What the Compass Means to St Patrick’s

The image of a compass represents guidance and direction. Firstly it suggests that St Patrick’s children come from all different points of the Nambucca Valley.

Secondly, the compass points themselves indicate a pedagogy or value that orientate students in their navigation of successful learning- how students learn at St Patrick’s (pedagogy) on the diagonal, and the values that underpin learning on the horizontal and vertical.

Overall, there is a message that children will have a strong sense of identity because the school will play its part in offering students vital learning experiences that will provide them with the security, knowledge and guidance required for steering through life.

The image of the cross illuminates the fundamental guidance given by Christ. Its diagonal positioning evokes the image of Christ carrying his cross to Calvary and reminds us that we too share that burden of suffering for the good of all.
Historical Background

St Patrick’s Primary School, Macksville was established on the 8th May, 1918 by the Good Samaritan Sisters. The Good Samaritan Sisters taught in Macksville for 35 years, leaving in 1953. The first school was built and opened in 1928. On 29th January, 1954 the Sisters of Mercy began teaching at Macksville with 150 pupils.

In 1956 a new Infants School was built and opened. In 1957 there were 250 names listed for enrolment. At the end of 1965 the high school was closed.

Planning for a new school to be built on a green field site began in 2005 when a report into future schooling for St Patrick’s School was commissioned by the Nambucca Valley Parish. The school population experienced substantial growth from 2005 to 2015. Building commenced in 2014 to relocate the whole school.

This expansion of school size also coincided with a change in pedagogy, and the building of a new school providing an opportunity to cater for, support and encourage effective teaching and learning practices.

Rationale for Framework

There is ample evidence to suggest that education is on a new trajectory. The methodologies of the 19th Century, often referred to as the ‘factory model’, which served the economies of the Industrial Revolution, are no longer relevant. Yet they persisted for over 200 years and there are still elements of this model visible in classrooms today. The teacher-centred approach is still part of the experience and expectation of some parents and educators, with children conforming to “one-size-fits-all” curriculum, memorising content, being tested and graded and moved along the educational “production line” until graduation.

The traditional model of education also led to other shortcomings in the whole-school quest for school improvement. Scope remained for teachers, even when following a common syllabus, to interpret differently, to give greater or lesser emphasis and time, to use more or less effective and engaging teaching techniques, to cope with greater or lesser challenges in their cohort, or to put in greater or lesser effort in the pursuit of student achievement.

Along with other schools in the Lismore Diocese and around the world, St Patrick’s has committed to an educational approach which addresses the needs of a 21st century learning environment and serves the needs of a 21st century economy. Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) as advocated by Richard and Rebecca DuFour, help schools to shift the focus from teaching to learning, from isolation to collaboration, and gives schools and teachers tools and insights to grow as educators.

What this looks like in a school setting is teachers in Professional Learning Teams collaborating on the “four critical questions” of the classroom;

- What do we want our children to learn?
- How will we know they have learnt it?
- What will we do if they don’t learn it?
- What will we do if they already know it?


This particular focus guides teachers to planning a common curriculum for which they have a shared understanding of, common pacing (time emphasis), common assessment tasks which give validity to grade comparisons, shared commitment to helping all children succeed, and this includes a common
school-wide approach to intervention, and a focus on those who already have the required knowledge, skills or dispositions so that they can progress and remain engaged.

“Learning environments need to be intentionally developed to enable and foster new pedagogies and to ensure that the individual needs of each learner in the community are effectively met. They must focus on what is best for student learning. Learner groups need to be monitored so that variations occur based on ability, interest, learning styles and more random groupings. These variations will ensure a sense of connectedness between all learners in the community and will ensure that individual needs are met. Strong partnerships between the school, home and community are fundamental to achieve a vibrant learning community.

Both physical and virtual learning spaces need to be planned so that they are:

- Flexible and adaptable – furnishings and equipment can be rearranged with speed and ease. Able to switch between individual and group settings – for presentation, communication and collaboration modes
- Reflective of the new learning practices
- Designed to support different levels of technological sophistication
- Provided with wireless and mobile computing devices”

Contemporary Learning Framework, Diocese of Lismore
Our Learning Framework has been designed based on the following principles:

1. Designing Spaces for Effective Learning in the 21st Century

As we move to provide a more effective learning program to meet the needs of students today it is incumbent upon our school to ensure the learning spaces provide every opportunity to motivate and engage students in the learning process. With the learning activities becoming more collaborative, more personalized and more engaging the learning spaces need to be more flexible and adaptable to enable a diverse range of learning scenarios.

The design of the learning spaces builds on the work of Stephen Heppell and his ‘Rule of Three’.

Rule of Three

One: never more than three walls

Two: no fewer than three points of focus

Three: always able to accommodate at least three teachers, three classes.

Today’s third millennium learning spaces are multi-faceted, agile (and thus easily re-configured by users as they use them), but allow all effective teaching and learning approaches, now and in the future, to be incorporated: collaborative work, mentoring, one-on-one, large group team taught groups... and more.  

Each learning pod is designed to accommodate up to 120 children (Kindergarten is built as a stand-alone learning pod) and can be arranged as straight or multi-age classes. The pod can be split into two large spaces by closing the operable walls. (As seen below) Each space has alternate coloured carpet squares as focus areas; this includes a semi-circular stage made from vinyl flooring. Individual toilets are accessible inside and outside each pod. Two withdrawal areas have been integrated into each learning pod. These spaces allow for one-on-one work with a teacher or teacher assistant or small group intervention sessions.
“Snyder and Crumpacker (1995) suggest that student choice in their learning environment is crucial to engagement. ‘What is important is the variety actually experienced by users rather than the number of distinct activity settings available’ (Snyder Crumpacker, 1995, P.41).

Adam Heath, Kristen Middle School, Auckland, NZ

Therefore, the learning spaces have been planned to enable indoor and outdoor learning to be integrated under the one roof. The general indoor spaces are linked with the outdoor spaces using rubberised matting, which enables teachers to plan activities which can be designed to suit a desired purpose. These large open spaces allow teachers and students the opportunity to create different learning environments using the furniture. Characteristics include the use of whiteboard paint, floor to ceiling pin board, colourful movable furniture, single toilets throughout and covered outdoor learning spaces.

Evidence of successful initiatives in building learning spaces is becoming more plentiful as research into this area grows. Designing learning spaces for 21st century learners was a key document published by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in 2008 to help guide schools as they began to implement the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

MCEETYA’s Designing Spaces for Learning sets out its framework for the building of a school in the 21st century.

A. Welcoming, stimulating learning spaces
   - Comfortable, imaginative and fun
   - Maximum use of natural light and ventilation
   - Creative colours, textures, patterns
   - Range of formal and informal furniture and fittings
   - Social spaces, range of technologies

B. Acoustics and lighting complement lighting
   - Sound absorbing materials on floors, walls and ceilings
   - Full-spectrum lighting for general learning spaces
   - Specialised lighting and sound
C. Furniture can be re-configured for multiple users and use
   - Fit for purpose furniture
   - Adjustable, modular and mobile
   - Stackable and collapsible
   - Ergonomic tables and chairs

D. Continuous replacement, upgrade and renewable of ICT
   - Emerging technologies, systems and services trialled and integrated

Designing spaces for learning spaces requires educators, planners, architects and the community to consider:
   - Inclusivity, engagement and interaction
   - Experimentation, innovation and knowledge creation
   - Adaptability, safety and sustainability

MCEETYA Learning Spaces Framework, 2008

The design of our school considered these factors to be important.

2. Deprivatisation

In a collaborative team and within flexible learning spaces, teachers must be accountable to each other to implement the plan that they have agreed on. They need to be mutually supportive of each other and deliver best-practice teaching and learning in front of their peers. They need to assist each other with management issues using common agreed approaches, deliver the curriculum content with common agreed practices and understandings, and learn from each other as they demonstrate some of the high-level skills of their profession.

“The numbers of adults in the classroom is changing: classroom assistants, adults other than teachers, student teachers, older children (perhaps from another education phase), parent helpers, inspectors, advisors. Classrooms are no longer one-teacher, one-group spaces and yet designing for this (for example with multiple foci) is not well understood. Much of the professions rejection of open plan schools in the last century was triggered by the threat to a teacher’s “privacy” in “their” classroom and by noise issues, but although that privacy has long since been breached by team teaching, inspection, initial teacher education, assistants and even parents...”

Stephen Heppell, 2004
The following table from the NZ Department of Education illustrates the differences between teachers who work in isolation (Private Practice) to those who work collaborative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In private practice teachers...</th>
<th>In collaborative practice teachers...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are isolated in individual classrooms and work alone</td>
<td>Are in frequent contact with other teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine their own goals and expectations for student learning</td>
<td>Commit to shared goals and expectations for student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have sole responsibility for the learning and behaviour of the students they teach</td>
<td>Share responsibility for the learning and behaviour of all students in the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not feel at ease having other teachers observe their teaching or sharing their student work with other teachers</td>
<td>Have a shared expectation and structured time to observe and reflect on each others’ teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have access to offer or receive feedback from peers</td>
<td>Act as critical friends to improve practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan and devise their programmes on their own</td>
<td>Jointly share with others the challenge of creating programmes that meet the needs of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May have friendly relationships with others, but do not have conversations that can impact on the teaching of others</td>
<td>Have purposeful conversations such as creating common assessments, discussing and moderation student work, analysing student data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are not encouraged to share dissenting views about contentious issues</td>
<td>Disagreements are expected and teachers learn to positively address differences of opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deprivatising Practice, New Zealand Ministry of Education

3. Personalisation of Learning

In every class there are students with varying learning needs and differing learning styles. When teachers have access to a shared and flexible learning environment, children are able to be grouped more effectively according to their individual needs. When teachers refer to the “four critical questions” and apply formative assessment tasks, they will find that the learning they are planning to deliver will not uniformly meet the needs of every child in their classroom. When teachers share their resources, they are able to group children with common learning needs at that particular time so that each child gets what they need. This could be a physical aspect of the environment, a social aspect, an environmental aspect or a choice of learning tools.
“The aim is to enable pupils to understand themselves better as learners and so take greater control of and responsibility for their learning, transferring and applying a widening repertoire of learning approaches in different subjects and contexts. They also offer a language for talking about learning which goes beyond reductive notions of ‘learning styles’ to focus more clearly on cognitive and affective development.”


4. Use of Technology for Learning

As a school community there has been significant emphasis placed on the use of technology as a vehicle to enhance student achievement. Careful consideration in the ongoing discussion about the use of technology has seen the provision of interactive televisions, interactive projectors and smart televisions in all learning areas as well as the library. This was partly achieved through school budgeting and National Partnerships and Parents and Friends donations.

As students use technology devices for entertainment it appeared reasonable to engage students in their learning by using the same devices for educational purposes. Furthermore, in 2012 and 2014, the Technology Team devised an eLearning Plan to set future directions for the school. The use of personal devices including tablets and touch screen computers were introduced into the school in 2012.

Simply having technology in classrooms doesn’t automatically translate into a 21st century classroom. Teachers are, and will always be, the key element in providing effective learning.

“In most places, “teaching strategies” overwhelmingly meant direction instruction. In recent decades, technology has been layered on top of content delivery and used primarily to support students’ mastery of required curricular content… Digital access makes it possible for students to apply their solutions to real-world problems with authentic audiences well beyond the boundaries of their schools.”

Michael Fullan & Maria Langworthy, 2014

The school has had meetings with ICT consultants and architects to discuss plans for future-proofing the school to allow for changes in technology. This includes wireless network, cloud server, VOIP communications, student-owned devices and wireless printing.
5. School-wide Pedagogy

Navigating for Successful Learning

St Patrick’s Learning Community values

HIGH EXPECTATIONS
We set high expectations for all students and teachers have a personal commitment to helping all students achieve success.

CRITICAL THINKING
We encourage our students to reflect deeply on what they are learning - to carefully analyse, synthesise and evaluate information as a basis for their beliefs and actions.

STRONG COMMUNICATION
Strong communication fosters an open and honest exchange of information between members of the school community.

EMPOWERING LEARNERS
Empowering learners who are equipped with the confidence, skills and motivation to succeed in the 21st century environment.
Navigating for **Successful Learning**

St Patrick’s **School wide Pedagogy**

**Connectedness**
Fostering positive social/learning relationships within the school learning environment, through forming meaningful and respectful partnerships.

**Inquisitiveness**
Inquiry is a learning process generated through questions derived from the interests, curiosities and experiences of the learner.

**Relevance**
Providing our students with opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understandings to problem solve in the world around them.

**Personalised**
Successful learning starts with the individual and takes account of difference. Differentiating the curriculum promotes equal opportunity in an endeavour to assist all students to realise their potential.

St Patrick’s Primary School 78 Wallace Street, Macksville, NSW, 2447
Ph: 02 6568 1397  Fax: 02 6568 1721  Website: www.macvplism.catholic.edu.au
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DEFINITION (WHAT)</strong></th>
<th><strong>INQUISTIVENESS</strong></th>
<th><strong>RELEVANCE</strong></th>
<th><strong>PERSONALISED</strong></th>
</tr>
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<td>Fostering positive social/learning relationships within the school learning environment, through forming meaningful and respectful partnerships</td>
<td>Inquiry is a learning process generated through questions derived from the interests, curiosities and experiences of the learner.</td>
<td>Providing our students with opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understandings to problem solve in the world around them.</td>
<td>Successful learning starts with the individual. Differentiating the curriculum promotes equal opportunity in an endeavour to assist all students to realise their potential.</td>
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<td><strong>RATIONALE (WHY)</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONNECTEDNESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>INQUISTIVENESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>RELEVANCE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction and collaboration are essential components of learning, and interaction between peers can be utilised as a powerful force for acquiring new knowledge, skills and attitudes. As opposed to simply transmitting knowledge the school promotes collaborative learning contexts in which students play an active role. Hence, the close relationship between positive relationships and learning.</td>
<td>When investigations grow from their own questions and students have an opportunity to discuss and reflect on their discoveries, they are better able to apply newly acquired knowledge to new experiences.</td>
<td>Powerful learning at St Patrick’s School invites students to work actively with abstract concepts and facts inside a highly social context.</td>
<td>In our school, students of differing abilities have opportunities to vary what they learn, how they learn and the manner of presenting the outcomes of their learning. This is important for all St Patrick’s students because it promotes and celebrates success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRATEGIES (HOW)</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONNECTEDNESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>INQUISTIVENESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>RELEVANCE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Navigating for successful learning:  
•  Expects high levels of collaboration  
•  Values each learner  
•  Recognises that learners learn from one another  
•  Promotes team skill building  
•  Encourages each learner to contribute within processes of learning | Navigating for successful learning:  
•  Engages learners by activating personal interest and generating understanding  
•  Stimulates curiosity and questioning, encourages risk taking and challenges thought processes  
•  Learners have choice in how they share their knowledge in creative ways | Navigating for successful learning:  
•  Provides opportunities to make meaningful connections between classroom concepts and their world  
•  Equips students with the authentic skills necessary to construct new knowledge.  
•  Assists students to explore solutions to social and environmental problems. | Navigating for successful learning:  
•  Acknowledges the potential for every learner to be successful  
•  Assists learners to take ownership of their learning  
•  Assists students to reflect deeply on their own learning  
•  Incorporates personal reflective practice in processes of assessment (for, as and of learning)  
•  Acknowledges and supports the differences in learning styles and needs |
St Patrick’s Primary School, Macksville

Our Response to the Diocese of Lismore

Contemporary Learning Framework

Powerful learning in Catholic education requires:

- A culture of learning that builds capacity based on:
  - Collaboration and communication
  - Critical thinking and creativity
  - Exploration, experimentation with and building upon knowledge
  - Planning and reflection

* At St Patrick’s the School-wide Pedagogy provides us with a framework for ongoing exploration and deepening of our understanding of “Navigating for Successful Learning”.

- A learning community that:
  - Builds relationships and trust
  - Connects learners
  - Strengthens partnerships
  - Ensures inclusivity
  - Sets high expectations

* At St Patrick’s relationships are at the core of our School-wide Pedagogy ensuring a learning community characterized by strong communication, connectedness and high expectations.

- A rich curriculum that:
  - Inspiring, Rigorous, Flexible and negotiated
  - Based on assessment of learning for learning

* At St Patrick’s our curriculum is derived from a set of clearly articulated educational values and pedagogical principles that demand rigor and flexibility. Our approach to assessment will develop in alignment with these values and principles.

- Engaging, adaptive environments that energize the learner:
  - Safe and secure - Supportive, stimulating and challenging
  - Shared - Respectful of diversity and difference
  - Energizing and Flexible - Connected locally and globally

* At St Patrick’s our School-wide Pedagogy, particularly the inquisitiveness principle, implies a learning environment that energizes, engages and empowers the learner.

- A cultural of learning that builds insight and meaning

- A continual focus on leadership for learning

- A rich curriculum that engages the contemporary learner

Pedagogy designed to empower the learner

* At St Patrick’s our School-wide Pedagogy empowers learners. The four pedagogical principles make explicit how this will happen.
Reflective Materials

3. Learning by Doing, DuFour, DuFour & Eaker, 2010
4. MCEETYA Learning Spaces Framework, 2008
5. Adam Heath, Kristen Middle School, Auckland, NZ.