought us closer to a sense of normalcy, however elusive it may seem.

This year, the outstanding result of the school's audit, achieving a perfect 100% compliance score, reflects our unwavering commitment to excellence and the culture of respect that underpins every



aspect of our school's operation. Witnessing the remarkable talents of our students shine brightly in the recent Edu-Dance concert, made possible by the generosity of our P&F, further reinforces the values of service and compassion that we hold dear.

The enthusiastic embrace of the new streamlined school uniform demonstrates our collective dedication to fairness and justice within our school community. This change not only eases the burden on our young learners but also symbolises our commitment to creating an environment where every child can thrive without unnecessary distractions.

In the spirit of unity and shared values, let us continue to build upon the rich legacy of our school, carrying forward the torch of faith, excellence, respect, service, compassion, and justice that defines us.

Thank you.