Annual Report

Mater Dei Catholic Primary School, Wagga Wagga

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The School
An enthusiastic and interested parent body, a committed and caring staff, a most supportive Parish Priest and a student body who show a willingness to be challenged and develop life longs skills, have all contributed to another productive year in our school. Our school population is at virtual capacity with 412 students in our two-stream school.

The large increase in our school population over recent years has required continual updating existing facilities and resources. The support of our school community and the Sacred Heart Parish in supporting such growth has been greatly appreciated.

It is with pleasure that I present our 2012 Annual Report for Mater Dei Catholic Primary School.

Catholic Identity
Our goal has been to provide opportunities for those in our school community to continue their faith development. We have worked closely with Father Bernie and the Kooringal Parish in achieving this. Sacramental programs have again been a focus. The students and teachers put a lot of time and effort into preparation for these sacraments and were joined by family and friends to celebrate these special occasions.

A desire to have students develop close links with the Sacred Heart Parish has seen the continuation of school-led Parish Masses. This has given the opportunity for primary classes to take responsibility for leading five of the 5.30pm Masses in Terms Two and Three. It also provided a good opportunity for families of our school to support the classes leading the Masses.

Class Masses and Liturgies are held regularly in our school and allow individual classes to take on responsibility for the planning of such occasions which are strongly supported by parents and grandparents.

A recent initiative has been the celebration of a combined Mass between our Primary School and Mater Dei Catholic College on the Feast of the Assumption to recognise her patronage of both schools.

The pastoral component in our school has been enhanced by the appointment of a Pastoral Care person as part of the Federal Government’s Chaplaincy Program. This has been most timely for our school as 2012 has been a year tinged with loss and sickness in our community. Our Pastoral Care Worker has been particularly active in supporting these families with visits, meals and other means.

In developing student’s global awareness and empathy for those less fortunate, significant amounts of money were raised through their involvement in the missions fundraising, project compassion and other charitable events throughout the year.

The establishment of a “Minnie Vinnies” group in our school has allowed these children to support those in the wider community. Visits to Nursing Homes and Retirement Villages were the major focus for students.

The Spiritual Renewal evening for staff was led by Jane Plum, a member of the CSO Catholic Life Team and focused on “Discipleship”.

A Message from key School Bodies
2012 Chairman’s Report

MDP School Council 2012

2012 again has been a successful year for MDPS. With a very enthusiastic fund raising effort by our P & F, we were able to achieve all the goals we set out at the budget and planning stage early on in the year.

The completion of our Mary Garden last year has provided an appropriate location for praying and quiet time for students and classes.

We have embarked on planning for a Creative Arts Space and are well on the way to finalizing plans and funding for this project. This is eagerly awaited by the staff and students. I feel this demonstrates the schools willingness to embrace all our student’s needs.

We have been at the forefront of the Diocese implementing the very first maintenance and programming structure that has since been used as a blueprint for all schools in the diocese.

I would like to thank all our staff and students, without the valuable input we would not be the
school we currently are today; they continue to excel in all areas.

Lastly I would like to thank Danny and Kathy for their leadership the school keeps thriving under strong leadership and will continue to do while they are within the school

Paul Keough
Mater Dei Parents and Friends Association

President’s Report
2012 has been yet another busy year for the school community at Mater Dei. Two major fundraising events were held; the School fete which continues to go from strength to strength and as usual proved to be a hit with families, and the recent Town and Country Gardens which saw over one thousand visitors pass through the gates of five wonderful gardens. The uniform shop, under the watchful eye of Carmen Coates, continues to be an enormously popular, well patronised and sustainable service for the school. Through these activities the P&F was able to disburse a significant amount of money back to the school community through the School Board.

This year more than ever we have all needed to draw on the sense of community at Mater Dei, with a series of challenges and heartbreaks testing the children, staff, families and friends of our school. The support provided to those in need by the whole school community, the Parish and Mater Dei College was extraordinary. In the darkest moments of the year many turned to our Principal, Danny Malone, for leadership, guidance and reassurance. Danny’s calmness, dignity, selflessness and sureness of faith provided an abundant example of his embodiment of our school’s motto, One in Spirit. Danny’s efforts through the year once again make all of ours pale in comparison, and we are truly fortunate to have a Principal of such calibre.

I would like to extend my thanks to the small army of people who you see at each meeting, a Principal of such calibre.

I would also like to highlight the efforts through the year of the teachers, staff and support staff at the school. In an extraordinary and difficult year they have remained professional, compassionate, approachable and enormously capable, and are well deserving of the thanks of the whole school community. Our children and our school are in very capable hands.

Finally to all of the parents, friends and supporters who make the school what it is - thank you. The future for Mater Dei Primary School has never looked brighter.

James McTavish
President

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing
Once again we were extremely pleased with the students results in the NAPLAN testing conducted for Year 3 and Year 5 students. Our student cohort achieved outcomes above the state average in almost every component. Whilst these results are very satisfying, we will carefully analyse feedback to assist with future learning and teaching.

Parents can refer to the “Myschool” website for greater detail.

Professional Learning
In our own school environment there were several areas of focus. The continuation of our Peer Observation Program for teachers was most successful. This program gave teachers the opportunity to observe and provide feedback to a “buddy” teacher on components of their practice. This program will continue in 2013 and will be an integral part of teachers developing their individual Professional Learning Plan.

Maria Worsfold from The Catholic School’s Office inserviced teachers on explicit teaching of reading strategies which will assist our teachers in developing more efficient skills with our students.

The sharing with colleagues of key learnings from Professional Learning Inservices by teachers who attended, has been beneficial. Work on John Hattie’s research on improving student outcomes, Higher Order Thinking skills and the
benefits of the “Sentence a Day” program were some of the topics of sharing at Teacher’s meetings.

Emphasis was also placed on the analysis of our NAPLAN, SENA and Observation data with a view to directing our teaching to areas of need. The embedding of First Steps Writing and Reading processes into classroom practice has also been a priority.

All staff were also trained in First Aid at the beginning of the school year.

Teaching Staff
B) have qualifications from a recognised higher education institution within Australia but no formal teacher education qualifications
C) have relevant successful teaching experience and appropriate knowledge but no formal teacher qualifications.

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<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<td>23</td>
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Workforce Composition
Our school staff consists of a Principal, fifteen permanent full-time teachers, 7 part-time teachers, two teachers assistants and five support staff. All of these personnel have the appropriate qualifications and clearance screening required to fulfil their duties in our school.

Student Attendance
Student attendance rates for each Year level and the whole school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attendance %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>95.75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>95.81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>95.65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>94.44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>96.13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>95.43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>95.50%</td>
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Student Non-Attendance
Teachers are provided with absentee slips. If no explanation of an absence has been provided to the teacher after a two week period, an “explanation of absence” form is distributed to the parent.

Should there be more than five unexplained absences, contact is then made by the Principal with the family.

Should there be regular absences by students which may be affecting their academic or social development, contact is often made with parents to discuss that situation.

Should students be going to be absent beyond six school days, parents are now to apply for Principal exemption by completing appropriate forms.

Enrolment Policy
Mater Dei School has developed its enrolment policy in alignment with the Diocesan Enrolment Guidelines. It is clearly outlined in our school prospectus, enrolment brochure and website. In short, our school has a commitment in the first instance to Catholic families residing in our zone where children are of appropriate age and readiness. Should vacancies allow, offering of places can then be made to Catholic families in our Parish and then other Parishes, where necessary? Non-Catholic families are most welcome to apply but need to understand that Catholic families will have first priority in placement.

Diocesan Enrolment policy can be accessed through the following link:
http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au/policies.htm

Characteristics of the Student Body

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig*</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>408</td>
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</table>

*L*anguage background *O*ther *T*han *E*nglish

Structure of Classes
Classes are divided into the seven different grades, with Kindergarten to Year 6 all being double-streamed. The maximum class size at the school is 30 students.

School Policies
Discipline /Student Welfare/Complaints & Grievances
Our school is committed to the development of the whole person: body, spirit, heart and mind.

We have developed a School Welfare Policy that encompasses discipline, student welfare, complaints & grievances.
In accordance with the policy we aim to establish a community of care through:

- welcoming and including students and their families
- respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each student
- providing a safe, secure & stimulating environment conducive to learning
- ensuring fairness & justice within appropriate discipline structures
- promoting self-esteem and critical thinking in students
- processes that allow parents to express their concerns or grievances

Changes to School Policies

Most policies are current. Variations have been made to policies in alignment with Diocesan and school expectations. All of these policies can be accessed via the Teacher’s Drive on our school network. A hard copy of all policies is also kept in the School Office.

Improvement Targets

The implementation of a Peer Observation Program as a platform to each teacher developing a Professional Learning Plan is a project that we are working towards this year.

Staff members were involved in Curriculum Reviews in the Religion and Creative Arts Key Learning Areas. Included in this was a review of Scope & Sequences and Assessment processes.

Sessions were also led by Maria Worsfold from the CSO on developing a wide range of reading strategies into our learning & teaching.

Introduction of new technology and replacement of existing technology has continued this year. The purchasing of twenty i-Pads for use in all classrooms has highlighted the part technology is playing in our learning and teaching.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

The emphasis this year has been the embedding of our “You Can Do It” program into the school. This program which was introduced last year, strives to provide all students with the foundations for achievement in school, work and the world of tomorrow. It aims to develop the Foundations of Getting Along, Organisation, Persistence, Confidence and Emotional Resilience in the children.

The appointment of a Pastoral Care co-ordinator mid-year quickly showed the benefits such a role will bring. Aside of supporting families in a year of tragedy and seriousness illness within our school community, a number of student initiatives have already begun. One such initiative has been the formation of a Mini Vinnies group within the school. The purpose of this group is outreach to the wider community and included visits to Retirement Villages and Nursing Homes.

The school has continued the “One in Spirit” award which, each fortnight, recognises a student who is demonstrating the values promoted by the School. We distribute each week one merit award and one “You Can Do It” award to each class for students who show strong academic effort, social or environmental awareness or the qualities sought through the “You Can Do It” program.

Our Student Council continues to give our student body a voice in matters concerning our school. Representatives from classes meet regularly with the Principal to discuss pertinent matters.

Community Satisfaction

The following information has been provided to the school. It has been a valuable gauge for determining the level of satisfaction the community has with our school.

Parents
My child (son or daughter) is usually happy at Mater Dei

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Students
I am usually happy at Mater Dei.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Staff
I am usually happy at Mater Dei

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Financial Statement Summary

![School Income Chart]

![School Expenses Chart]

About This Report
This report has been compiled by the Principal with the assistance of appropriate school and Diocesan personnel and encompasses educational and associated activities of our school community in 2012.