Annual Report

St Mary’s Primary School, Corowa

CONTACT DETAILS:

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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 school is part of the St Mary’s Star of the Sea Parish. Our school enjoys strong support from Father Paul, and our parishioners. We work diligently to form a strong community of faith through the exchange of ideas and activities.

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 that you enjoy our annual report for 2013.

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. We have incorporated the new syllabus units that have been designed by our Religious Education Co-ordinators within our Diocese and the Catholic Life Team.

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 celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation this year. This was a highlight of the year for our senior students. Year 6 students participated in the National Religious Education Test again in June.

As part of our commitment to justice and equity our staff have lead the students through an understanding of being grateful and showing care and compassion for those less fortunate than ourselves. This guidance is revealed by the many opportunities the children lead to show this care and compassion. Their deeper understanding of our global responsibilities is evident in their expressions of love through Caritas Australia.

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 commenced this year in using the resource within our whole school and utilising the resources from the Catholic Schools Office through the Catholic Life Team. We acknowledge the wonderful work done by Sr Anne Hagan and John Goonan in collating resources through 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. We will continue to develop resources for the students to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding Jesus, His life and His Mission for us.

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 our school Masses and our weekend Masses. 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 the reading of literature and developing a love of reading; assisting at sporting events or generously giving their time during fundraising efforts throughout the year. We encourage all parents to meet with their child’s teacher and develop a supportive relationship with them. This partnership between home and school is a wonderful support to all students, staff and parents within our school and produces positive outcomes for their children.

A Message from key School Bodies

School Council Chairperson’s Report 2013

2013 has been another successful year for St Mary’s Corowa School Council.

School maintenance programs for 2013 have included the resurfacing of the cricket pitch, the concrete near the kinder room, carpet in Yr 5, window tinting in Year 3, 4 and 5, and the fence in front of new hall. Special thanks to Jack Seymour for being the unofficial project manager for most of these projects.

School Council projects for 2014 include netting behind football goals, developing new school uniform options and investigating school IT apps to improve communication within the school community.

Parent Information & New Beginnings Parent Information Sessions have provided important and targeted information for parents. I encourage all parents to consider coming to these sessions next year.

The P & F Committee and fete committee have once again done a fantastic job this year. The school fete continues to be a great event and is a credit to all involved. Can parents please consider being part of these committees as the events not only provide entertainment but raise money for the school. This year the P & F purchased pie warmers, football tables, library furnishings and donated money to the school council to assist in projects for the children.

The OOSH Programme will be changing management in 2014 and will be privately operated. This will expand and improve the programme and enable families to access public funding. Thank you to all of the OOSH staff.

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

Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

We have developed a focus for learning from the analysis of the Data from Naplan assessments in 2013. The whole school focus on the improvements in the learning outcomes through explicit teaching and effective feedback. The structures put in place are strategic in achieving the desired outcomes across all year levels. With support from parental engagement in their child’s education, parents have a great role to play in assisting their child in their learning journey.

A summary of the areas of focus:

Year 3 Reading

- Locating explicitly stated details in an information text.
- Making inferences by examining information in different texts and contexts
- Comprehending the information and applying this knowledge to further interpretations

Year 3 Writing

- Using persuasive writing structure and devices to persuade the reader
- Vocabulary – Developing the use of simple words to more complex and appropriate words
- Awareness of paragraphs to introduce new ideas
- Spelling and Punctuation – The use of correct and appropriate punctuation and
the use of more difficult words spelt correctly.

Year 3 Numeracy
- Data: Interpreting picture graphs with one-to-one correspondence.
- Fractions & decimals: Using inverse operations to solve problem.
- Multiplication & Division: Choosing the correct operations in a problem to solve it correctly.
- 2D space: Completing a geometrical patterns & distinguishes between symmetrical and non-symmetrical shapes.
- 3D space: Identifying particular faces of a solid in different orientations & counts the number of edges on a given prism.

Year 5 Reading
- Comprehension of text: interpreting information correctly
- Making inferences by examining information in different texts and contexts
- Connecting information: Identifying information that has a connection to other parts of the text

Year 5 Writing
- Using persuasive devices to enhance the writer's position to persuade the reader.
- Vocabulary – Developing the use of simple words to more complex and appropriate words
- Spelling and Punctuation – The use of correct and appropriate punctuation and the use of more difficult words spelt correctly.

Year 5 Numeracy
- Position: Locating points on a grid
- Data: Interpreting column, line, bar and pie graphs.
- Fractions & decimals: Adding and subtracting mixed numerals involving simple denominators.
- Addition & subtraction: Calculating the difference between two four-digit numbers and two five-digit numbers. Problem-solving.
- Multiplication & Division: Choosing the correct operations in a problem to solve it correctly

Professional Learning
In 2013 our staff participated in Professional Learning focused on our priority areas from our School Renewal Framework. 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
- Australian Curriculum
- National Partnerships Teacher Leadership
- First Steps Reading Modules
- Spirituality
- Meaningful Prayer in the classrooms
- 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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
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Workforce Composition
A) Indigenous
B) Non-Indigenous

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<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<td>Principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Teaching Staff</td>
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Student Attendance
Student attendance rates for each Year level and the whole school

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attendance %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>91.62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>92.05%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>92.46%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>91.64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>91.52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>91.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>93.04%</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.

Families are reminded that if their child needs to be absent from school for an extended period of time that they must complete an exemption form. This form is filed and a Certificate of Exemption is issued to the parent. These Exemption forms available from the office upon request.

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>73</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>151</td>
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*Language background Other Than English

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.

Behavioural Plans may need to be designed for individual cases. This is created with the student, teacher and parent and communicated to all parties as required.

Student Welfare
Students may at times need reassurance and support in dealing with issues that confront them during their life.

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.

We have a Well-being Team that meet fortnightly to assist in pastoral care of all students.

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.

We use Restorative Practices to assist students in acknowledging their part in conflict and being aware of any hurt that they may have caused. Restorative Practices gives students a way of learning and changing behaviours for the future. Restorative Practices are based on inclusion, forgiveness and compassion. We recognise that this learning develops over time and needs constant revisiting along a child’s life journey.

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

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 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, Student Leadership Policy, and Library Policy. We have updated our school plan for evacuation to include all...
new buildings with new floor plans. We have updated the School Policy and General Information booklet with policy updates.

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 will develop a lock down policy in reference to the CSO policy guidelines and procedures. We will refer to the CSO policy as required.

Curriculum policies are reviewed as the Key learning area is audited for review. In 2013 we reviewed the Maths and Human Society and Its Environment Policy.

In 2014 we will review English, PDHPE and Science and Technology.

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

**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 ongoing literacy resources for our Bounce Back Programme.

We have prepared our school to achieve priorities stated in the 2012 SRF:

**Catholic Identity and Religious Education**
- Consolidate RE Syllabus and Making Jesus Real developed throughout the whole school.

**Student Learning**

Targeting student Numeracy and Literacy levels to raise student achievement within and across the curriculum.

Supporting and promoting student wellbeing in our school to increase student learning outcomes through sustainable support processes.

- Continue with National Partnerships
- Learning and Teaching priorities for Numeracy and Literacy. Focus on Reading
- Pedagogy
- Plan for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum for English.
- Continue with Best Start.
- Analysis of Naplan data
- School Policy curriculum review process on going
- Knowledge Management and ICT
- Cyber safety resources
- Enabling students, staff and parents to become skilled and knowledgeable citizens of the online world.
- Well Being resources and parent information sessions
- Employee Services
- Supporting and promoting staff well-being.
- Finance and Resources
- Information sessions for parents regarding well – being.
- Continue Parent sessions in "New Beginnings".
- Capital works and refurbishment linking maintenance issues to create safe learning and working environments.
- Strategic leadership and Partnerships
- Building leadership capacity of staff.

In 2013 we continued with 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. Parents requested sessions on anger management for younger children and strategies to assist children become more resilient. We were very fortunate to run the sessions with the help of 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.

In 2013 we have introduced the “Gorgeous Girls” Program through Centacare.

**Session 1: What I like about me**

Girls to embrace their personal qualities rather than focusing on physical appearance.
Session 2: Love the skin you’re in
Discuss meaning of Body image and to be accepting of each other and self.

Session 3: Friends and Frenemies
Explore and discuss what it looks like to be a friend and what it looks like when you are not a friend. Discuss importance of having positive friendships.

Session 4: Cake decorating
This continues to reinforce and teaches students to think about their personal qualities which make them Gorgeous.

Session 5: Affirmations
This session extends from previous conversation where students write strength based notes to their peers, expressing the gorgeous qualities they notice in others.

Session 6: Summary, Evaluations and Awards
The session goes over learning, and a time for celebrating achievements.

In 2014 we will investigate a similar session for our young boys.

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.

In 2014 we will be transitioning to outsource this service through “Extend OOSH”. This will mean a much more comprehensive coverage of service as this will operate for 5 days. This will allow each family to access Child Care Benefits. Families will be able to enrol and book their places for After School Care online. Our existing carers will have the opportunity to continue working in this service in 2014. For more information regarding this service please visit the website: www.extend.com.au or ring 1300 366 437.

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.

In 2013 the children have been involved in Athletics, Soccer, Basketball and Tennis.

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 notices 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
- doing your best
- treating people fairly
- standing up for the rights of others
- being honest and trustworthy
- acting ethically and morally and with integrity within our society
- showing respect and dignity towards others
- acting in a responsible way in regards to their learning, playground and belongings
- taking time to understand others and being tolerant of others
- using our manners to show respect and consideration

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 and strategies 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 research based 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 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 for Year 6 which is a peer relationship program that develops and builds positive relationships and assists students in recognising the essential elements of relationships. Peer support also gives the student leaders opportunities to learn about resilience and values. The Anti – bullying messages are very sound and effective. In 2014 we will continue to incorporate Making Jesus Real throughout the whole school.

In times of conflict we use Restorative Practices as part of our pastoral well-being policy. Restorative Practices assists teachers, students and parents to build maintain and restore relationships. Restorative Practices helps to build capacity to enable students to self- regulate their behaviour and their responses in future. Restorative Practices can contribute to the improvement of learning outcomes.

We would like to develop Parental Support and engagement as a way to improve the learning outcomes for all students. This year we had Well Being Information Sessions for all of our families to participate in. The follow up from this was a community survey. This will be used in 2014 to assist in providing feedback for future sessions and social gatherings.

At St. Mary’s our students 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. This year our students have been a part of community awareness events. Our students have designed play grounds for the Corowa Shire’s “Dream Playground” competition and assisted in educational posters for the community through artwork in the arcade through “The Hub”.

We work closely with the staff from Centacare and liaise with families around a variety of student concerns and issues. Catherine McNamara has worked extensively this year with our staff and students. We have a Well Being Team that meet fortnightly to discuss any issues and this provides a platform for staff and education officers to develop relationships and strategically provide for students well-being.

This year we introduced a Well Being session called “Gorgeous Girls”. Catherine McNamara from Centacare ran this session as a transition to secondary school. This explores many issues around growing up and looking at the personal strengths rather than the media crazed image of growing up. This program uses a collaborative learning style by inviting seniors from Xavier High School to share their knowledge and mentor our Year 5 and Yr 6 students. We hope to continue this next year. We will investigate a similar session for our Yr 5 and Yr 6 boys.

Community Satisfaction
The following information has been provided to the school. It has been 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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>%</td>
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Students
I am usually happy at St. Mary’s.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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Staff
I am usually happy at St. Mary’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Financial Statement Summary

About This Report
Principal, staff, students and parents have been involved in compiling this report.