

St Mary's Primary ARMIDALE
Annual School Report to the Community
2015



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Principal

Mrs Alanna McRae

ABOUT THIS REPORT

St Mary's Primary is registered by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW. The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the Education Act 1990 (NSW).

The *Annual School Report to the Community* provides parents and the wider School community with fair, reliable and objective information about School performance measures and policies, as determined by the Minister for Education. The *Report* also outlines information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance during the year and the achievements arising from the implementation of the School's Annual Improvement Plan.

The *Report* demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies, the School community and the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale. This *Report* has been approved by the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale in consultation with the Regional Consultant who monitors that the School has appropriate processes in place to ensure compliance with all Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, NSW requirements for Registration and Accreditation.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to School newsletters and other regular communications. Further information about the School may be obtained by contacting the School or by visiting the School's website.

Principal's Message

The staff, students and parents of St Mary's Catholic Primary School form a close knit educational community which was founded in 1848 by the lay of the community. Our story and traditions have been shaped by the Ursuline sisters, the Patrician brothers and the De La Salle brothers. St Mary's is the oldest school in the Armidale Diocese.

This report highlights the school's quality teaching and learning experiences and achievements as well as our participation in many events. It reflects the School's Mission Statement and school motto "*Serviam*" to serve. St Mary's Catholic Primary School lives and celebrates the Gospel values in the rich traditions of the Catholic faith. It is a place where students are nurtured and empowered to become independent lifelong learners.

This report reflects on all that has been achieved and realised throughout the year. I hope that all members of the community continue to feel a sense of pride and achievement in our school.

Parent Body Message

The 2015 school year has been another very successful year at St Mary's. The school has continued to grow in numbers and reputation within the community of Armidale. The school board has had an interesting year with new members coming and others leaving.

The Board, largely made of parents and several members of the school executive is a discussion group for initiatives of the school, ensuring a smooth and coordinated operation of the school's many activities.

The number of parents willing to help and volunteer large amounts of their time and effort is what makes St Mary's - an enormous thank you must go to the volunteers, parents, teachers and friends for donating their valuable time to the school to date. Sadly, this number is dwindling and it will be a challenge for the school in the coming years to ensure these groups (Board, Parents and Friends, etc) are filled with members of the school community.

The implementation of the Bishop's Commission proposed changes to school boards was to be introduced last year - this has now been deferred until next year. I look forward to being involved in the changes and how they will benefit the school community.

Student Body Message

Year 6 2015 has been excellent! During this year, St Mary's has gifted our group many opportunities such as: an amazing trip to Canberra in which we got the chance to go to Parliament House and meet the Prime Minister; and educational days where we left the school to try unique things like the UNE Science Engineering Challenge, Young Leaders Conference, Grip Leadership and Brain Olympia.

During the year we were given the chance to try out a new form of learning called collaborative learning where we did not have allocated seats and we could sit anywhere that suited our learning capabilities. The new furniture has helped us feel relaxed and ready for work. The couches and chairs are comfortable and are a great idea. St Marys has been a great experience and like our classmates, we have had a great time.

Our teachers have devoted countless hours of dedicated work to our class. Both of them have helped our little community so much, thank you for all the things you have done for us.

This school has been the foundation for success of many peoples and we hope it continues to be. Year 6 has been a ball and we hope the continuing students have a great time.

School Captains 2016

SECTION TWO: SCHOOL FEATURES

St Mary's Primary is a Catholic systemic Co-educational School located in ARMIDALE.

St Mary's has a long history dating back to 1848. Our story and traditions have been shaped by the Ursuline sisters, the Patrician brothers and the De La Salle brothers. St Mary's is the oldest school in the Armidale Diocese, established by lay people in 1848. The Ursuline Sisters arrived in 1882 and maintained a presence in the school until 2001.

The Patrician Brothers established a boys' primary school on the site from 1889 until 1897. Later in 1906 the De La Salle Brothers re-established the boys' primary school and taught there until 1972. The school has been under lay administration since 2001.

St Angela Merici was the founder of the Ursuline Sisters. The St Mary's buildings are named after St Angela, St Ursula and St Anne. The school crest is common to Ursuline schools as is the motto: "Serviam" I will serve. Generations of families have been educated at St Mary's under the Ursuline motto.

St Mary's is located in the Cathedral precinct of Armidale adjacent to the CBD. The Cathedral, Bishop's House, Catholic Chancery, Parish Hall, Ursuline Convent, Centacare, Catholic Schools Office and Armidale Diocesan Investment Group are all located in the same block. Armidale is a vibrant town and is the centre of the Northern Tablelands.

The town has full services and hosts the University of New England. This gives Armidale a unique character and diverse population. St Mary's attracts enrolment from the surrounding district including students from, Invergowrie, Uralla, Black Mountain, Guyra, Yarrowyck, Walcha and Wollombi. Our classrooms are housed in three main buildings surrounded by spacious and park like grounds planted out to make the most of the four distinct seasons we experience. St Mary's has excellent facilities and playing fields. The school library is well appointed and spacious. There are excellent computer facilities available for all students.

SECTION THREE: STUDENT PROFILE

Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Kindergarten to Year 6. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds. The following information describes the student profile for 2015:

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
183	173	16	356

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Armidale adheres to the policy as endorsed by the Bishops Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment of Students in the Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale'. The Catholic Schools Office Armidale monitors the implementation of this policy. The policy has been developed in the context of government and system requirements. Children from families who are prepared to support the ethos and values of the Catholic Church may be considered eligible for enrolment. A pastoral approach is adopted for parents experiencing genuine difficulty with the payment of fees.

The full text of the 'Enrolment of Students in Catholic Systemic Schools of the Diocese of Armidale', along with any specific enrolment policy for the school, is printed at the end of this document.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2015 was 93.98%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group	
Kindergarten	94.50%
Year 1	93.31%
Year 2	94.89%
Year 3	94.29%
Year 4	92.76%
Year 5	94.38%
Year 6	93.72%

Managing Student Non-Attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential if students are to maximise their potential. The School, in partnership with parents, is responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students. While parents are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their children, School staff, as part of their duty of care, monitor part or whole day absences.

School staff, under the Principal's leadership, support the regular attendance of students by:

- providing a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of wellbeing and belonging to the School community;
- maintaining accurate records of student attendance;
- recognising and rewarding excellent and improved student attendance;
- implementing programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise.

The Principal is responsible for supporting the regular attendance of students by ensuring that:

- parents and students are regularly informed of attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance;
- all cases of unsatisfactory attendance and part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly and that appropriate intervention strategies are implemented;
- the Director of Catholic Schools or designated Catholic Schools Office Armidale officer is provided with regular information about students for whom chronic non-attendance is an issue and for whom School strategies have failed to restore regular attendance.

SECTION FOUR: STAFFING PROFILE

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2015:

Total Teaching Staff*	Total Non-Teaching Staff	Combined Total
23	15	38

* This number includes 16 full-time teachers and 7 part-time teachers.

Percentage of staff who are Indigenous	5%
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Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the Catholic Schools Office Armidale. The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking of its staff professional learning and individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes.

The School held the equivalent of five staff development days this year with areas of focus as follows:

Term 1	Quality Learning and WHS eModules
Term 2	Core Catholic Values and Principles
Term 3	Collaboration and Planning for Student Improvement
Term 4	History & Geography

School staff participated in the following: Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, History & Geography - Australian Curriculum, BART, PLCs, Kids Matter, Additional Needs, CPR, Google apps, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program and Google Classroom.

The Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, Education Assistants, Aboriginal Education Assistants, Librarians, Secretaries, Project Teachers and Student Support Teachers attended specific workshops throughout the year.

Teacher Standards

The following table sets out the number of teachers who fall into each of the categories

determined by the Board of Studies:

Teacher Qualifications		Number of Teachers
1	Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	22
2	Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0

SECTION FIVE: CATHOLIC LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Mary's Primary follows the Armidale Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum and uses the student text *To Know, Worship and Love*, as authorised by the Bishop of Armidale, Michael Kennedy.

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St Mary's is able to celebrate Mass regularly in the Cathedral. At the beginning of the year we celebrated Ash Wednesday Mass with O'Connor Catholic College.

Throughout the year the whole school celebrated Mass together twice each term including Holy Days of Obligation. Primary grades attend Mass each fortnight, on Fridays, with the parish. The first Friday of each month all classes participated in Eucharistic Adoration with the Parish in the Cathedral. The children participated reverently and prayerfully in Holy Week celebrations. The school hosted Grandparents Day as part of the Diocesan Marriage and Family Week Celebrations and hosted Parish Mass on the Sunday.

A school based Lenten program and three twilight prayer sessions were offered in 2015 for staff & parents. During Advent, students in Kindergarten to Year 4 presented Christmas Prayer Assemblies, celebrating the Christmas message of love, hope and goodwill. The end of year finished with Mass on the last school day of Term 4. Primary students were Altar Servers for both daily and weekend Masses.

The Parish Priests regularly visited each classroom and provided the Sacrament of Reconciliation each term for Primary grades. Our school based sacramental program prepared children in Year 2 for Reconciliation, Year 3 for Eucharist and Year 6 for Confirmation.

In Staff formation, new teachers and Education Assistants attended the New Employees Retreat. Teachers were able to attend the Diocesan Teachers Retreat, Assistant Principal attended the AP Retreat and our Religious Education Coordinator attended the REC Conference and REC Retreat.

Families supported the following events as part of the Parish and School Community:

- Stations of the Cross.
- Parish & School celebrations including the Chrism Mass, Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Feast of Saint Mary of the Cross.
- Catholic Schools Week Mass & the Spirit of Catholic Education Awards.
- Parish Family Mass once per term.

The Parish provides regular financial support for school building and maintenance projects. The Parish Administrator is a member of the School Board and the Principal is a member of Parish Pastoral Council.

Students in Years 6 in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Armidale undertake the Diocesan Religious Education (RE) Test annually. The test consists of fifty multiple-choice questions. Results of the test are analysed by teachers and are used to inform teaching and learning in Religious Education.

SECTION SIX: CURRICULUM

The school provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies, Teacher and Educational Standards, NSW syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. In addition, the school implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office Armidale.

Dedicated work by St Mary's staff resulted in improved student learning and progress across the school in 2015. MiniLit continued in 2015 with the addition of the Reading Tutor Program and Comprehension Skills activities being offered to targeted students.

A whole school focus on making learning explicit for students by describing the learning intentions and success criteria for lessons has better enabled students to better meet learning targets. Best Start assessments for all students prior to the commencement of Kinder has given us accurate data on the entry literacy and numeracy skills of these students. This year all students from K-6 were placed on the Literacy and Numeracy Continua to provide accurate record of student progress and improvement.

Participation of all primary students in the ACER PAT Reading and Maths assessments in the first few weeks of the school year has given us valid achievement data for these students so as to accurately track their learning progress. The Personalised Learning Plans for all our Aboriginal students enables us to have meaningful meetings with our Aboriginal families to discuss student progress.

The Project Teacher position continued for 2015. The Project Teacher was responsible for implementing the diocesan Literacy Enhancement strategy K to Yr 2, Comprehension and Reading Tutor Program for Years 3 to 6 and supporting teachers in the implementation of the NSW Syllabus of the Australian Curriculum. All students on these program made substantial progress in their reading skills. The Quicksmart numeracy program continued in 2015 as an intervention strategy for students in Year 6.

The 2015 Year started with all classes doing 'A Quality Beginning Program.' This is a 2 week focus establishing Quality Learning processes and Positive behaviour expectations in the school.

Professional Learning Team Meetings were held weekly to plan learning and assessment tasks, analyse student data and progress and plan appropriate interventions. These meetings ensure consistent contemporary approach to the teaching of Reading and Numeracy, effective use of student achievement data from NAPLAN and standardised tests to monitor student progress and

plan for future learning & interventions, the use of common assessment tasks across all grades, common rubrics, matrices and marking criteria K-6, effective support for differentiation of learning in Reading, Spelling and Numeracy.

Additional student learning opportunities offered in 2015 included Tournament of Minds, Individual music tuition, school choirs, orchestra and percussion band, Eisteddfod, Jumpstart – Catholic Schools Concert, Chess, ICAS competitions and representative sport at Diocesan, Polding & State levels.

SECTION SEVEN: STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN STATE-WIDE TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists School planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in numeracy and the aspects of literacy. The School results shown are compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2015		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Reading	54.00%	48.20%	12.00%	11.00%
	Writing	45.00%	46.80%	6.00%	7.40%
	Spelling	36.00%	41.10%	16.00%	14.50%
	Grammar	46.00%	51.80%	12.00%	10.70%
	Numeracy	38.00%	33.60%	12.00%	15.20%

NAPLAN RESULTS 2015		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Reading	38.00%	33.40%	20.00%	18.20%
	Writing	9.00%	19.10%	25.00%	17.50%
	Spelling	39.00%	32.60%	21.00%	15.30%
	Grammar	34.00%	36.20%	13.00%	16.20%
	Numeracy	20.00%	27.50%	25.00%	15.80%

Student Welfare Policy

No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of the School's Pastoral Care Policy may be accessed on the School's website or at the administration office.

Discipline Policy

Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited in this School. The School does not sanction administration of corporal punishment by School persons and non-School persons, including parents, to enforce discipline in the School.

No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of the School's Student Discipline Policy may be accessed on the School's website or at the administration office.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The Catholic Schools Office, Armidale has established a *Student Anti-Bullying Policy* which is implemented by our school and all systemic schools in the Diocese. It provides a framework for school communities to work together to prevent and address issues of student bullying, in order to build respectful relationships that respond effectively and sensitively to the needs of each person. The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) monitors the implementation of this policy. No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of the *Anti-Bullying Policy* may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The Diocese of Armidale has established a *Staff Grievance Policy* which is implemented by our school in the Diocese. Each school also has an individual Grievance Policy and Procedure for dealing with matters at a school level. The rationale for these policies is that within the reality of the schooling experience, it is recognised that, from time to time, misunderstandings and differences of opinion will occur, and that these need to be resolved satisfactorily. Addressing such matters within a framework of dignity, respect and truth can provide powerful opportunities to model the love of Christ in the reality of our contemporary world. The

Catholic Schools Office monitors the implementation of these policy. No changes were made to the policy this year.

The full text of the individual policies may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or at the CSO website.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

During 2015 St Mary's continued to consolidate Kids Matter and Positive Behaviours for Learning programs through our 7 Kinds of Best and the Student, Staff and Parent Codes of Cooperation.

The Restorative Justice approach was also utilised by teachers in their approach to behaviour management issues and was monitored through BART – Behaviour Analysis Reporting Tool.

Students were encouraged to participate in the school, parish and local community by attending ANZAC Day March, Remembrance Day, NAIDOC Week, Clean Up Australia Day, Cathedral Cleaning Roster, Junior Land Care and Green Thumbs.

2015 School Captains enjoyed attending the Young Leaders Day in Sydney with hundreds of School Leaders from Primary Schools in NSW in Term 1. Year 6 students also attended the GRIP Student Leadership Conference in Armidale as part of their role as School Leaders with responsibility.

Each year, the School develops an Annual Improvement Plan indicating the intended key improvements for student learning outcomes. The plan is drawn from the School's Strategic Improvement Plan and informed by the Catholic School's Office Annual Improvement Plan. The School engages in an annual evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness against these external standards in collaboration with the Schools Consultant.

Key Improvements Achieved in 2015

The School Priorities that were achieved in 2015 are listed below under their Strategic Intent.

Mission and Evangelisation:

- Teachers participated in PD on Christian Anthropology and Primacy of God;
- Teachers included explicit teaching strategies in at least one KLA identifying Catholic principles and values;
- All teachers of RE used the Emmaus process and storytelling process; and
- There was increased participation of staff and parents in Renewal and Faith Formation activities.

Learning Services:

- Standards Based Assessment was embedded;
- Teachers worked on designing assessment for, as and of learning linked to the syllabus outcomes;
- Students are using self and GOAL peer assessment; and
- Teachers have a sound knowledge of syllabus documents, assessment for, as and of learning and inquiry approaches.

School Services:

- Professional development was provided in child protection, protective behaviours, and reporting; and
- Leaders are all acting as instructional leaders to build a Catholic PLC.

Financial Services:

- The Principal completed a Financial Literacy course; and
- Staff effectively use Gmail, Google docs and Google presentation to plan, present and improve their communication.

Priority Key Improvements for 2016

The School Key Priority areas for improvement in 2016 are listed below under their Strategic Intents.

Mission, Evangelisation, Learning and Teaching:

- Teachers have included explicit Catholic Principles and Values teaching strategies in additional KLAS;
- Improved data literacy of all teachers; and
- New Technologies have further enhanced staff and student capacity to improve learning outcomes.

School Leadership and Management:

- The Principal leads site based teacher learning and development.

The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

Parent Satisfaction

In 2015 Parents were surveyed by an independent specialist corporation. Parents were offered the opportunity to provide comprehensive feedback across six areas - Catholic Ethos, Leadership, Resources, Teaching and Learning, Improvement Processes and General. Parents indicated an excellent satisfaction in Catholic Ethos, Leadership, Resources and General with Teaching and Learning and Improvement Processes rated in the high end of the good category. General rated the highest and Improvement Processes rated the lowest.

No areas of concern were identified by parents. While the survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction in every area, the comprehensive reports will be analysed closely by the Leadership Team and School Board to identify areas of priority for school improvement.

Student Satisfaction

In 2015 Students in Years 4 and 6 were surveyed by an independent specialist corporation. Students were given the opportunity to provide feedback in six areas - Catholic Ethos, Leadership, Resources, Teaching and Learning, Improvement Processes and General. Student rated Catholic Ethos, Leadership and Teaching and Learning within the excellent category and Resources, Improvement Processes and General at the high end of the good category. Catholic Ethos scored the highest response from students and Improvement Processes the lowest.

No areas of concern were identified by students. While the survey results indicate a high level of satisfaction in every area, the comprehensive reports will be analysed closely by the Leadership Team and School Board to identify areas of priority for school improvement.

Teacher Satisfaction

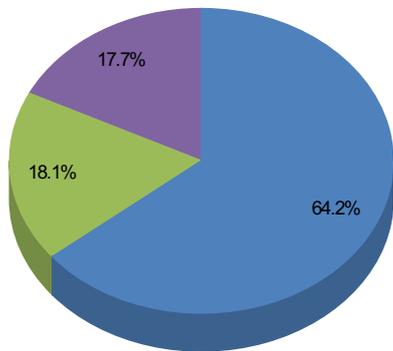
In 2015 Staff was surveyed by an independent specialist corporation. The staff was given the opportunity to provide feedback in six areas - Catholic Ethos, Leadership, Resources, Staff Engagement, Improvement Processes and General. Catholic Ethos, Resources and General were rated as excellent and Leadership, Staff Engagement and Improvement Processes were rated at the high end of the good category.

No areas requiring attention were identified. While the survey results indicate a high level of

satisfaction in every area, the comprehensive reports will be analysed closely by the Leadership Team and School Board to identify areas of priority for school improvement.

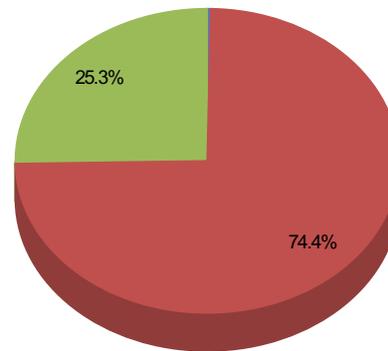
SECTION ELEVEN: FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Income



- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants (64.2%)
- Government Capital Grants (0%)
- State Recurrent Grants (18.1%)
- Fees and Private Income (17.7%)
- Other Capital Income (0%)

Expenditure



- Capital Expenditure (0.3%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (74.4%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (25.3%)

This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2015 year is detailed below:

RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants ¹	\$2,753,134
Government Capital Grants ²	\$0
State Recurrent Grants ³	\$778,775
Fees and Private Income ⁴	\$759,341
Other Capital Income ⁵	\$0
Total Income	\$4,291,250

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure ⁶	\$11,456
Salaries and Related Expenses ⁷	\$2,975,227
Non-Salary Expenses ⁸	\$1,010,731
Total Expenditure	\$3,997,414

Notes

1. Commonwealth Recurrent Grants includes recurrent per capita grants and special purpose grants.
2. Government Capital Grants includes all capital grants received from the Commonwealth and State Governments.

3. State Recurrent Grants includes recurrent grants per capita, special purpose grants and interest subsidy grants.
4. Fees and Private Income include Archdiocesan and school based fees, excursions and other private income.
5. Other Capital Income includes building levy fees and capital donations used to fund Capital Expenditure.
6. Capital Expenditure includes expenditure on School Buildings, and Furniture and Equipment.
7. Salaries and Related Expenditure includes all salaries, allowances and related expenses such as superannuation and workers compensation insurance.
8. Non-Salary Expenses include all other Non-Salary Recurrent Expenditure covering resources, administration, operational expenses, utilities, repairs and maintenance.

Enrolment Policy

This school does not have any enrolment policies or support documents in addition to the Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools 'Enrolment Policy' for schools in the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is available on the Armidale Catholic Schools Office website at; <http://www.arm.catholic.edu.au> .