



## SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020

As part of our funding agreement with the Australian Government, we are required to ensure that specific 'School Performance Information' is made publically available to the school community. The information has been provided by this report which has been posted on our website at [www.stmarks.sa.edu.au](http://www.stmarks.sa.edu.au) and which is also available at the school office.

COVID-19 saw many of our usual activities modified or cancelled in line with advice provided by SA Health and the Association of Independent Schools SA.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please direct them to the Principal, Mr James Heyne.

### **Contextual Information**

In 2020 St Mark's Lutheran School operated with a Foundation to Year 6 structure providing 2 classes in each year level. St Mark's continues to operate as a systemic Lutheran school located in the Adelaide Hills. In harmony with our Lutheran ethos, the School is centred on the gospel of Jesus Christ as described in our Mission and Values, which we strive to bring to life each day with all our interactions within and beyond the school community.

### **Our Mission**

'Led by God, St Mark's provides a quality education, developing individuals' potential and encouraging all to reflect Christ's love in care and service to others.'

### **Our Values**

God's Word, as revealed in the Bible, is the authority of what we do and teach. Therefore, we foster and support the following 11 values.

#### ***Love***

We daily reflect God's love for us in our interactions with others.

#### ***Forgiveness***

We forgive others as God forgives us and in doing so, we recognise the wrong, seek reconciliation and begin anew.

#### ***Integrity***

We display a moral character based on honesty, truthfulness and faithfulness.

#### ***Patience***

We display patience through perseverance and self-control.

#### ***Respect***

We are considerate of others, honour their role and recognise their worth as individuals.

#### ***Justice***

We interact with others in a fair and equitable manner.

**Cooperation**

We work together harmoniously, and in doing so, acknowledge differences but remain focused on achieving common goals.

**Service**

We give selflessly of our time and talents for others.

**Hope**

We face the future with confidence, in anticipation of the possibilities God holds for us.

**Compassion**

We care for, and have empathy with, the situations of others as we walk alongside them.

**Excellence**

We encourage all to aim for excellence through realising their potential.

To provide focus and direction to our operations and activities we provide our strategic plan as a statement of intent. The plan is the result of a consultative community process building upon our strengths and focusing our improvement endeavours in four key areas. In 2020 the school continued to work through its Strategic Priorities and these include:

## St Mark's Lutheran Strategic Priorities

### Goal 1 - Inspired Students

**We will create student focused, innovative learning environments informed by evidence based best practice inspiring students to achieve their God given potential.**

- Deliver learning programs that are **student centred** based on a culture of high expectation for all learners as they strive for personal excellence.
- Differentiating learning to accommodate the needs of learners across the spectrum of achievement.
- Promote **student wellbeing** and **student agency** nurturing care and connection so that students feel safe and included.
- Design learning where **technology** plays an integral role in learning through collaboration, communication and creativity.

### Goal 2: Passionate Staff

**We will empower our staff to use and develop their God given gifts to achieve our St Mark's vision.**

### Goal 3: Exciting Facilities

**To maximise opportunities to enhance our facilities into agile, appealing and inviting learning spaces.**

## **Goal 4: Vibrant Community**

**We will continue to grow as a Christ centred vibrant community that acknowledges its interconnectedness and reflects the gospel in love and service.**

St Mark's adopts a holistic approach to learning where individual student needs are developed through quality educational and pastoral programs.

Educationally, ongoing curriculum development and quality teaching results in a strong emphasis placed upon Literacy, Numeracy and Christian Studies. The integration of technology into the learning programs developed from the Australian Curriculum areas of English, Mathematics, Science, HASS, The Arts, Health and PE, Technologies and Languages – German, underpins quality learning experiences for our students.

In 2020 the school continued to be guided by its 6 Learning Principles:

### **1. Learning conceptually through inquiry, focussing on critical and creative thinking, promotes deep understanding, connections and transference of knowledge.**

*At St Mark's concept based teaching is learning through the pedagogy of inquiry. Concepts are the 'big ideas' rather than subject specific knowledge. By leading students to consider the context in which they will use their developing understandings, concept based learning brings real world meaning to content knowledge and skills. Students become critical thinkers which is essential to their ability to creatively solve problems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

*At St Mark's inquiry learning sees our students being co-creators of learning actively involved in questioning, communicating, reflecting, collaborating, analysing and responding to 'big ideas' or concepts. Inquiry learning takes place in a social context with students learning from each other, together with others and from individuals and organisations beyond the classroom context.*

*At St Mark's we believe thinking that is productive, purposeful and intentional is at the centre of effective learning. By students developing an increasingly sophisticated understanding of creative and critical thinking they will be well placed to respond to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

### **2. Learning in an environment that is safe, respectful and nurturing promotes confidence, positive risk taking and improved learning outcomes.**

*At St Mark's all efforts are made to promote positive attitudes and behaviours so students feel safe, cared for and included. Our restorative practices in managing student behaviour provide opportunity for those affected by conflict to be part of the healing process. Positive relationships are essential for learning and for maintaining a harmonious community.*

### **3. Learning opportunities that cater for the different learning styles and abilities of students enhances progress towards excellence for all students.**

*At St Mark's we believe learning experiences are most effective when students are provided with different pathways to achieve success. Students engage and focus on a task when they are at the centre of their own learning experience. Learning that is student centred leads to deeper understanding and application.*

**4. Learning that is developed from regular assessment and feedback to learners provides challenge and engagement for all students.**

*Quality teaching and learning is informed by regular assessment and timely feedback. Students who learn to evaluate the quality of their learning against well - defined learning goals and criteria develop skills that are invaluable for learning throughout their own lives.*

**5. Learning that connects with students' backgrounds, perspectives and interests promotes self-motivation and authentic engagement.**

*At St Mark's we believe that respecting diversity and providing learning experiences that are inclusive will foster students' developing sense of self, belonging and identity within the learning community.*

**6. Learning that builds essential capabilities while embedding technology as a tool for learning equips students to be able to redefine their understandings, respond to issues and be life-long learners.**

*Designing learning where technology plays an integral role in collaboration, research and presentation ensures our students learn to use ICT with confidence, care and consideration, understanding its possibilities, limitations and impacts on individuals, groups and communities.*

Areas of subject specialisation in 2020 included Music, German, Physical Education and collaborative use of our Library/Resource centre.

In addition, students at St Mark's undertake a wide range of learning experiences through many events, activities and learning opportunities. As previously stated, Covid-19 had a significant impact on many of our usual activities.

<u><i>Social Justice:</i></u>	Support of national and local charities through our chapel offerings
<u><i>Leadership:</i></u>	Student Representative Council, House Captains, playground Peer Mentor Program, Student Representative Council lunch clubs prior to and as Covid-19 restrictions eased
<u><i>Excursions:</i></u>	Art Gallery, Museum, Laratinga Wetlands, Parliament House, Adelaide Zoo, Adelaide Railway Museum
<u><i>Incursions:</i></u>	The school usually hosts many incursions but due to Covid-19 2020 incursions were cancelled
<u><i>Outdoor Education:</i></u>	Camps were modified to day excursions in 2020. National Ride to School Day in early Term 1 remained a highlight
<u><i>Music/Drama Program:</i></u>	Due to Covid-19 choir, music bands, individual music tutors occurred in line with SA Health guidelines. The annual school concert was planned to meet the requirements of SA Health Guidelines for Covid-19
<u><i>Community Events:</i></u>	Parents and Friends events including The Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea, Special Friends Day and many special treats we usually have for our students including pizza night, sausage sizzle days, donut days were cancelled due to Covid-19. Events that were hosted included a student disco and Remembrance Day
<u><i>Sport:</i></u>	SAPSASA Swimming and Cross Country, Inter-Lutheran Athletics, Cross Country, Pedal Prix, House Sports were cancelled due to Covid-19 while Sports Day remained a highlight of Term 1
<u><i>Related Curricula:</i></u>	Inter-School Chess, ICAS Competitions, Lutheran Education Adelaide Hills Stem Project were cancelled due to Covid-19 while the Premier's Reading Challenge remained a highlight

Pastorally, St Mark's strives to develop caring and nurturing relationships between all members of the school community including active parent participation. Our staff, supported by our Pastoral Support Worker provided support and care for our students and families in all aspects of their lives. In a Covid-19 environment this became an even more important priority with the school providing regular communication home for families on self-care for parents, caring for family during a pandemic, helpful home learning tips during lockdown as well as contact details for community support agencies.

In 2020 staff continued to implement the 'You Can Do It' and Circle Time in classrooms. This supports the school's restorative practices for managing student behaviour.

In early 2020 students from Cornerstone College (sister school) were able to support student learning through the college's Legacy Project.

### **Our Students**

In 2020 St Mark's provided enrolment for 312 students comprised of 149 girls and 163 boys. 2% of students identified as indigenous. 3% of our students have a language background other than English.

### **Our Staff**

#### *Teacher Standards and Qualifications*

All teachers have satisfied the requirements of teacher registration, including child protection training and a criminal history check.

The following table indicates the highest qualifications of St Mark's teaching staff.

Masters	Bachelor	Graduate Diploma
3	21	4

In 2020 the school continued to actively support the professional learning of teaching staff. A particular focus was online learning and in particular learning of the Seesaw platform – a remote online learning and communication platform. Our teachers also received training in Zoom – a cloud-based video conferencing service which allowed students at school and their teachers to connect with students learning at home. This training allowed the school to provide ongoing quality learning in a Covid-19 environment.

The school was able to continue its practice of fortnightly assemblies and weekly chapels using the technology available. Our students may not have been able to connect live but were able to do so from their classrooms allowing staff to continue nurturing the community feel our school is renowned for. Families warmly welcomed viewing their child's/children's assemblies and chapels via the school's YouTube channel.

Amidst the challenge of Covid-19 positives can be found. SA Health guidelines requiring parents not attend their child's classroom, saw the school observe students become more independent in caring for their personal needs. Also noted in 2020 was an increase in positive parental perception of the school and the work of its teachers due to the increased parental engagement with their children's learning. Teachers also noted the benefit of providing the freedom for students to learn at their own pace and then deliver understandings via different mediums seeing an overall increase in student engagement.

In early 2020, St Mark's was able to achieve several priority actions documented in its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The first action was open Sports Day with its very first Welcome to Country by a member of the Peramangk community – the original custodians of the Mt Barker district. This was a heartfelt experience for our students, their families and our staff. The school also celebrated National Reconciliation Week and staff engaged in professional learning delivered via Zoom by Australians

Together. This provided an opportunity for staff to grow in their cultural understanding of First Nations people and our shared history.

In 2020 the school was served by 24 teaching staff and 10 administration and support staff. No staff identified as Indigenous. Together they form the cornerstone of the quality environment that St Mark's is known for.

### **Student Attendance**

The student attendance in 2020 across the school is reported below for the two collection periods for all students in Years 1 to 6. There is a need to view the 2020 attendances knowing it was a Covid-19 year. A lower than usual attendance rate is reported as parents took a precautionary approach, due to COVID19, and kept students at home if they were at all unwell.

Semester One		Term Three	
Year level	% attendance	Year level	% attendance
Year 1	92.3	Year 1	92.8
Year 2	92.6	Year 2	95.8
Year 3	91.9	Year 3	93.4
Year 4	91.7	Year 4	95.1
Year 5	92.0	Year 5	96.6
Year 6	91.1	Year 6	93.7
<b>School Total</b>	<b>92.1</b>	<b>School Total</b>	<b>94.7</b>

When a student is absent without explanation, a phone call is made to the parents or guardians after the morning roll has been marked. Parents and guardians are required to provide explanations for absences from school and apply for attendance exemptions for extended absences. In a Covid-19 environment some modification to our attendance tracking system was made. Parents used a variety of mediums to inform the school if their child was absent due to learning at home or other circumstances.

### **Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy testing.**

There are no 2020 results for student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) was cancelled due to Covid-19. In previous years students at St Mark's achieved at high levels with the percentage of students achieving at or above the National Minimum Benchmark above national percentages.

### **Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction with the School**

In 2020 we continued to be affirmed by our community through the following indicators.

- ✓ Our school has again been greatly supported through the wonderful efforts of a dedicated team of Parents and Friends. As Covid-19 restrictions eased, the Parents and Friends hosted a student disco. The highly anticipated school fair also an initiative of the Parents and Friends was cancelled due to Covid-19.
- ✓ Student Representative Council hosted numerous events to promote the school's values. Initiatives included Stepping Into Kindness Day, National Reconciliation Week and a Soup Drive for Empathy. Our Student Representative Council also hosted numerous lunchtime clubs which were well attended by students from Foundation to Year 6.
- ✓ Affirming feedback - The school regularly received affirming written and verbal comments from the parent community regarding the way the school navigated Covid-19 from both a wellbeing perspective as well as the ongoing delivery of quality learning through challenging times - online learning as well as face to face learning.

- ✓ Community participation - Students, parents and friends of the school whole heartedly shared how they missed the many events hosted by the school in previous years but in 2020 were cancelled due to Covid-19.
- ✓ A caring community - Our Religious Pastoral Support Worker oversaw our 'Caret' which provided valuable support and care for many families in need. She also provided programs of support for students to assist them to feel safe and respected in our school. Parents and extended family feedback consistently affirmed the care provided to families in times of difficulty.
- ✓ Graduation of students. Families with students graduating from St Mark's in 2020 continued to express their deep gratitude and thanks to our staff for the care, nurture and education provided to their children.

Key improvements to capital works included the complete refurbishment of the Foundation classes and surrounding gardens and play areas allowing for additional flexible learning spaces. Foundation classes also enjoyed new furniture and storage options. Soft furnishings were also purchased for the Library and specialist German language room. Other soft furnishings were purchased for Year 1 – Year 6 classrooms allowing students to create their preferred learning spaces. A sports storage facility was constructed allowing student leaders to manage sports equipment independently. 56 laptops were also purchased to replace less effective devices.

#### **School income broken down by funding source**

Below is listed the income received by the school in 2019. We acknowledge not only the funding provided by the Commonwealth and State Governments but also the significant and substantial level of tuition fees paid by families.

Commonwealth Funding:	\$2,565,156
State Funding:	\$674,831
Tuition Fees:	\$1,001,470
Other Income:	\$191,129
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>\$4,432,586</u></b>

Thank you for taking the time read our 2020 School Performance report. I would welcome any questions you may have. The best way to understand the experience we provide for our community is to visit us personally. I would welcome the opportunity to share our story with you.

Respectfully Submitted

James Heyne  
Principal  
St Mark's Lutheran School.