2012

Annual Report

*St Mary’s Primary School, Yoogali*

CONTACT DETAILS:

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The School
St Mary’s is a vibrant parish school situated in Yoogali, 4.5 kilometres from the centre of Griffith, in the Riverina region of New South Wales. St Mary’s boasts a fine history of academic excellence.

With a current student population of 160, St Mary’s is small enough to create a caring, family atmosphere and large enough to provide a diverse range of opportunities. Our welcoming and dedicated staff set high expectations for student learning.

Our school motto is ‘Do Your Best’ and we strive for every student to reach their potential. As a matter of justice it is our goal to ensure that children who need additional help are supported in their learning.

We aim for our students to become confident, thinking, caring, global citizens who act with wisdom and integrity, a strong sense of social responsibility, who can respond with intelligence to the opportunities that their future may bring.

This Report complements and is supplementary to school newsletters, and other regular communications.

Catholic Identity
Religious Education is the very core of our Catholic identity at St Mary’s School, Yoogali. The school’s Religious Education document is ‘Sharing Our Story’ and has undergone considerable development over the past few years. Teachers are using the schools’ website to access religion resources and units of works. They are finding these resources are allowing them to build up their own programs to cover areas of student needs. When preparing for the curriculum review in Religious Education, teachers were confident in their ability to program, teach and assess student growth. All teachers were able to display appropriate samples of work for their stage as well as a range of assessment tasks which allowed students to work at a variety of levels.

The teaching of Religious Education occurs daily in classrooms, with children learning about their Catholic faith through the core strands of Prayer, Life in Christ, The Celebration of Christian Mystery and Profession of Faith.

Children in all classes have taken part in many meaningful and joyful masses, liturgies and prayer services over the course of the year. The children enjoy taking on roles of responsibility during both weekday and Sunday masses, such as altar serving, playing musical instruments, singing in the choir or reading. All classes have participated in school and Sunday masses throughout the year. These masses bring together students, teachers, parents, grandparents and the wider church community we affectionately see as our extended school family. Each term, St Mary’s hosts a Sunday mass in our parish. These masses are always followed by morning tea provided by the host class and their family. This is just another way for us to come together and celebrate the sense of community St Mary’s fosters.

Sacraments:
Each year, St Mary’s celebrates the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. The liturgy for the sacrament of Penance is always a powerful example of the compassion and care the children so proudly display here at our school. Year Three receive the Sacrament of First Eucharist in third term, in a colourful and vibrant parish mass. The teachers work very closely with the children and Father Neru, our parish priest, to create a very moving liturgy to be enjoyed by our parish family. The liturgy for the Sacrament of Confirmation is always an amazing and moving mass in which our senior students witness to their faith in a powerful manner.

School Choir and Altar Servers:
St Mary’s is very fortunate to have such a giving community of staff and students. Our school choir, guided by Mrs Reginato has added a new dimension to our liturgies and enhanced numerous parish masses. Many students from Year 4 to Year 6 commit to
being an altar server and participate regularly in parish and school events.

Reaching Out To Others:
This year saw St Mary’s reach out to the wider community in many different ways. In 2012 the school raised a large amount of money to give to a local parishioner who travels to Uganda regularly to help in any way possible. The students enjoyed learning how their money was spent and seeing photos of the work being done there. With the organisation of the Students’ Representative Council, money was also sent to contribute to the work of Catholic Missions. This generosity was remarkable as some many of our school families had their homes flooded in the March floods.

At the end of the year, as a result of our annual Giving Mass, the school invited members from St Vincent De Paul to accept a donation of toys and gifts for the underprivileged in our Griffith community. This year, we also supported Ronald MacDonald House. As we have families that make use of this facility, we decided to support charities that are used locally. This way students become aware of the needs of such organisations as well as the work they quietly perform in our community. We were given a list of things that Ronald MacDonald House needed and students very generously donated a large amount of goods that were transported to Sydney. Students also raised money at various times for our sponsor child Abadi. The children love these opportunities and enjoy hearing updates on how Abadi is going.

Tricia Marin Religious Education Coordinator

A Message from key School Bodies
From the Principal’s Desk
There is something very special about our school. You can feel it. You can see it in the vibrant faces of the Year One’s who strive to sing the National Anthem better and louder every week. You can see it in the way the Year Six students have looked after their Kinder buddies with such care all year. I see the positive energy of our school in the thousands of lamingtons that were made this year and the continued behind the scenes excellence of our canteen committee.

This year in particular, I saw the strength of our school in the way we worked together to cope with and bounce back from the worst flood in the history of our school and our region. The generosity of spirit of the St Patrick’s School community and the teamwork from staff and parents was inspiring. The positivity and resilience of our students as they continued their learning at St Pat’s without missing a beat was breathtaking.

Our school is founded on faith. We strive to do as Jesus did, to care for each other. I see this every day, everywhere I look.

At St Mary’s we have an incredible, dedicated staff. You would all have stories that you could tell me about what members of our staff have done to help your child reach their potential. On behalf of every child and every family, I thank every member of St Mary’s staff for their tireless commitment.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the leadership team of the school. Annette Reginato continues to carry out the role of Assistant Principal with wisdom, energy and vision. Our Religious Education Coordinator Tricia Marin has supported the staff tirelessly and practically so that they may deliver joyful and meaningful Religious Education programs. It is a privilege to be part of such a strong executive.

Partnerships with families are the cornerstone of our school. Again this year, the sustained parental support we receive for reading groups, class masses, sporting carnivals and fundraising sets our school apart. The phenomenal 2012 fundraising total that our School Council Chairperson John Matkovic will announce in his address today speaks volumes about YOU, our fabulous parents.
There is one group of parents that I would like to acknowledge in particular. The St Mary's School Council. Your leadership has been outstanding. John Matkovic has once again done an excellent job in the role of Chairperson this year and I have greatly appreciated your support and wisdom, John. To the leaving families of Ginette and Tony Barbaro, Janet and Craig Dixon, Amelia and Sante Donadel, Anna and Ivan Gesucale, Mary and Sam Marando, and Debbie and Kevin Torresan, we wish you well as your family life moves you on to a new stage. Thank you for your support of your school through your years with us. You will always belong to the St Mary's family.

The heart of every school is the children. Children, you have tried your best, cared for each other and approached each new day with boundless energy and wonder. How proud I am of you all. Year Six, you know how special you are to me.

As the year draws to a close St Mary's continues to be a very special place that is a joy to be part of. I would like to thank each of you for your commitment to your school throughout 2012. It has been an eventful, but wonderful year.

MaryJane Simms
Principal

2012 SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2012 has been a great year for St Marys and the School Council can be proud of their efforts in supporting the school. The activities and events conducted by members of the School Council allow us to support our school and contribute to making it the best learning environment for our children. Once again our target of $18,000 for essential needs was met but what is phenomenal is that we achieved an additional $20,000 in raised funds which will go towards the niceties that the school deserves for our students.

Sadly though, our 2012 school year began with the devastating floods as a backdrop. What a shame it was to see so much of where we live and our beloved school under water. But like all floods the water recedes and dries and the clean-up commences.

We thank all those that helped in getting St Marys back up and running in such a short time and to the parents and teachers for a smooth and seamless transition during our time at St Pats. What an Adventure!!

I would like to thank all our parents who give of their time and talents to add that extra dimension to the school experience. The parents who come into the school on a regular basis to help with reading and other classroom activities. The canteen committee and helpers, the dads who volunteer for the working bees and all the parents and grandparents who come along to assemblies and school masses, give our school a rich sense of community that is a hallmark of St Marys.

I would also like to thank Father Neru. His strong support for the school is extraordinary. Thank you Father.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and tireless efforts of the staff at St Marys School. Our School community is very fortunate to have a dedicated and professional staff who go above and beyond in their efforts to provide an outstanding education for our students and create a welcoming and inclusive community environment.

The school is led admirably by Mary Jane Simms and I would especially like to thank her for her dedication and ongoing commitment to St Marys, the teachers and our students. A shining example of this would have to be our musical production of The Academy Awards, how much fun was that? And how good were all the students. Oppa Gangnam Style will never be the same!!!!

So once again thank you all for getting behind and supporting the fundraisers and events this year, thank you to the businesses,
families and individuals that contributed and generously donated, we understand that it’s not always easy or possible to support each and every fundraiser held, but we thank you.

John Matkovic
School Council Chairperson


The School Sport Program provided many varied opportunities for the students during 2012. School Sport is an exciting and prominent feature of our learning curriculum at St Mary’s. Our dedicated and skilled teachers worked with local professionals to ensure that quality opportunities were provided to all classes.

The School Swimming Carnival began the sporting calendar and saw many students achieve well.

Once again races in the 18m Program Pool were a particular highlight. These provided an opportunity to develop formal swimming strokes and confidence under racing conditions for children who are unable to swim 25m or 50m. Our school is very fortunate, as all children from Year 1 to 6 attend and participate in our school carnival. The floods at the beginning of the year saw the Cross Country Carnival joined with St Patricks of Griffith and St Therese of Yenda. This was a wonderful union of schools joining together as one due to the floods. This day was so successful we are going to do it again in 2013. The event was held at Ted Scobie Oval in Collina. Middle and Upper Primary students ran a formal cross country course, while the infants participated in a modified event.

The sporting focus during Term Two included preparation for the School Athletics Carnival. All students from Kindergarten to Year 6 were provided with development of their field event skills and short distance athletics. In May, Years Four and Five participated in a Rugby League Super Clinic with 350 other students from the Griffith area. The day focused on exposing children to Rugby League and developing some of the key skills involved in the sport.

In Term Three, Kinder, Year One, Year Two and Year Three participated in an Intensive Swimming Program. Each day for a fortnight every child was provided with professional and skilled instruction from the staff at the Griffith Regional Aquatic Centre. Both swimming stroke development and safety were included in the program.

In Term Three we also had Netball Clinics for K-6 run by an accredited Netball Coach.

During 2012 numerous students participated in Representative sport at Deanery, Diocesan, and Mackillop.

Jordan Sartor won the David Jones Sports Award for 2012. He was awarded this honour due to his achievements throughout the year in Athletics, Cross Country, Soccer and Touch Football.

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

Numeracy continues to be a strength at St Mary’s, with a strong ability to apply appropriate strategies to solve oral and written problems reflected in our students’ results across all grades.

In literacy, our NAPLAN data this year indicates that grammar and punctuation are areas that require a whole school focus to achieve consolidation. Whilst improving grammar outcomes for our students is a focus for the remainder of 2012, grammar and punctuation will continue to be focuses in 2013.

Professional Learning

St Mary’s staff engages in ongoing professional development in order to best meet the needs of students. As a staff we meet weekly for whole school, class planning or programming purposes.
As well as this, there are other professional development opportunities for staff. In 2012, these included the following:

**Working with Charles Sturt University**

Staff from Charles Sturt University in Wagga observed our staff practice as leaders and learners. This formed part of their research study into effective shared leadership in schools. The focus of our project was on professional learning plans and the changes to our practice which best facilitate student learning. As part of this project staff from St Mary’s made a presentation at the 2012 CARN conference in Canberra.

**Additional Professional Learning Opportunities in 2012**

Upskilling staff in understanding the spectrum of Autism and it’s implication in the classroom (Sue Larkey).
Full Senior First Aid training
CPR renewal
Harrassment/Child Protection
OH&S and Workplace practices
Kinder/Year One Literacy Assessment-(Observation Survey)
Best Start Training (Kinder)
SENA-Individual Numeracy assessment
Specialist Training in Reading Recovery
Special Needs workshops for the Special Needs Co-ordinator

**Teaching Staff**
The NSW government requires that this report detail the number of teachers in each of the following categories:
A) have teaching qualifications from a recognised higher education institution within Australia
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
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**WORKFORCE COMPOSITION**
The School teaching staff is made up of 11 full time and part time staff.
The Principal is supported on the executive by an Assistant Principal and Religious Education Coordinator.
Additional positions are Librarian (0.2FTE) and Italian Teacher (0.2 FTE)
Support staff includes four part time aides.

**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>95.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>94.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>92.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>96.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>95.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>94.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>94.06%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Student Non-Attendance**
*Regular school attendance is critical to optimum student learning.*
In accordance with the school attendance procedures for diocesan systemic schools, unexplained absences are followed up by appropriate personnel.
1. Class Teachers record student attendance by the ‘exception method’
2. Class Teachers are to follow-up on absences, including partial absences, by requiring notification from the parent(s)/guardian(s) to explain the reasons for absences. A record of each notification is to be kept with the Class Roll.

**Enrolment Policy**
The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established an Enrolment Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese.
At St Mary’s closing dates for enrolments in Kinder for the following year are advertised through The Area News, feeder preschools and early childhood centres.

NSW legislation allows for the enrolment of children into Kindergarten who turn 5 before
August 1. At St Mary’s School parents seeking to enrol children who turn 5 after May 30 are advised of the possible adverse outcomes for their child.

**Should there be more applications for enrolment than there are places for students, the St Mary’s enrolment criteria will be used to offer places to students. These criteria are in line with diocesan policy and can be obtained from St Mary’s School.**

**Characteristics of the Student Body**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig’</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language background Other Than English

**School Policies**

**Discipline**

At St Mary’s we believe that children respond best to a discipline approach that encourages and rewards positive behaviour. Our discipline policy is based on this belief.

**Student Welfare**

We believe that every child has a right to be safe and feel safe. The practices in our Bullying Policy are focused on ensuring that this occurs for the students of our school. These policies can be found in the St Mary’s General Policies and Procedures Handbook and can be accessed any time by contacting the school.

**Complaints and Grievances**

The school has adopted an approach to resolving complaints and grievances that is based on procedural fairness. It recognises that parents/caregivers and students must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory way.

Parents/students with a complaint are encouraged in the first instance to contact their class teacher. If the need then arises contact with the Principal and the Catholic Schools Office may be appropriate. Further information about diocesan policies can be obtained from the Catholic Schools Office.

**Changes to School Policies**

Throughout 2012, St Mary’s Policies and Procedures were audited and renewed to ensure that St Mary’s policies were up to date and in line with diocesan policy, where appropriate.

**Improvement Targets**

*The following were 2012 target areas for improving student learning outcomes:*  

**Literacy-**

Comprehension/critical thinking/visual literacy
Technology- using ipads to facilitate learning

**Maths-**

Consolidate K-6 Focus on working mathematically/choosing appropriate mental strategy to solve problems

**Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

**Responsibility**

Respect and responsibility are encouraged right throughout St Mary’s school. Staff and students alike are continually working on making sure that each person is responsible for, and does their part to create a safe, happy and encouraging learning environment.

The school Kindergarten/Year 6 Buddy program is a very successful part of both the new Kindergarten’s transition to primary, along with the development of leadership and responsibility for the Year 6 students. Another successful leadership opportunity for 2012 included the Year 6 Students organising and running the school assemblies. Assemblies are held on both Monday and Friday each week and the students were responsible for organising items for the assembly. The results from this experience were quite impressive, a development in public speaking skills and
improved confidence were the outcome. Students from younger grades are enthusiastic about their chance for this opportunity when they become school leaders.

Students are supported in:
• leadership - School and Sport Captains, the Student Representative Council (SRC), SRC teacher mentoring, commissioning ceremonies.
• spiritual growth - Prayer, liturgy, retreat days, reflection sessions, preparation for sacraments, Parish Priest involvement

Making Jesus Real
In 2012, Making Jesus Real became a whole school focus. The goal for this year was to provide our students with language for ways to treat others which will make Jesus real each day at our school through the ways we treat and speak to others.

Italian Language Program
The Italian Language program with specialist Italian teacher Senora Eleonora Taranto, continued in 2012. All classes, from Kindergarten to Year Six took part in weekly instruction in the language and culture of Italy.

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 {school name here}

<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>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Students
I am usually happy at {school name here}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</table>

Staff
I am usually happy at {school name here}

<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>7.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
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Financial Statement Summary

About This Report
Many thanks to the following members of the St Mary’s community for their contributions to this report: 2012 Sport Coordinator, Rebecca Turner, 2012 Religious Education Coordinator Tricia Marin, Annette Reginato, School Council Chairperson, John Matkovic. These contributions reflect the teamwork that is a hallmark of this great school.