
Charlotte Mason College

Independent school reporting 2021

Learning to live in goodness, truth and beauty

ANNUAL REPORT

Charlotte Mason College

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Charlotte Mason College in 2021

School overview:

Charlotte Mason College is a co-educational Christian private school that provides Primary and Secondary classroom and distance-education based on the philosophy of Charlotte Mason which has guided Charlotte Mason schools around the world for over 120 years. At Charlotte Mason College (or CMC) we are concerned that children should not merely acquire knowledge and skills but should have opportunity to experience an abundant life within all that is good, true and beautiful.

CMC families pursue lifestyles of....

...'**goodness**' – through Christian character training via the disciplined development of the habits needed for success in life. The CMC program employs Charlotte Mason's gentle common-sense methods of child training.

...'**truth**' – through the search for knowledge in the sciences, humanities and the arts. Students engage with quality classic literature from the great thinkers and leaders throughout history; they engage with what Charlotte Mason called 'living books' and real-life practical experiences; and

...'**beauty**' – by maintaining a warm, loving, positively affirming atmosphere in the home or classroom; setting up an aesthetically beautiful and ordered learning environment; and by becoming familiar with classic artworks and music composers.

The relatively small size of the school contributes to a friendly school community with the opportunity for all children to be understood and appreciated. This school is for those parents who value the unique Christian classical liberal-arts approach that a Charlotte Mason education offers, and for those who see that the education of their child is not the school's job alone.

School progress towards its goals in 2021

Between our initial accreditation in June 2017 and the end of 2021, CMC grew from 15 to 66 on-campus students, and also increased from 96 to 149 distance education students; our total number of students growing from 111 to 215 students.

Facilities Improvement Goals: During 2021 there was a minimal growth in student numbers so the existing facilities were utilized fully, without further construction. However, there is a plan to separate the Pre-primary (Preparatory) level students from Year 1 & 2, requiring a separate classroom. This is because the revised Australian Curriculum, which will be implemented in the next few years, has a different emphasis for Prep compared to Year 1 & 2. More facilities will be required for additional classrooms. The planning for this has begun and will continue in 2022. Towards the end of the year, an outdoor playground was constructed, ready for use in 2022. In preference to the typical multi-coloured plastic & metal design, our playground was carefully designed to have a more natural timber design and construction, which is more in line with the natural aesthetics of the surrounding forest.

Curriculum Goals for 2021 included ongoing improvement on documentation of how our education program aligns with the Australian Curriculum; and the provision to all distant education families of a selection of quality classic literature, and what Charlotte Mason called 'Living Books', rather than mere textbooks for every grade level. Furthermore, CMC teachers and DE learning advisors and the curriculum coordinator have continued to refine the Subject Guides (used by Home Tutors and classroom teachers) in order to improve content and structure of these very valuable resources. As the COVID-19 epidemic has continued in 2021, it has continued to have impact. CMC has weathered this storm extremely well, as the fact that we already served Distance Education students gave us some flexibility to further develop this service for other students learning at home. CMC has made use of ZOOM (interactive video conferencing) for delivering teaching and learning to all students in all learning areas during this time. Staff meetings have also been increasingly conducted via Zoom.

Enrichment and Extension Program.

The Enrichment and Extension Program at Charlotte Mason College has further developed this year. Some of the things that have been implemented include:

- Differentiated subject work provided to students who have been identified via the following available tests:
 - PAT testing available for all students

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- CogAT testing currently available for students aged 5-6 years.
 - GL Verbal and Non-Verbal Reasoning Online testing available for students aged 8-13

- Individual Zoom lessons for our Distance Education students who have been provided differentiated work
- Assistance has been provided to all teachers to provide a differentiated approach in their classrooms
- Learning Support Staff and other teachers have attended professional development training in outdoor-play-based learning, Multi-sensory Structured Learning and other differentiation techniques and strategies.
- The referral and testing processes have been improved to ensure that all students are being targeted effectively

School Community Goals for 2021 included the continuation of the weekly enrichment day (held each Thursday) for distance education students to join with on-campus students for musical theatre, sports activities, science experiments, literature, and mathematics experiences. This has been a great success with between 90 and 100 students attending each week under guidance and regulations of Queensland Health and our COVID-safe plan. While the distance education students (who have travelled from areas such as Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast etc.) participated in enrichment activities, many of their parents also attended parent training sessions conducted by staff.

At the end of Term 2, the college engaged parents in teacher parent interviews for both on-campus and distance education families. Distance education families were given this opportunity to collaborate one on one with teachers via Zoom links.

Future outlook

The Principals of other schools have advised us that the first three to five years of establishing a new school is always a stressful time of constant change as the school tries to balance the two complementary priorities of compliance with all government regulations, while staying true to its philosophical distinctives; then bringing both of

these priorities together in a practical, not just theoretical way. The college is continuously improving on government policy, curriculum development and delivering an excellent wholistic education to all students. The school community has come together to do a wonderful job at fulfilling these goals, and the future for CMC looks particularly bright as we establish this first Charlotte Mason School in Australia and move towards creating a network of Australian CM schools.

Our School at a glance

School profile

Coeducational

Independent Christian school

Offering Prep to Year 10 in 2021

Student enrolments listed below.

Table 1: Student enrolments at this school (On-campus + Distance Education)

Enrolment category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	111	214	220	180	215
Girls	58	100	106	96	112
Boys	53	114	114	84	103
Indigenous	0	9	8	11	15
Enrolment continuity (between February & November)	90%	90%	89%	89%	88%

Notes:

1. Student counts are based on the Census (August) enrolment collection.
2. Indigenous refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.
3. pre-Prep is a kindergarten program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, living in 35 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in the year before school.

In 2021, there were no students enrolled in a pre-Prep program.

Characteristics of the student body

Overview

In 2021, Charlotte Mason College had attracted 37% of students from the lower socioeconomic quartile of the Australian population. 32 % come from the second quartile, 24% from the third quartile and 7% from the highest socio-economic quartile of the Australian population. Although we are a relatively new school, we have very quickly gained a reputation for being able to assist students who had not been doing well in their previous situations. Our friendly personal approach to education has

enabled previously failing students to reignite their love of learning and find success. The school aligns with the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration that ‘places all our students at the center of their education by emphasizing the importance of meeting the individual needs of all learners.’ As a Christian school established to have a unique philosophical perspective, we will tend to attract a predominantly Christian population and those interested in the superior benefits of a Christian classical liberal arts education with traditional family values. Freedom of choice is strongly supported in this region, such that there are a range of other State and private schools within the surrounding suburbs that offer options for those who are not specifically looking for this kind of education.

Average Class sizes

Table 2: Average on-campus classroom size information for each phase of schooling

Phase of schooling	2017	2018	2019	Phase of schooling	2020	2021
Prep – Year 3	5	15	9	Prep – Year 2	10	11
Year 4 – Year 6	10	17	18	Year 3 – Year 4	11	11
Year 7 – Year 10	9	18	15	Year 5 – Year 6	12	11
Year 11 – Year 12	N/A	10	5	Year 7 – Year 8	11	11
				Year 9 – Year 10	11	11
				Year 11 – Year 12	N/A	N/A

Curriculum delivery

Our approach to curriculum delivery

The Charlotte Mason College (CMC) program has contextualized the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards into a feast of living books, cultural artworks, and ideas to provide the mental food for-thought that will nourish your child’s mind and heart. The CMC Program is a Christian Classical Liberal Arts Education. As such, it is a broad general and cultural education that does not stream students in a narrowly focused way. We are looking to develop the whole person, and help the student prepare for life and for many varied opportunities in the future.

Co-curricular activities

During 2021, one day per week has been set aside for 'Campus Enrichment Program', in which our distance education students have opportunity to join in enrichment activities with the on-campus students. Enrichment activities include Musical Theatre training and performance, music lessons (instrumental or voice), sports and games, coding & computer literacy, science experiments, creative arts, and dance.

How information and communication technologies are used to assist learning

During 2021, the school maintained a bank of lap-top computers enough for students in two classrooms at a time, to be able to use the computers for educational purposes. The computers are used strictly as a tool for learning, to supplement the education program. However, Charlotte Mason College is careful not to substitute computer-based learning as an easy option instead of real teaching and personal interaction. Computer-based learning is not a high priority in the Charlotte Mason philosophy. We prefer to engage the students with real books, tutorial discussion and hands-on activities, rather than sit them in front of a computer all day.

During 2021, the use of computer technology was extended to aid the distance education students to connect with teachers and other students through Zoom-video lessons with individual and group conferencing; and as a way for the students who live in distant regional areas to feel more connected. The lessons learnt during this trial phase of video-conferencing had built a good foundation for expanding this service in 2021. Distance Education students engaged in regular timetabled Zoom lessons. The College continued to utilize the 'Learning Management System' within TASS 'Student Café' and 'Parent Lounge' (an online portal) where students and parents have access to digital resources, assessment tasks, set activities, teacher feedback and progress reports.

Social climate

Overview

The on-campus day-school, being small in numbers has a unique family feel, where everyone is known and appreciated. Parents and visitors have commented on the peaceful atmosphere, where the children feel safe and happy. This has also been

largely due to the implementation of Charlotte Mason’s method of discipline and the ‘Love & Logic’ approach to behavior management. Charlotte Mason said: “Habits are to life as rails are to a train”. One of the things Charlotte Mason pondered as a young teacher was – How do we lift children above their nature? She found the answer was not through either punishment or reward, but simply through the discipline of habit training. Specific habits include focused attention; neat and accurate work; courtesy, respect & kindness; and emotionally staying your best self. Therefore, we assist the children to develop new habits that will positively form their character, so they can be more successful in life.

Parent and community engagement

As we have moved into the fourth year of operation, parents have continued to be supportive, and have offered their time for tutoring and co-curricular activities. The school has established a routine of two musical theatre productions each year. A tradition has continued, where the students put on a special performance for the residents of the aged care facility next door to the school. This has been enthusiastically received. Parent teacher conferences were held in the middle of the year to extend on parent involvement in their students learning. Engagement in our parent training has been successful in building ongoing community during Thursday College Enrichment Days.

Staff Training for a Supportive and Respectful Learning Environment.

The philosophy and aims of learning intervention support students with learning difficulties and disability. Our aim is to involve everyone in the school community to work together in supporting each student and helping them to reach their individual potential. Inclusive practices are promoted for all students at CMC. School based management requires flexibility and responsiveness to the educational needs of every student. By identifying the educational needs and support requirements for a whole range of students in a school, management then assists in the promotion of best practice in the teaching of students with learning challenges. During 2021, staff at CMC were offered ongoing professional development in best practices for inclusion, planning for all learners and differentiation.

School funding

School income broken down by funding source

School income reported by financial year accounting cycle using standardized national methodologies and broken down by funding source is available via the My School website.

How to access our income details

1. Click on the My School link <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>.
2. Enter the school's name or suburb of the school you wish to search.
3. Click on 'View School Profile' of the appropriate school to access the school's profile.
4. Click on 'Finances' and select the appropriate year to view the school financial information.

Note: If you are unable to access the internet, please contact the school for a hard copy of the school's financial information.

Our staff profile in 2021

Workforce composition, including indigenous staff

Table 3: Workforce composition for this school

Description	Teaching Staff*	Non-teaching staff	Indigenous**staff
Headcounts	18	20	0
Full-time equivalents	15 FTE	14.3 FTE	0

** Indigenous refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

Qualification of all teachers

Table 4: Teacher qualifications for classroom teachers and teaching school leaders at this school

Highest level of qualification	Number of qualifications
Doctorate	0
Masters	4
Graduate Diploma	5
Bachelor degree	9
Diploma	0
Certificate	0

Professional development

Expenditure on and teacher participation in professional development

The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2021 was \$10,727

The major professional development initiatives are as follows:

- External consultant – Curriculum Compliance & Adjustments for Learning Support
- MSL Phonics Training.
- Independent Schools Qld – Seminars & Workshops.
- The Alpha School System (TASS) online admin system training
- Safety Training – Fire Emergency Procedures & First Aid Training
- Outdoor Play-based Learning

The proportion of the teaching staff involved in professional development activities during 2021 was 100%.

Staff attendance and retention

Staff attendance

Table 5: Average staff attendance for this school as percentages

Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Staff attendance for permanent and temporary staff and school leaders	99%	99%	98%	95%	95%

Proportion of staff retained from the previous school year

From the end of the previous school year, 85% of staff were retained by the school for the entire 2021.

Performance of our students

Key student outcomes

Student attendance

The overall student attendance rate in 2021 is shown in the table below. Tables 6–7 show attendance rates at this school as percentages.

Table 6: Overall student attendance at this school

Description	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Overall attendance rate* for students at the school	95	93.5	98%	95%	95%

Attendance rate for indigenous** students at this school	N/A	N/A	100%	90%	90%
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Table 7: Average student attendance rates for each year level at this school

Year Level	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Prep	N/A	N/A	99	95	95
Year 1	N/A	100	99	96	95
Year 2	N/A	98	99	94	95
Year 3	N/A	96	99	96	96
Year 4	N/A	100	99	95	95
Year 5	N/A	97	99	94	95
Year 6	N/A	95	99	96	96

Year Level	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Year 7	N/A	91	99	95	95
Year 8	N/A	70	98	94	95
Year 9	N/A	89	99	95	94
Year 10	N/A	92	99	95	95
Year 11	N/A	N/A	99	N/A	N/A
Year 12	N/A	N/A	99	N/A	N/A