

# Annual School Report

## 2020 School Year

### St Mary's Primary School, Bowraville



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[www.bwppplism.catholic.edu.au](http://www.bwppplism.catholic.edu.au)

## About this report

St Mary's Primary School is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Diocese of 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 and the achievements arising from the implementation of the school Improvement Plan.

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

This *Report* complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, yearbooks and other regular communications. The *Report* must be available on the school's website by 30 June 2021 following its submission to NESA.

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 6564 7369 or by visiting the website at [www.bwplism.catholic.edu.au](http://www.bwplism.catholic.edu.au).



## 1.0 Messages

### 1.1 Principal's Message

The primary purpose of St Mary's 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 Primary School offers students a quality 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 students 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 2020. Student work was proudly displayed in classrooms, on school noticeboards and in the school office. School achievement was highlighted and celebrated at many school assemblies. Our focus was to continue to build on the reputation that St Mary's Primary School has earned as an exemplary school. The following list provides an indication of the school's academic achievements. In 2020 the school:

- Students learnt the traditional Gumbaynggirr language, leading to language and song presentations within the school and wider communities.
- Implemented Personal Plans and Deadly Cultural Learning Plans to assist vulnerable Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to make individual progress in both literacy and numeracy.
- Participated in the New South Wales Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan which increased the students' writing and numeracy skills.
- Consolidated the Walker Learning Approach in Kindergarten to Year 2. This is a play-based learning and teaching approach that suits the school's context and the students' learning needs.
- Commenced implementing the Walker Learning Approach in Years 3 to 6. This approach focuses on increasing student engagement in the learning and teaching process.

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. In 2020 the school:

- Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic lockdowns and restrictions throughout the year, opportunities for students to be represented at community and cultural events were curtailed.

Students performed well at various sporting events throughout the year. The following list provides some examples of sporting highlights. In 2020:

- Students in Years 3 to 6 participated in a local Netball Gala Day.
- All students participated in the School Cross Country.
- Other opportunities were limited due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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 Primary School is indeed blessed to have such dedicated and enthusiastic people supporting the school.

Warren Niethé  
Principal



## 1.2 A Parent Message

St Mary's continued to reach out to our Indigenous families. However, a number of usual events or programs were either modified or postponed due to COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions that were in place throughout the year. The traditional language of the Gumbaynggirr people was actively taught to all children throughout the school by an Aboriginal staff member. This is an important part of our school community as it enables the Gumbaynggirr culture and traditions to flourish for future generations.

Following COVID-19 Pandemic safety guidelines our school continued to be an important part of Nambucca Valley Catholic Parish (NVCP). Staff, children and families attend weekly mass with parishioners as well as donating Christmas hampers to our local St Vincent de Paul. The school and the NVCP worked with an Aboriginal Health Corporation to support a Youth Hub that operates out of the school hall.

A group of parents were active within the school, assisting with the many varied celebrations and activities such as sporting carnivals, Mothers' Day stall, Fathers' Day stall, Easter Raffle and other events.

Families were kept informed about what was happening at school by a School Newsletter that was sent out on a regular basis, was published on the school webpage as well as frequent Facebook posts. Parents and students were able to have a say about how the school is going through a comprehensive annual survey. Information about school improvement has been shared.

Aunty Brenda Buchanan  
Parent Member  
Friends of St Mary's

## 2.0 This Catholic School

### 2.1 The School Community

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

Last year the school celebrated 116 years of Catholic education.

The parish priest Fr Shelwin Fernandez is involved in the life of the school.

St Mary's Primary School 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 activities such as:

- Participation in Parish Sacramental Programs.
- Participation in ministries such as Welcome to Country in Language, altar serving, reading and offertory at school and parish masses.
- Including and supporting the Gumbaynggirr Elders.
- Supporting the local St Vincent de Paul Chapter.

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 two and a half hours of religious education taught formally each week. The Diocesan Daily Prayer guidelines support the school's prayer life. The aims and direction of our parish school are guided by *The Mission of Jesus Christ Foundational Values Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore*. 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 school life. Religious Education is given priority in our school and classroom curriculum and planning.

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

## 2.2 School Enrolment

St Mary's Primary School caters for children from Years K to 6. The following table indicates the student enrolment characteristics:

	Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL 2020	TOTAL 2019
<b>Male</b>	5	10	6	4	2	3	0	30	24
<b>Female</b>	0	3	4	3	3	3	3	19	18
<b>Indigenous *</b>	5	10	4	4	4	3	1	31	24
<b>EALD *</b>	5	10	4	4	4	3	1	31	24

*\* count included in first two rows*

NB: EALD refers to students who have English as an Additional Language or Dialect.

## 2.3 Student Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school regularly. Whilst it is the parents' legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly, staff monitor attendance each day as a part of their duty of care. The Class Roll is marked every day and rolls are checked each week by the principal or their delegate. The school uses the attendance coding system adopted in all NSW schools. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly by staff. Parents are requested to provide a satisfactory explanation for an absence by means such as a written note, telephone call, SMS message or email to the school preferably on the first day of absence, and certainly within seven days. 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 the leave request.

The average student attendance rate for the school during 2020 is shown in the following table.

Year K	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	All Years
81.4%	87.3%	90.9%	89.6%	85.2%	88.8%	94.8%	87.7%

## **2.4 Teacher Standards and Professional Learning**

All teachers employed by the School are qualified to teach in NSW. Additionally, all teachers at this School who are responsible for delivering the curriculum are accredited with NESA. Effective from October 2007, the minimum qualification for a teacher in a systemic school in the Diocese of Lismore is a four year teaching degree. Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the *NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004*. Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocese at these levels is as follows: Conditional 82 teacher(s); Provisional 93 teacher(s); Proficient 946 teacher(s); Highly Accomplished 1 teacher(s); Lead 2 teacher(s). Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

At this school there are 8 teacher(s) accredited with NESA, 8 teacher(s) with recognised qualifications to teach Religious Education, 5 Indigenous staff and 8 non-teaching staff.

## **2.5 Teacher Attendance and Retention**

The average teacher attendance figure is 92.0%. This figure is provided to the school by the CSO.

There were no significant staffing changes last year.

## **2.6 Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

The school ensures that at every available formal and informal opportunity the values of respect and responsibility are promoted. We want every student to understand and appreciate that they are part of both the school and the local community.

The school models and teaches students about respect and responsibility in a number of ways:

- 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. A whole school program based on the concepts of team, respect, understanding, support and togetherness (TRUST) continues to be implemented.
- The values of respect and responsibility among the students was further consolidated through "Yarning Time" with the Child and Family Support worker. Yarning Time focused on restorative justice practices.

## **2.7 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.

Parent, student and staff levels of satisfaction relating to important aspects of school life have been captured in the past through the Diocese of Lismore Catholic Schools Office school improvement surveys. Additionally, parental, student and teacher informal opportunities regularly occur through the school newsletter, whole school assemblies as well as staff meetings.

### **3.0 Teaching and Learning**

#### **3.1 School Curriculum**

The school provides a comprehensive educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) 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.

- A number of Key Learning Areas are contextualised taking into account a significant percentage of the students are Aboriginal.
- The early years of learning and how the curriculum is delivered are important focus areas as many students are starting with limited school readiness. To this end, a play-based approach to learning is being implemented.
- There is a strong emphasis that all students meet State and National benchmarks in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Student progress is tracked and monitored using Learning Progressions in Literacy and Mathematical Assessment Interviews in Numeracy.
- The school curriculum is personalised for students through differentiation and targeting specific learning goals. Personalised Plans as well as Deadly Cultural Learning Plans for Aboriginal students are used.

The school continues to work towards developing 21st Century pedagogy. This pedagogy will underpin learning across the school. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on cultural diversity, inclusiveness, personalised learning programs, wellbeing and parent partnerships. Teachers intentionally implement the Gradual Release of Responsibility model. This is achieved through modelled, shared, guided and independent learning activities. Additionally, students collaboratively co-design with their teachers individual learning intentions and success criteria as well as receiving feedback. Personalised learning is enhanced by tracking and monitoring individual student progress.

The parish primary school offers a strong co-curricular program including student participation in:

- Fostering a connection with the Gumbaynggirr community, especially with the Elders.
- Learning Aboriginal cultural songs and dances that are performed in the wider community.
- Excursions to St Patrick's Primary School, Macksville and Bowraville Central Public School for shared educational activities.
- Hosting cultural immersion programs for a number of Sydney based schools.

#### **3.2 Student Performance in National Testing Programs**

##### **3.2.1 NAPLAN**

There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as a result of the decision by the Australian Government for students not to participate in the NAPLAN Assessments due to the circumstances of the Covid-19 Pandemic.



### 3.3 Teacher Professional Learning

All teachers have been involved in professional learning activities during the year. These activities are designed to develop the professional 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 2020 were:

Staff Professional Learning Activity	Date	Presenter
Lismore Catholic Schools Office Learning and Teaching Statement - Introduction and Module 1	20/07/2021	St Mary's Primary School Bowraville - Leadership Team
Lismore Catholic Schools Office Learning and Teaching Statement - Modules 2 and 3. School Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan	25/09/2021	St Mary's Primary School Bowraville - Leadership Team
Lismore Catholic Schools Office Learning and Teaching Statement - Module 4. Preparation for the Lyn Sharratt Learning Collaborative Partnership. Mathematics Agreed Practice Statement. Implementing Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.	12/10/2021	St Mary's Primary School - Leadership Team

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

Activity	Staff numbers	Presenter
Technology for Classrooms	1	Lismore Catholic Schools Office
Instructional Leader Training	1	Lismore Catholic Schools Office
Nationally Consistent Collection of Data	1	Lismore Catholic Schools Office
Walker Learning Approach	3	Early Life Foundation
Extending Mathematical Understanding	1	Lismore Catholic Schools Office

The professional learning expenditure has been calculated at \$1903 per staff member. This figure has been calculated by the CSO and reflects expenditure on casual release days and professional development activities in particular categories.

## 4.0 School Policies

### 4.1 Enrolment Policy

Parish schools were established as places of educational excellence and places that transmit the faith, in the mission entrusted to the Church by our Lord Jesus Christ. They form part of a tradition of Catholic education provided by religious and lay teachers in the Diocese of Lismore for over 150 years. They also fulfil parents' rights to choose the schooling for their children which reflects their own faith, values, beliefs and hopes. Catholic schools have a particular responsibility to provide a Catholic religious education to children baptised in the Catholic faith and to support parents in honouring the commitments that they made on behalf of their children at baptism. The Catholic school is also "open to all who want to share its educational and faith goals inspired by Christian principles" (Congregatio de Institutione Catholica 2009). Most importantly, there is a special place in parish schools for those with the greatest need, especially in areas of lesser educational options or lower socio economic circumstances, and efforts should be made to encourage such enrolments, within the vision of the



Bishop of Lismore for the poor. Every new enrolment at St Mary's Primary School 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. The School [Enrolment Policy](#) explains the Parish enrolment guidelines. A copy of the enrolment policy is located in the school office or it can be accessed on the school's website. There have been no changes to this policy this year.

#### **4.2 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. To live out this policy the school has adopted various programs aimed at helping students value themselves and experience wellbeing. 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 and is available on the school's website. There have been no changes to this policy this year.

#### **4.3 Discipline Policy**

The school does not sanction corporal punishment or allow parents to administer corporal punishment in the school.

The school policy is based on procedural fairness and ensures that school practices respect the dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms of individual students. Students are required to abide by the school rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other people with delegated authority. Where disciplinary action is required any penalty imposed will vary according to the nature of the breach and/or the student's prior behaviour. The policy is discussed with students, staff and parents on a regular basis. Reminders about the policy are regularly included in school newsletters. Relevant sections of the policy are also published in the student diary and it is available on the school's website. There have been no changes to this policy this year.

#### **4.4 Anti-Bullying Policy**

The school's Anti Bullying Policy fosters a cohesive approach to the issue of bullying and includes specific initiatives that are designed to promote pastoral care, wellbeing and safe school communities. This policy covers the bullying of students with disabilities. Disabled children and young people need to know they have the right to be safe from bullying, what bullying is, how to keep safe and what to do if adults do not do enough to stop the bullying. The dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching and intrinsic to our education ministry. There have been no changes to this policy this year and it is available on the school website.

#### **4.5 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. There have been no changes to this policy this year and it is available on the school website.



## 5.0 School Determined Improvement Targets

Each year the school implements the School Improvement Plan. 2020 was a very rewarding year.

Key improvements achieved this year	Key Improvements for 2021
<p><b>Mission of Jesus Christ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked towards a whole school formation plan for staff, students and the wider community with a focus on Aboriginal Spirituality and Social Justice within the Catholic Faith.</li> <li>Permeated Catholic World View (CWV) in other Key Learning Areas (KLAs).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mission of Jesus Christ</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain student voice on how students wish to engage and learn about Religious Education considering their cultural context and experiences.</li> <li>Embed Aboriginal spirituality and perspectives into Religious Education lessons by including Indigenous families, Indigenous Education Workers and community Elders.</li> <li>Provide storytelling kits that engage students in Religious Education lessons.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning and Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented strategies that allowed students to monitor and track their own learning through a process of goal setting, reflection and self-assessment against success criteria.</li> <li>Established staff awareness and understanding of how personalised plans improve the quality of learning and teaching for all students.</li> <li>Provided opportunities for staff to understand quality differentiation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning and Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an agreed practice for the learning and teaching of writing.</li> <li>Personalise the learning and teaching of writing through differentiation.</li> <li>Improve the learning and teaching of writing by embedding learning walks, co-teaching, coaching and providing feedback to teachers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pastoral Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveyed families and the wider community about school engagement.</li> <li>Worked towards a Pastoral Care framework.</li> <li>Established agreed practices for student management based on Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pastoral Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with parents twice a term to collaboratively discuss learning opportunities for students.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for parent voice when setting student learning goals.</li> <li>Organize family friendly events that focus on literacy, numeracy, digital technologies, spirituality, wellbeing as well as school-home partnerships.</li> </ul>

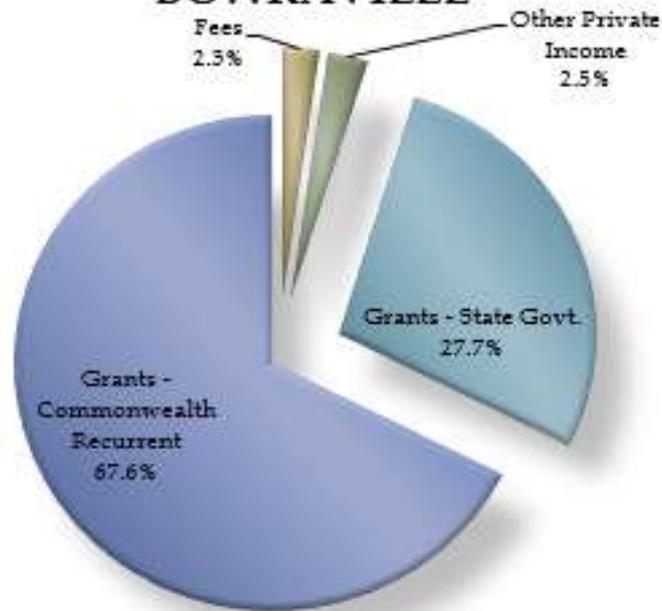
## 6.0 Financial Information

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 2020 is presented below:



## 2020 INCOME - St Mary's Primary School BOWRAVILLE



## 2020 EXPENSE - St Mary's Primary School BOWRAVILLE

