



# St Francis Xavier Primary School Ballarat East Ltd

ABN 47 838598 852

Reviewed: Feb 2020

Ratified: Feb 2020

Next Review: Feb 2025

## An explanation of how the school's philosophy is enacted

### Vision and Mission:

#### St. Francis Xavier Primary School Vision:

Called to action through Gospel values and Mercy tradition we will enrich thinking, expand horizons and pursue excellence!

#### St. Francis Xavier Primary School Mission:

Through our ardent and all-encompassing Mercy work at St Francis Xavier Primary School, we will engender a passion for learning, respect and an ability to live in harmony with God's creation.

Charged with the ministry of our vision statement we are committed to the following core values:

1. Mercy
2. Respect
3. Compassion
4. Excellence
5. Justice

"Mercy not only bestows benefits, but receives and pardons again and again." Catherine McAuley

Central to the mission of St. Francis Xavier Primary School is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

### How is our Catholic School Vision/Mission embedded in what we have achieved?

St. Francis Xavier, Ballarat East is performing effectively and making a significant difference in the lives and learning of the children, staff and community we service. This belief is supported by the substantial improvement in our school academic achievement and school health surveys. St. Francis Xavier has rigorously adopted the recommendations of the 2012 School Review as a plan for whole school improvement. This plan was comprehensive and valued by all stakeholders that contributed to it. The report has been a catalyst for change. We have conscientiously adhered to the recommendations of the review and have used the wisdom and experience of the leadership team and staff to identify other areas for development. Whilst improvement is evident we believe there is still much room for future growth. A commitment to continue to build teacher capacity, enhancement of our Catholic Identity and a focus on contemporary learning strategies is recognised as areas for future development.

At the beginning of 2014 staff were challenged to think about their fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning and led through a series of workshops to strengthen their understanding of moral purpose and responsibility. From this, staff collaboratively developed a new vision and mission statement that represented our vision and pedagogy about the way children learn. There is a strong belief and understanding amongst staff about our core purpose and this is used to audit all decisions that are made in our school.

There has been a very deliberate shift in thinking, nurtured by senior leadership towards a focus on explicit teaching and on raising student achievement at St Francis Xavier. A culture of continuous and ongoing professional development has been established. Staff have been introduced and supported in a range of quality teaching and learning programs in the classroom that have at their very core, a strong emphasis on explicit teaching practices.

To support this staff have been introduced to the work of leading educationalists such as Fullan, Hattie, Clarke, Black and William and challenged to examine their own beliefs about teaching and learning in light of the research presented. Teachers are committed to whole school Core Professional Learning each week and the major changes and initiatives in our school have been embedded because of the time and support given to staff to implement and reflect on improved educational outcomes.

In 2015, a full time Curriculum Leader was appointed to audit and then improve current practices. Working within our Leadership Structure the Curriculum Leader has been able to ensure continuity and progression in our curriculum through the school. A greater focus on using evidence and data to inform our decisions has also ensured a whole school approach and trust in change. This journey has been significant!

The appointment in 2015 of a Digital Literacy Leader has also raised the profile and importance of ICT and how it can enhance the curriculum. A working party was established to create an eVision for our school that supports our school vision. Whilst teaching and learning is seen as the driver in what we do, ICT competencies have been identified as the 'accelerator.'

Another significant development was a professional learning focus improving student behaviour across the school. Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline research was identified as a program that supported our schools beliefs and could demonstrate an improvement in the classroom learning environment. A year of staff professional learning led to the formation and implementation of *The St. Francis Xavier (Villa) Way*. To also support the pastoral needs and mental wellbeing of our school community we became a KidsMatter School. KidsMatter provided a framework for identifying this as a significant strategy for supporting whole school wellbeing.

All staff have taken ownership and responsibility for wanting our school and our children to improve and hence see the School Review process as a very positive one. We recognise that SIF provides us with an excellent opportunity to reflect on and affirm our core beliefs and core business and to celebrate our achievements. It also gives us the opportunity to collaboratively identify our future directions for learning and the continued growth of the school and our community.

The St Francis Xavier School Vision and Mission is regularly referred to on the school Newsletter.

**Reference:**

SFX 2016 School Reflection Report