AGM 25th November 2015 Principals’ Report

In the words of the Ecclesiastes - and the song - To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: and tonight we come to one of those time. It is with great pleasure that I bring to you the Principals’ report for 2015. The last from myself as Principal and the last for Banksia Grove Catholic Primary School, as from next year we take on the name of St John Paul II Catholic Primary School. Taking on the name of such a prominent and influential Catholic leader of modern times clearly identifies us a Catholic school within the broader community.

The new year began with two major events. Finally, after a lot of extra hard work by staff in extremely hot conditions, on the first day of term everyone was in their new classrooms. Stage 6 of our building program was almost complete. Secondly the first Sunday of the new school year commenced with a huge community celebration with a visit from the Archbishop introducing Fr. Vinh as our new priest in charge. Both events have impacted very positively on the school over the year.

When Fr. Vinh breezed into the community in February with all his energy, enthusiasm and drive, ably assisted by Sr. Tuyen and Sr. Duyen, new life and energy has also been breathed into our school. It has been wonderful to have our own parish priest coming to Masses, going into the classrooms, getting to know the children, staff and families. It is also very reassuring when you come to Mass on the weekend to see many of our children participating actively in the life of the Church, not only by walking or riding to Mass but by serving, taking up the collection or gifts as well as being in the choir or band and assisting with the music. Having daily Mass here on the school grounds is a blessing and there have been several really beautiful community masses including the commitment Mass at the beginning of the year, the sacramental Masses and the fantastic Parish Feast day which was a great representation of our community as a whole. There was a lovely feeling on the day of what it is truly like to when people live in Harmony. I am sure that this will continue to grow and develop over the coming years and look forward to visiting when we also have a Church as well as a school. More building is definitely on the way.
BUILDING
Although we are now in the defects stage of the building program and there has been work going on at different times over the year, it has been an immense relief to have everyone settled in their various areas. The additional parking and added exit and entry points to the school site have also improved the flow of vehicles in and out of the school grounds. The ongoing work has included the completion of the walkways which has been particularly beneficial as another shaded area, continuation of the landscaping around the front of the school, the veggie patch and the hard courts which has brightened up the whole school site. We really do work and learn in a very attractive school, both the buildings and the grounds.

STAFFING
This year we welcomed back Caroline Porteus as our LOTE teacher and Hayley Wells who took on the role as Coordinator of Children with Disabilities. Jason Cain arrived from Kalgoorlie to take up a position as classroom teacher and Georgie Triance and Sr. Tuyen joined the team as Education Assistants in the Early Childhood area. Lea Williams has also joined the admin team on a casual basis. Along with all other members of staff who continually use their gifts and talents as well as expertise to support the children and each other across all aspects of school life. Our staff really do try to cater for the development of the whole child. Caroline has handed in her resignation. We thank her for her hard work during her time here and wish her all the best for the future. Marlee McAdam has been appointed as the Indonesian Teacher for 2016. She come from the DET with a wealth of experience in this area.

Apart from Marlee, the only other new staff member for next year will be Chris Lamb as Principal. He has been visiting regularly and finding out as much as he can about what is happening. I know he is really looking forward to joining the community next year.

SCHOOL DIRECTION & PLANNING
With the change in the school name lots of behind the scene work has been going on in regards to legislative requirements. Permission and approval had to be gained from the Archbishop, CECWA before it could be passed onto the State Government for the process to commence. For a while I thought I had become the Archbishop’s special pen pal. Next year we will have a change of name, a new
logo and branding such as school letterhead and signage but apart from that things will remain the same until everything is settled. The school uniform will remain the same for now. One change that has been made is that we will be registering to have a three year old program commencing from term 2 next year. This does not necessarily mean that there will be a 3yo program but if it was wanted then we could go ahead.

Over the past few year there has been a big push on strategic planning for schools. Although staff have been actively involved in these processes it has been greatly appreciated this year having the School Board also aware of and involved in this ongoing process.

Part of our school’s reregistration involves having an outside Audit ensuring we are complying with all Government and Catholic Ed policies and legislation. This Audit was conducted over the year and we passed with flying colours.

Individual Catholic School Plans and compliance documents are based on the acronym –.LEAD LEARNING, Engagement, Accountability and Discipleship

The school focus for

- **Learning** was - Comprehension and problem Solving
- **Engagement** – the introduction of NQS in years K-Yr. 2 which is mandatory across all Australian Schools from 2015. We were happy to host a number of schools here to share ideas and show good practice.
- **Accountability** – developing staff capacity through individual professional growth plans and linked to Australian Teaching Standards. The process that we have developed was recently presented to a number of other schools across Perth as an example of great practice.
- **Discipleship**- assisting in the development of our new parish – which will be ongoing.

For 2016 the focus will be

- Learning – Better use of data to direct teaching and learning
- Engagement –
- Accountability
- Discipleship

We will also be continuing and developing the implementation of NQS. Implementing a sensory program to assist those children who have difficulty with self- regulation. This is an addition to our pastoral care program.
Of course there are still all the other requirements of effectively running a school. In our Pastoral care. This year were able to gain the services of Jenny Baxter as our School Chaplain and funded through the State Government. This has broadened our support program for children in particular and the community in general with Jenny, Lesley - our Social Worker and Hayley, forming the Student Support Team, ensuring a more targeted response to children’s needs. The veggie patch has been revived, Years 5 and 6 were involved in and targeted Blueearth leadership program and the rest of the school continued regular Blueearth sessions. This year we joined Anglicare and introduced Social Skills classes for identified children, The Rainbows Program has continued with Sr. Tyuen and Sr. Duyen joining the staff trained as facilitators. The SWEL Team – Student Wellbeing and emotional learning team has continued along with crunch & Sip and Collaborative learning. Having the Library open each lunchtime has also proved a bonus for those children who don’t feel like running around. Every day there is a queue of children waiting to get in. This along with flipping the lunch time has reduced the number of issues being dealt with on the oval as well as the amount of rubbish and lost property.

From an academic point of view Edwina and Marisa were involved as a pilot school in the online data entry process which will be implemented in all Catholic schools next year as a process for data collection and analysis in Pre Primary classes. We have continued our link with Curtin University Speech Program working mainly in the Kindy and Pre Primary areas. This will continue next year. The children’s involvement in the Arts continues with a large number involved in the Performing Arts Festival in dance, drama and Music and The West Coast Song Fest. For the first time we had a very successful Science Expo organised by Jodie Duerloo and Caroline Porteous was awarded a small grant which enabled her to organised incursions as part of her LOTE sessions. This year we were also runners up in the PALS Award. Joan Ring, now ably assisted by Kathleen Blackmore are running Playgroup which I am pleased to say is growing in numbers. The children have been involved in a number of sports carnivals and coaching sessions as well as the opportunity to join after school sports programs. Kerry Brown has continued her support in the early years through both the Reading Recovery and LLI support programs. This year Lyn Paraszczyn took on the role of 3rd wave intervention or support in Literacy for children in Years 3 – 6 which has proved to
be very successful. We have also continued our links to the various Universities around Perth,

All schools, especially Catholic ones, are reliant upon the support of their parents and friends. We often hear the complaint that we need more parent help - which we do. However we need to look at the glass being half full rather than half empty. Although attending a meeting may not be everyone’s cup of tea, this year we have received parent help - in the canteen and the uniform shop. Jane Sheely has done a great job overseeing the children's banking and encouraging more children and families to participate.

Eileen and the members of the P&F have worked hard organising activities both Fun raising as well as fund raising. We are very appreciative of the funds donated to the school to support the children in various ways, In addition to activities already noted parent and grandparent help includes assistance with excursions, Spring In The Grove, sausage sizzles, classrooms, sports day, and discos and parent helper workshops. Consequently we are able to support our children to a much greater degree than if we were to rely upon staff alone. As a result of this additional support new resources have been purchased, The bush dance at the beginning of the year, the Easter Egg hunt, The Lap –a-thon and school discos were organised, lunches for sports day provided, The Year 6 leavers shirts were donated, the children enjoy healthy meals from the canteen, uniforms can be ordered and purchased easily. All this helps Banksia Grove to be a better place. Over 100 individual invitations were sent out to people who have assisted us in some way this year.

Thanks to members of the school board, most of them new for this year. Under the direction of Shane the members of the Board have worked well together and put time and effort into looking and planning for the future of the school and parish as well as consolidating what we already have. They have been a delight to work with and I am sure that Chris will appreciate working with them next year and into the future. The Board is the link between Catholic Ed, future planning and financial management. Although there are very strict processes in place regarding the use of monies coming into the school it is very important that the community has input into this and this is done through the Board. Thanks you to Carrie and Joselyn who will be stepping down this year.
As this will be my last opportunity I feel I must acknowledge the fantastic work that the staff here does. The history of Banksia Grove has shown that it has not always been the easiest place to work in, Constant building going on around them, limited resources, and class groups regularly changing as people move into the area. Repeatedly having to make do because the building is not finished or resources have not arrived. Yet despite all this they are resilient and flexible and always do their best. For some reason Banksia Grove Catholic Primary School has always been blessed with exceptional staff and this year is no exception. Starting with Di, Kerry, Lea and Mailyn in the front office as the face of the school, and are on the front line and as such sometimes have to deal with difficult situations and have always done so respectfully and professionally, to all class teachers and all support staff. At all times the children and what is best for them has been the focus of what is happening.

I am not always sure that parents and carers are really aware of or appreciate the additional time, effort, worry and attention to detail that staff members here at Banksia Grove take on and that is often above and beyond what is expected of teachers generally, I want to acknowledge this hard work and thank them for it. I have great confidence that it will continue and develop in supporting Chris next year and into the future.

It has been a great honour to have been a member of this community for the past 12 and a half years, to see the changes, growth and developments not merely in the buildings, but in education and the Church. To come to know so many people and families and to be involved in their lives through being a part of this Catholic school has been a privilege. The times have certainly not all been easy but they have been fulfilling. Many thanks to all those who have assisted me along the way. Although at the time I did not always understand it, reflecting over the time has brought me a greater appreciation of the role that God has played in my life and those that I have come in contact with over the years. Banksia Grove is a special place to be. As we move towards a new stage in the development of our Catholic Community and all the ups and down that are to come I remind you of the words of our patron St John Paul II

“Never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire,
And never become discouraged. Be not afraid.” The future starts today, not tomorrow.

To you all I say thank you and every blessing for the future as you continue to work together in the development of the community. Best wishes for a Happy and peaceful Christmas and safe and fulfilling 2016.

Thank you.

Tricia Davis

Principal

25 Nov 2015.