St Benedict's Primary School
Narrabundah

Information Book
2014

Nurturing personal and academic growth...
a journey from Kindergarten to Year 6.
‘All guests who present themselves are to be treated as Christ.’

From The Rule of St Benedict

School Vision

Inspired by Christ and guided by his teachings, the community of St Benedict’s journeys together to provide a caring, friendly, learning environment that nurtures the development of each child through love, work and prayer.

All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ.
Welcome

Thank you for your interest in St Benedict’s Primary School.

St Benedict’s is a warm, vibrant and friendly school, catering for students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Our actions are based on Catholic beliefs and values and in the Spirit of St Benedict we welcome all students and families as Christ.

Established more than 50 years ago by the Good Samaritan Sisters, we provide a strong tradition of quality education for a diverse student population. Our small school enables every child to be uniquely known, appreciated and nurtured.

We work closely with parents and parish in the holistic development of every student. Parents are informed and involved as they celebrate their child’s successes and engage in school life. The parish continues to be a great source of faith and life for us all.

St Benedict’s offers a safe and caring learning environment and the opportunities and challenges that inspire all students to create a positive future for themselves and their community.

Mr Matthew Garton
Acting Principal
School History

St Benedict’s Primary School was opened in 1955 under the care of the sisters of the Good Samaritan. From 1961 to 1981 the Sisters of the Society of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (a Dutch order brought to Australia during a time of teacher shortage in Catholic Schools) were responsible for the administration of the school. The strong sense of community and partnership established in these early years are still part of the school’s culture today.

During our long history of Catholic schooling in Canberra, St Benedict’s has earned the reputation of being an effective and successful school with unique and special qualities.
Nurturing personal and academic growth from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Facilities

To enable the best learning possible, St Benedict’s provides for its students and teachers:

- Spacious, accessible, newly refurbished and well-resourced classrooms with interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning.
- A diverse playground including a sandpit, fitness track, green oval, tree-sheltered play and eating areas and well-used courtyard areas.
- An interactive garden for play and learning.
- Learning technology including the use of ipads, computers and digital learning spaces for each classroom (cLc).
- A large and often used hall for Dance, Gymnastics, Physical Education and school gatherings.
- Healthy food and beverages through the School Canteen.

The St Benedict’s Parish Church is ideally located on the same site and is the centre of many of our faith celebrations.
Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care for students is foundational to the role our school plays in the personal development of every child.

Whilst it has each individual as its focus it also recognises the many relationships in which each student participates. Our goal is to build a system of support, encouragement and care within the ethos of our Gospel-based community.

Our Pastoral Care Policy enables member of our community to:

- Grow and be affirmed in their dignity and worth as a person
- Appreciate themselves and their growth
- Develop skills in personal relationships
- Experience responsible self-discipline
- Encourage supportive relationships

At St Benedict’s we live to:

**Listen, Work, Pray, Seek Peace and Care**

And our Pastoral Care Policy enables this.

Our over-arching Pastoral Care Policy includes policies on:

- A Whole School Approach to Bullying
- Behaviour Management
- Playground Supervision
- School and Student Leadership
Education of Boys and Girls

St Benedict’s Primary School is a co-educational school that provides a uniquely individualised and nurturing educational experience for both boys and girls.

We provide a wide range of opportunities for our students to explore and learn in ways that suit their particular interests and characteristics. We support students in developing a wide range of intellectual, physical, social and emotional skills and capacities.

Students build strong relationships with their teachers and this enables them to continue to thrive in a safe and supportive environment. Under the care of our dedicated staff and through teaching programs such as Rock and Water for boys in Years 4 to 6, we assist students in developing positive gender identities and relationships.
Curriculum

Guided by Gospel values, we provide an education community within which the spiritual life is influenced specifically by our patron, St Benedict and supported by a very active and involved Parish. Students have the opportunity to hear the Good News and to respond to the person and message of Jesus. We provide students with opportunities to share their faith through celebrating Masses, liturgies, focus assemblies and Sacramental Programs including retreat and reflection days.

Key Learning Areas

We offer thorough teaching and learning in the areas of:

- Religious Education
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Personal Development, Health & Physical Education
- Society and Environment (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship)
- The Arts (Visual, Drama, Music and Dance)
- Language and Cultural Study: Italian

The source of our curriculum is a combination of The Australian Curriculum and The ACT Curriculum Framework: Every Chance to Learn.

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Teaching and Learning

We have an enthusiastic and committed staff who strive to offer the best curriculum programs to their students. They continuously seek to use the most effective teaching strategies for each class and student, supported by ongoing professional learning in Quality Teaching and the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Junior Primary

From Kindergarten to Year 2 the teaching team works together to provide a nurturing environment that offers a solid foundation in Literacy and Numeracy and basic social and motor skills. They develop programs that expand each student’s growing knowledge of the world around them. An assessment schedule is in place to identify any specific learning needs as early as possible and work with students and parents to provide support.

Primary Learning Program

In the Primary Learning Program our Year 3 - 6 team work together to provide targeted teaching for students in Literacy and Numeracy based on identified needs. As each student’s needs change their program is altered. They develop programs to develop in each student their independence, identity, social resilience, a deep faith, an increased capacity for leadership and a broader knowledge of the world. Foundational to this program is the development of critical thinking and organisational skills.
Enrichment Opportunities

Leadership

All Year 6 students at St Benedict’s take an active role as community leaders. They can select from a number of roles to lead in:

- Sport Leaders (House Captains)
- Media Leaders
- Liturgical Leaders
- Peer Relationships Leaders
- Hospitality Leaders

Student learn how to conduct tours, organise and lead assemblies, participate in outreach to the community, co-ordinate playground equipment, support staff at sporting events and mentor younger students. This is the culmination of a leadership program that begins in Kindergarten with each class member in every class having responsibilities for making contributions to the school community.

Buddy Program

When Kindergarten students arrive for their school orientation day, the year before they begin, they meet their buddies. Year 5 and Kindergarten buddies begin this special relationship at the beginning of the year and this continues for the next two years.

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Perceptual Motor Program

Students from Kindergarten to Year 2 participate in Perceptual Motor activities that focus on balance, coordination and developmental skills. It is organised by experienced teachers and delivered with the support of a committed team of parent volunteers.

Community Outreach

An integral part of our leadership program is the outreach to ‘Mountain View’ (a local nursing home for the elderly). The students participate in a healing liturgy and then join the residents for morning tea and an informal chat. This is a very rewarding experience for both the Mountain View residents and the children.
Academic Challenges

*Da Vinci Decathlon*

Students in older classes can use their developing skills in problem-solving and collaboration in a larger context where they compete in a range of tasks using their knowledge of literature, science and history.

*Debating or Rostrum*

Older students can also develop confidence through public speaking opportunities in contexts such as *ACT Debating or Rostrum*. Supported by staff these competitions suit a number of our high achieving students.

*Performances*

Every second year Junior Primary prepare for a fun-filled community concert while students in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to participate in an Australian-wide performance competition. We have participated recently in *Wakakirri* and *J-Rock*.
Specialist Programs

**Gymnastics**

During Term 1 a local gymnastics club provides qualified staff to teach basic gymnastic skills for students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

**Dance**

During Term 2 of each year all children have the opportunity to learn dance (creative, folk and contemporary).

**Music Tuition**

Several specialist teachers offer private, individual tuition in piano, guitar, violin and cello through the school.
Specialist Personnel

School Counsellor

Catholic Care provides the school with the services of a Counsellor on a regular weekly basis. The Counsellor is available to assist children and their families with personal issues that may occur, and indeed parents and teachers may request assistance of the Counsellor.

Learning Support Team

The St Benedict’s Learning Support Team includes our Learning Support Teacher and our Learning Support Assistants. They work together with classroom teachers in catering for the individual needs of children in teaching and learning.

Out of Hours School Care

We work with the YWCA to offer both Before and After School Care each day for our students. The program operates in our School Hall from 7.30am until 9.00am and 3.10pm until 6:00pm. The Child Care Rebate for fees is available. Registration forms are available at the Front Office and through YWCA Canberra. Further inquiries can be made through the After School Care phone number (6295 3280) after 2.30pm each weekday afternoon.

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Parent and Teacher Communication

Effective communication with parents, especially with regard to children’s progress at school, is a high priority at St Benedict’s. At any time during the year parents are encouraged to request a meeting with class teachers to discuss their child’s progress. Teachers ensure that parents remain informed about any issues that arise in the school context. We believe that it is much easier to address concerns, celebrate successes and for parents to feel reassured and confident in what is happening in the classroom when there are open channels of communication between home and school.

Some of our planned forms of communication include:

- Information Evenings for classes in Term 1.
- Class program overviews sent home each term.
- Interim Reports provided during the year.
- Full reports provided in Terms 2 and 4.
- Parent-Teacher interviews offered at reporting time.
- General news through the weekly School Newsletter, the school website and our Twitter feed.

Nurturing personal and academic growth from Kindergarten to Year 6.
Parent Involvement

*Parents and Friends Association*

All parents are invited to be involved in the Parents and Friends Association whose major role is to organise opportunities that build community amongst families. This body is also responsible for major fund raising efforts on behalf of the school community. Money raised feeds directly into providing resources and services for children at the school.

*School Board*

The School Board supports the Principal and School in Policy Direction, Financial Management, Strategic Planning and Pastoral Care. They work closely with policies developed by the Catholic Education Office.

*Parent Representative*

Each class has a Parent Representative to assist classroom teachers with communication to parents, create opportunities for families to gather socially and to help welcome new families to the school.

*Parent Volunteers*

Some of the other ways that parents can volunteer to be involved in the school are as classroom helpers in the canteen, assisting with the perceptual motor program, grounds maintenance team and with excursions and special events.

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Thank you for taking the time to read about St Benedict’s Primary School.

Please feel free to organise a time to take a tour or meet with the Principal to discuss the future for your child at St Benedict’s.

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Nurturing personal and academic growth from Kindergarten to Year 6.
At St Benedict’s Primary School everything we do is based on the following school values:

- Spirituality
- Dignity
- Optimism
- Excellence
- Community
- Integrity
- Respect
- Compassion

Our School Motto:

‘To Work and Pray’