

Annual School Report
2013 School Year

St Mary's Primary School, Bowraville



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About This Report

St Mary's is registered by the Board of Studies (NSW) and managed by the Lismore Catholic Schools Office (CSO), as the 'approved authority' for the Registration System formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act 1990.

The *Annual Report to the Parish School Community* for this year provides the parish 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 to the parish school community information about initiatives and developments of major interest and importance to the parish school community and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school's Strategic Management Plan and Annual Plan.

The *Report* demonstrates accountability to the Federal and State Government regulatory bodies, the parish and school community and the Catholic Schools Office. This *Report* has been approved by the CSO which monitors school processes to ensure compliance with all NSW Board of Studies requirements for Registration.

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, year books and other regular communications. The *Report* will be available on the school's website by 30 June 2014 following its submission to the Board of Studies.

The contents of this *Report* may be tabled for discussion at various parent forums and all information is public.

Further information about the school or this *Report* may be obtained by contacting the school on 02 65647369 or by visiting the website at www.bwppplism.catholic.edu.au

Principal's Message

The primary purpose of St Mary's Catholic Primary School is to support the members of the parish community in providing a faith formation for their children. The school fosters a commitment to the individual person and provides opportunities for academic, cultural and sporting achievement. St Mary's offers students a Catholic education based on the teaching of the Church and within the context of a strong faith community.

Our parish school continued to provide many opportunities for the faith and spiritual growth of the students as well as opportunities to excel in academic, cultural and sporting areas. All of these areas combined to ensure that our school's mission was lived out daily in the life of the school.

The students' achievements and accomplishments were showcased throughout 2013. Student work was proudly displayed in classrooms, on school noticeboards, in the school office and on class webpages. School achievement was highlighted and celebrated at many school assemblies. Our focus was to continue to build on the reputation that St Mary's has earned as an exemplary school. The following list provides an indication of the school's academic achievements:

- Our students achieved at significantly higher rates than similar schools throughout Australia.
- Two students attained full-time placement in prestigious Sydney boarding schools.

There were many opportunities throughout the year for our school to be represented at community and cultural events. The following list provides an indication of the school's cultural program and community involvement:

- St Mary's students opened many community events delivering Welcome to Country speeches in Gumbaynggirr.
- St Mary's students excelled in Dance Fever, winning ribbons in various categories.
- Our students participated in the Bellingen and Macksville River Festivals. The students performed stilt-walking and drumming exhibitions.
- The students participated in ANZAC Day march and service.

Students performed well at various sporting events during the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights:

- All students participated in the school's athletics carnival with a team of representatives progressing to Zone honours.
- One student represented our school in the Diocesan Softball team.
- All students participated in the school's cross country carnival and the school hosted the Zone Cross Country.
- All students participated in the school swimming carnival.

There were many people who assisted in the school's quest for excellence. In particular special thanks are extended to the parent body and the school staff for all their generous efforts. St Mary's is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

Troy Baker
Acting Principal

A Parent Message

This year has seen many great gains at St Mary's Bowraville. Teachers have been exploring learning in the 21st Century and what that means for our children. There has been significant Professional Learning for staff as they implement the Contemporary Learning Framework to ensure our students are engaged, enabled and empowered.

Significant work has been done in embedding a professional culture within the school. The addition of Professional Learning Teams together with an increased focus on the use of data has been significant in continuing the improvement across all classes.

Michelle Flanders
President
Friends of St Mary's

This Catholic School

St Mary's is located in Bowraville and is part of the Nambucca Valley Catholic Parish which serves the communities of Bowraville, Nambucca Heads and Macksville. School families are drawn from the towns and communities of Bowraville, Nambucca Heads and Macksville.

Last year the school celebrated 109 years of Catholic education.

The Parish Priest Fr Michael Alcock is involved in the life of the school as is Fr. Paul Sullivan of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry.

St Mary's is a parish School with strong links to the parish family. The school aims to involve the children and their families in the life of the parish through such activities such as:

- participation in monthly Parish Masses;
- involvement in Parish Sacramental programs;
- support of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry programs;
- parishioner participation in school liturgies;
- provision of altar servers for Masses.

The parish school uses the mandated Diocesan Religious Education curriculum and the resource text "To Know, Worship & Love". Catholic life and culture permeate school life with 2.5 hours of religious education taught formally each week. The Diocesan Daily Prayer guidelines support the school's prayer life. The aims and direction of this parish school is guided by *Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore, the Foundational Beliefs and Practices – The Essential Framework*. This Framework underpins all policy, planning, roles and processes within the parish school. Our aim is to increasingly integrate the essence of this statement into all aspects of parish school life. Religious Education is always given priority in our school and classroom curriculum and planning.

The parish school Mission Statement highlights the nature and calling of the school.

St Mary's caters for children from Kindergarten to Year 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL 2013	TOTAL 2012
Male	3	4	2	3	4	1	2	19	19
Female	1	5	3	4	4	2	4	23	28
Indigenous <i>count included in first two rows</i>	2	8	4	6	6	1	4	31	38
LBOTE (Language background other than English) <i>count included in first two rows</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

School Curriculum

The school provides a comprehensive education program based on and taught in accordance with the Board of Studies 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.

The school continues to work towards developing a 21st century pedagogy. This pedagogy will underpin learning across the school, Kindergarten to Year 6. Students' use of ICT is integrated across all KLA's and is used as a tool for researching, communicating, collaborating and creating. Teachers are exploring Web 2 tools to broaden students' access to technology. This is supported by developing pedagogies that encourage collaboration, inquiry, creativity and higher order thinking skills.

At the same time the school understands the importance of knowing the basics as a solid foundation to higher order thinking and as such provides explicit and sequential direct instruction in both literacy and numeracy.

A key feature of the teaching/learning program is not only the integration of cross curricular concepts including indigenous education but also the learning support programs. These specialised programs are provided to support the class teacher and to personalise student learning. Personalised Learning Plans for all indigenous students and a focus on a differentiated curriculum are two areas where this is evident.

Sustainability is a cross curriculum perspective in the school. The development of the school playground as a learning-scape encourages students' authentic learning of

sustainability. The provision of water tanks, breezeways, a citrus orchard, bush tucker gardens, butterfly and bird gardens and vegetable gardens all contribute to the embedding of sustainability principles in the operation of the school and provides a platform for learning about sustainability.

The school values the arts as a way of exploring and expressing the inner-self and has implemented African drumming, ceramics, dance programs and Indigenous arts and crafts throughout the year.

Student Performance in National Testing Programs

The school participated in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) with students in Years 3 and 5 tested. In Year 3, 5 students presented for the tests while in Year 5 there were 3 students.

In Literacy there were four elements tested. These were reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation. In Numeracy, students were tested in number, patterns and algebra, measurement, data, and space and geometry.

In both Year 3 and Year 5 there are six achievement bands with Band 6 being the highest level of attainment in Year 3 and Band 8 the highest in Year 5.

The Commonwealth Government has set minimum acceptable standards for reading, writing and numeracy at particular ages. In Year 3, students who achieve Band 3 or higher have achieved above the minimum standard. In Year 5 those students who achieve at Band 5 and higher have achieved above the minimum standard set by government.

At St Mary's, school and student performance is closely monitored. These tests are one means of gathering data on individual student and school achievement. School staff have participated in Catholic Schools Office information sessions on NAPLAN and SMART 2 Data Analysis workshops.

The following data indicates the percentage of St Mary's students in each band compared to the State percentage.

Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy

Year 3 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy	Percentage of students in Bands 1 to 6											
	BAND											
	6		5		4		3		2		1	
	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School
Reading	27.9	0.0	18.7	0.0	24.6	33.3	16.3	16.7	9.7	33.3	2.8	16.7
Writing	17.2	0.0	37.0	20.0	23.1	0.0	15.2	40.0	5.5	40.0	2.0	0.0
Spelling	25.3	0.0	24.3	20.0	22.8	20.0	17.6	40.0	5.6	0.0	4.4	20.1
Grammar and Punctuation	30.7	0.0	23.7	20.0	20.7	40.0	14.2	20.0	7.5	20.0	3.2	0.0
Number, Patterns and Algebra	15.3	0.0	70.3	0.0	31.6	50.0	18.5	50.0	12.2	0.0	5.2	0.0
Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry	12.3	0.0	29.5	0.0	22.2	33.3	23.9	50.0	7.7	16.7	4.4	0.0
Numeracy	14.0	0.0	24.8	0.0	28.7	66.7	21.5	33.3	8.3	0.0	2.8	0.0

Year 5 NAPLAN results in Literacy and Numeracy

Year 5 NAPLAN Results in Literacy and Numeracy	Percentage of students in Bands 3 to 8											
	BAND											
	8		7		6		5		4		3	
	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School
Reading	15.3	0.0	22.1	0.0	28.9	50.0	22.6	50.0	9.4	0.0	1.8	0.0
Writing	7.8	0.0	15.2	0.0	29.7	50.0	32.3	0.0	8.8	50.0	6.3	0.0
Spelling	13.2	0.0	24.7	0.0	27.3	50.0	21.1	50.0	8.1	0.0	5.5	0.0
Grammar and Punctuation	19.0	0.0	23.1	0.0	22.3	0.0	21.8	100.0	9.3	0.0	4.6	0.0
Number, Patterns and Algebra	15.8	0.0	12.9	0.0	24.8	50.0	24.7	50.0	17.0	0.0	4.7	0.0
Measurement, Data, Space and Geometry	13.8	0.0	19.3	0.0	25.7	50.0	24.0	50.0	10.6	0.0	6.7	0.0
Numeracy	14.8	0.0	13.0	0.0	26.4	0.0	25.7	100.0	15.1	0.0	5.1	0.0

Due to the extremely small cohorts it has been difficult to obtain reliable data as to the effectiveness of Literacy and Numeracy interventions. However in terms of growth, students have made positive gains in Writing, Spelling and Numeracy. This is evidenced by larger percentages of our students attaining scores above the National Minimum Standard and increasing numbers scoring in the higher bands.

Our results in Numeracy continue to be very pleasing due to individualised learning plans especially for Indigenous students.

Teacher Standards and Professional Learning

Teacher Qualifications / Staff Profile		Number of Teachers
1.	Those having formal qualifications from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	7
2.	Those having graduate qualifications but not a formal teaching qualification from a recognised higher education institution or equivalent.	0
3.	Those not having qualifications described in 1 or 2 above but having relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate relevant knowledge.	0
4.	Teachers with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education.	2
5.	Number of staff identifying as indigenous employed at the school.	9
6.	Total number of non- teaching staff employed in the school.	12

All teachers have been involved in professional development activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the skills and understandings of staff so as to improve student outcomes. Professional development can take many forms including whole-staff development days, subject specific in-services, meetings and conferences.

Whole- staff development day professional learning activities in 2013 were:

Staff Development Days	Term	Presenter
Primary Connections	1	Primary connections
Australian Curriculum	2	Troy Baker / Jane Paton
Australian Curriculum	3	Troy Baker / Jane Paton
Australian Curriculum	4	Staff Leadership Team

Additionally staff attended either singly or in groups a range of professional development opportunities including:

- Leader of Pedagogy
- Peer 2 Peer
- K-6 Numeracy Continuum Workshops 1 and 2
- Science and Technology workshops
- Data Analysis
- QuickSmart Numeracy and Literacy
- Best Start training
- K-2 Learning Plans

The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at \$6585 per staff member. This figure has been calculated by CSO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

Teacher Attendance and Retention

The average teacher attendance figure is 95.99%. This figure is provided to the school by the CSO.

Student Attendance

School attendance is always high. The Class Roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each term. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by classroom teachers. Parents are requested to provide a note to the teacher immediately the child returns to school otherwise a phone call is made. The principal is made aware of sustained student absences or absences reflecting a pattern. In these situations the principal or delegated staff member contacts the parent/guardian. Parents are encouraged to arrange medical and other necessary appointments outside school hours. Prolonged periods of absence occur from time-to-time for various reasons. In these cases students and their parents meet with the principal to discuss their leave request. Any concerning pattern of absence is followed up by the School Parent Liaison Officer.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2013 was 87.2 percent. School attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group	Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	80.9%	86.7%	82.7%	84.2%	89.9%	80.9%	95.5%

School Policies

School policies are reviewed regularly. In 2013 the following policies were reviewed, updated or newly created:

- Student Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Behavioural Management Policy
- Bus Policy

Enrolment Policy

Every new enrolment at St Mary's requires parents to attend an enrolment interview. The interview provides an opportunity to learn more about the educational experience provided by the school, specific school procedural policies and current school expectations.

Preference for enrolment is given to children of baptised Catholics. It is a condition of enrolment that all children will participate in class religion lessons and activities, as well as prayer celebrations and school and class Masses.

Children who turn five by 30 June are eligible to apply for enrolment in Kindergarten. Enrolments for Kindergarten children are called for in the year before commencement. Other enrolments are accepted throughout the year if there are vacancies in the classes concerned.

A copy of the enrolment policy is located in the school office or it can be accessed on the school's website. The School Enrolment Policy explains the Parish enrolment guidelines.

Student Welfare Policy, Pastoral Care Policy

The school's Pastoral Care Policy is based on the principles of restorative justice and procedural fairness. The policy reflects the vision and mission of the Catholic Church and is characterised by safety, trust and mutual respect. Pastoral Care is the integration of the academic, social and religious dimensions of a school's energy so that an atmosphere of care prevails within the school community. To live out this policy the school has adopted various programs aimed at helping students value themselves and experience well-being. These include programs focussing on self-esteem, social relationships, moral development, vocational awareness, sexuality, anti-bullying, drug awareness, health and personal safety. The school's pastoral care program has been developed in consultation with staff, parents and students.

Discipline Policy

The principles of restorative justice are embedded in the school's Behaviour Management Policy. These principles include acknowledging the inevitability of conflict and hurt in relationships, working towards healing by repairing relationships, learning and growing from experience. The policy is regularly communicated to all members of the school community. Students, staff and parents have a clear understanding of the expectations articulated through this policy and are supportive of the need to provide a safe and caring learning environment. The policy acknowledges teacher and student rights and responsibilities, and is based on the Gospel teachings of love for self and others.

Complaints and Grievance Policy

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and recognises that parents and caregivers must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory environment. Any concerns raised are responded to promptly and fairly, and confidentiality is always maintained. The policy is available at the front office or from the school's website.

School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school develops an Annual Plan drawn from the five-year Strategic Plan. 2013 was a very rewarding year. Listed below are a number of goals and priorities that the school focused on during the year. The parish school's main goals and priorities were to:

- continue to invest in building staff capacity to meet the changing needs of our students;
- develop Professional Learning Teams that have continued focus on the learning needs of students;
- consolidate our understanding and implementation of the Australian curriculum;
- build collaborative learning initiatives across cohorts;
- develop our capacity to differentiate curriculum for all students.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways such as:

- 'Deadly' awards in weekly gatherings. These are based around our school behaviour and discipline code.
- Stilt-walking/drumming program. This is a means by which students are encouraged to take risks in a safe environment. It develops self-esteem and positive attitudes.
- Stop, Think, Do initiative;
- cultural awareness activities incorporated in our 'Gumbaynggir' language program.

The values of respect and responsibility lie at the heart of Catholic schools, and underpin all policies and procedures. Students, teachers and parents are regularly reminded of the school's commitment to these and other school values by newsletter items, assembly messages and by the nature of our interpersonal relationships. In 2013, the school held a special parent forum through the 'Personalised Learning Plans' to address these and other values identified by the school community. Many of the awards presented to students throughout the year are indicative of these values. Respect and responsibility are fundamental to the school's restorative justice program.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The school uses a variety of methods to gauge parental, student and teacher satisfaction with school operations. The school understands the importance of regularly reviewing approval and satisfaction levels. Last year the following formal and informal opportunities allowed the school to test reaction to decisions, policy and school procedures:

- Personalised Learning Plans including community consultation;
- parent / teacher conversations around goal setting and curriculum;
- Parents and Friends Association meetings;
- school lunches and gatherings around special events such as Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Financial Information

Catholic schools are accountable for all monies received. Each year, the Lismore Catholic Schools Office submits to the Commonwealth Government a financial statement on behalf of the parish primary schools and secondary colleges. This statement details the income and expenditure of each school. In addition, the financial accounts for each school and for the Catholic Schools Office are audited annually.

A visual summary of the income and expenditure reported to the Commonwealth Government for 2013 is presented below:

