

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

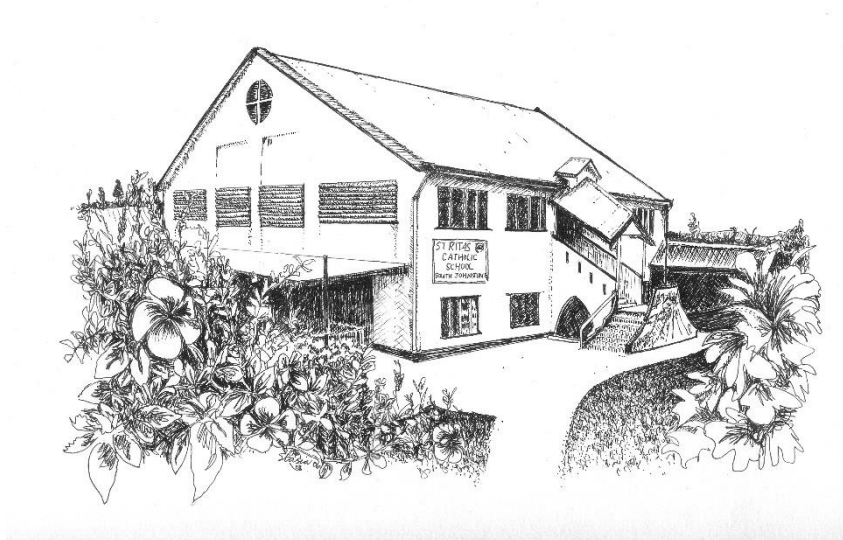
Vision Statement

At St. Rita's we believe in:

- The partnership of parents, teachers, students, parish and wider community is enriched by our Gospel values and our faith.
- Encouraging risk taking and offering challenging opportunities to enhance success for all in an ever-changing world.
- The development of the whole person academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually using Jesus as the perfect example.
- Accepting the differences and valuing the opinions of others in a safe, caring, loving and learning environment.

School Mission Statement

Because of this vision we will aim to foster the growth of each individual within a committed faith community of students, staff and parents. Our administration, organisation and programs reflect and teach gospel values. We strive to nurture the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual development of each student. We acknowledge the role of parents as the primary educators of their children, and we are prepared to support them in this responsibility. We value a cooperative spirit between the home and the school.



About our School

South Johnstone is a small rural township situated 100 km south of Cairns and 9 km south-east of Innisfail. St Rita's caters for students from Innisfail, Kurrimine Beach, East Palmerston, Mena Creek, Mundoo, Moresby, Mourilyan and South Johnstone. We are a small school providing a Catholic education in a rural setting.

The township of Innisfail has a Catholic Secondary School (Good Counsel College) and a State College. Within 10kms of South Johnstone there are numerous State Primary Schools, as well as Good Counsel Primary School.

Agricultural industries and support services are predominant in the local area. It is these industries that are the primary source of employment for the families with children attending school at St Rita's.

The school opened in 1932, operating from the building adjacent to the school in Green St, which presently hosts a long-running playgroup. The school moved across the road in 1933 to where the present building is situated. The Sisters of Good Samaritan staffed the school up until 1977 when the first lay principal was appointed. From this time, to the present, solely lay people have staffed the school. The face of the school has changed over time, with the addition of new classrooms, a purpose built Prep facility and state-of-the-art undercover multi-purpose hall. Recent additions include the building of a staff room, meeting room and toilet facilities.

St Rita's is proud to be a community school, with a reputation for having a strong family focus. St Rita's is blessed with a committed Parents and Friends Association. The hardworking P&F provides much needed financial support through various fundraising ventures. The P&F also assist with organizing social activities that aim to bring families together. New families have commented on how welcoming the parent body is and how the support that is offered helps them to make a smooth transition into school life.

A team of devoted teachers staff St Rita's. They all share a passion for education and a commitment to Catholic ethos. The staff works together within a professional learning community, sharing their knowledge and supporting early career teachers. A team of experienced school officers supports the teachers. Our school officers are vital to the day to day running of our school. Working in classrooms, administration, the library and with those students requiring extra support as well as extension. The staff is aware that they are educating students for a rapidly changing world. Therefore, the teachers and school officers are constantly searching for new learning opportunities to help them meet the diverse needs of their students.

School Annual Improvement

Priority 1: Develop a Culture for Learning and Improvement for all students

By the end of 2019:

90% of students in Prep to Year 3 to be at the following reading levels:

Prep - Level 6 or above

Year 1 - Level 15 or above

Year 2 - Level 22 or above

By the end of semester 1 100% of students in Prep to Year 3 to have shown progress in reading.

These targets are informed by CES Reading benchmarks:

Strategies and resources implemented

- *Teachers were engaged in Professional Learning Teams where the agenda was driven by engagement with data. In the early years the focus in the PLT was on reading.*
- *A reading data wall was created to provide opportunities for staff to engage with data. This has enabled staff to ensure that every student is making progress in reading.*
- *The explicit teaching of Synthetic Phonics occurred in Prep and Year 1.*
- *Professional development opportunities for teachers has been provided throughout the year with the Literacy Coach working in classrooms and individually with teachers.*
- *There was continued engagement with school based best practice documents and sequence and scopes.*

Priority 2: Optimal Learning and Wellbeing for all students

90% of students in Years 4-6 to have an effect size/growth equal to or greater than the normed sample (ACER) and equal to or greater than the Australian mean (NAPLAN).

Strategies and resources implemented:

- *Teachers were engaged in Professional Learning Teams where the agenda was driven by engagement with data. In the upper years the focus in the PLT was on Mathematics.*
- *Professional development opportunities for teachers has been provided throughout the year with the Numeracy Coach working in classrooms and individually with teachers*
- *A baseline Maths test was created to assist in measuring progress throughout the year.*
- *A Maths Professional Development Day was held at the beginning of the year focusing on the teaching of Maths.*
- *There was continued engagement with school based best practice documents and sequence and scopes.*

Areas of growth

1. Priority 1 has been a consistent focus in 2019 with the majority of strategies having been completed. Teachers in the junior school have worked towards improving whole class instruction of reading as well as running more effective reading group sessions.
2. The majority of strategies for Priority 2 have also been completed. The Professional Learning Team of teachers from Year 2 to 6 have had two major focuses to improve reading. These focuses were determined by examining student data. The first was to improve inferential comprehension and the second was to improve fluency.

Characteristics of Student Body

- Student Enrolment – 102 (52 Boys and 50 Girls)
- Verified students - 3
- Indigenous - 11
- NCCD - 10
- Student Catholicity – 44.9%
- Attendance – 78.5%
- ICSEA – 1013

Cultural diversity

- Fijian
- Czech
- Thai
- Indian
- New Zealander
- Australian

Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

At St Rita's, we believe that preparing students for an unknown world, requires courage and energy, because student needs have changed so drastically. Literacy and numeracy will always remain the keystones of curriculum. Reading and writing have not been replaced by the new technologies. However, there are new literacies connected to information technology and communication, which we have now included in our whole-school curriculum plans and teach explicitly. Information is everywhere and is instantly accessible. Therefore, research skills have become vital. Teaching students to find, analyse and use information responsibly is vitally important. Technology has also allowed our students to access their learning in new ways. In keeping with our school motto, "Forward to a Better World", we want to ensure that our students leave, fully equipped to tackle the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Religious Education is a highly valued Key learning Area at St Rita's. Whole school and class liturgical celebrations are a significant element of the religious education program at the school.

At St Rita's we are committed to effectively delivering the Australian Curriculum to our students. This means ensuring that our teachers receive quality professional development and that our resources are current. This allows our teachers to ensure that each student is being taught the knowledge and skills that they need in a way that suits their specific learning style.

Extra-Curricular Activities

At St Rita's we offer a diverse range of extra-curricular activities to allow students to pursue their special interests. These include:

- Teams for sporting events such as football, athletics, futsal, soccer, softball and netball
- Sport coaching sessions - Netball, Cricket Australia, NRL development, Tennis
- Wonder of Living Program
- Arts Council Performances
- Mary Mills Cup
- Fowler's Cup
- Interschool Futsal Titles
- School Sports Programs such as Auskick, Tennis, Rugby League
- Handball competition
- Reader's Cup
- Under 8's day
- Bravehearts
- Show displays
- Camps and excursions

Social Climate

At St Rita's we are determined to help each student achieve his or her full potential. We acknowledge that each child is truly unique and therefore learns in different ways and at different speeds. Every effort is made to cater to each student's individual needs.

Though we are small, our size is not a weakness, but one of our greatest strengths. Students learn to "pitch in" and help out around the school and to assist with younger students as a part of our "buddy" program. We enjoy seeing younger siblings in and around the grounds before they join their big brothers and sisters at school when they start Prep. We also love hearing about past pupils' adventures and successes long after they exit the front gates for the last time. In essence, St Rita's is a small school with a very big heart.

Parent Engagement

Parents at St Rita's are recognized as the first educators of their children and as such are encouraged to participate wherever possible:

- Class Information Afternoons
- Parent Education, eg Wonders of Living, Maggie Dent
- Parent Teacher Interviews
- Parent invitations to classrooms as helpers or visitors
- Parent invitations to school assemblies and liturgies
- Parents and Friends Association
- Combined Schools' Board
- Playgroup
- St. Rita's Feast Day
- School Fete
- Mother's Day Morning Tea
- Grandparents Day (Prep)
- Oral and Written Reports - interviews
- Naidoc Activities
- Camps/Excursions
- Sports days
- Under 8's Day
- Christmas Concert

Parent Satisfaction

In the annual school satisfaction survey parents rated St Rita's school across 7 key areas which included Catholic Ethos, Student Protection, Improvement Processes, Leadership, Bullying and Behaviour Management, Learning and Teaching, and Resources. The overall satisfaction score was 78% or 3.88 out of a total of 5. The top 3 reasons for school selection were size of the school and classes, school reputation, and location.

From the survey almost 82% agreed that St Rita's School is a welcoming and caring community where everyone is treated with respect. 93% agreed that St Rita's School provides clear, timely and relevant information. 93% also agreed that the grounds, buildings and outdoor facilities are well-presented and maintained while 92% of respondents felt that the classrooms are well presented and stimulating places for learning.

Major Professional Development Initiatives

Staff have been involved in professional development opportunities covering:

- OWHS - keeping up to date with policies and procedures to ensure the safety of themselves and others eg. fire equipment training, back care, evacuation procedures, risk assessments etc.
- Student Protection- keeping teachers abreast of legal and protection issues, to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.
- Disability Standards Training
- Literacy Writing Focus
- Visible Learning Practices
- Maths coaching
- Literacy coaching
- APRE Focus Days
- NAPLAN Analysis
- Administration Officer's PD
- Data Analysis
- Consistency of Teacher Judgement - engaging teachers in a process of assessing student work consistently within the school community and across schools within the Diocese.
- Information and Communication Technology - teachers use computers extensively to assist planning, communication and reporting. Training is provided to ensure ICT skills are at an appropriate level.
- Get Reading Right PD
- Maths PD
- Writing PD
- PLT Training
- Diverse Learners Team Conferences
- Learning and Teaching Network meetings
- NCCD (Nationally Consistent Collection of Data)
- Professional Conversations.

Staff Satisfaction

In the annual school satisfaction survey staff rated St Rita's school very highly across 7 key areas which included Catholic Ethos, Student Protection, Improvement Processes, Leadership, Bullying and Behaviour Management, Learning and Teaching, and Resources. The overall satisfaction score was 87% or 4.36 out of a total of 5.

100% of staff agreed that St Rita's is a welcoming and caring community where everyone is treated with respect. 100% also agreed that the school promotes justice, compassion and service. 91% of staff agreed that morale is positive amongst staff while 100% felt that the school delivers quality educational outcomes for students. 100% of staff felt that the current behaviour support programs are effectively implemented across the school. 100% agreed that the school provides equipment training and resources needed by staff to do their job effectively while this same percentage feel that the school provides them with the necessary training and professional development required to do their job well.

How non-attendance is managed by the school

Parents are to contact the school on the morning of non-attendance by phone or e-mail. If contact has not been made, a message will be sent to parents advising them of their child's absence and asking them to contact the school. If the child is absent for a period of time without notification or a pattern of non-attendance is recorded the parents are contacted to discuss any issues or concerns regarding the student.

Student Satisfaction

In the annual school satisfaction survey students from year 5 and 6 were surveyed across 7 key areas which included Catholic Ethos, Student Protection, Improvement Processes, Leadership, Bullying and Behaviour Management, Learning and Teaching, and Resources. The overall satisfaction score was 77% or 3.87 out of a total of 5.

81% of students surveyed agreed that they were proud to be a student at St Rita's. 88% agreed that prayer is an important part of what is done at this school. 95% agreed that doing their best at school is important to them while 85% feel that they are encouraged to do the best that they can. 81% of students agreed that when they have a problem with their learning their teachers are willing to help them. 84% of students surveyed said they felt safe at school while 81% felt that the students at this school are nice to each other.