Annual Report
St Therese Primary School, YENDA

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The School

St. Therese School is a small, family orientated school located in the Riverina district of New South Wales, 15km from Griffith. We provide a comprehensive and highly motivating educational programme for all students based on the outcomes identified by the NSW Board of Studies.

We aim to prepare young people for today’s society by providing an education rich in variation, technology and programmes designed to foster independence, leadership and critical thinking skills.

Teaching programmes and learning activities cater to multi-age classes, allowing each individual child the opportunity to reach their full potential and to work at their appropriate level.

Catholic Identity

St. Therese is a parish school, part of the St. Francis Parish of Yenda, Yoogali and Hanwood.

Our Catholic faith and identity is integral to all that occurs at St. Therese, Yenda. A daily time allocation is incorporated into the class timetable for Religious Education, with additional focus given to preparation for the sacraments. The Diocesan program ‘Sharing our Story’ forms the basis of this.

Students are taught about their faith and guided in their spiritual development. Catholic identity is visible in the way we treat and value each other.

Sacraments

All students share in the preparation for sacraments at St. Therese. The tradition and celebration is shared by the school community.

Students being prepared for sacraments are introduced to the parish through commitment masses – the students commit to their preparation, parents commit to support them as do the parish as a whole.

Reconciliation is offered in Year 2, First Communion in Year 3 and Confirmation in Year 6.

Liturgies and Masses

Mass and other liturgies to celebrate feast days are celebrated with the parish.

The school works in close rapport with the parish, its priest, Fr Neru and the parish community.

At least once a term, our school hosts the regular Saturday night Mass. The students are responsible for the readings, prayers and music at this Mass.

Liturgies, other than Masses, are held to celebrate and commemorate special times and events such as Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and Christmas.

Prayer

Every day commences with formal prayer. Prayer is also encouraged at other regular times during the day.

Students are encouraged to pray for their own intentions. The students are responsible for leading prayer at assemblies, liturgies and other gatherings.

Every week we are joined by a volunteer who plays guitar and teaches us new hymns. The children enjoy praying in this way.

Pastoral Care

We have continued to support St. Vincent de Paul and Project Compassion this year. The students also participated in casual days to raise money for various charities.

Community Involvement

The students of St. Therese School actively involve themselves in community events. This year we have participated in the Yenda Community celebration of Anzac Day and Carols by Candlelight.

A large percentage of students always make themselves available to represent our school at these events.

Year 6 Religion Test

The students of St. Therese continue to achieve excellent results in this test.

A Message from key School Bodies

The School Council offers the opportunity for parent representatives to work with the staff in maintaining the school in all areas and planning for the future based on the needs of the students.

During 2012, the school council again ran as an amalgamation of the School Board and the Parents and Friends Association.

2012 saw the school and some of its equipment damaged in the March floods –
this proved to be a demanding time for some of our families. For a time, we were unable to attend school at our site and our sincere thanks must go to the staff and students at St. Patrick's Griffith and St. Mary's, Yoogali for their support during this time. The students attended school at St. Patrick's for the greater part of Term One.

On a brighter note, in October, the school celebrated its 75th Anniversary. This was a wonderful occasion enjoyed by all. Many thanks must go to the many people involved in the preparation for this event.

The parent body has successfully supplemented the school’s financial position through fundraising activities. Parents have continued to willingly volunteer to carry out grounds and maintenance works around the school.

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

In 2012, students in Year 5 sat the NAPLAN tests. All students achieved national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy.

St. Therese School prides itself on consistently high academic results.

Data is analysed by the teaching staff each year and the information collated is used to identify areas of need and to guide teaching and learning practices.

Professional Learning

The staff at St. Therese School continues to commit to upgrade their learning through various methods of professional development. In 2012, all staff updated their Senior First Aid certificates.

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>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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Workforce Composition

The teaching staff is made up of one full-time teaching principal and one part-time teacher.

The secretarial position of 20 hours per week is shared, with each secretary working 10 hours each.

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>83.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>86.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>92.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>92.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>85.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>92.00%</td>
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</tbody>
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Student Non-Attendance

Parents are required to explain student absence in writing as soon as practically possible. A preferred proforma for use is provided by the school. Unexplained absences are followed up within a week. All student absences are recorded on SAS in accordance with Diocesan policy.

Enrolment Policy

St. Therese School is an inclusive school and welcomes enrolment applications from students with disabilities and from other faith traditions. Children from families who are prepared to be supportive of the life and teachings of the Catholic Church and adhere to the religious practices, educational ideals and financial requirements of the school may apply for enrolment.
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>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language background Other Than English

School Policies

Discipline
We believe that the most effective form of discipline is self-discipline. This encourages students to make decisions and accept the consequences of their actions.

Parents play a crucial part in their children’s education and have a major role to play in the child’s behavior and discipline. The support we receive from parents in assisting their children to make correct decisions is invaluable.

All students and staff have the responsibility to respect the rights of other students and staff.

Bullying is neither acceptable nor tolerated. Students and/or parents are strongly encouraged to report all forms of bullying immediately.

Staff is expected to investigate all reported and suspected incidents of bullying.

Student Welfare

St. Therese School, being a Catholic School, is called to provide an environment that is safe and in which all individuals are able to develop to their full potential.

Teachers have an important role in the total care and growth of each individual.

Students also have a role to play in the care and growth of their peers.

St. Therese School promotes an environment where students feel safe to take risks and all their efforts are valued and celebrated.

Complaints and Grievances

Students, parents and staff are encouraged to seek solutions to problems as soon as it is evident that a problem exists.

All complaints and grievances are to be taken seriously and appropriate processes put into place for procedural fairness.

Students, parents and staff are encouraged to contact the Principal in regard to these matters and, if necessary, are able to contact the Parish Priest, School Council Chairperson and relevant personnel at the Catholic Schools Office.

Further information can be obtained from the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Catholic Schools Office website.

www.csoww.catholic.edu.au

Changes to School Policies

Copies of all school policies can be viewed by contacting the school office.

Improvement Targets

All St. Therese School’s teaching and learning programs aim to educate students in such a way that they graduate as confident, caring and independent workers who are capable of creative thinking.

The main focus for improving targets now and in the immediate future is to focus on critical thinking, problem solving and the creative use of technology in order to equip students for the future.

All teachers provide feedback to students using explicit marking criteria for assessment tasks that relate directly to their learning. Students are made aware of these criteria before undertaking assessment tasks ensuring that they are able to clearly see what is expected. We see evidence of aiming for excellence when expectations are clearly stated. Assessment tasks are always planned in such a way that allows students the scope to clearly demonstrate what they are capable of.

The analysis of assessment tasks steers future teaching directions.

Mathematics

We strongly believe in the need for students to be more explicitly taught how to think and work mathematically and how to problem solve effectively.

We focus on the teaching of strategies and when to use them, as well as quick mental computation and understanding of strategies.

Thinking Tools and Graphic Organizers

We foster the use of thinking tools and graphic organizers to help students organize and prioritize their thoughts.
We believe that students need to be taught the skills to organize their thoughts in more effective ways.

**Technology**
In the ever changing world of technology, it is important that students are up to date. Technology is used in all the Key Learning Areas to help foster independent learning and creativity.
We aim to keep updated with technology and have a computer ratio of one computer to every student in the primary classroom. Students are encouraged to use a variety of presentation techniques for their work. Children in all year levels have safe access to the internet, they are also taught about internet safety and responsible use of the internet.
Each classroom has an interactive whiteboard and access to digital cameras, video cameras, webcams and ipads. The school subscribes to internet based programs that complement our teaching and foster independent learning skills.

**Literacy**
Crucial to full comprehension is the ability to think critically or 'read between the lines.' Teaching programs focus on the provision of activities that encourage the growth of inferential comprehension.
A greater focus on oral comprehension this year has been successful – the students have learnt through talk and used these discussions as springboards for reading and writing tasks.
Regular reflection on literacy and other tasks has also been more of a focus and used as a tool for clarification and a measure of student understanding.
The school continues to use Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar in the infant’s classroom. Research data indicates that this program accelerated the development of reading and writing skills, using visual, aural and kinaesthetic cues.
Kindergarten children were again reading and writing at an advanced level at the end of the school year, giving them an accelerated start to their academic life.

**Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**
A wide range of extra-curricular experiences are offered at St. Therese to supplement and enhance our classroom activities.

Students have the opportunity to represent the school at concerts and performances out in the community.

We aim to expose the students to professional performance of music and drama whenever the opportunity arises.
It is one of our aims that each student will be given the opportunity to gain the skills needed to participate in school sport. All students are encouraged to participate regardless of ability.
Students are given the opportunity to represent the school at various Deanery and Diocesan carnivals.
This year we were fortunate to join St. Mary’s, Yoogali and St. Patrick’s, Griffith for the Cross Country and St. Mary’s, Yoogali for Swimming and Athletics Carnivals. This was a great experience and a great example of using available resources to offer the best opportunities to our students.
It was also a great opportunity for all the students of the Catholic Schools in the area to get together.

All students participated in a 10 week swimming program this year.
Various sporting organizations offer skills clinics throughout the year where students learn skills specific to a sport – we were fortunate enough to source external providers to teach the students gymnastics this year. These clinics are all inclusive K-6.

Leadership opportunities are offered to the students from a young age. Our students have opportunities to organize and perform items for school assemblies and concerts, offering development in character, values and appreciation of the talents of others.

The ‘Open Days of Discovery’ program was again offered this year. This program targets children who are to attend school the following year. The program is open to all children of the community; however, preference is given to those with a genuine desire to enrol their child at St. Therese School.
We believe this to be a unique program in the area, which together with our extensive orientation program, provides four year olds with a sound educational experience and fosters smooth transition to school.
This program has become highly regarded in the community.
The school has developed a culture, whereby students feel comfortable taking risks, knowing that their efforts will be supported by their peers.

**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>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
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</table>

**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>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</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>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>%</td>
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**About This Report**

This report has been prepared by the school principal Mrs Kathy Grant.