Our Learning Community

Information Book 2017

Nurturing personal and academic growth...

...a journey from Kindergarten to Year 6.
All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ.
‘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.

Nurturing personal and academic growth from Kindergarten to Year 6.
Welcome

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

St Benedict’s is a warm, vibrant and friendly learning community, 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.

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
Principal

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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.
Facilities

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

- Spacious, accessible, refurbished and well-resourced classrooms designed for collaboration and enhancing 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 courtyard and garden for play and learning.
- Learning technology including the use of ipads, computers and digital learning spaces accessible to all students and teachers.
- A large hall used for class participation in 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.

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Pastoral Care

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

While each individual is our focus we also recognise 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.

We enable members 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**

Our Pastoral Care is also embedded in our policies on:

- Anti-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 from Kindergarten to Year 6.

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, we assist students in developing positive gender identities and relationships.

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Curriculum

Guided by Gospel values, we are a school community in which the spiritual life is influenced by our patron, St Benedict and is supported by an active and involved parish. In our inclusive Religious Education program students have the opportunity to hear and respond to the person and message of Jesus. We provide students with opportunities to share faith through Mass, liturgies, focus assemblies and Sacramental Programs, retreats and reflection days.

Student Centred Inquiry

Inquiry-based learning is a primary focus at St Benedict’s. Teachers work together to plan dynamic, student-centred units of inquiry that carefully guarantee the presentation of the Australian Curriculum and engage students with their own understandings or questions while all the time carefully collecting assessment data on each student’s achievements and next focus for learning.

Our Vision for Students

At the end of their journey to Year 6 we aim for our students to be:

- articulate and expressive in their faith,
- independent in their work,
- creative in their thinking,
- resilient in their relationships,
- confident in their sense of self,
- effective in collaborating,
- skilled in communicating and
- responsible stewards of their immediate world.

Nurturing personal and academic growth from Kindergarten to Year 6.
Key Learning Areas

We offer thorough teaching and learning in the areas of:

- Religious Education
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Technologies (Design and Technologies, Digital Technologies)
- Health & Physical Education
- Humanities & Social Sciences (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business)
- The Arts (Visual Arts, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Dance)
- Language and Cultural Study: Italian

The primary source of our curriculum is *The Australian Curriculum*. Our Religious Education Curriculum is the Archdiocesan *Treasures New and Old* and is available at the Catholic Education website.

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 early 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.

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Primary Learning Program

In the Primary Learning Program our Years 3 - 6 team work together to provide targeted teaching for students in Literacy and Numeracy based on identified needs. They design programs to develop each student’s independence, identity, social resilience, faith, capacity for leadership and a broader knowledge of the world. Foundational to this program is the development of critical thinking and organisational skills. Through increased use of learning technologies students are provided with the opportunity to develop the 21st Century learning skills they require to learn and participate in their future. A BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) program is introduced in Years 5 and 6 as they move towards high-school.

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 from:

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

Students learn how to conduct tours, organise and lead assemblies, participate in outreach to the community, co-ordinate playground games, lead teams 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 contributing to the school.

**Buddy Program**

When Kindergarten students arrive for school orientation, the year before they begin, they meet their buddies. Year 5 and Kindergarten buddies begin this special relationship early in the year and it continues for the next two years.

**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.

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Academic Challenges

*Tournament of the Minds*

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 technology, literature, mathematics, engineering and social sciences.

*Debating or Rostrum*

Older students 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 in *Wakakirri* and *J-Rock*.
Specialist Programs

**Gymnastics**

Throughout Term 1 a qualified teacher is employed to teach basic gymnastics skills for students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

**Dance**

Throughout Term 2 all children have the opportunity to learn dance (creative, folk and contemporary) from an experienced and qualified dance teacher.

**Music Tuition**

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

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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 parents and teachers may request assistance of the Counsellor.

Inclusion Team

The St Benedict’s Inclusion Team includes our Inclusion Teacher and our Inclusion Assistants. They work together with classroom teachers to cater for the specific teaching and learning needs of all children.

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.
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 our emailed weekly School Newsletter, the school website and our Skoolbag App.
Parent Engagement

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 Representatives

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 parents can volunteer to be involved in the school are as classroom helpers in the canteen, assisting with the perceptual motor program or working bees and with excursions and special events.
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.

**St Benedict’s Primary School**
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Mission Statement:

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.

School Motto:

‘To Work and Pray’

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