As I reflect on the past year and how much has been achieved, I find that St. Joseph’s School, Payneham, is an exciting place to learn, with our school offering diverse programs which challenge students by the variety of activities we offer. I am very proud of the fact that all of our children have been given every possible opportunity to grow and become Christ-like. Our focus is always on the whole child whilst recognising that each person who comes through our doors is not an empty vessel to be filled up, but has a myriad of talents which we acknowledge and develop. Our aim is to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of each individual and continue to build their self-esteem, a true sense of belonging and an understanding of their unique talents and abilities. We believe that there is more to the education of each child than just numeracy and literacy. We believe that creativity is important for twenty-first century learning, indeed for human development, so we have rich opportunities for the children to develop in the various curriculum areas. Our Catholic ethos ‘Love in Everything’, ensures that a Christ-centred approach is at the heart of all we do.

One of the great blessings that we acknowledge at Payneham, is the wonderful partnership between home and school. Our capacity as educators to show ‘Love in Everything’, is made more powerful when we know that we have the wholehearted support of our families. The saying ‘An apple doesn’t fall far from its tree’ deeply reflects the strong impact that our families have on their children's development. We regularly witness the sense of compassion, empathy and determination modelled by our families. It is these characteristics that are then adopted by our students and utilised at our school.

‘The environment that the students learn in should set the standard for the work that they produce.’

Religious Education and Evangelisation

At St. Joseph’s Payneham, we continue to embrace opportunities to celebrate our Catholicity. There have been many times throughout the year that we have come together as a Catholic community to celebrate and share our faith. As a community we have participated in class masses and celebrated special feast days such as the Feast of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Through coming together as a community of believers we are able to strengthen our relationships with each other and with God and build a strong faith community here at Payneham. Our school continues to support students and their families as they celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation, with all of the preparation done at a school/parish – based level. A big ‘thank you’ to Father Allan, Ingrid and the Year 3/4 teachers and those families involved in the Program.

There has been continued support from parents through the attendance of families at whole school masses, class masses and Parish Festas. It is as essential as ever that the children see the importance of these celebrations through the participation of their parents. It is together, as a community, that we can further develop our faith and support each other on our faith journeys. As a Catholic School, our Religious Education Programs focus on giving children practical knowledge of the Catholic religion through scripture and teachings of Catholic traditions. The children experience stories of Jesus as a model of how we can witness the Word of God in our lives.

Our school was established in 1962 and continues to be a testament to the Christian values we demonstrate as a community. Through the support of both the school and parish, and thanks to the help of Ingrid, Father Allan and Sister Candida, our school has provided our families with a strong religious dimension. It is pleasing to see the ‘Love in Everything’ shown by members of our community as they
continue to bear witness to the teachings of Jesus through supporting those in need in our community. Throughout the year there have been a number of occasions in which our school has been asked to show generosity to those in need. As always, the response from members of our community has been one of generosity. Last year we had several different fundraising initiatives that we have supported. Project Compassion continued to be a strong focus for our school during Lent and gave great attention to the importance of ‘giving’ rather than ‘receiving’. We also did fundraising for the various SRC fundraisers, including supporting Max Caporlingua with a Diabetes fundraiser, raising funds for One Sight and the Cora Barclay Centre and the St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Hampers. In total we raised $2009.14 for worthy charities which was a great effort.

‘It is important that we don’t focus on just learning content but that we focus on learning how to learn.’

CURRICULUM / EDUCATION

Many of the strategies that have been implemented in previous years are still in place. In 2015 we continued to focus on improving the teaching and learning in the areas of literacy and numeracy. We have continued to look at our pedagogical practices and how we gather data to support the learning activities carried out throughout the year. Teachers have been encouraged to differentiate the curriculum to cater for the needs of all the children and be able to report on the learning outcomes so that parents understand how their children are progressing.

Within each learning space, teachers continue to diversify the curriculum to meet individual needs of the students. Our individualised reading programs allow all children to work towards achieving their potential. Programs such as Maths Olympiad, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Programs some of which include Robotics and Coding, and Children’s University which have all been implemented to support our children with meaningful enrichment and extension activities.

We believe we provide our students with an education that will prepare them for life. Our learning community fosters confident, independent and life-long learning with an attitude which promotes achievement of the full potential of all individuals in an environment embedded in Gospel values. We utilise technology as a tool to aid our learning and develop critical thinkers who are able to access information and communicate effectively, thereby enhancing their potential as life-long learners. Assessment tasks are explicit and meaningful for future planning. Hopefully our reporting to parents is useful as it tries to reflect the child’s whole development. We are privileged each day to participate in the children’s learning journey and recognise and applaud just how hard our children try. We celebrate their achievements and share with pride their progress. We continue to go from strength to strength with the way we integrate our technology with the various teaching and learning programs we provide. High quality teaching resources have been made available electronically and access to these resources is important for our students. A big ‘thank you’ to Ingrid, Barb Biar and the ICT Overview Committee for the help and support they provide in making our ICT programs and facilities contemporary and relevant to the children’s learning needs.

‘Learning is not a spectator sport’.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

We have a very dedicated team at Payneham with the children’s development being the focus at all times. Our staff are committed, qualified, innovative professionals who receive on-going training in current pedagogical practices. They are committed to supporting each child to achieve personal excellence and as a consequence our children have a real love of life and learning. All staff have been involved in professional development activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the skills and understandings of staff to improve student outcomes. In 2015 the Teaching Staff committed the bulk of their professional learning and participated in the Dyslexia On-Line Training. This involved hours of learning which has helped the staff reflect on their practices and ways to improve learning outcomes for the students. Teachers in the Early Years have also participated in the Oral Language Project and shared their new knowledge and skills with the rest of the staff. We will build on both of these programs in 2016.
Our professional learning opportunities have taken many different forms including whole school staff days, subject specific professional learning activities, meetings and conferences. Special thanks to Ingrid, Marie and our PORs who have led many of these professional learning opportunities for the Staff.

The strength and vitality of any school rests with its staff. Whether they operate in the classroom, in the grounds, canteen, library or office, all contribute their skills to advancing the education and well-being of our students. I thank each and every one of them for giving their time and energy to enrich the lives of others. Those involved in education have the joy of knowing that in a very real sense, they are responsible for bringing out the best in people by our attitude and friendly and welcoming manner.

Finally I acknowledge the support of our Leadership Team: Mrs Ingrid Douventzidis and Mrs Marie Polvere, for their unconditional commitment to our school and to my Leadership. These two ladies have given of themselves totally and tirelessly throughout the year. I am quite sure that a vast majority of people, including staff, would be unaware of how much work Ingrid and Marie do in their roles to support our school community. I have certainly appreciated and relied upon Ingrid and Marie for their dedication, support, loyalty, honesty, sense of humour and good nature. To Ingrid and Marie – thank you!

‘Learning occurs when the whole community is involved in the process and the school and community support each other.’

COMMUNITY

St. Joseph’s is very fortunate to have so many people who have contributed to our many achievements during 2015. I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all School Board members, led by the Board Chair Mr John Flynn and Vice Board Chairperson, Mr Roberto Clemente. A big ‘thank you’ once again to our Treasurers Carlo Melillo and Gina LaBella, Secretary Mrs Mellissa O’Loughlin, Staff Rep Ms Vanessa Mercurio and Ingrid. I take this opportunity to thank all our Board members for their support and dedication to our school. I wish to thank Carlo for doing a great job in his role as Board Treasurer over the past six years. He has given so generously of his time and we thank him for his support of our school in this important role. Thank you Carlo!

Our Parents and Friends Committee have also been very productive and active in their fundraising efforts last year. Under Anna Ruggerio’s leadership, we have operated from the single purpose of people coming together to support our students. I would like to express my appreciation to the small group of parent representatives on this Committee, who have continued their wonderful work in 2015. The beginning of the year welcome back to school morning tea; catering for the Working Bees; Quiz Night; School Disco; Whole School Carols Night, are some of the events and activities held last year due to the commitment of such a dedicated and hardworking group of parents. The community gathering aspect of our school cannot be undervalued and we look forward to the P&F continuing to grow under a new President for 2016. Special thanks to Anna for doing a wonderful job in her role over many, many years of dedicated service and commitment to our school. Anna will be sadly missed.

I thank all our parents for their commitment to our school and for their crucial support of our home/school partnership. Our volunteers in the Canteen, Classroom, Excursions, Camp, Library, Sports Day/Carnivals and Sports Teams, have all demonstrated commitment to our school through action and service. Without this support we would not be able to achieve all that we do achieve with the students.

‘Students whose parents are involved in and are positive about schooling, are more likely to succeed.’

I thank the students too for their energy and enthusiasm; their innocence and honesty; their perseverance and accomplishments and most of all for their willingness to learn and their friendship. The Year 7 Graduating Class of 2015, have been tremendous in their display of leadership to all students in the school. We are very proud of their accomplishments and more importantly, we are very proud of the people that they are! I congratulate them and encourage the children to hold onto all the leadership qualities they have acquired.
Our goals for 2015 included:

- Continuing to provide a strong Religious Education Program which promotes daily prayer, faith formation and supports the gospel values and teachings of the Church.
- To continue to promote Pastoral Care for staff and student health and well-being.
- Supporting the on-going sacramental life of staff and students.
- The implementation of the next stage of the new Australian Curriculum.
- Implementation of a new Student and Finance Management System, O365 /iScholaris (CEO initiative) and looking at how it can support our current programs, including assessment and reporting to parents.
- The continuation of the 3 Year Numeracy Project which has included other staff members.
- The introduction of some new literacy initiatives, such as Read 2 Learn Project and the Oral Language Teaching Project.
- The commencement of the ‘Little Scientist’ Program in our Preschool.
- Continue to look at effective ways for implementation of continuous school improvement.
- The introduction of an on-line Professional Training Course for Staff on Dyslexia.
- The continuation of Year Level Co-ordinators.
- To maintain sound financial planning and management.
- To continue meeting the needs of individual students, including the development of appropriately modified programs in Inclusive Education and the Gifted and Talented Program.
- The introduction of the Children’s University Program (Year 3 – 6)
- The Piccolini Program for 3 & 4 year olds.
- The continuation of a Counselling Service to support children and their families.

Our goals for 2016 will include:

- Continuing to provide a strong Religious Education Program which promotes daily prayer, faith formation and supports the gospel values and teachings of the Church.
- To continue to promote Pastoral Care for staff and student health and well-being.
- Supporting the on-going sacramental life of staff and students.
- Implementation of the final stages of the new Australian Curriculum so all areas are covered.
- The continuation of the Numeracy Project which has included other staff members.
- Implementation of our new literacy initiatives, such as the Read 2 Learn Project and the Oral Language Teaching Project throughout all year levels.
- The continuation of the ‘Little Scientist’ Program in our Preschool and looking at how we can get accreditation as a ‘Little Scientist’ Preschool.
- Implementation of a new collaborative technology tool - O365 and looking at how it can support our current teaching and learning programs.
- The introduction of a trial BYOD Program for the Middle Years incorporating the use of iPads.
- Continue to look at effective ways for implementation of continuous school improvement.
- Implementation of the Dyslexia Program all the Staff participated in last year.
- The continuation of Year Level Co-ordinators.
- To maintain sound financial planning and management, especially in light of the new property acquisition next door to the school. To develop this land as an outdoor play space for the children.
- To continue meeting the needs of individual students, including the development of appropriately modified programs in Inclusive Education and the Gifted and Talented Program.
- The continuation of a Counselling Service to support children and their families.
- The continuation of the Children’s University Program
- The continuation of the Piccolini Program for 3 & 4 year olds.
- The introduction of a Transition to School Program for 5 year olds in Preschool.
- The development of our recent land acquisition to include a new outdoor play space for the children.
CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our staff are in an era of teaching and learning, that whilst exciting, is incredibly demanding. The multi-media classroom still requires a human heart to contend with the social pressures experienced by children with a growing incidence of anxiety and stress amongst our students. I continue to admire the generosity of spirit and commitment to professional formation displayed by our teaching and support staff. At times it is a challenging vocation, yet our staff continues to reflect a great level of care and compassion for the young people who have been entrusted to us. Likewise, our families continually work with us to ensure that every child is able to achieve the level of success aligned with their ability. We acknowledge and appreciate the increasing financial pressures being exerted on our homes from increasing living costs. Your commitment to provide your child with a Catholic Education is deeply respected and valued.

As a School Board, we continually strive to review and promote structures which will enable us to realise our school vision within very tight financial parameters. Our vision is to provide a Christ centred quality education that is accessible to all families at Payneham. That means that one of our objectives is to make Catholic education affordable and available which means keeping our fees at a manageable level for everyone. We are very fortunate to be in a wonderful school with a very supportive community and it is important to prompt ourselves to remember that everything we do is for the children at St. Joseph’s Payneham and not for any other reason. To the families and students who left us at the end of 2015, we thank them for being part of this community and for sharing their gifts with us.

I sincerely thank the St. Joseph’s School community for all of their support, commitment, respect and dedication throughout the year. I continue to enjoy my time as Principal only because of the fantastic team that I have around me and I feel very privileged to be part of this amazing learning community.

Laurie Sammut  
Principal  
2015