

History of St. Mary's Sea Lake – Ms Kate Nunn, Principal.

St. Mary's School was officially blessed and opened on the 20th April 1958 by the most Reverend J.P. O'Collins, Bishop of Ballarat. The first classes began in 1958 with three Josephite sisters with 76 students enrolled from Grade Prep to Form Three (year nine).

In the same year a Mother's Club was formed. An article in the local paper regarding the opening of the school stated it was a modern building of contemporary design in cream brick. Designed to catch the maximum light with minimum of direct sunlight, the three well equipped classrooms incorporate modern teaching facilities. A spacious office-staff room and entrance foyer with music and heater rooms complete the main block. It then went on to say that His Lordship Rev O'Collins congratulated the parish and the town on having the sisters of St Joseph in their school and he forecasted that great good would come of it. He congratulated the children on their great efforts to raise money for their new school, and promised they would do well both spiritually and academically under the good Sisters of St. Joseph.

Kate Nunn also highlighted in the history of the school that twenty football jumpers and socks were purchased in 1959 and a football match was played against Hopetoun. In 1969, the secondary part of the school was discontinued and Grades Prep to Six remained. In 1971, the first Gala Day was held.

In 1994, St. Mary's was refurbished, the Library extended, and a new Art Room built. In 1999, there were 51 pupils in Prep to Grade Six and these represent 31 families. Sr. Patricia Day, past Principal was the last Josephite to teach at the school. In 2000, Vin Butler, became the first lay Principal, ending 42 years of Josephite leadership. There were 50 children enrolled at St. Mary's.

In 2002 the school embarked on a building program. The program included demolishing the boys' toilet/cloakroom, building a new boys' and girls' toilet, and refurbishing the girls' toilet into a cloakroom. Also at the beginning of that year a shade structure was erected over the playground. The Parents and Friends Association raised funds for this project.

In 2010 the school built a new multipurpose building under the BER project. Our St Mary of the Cross Centre is a large open area with a kitchen and toilet and is used for indoor games, our performing arts program, liturgies, assemblies and whole school functions. And more recent the classrooms were completely refurbished to an open plan style with flexible learning spaces to complement the Professional Learning Community framework, which was blessed by Bishop Paul Bird on this day.

Kate Nunn also stated that St Mary's was characterised by its strong sense of community and tradition. The parents work hard to support all endeavours so that the students are provided with all they need to receive the best education possible. The staff is a close knit team who work collaboratively and extremely hard to make the school a special place to be, in which everyone is nurtured, loved and valued to enable every child to become the best for the world.