



# Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School Gladstone

## 2018 Annual School Report



Catholic Education  
Diocese of Rockhampton

# System

Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton

# Principal

Mrs Jennett O'Mullane

# Address

181 Goondoon Street  
Gladstone  
Qld 4680

# Total enrolments

277

# Year levels offered

Prep to Year 6

# Type of School:

Co-educational

# Curriculum Offerings

## Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

Star of the Sea 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 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. Through quality teaching and learning experiences we provide a curriculum that is differentiated, collaborative, investigative and catered towards the needs of the whole child, empowering growth in all areas of their development – spiritual, academic, physical, social, and emotional.

## Extra Curricula Activities

Star of the Sea offers many extra-curricular activities that complement the core School Program.

Music has a particularly strong emphasis in all areas of the curriculum and is used during masses, liturgies and school assemblies. Classroom teachers deliver an accredited program and also lead the School Choir which performs at the annual Eisteddfod and at various community functions.

An Instrumental Program is offered in Years 3 -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 successfully 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 number of our students also participate in speech and drama lessons.

A variety of lunch time clubs and activities are offered to students including our Gardening Club, Lightbulb Thinking Skills Club, our Mini Vinnies Group, Library Monitors and School Choir.

## 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 use of interactive whiteboards, computers, laptops, Chromebooks, iPads, Lego robots and interactive handpieces all assist in providing dynamic and meaningful learning experiences. Ongoing professional development assists teachers to use these technologies as effective teaching tools. We have initiated the Bee-bot devices in the lower school as a stand-alone activity as well as preparing our students for further interaction with the Lego robots. iPads are used across the year levels in both small group and whole group situations to engage students and promote learning. All students from Prep to Year Six participate in a weekly lesson with a specialist IT teacher using a variety of technologies such as laptops, iPads and robotics. 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

A Buddy System operates across the school with our Year 6 students mentoring multi age Buddy groups that promote the Virtues and Growth Mindset skills and attributes.

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

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 a number of 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.

A range of social programs for students across the school have also been instigated including Mini Vinnies which is a lunch time group established to develop leadership and communication skills that allows students to explore practical ways of making our world a better place. Our garden program operates as both a lunch time club and a school program that develops collaboration, self-esteem and compassion.

## **Cyber Safety and Anti-Bullying Strategies**

Our school has implemented Diocesan policies on Acceptable Use Agreements for students and staff. The school regularly communicates to 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. Our school has a number of social/emotional learning programs in place to assist students in guarding against bullying at school. The school community is kept up to date about developments in this area. All Diocesan and school policies are reviewed on a regular basis. As part of our Information Technology curriculum, all students complete a cyber safety and cyber bullying program each year.

## **Strategies for involving parents in their child's education**

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 on a monthly basis, 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.

Parents are welcome to assist in the classrooms 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 active 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, such as our Year 5 students who explore the creation of sustainable light dispersal systems. 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.

# 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 over the 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 (%)

92.3 %

## 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.

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# Staffing Information

## Workforce Composition

Workforce Composition	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff	Indigenous Staff
Headcounts	21.00	20.00	1.00
Full-time equivalents	16.78	12.35	0.26

## Qualifications of all teachers

Qualification – highest level of attainment	Percentage of staff with this Qualification
Doctoral / Post-doctoral	
Masters	4.76 %
Bachelor Degree	90.48 %
Diploma	4.76 %
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 developing Teacher Capability and developing a whole school approach to implementing the National Curriculum. Growing our faith community has continued to be a major focus for professional development this year as well. Many staff engage in additional 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
- Whole School Curriculum Priorities
- Caroline McCarty - Behaviour Management techniques
- Bishop In-service Day – “What do Young People in our Diocese need/want?”
- Gail Davis – 3 Worlds of the Text
- Louise Dempsey – Teaching Writing
- Resilience Project
- Leading Liturgy with Michael Mangan
- The new PSDE Curriculum
- CQU STEM Workshops

The percentage of teacher participation in professional development was 100 %

## Total funds expended on Professional Development

\$ 79,400

## Average Staff Attendance and Retention

90.77 %

Percentage of teaching staff retained from the previous school year was 96.06 %

## 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

Search by suburb, town or postcode

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](http://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.

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## 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 strong results are attributed to quality literacy and numeracy programs, the setting of high expectations for all learners and a focus on differentiating for the individual needs of learners.

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## Strategic Improvement Progress and Next Steps

### Strategic progress in 2018

Our 2018 School Improvement Goals Included:

- To prepare for the School Improvement Validation
- To provide regular opportunities for all members of the school community to feel connected and listened to by the school leadership team who, in turn, communicate a clear vision and improvement agenda to the school community.
- A focus on the use of data to inform whole school teaching and learning approaches.
- The development of a whole school approach to the teaching of writing with an aim to increase NAPLAN writing growth trends, especially for our Year 5 students.
- To explore effective pedagogical approaches that should belong to a whole school approach.
- To explore whole school and classroom based strategies for promoting higher order thinking skills.
- To explore how our use of Christian Virtues can be used explicitly in our School Behaviour Management Plan and through a whole school Buddy Groups program.
- To foster a deeper understanding of biblical texts and their meaningful links to today's Christian living.
- To audit the signs, symbols, texts and procedures used at Star of the Sea as to their contribution towards a relevant Catholic message.

The Validation phase of our School Improvement process was a great chance to connect with all school community members and establish clear goals for the future. Staff are developing a clear understanding and agreement surrounding the key practices and beliefs that provide a whole school approach to teaching and learning, especially in the area of writing. Various professional learning opportunities provided staff with explicit strategies for the quality teaching of writing and the use of the Writing Tool as a means of analysing writing data will be used in 2019. Our Year 5 cohort displayed strong growth in their writing and were identified by ACARA as having "significantly above average learning gain" for 2016-18 in NAPLAN Numeracy scores. A focus on spelling is identified as being a priority for 2019 which will be a further enhancement of our work with writing. Teachers are becoming more adept in presenting bible messages and Christian images in Religion lessons and liturgies that are more relevant and meaningful to our students. The school is seeking to identify a number of core virtues that exemplify the mission of Star of the Sea.

### Strategic Priorities for 2019

- Develop a Teaching and Learning Framework which will explicitly outline the school's core learning and teaching priorities and approaches for improved student learning outcomes.
- Improve data literacy across the school and explore opportunities for the school community to engage in appropriate data conversations.
- Create new ways of communicating and connecting with all members of the school community.
- Review our School Mission and Vision statement and explore ways to integrate the Making Jesus Real Program with our existing practices.

- Grow our inquiry based teaching and learning practices
- Continue to explore best practise for whole school writing and spelling programs.

## **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 quite strong. The school has just finished its School Improvement cycle and is implementing goals that have stemmed from the data collected in our Validation phase. This data will provide clear direction for the coming 5 year period.

A strong emphasis is on student voice which is accessed through class and whole school opportunities such as individual conferences, Student Council meetings and mixed age meetings with the Principal.