Principal’s Annual Report November 2015

St. Martin’s has seen significant change in 2015 with the transition of Year 7 to secondary. This however, has not affected school enrolments to a great degree as we have again accepted a preparatory ‘bubble’ group for 2016. The non-Catholic element of St. Martin’s enrolment remains at 8% and these are mainly made up of siblings. Our mid to large school has endured many changes in personnel, highlighted by the promotion of Mike Armstrong to Principal at Mary Immaculate Annerley. Maternity leave; unforeseen personal leave and sickness have all impacted the staffing arrangements of St. Martin’s. We welcomed Veronica Tomerini-Smith to our leadership team as Acting Assistant Principal Religious Education for the second half of the year.

The first year of the Contemporary Learning Village has been a success with the connection of the De Porres building to the courtyard. The village will be completed in Term and into the holidays with the refurbishment of the two rooms and tuckshop into the Year 5 learning spaces. Also the tuckshop move to the Dominic Centre will provide an improved food preparation area for tuckshop and future functions. A progressive and rapid move into a philosophy of contemporary learning has resulted in greater engagement of our learners. The improvement aided by greater accessibility to technology and through the use of a Learning Management platform L.I.F.E. is clearly the most obvious change to the delivery of teaching and learning.

Parish Priest Fr. Tom Cassidy was appointed to Our Lady of Graces Parish in 2012 and has reinforced the established strong links between parish and school. This connectivity is enhanced with the sharing of facilities and the cooperative communication, including Kelly Corbett from the Sacramental Program and/ or Fr. Tom speaking on assembly and at special events including Dominican Family day. We are extremely pleased with the creation of the Martin Garden with the centre point being a statue of St. Martin De Porres. It was also a year where significantly the School Mission Statement was reviewed and re-worded with a copy included.

In summary the capital works and enhancements during 2014 Years included: The Contemporary Learning Village; Martin Garden; the Great Wall of Respect.
and the Anzac Garden as well as the completion of the 2 metre fence along the Risley Street side of the valley.

Enrolments at the beginning of the 2015 year were close to predicted numbers with 694 students enrolled with numbers increasing as the year has progressed. Our enrolments are very healthy with all year levels being almost full and waiting list exist in several year levels. Parents have reignited the discussion on whether to remain at St. Martin’s after Year 4 rather than move to the Religious Order Schools. Two meetings were held and one included Ian McDonald from St. Laurences and Julie Saunders from BCE Planning. We will see a positive effect from these discussions in the years to come. The school enrolment is predicted to grow to a maximum enrolment of approximately 750 in the next 4 years. The school will need to build additional learning areas to cater for increased enrolments. A master plan is being developed in conjunction with BCE.

Today St. Martin’s is a Parish School with a strong relationship with surrounding Catholic schools and sporting divisions.

Significant characteristics of our school are:
• Strong links with Parish with involvement in Sacramental Program, School and Class Masses and joint fundraising ventures for Caritas; Church Missions and St. Vincent de Paul.
• A very supportive and collaborative team of teaching staff and school officers who work tirelessly in providing an authentic, innovative, contemporary and quality Catholic education for our students.
• Renowned for a caring and committed approach to providing quality contemporary Catholic education.
• A strong sense of community stemming from improved whole school aesthetics, as well as general behavioural and academic expectations of our students.
• A school that bases all relationships on RESPECT

As we conclude another educational year for the students of St. Martin’s Catholic primary school, it is timely that I present a report for parents and Our Lady of Graces parish representatives.

Mission and Religious Education
The inception of the new Religious Education Curriculum has occurred with all teachers appreciating the support and leadership from our new acting APRE Veronica Tomerini-Smith.

St. Martin’s has focussed on Social Justice in a concentrated Catholic way ensuring that our children are learning to perpetually think of and act for the benefit of others. Our theme is Love in Action. I commend Fr. Tom Cassidy in his fourth full year as Parish Priest in his affirmation of our children’s behaviour and faith development, his interest in school development. He is particularly interested in the delivery of Catholic education to our children, the faith development of all in our community and the common good that can be achieved with a consolidated effort in the wider community.

**Learning and Teaching**

St. Martin’s continues to offer a balanced, holistic education for the children in our care. Evidence from Internal Monitoring of Essential Learning as well as NAPLAN and from a further plethora of evidence tools indicate that children are receiving quality teaching and learning. I am particularly pleased that IMEL is identifying areas of weakness as well as strengths and most importantly, providing teachers with detailed information on the children in their care. The next stage for this data is for it to be uploaded onto the Business Intelligence Tool (Software sponsored by BCE).

The fourth year of 1:1 laptops now for the Year 5-7 students offers opportunities in providing contemporary learning and has been an insightful addition to our educational offerings. I commend and thank Mike Armstrong and the teachers who have committed to this life-long learning paradigm and the exciting potential it provides. Cooperative, innovative planning between teachers and Julie Kenny (as CST) planning using the newly developed Australian Curriculum and beginning with the needs of our children, has been a further highlight of 2015. The introduction of the Arts syllabus in 2016 prompts us to formalise this area of the curriculum to offer an even greater breadth of learning experiences for our children.
The Contemporary Learning Village will be completed in December and be ready for use at the start of 2016. This combination of five classrooms includes a utility teaching area equipped for cooking and science activities. All available data including NAPLAN, IMEL, Schools Reporting Systems and Behaviour Records prove that St. Martin’s children are developing knowledge, skills, self-esteem and confidence as they are nurtured towards achieving their potential.

Julie Kenny has added a great deal as our new Curriculum Support and will be here an extra day per week in 2016 (5 days) to broaden her role and I have no doubt, impact on the Teaching and Learning of our school. This period also included the introduction of the new Australian Curriculum and the impending transition of Year 7 to secondary.

**Collaborative Partnerships**

The initial year of P&F Levy/ Community Events has been very positive. The parents and friends have gone a long way to providing donated funds to assist with the Cooling our Classrooms goal with the final rooms to be completed including the Art Room and the Contemporary Learning Village. The parent community we have been involved in many school events, from sausage sizzles and working bees to discos, camp outs and the Barnyard Boogie.

**Quality Assurance Process**

In 2013 the school reviewed and rated the following components:

1.5 Learning and Teaching of Religion 6/7
2.4 Student Well-Being and Pastoral Care 6/7
3.1 Professional Learning and Development 5/7
4.3 Finance and Facilities 6/7

*These ratings were arrived at after a panel made up of teachers and leadership reviewed survey results from parents and staff and tabled a variety of evidence and relevant data. As well as listing strengths and areas to improve, the ensuing discussions and interaction with staff and the result assisted in formulating goals for the 2016 Action Plan.*

There are many highlights of 2015. These include but are not limited to:
• Wonderful efforts of our musical groups and performers—at the CSMF of a gold, and two silver
• The Year 6 performance night The Traveller
• The wonderfully positive and diverse Celebrations of Learning
• The outstanding team work by our life-long learning teachers and school officers
• Strategic Teacher Feedback
• The mother’s lunch
• The innovative teaching and learning using the L.I.F.E. platform
• Athletics and swimming carnivals
• The wonderful respectful behaviour of our students
• Anti-bullying day
• Spirit of St. Martin’s award

Parish groups have begun using the Dominic Centre, both inside and underneath, and we continue to work on building understanding and knowledge within our community in relation to the parish goal of promoting faith among our families and building a relationship between our children and God.

Thanks to the members of our community that go to the extra effort to be involved in the formation of goals and directions for St. Martin’s and then the active support in achieving these goals for the children entrusted to our care. This continues to be a great school - getting even better!

Mick Kelleher

Principal