

AGM – Principal's Report

This year has been a year like no other. Katanning was rocked by fire at the start of the year. The world was devastated by the pandemic that shut down economies, closed borders and changed the very way we live. The school has been through some major changes with Mr. Gammon and his family departing and St Patrick's welcoming my family and I into your community.

As an educator for over 20 years, I've never been a part of such rapid change as what happened this year. The uncertainty of COVID 19 meant that educators had to create, manage and deliver learning remotely to their students. This stretched, challenged and inspired real innovation and improvement.

Having only been at St Patrick's for Term 4, I can only speak about my short time here. What I can confidently say from my perspective is that the staff are fully committed to providing the best learning experiences, engaging the students, and expanding them academically, socially, and spiritually.

The school continues to offer support in all areas of the curriculum, with Initial Lit, MiniLit and MacqLit continuing, the enrichment programs targeting specific students and the in-class extension offered to students throughout their differentiated lessons. These programs have allowed the students to continue to flourish and reach their potential.

The staff at St Patrick's are extremely professional, compassionate and dedicated. Their commitment to providing the very best for their students is both admirable and appreciated. It is through their efforts and parental partnerships that we continue to see strong growth in all students. We say goodbye to Mrs. Horgan, Miss Newman, Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Ramm, Mrs. Schinzig, Ms. Bearcroft, Mr. Gammon and myself Mr. Priest and we thank them for all they have given St Patrick's. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

The success of a school is significantly influenced by the parental engagement in schools. The School Board and P and F Executive have worked extremely hard, especially this year. They have carried a larger than normal burden and their work does not go unnoticed and personally I am glad I have had the chance to work with them if only for a short time.

To the School Board – Simon Kerin, Sheldon Kowald, Andrew Bushell, Davina Davies, Linda Hewson, Tania Edwards, Helen Robinson, Pat Kennedy and Fr Gerome. You all give a tremendous amount to this school and deserve to be recognised. To Simon Kerin and Davina Davies, thank you for your insight, commitment and collaboration during your time serving St Patrick's School. You volunteer for all the right reasons. To the P and F – Katherine Anderson, Chrissy Kerin, Cathy Chambers, Davina Davies and Megan Lydeamore. What a passionate, creative and dynamic team you make. We are truly blessed to have volunteers like you in our school. To Chrissy, Davina and Megan, thank you for all you have contributed to our school community.

This year we have had 11 students from the school involved in the sacramental programs offered. Our staff have shown great commitment in preparing our students for the sacraments and supporting them on their faith journey. We also thank Fr Gerome for his continued support and guidance in our school and parish.

And of course, the students. What a great bunch of children they are. They have such character and personality. It has been an absolute joy teaching, talking, and getting to know all of them. They have such zest for life. Encourage them to reach for the stars and let them know that anything is possible.

So, what does the future hold for St Patrick's.

The school is in a strong position. Mr. Brett Wilke is experienced and enthusiastic about the journey ahead. Mrs. Denise Bowen and Miss Lyndee Montgomery join the teaching team and bring with them a wealth of passion and drive to make St Patrick's the best it can be.

Personally, I am a little sad that I will not get to be a part of this wonderful community for much longer. When I was asked to consider coming to Katanning for a term, I had no idea what to expect. I am honestly the luckiest man in the world. My wife and children jumped at the idea of an adventure and challenge. We will look back on this extremely fondly. It was a real gift to be able to work and walk alongside all of you for this brief period of time.

Thank you all once more, and you should all be immensely proud of St Patrick's, it is an amazing place.

Ben Priest