

Live in Faith

Grow in Wisdom

Seek Peace

# St. Columba's School Bayswater



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## **AGM 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Good evening and welcome to our Annual General Meeting.

2015 has once again been a very productive and rewarding year for all members of the St Columba's School community. With the financial constraints placed upon us because of the tight budget and the increase in teachers' salaries in 2015, I am proud to announce that we were able to sustain the many initiatives we currently have in place, which include the Science, Humanities, Music and Physical Education specialists, ICT upgrades, leasing/purchasing of iPads and many other programs implemented within the classrooms.

### **Learning – Education**

#### **Curriculum Plan and Our Strategies**

St Columba's School has been involved in the RAISE process from its inception in 2004 and staff continue to implement all the essential elements of a successful Literacy and Numeracy Program, as identified in the RAISE pedagogy..

The following supportive structures form a foundation for our Literacy and Numeracy strategies:

- The Complete Advantage in Kindergarten- Early identification of children at risk, with immediate referral to outside agencies eg Speech, O.T, SCDC, Non Government Schools Psychologist etc.
- PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) Pre – Primary (to be replaced by On Entry Assessment in 2016).

- Diana Rigg Phonological Language Development Program (PLD) Pre – Kindergarten to Year 6.
- Observation Surveys – Year 1 and 2 and students reading below Level 20 in Year 3.
- MAI testing - Year 1 and 2 and ‘at risk’ students in Years 3-6.
- EMU Program - Year 1
- EMU techniques used in Early Childhood Education.
- Whole School Assessment Timetable (Words Their Way, Mathematics Diagnostic Tests, NAPLAN, REBLT)
- Literacy Dedicated Time - involving whole class, small group and individual explicit teaching.
- Teaching strategies that reflect developmental learning.
- Using ICT to enhance the pedagogy in all areas of the curriculum.
- A focus on 21st Century Learning, incorporating Contemporary Learning Spaces
- Gifted and Talented testing for the Extension Program.
- Professional Learning Community Meetings.
- Professional Development - including opportunities for teachers to engage in '*shoulder to shoulder*' learning, to enhance the development of quality teaching practice and to increase teacher capacity.

Staff members have also engaged in Professional Development throughout the year, both whole school and in Professional Learning Communities. The school uses elements of the Collaborative Professional Learning model to guide our professional learning and has implemented the following:

- Enabling and encouraging shoulder to shoulder learning
- Professional Learning Community meetings
- Professional Development events

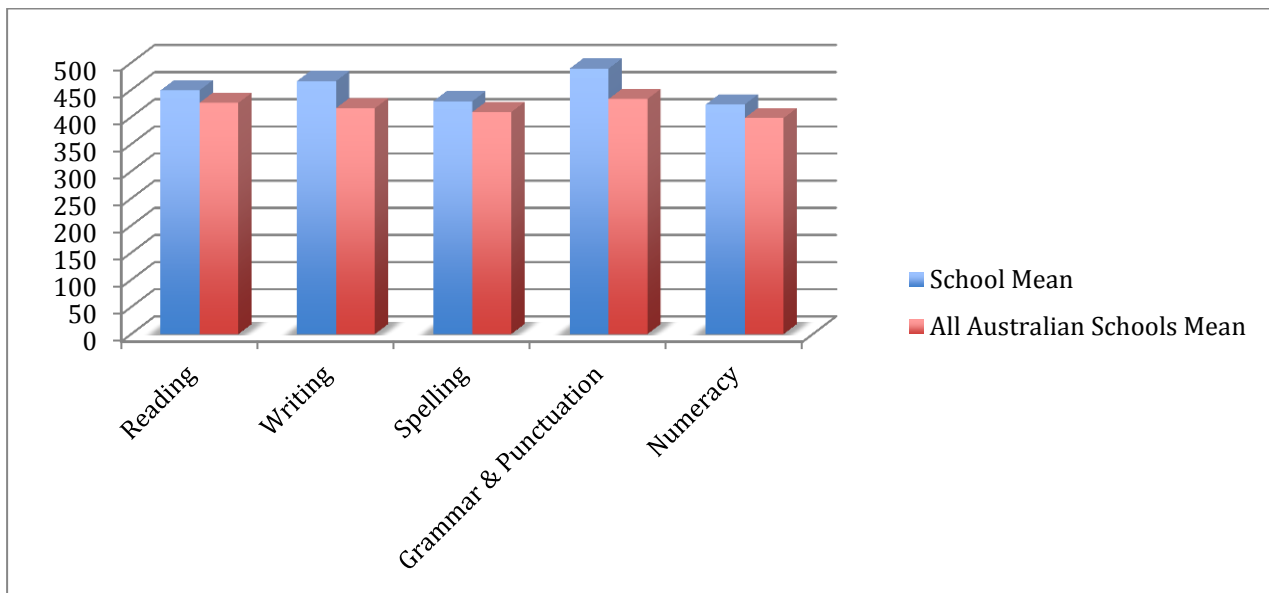
**2016 Curriculum Focus:** Through analysing our data in 2015, we identified extending the learning of all students, particularly our high achieving students, as a major focus. We found that our high achieving students were not improving at an expected rate. This seemed to be a common theme amongst all schools. With this in mind we formulated our focus for 2014-2016 and asked ourselves the question, "*How can the learning of our students be enhanced in all curriculum areas through the development of their 'Critical and Creative Thinking skills'?*"

Through our Professional Learning Community meetings, the staff developed a shared understanding of what is meant by 'Critical and Creative Thinking', and what it looked like in the classroom. As a staff we worked on increasing staff awareness of available tools that could be utilised as well as teachers observing each other. In analysing our 2015 NAPLAN data we were pleased to observe that most of the students who achieved in the top bands in Year 3 had made very

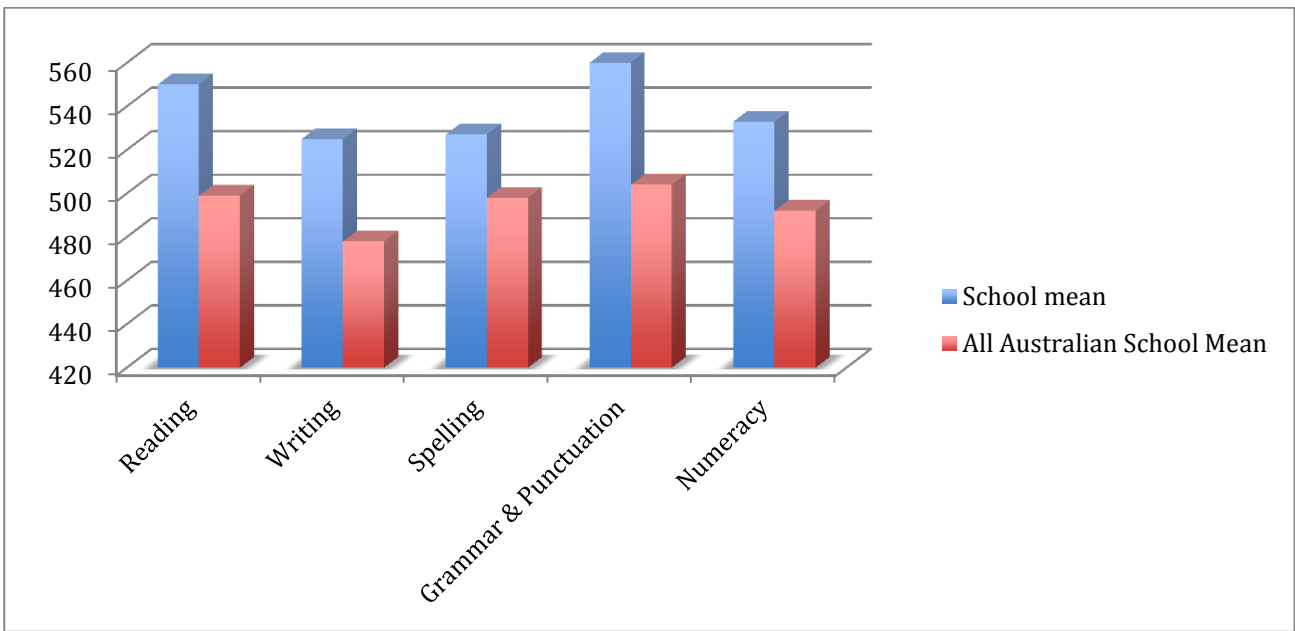
satisfactory progress from Year 3 to Year 5. 'Creative and Critical Thinking' practices will continue to be embedded throughout the curriculum, within each classroom.

Further investigation of our 2015 data, has shown that the St Columba's students are performing above the All Australian School Mean in all areas, in both Year 3 and Year 5. Further analysis also showed that although we are still above state and national averages, we are experiencing a downward trend in our Spelling results in Year 3 and Year 5. As a staff, we have identified spelling as a focus for 2016 and this will include training, and retraining of staff in the 'Words Their Way' program, examination of supplementary resources and activities and the tracking of each student's spelling progress with the introduction of a data wall. Below is a summary of the NAPLAN results achieved in 2016.

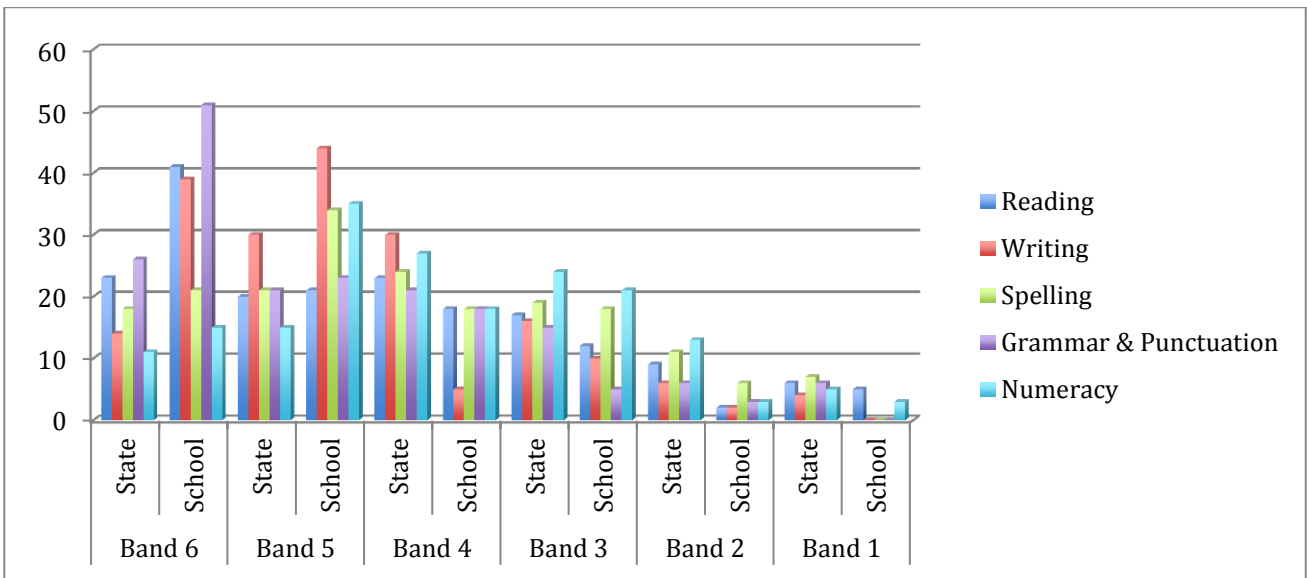
<b>Year 3 2015</b>	<b>School mean</b>	<b>All Australian School Mean</b>
<b>Reading</b>	449	426
<b>Writing</b>	466	416
<b>Spelling</b>	429	409
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	489	433
<b>Numeracy</b>	423	398



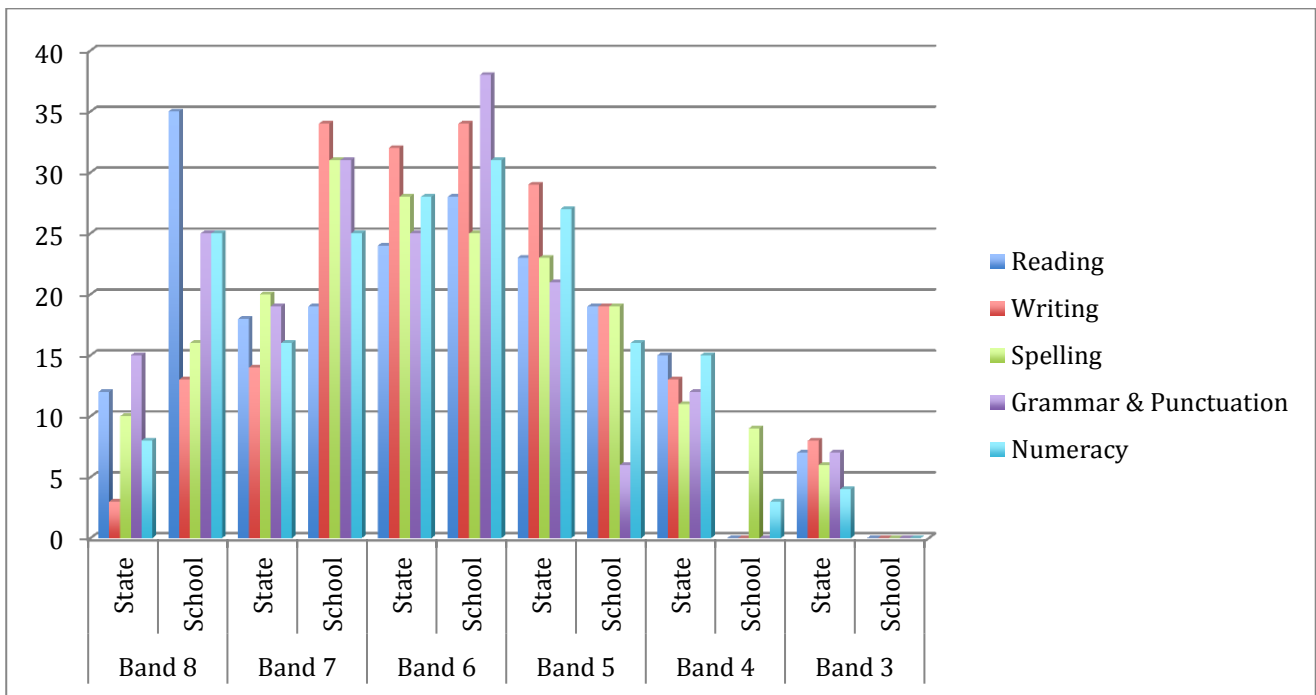
<b>Year 5 2015</b>	<b>School mean</b>	<b>All Australian School Mean</b>
<b>Reading</b>	550	499
<b>Writing</b>	525	478
<b>Spelling</b>	527	498
<b>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</b>	560	504
<b>Numeracy</b>	533	492



Year 3 2015 – Percentages in Bands						
		Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
<b>Band 6</b>	State	23	14	18	26	11
	School	41	39	21	51	15
<b>Band 5</b>	State	20	30	21	21	15
	School	21	44	34	23	35
<b>Band 4</b>	State	23	30	24	21	27
	School	18	5	18	18	18
<b>Band 3</b>	State	17	16	19	15	24
	School	12	10	18	5	21
<b>Band 2</b>	State	9	6	11	6	13
	School	2	2	6	3	3
<b>Band 1</b>	State	6	4	7	6	5
	School	5	0	0	0	3



Year 5 2015 – Percentages in Bands						
		Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
<b>Band 8</b>	State	12	3	10	15	8
	School	35	13	16	25	25
<b>Band 7</b>	State	18	14	20	19	16
	School	19	34	31	31	25
<b>Band 6</b>	State	24	32	28	25	28
	School	28	34	25	38	31
<b>Band 5</b>	State	23	29	23	21	27
	School	19	19	19	6	16
<b>Band 4</b>	State	15	13	11	12	15
	School	0	0	9	0	3
<b>Band 3</b>	State	7	8	6	7	4
	School	0	0	0	0	0



## Engagement – Community

Parish and school relations have continued to flourish this year with the school and parish supporting each other during many scheduled events. Father Minh-Thuy, as well as members of the Parish Council and Finance Committee have been very supportive of the school and vice versa. We are extremely lucky and proud to have Fr Minh Thuy as our parish priest and we will continue to work towards creating a string connection between the parish and school in 2016.

Over the year we have endeavoured to nurture a community which is inclusive of everyone. Recently our sister school, St Joseph's Wyndham, visited and called St Columba's School home for a week. During this time, we had an Aboriginal Flag Raising ceremony, which included guest

speaker Tamisha King. It was a moving experience which brought home the fact that the Aboriginal people were the first Australians and that we are one nation made up of many diverse cultures.

Throughout this year the St. Columba's children have continued to support a variety of charities including the Lifelink program run by the Perth Archdiocese, Caritas, Project Compassion, Catholic Missions, Mercy Works and St Vincent de Paul. These commitments will continue in 2016. Thank you to those who have generously supported these charities.

The students have also participated in a number of events throughout the year, such as the Sacred Saints Interschool sports, intraschool/interschool sports, athletics and swimming carnivals, the Running Club and Swimming Clubs, and many other events. We once again look forward to a successful 2016 when the school community will continue to be actively involved in many school community events.

In 2016, the school will celebrate its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It only seemed like yesterday we were celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. 2016 will also be the Year of Mercy, to align our school with Pope Francis' call for all Catholics to acknowledge and celebrate the 'Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy'.

## **Accountability - Stewardship/Governance & Discipleship**

With the school's 'Three Year Strategic Plan' in its final year in 2016, forward planning has already commenced to prepare for the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan to be fully implemented. The staff and School Board members have been working closely to implement the initiatives outlined in 2015/16. Throughout the year school based policies have been reviewed and uploaded to the school's website. The students have also been given greater opportunities to experience a wide range of educational experiences, such as the Options Program, Catholic Performing Arts Festival, Catholic Education Week Carnevale and the I.T. Program.

As stated in the Strategic Plan, and our Annual School Improvement Plan, our focus this year was to further develop the link between the school and parish. To this end, parents and students were invited to take a more active role in their own faith development through participation the school/parish masses at the beginning of each term and by inviting the students and parents to attend the Youth Masses. As well, we have offered families from the school and parish the opportunity to attend an interactive family workshop to help them prepare for the Christmas season. We look forward to hosting more of these interactive workshops in 2016. An updated copy of the Strategic Plan as well as

the Annual School Improvement Plan (what we have achieved in 2015 and what we will be focusing on in 2016) will be uploaded to the school website in the near future.

At St Columba's we are very fortunate to have a dedicated and committed group of staff members who have consistently displayed their commitment to the St Columba's community. The Staff have tirelessly taken on cutting edge educational initiatives, such as the RAISe Process and other initiatives, to further enhance their own teaching skills and to implement 'Good Teaching Practices' within their classrooms and learning environments. I take this opportunity to publicly state how fortunate we are to have such dedicated, committed and caring staff members and I thank them for their dedication and commitment to the children and families of our school.

The school wouldn't be able to operate without the assistance and generosity of the many wonderful parents within our community. As there are too many people to mention individually, I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for assisting us in so many ways including in the canteen, library, classrooms, at sporting events and on committees. I would like to give special thanks to the Uniform Shop coordinators and members of the Pastoral Care Group who have supported many families within our community and coordinated many events.

To the school's Parents & Friends Association, I offer my sincere thanks for their support in raising the necessary funds to complete many tasks around our school. As I have mentioned in the newsletter, they very kindly donated the funds for the playground equipment and play area, musical instruments, library books for the students and ITC equipment. The Parents & Friends provide valuable support to the school, not only financially, but also at a social level, drawing the community together. Particular appreciation and thanks goes to the President, Jen Debono, the P&F executive and the regular attendees at monthly meetings who have worked tirelessly during the year to ensure sufficient funds are raised. A concerted effort and spectacular results with the fundraising demonstrated what can be achieved by a group of dedicated people who work together towards a common goal. I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the retiring members for their support and efforts during the year.

During the semester, I have received support and assistance from many individuals and groups within the school and parish communities. I would particularly like to thank all the Board members for their support and encouragement during the year. They have the responsibility of assisting with the financial management and planning for future resources of the school. Under the very capable leadership of Mar Hube, the Board members have worked diligently to ensure all aspects of the school's educational program and physical resources are maintained at the highest level. I thank them all for their untiring

efforts and for endorsing the employment of extra staff members in previous years. To our retiring members, thank you both for your dedication and commitment to our school community.

To all those who are leaving the school community at the end of the school year, and to those who have worked so hard in and around the school in a voluntary capacity, I thank you for your involvement and contribution to the school. Your time and effort is very much appreciated by the whole school community.

On your behalf, I would like to express gratitude to our Parish Priest, Fr Minh-Thuy, for his work on the Board and assistance with the educational and spiritual guidance of the children. He is a dedicated and caring priest who is open-minded, friendly and a much respected pastoral leader in our community. The school and parish are very fortunate to have such a wonderful spiritual leader and friend.

I would also like to give special thanks to our Assistant Principals, Megan Dwyer and Deb Klatt, for their support and dedicated efforts during the year. Megan and Deb have worked tirelessly to complete extra responsibilities assigned to them. Their support and professional approach to all that they do has been very much appreciated by all members of our community. I look forward to working closely with them both in 2016.

Finally, I thank you all very sincerely for your support and encouragement during the year. It has been an extremely busy year and your support has been invaluable. We are all very fortunate to have such a vibrant community and wonderful children at our school. I wish all families a very safe, happy and Holy Christmas season. May we all grow in 'Faith, Wisdom and Peace' in this wonderful community and look forward to 2016 with great joy and enthusiasm.

Yours sincerely,

**Greg Martin**  
**PRINCIPAL**  
**17<sup>h</sup> November, 2015**