

## **Education Minister engages with students at high performing Catholic school in Bankstown**

The Federal Minister for Education Jason Clare MP visited students and staff from St Felix Catholic Primary School, Bankstown this morning and met with the Archbishop of Sydney Anthony Fisher OP, National Catholic education executive director Jacinta Collins and executive director of Sydney Catholic Schools Tony Farley.

The official party was welcomed by St Felix principal Fran Bonanno and school captains Dominic Nassar and Matilda Escolme before touring Kindergarten and Year 1 classrooms speaking with students and attending the Years 2 to 6 assembly where they were greeted with a student musical performance.

Minister Clare is no stranger to St Felix Catholic primary; with his electoral office just down the road he has been visiting the school for around 16 years; and his wife attended also the school.

Minister Clare said it was great to visit St Felix with Archbishop Anthony and to talk to students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

“I’ve just organised to come back in a couple of months’ time to teach the students about how Parliament works,” the Minister said.

St Felix primary school has demonstrated exceptional NAPLAN learning growth for students from Years 3 to 5 over the past five years, among some of the highest results across Sydney Catholic Schools, with 98 per cent of students at the school from a language background other than English.

Principal Fran Bonanno said St Felix had highly effective teachers and support staff with a focus on collaborative planning and individualised learning which was reflected in the school’s strong NAPLAN results.

“Good results come from good teaching and a belief that children can and will achieve regardless of their social or economic background,” Fran said.

“There is a moral imperative that we ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities possible.”

Jacinta Collins said it was wonderful to be with the Minister touring one of our high performing Catholic schools.

“Catholic education is grateful for the support of the Australian Government with today’s visit providing an important opportunity to speak with the Minister about key issues affecting Catholic education, including ensuring school choice and religious freedom for faith-based schools, implications of the review of the National School Reform Agreement and the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan.

“Catholic education is the major provider of education outside of government, with enrolments growing from 766,088 students in 2017 to 793,729 in 2022 - that’s one in five Australian students - across 1,759 Catholic schools, employing over 104,500 staff.

“As the largest provider of faith-based schooling in Australia, this growth shows the great importance Catholic school families place on choosing a school that meets the needs of their child and reflects their values and beliefs,” Jacinta said.

NCEC is the peak body for Catholic education in Australia and is responsible for the national coordination and representation of Catholic schools and school authorities.