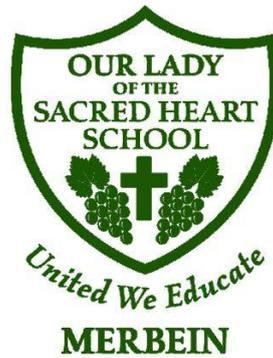




## School Improvement Framework

# Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School Merbein

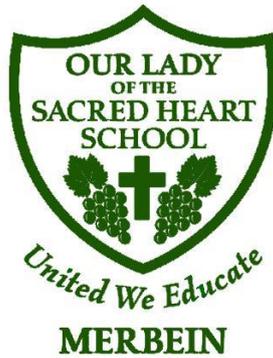


## School Improvement Plan 2017 - 2020

Signed by Principal .....

Name .....

Date .... /.../.....



## Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School, Merbein School Vision and Mission

### VISION STATEMENT

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School, Merbein, will provide a Catholic education for each child growing up in our local parish in a child safe school.

In partnership with our parish community, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School will provide a comprehensive education by developing in all children the particular qualities which will enable them to contribute to the common good of all society. This is based on the Gospel values of:

*Love, trust, dignity, respect, freedom, forgiveness, self-awareness, self-discipline*

### MISSION STATEMENT

As a Catholic School we act in accordance with Gospel values. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School will provide an environment in which:

- each child will be treated with reverence, respect and dignity
  - an atmosphere of openness and trust exists
  - the school will be an integral part of the parish and wider community
  - achieving personal excellence becomes the aim of all learning.
- We will provide a Christian learning environment by using a holistic approach to education within a Catholic framework.
  - We will work as a partnership of teachers and parents in supporting the faith development of the children.
  - We will encourage parents to be active participants in the school's decision-making processes and curriculum development.
  - The Parish Leader and priests of the regional Catholic community, under the direction of the Bishop, will assist us in the pastoral and liturgical leadership within the parish.
  - We will provide our students with the opportunity to be active and responsible members of our parish and wider community.
  - We will provide a challenging, comprehensive curriculum for all students.

# School Contextual Statement

The township of Merbein is situated on the Murray River 12 kilometres north-west of Mildura. Surrounding the town are closely settled fruit blocks, which rely on irrigation. Crops are mostly grapes for fresh fruit, dried fruit and wine industries, as well as citrus growing and diversified cropping including pistachios, almonds and avocados.

On the advice and vision of parishioner Mr. Edward Joseph Kenny, Inspector of Works with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, crown land was purchased and made available to meet the need for a Catholic Church and school in Merbein. Mr. Tom McCarthy Senior, met with Fr. Ryan of Mildura and Dr. Foley, Bishop of Ballarat, to discuss the building of the church and school. Following this meeting Mr. McCarthy, along with Mr. John Power Senior, travelled the Parish by horse and buggy to get donations to start the project. Donations were forthcoming and after a very large donation of 500 pounds by Mr. McCarthy, their goal was achievable. In 1927 a brick building, which was to serve as a church and school for the parishioners, was built. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School (OLSH) opened on January 31, 1928 and was staffed by three Sisters of Mercy who travelled daily from Mildura. Originally, our school was made up of Irish families and the school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy to teach and provide educational opportunities to all those in the Merbein Community.

*"...educate people and you will provide them with an opportunity for life."*

*Catherine McAuley – founder of Sisters of Mercy*

In its first year there were 60 children enrolled and another 24 students attended at times throughout the year. Since that time the school has continued to cater for the children from the township as well as those who travelled in from fruit blocks and neighbouring districts. The original building, catering for three classes, wasn't added to until 1975, and again in 1979. Since 1991 several major building projects have completed the school, which began over eighty years ago. Along with a staff of dedicated and committed lay teachers, the Sisters of Mercy continued their service to OLSH until 1998. In 1999, Mr. Des Lowry, the first lay Principal was appointed.

Our school crest has three main parts that tell part of our school story:

**THE NAME:** The School's full title is named after Mary, Mother of Jesus. OLSH is the Catholic school of the Merbein Parish.

**THE VINE AND CROSS:** The vine leaves and grapes symbolise the link with our school and our community's dependence on vines. "I am the Vine, you are the branches." (John 15:5)

**THE MOTTO:** "United We Educate." This is the basis of all we do.

The Merbein Parish is a member of the Sunraysia Regional Cluster. Since January 1997, the parish has been without a resident priest, with Sr. Marion McDonald as the appointed Parish Leader, who resides at the parish house. The Sunday Mass and weekday Mass are conducted by the Mildura priests. Various parish groups look after the day to day running of the Parish and organising the Sacramental preparation of the parishioners, which is co-ordinated and overseen by the Parish Leader. Our school is a Catholic school, but is open to all families. We welcome children from many different faith traditions and those who don't identify themselves with a religion, but are committed to the same values.

Today, our school is more multi-cultural with our students predominantly originating from Anglo-Saxon and European descent. Our school community is made up of town and rural families, from both Victoria and New South Wales. Our families work in various sectors of the community, ranging from manual labourers to qualified professionals. Our SES score is largely influenced by the number of families who draw their income from horticulture. Our Socioeconomic Status (S.E.S.) Score is 86. Over the years, the school has witnessed generations of families being taught at OLSH. Our current school enrolment is approximately 170 students.

## Overview

The review and validation process for Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School, Merbein is directed by Catholic Education, Ballarat School Improvement Framework (revised 2015). The School Improvement Framework provides a process for improving student outcomes in learning and wellbeing in the Diocese of Ballarat. It takes into account school culture, leadership, learning and growth of all within the school community.

The School Improvement Framework provides a cyclical structure for the school to focus on what is important for the school to improve. It nominates the key drivers of leadership, collaboration, evaluation, reflection and evidence-based decision making. It draws on the National School Improvement Tool (2012) and other frameworks to enable the school to build a culture of shared responsibility for improving the outcomes for all students. It accounts for the five national reform directions (quality teaching, quality learning, empowered school leadership, meeting student need, transparency and accountability) and promotes evidence-based strategies and innovation, encouraging schools to continually ask important questions about student learning and future directions. It includes annual actions around:

- reflecting on and analysing school performance
- implementing elements of the long-term school improvement plan
- developing and implementing the annual action plan
- meeting compliance and reporting obligations

See also: *BDSAC School Improvement Policy (2015)*

*School Improvement and Accountability Schedule (2016-2019)*

The school is informed and guided by *The Characteristics of a Highly Effective Catholic School* (CEB 2016) which clearly articulates a standard for schools in the Ballarat Diocese around effective practice. It highlights the importance of a central vision and the aspects of school operation that flow from this vision.

Catholic School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Religious Education</i></li><li>• <i>Enhancing Catholic School Identity</i></li><li>• <i>Social Action &amp; Justice</i></li></ul>
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Partnering with Families</i></li><li>• <i>Community Partnerships</i></li></ul>
Leadership & Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Shared Leadership</i></li><li>• <i>Building Staff Capability</i></li><li>• <i>Ensuring Effective Governance</i></li><li>• <i>Stewardship Of Resources</i></li></ul>
Learning & Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum</i></li><li>• <i>Effective Teaching</i></li><li>• <i>Engaging Students In Their Own Learning</i></li><li>• <i>Analysis and Use of Data</i></li><li>• <i>Coordinated Strategies for Intervention</i></li></ul>
Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Quality Relationships</i></li><li>• <i>Wellbeing Practice</i></li><li>• <i>Safe Learning Environment</i></li><li>• <i>Rights and Responsibilities</i></li></ul>

*The Characteristics of a Highly Effective Catholic School* highlights the necessity for the school to implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum. At this time, the school is implementing the Victorian Curriculum (2017) which includes cross-curriculum priorities related to learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. The school also accepts its obligation to provide a safe environment for staff and students, as mandated by the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Long term School Improvement and annual Action Plans are developed collaboratively by the school's governing authority, school staff, School Advisory Council and the Catholic Education Office, Ballarat. The school reports annually to the school community on its achievements and ongoing plans for improvement via the Annual Report to the School Community, as required by the State and Federal authorities. This report is published on the VRQA State Register and is available on request from the school. This school improvement plan will also be published in a form readily accessible to the public

## Key Priority One

Key Priority (A key improvement that will maximise student learning)	Links with CHECS Components
<p>In order to assist students to build a strong, personal and enduring faith we will move students from Literal belief to Post-critical belief.</p>	<p>Catholic School Culture 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 Community Engagement 2.1 Leadership and Stewardship 3.2, 3.3 Learning and Teaching 4.2, 4.3, 4.4</p>

### Possible Strategies and Actions that will address this Priority

- Staff learning relating to recontextualisation and Post Critical Belief.
- Reflect on school values and link them explicitly to the Gospels.
- Develop ways of understanding the symbolic meaning of scripture.
- To spend explicit reflection time on scripture, questioning strategies and critical reflection. Ensure this is included in planning.
- Develop formal strategies for teaching prayer.
- Use of people with specialist RE skills to support collaborative teaching sessions.
- Utilise commentaries to support scripture teaching.
- Be involved in local and other social justice organisations e.g. Mini Vinnies, Meals on Wheels

### Implementation Overview

*Brief statement:*

*When, How and By Whom?*

- Our Leadership Team is responsible for developing and implementing an Annual Action Plan with our staff members. This identifies elements from our School Improvement Plan which will be addressed in the following year, and strategies around their implementation.
- Our Religious Education leader will take particular responsibility for this priority.
- The Annual Action Plan is developed during Term 3, and sent to our educational consultant to see what support is needed from our Catholic Education Office support staff.
- In this particular priority, we will get support from our Religious Education Advisor, who is currently Jim Waight.
- The Sunraysia Partnership Council for Catholic Primary Schools also provides professional learning and support for our Religious Education leaders, in particular based around personal faith.
- As a whole staff we will revisit the priorities and strategies in our School Improvement Plan at least twice a year over the four year cycle.

## Key Priority Two

Key Priority (A key improvement that will maximise student learning)	Links with CHECS Components
<p>In order to ensure collective responsibility for student outcomes we will embed collaborative team structures and practices.</p>	<p>Leadership and Stewardship 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 Learning and Teaching 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 Wellbeing 5.1, 5.2, 5.3</p>

### Possible Strategies and Actions that will address this Priority

- Build a shared vision for student learning.
- Ensure formal planning time for units to plan together.
- Develop a timeline for reviewing all school documentation and policies/procedure
- Have a regular staff retreat day, with the first one based around Team Management Systems.
- Review / Update our Vision/Mission Statement
- Develop a formal Appraisal/Feedback and Recognition process.

### Implementation Overview

*Brief statement:*

*When, How and By Whom?*

- Our Leadership Team is responsible for developing and implementing an Annual Action Plan with our staff members. This identifies elements from our School Improvement Plan which will be addressed in the following year, and strategies around their implementation.
- The Annual Action Plan is developed during Term 3, and sent to our educational consultant to see what support is needed from our Catholic Education Office support staff.
- The Sunraysia Partnership Council for Catholic Primary Schools has employed a Risk and Compliance Officer who will give ongoing support to our school in the area of policy and documentation cyclical review.
- A Professional learning Plan will be set up for all staff members as per VRQA requirements, which will help address the need for a feedback and recognition process.
- As a whole staff we will revisit the priorities and strategies in our School Improvement Plan at least twice a year over the four year cycle.

## Key Priority Three

Key Priority (A key improvement that will maximise student learning)	Links with CHECS Components
In order to improve student engagement, we will embed shared, evidence based pedagogical practices.	Leadership and Stewardship 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 Learning and Teaching 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 Wellbeing 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

### Possible Strategies and Actions that will address this Priority

- Embed a guaranteed and viable curriculum
- Use Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to help build student feedback processes.
- Develop a Scope and Sequence for each learning area.
- Adopt an agreed, viable spelling program across the whole school.
- Continue to implement, assess and redefine our RTI strategy.
- Have consistent approaches to student and staff wellbeing

### Implementation Overview

*Brief statement:*

*When, How and By Whom?*

- Our Leadership Team is responsible for developing and implementing an Annual Action Plan with our staff members. This identifies elements from our School Improvement Plan which will be addressed in the following year, and strategies around their implementation.
- Our Teaching and Learning Leader will take particular responsibility for this priority.
- The Annual Action Plan is developed during Term 3, and sent to our educational consultant to see what support is needed from our Catholic Education Office support staff.
- In this particular priority, we will get support from our Learning and Teaching advisor, who is currently Felicity lane.
- We will continue to work with Susan Rampling from the Ballarat CEO to support our RTI Strategy on an ongoing basis. This will include support for Problem Solving Meetings.
- We will designate a staff leadership position to RTI Leader, and have that person responsible for leading this ongoing strategy.
- As a whole staff we will revisit the priorities and strategies in our School Improvement Plan at least twice a year over the four year cycle.