

7. St Stephen's School

<i>Moderator, as visitor</i>	Rev Steve Francis
<i>Chairperson</i>	Kevin Smout
<i>Principal</i>	Donella Beare
<i>Council Secretary</i>	Robin Parsons
<i>Members elected by Synod</i>	Tim Brewer
	Michael Charteris
	Michael Lynn
	Jenine Owen
	Anneke Klopper
	Riaan Piek

St Stephen's is a Christ-centred, student-focused and community-based school of the Uniting Church. Our personalised approach to learning and strong tradition of high-quality teaching encourages St Stephen's students to lay foundations for their chosen pathways.

Our Christian faith lies at the very heart of our understanding of what it is to be human as well as our understanding of education. People of innovation, creativity, integrity and faith. People who value community, are equipped with a positive attitude, and above all, live to serve.

Our learning and working environment is based on five core values; faith, learning, service, care and community. These values form the foundation of the School's vision and culture.

The year has seen roll out of our new Strategic Plan (2018-2020). Entitled 'Staying True, Moving Forward', the plan builds on our strong foundations and the progress we have made over the past 30 years as we move forward with a clear direction.

Teaching and Learning at St Stephen's School is a relational adventure, where traditional learning is redefined to enhance student outcomes. We are committed to providing a Christian approach to education, which offers opportunities of challenge, purpose and growth. This becomes possible when we share the same language and expectations. At St Stephen's School this is reflected in a shared understanding of excellence for self and others.

The School continues to grow its relationship and partnership with the Uniting Church and has greatly appreciated the Church's involvement in a number of activities - from worships and devotions to our awards presentation nights and other events - over the past year.

Our School Council and staff would like to thank our Moderator, Rev Steve Francis for giving us his time and blessings at a number of our events as well as General Secretary, Rev David de Kock who was also a keynote speaker at our staff professional development seminar this year.

Following on from the Church's release last year of their Safe Church Policy and a National Child Safe Policy Framework, the School will continue to ensure its relevant policies and procedures align with the commitments outlined in the Framework. We will also continue to work closely with the Uniting Church in relation to the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

I. PASTORAL CARE AT ST STEPHEN'S SCHOOL

St Stephen's School is committed to providing significant care to each student in matters concerning social, educational, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

This is facilitated through our unique care structure that ensures every student is known and has a strong sense of identity, belonging and purpose.

The foundation for pastoral care at St Stephen's School remains our unique House system. Upon enrolment, students are allocated a House. Houses are smaller communities within the larger school that are overseen by a Dean and an Assistant Dean. They provide a sense of identity and belonging for each student and an opportunity to contribute to the wellbeing of fellow students. This vertical approach fosters a sense of "whole community" in which Year 11 and 12 students are able to interact with and mentor students in lower year levels.

Students act together, as a community, to participate in sport carnivals, academic competitions, service learning opportunities and worship. Worship and devotions play a central role in the activity of a House. Devotions occur weekly at both a homeroom level and a whole House level, whilst worship services occur on a term basis. Whole school worship services occur regularly at Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving, Year 12 Farewell, as well as other times during the term.

The care of students, families and staff within each House is supported by the School's Pastoral Care Team consisting of educational and care professionals. The Pastoral Care Team is made up of the Deputy Head (Care), School Psychologist, School Nurse, Deans of House, Head of Learning Enrichment and Year 7 Co-ordinator.

The Pastoral Care Team meets weekly to discuss individual students and families of concern. Appropriate responses and ongoing care plans for these students are developed and implemented. In addition, the Pastoral Care Team will plan for whole school pro-active programs in the wellbeing space and school community seminars.

Through focussing on the needs of others, confidence and resilience in our younger students is developed, as well as leadership skills in our secondary students. Aspects of "Health and Wellbeing" are taught explicitly in a variety of areas. Our Health Education Program in lower secondary school includes topics such as sexuality, drugs, cyber safety, fitness and healthy relationships. In the Positive Education Program in upper secondary school, students are taught study skills, relaxation techniques, healthy sleep routines and healthy diet.

The Pastoral Care Team presents regular seminars in the area of wellbeing. These are presented to both parents and students. Topics presented in the last 12 months include: Triple P- Parenting, Building Student Resilience and Digital Health. The annual St Stephen's Parent Symposium focussed on "Future proofing parent-child relationships".

2. SERVICE LEARNING:

St Stephen's believes a commitment to the work performed by community groups and an interest in the wellbeing of others develops mature, independent and caring people. The concept of service is at the heart of our School, yet students are not the only ones to benefit from our commitment to serving others.

Parents, family members and the wider community can engage their passion for service through the School's volunteering opportunities.

An exciting opportunity to partner with WA Charities Direct has emerged for our students centring on leadership and service in action. The key focus of WA Charities Direct is to ensure that all those who are helped by the charity are WA based and 100percent of all funds raised go directly to the individuals and families in need and to assist young charities get off the ground. St Stephen's has been selected as the pilot school for this program (secondary based). The framework revolves around working with a group of students, cross-campus, to develop their leadership, team building and philanthropic skills through a variety of activities.

Some other examples of our service learning and volunteering include:

- UnitingCare West Food Rescue
- Home room collection and baking for UnitingCare West Tranby Day Centre/Merriwa Community Hub
- Cook and Donate – Supporting UnitingCare West Merriwa Staff attend a basic cooking session after school to prepare pre-packaged meals for families in financial crisis
- UnitingCare West Winter and Christmas Appeals
- Joint partnership with UnitingCare West in establishing the Uniting Church schools 'Social Justice Program' for both Primary and Secondary
- SSS Food Cart – both campuses now have their own food collection cart and have liaised with Lakeside Joondalup and Westfield Whitfords to collect surplus food from retailers once a week to donate to UnitingCare West
- Volunteer knitters – parents and grandparents knitting blankets, beanies and scarves for UnitingCare West Tranby Day Centre
- Rise Community Network - for those with disabilities
- Rocky Bay – supporting young adults with acquired brain injuries
- Wanneroo Community Retirement Home
- Regents Garden Aged Care Facility
- Salvation Army - Balga - maintenance and interaction with day care centre
- Salvation Army Doorways Breakfast – Feeding Perth's homeless warm breakfast
- Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal – Students and staff manning posts at Bunnings and large shopping centres
- Red Cross Soup Patrol – Staff roster of a Friday night to deliver hot meals to homeless in Fremantle and Perth.

Our school also undertakes a number of international tours, exposing our students to different cultures, environments and people around the world, which helps to mold them into more compassionate people with life experience before they have even graduated.

Our Service Learning tours include Bethany Home Malaysia, Cambodia and South Africa as well as two of our indigenous sister schools in the East Kimberley - Purnululu Aboriginal School and Yiyili Aboriginal School. A further tour to Indonesia is also being planned.

3. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

Our students have continued to perform strongly across academic areas over the past year with a total of 35 students placed inside the State's top 10 percent for WACE and 19 of these students were placed inside the State's top five percent for the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE). Of students who applied to University, 95 percent were offered a place and 75 percent of students received an offer for their first preference. WACE was achieved by 98 percent of students and the School was ranked equal first in Western Australia for Vocational Education and Training (VET).

A particular highlight for this year saw our School - in partnership with Edith Cowan University – named as having the most Transformative Impact on Education at this year's Western Australian Information Technology and Telecommunication Alliance INCITE Awards.

The award was for the gamification app 'Abydos', which uses the theme of ancient Egypt to teach primary students about fractions. Research showed a group of Year 6 students who used the app scored 10.5 percent higher after just two sessions a week for four weeks using the app. This was the first win in the new Education category, which recognises products that break down barriers and access to education.

4. MOVING FORWARD, STAYING TRUE:

Looking ahead, and in line with the School's new strategic plan, the need for a clear pre-kindergarten to Year 12 approach with a seamless transition to ensure best outcomes for our students has been identified. From Term 1, 2019, both campuses will have one Head of School overseeing each campus to ensure our leadership and teachers cultivate long-term academic objectives and foster stronger relationships with students. This also builds a strong community spirit and it enhances students' engagement not just with their learning, but with the whole school.

This report provides some of the key areas of focus and development for our School over the past 12 months as we continue to provide a Christ-centred, student-focused and community-based education for our students.

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