

St Mary's Primary School

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Parish Priest: Monsignor Ted Wilkes

Parish: Sts Mary and Joseph's Cathedral

Principal: Mrs Suzanne Fern

**ST MARY'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL
ARMIDALE NSW**



Annual School Report 2011

Mission/Vision Statement

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. St Mary's is a harmonious community where all members are valued and respected.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a sacred place where we live Christ's mission in word and action. With Christ as our guide and inspiration we welcome all and encourage each other to grow spiritually. We are rich in stories and tradition providing a strong foundation for life.

Educational excellence drives our successful and dynamic learning community. We nurture innovative approaches to teaching and learning ensuring opportunities for individual achievement. Learning is collaborative and student centred focusing on meeting current and future needs. Students have pride and confidence in their work and are challenged to reach their potential.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive community that embraces compassion and respect for all. We work and grow together in a happy, secure and healthy environment where every individual has a sense of belonging. We are enriched by strong partnerships with families, parish and the wider community as we prepare our students to be effective leaders of tomorrow.

About this Report

St Mary's Primary School is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale, the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990. The annual report provides parents and the wider school community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. The report describes achievement of school development priorities in 2011 and gives information about 2012 priorities. This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. This Report is sent to the Catholic Schools Office, Armidale for validation with the requirements of the Education Act 1990 before being forwarded to the Board of Studies. Following its submission to the NSW Board of Studies the report will be presented to the parent body and be available on the CSO website by 30 June 2012.

The school Regional Supervisor also validates that the school has in place appropriate processes to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration.

Principal's Message

2011 saw the culmination of two years of building and refurbishment at our school. It was also a year of commemoration and celebration. Sadly, the withdrawal of the Ursuline Sisters from Armidale and the sale of their Convent closed a significant chapter in our history. We were proud to host a luncheon for 23 Ursuline Sisters and a similar number of ex staff from St Mary's to thank them for 129 years of dedicated service to Catholic education in our city. We also played a role in the Parish farewell to the Ursulines and accepted a candle symbolising the passing on of the Ursuline traditions to our school community for future generations.

In December we celebrated the Official Blessing and Opening of both our new and refurbished buildings as part of the BER Primary Schools for the 21st Century and Australian Government Capital Grants Programs. The formalities were conducted by the Most Reverend Luc Matthys, Bishop of Armidale, and Mr John Mula, Director of Catholic Schools Armidale Diocese. The school community is commended for their patience and flexibility during the necessary inconveniences and constraints imposed by the ongoing building projects. We are now able to enjoy the benefits of both an enhanced school environment and the much improved functionality of our school.

2011 was an extremely busy year during which St Mary's school received extraordinary support from both the Parish and Parent community. Our Parish Priest offered his time, wisdom and knowledge in helping to solve the many issues that arose throughout our building projects. The Parish has also been very generous in their financial support.

Likewise the P&F were tireless in their fundraising efforts throughout 2011 and supported all requests for assistance with our building project including our new Danthonia sign, school banner, white goods for the Canteen, a new portable stage for the Hall and new doors in the Breezeway.

St Mary's continues to provide a positive learning and caring family environment where parents, students and staff work cooperatively in partnership to build a strong educational community. Together we strive to ensure all children are nurtured and loved as they grow and learn. St Mary's is a happy school that celebrates a love of life. Through the dedication of a committed and professional staff the school has set many new directions, particularly in the areas of teaching and learning and the faith development of our students. Our teachers are also learners who work hard to provide the best quality education for the children in their care. They promote a love of learning in their classrooms and encourage, support and challenge each student on their learning journey.

Through a focus on Dreaming, Believing and Achieving Together in 2011 we focused on implementing: 'Positive Behaviours for Learning' through our '7 Kinds of Best' and Student, Staff and Parent Codes of Cooperation. This was the start of our journey in addressing the focuses identified in our 2010 School Review including values education, positive relationships and a focus on making a difference through witness, word & action.

The use of Quality Learning Tools & Strategies throughout the school has enabled us to address our focus areas of high expectations for all and student goal setting and meaningful feedback.

The implementation of Professional Learning Com-

munities allowed us to support each other as we addressed our Review focus of quality teaching, learning & assessment in all KLA's.

School started well in 2011 with 281 students in 11 class groups. This included 52 new students. In January we welcomed a teacher from Wales who was completing a teacher exchange with a St Mary's teacher until the end of August.

Life continued to be busy and exciting at St Mary's with many extra cultural and sporting opportunities available. All students were involved in the annual Student Art Show, school choirs, cultural performances and excursions as well as learning Indonesian. Many also took on individual music tuition, joined the school orchestra or competed in the very successful school chess club. St Mary's Chess teams maintained their formidable reputation at local, regional and state levels thanks especially to our volunteer Chess Coach. Our vibrant library continued to be a popular destination with increasing numbers of students participating in the Premier's Reading Challenge. St Mary's students love their sport and excelled during 2011 through representation in local teams as well as at Diocesan, Polding and State level. Representative sporting opportunities included swimming, cross country, athletics, orienteering, rugby, netball, touch football and even horse sports.

Many students in Years 4 – 6 also had the opportunity to participate in enrichment activities including Tournament of Minds and Brain Olympia. Student Leadership opportunities included students from Kinder to Year 6 being given the opportunity to lead as members of the Student Representative Council. Our Year 5 & 6 student leaders once again enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about leadership through participation in the Young Leaders Day in Sydney and the Impact Student Leadership Conference in Tamworth. These experiences empower our students to grow in pride and confidence.

Our extended kinder orientation program and our friendly experience days' program for older students ensured new children were secure and confident when commencing at our school. St Mary's Starting School Expo provided parents of children commencing kindergarten with valuable advice on how to help their child prepare for 'big school'. A number of local professionals once again generously gave their time to provide quality presentations. Our Expo was also well supported by many local businesses who displayed a range of products required by first time school students.

In the 2011 Year 6 Religious Education Test St Mary's students achieved above the Diocesan average. Other 2011 student events and achievements included: • The introduction of Dance lessons for all students K-4 • 80 St Mary's students performing in the 'Reach for the Stars' Catholic Schools Concerts

along with students from O'Connor Catholic College and St Joseph's Uralla • The introduction of a Stage 3 Gymnastics program at the Armidale Gymnastics Club • Our amazing chess club results including the Regional competition where our Chess teams dominated the competition placing 1st, 2nd and 4th out of 40 teams! • Workshops and a concert presented by Peter Kearney • A Visit by the Questacon Science Circus.

Parents enrolling their children at St Mary's often comment that they chose our school because of its spirit of community. St Mary's is a welcoming and inclusive community where individuals and relationships are valued and respected. Our Class Parents ensured new families quickly felt that important sense of belonging. Our 2011 Welcome BBQ and Crackers went off with a bang with one of the largest number of families attending in years. A highlight of our year was our Catholic Schools Week celebrations including our Student Art Show, P&F Fete, Grandfriends Day and Preschool Open Morning. During 2011 we offered four Twilight Prayer Reflections for both parents and staff presented by members of the Diocesan renewal Team. Literacy & Numeracy week was held in Term 3 & we celebrated with the National Music Count Us In activity, Open classrooms, Book Character Parade & family Picnic Lunch. Another successful P&F Revue saw very polished performances that were well received by packed audiences. We sincerely thank the many Parents and Friends of St Mary's school community who work together to create these fantastic shows.

St Mary's is enriched by strong partnerships with families, parish and the wider community. We teach and embrace compassion and reconciliation. St Mary's again enjoyed much parent support in 2011. The very tangible support and spirit of cooperation that exists at St Mary's is evident daily in the generous contributions of many enthusiastic people. In particular we were very happy with the Volunteer Parent Reading Program coordinated by our Additional Needs Teacher. We had a great group of 24 committed volunteers assisting 56 students with their reading. In addition, a small group of parents were also trained as MultiLit Tutors to assist more students with their reading through this intensive program.

On a sad note we celebrated the life of one of our mothers at her funeral Mass in June after her 15 month battle with Cancer. Throughout her illness the amazingly generous support from the school community for her family was further testament to the spirit alive in this community.

St Mary's has actively participated in community events and continued to enhance its outstanding reputation within the general community. St Mary's is a proud participant and supporter of many Armidale community events including the

ANZAC Day March, Autumn Festival Parade and the Armidale Eisteddfod.

As we recognise and commemorate our strong and proud history we look forward to the future with much excitement. We now have Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms and continue to ensure teachers receive appropriate professional development to support them in using this technology to maximise student learning outcomes. This year we also purchased 13 iPads to ensure each teacher and class has access to this innovative technology. Active support from our School Board and Parents & Friends Association has ensured the upgrading of our ICT facilities designed to meet the current and future needs of St Mary's students

Congratulations and thank you to all members of St Mary's school community on a productive and enjoyable 2011.

Parental Involvement

When we reported at the end of last year we were settling into our new administration offices, looking forward to the refurbishment of the St Anne's building, and beginning the construction of the 6 new classrooms under the Federal Government BER programme. As I write today, we have moved into these new facilities and preparing for the formal opening on Friday 9th December. The upheaval that our students, teachers, ancillary staff and families have endured over the past 18 months has been draining but the new school that we now have, and can be very proud of, will set the school up for the next 25 years, hopefully as a full 2 stream school. There are still a number of issues to finalise but the ability to now commit learning areas to a music room, language centre and liturgy room will assist in nourishing our students and the broader school community.

Most of the Boards time during the school year has been taken up with the building project, many thanks to the assistance of the C.S.O. and Mr Manglesdorf who have shouldered much of the specialist work that neither Mons Wilkes, Mrs Fern nor the Board hold the skills to undertake. Now we put our shoulder to the wheel and start paying off the debts that always come with such an expansive series of projects. As always we must also thank Mons Wilkes and Father Steven for their spiritual leadership and involvement in the life of the school over the past 12 months. The parish also continues to provide valuable financial support through the School Building Fund which this year replaced the roof on the infants building and assisted in replacing the heating throughout the school following the decision to turn off town gas earlier this year. We also continue to be helped by the students at both

O'Connor Catholic College and St Albert's College as they regularly assist in working bees and other school functions.

The parish and broader town community continue to support our school in astonishing ways. The efforts by the school body to raise almost \$16,000 through the annual fete and around \$15,000 from the Glee Revue continue to provide opportunities for the P&F to assist in enhancing our children's educational experience. This year the P&F have continued their extraordinary support for the school by purchasing additional smart boards, school banners, the school sign and associated branding resources, a complete replacement of electrical goods for the canteen and continual assistance to our children as they represent the school and Diocese at numerous sporting and academic endeavours.

Our long term focus on literacy and numeracy is showing fruits of success with the recent NAPLAN reports showing that our students continue to improve in these critical aspects of their formative education. I continue to be quietly jealous of the breadth of learning opportunities that our children are blessed to be exposed to by our committed teaching staff.

The ongoing work and success of our Mini-Vinnies Group this year highlight the social and pastoral skills that our children are developing as they continue to show care and support for those less fortunate than themselves. That charitable view of the world can only put them in good stead into the future, and they will remember fondly their days at St Mary's. School Board Chairperson 2011

Student Leadership

St Mary's Primary School has been an amazing part of our childhood. It has provided us with a wonderful education and has given us experiences and opportunities that we needed to prepare for high school. As the school captains, we had the honour to represent the school in many ways such as the Halogen Young Leaders Day and the opening and blessing of our new school buildings.

We were privileged to attend a school that has a broad range of extra activities such as music, community service and sport. These opportunities are amazing and we were enjoyed being able to actively participate in our school. The St Mary's community is really supportive and we were pleased to be the school captains for 2011

School Profile

School History

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 reestablished 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, St Anne and Moira Foley. The school crest is common to Ursuline schools as is the motto: "Serviam" Generations of families have been educated at St Mary's.

Location/Drawing Area

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.

Enrolment Policy

St Mary's Primary School follows the Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools policy Enrolment of Students in Catholic Systemic Schools in the Diocese of Armidale 2002. This document can be obtained from the school office or is available on the Catholic Schools Office web site: <http://www.arm.catholic.edu.au>.

Student Enrolment

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2009	154	136	290
2010	147	136	283
2011	153	128	281

Student Mobility

In 2011 52 new students commenced their schooling at St Mary's. Of these 35 were in Kindergarten and 17 in other grades. Throughout the year 17 new students joined our school community. 13 students left St Mary's for other schools during 2011. 30 Year 6 students left St Mary's at the end of 2011 and 4 other students left to continue their schooling at other schools.

Student Attendance

Average daily attendance for 2011

Kindergarten	92.45%
Year 1	94.02%
Year 2	94.71%
Year 3	91.93%
Year 4	92.74%
Year 5	92.76%
Year 6	91.33%
All students	92.90%

Management of Non-Attendance

Absence reminder notes are sent to parents / guardians if an absence is unexplained after seven days. The sending of this note is recorded by the class teacher. Excessive or unusual unexplained absences (e.g. if there is no response to the notes above,) are followed up by a member of the school leadership team by phone or in writing. Occasionally, home visits are necessary. Where a child is absent from school for 12 days without successful contact with the parents, the Principal notifies the Catholic Schools Office.

Letters are sent to parents/guardians of students with unacceptable attendance patterns and/or patterns of consistently late arrival as identified in the mid and end of term attendance checks. Parents/guardians are asked to meet with the Principal to discuss the reasons for the absences/late arrival and strategies to improve attendance.

The Aboriginal Education Assistant assists with following up parents/guardians of aboriginal students with unacceptable attendance patterns and/or patterns of consistently late arrival as outlined in St Mary's School Community Partnership Agreement

Consistent identification of students with unacceptable attendance patterns and/or patterns of consistently late arrival requires implementation of additional strategies including completion of the Keep Them Safe Online Mandatory Reporters Guide. Failure of parents/guardians to attend requested meetings and support the school Attendance Policy may result in the termination of student enrolment. This would be done in consultation with the Parish and CSO.

Staff Profile

In 2011 St Mary's had 12 full-time and 6 part-time teachers. One teacher completed a semester exchange with a teacher from Wales during the first half of the year. The leadership team consisted of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, Coordinator Two and Coordinator One. Three of the part-time teachers provided Executive Release time for the teachers in these roles.

The classroom teachers were supported by the following part-time specialist staff: Teacher Librarian, Additional Needs Teacher, Music Teacher, Aboriginal Education Assistant and 3 Education Assistants. There were two part-time Clerical Assistants one of whom was replaced during the year. In addition there was a part time ICT Assistant and Canteen Manager.

The staff have between 8 and 33 years teaching experience. All teachers hold teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia with 4 holding Masters Degrees and 13 holding Bachelor's Degrees. All staff will be returning in 2012 with the exception of one part time teacher who has taken maternity leave.

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2011 was 96.25%.

Teacher Standards

Teacher qualifications fall into 1 of 3 categories for all teaching staff responsible for delivering the curriculum.

Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR* 100%

Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications 0%

Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context 0%

* Australian Education Institution - National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

Percentage of teachers accredited to teach Religious Education 100

Percentage of teachers undertaking accreditation to teach Religious Education 0

Staff Professional Learning

During the year the whole school staff participated in the following Staff Development Days: Quality Learning & Values Education, Capacity Matrices, Religious Education and Planning of integrated units using higher order thinking skills.

Staff meeting PD sessions were also held on Professional Learning Communities, Literacy, Numeracy, Anaphylaxis training, First Aid & CPR and Child Protection.

Individual or small groups of staff attended the following Professional Development activities: ACEL Emerging Leaders Conference, Professional Learning Communities Workshops, David Langford Quality Learning Workshop, an Autism workshop, Diabetes management, a PDHPE planning day, Implementation of the ESL Scales, RE Storytelling, Stage Maths Days, Team Leadership for School Development, a Diocesan Leadership Program, NSW BOS Consultation sessions & Diocesan workshops on the new Science, Maths & English curriculums, Guided Reading & Grammar workshops, NAPLAN Persuasive Writing Certificate, a Dare to Lead Conference on Aboriginal student engagement the Diocesan Aboriginal Immersion week, Non violent training workshops, Conflict Resolution, Panel member training for accreditation of teacher Education courses, Stage planning days analysing the 2011 NAPLAN data and Assisting students with Learning Difficulties at the SPELD Conference

Specific workshops were held for Principals, Assistant Principals, Religious Education Coordinators,

Education Assistants, Aboriginal Education Assistants, Librarians, Secretaries and Additional Needs Teachers throughout the year.

Catholic Identity

Religious Education Program

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

Liturgical Life

St Mary's is fortunate to be able to celebrate Mass regularly in the Cathedral. The Opening School Mass was celebrated with O'Connor Catholic College early in Term 1. A highlight of Term 2 was Grandfriends' Day which included a very well attended Mass. Primary students attended Mass weekly. Stage 3 attended Mass on Thursdays at 9.15 am while Stage 2 attended on Fridays at 9.15 am. There was also a whole school Mass at least once each term. Infants' classes attended Mass once each term with their 'buddy' class. Buddy masses were advised in the Newsletter to enable and encourage parents to attend. The whole school attended Mass on Holy Days of Obligation. The end of year Mass was celebrated on the last school day of Term 4. The Parish priests also regularly visited each classroom and provided the Sacrament of Reconciliation each term.

Our school based sacramental program prepared children in Years 2,3 and 6 for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. Parents supported these programs especially through attendance at the Information Meetings and Enrolment Masses.

Staff and Student Faith Formation

In 2011 twenty one Year 6 students from St Mary's received the sacrament of Confirmation, which was conferred by Bishop Luc Matthys on Pentecost Sunday. On the last weekend in August, twenty six Year 3 students received the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time and in November, thirty Year 2 students received the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

During Lent all students were involved in Lenten Prayer Assemblies which were opportunities for parents, students and the wider community to reflect on the meaning of Lent and Holy Week. During

Advent, students in Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2 presented Christmas Prayer Assemblies which celebrated the Christmas message of love, hope and goodwill.

Staff had the opportunity to gather weekly for Staff prayer and in 2011 the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator and 2 Classroom teachers attended Diocesan Retreat days. Four twilight prayer sessions were held for parents and staff this year. They were led by members of the Diocesan Renewal team and focused on Lent, Pentecost, Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Year 6 Religious Education Test

Average score	Diocesan (%)	This School (%)
2009	73.2	74.92
2010	70	68.4
2011	69.0	71.4

Social Justice

St Mary's Social Justice program in 2011 was led by St Mary's very active and enthusiastic "Mini Vinnies" group. 58 students from Years 4 - 6 met regularly at lunchtime throughout the year to help plan and implement a range of initiatives to assist those in need both within and beyond the school. At the beginning of the year a fundraising appeal was held for Queensland flood appeal. Mini Vinnies also supported the St Vincent de Paul Winter and Christmas appeals. They attended the inaugural one day Mini Vinnies Conference in Inverell with other Mini Vinnies groups from Diocesan schools. Parents assisted with both the Winter Sleep Out and Christmas Party fundraisers.

St Mary's supported Project Compassion and the Catholic Children's Mission through fund raising in 2011. Approximately \$1800 was donated to Project Compassion and \$1400 to the Children's Mission Appeal. In addition \$305 was raised for the St Vincent de Paul Assist a Student program. The Religious Education Coordinator assisted Stage 3 students who volunteered for community service. These students were mainly involved in cleaning the Cathedral in 2011.

Parish Links

The school works closely with the Parish, welcoming the Parish Priests as regular visitors in the classrooms and school. Students are Altar Servers for both daily and weekend Masses. Parishioners are encouraged to support the Stage 2 & Stage 3 students at weekly Mass. In 2011 the classroom teachers taught the sacramental preparation programs for St Mary's students in Year 6

preparing for Confirmation, Year 3 preparing for their First Eucharist and in Year 2 preparing to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation. The school's Religious Education Coordinator was also actively involved in the Parish Sacramental programs for all three sacraments.

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. Members of the school community including the School Orchestra supported the Parish Dinner. Members of the Parish community supported the P&F Revue and Fete. The school is working closely with the Parish team planning the 2012 Centenary of the Cathedral.

Respect and Responsibility

During 2011 St Mary's school community implemented a 'Positive Behaviours for Learning' approach through our 7 Kinds of Best and Student, Staff and Parent Codes of Cooperation. This has been the start of our journey in addressing our 2010 School Review Focuses of values education, positive relationships and a focus on making a difference through witness, word & action.

Values, expectations and agreed behaviours were identified for all members of St Mary's school community utilising our 7 Kinds of Best framework: Be the Believing Kind, Be the Learning Kind, Be the Achieving Kind, Be the Community Kind, Be Kind to Yourself, Be Kind to Others & Be Kind to the Environment. Each Kind of Best was taught and emphasised throughout the year at whole schools assemblies, stage assemblies and in each classroom. At the beginning of the year two weeks were set aside to allow a whole school focus on 'A Quality Beginning' during which Class Visions and Codes of Cooperation were developed based on our 7 Kinds of Best.

Highlights of this Initiative included: Classroom Codes of Cooperation developed & displayed in each classroom; Explicit lessons focusing on the 7 Kinds of Best taught every week to reinforce positive behaviours for learning; School Wide Student Code of Cooperation reviewed & distributed for family discussion; St Mary's Term Behaviour Awards presented in recognition of different levels of student compliance with the Student Code of Cooperation

During the year students were encouraged to reflect on their growth in demonstrating the 7 Kinds of Best behaviours. The Restorative Justice approach was utilised by teachers in their approach to behaviour management issues.

Students were encouraged to participate in the

community ANZAC Day March and all were involved in special school based assemblies commemorating ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day and NAIDOC Week. The whole school also participated in the International Pinwheels for Peace project on International Peace Day in September. The Student Representative Council led a number of initiatives aimed at developing students' pride and awareness of their school uniform and environment.

School Curriculum

St Mary's Primary School follows the Board of Studies syllabus for each subject offered (as required for registration under the Education Act 1990) and implements the curriculum requirements of the Catholic Schools Office.

Features of the School Curriculum

During 2011 our school curriculum focus was on working collaboratively to improve student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy. To support this focus the following initiatives were implemented and/or consolidated:

- A Quality Beginning – 2 week focus at the beginning of the year on establishing Quality Learning processes and Positive behaviour expectations in each classroom
- Quality Learning Processes developed & displayed in each classroom e.g. Morning process, Pack Up process to maximise learning time for students
- The use of QLA Tools & Strategies throughout the school enabled us to address our focus areas of High expectations for all and Student goal setting and meaningful feedback
- Capacity Matrices implemented in all classrooms to maximise individual learning
- Parking Lot used in all classrooms for student voice & feedback
- Classroom Meetings held weekly in all classrooms
- Implementation of Professional Learning Communities Meetings and goal setting processes for each team
- The implementation of Professional Learning Communities allowed us to support each other in order to provide: Quality teaching, learning & assessment in all KLA's, A challenging & engaging curriculum and A professional learning culture
- St Mary's Literacy & Numeracy Guidelines implemented in all classrooms
- All teachers K-6 expected to implement of Guided Spelling
- Professional Development provided for all teachers in the NAPLAN Persuasive Writing Criteria.
- Completion of the NAPLAN Persuasive Writing Certificate by 5 teachers.
- Use of CSO Achievement Targets in Literacy & Numeracy as the basis of the school's annual Literacy & Numeracy Plan
- Assessment Plans for Common Grade Assessments & Student Work Samples for each Year level developed & implemented each term
- Rubrics and/or

common criteria developed to support allocation of the Common Grade Scale to these assessments

- Assessment for learning strategies and terminology introduced to all teachers.
- Standardised tests for all students completed throughout the year
- Student Tracking Cards updated each term with current assessment data
- Annual analysis of NAPLAN SMART Data by all teachers to inform future planning
- Protection of uninterrupted learning time from 9 – 11am
- Homework Grid implemented in all classrooms – content regularly monitored and reviewed by Stage teams
- The integration of ICT in student learning at St Mary's was enhanced in 2011 by the installation of Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms, the purchase of 13 iPads & the provision of PD externally and internally for staff in the effective use of these technologies
- Additional student learning opportunities in 2011 including Tournament of Minds, Brain Olympia, Individual music tuition, Indonesian, school choirs and orchestra, Chess, ICAS competitions and representative sport.

Student Performance

St Mary's Primary School uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, portfolios, projects and presentations. The school also participates in the nation-wide literacy and numeracy testing program for the purposes of diagnosing individual learning needs and reviewing whole class teaching programs. Information on student progress is communicated on a regular basis and opportunities exist for external assessment results to be discussed with parents on an individual basis annually.

Literacy and Numeracy

The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) was introduced for students in Years 3 and 5 in May 2008. NAPLAN replaces the previous State-based Basic Skills Test and the results provide valuable information about student achievements in Literacy and Numeracy. Analysis of the results is used at school level to support the enhancement of Literacy and Numeracy outcomes for all students. Year 3 results are reported in Bands 1 to 6 with Band 6 representing the highest achievement and Year 5 results are reported in Bands 3 to 8 with Band 8 representing the highest achievement. **Please note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.**

Year 3 % in Bands		1&2	3&4	5&6
Reading	School	8	54	37
	National	14.7	38.6	44.7
Writing	School	5	38	57
	National	7.9	44.2	46.1
Spelling	School	10	38	52
	National	15	42.5	40.6
Grammar & Punctuation	School	10	46	43
	National	13.9	36.1	48.1
Numeracy	School	14	54	32
	National	14	50.8	33.3
Year 5 % in Bands		3&4	5&6	7&8
Reading	School	16	45	39
	National	20.4	49.2	28.6
Writing	School	20	63	18
	National	17.4	58.1	22.6
Spelling	School	20	63	17
	National	19.5	52.9	25.7
Grammar & Punctuation	School	24	41	34
	National	17.1	46.4	34.6
Numeracy	School	22	59	18
	National	17.6	55.8	24.8

Overall we were very pleased with the Year 3 results in particular. The Year 3 results were above the National average in all assessment areas. There was a higher percentage of students in the Top Band (Band 6) in Reading than the State average. 10 students achieved in the top two bands for all aspects of Literacy and 12 students achieved in the top two bands for all aspects of Numeracy. The trend data for NAPLAN results over the past four years shows improved results in Reading, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation, Numeracy, Data, Measurement, Space & Geometry.

The Year 5 results were above the National average in Reading. 15 students achieved in the top two bands of at least two aspects of literacy and 8 students achieved in the top two bands in at least two aspects of numeracy. The trend data for NAPLAN results over the past four years shows improved results in Reading and 2011 results have risen above State and Diocesan averages. School and student growth results for Reading and Spelling from Year 3 to Year 5 are above State and Diocesan averages.

National Minimum Standards

The lowest Band for each year (Band 1 in Year 3 and Band 3 in Year 5) represents students who are achieving BELOW the National Minimum Standard (NMS) in each aspect of NAPLAN. Students in the second Band for each year (Band 2 in Year 3 and Band 4 in Year 5) represent students who are achieving at the NMS. Students in all other Bands are achieving ABOVE the NMS.

The percentages of students in this school achieving the national minimum standard are reported below.

		Year 3	Year 5
Reading	School	95	93
	National	92.8	91.5
Writing	School	95	91
	National	95.3	92.5
Spelling	School	90	89
	National	92.8	91.3
Grammar & Punctuation	School	90	85
	National	93.1	92
Numeracy	School	92	89
	National	95.6	94.4

In Year 3 there was a lower percentage of students in the lowest two bands of Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation, Numeracy and Data, Measurement, Space & Geometry than the State average. In Year 5 there was a lower percentage of students in the lowest two bands of Reading than the State average. We are in the process of establishing Professional Learning Teams within each Stage group of teachers to enable them to plan, work and assess more closely to better address the needs of all students.

School Policy Summary

Student Welfare

St Mary's Primary School seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- minimises risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of students
- provided student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development

The school's Pastoral Care Policy is based on the Bishop's Commission Policy Pastoral Care In The Catholic Systemic Schools Of The Armidale Diocese.

In 2011 as part of our focuses on Be Kind to Yourself and Be Kind to Others, all classes at St Mary's participated in classroom lessons aimed at identifying bullying behaviours, exploring the role of bystanders when bullying occurs and reinforcing the "Turn, talk, tell" strategy for dealing with bullying should it occur. The "Turn, talk, tell" strategy to bullying involves students turning away or ignoring bullies, talking to bullies by saying "No" or telling

a teacher what has happened should the bully not respond to the "No". All reports and incidents of bullying are followed up with strategies and support offered to any victims of bullying. Any identified bullies are given appropriate consequences and also offered strategies and support to modify their behaviour. Additional teaching resources were purchased to support the teaching of other social skills K-6.

The Class Parent program was useful in providing support for families in need throughout the year. Student well-being was enhanced in 2011 through the "Crunch and Sip" program in all classes which encourages a short snack break at 10am to eat fresh vegetables or fruit as well as the consumption of water throughout the day. A number of St Mary's students also benefited from the "Walking School Bus" option for travelling to school once each week. Nearly 100 students participated in the 'Walk Safely to School Day' activity. St Mary's is recognised as a "Sun Safe" and "Asthma Friendly" school.

The full text of school and diocesan policies are available on request from the school office..

Discipline Policy

St Mary's Primary School bases its Discipline Policy on the Bishop's Commission Policies Pastoral Care In The Catholic Systemic Schools Of The Armidale Diocese, Policy On Suspension, Expulsion Or Exclusion Of Students In Catholic Schools In The Diocese Of Armidale and Management Of Drug Related Issues In Catholic Schools In The Diocese Of Armidale. These policies are based on procedural fairness and are discussed with students on a regular basis. In compliance with the NSW Education Reform Act 1990, corporal punishment is banned in ALL Armidale Diocesan schools.

The full text of school and diocesan policies are available on request from the school office..

The criteria for Term behaviour awards for students was made explicit and aligned to St Mary's 7 Kinds of Best and Student Code of Cooperation. Parents and students were made aware of the criteria for each award and the new system was introduced during Terms 3 & 4. For the highest award students were required to demonstrate the 7 Kinds of Best through consistent appropriate and cooperative behaviour all term.

Enrolment Policy

St Mary's Primary School bases its Enrolment Policy on the Bishop's Commission Policy Enrolment of Students In Catholic Systemic Schools in the Diocese of Armidale.

The full text of school and diocesan policies are available on request from the school office..

Complaints and Grievance Resolution Policy

St Mary's Primary School procedures for resolving concerns and complaints is based on the Bishop's Commission Policy Complaints & Suggestions Policy for the Diocese of Armidale. This policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that members of the school community must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive, conciliatory environment. The full text of school and diocesan policies are available on request from the school office..

Parent, Student and Staff Satisfaction

M.Y.P. conducted a School Results Survey for St Mary's in 2011. Responses from parents were received from 154 out of 195 families. The Parents indicated an overall satisfaction score of 81%. The best practice areas identified by parents included: leadership, general and Catholic ethos.

Responses from staff were received from 22 out of 26 eligible respondents. Staff indicated an overall satisfaction score of 81%. The best practice areas identified by staff included: Catholic ethos, general, leadership and staff engagement.

Responses from students were received from 50 out of 77 eligible respondents in Years 4 & 6. The students indicated an overall satisfaction score of 85%. The best practice areas identified by students included: Catholic ethos, general, leadership, teaching & learning, resources and improvement processes.

School Review and Development

Annual School Priorities 2011

PRIORITY 1: CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION • Focus on improving relationships (7 Kinds of Best & School Code of Cooperation) • Parents role as prime educators (Twilight Prayer Reflections & Parent Workshops)

PRIORITY 2: STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING • Implementation of positive behaviours for learning (7 Kinds of Best & School Code of Cooperation) • More effective use of data by students to enhance intrinsic motivation (QLA strategies & processes) • Focus on

explicit goal setting & feedback for students on their performance

PRIORITY 3: TEACHERS AND THEIR TEACHING

- Professional Learning Community practices established
- Shared responsibility for the learning of all students
- Effective use of collaborative planning & professional dialogue by teachers
- Enhanced use of data to inform teaching and learning

PRIORITY 4: FINANCIAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND RESOURCES • School Refurbishment

PRIORITY 6: PARTNERSHIP • Encouragement of staff innovation & better utilisation of the talents of all staff • Parents as partners

Projected School Priorities 2012

- Participation in the Catholic School Identity Profiling Project
- Professional development for teachers on meaningful prayer & liturgical celebrations
- Meeting the requirements as a NSW Catholic Focus School for Aboriginal education
- Firmly establish Professional Learning Communities practices
- Enhanced collaborative planning & professional sharing by teachers
- Focus on assessment for learning
- Enhanced use of data to inform teaching and learning
- Effective intervention strategies for lower & higher performing students in literacy & numeracy
- Provision of workshops for parents to enhance their skills & understanding as partners in education
- Upgrading of School Maintenance Plan to address identified & significant maintenance issues
- Commence planning for a whole school environmental education focus

Major Achievements from the 2011 Annual Plan

The implementation of a whole school framework and language for values education and behaviour expectations at St Mary's has been very successful.

Using our 7 Kinds of Best we have been able to describe common expectations for all students, staff and parents at St Mary's. We have used these to develop Class and School Codes of Cooperation. We developed our school 7 Kinds of Best song and regularly reinforced our shared values and behaviour expectations through classroom lessons, school assemblies and through the school newsletter.

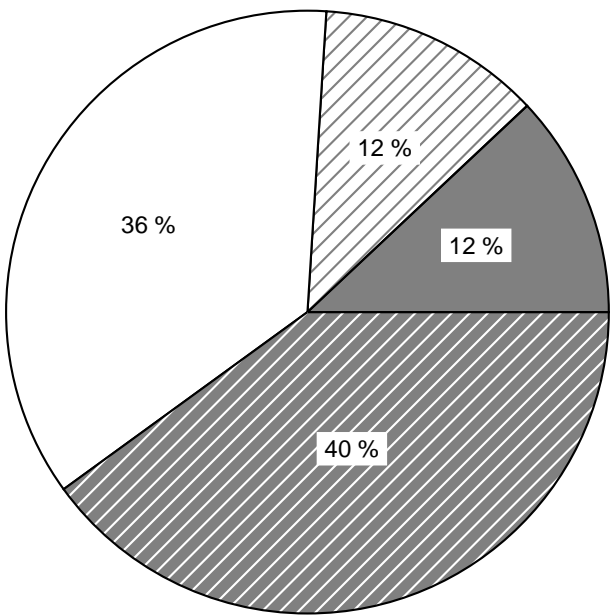
The focus on Quality Learning throughout the school saw the regular and consistent use of a variety of Quality Learning processes and strategies in all classes. These strategies are designed to increase the intrinsic motivation of students to achieve to the best of their potential. They also encourage increased student voice and ownership of learning in the classroom.

The introduction of Professional Learning Communities practices was enhanced by all members of the School Leadership Team attending a variety of Professional Development opportunities early in the year to develop a shared understanding of the essential elements of this collaborative approach. Teachers were given allocated PLC meeting time each week and the process of SMART goal setting was introduced. A trial was also implemented in Term 4 with a whole school timetable allowing maximum staffing of each Stage for an hour each day to better facilitate grouping of students according to their learning needs.

The most challenging and rewarding achievement of 2011 was the completion and Official Opening of our new and refurbished buildings completed with funding from the National School Pride and Primary Schools for the 21st Century under Building the Education Revolution program. This project has allowed for the refurbishment of the 1912 St Anne's School Hall and the construction of 6 new classrooms as well as new toilets and School Canteen. After nearly two years of building works in the school, we are enjoying our new facilities and the opportunities created by the new central location of all St Mary's classrooms.

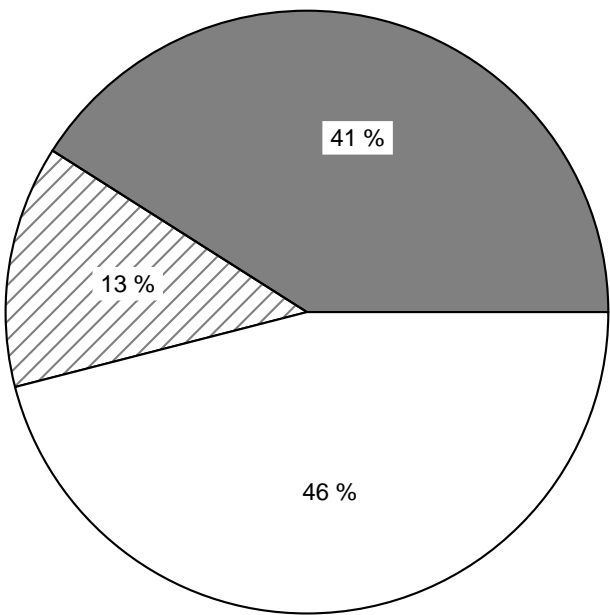
Financial Statement

Income



- fees and private income
- ▨ state recurrent grants
- commonwealth recurrent grants
- ▨ government capital grants
- ▨ other capital income

Expenditure



- salaries, allowances and related expenses
- ▨ non-salary expenses
- capital expenditure

The information in this report has been verified and the priorities endorsed by the Director of Catholic Schools and the school Regional Supervisor.