Annual Report

St Patrick’s Primary School, Griffith

CONTACT DETAILS:

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1. The School

St. Patrick’s Primary provides affordable Catholic education to the children of Sacred Heart Parish and surrounding areas. Being a large co-educational systemic school within the Diocese of Wagga Wagga, the students reflect the wide cultural and ethnic diversity of the area. The school is noted for its inclusive policy, catering for students with a wide range of nationalities, learning needs and faith backgrounds.

We have high expectations for all students and are proud of their academic achievements. Our dedicated and qualified staff makes a concerted effort to assist all students to discover and nurture their gifts and talents, ensuring curriculum and extra curriculum activities meet the needs of the student body. Programs to support students with physical and learning difficulties, strong academic ability and those who have English as a Second Language are evidence of this.

Effort and achievement are valued as are the development of strong personal qualities such as respect, honesty and generosity. The school is noted for the attention given to pastoral care by staff and student welfare is a major school priority.

Overall, we have a very happy, tolerant and harmonious school community who put into daily practice our school motto, “Do all things well.” As well there is a real emphasis on Making Jesus Real in everyday interactions by the way student and staff.

The school is blessed to have a magnificent physical environment in which to work, learn and play including over a hectare of gardens and grass playgrounds. School buildings are in excellent condition as the school maintenance program and building master plan have ensured planned upgrades.

Parent support for fund raising over many years has ensured our resources within the classrooms and specialist areas are first class. The provision of infrastructure and hardware such as the provision of Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms are providing our school community with the technological resources to ensure students can become competent and critical users of a range of digital devices and programs.

Parental involvement underpins the work of staff and is a core element of the school ethos. An elected School Council oversees the budget, resources acquisition and forward planning as well as acting as a parent forum. It is assisted by the Parents and Friends Association, which oversees social activities as well as fund raising.

As a Catholic Primary School we are committed to helping our pupils to learn about and live our faith. This is a challenge as increasingly our society is devaluing the need for religious instruction. With around twenty percent of our students being non-Catholic our challenge is increased. However, all receive the same spiritual education with the exception of receiving the sacraments and we have the same expectations of each family – that they fully support the Catholic ethos and Religious Education Programme of the school. Happily, this is the case and we have a very harmonious and tolerant school community.

2012 has been marked by many highlights and marvellous achievements. Many are recorded in this Report but a fuller account can be found in our weekly newsletter located on our school website.

Catholic Identity

Religious Education in 2012 again was very busy yet rewarding. Staff work as a team with our parish priest Fr Andrew Grace and Fr. Peter to develop the faith aspect of children’s lives. Fr Rafe Beltrame continues to support teachers and students in Sacramental years and all three are visible in both classrooms and on the playing fields.

Liturgies and Masses play an important part of Religious Education and all students attend Mass on important feast days. Daily prayer in classrooms is emphasised and students are encouraged to develop a special relationship with our loving God.

The school-based Sacramental Programmes of First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation is always well supported by our Parent and Parish Community. The presence of Bishop Gerard Hanna, prior to, and at Confirmation is very special to the Confirmation candidates and their families. He speaks openly and honestly to the students, deepening their understanding of Confirmation.

Students are actively encouraged to think of others and their needs. Money is raised through special events for Caritas and our local St Vincent De Paul Society.
Kinder – Year 6 classes had special liturgical celebrations throughout the year including Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Easter, Christmas, Anzac Day and Remembrance Day were all celebrated through music, drama and readings. These Liturgies have amazing support from our parent community.

The Internet is fast becoming a major resource tool for teachers when looking for information on units being taught in their classroom. The suggestions from the Resource Centre in Wagga have been invaluable and have been utilised by many teachers. Teachers from Kinder to Year 4 have received professional Development in ‘Godly Play’ and now use this strategy to teach parables and stories about Jesus.

The Religious Education Scope and Sequence has been revised and approved by the CSO Wagga as part of our Registration Review in RE in 2012. We continue to work on building up resources for the Diocesan syllabus “Sharing Our Story” and use the “To Know, Worship and Love” resource in all grades. Sr. Anne from Slattery Centre, Albury has published units of work for all grades on Advent, Lent and Easter as well as the Sacraments of Reconciliation, The Eucharist and Confirmation. All teachers are finding these units really beneficial.

Other programmes used to benefit students were the Seasons of Growth used with students who have encountered grief and loss and ‘Making Jesus Real’ which is a K-6 relationship based programme. We have turned this into a Peer support programme led by Year 6. They emphasise that God Moments and making Jesus Real in our lives will make us better people and make the world a nicer place.

Year 6 students participated in the NSW Religious Education Test and received excellent results, indicating a very sound knowledge of the teachings of the Church. Nearly half received a high Distinction or Distinction, achieving well above the Diocesan and State average.

A Spirituality Day for staff professional development was held on Monday 8th October and led by Mr John Goonan, Sr. Anne and Maureen Delaney from the CSO Catholic Life team. This was followed by a 3 hour twilight meeting on Tuesday 30th October which emphasised teaching the RE Syllabus.

All staff have been accredited to work in Catholic Education in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga under varying classifications. To maintain accreditation all staff must complete a certain number of hours of formation depending on classification.

A Message from key School Bodies
This year has been both a busy and exciting year for the School and School Council. The focus of the School Council this year has been the finalisation and commencement of works on the final Landscape Masterplan and the St Patrick’s Strategic Plan. Implementation of the landscape master plan, which has commenced with front of the Administration block, will take a number of years to complete. Ultimately the finalisation of the plan along with the new school buildings will result in St Patrick’s having the best school facilities in the Diocese, an achievement we should all be proud of.

The School Strategic Plan sets the strategic direction of the school over the next five years. Its vision aims to ensure St Patrick’s is: A family oriented school grounded in the living and celebration of the Catholic faith. We aim to develop happy, adaptable, respectful children well balanced in body, spirit, heart and mind. We will facilitate their education and encourage development of their individual talents in order for them to achieve to the best of their ability.

It is the responsibility of not only the school council but also the whole school community to drive this process to ensure the success of the plan. The plan has started to be implemented and from all reports the school staff has embraced it and are successfully delivering the outcomes and for this they are to be congratulated.

The School continues to be in a strong financial position thanks to the outstanding work of Judy Kroek and Angela Favell and this will ensure that we can continue to keep fees as low as possible while meeting the educational needs our children into the future and offering the best facilities and resources of any school in Griffith. However, there will be challenges ahead due to changes in government policy and reductions in funding.

This will be a major focus of the School Council over the next few years.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the School Council members for their effort in contributing to the continued development of St Patrick’s Primary School to ensure it remains the best school in Griffith. I would also like to thank Nick Wordsworth, who is standing down from council after his 6-year
Many of the achievements in the school such as the BER program are a result of his efforts. Ms Hutcheon, who is the staff representative, has also done an outstanding job in his time of the Council.

I would also like to thank Mr Keady, Mr Wedesweiler and in particular all the staff at St Patricks as without their support and dedication the school would not be the place it is and our children would not receive the quality of education that they do.

Finally, on behalf of the School Council I would like to wish Rob all the best in his new role. Rob, you have served this school for 21 years with distinction and you should be proud of your achievements. Your vision and foresight have set the school up to be successful well into the future. The success and achievements of a school and the students starts with leadership. The leadership and dedication you have shown in putting the children first is to be congratulated and has, I believe, made St Patrick’s the best Primary School in the Diocese and has set our children up for outstanding futures. Thank you.

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

The 2012 results were very positive across all the strands, despite the large number of Special Needs Students in both the Year 3 and Year 5 cohorts. This reflects our school’s emphasis on the basic skills and the high level of achievement expected from all our students. Particularly pleasing was the high percentage of students in the top two bands for Reading and Numeracy in both grades. They are significantly above the Australian Schools Average. Equally pleasing was the low representation in the bottom two bands. Student gain between Years 3 and 5 was impressive particularly in the Top 2 Bands. The school analyses the NAPLAN Trend Data each year and uses the analysis information to pin point areas of collective and individual weakness and strength. Teachers incorporate this data to assist with outcome and programme selection. Analysis by staff has set the goal of moving more students from the second highest band to the top band.

Our results and student gain between Years 3 and 5 can be found on the ACARA website. www.myschool.edu.au

Professional Learning

Staff at St Patrick’s Primary view themselves as lifelong learners and value the role professional learning plays in preparing teachers for the twenty-first century.

Staff undertook a number of professional development programmes during PD days, twilight sessions and afterschool. These included:

The introduction of modules 1 and 2 of KidsMatters including the training of facilitators and the allocation of 2 Professional Development Days. Modules 3 and 4 will be undertaken in 2013. This overarching wellbeing program is being supported by Making Jesus Real school developed Peer Support Program.

Continuing the training in GradeXpert a tracking/assessment program that enables assessment data to be stored and shared. Stage meetings with a focus on professional reading and viewing were introduced, allowing professional discussion between staff. Additionally staff engaged with peer ICT training to ensure competence/mastery of the many digital devices utilised across the school, particularly the iPad and teacher use and selection of Apps applicable to their stage and grade.

Finalisation of the Learning and Teaching Policy and review of Scope and Sequence for English were major focus areas in Term Two. During Term Three, staff prepared for the Religious Education and Creative and Practical Arts Registration. Professional Learning Plans for staff was introduced and to be implemented during 2013. Staff from ASPECT spent two weeks in the school upskilling teachers and teacher’s aides. Additionally a number of staff attended workshops across the Riverina and ACT. The re-introduction of First Steps Writing during Term Four has revitalized this subject area. In addition Many staff engaged in selected PD programs including: Action Research for the MORE project, Visible Learning Workshops in Wagga and Newcastle.

All staff updated their CPR Qualifications and a number of staff completed their Senior First Aid updates. Individually, a number of staff attended in-services, state and national conferences on a variety of topics.

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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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
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Workforce Composition
We are privileged to have a staff that is both very experienced and fully qualified. Of the twenty-one full time teachers, five are male and eighteen are female. The majority of staff has been teaching for at least 15 years. The seven part time teachers mainly occupy support roles and offer specialist instruction such as English as a Second Language, Reading Recovery, Special Needs and Sport. We have an Italian Language specialist teacher who teaches all students in the school each week. There are two classes who have job share teachers.

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>93.48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>93.27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>93.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>93.78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>93.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>93.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>91.31%</td>
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Enrolment Policy
- The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for enrolments at St Patrick’s Primary School.
- All Catholic children who are members of the Sacred Heart Parish will be given priority.
- Enrolment of children from other Christian faiths will be considered.
- Children from non-Christian families may also be enrolled.
- All parents will give a firm undertaking that they will accept and support the life, nature and identity of the Catholic School, including the participation of their children in religious education programs.
- No child is to be denied Catholic schooling simply because of an inability, as against an unwillingness to pay.
- All parents enrolling their children in a Catholic Diocesan school must complete the official enrolment form and return it.
- Birth and Baptismal Certificates are required at the time of enrolment. We also require an Immunisation Certificate.
- St Patrick’s Primary School welcomes children from the Griffith pre-schools to come and have a look and a play at the school. These visits occur before Orientation Day, which is held in November.
- On enrolling a child at St Patrick’s School, an information package is given to the family. There is then an interview with the parents and child and a tour of the school.

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>277</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>519</td>
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*Language background Other Than English

Structure of Classes
The following table is the number of students within each grade at St Patrick’s School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Policies
Discipline
St Patrick’s School believes that every child has the right to learn and play in a safe and happy school environment. It is expected that students respect the right of other students to learn and teachers to teach. This policy establishes a code of behaviour that encourages students to be self-disciplined and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Student Welfare
St Patrick’s fosters an atmosphere of cooperation in which everyone’s feelings are respected and where student self-esteem is valued and supported. We will foster sound student management by creating a total school environment that contributes to a sense of well being for all staff and students.

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. Our approach is based on the policy of the http://web.csoww.catholic.edu.au/

Changes to School Policies
Our school went through the process for registration in 2011. All policies, curriculum documents, teacher programs and assessment plans were diligently worked on to ensure that the process would be successful. As a consequence, all policies are current and written in a manner acceptable to the review panel.

Improvement Targets
The school’s Strategic Improvement Plan for 2012 involved the following curriculum areas:
# Religious Education – continue to implement the Diocesan Syllabus. Provision for Executive and Staff to attend CSO Retreats; continuance of the school based sacramental programmes and student centred faith based workshops on Making Jesus Real and Godly Play.
# Coming together on a regular basis for prayer and mass.
# Developing a learning program, based on Making Jesus Real for use K-6 in peer support groups led by Year 6 students.
# Supporting Sacred Heart Parish. e.g. assisting with sacramental programs, taking on parish roles such as church cleaning and assisting with children liturgies, mass reading, and special ministers.
# Ensuring that children from faith backgrounds other than Catholic are valued and their faith traditions recognised.
# Making explicit, with the consensus of our school community, the values we wish to emphasise.
# The revision, by the School Council and Staff of the School Strategic Plan including markers to verify implementation.
# Implementing The Way Forward Action Plan developed by staff to overcome perceived needs. Overall 95% of the needs identified were addressed.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS; POLICIES AND CURRICULA
# Religious Education and Creative and practical Arts Policies to be reviewed for Registration.
# In servicing of K-6 staff on the First Steps Writing Programme.
# Continue with programs that support learning: Reading Recovery, Language classes-both funded and unfunded), ESL, Jolly Phonics, Grade Writing Assessment and Special Needs Program.
# Critically evaluate our NAPLAN results as well as the grade literacy and numeracy work seeking to improve student learning and staff teaching.
# A Production of a Years 3-6 Concert Performance.
# Participation in the ACT Wakakirri Competition.
# Enter the Riverina Region Chess competition.

LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
# Role Statements for staff members need to be updated.
# Continue to implement marketing strategies.
• Seek ways of providing opportunity for staff members to take on leadership roles.
• Ensuring statutory compliance elements are updated – e.g. CPR, Child Protection, Chemical Safety, Harassment, Evacuation and medical updating.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
• In-servicing support for ICT including Interactive Learning.
• Providing opportunities for teachers to attend professional development including teachers needing to comply with the NSW Teacher Institute Accreditation.
• Teachers will implement the First Steps Writing program

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES.
• Began the implementation of the total landscape plan with the redevelopment of the Warrambool Streetscape.
• Continue implementing the ICT plan developed by the Technology Committee including providing wireless access to all areas of the school.
• Continuing to seek government programs and initiatives that will provide finance for specific purpose programs e.g. environmental grants, Solar Grants.

These priorities listed for last year were addressed.
• Implementation of Stage 1 of the Landscape plan.
• Improving NAPLAN results across all strands for both grades.
• Literacy initiatives were instituted for Writing, Vocabulary training, ESL and Special Need students.
• ICT was heavily emphasised. Utilising the Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms, PCs in the classrooms and the fixed and mobile laptops.
• Increasing the professional development opportunities for all staff and raising the level of awareness of educational change.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility
Respect and Responsibility are core aspects at our school. Students, staff and parents are expected to behave in a respectful manner towards each other at all times in accord with the Gospel example provided by Jesus and in line with the School Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policies. All students are expected to be polite, well mannered and well behaved at all times. Our school is proud of the conduct of the students and this is particularly so when students go on excursions and sporting representation. Examples of student responsibility include The K/Year 6 Buddy programme, Student Representative Council and Sport Captain leadership. Year 6 were trained under the Making Jesus Real programme to understand issues such as social justice, earth care and respect for all as well as doing community service as part of their Confirmation preparation.
A Centacare employed school counsellor works at the school for two days each week providing specialist support to students with emotional and social problems. As well a pastoral care worker/chaplain is employed at the school under the Commonwealth Government’s Chaplaincy Program.

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 St. Patrick’s, Griffith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Students
I am usually happy at St. Patrick’s, Griffith.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Staff
I am usually happy at St. Patrick’s, Griffith

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Financial Statement Summary

About This Report
This report was prepared by the Principal, members of the School Executive, The School Council Chairman and teachers with responsibility for specialist learning areas.