Annual Report

St Mary’s Primary School, Corowa

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The School
St Mary’s is a co-educational school catering for students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Our school serves the needs of the Catholic Community of Corowa in providing a quality Catholic education for all students in our care.

St. Mary’s is part of the St Mary’s Star of the Sea Parish. Our school enjoys strong support from Fr Paul, and our parishioners.

Our staff endeavours to teach up-to-date research-based learning and teaching practices to assist all students in developing, spiritually, academically, physically, emotionally and socially.

We hope you will enjoy our annual report for 2012.

Catholic Identity
We believe St Mary’s Primary School is a community in which:

✔ Jesus is our prime focus enabling us to be active members of a faith-filled community.

✔ children are prepared in a collaborative, cooperative and supportive environment, for the changing world, through the promotion of a comprehensive quality curriculum.

✔ the dignity of each person is upheld and respected, and where the ideas of compassion and justice are allowed to flourish.

✔ parents, the parish and teachers work towards the total development of the child in a safe, cooperative and collaborative learning community.

The school’s Religious Education Syllabus is ‘Sharing Our Story’. We have implemented the syllabus and resources and developing the area of assessment in line with the syllabus.

The teaching of Religious Education occurs daily in all classrooms, with all children learning about their Catholic faith and covering the strands of God, Jesus, Church, Sacraments, Scripture, Christian Life and Prayer.

Staff and children are involved in the preparation of school and class liturgies throughout the year.

The Sacramental Programme included regular liturgical celebrations in students’ homes as well as in St Mary’s Parish Church, with each programme culminating in the celebration of the particular sacrament (Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation).

Bishop Hanna was not able to visit this year due to illness. Father Tom Chapman conducted the training and celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation this year in the absence of Bishop Hanna and Father Hart. We acknowledge this achievement by Father Tom Chapman.

Year 6 students participated in the National Religious Education Test again this year.

Children across all grades raised money for Catholic Missions throughout the year, through Project Compassion during Lent and casual clothes days and competitions during Mission weeks. Money raised assisted the poor in Australia and abroad.

Children made visits to Karinya House, the local nursing and retirement home, to meet with and entertain the elderly residents at different times throughout the year.

We have again incorporated the “Making Jesus Real” resource for our Year 6 students. We have trained all staff in using the resource “Making Jesus Real”. We will commence using the resource in 2013 within our whole school and update resources from the Catholic Schools Office through the Catholic Life Team. We acknowledge the wonderful work done by Maureen Delaney in collating resources through the Making Jesus Real newsletter this year. We have continued to be impressed by the language and concepts of the resource and will endeavour to incorporate this into other areas of our RE curriculum. This has proved to be a very valuable resource for our senior students and we look forward to using this resource with all grades.

We encourage all families to be committed to their Catholic School and Parish and contribute to the learning of the children through their participation in school life and parish life. We would like to encourage more families to participate in Mass. We have had special children’s Masses on the weekends. These are a wonderful way for the young students to learn more about what is involved at Mass and how they can be a part of this involvement.

We welcome all families to our school and encourage all parents to be fully engaged in their child’s learning journey. This can be
through an awareness of what happens in our school, through assistance in the classroom, supporting their child at home with readers; assisting at sporting events or generously giving their time during fundraising efforts throughout the year. This partnership between home and school is a wonderful support to all students, staff and parents within our school.

A Message from key School Bodies

School Council Chairperson’s Report 2012

2012 has been another busy and successful year at St Marys Corowa. Thank you to all council members for your support in 2012. We will be looking for new members in 2013 with the retirements of Mark Ferguson and Ray Heagney and encourage all parents to get involved in either School Council or the P & F Committee.

The P & F Committee has once again been very active in 2012 by providing support in fundraising throughout year, organising a very successful school fete (well done) and managing the landscaping of the school. The efforts of the P & F provide extremely important funds for the school and we look forward to new members being part of an active P & F in 2013.

The OOSH Programme and Active After School Communities programme have been very successful and will continue in 2013. The children involved have loved being involved in the programmes that provide important support for parents and children.

Thank you to Jan Lowden, Father Paul Hart, our teaching staff, parents, carers, P & F and Fete Committees for their tireless hard work and commitment to make St Mary’s a great place for our children to learn.

Stephen Blain
Chairperson
St Mary’s School Council

Some achievements over the year include:
- garden landscaping
- fundraising
- fete
- school production: “Circus Splendida”
- New Beginnings Parent sessions
- commencing National Partnerships
- continuing with OOSH
- AASC
- utilising the new facilities
- resurfacing cricket pitch
- investigating uniform options
- ongoing maintenance

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

Our Year 3 and Year 5 students participated in the National Assessment Programme for Literacy and Numeracy in May, and performed very well in their NAPLAN tests. We thank the teachers and parents for supporting the children in this endeavour.

Our students performed well in:

Numeracy:
- count forwards by ones from a given three-digit number
- use place value to read, represent and order numbers up to four digits
- record numbers using expanded notation
- compare and order decimals using strategies such as the number line and diagrams
- explain or demonstrate the equivalence of fractions
- use estimation to check whether an answer is reasonable
- interpret and explain the use of fractions in everyday contexts
- name and describe common 2D shapes
- classify quadrilaterals
- identify flips, slides and turns
- record and calculate using tally marks
- collect information, organise and record data in a simple table
- locate and interpret information presented in two-way tables

Writing:
More proficient spellers employ their knowledge of a variety of strategies to assist them in how to spell. They draw frequently on all four knowledge areas (phonological, visual, morphemic and etymological) to make informed decisions when attempting to spell unknown words.

The purpose of the conclusion is to close the argument and to reinforce the writer’s position on the topic. Better conclusions do this in a meaningful way, which may include: a call to action, a plan of action, a recommendation or a personal reflection

The use of effective persuasive devices enhances the writer’s position and persuades the reader to accept the line of argument. Persuasive devices that appeal to the reader’s reason, values or emotions include the use of
authoritative and emphatic statements, direct address to the reader, hyperbole and rhetorical questions.

A paragraph contains a group of connected sentences. It is generally made up of one main idea and a number of supporting sentences. Paragraphs are the basic unit that segment longer pieces of writing, such as essays and reports.

Reading:
*Inferring Meaning:* When we infer we take what we know and combine it with clues from the text to draw a conclusion or predict a result. Making inferences is vital to developing understanding of a text. It enables students to discover the deeper meaning of the text. It enables students to discover the deeper meaning of the text and what is not directly stated by the writer or the creator of the image.

*Identifying the main idea:* The main idea tells about all the parts of the text in just a few words.

*Retelling and directly locating information:* When we retell what we read in a text, we tell what the text is about using our own words. The purpose of developing the skill of retelling is to teach students to monitor their understanding whilst reading.

The results of this NAPLAN Assessment assist the teachers in planning learning and teaching experiences for our students to assist their learning. Each child is unique and their learning style and efforts provide them with a distinct blueprint for learning. The NAPLAN test measures specific areas of their learning in Numeracy and Literacy. Parents are provided with a specific breakdown of each question in their child’s individual report.

**Professional Learning**
In 2012 our staff participated in Professional Learning focused on our priority areas. This complemented our Learning and Teaching within the school focusing on up to date educational research from leading academics.

Professional learning and development included:
- Child Protection
- Duty of Care
- CPR
- IT technology
- Chemical Safety
- Anaphylaxis Training
- Asthma Training
- Positive Behaviours CPI
- National Partnerships Teacher Leadership
- First Steps Reading Modules
- Making Jesus Real Whole School Training
- Spirituality
- NAPLAN whole school Analysis of data

**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.

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<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10</td>
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**Workforce Composition**
A) Indigenous
B) Non-Indigenous

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<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Teaching Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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**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>95.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>96.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>94.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>94.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>95.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>92.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>94.98%</td>
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**Student Non-Attendance**
Parents are requested to communicate with our school and are asked to ring up the school and send a note to explain when their child was absent. Parents are sent reminder notices if a child has been absent from school.
and communication has not been received within 7 school days of the absence.

**Enrolment Policy**

Our school refers to the Catholic Schools Office Enrolment Policy and we work within their guidelines.

**Characteristics of the Student Body**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig’</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>148</td>
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*Language background Other Than English

**Structure of Classes**

At St Mary’s we have a single-streams of seven classes, kinder to year 6.

**School Policies**

**Discipline**

At St Mary’s School we are committed to ensuring that each child feels safe, happy and secure. Therefore, we take seriously our responsibility to employ effective strategies to allow this to happen.

We involve students, parents and staff in the development of strategies to assist all members to feel safe, happy and secure. We use restorative practices when dealing with children to assist them in reflecting on their actions through the lens of compassion, inclusion and forgiveness.

**Student Welfare**

Students may at times need reassurance and support in dealing with issues that confront them.

We have a Centacare Liaison officer who is available to work with our students on a fortnightly basis. This service can be utilized by any student. Parents and teachers may request a referral and this is followed up with discussions with the parents and then the student. This has been a very successful service to assist a student’s wellbeing.

Pastoral care provides opportunities for our students to:
- enjoy success and celebrate achievements.
- be able to contribute positively to our school.
- foster a love of learning
- be guided by the Catholic Schools Office policies.

**Complaints and Grievances**

Our school refers to the Catholic Schools Office Complaints and Grievances Policy and we work within their guidelines. The link to the school’s Complaints and Grievances is: [www.csoww.catholic.edu.au](http://www.csoww.catholic.edu.au)

**Changes to School Policies**

We have reviewed our policies throughout the year. We have changed attendance codes to come into line with the CSO policy and procedures. We have modified our Sunsmart policy to continue to be a Sun Smart School. We have reviewed the general school policies to reflect current practice such as Enrolment Policy, Homework Policy and Uniform Policy. We have updated our Chemical Safety Policy, Learning and Teaching Policy and our Critical Incident Policy. We have updated the School Policy and General Information booklet with policy updates.

The Staff Handbook has also been updated.

We are in the process of reviewing our Pastoral Care Policy using guidelines from the CSO Policy and Procedures when they become available. We will incorporate CSO policy changes, as they are developed, into our Pastoral Care Policy.

We have developed After School Care policies and Procedures from the CSO guidelines. Access can be obtained from the office.

In 2012 policies were reviewed for registration purposes. All policies have been reviewed and specific policies have been targeted for updates.

**Improvement Targets**

We will endeavour to strive to create a positive learning environment for all students. We have focused on our priority areas as identified through assessment and reflection and align our school priorities in a forward direction to achieve these goals.

We have focused on student wellbeing through the awareness of restorative practices and purchased resources to assist teachers in teaching healthy relationships, resilience and respectful behaviours towards others. We have received support from our Parents and Friends Committee to purchase resources for our Bounce Back Programme.

We have prepared our school to achieve priorities stated in the 2011 SRF:
- Consolidate RE Syllabus
- Commence National Partnerships
Learning and Teaching priorities for Numeracy and Literacy
School Policy curriculum review process on going
Well Being resources

In 2012 we introduced the “New Beginnings Parent Information sessions.” These information sessions ran over five weeks, covering issues from the emotions of having children commence school for the first time, to learning about parenting ideas and suggestions to assist children in the transition to school. We were very fortunate to run the sessions with the help of Loretta Bennett from Gateway and Catherine McNamara from Centacare.

The positive feedback from these information sessions has been a great way to assist parents when they need to transition their child as they commence school.

We have continued to provide our After School Service for all families to enjoy. This service provides an affordable and safe environment for our students to be cared for after school. We are proud to be able to deliver this to our families.

We have continued with our Active After School Communities programme in 2012. This is a free programme aimed at improving the level of physical activity of students after school. The Active After School Communities programme runs for seven weeks each term. We have successfully applied for and received a grant from the Australian Government to be able to provide this free service to all families.

The children have been involved in Table Tennis and T- Ball, Athletics, Circus Skills, Indoor Bowls, Hockey and Basketball.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility
We endeavour to instil the values of our Catholic School Community within our students. We utilise the Values Education throughout the school. We focus on these values in the classroom and encourage this to be discussed at home. A monthly focus is placed in the newsletter and staff notice each week. This is discussed in class with the children and areas of concern are worked through.

We have a regular focus on specific values such as:
- care and compassion

Habits of Mind
- persisting
- listening with understanding and empathy
- managing impulsivity
- thinking about their thinking
- striving for accuracy
- questioning and problem solving
- communicating with clarity and precision
- applying past knowledge to new situations
- gathering data through all senses
- creating, imagining and innovating
- responding with wonderment and awe
- taking responsible risks
- finding humour
- thinking interdependently
- remaining open to continuous learning

We have a whole school focus from a wide range of areas.
This is communicated within our policies and through our school newsletter and reinforced in the classroom focus. Resources have been purchased to assist teachers in bringing these values to life and making them more relevant in the lives of their students. Staff use a range of resources to assist in instilling these important values, qualities and characteristics.

Staff refer to “Towards Wholeness K-6” which supplements the PDHPE programme studying Healthy Relationships for each stage of development. We have the “Quest for Values” programme in all stages. This is a wonderful resource that assists with strategies to teach values across the school. We have introduced the “Bounce Back” Programme throughout the whole school. These programmes assist teachers in working with students on issues of wellbeing,
resilience and respect. Resources have been allocated to each stage to reinforce these themes across the whole school. We thank Mrs Lane for organising the purchasing of these resources. We thank the Parents and Friends for the support with this initiative.

We have the Buddy programme for Year 5 students. This continues into Year 6 the following year when the Kinder children commence school.

We have Peer Support Training and Making Jesus Real resources for Year 6. In 2013 we will be incorporating Making Jesus Real throughout the whole school.

The children are encouraged to participate in community events. We have encouraged families to participate in the Corowa Festival of Fun 4 Kids; Landcare activities, Singing and performing at Karinya Southern Cross Aged care facility and participating in the ANZAC and Remembrance Day ceremonies.

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

**Parents**
My child (son or daughter) is usually happy at St Mary’s Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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**Students**
I am usually happy at St Mary’s Primary School:

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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**Staff**
I am usually happy at St Mary’s Primary School:

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<th>Agree</th>
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