



Star of the Sea Primary School Gladstone

2021 Annual School Report



Catholic Education
Diocese of Rockhampton

Star of the Sea Primary School, Gladstone

Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton

Principal

Jennett O'Mullane

Address

181 Goondoon Street
Gladstone Qld 4680

Total enrolments

310

Year levels offered

Prep to Year 6

Type of School:

Co-educational

School Overview

Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School is situated in the centre of Gladstone, with the school drawing enrolments from many areas of the Gladstone region. Star of the Sea was established in 1902 and has a distinct Catholic ethos with a particular focus on Gospel values, the teachings of Jesus, and Mary as a guide and role model. We value deeply our Parish family, with our local priests officiating at masses and liturgies, visiting classrooms and playing an important part in the religious and faith development of our community.

The school has a strong focus on digital technologies with teachers utilising a wide variety of technology and strategies to facilitate learning and to equip students for their role as digital citizens. Outside School Hours and Vacation Care is available for enrolled families. Our school has a dedicated and active Board, and Parents and Friends Association. These groups meet on a monthly basis and provide much appreciated input into policy and program development. Star of the Sea operates an open-door policy, where all staff members are accessible to parents for formal and informal discussions regarding their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to take an active role as partners in their children's education and are acknowledged for their crucial role in the development of each child's character.

More information on our school can be accessed from myschool.edu.au

Curriculum Offerings

Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School is a Catholic community which seeks to give witness to the gospel as modelled by our namesake, Mary, Star of the Sea, and as a result has a distinctive Marian flavour. At Star of the Sea, we endeavour to provide students with a safe, supportive, and caring Christian environment enabling all learners to strive towards their full potential. We believe that children learn by doing and classrooms should be full of investigation and challenge, with students encouraged to be actively involved and responsible for their learning. We seek to provide an education that caters for the needs of the whole child – nurturing, not only their academic qualities, but also their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development as well.

Extra Curricula Activities

Music and the Arts has a particularly strong emphasis across all areas of the curriculum and is also used during masses, liturgies, and school assemblies. Our specialist teacher delivers an accredited program with opportunities for student performances taking place at the annual Eisteddfod, our annual School Christmas Concert and at various community and school functions. Our School Choir is offered to Years 3 to 6 with performances also occurring throughout the year. Our school also has a tradition of competing in various speech and drama sections of the Eisteddfod with staff and students often involved in the bi-annual community theatre performance.

An Instrumental Program is offered in Years 3 to 6 in the areas of brass, woodwind, and percussion. The School Band and Bell Ensemble both rehearse once a week, and play regularly at school assemblies, at the local Eisteddfod and at various community functions. Students are also encouraged to attend the annual week-long Instrumental workshop run by visiting inter-state conductors.

A fully accredited Physical Education Program is offered at the school with a variety of skills taught. Students are encouraged to participate in a period of daily physical activity. School swimming is also offered as part of the program. A gross motor program forms an essential part of our P - 2 curriculum.

The school is represented in the local Interschool Sports Competition in the following areas – Netball, Soccer (boys and girls), Hockey (boys and girls), Touch Football and Rugby League – as well as Interschool Athletics and Cross Country.

Students at the school are encouraged to participate in local primary school sports, and a strong percentage of students have been chosen to represent their region at local, regional, and state level. Our school has a process to formally recognise and acknowledge these students.

Students are also encouraged to take part in additional academic competitions such as the International Australasian Competitions.

A variety of lunch time clubs and activities are offered to students such as Library Monitors, School Dance Choir and Social Justice Group. Our Robotics Group meets regularly in Terms 2 and 3 in preparation for local Robotic Challenges.

How Information and Communication Technologies are used to assist learning

Information and communication technologies form an integral part of the learning environment at Star of the Sea. The school supplies a variety of digital technology aids such as laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, EV3 robots, Microbits and Beebots which assist in providing dynamic and meaningful learning experiences. Ongoing professional development assists teachers to use these technologies as an effective teaching tool. Seesaw for Schools is used in our Lower Classes and Outside Hours Service as a digital learning and communication platform. Bee-bots and Microbits are a solid introduction to basic coding which is expanded throughout the Year Levels. All students from Prep to Year Six participate in lessons with a specialist IT teacher as well as class-based lessons with their own teacher using various digital technologies for a variety of purposes. Over the course of the year, students are exposed to Microsoft and Google products and apps, Internet Safety activities, Robotics and explore a myriad of skills such as coding, film production and digital presentations.

Social Climate

Strategies to Promote a Positive Culture

Wellbeing and strong personal relationships are a priority in the school's efforts to build a strong positive culture. Multi-age Pastoral Care Groups meet regularly throughout the year to help build connections across the age groups and present a unified message regarding important social and personal skills and strategies to deal with bullying and relationship difficulties. Our APRE runs a program across all year levels to deliver messages about wellbeing, social and personal development and following the example of Jesus in the way we treat others. A Buddy System operates across the school with our Year 5 & 6 students mentoring and supporting our younger students.

The school employs a qualified School Counsellor three days per week, and the service is available to all students and parents.

One of the local parish priests officiates at masses and liturgies, visiting classrooms and playing an important part in the religious and faith development of our community. The Making Jesus Real Program encourages all students to treat each other according to Christian principles of love and respect and provides them with the strategies and vocabulary to do this.

A particular focus on building future leaders guides several initiatives put in place with our upper primary students. An induction program is implemented each year supporting students in the development of both leadership and social skills such as conflict resolution, problem solving and relationship building.

Cyber Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategies

Our school has implemented Diocesan policies on Acceptable Use Agreements for students and staff. The school regularly communicates with parents and the school community about cyber safety issues. We also have appropriate policies in place to deal with the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices. As part of our Information Technology curriculum, all students complete a cyber safety and cyber bullying program each year.

Our school has several social/ emotional learning programs and a Positive Behavior Policy in place to assist students in guarding against bullying at school. Professional Development for staff in this area is a priority as is regularly communicating information to parents. The school actively works to create a safe and supportive learning environment where all members are encouraged to advocate for their own and other's safety. All Diocesan and school policies are reviewed on a regular basis.

Strategies for involving parents in their child's education

We believe that parents and family are the most significant influencers in a child's life, and we value the opportunity to work in partnership with them as educators. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in their children's education. Star of the Sea operates an open-door policy, where all staff members are accessible to parents for formal and informal discussions regarding their children's progress. At the beginning of the school year, parents are invited to Parent Information Evenings to meet teachers and have teaching programs and classroom routines explained. Parent workshops are conducted on a needs and interest basis.

The school has a dedicated and active Board, and Parents and Friends Association. These groups meet monthly and provide much appreciated input into policy and program development, and funds for additional equipment and resources. Opportunities for relaxed, social interactions occur regularly, such as our monthly gathering before the P&F Meeting and our School Discos and Christmas Concert.

Parents are welcome to assist in the classroom and are particularly active in the early years of schooling. Programs such as our Reading Stars depend on committed volunteers who help to support the learning of our students. Parents also volunteer their time at sporting events, tuckshop, school events, retreats, and excursions.

Reducing the school's environmental footprint

Star of the Sea is a Reef Guardian school that has engaged in a range of environmental initiatives and programs. We actively recycle paper and cardboard and promote the sorting of rubbish within the classroom. We have an energetic group of student leaders who work to educate the students and their families and initiate environmentally sound practices within the school community. Students engage in community projects that seek to give back to the environment, and classrooms include sustainability principles across the curriculum. Lunch scraps are composted, and our students participate in programs based around creek to coast thinking, allowing them to explore our impact on waterways and estuaries. Drink containers are recycled for money which is donated to charity.

Characteristics of the Student Body

Students at Star of the Sea come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including those of Indigenous Australia, and those from Asia, Africa and New Zealand. A number have English as a second language. Many travel quite extensively.

Star of the Sea draws on enrolments from many areas of the Gladstone region. It has experienced sustained growth in recent years with the total capacity remaining at two-stream. Many students come from families where both parents are in the workforce, while a number reside in single or shared parenting situations. The number of students and families with English as a second language continues to grow in Gladstone and at Star of the Sea. We have trained one of our experienced teachers to assist our Inclusive Curriculum coordinator in this area.

As Gladstone attracts many families who work in industry, the city is still considered quite transient in nature.

Average student attendance rate (%)

The average student attendance rate for 2021 was 95.13%.

Management of non-attendance

Student attendance is generally very good at Star of the Sea. Our school maintains a procedure of requesting parent contact to explain student absences. Our office staff liaise with classroom teachers to coordinate this procedure. Electronic rolls are used in all classrooms with direct communication made with parents if a child is absent for roll call. Extended absences are brought to the attention of the Principal.

Staffing Information

Workforce Composition

Workforce Composition	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff	Indigenous Staff
Headcounts	26.00	18.00	1.00
Full-time equivalents	19.55	10.49	0.58

Qualifications of all teachers

Qualification – highest level of attainment	Percentage of staff with this Qualification
Doctoral / Post-doctoral	
Masters	3.85%
Bachelor Degree	96.15%

Diploma	
Certificate	

Major Professional Development Initiatives

Star of the Sea staff members are involved in a diverse range of ongoing professional development opportunities with a major focus on creating consistency in our teaching approaches and using data effectively to improve teaching and learning. Implementing the new Religion Program and reviewing our Catholic Identity has also been a focus for professional development along with a continued investigation into approaches that nurture deep learning and critical thinking skills

Many staff engage in additional personal professional development in a multitude of areas such as First Aid, Curriculum and diverse learning needs.

Whole staff Professional Development days have addressed the following areas:

- Student Protection and Workplace Health and Safety Inductions.
- Strategic Planning.
- Improving Reading Instruction & Increasing reader confidence & motivation.
- Using data to inform practice in Reading & Spelling.
- Bishop's In-service Day – Catholic Schools and their Mission today.
- Exploring Data.
- Wellbeing/ Positive Behaviours / Implementing a Supportive School Environment Plan.
- First Aid / Anaphylaxis Training.
- Using STEM in the classroom.

The percentage of teachers engaged in professional development was 100%.

Total funds expended on Professional Development

The total of funds expended on teacher professional development was \$29,100.

Average Staff Attendance and Retention

The average staff attendance for the school year, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave for periods of up to five days, was 90.27%.

Percentage of teaching staff retained from the previous school year was 89.02%.

School Income

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>.

(The School information below is available on the My School website).

Find a school

Search by school name

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Sector Government
 Non-government

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Results

Our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for Years 3 and 5 are available via the My School website at www.myschool.edu.au.

If you are unable to access the internet, please contact the school for a paper copy of our school's NAPLAN results.

Key Student Outcomes and Value Added

Generally, our student body performs very well in NAPLAN. Our approach has been guided by good teaching for the entire year, rather than focusing on test preparation. As cohorts, our classes have good results. We are continuing to use technology to assist us in assessing our results and trends across year levels. This data is used to inform teaching and learning across the school. Our solid results are attributed to quality literacy and numeracy programs, the setting of high expectations for all learners, explicitly teaching learner assets and skills, and a focus on differentiating for the individual needs of learners. Writing continues to show steady growth and the school is focused on improving spelling and reading results through a focus on investigative, literature-based approaches that build engagement and confidence.

Strategic Improvement Progress and Next Steps

Strategic progress in 2021

Our Core Goals and Strategies for 2021 included:

Continue to deepen our use of data to inform practice, especially in the areas of Reading and Spelling in the context of Writing.

- Look for ways to increase student voice in their learning.
- Explore best practice and current thinking around the teaching of Reading.
- Invite Peer Collaboration as a means to share best practice in the teaching of reading.
- Review of Supportive School Policy and Positive Behaviour Guide with focus on enculturating school vision and virtues and promoting staff and student wellbeing.

This past year saw staff once again proving their tenacity amidst the challenges of a pandemic. Skills of collaboration, critical thinking and flexibility have been engaged as we strived to engage authentically with the data with the aim of improving practice, especially in the area of spelling and reading. Through focused data chats we developed hunches based around increasing volume and engagement in reading and saw significant growth in a high number of targeted students. Collaborating with peers deepened learning and widened the sphere of strategies available. The development of our Positive Behaviour Policy was a year long journey of education and collaboration to ensure alignment of belief and practice.

Strategic Priorities for 2022

The staff have worked hard over the past couple of years to become more comfortable and adept at working with data to guide them in their practice. Our data discussions have become more comfortable and effective, and we continue the journey this year, seeking this year to better assist students to understand their own personal data and set meaningful learning goals and success strategies.

We continue our exploration of a literature-based, inquiry approach to developing core literacy and critical thinking skills. This year sees a particular focus on collaborative planning of concept based units that seek to deepen student thinking across all subject areas, especially reading comprehension.

Our school's commitment to the wellbeing of our community has led us on an exploration of the benefits of a trauma aware approach to teaching and learning and developing social/emotional skills. Building on the Positive Behaviour Policy written last year, the school is working with Diocesan Staff and the Berry Street Education Team to develop a whole school trauma aware approach to supporting and developing positive behaviours. This involves ongoing consultation and education of all members of the school community and is closely linked to the school's renewed commitment to developing an authentic Catholic Identity. At the heart of this is a belief in the individual dignity of all human beings and a commitment to caring for each of their needs.

Our Core Goals and Strategies for 2022 include:

To promote authentic contemporary expressions of Catholic identity using dialogue and recontextualization, helping students to find meaning in the symbols, rituals and stories of our Catholic tradition.

To enhance student growth in the areas of reading and writing by planning around big ideas and inquiry-based pedagogies, encouraging deep thinking skills in students, particularly in their comprehension of texts.

To explore with staff the core priorities and possible models for effectively supporting diverse student needs, increasing student confidence in having a voice and taking responsibility for their learning

To deepen our knowledge of trauma aware practices in education and support students in identifying and practising behaviours that respect diversity and the individual story of others.

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction

In general, the parents and students seem very satisfied with the school and its progress. The parent community is very supportive of the P&F and its goals to provide funds to support school initiatives. The School Board is well attended and parent response to requests for feedback is relatively strong. The school continues to embrace a cycle of improvement, seeking regular input from the community and implementing goals that have stemmed from the data collected.

A strong emphasis is on all members of the community having a strong voice within the school. Teachers work with students to help them develop personal learning goals and plan for growth. Opportunities for suggestions are implemented throughout the year on an individual, class and whole school basis. Parents are strongly encouraged to support their children in sharing their voice as needed.