

Saint Joseph's Parish School Murgon

Annual Report 2008

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The town of Murgon is situated in the South Burnett region approximately three hour's drive from Brisbane. There is a long history of pastoral development (cattle and cotton) of the area and until its closure early in 2007 the Meatworks was the largest employer in the town. Tourism and Wineries are also important industries in the region.

There is a rich Indigenous presence in the area, and Indigenous culture is a feature of the Saint Joseph's community. A number of families from Cherbourg (7 Kilometres away) send their children to Saint Joseph's School.

Enrolments

The current enrolment is 175 children from Prep to Year Seven. There is a steady intake into Prep – 17 in 2008 and 20 for 2009. The enrolment of 53 Indigenous children is the largest enrolment of Indigenous children in the Brisbane Archdiocese.

Curriculum

The curriculum follows the Outcomes Approach to education mandated by the State Government. Reporting to parents and the community is also in accord with directions from both Federal and State Governments. The special emphasis this year has been the area of Maths, and the staff has undertaken considerable in-service in this area during the year under the direction and with the support of Judy Hartnett from Brisbane Catholic Education.

Religious Life of the School

Faith development is at the heart of all we do here at Saint Joseph's. Prayer and Religious Instruction based on the guidelines from Brisbane Catholic Education are a daily feature in all classes. The Parish Priest, Father Dan Redhead visits the classes on a regular basis and also attends to the pastoral and sacramental needs of the staff and children. Members of staff are involved with the Sacramental Preparation Programmes for Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Special Feasts of the church are celebrated liturgically and in other ways, and the school buildings are names to reflect the various religious traditions in the school. Special celebrations were also held to mark the Apology to the Indigenous people from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, and for National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. ANZAC Day was also celebrated at school and with the local community.

Staff Development

Staff are constantly seeking to further their knowledge and skills through in-service both locally and regionally. The Professional Development Days at the commencement of the 2008 school year looked at different learning styles through the Dreamtime Personalities facilitated by Michael White, and Class Prayer and Liturgy Rituals facilitated by Pat Lavercombe. Other full Staff Development Days included work on the Maths Syllabus, Student Protection, and Spirituality. CTJ was combined with SBCC (Primary), St Joseph's Gayndah, and St Pat's Nanango. Three staff undertook training in the Bandscales. Four staff participated in the three day *Sharing Our Call* Programme on Marist Spirituality. Spirituality Twilights were held in Lent and Advent, and also on the Marist Spirituality Document – *Water from the Rock*. This was facilitated by Tony Clarke.

Extra Curricular Activities

The following extra curricular activities are available for the children:

- Netball and Rugby League Teams
- District representation in Swimming, Cross Country, Athletics, Netball and Rugby League
- Choir
- Excursions, including the week-long trip to Sydney and Canberra for Years 6&7 in July/August
- Camp – Year 6
- Enrichment Group
- Girl's Club (Craft)
- Active After School Programme

Community Involvement

The school is involved with the community when appropriate. The choir sings at nursing homes, Anzac Day, the Murgon Show etc. The school participates in the local Anzac Commemoration, and this year received second prize for the Murgon Show Schools' Display. A number of children participated in the Jump Rope for Heart Programme, and collections for the missions are held regularly.

Parents are always welcome and encouraged to assist in the school. They do this through a variety of ways including:

- Parents & Friends Activities
- Tuckshop
- Classroom and Library Support
- Sports days and activities
- Excursions
- Liturgies

All parent and community volunteers were in-serviced with regard to the volunteer code of conduct and other government requirements.

Funding and Special Projects

Again this year we have benefited from Federal and State Government funding, and this has allowed a number of special programmes to run in the school to support children thought to be 'at risk'. These programmes addressed skills in literacy and numeracy as their main focus. A very significant programme was run to support Indigenous parents with regard to assisting their children with early reading and writing skills, and with homework. In addition, a grant was received from the Investing in our Schools Programme, and this provided the bulk of the funding for the construction of a multi purpose court. Federal funds also provided for a new flagpole (masthead) which will allow three flags to be flown at the one time. New flags and a picture of Queen Elizabeth II were also presented to the school by local Federal member Mr Warren Truss.

An amount of \$10 000 was also received for drought relief. This money supported children attending excursions, and also the school swimming programme.