2013
Annual Report
St Mary’s Primary School, Yoogali

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The School
St Mary’s is a single stream Catholic school in Griffith, in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area of New South Wales. Our school is part of a community of Catholic primary and secondary schools in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.
With a current student population of 159, St Mary’s is small enough to provide a caring, family atmosphere and large enough to provide a diverse range of opportunities for students.
Small class sizes are a feature of our school, with many classes currently ranging from 17 to 20 students.
At St Mary’s partnerships with parents are highly valued and parental involvement is a foundation of our school.

Catholic Identity
Our Catholic Faith is the core of our school and is reflected in our School Vision and Mission Statement.

St Mary’s Vision Statement
In keeping with the evangelising Mission of the Catholic Church, We strive for St Mary’s to be:

- A vibrant, Christ-centred, Parish school, based on Gospel Values;
- A dynamic learning community educating for lifelong learning: body, spirit, heart and mind;
- A positive, welcoming environment, where the skills and talents of each individual are valued and developed, so that each person reaches their full potential.

The teaching of Religious Education at St Mary’s occurs daily, 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.

Sacraments:
Each year, St Mary's prepares students for 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. 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.

Reaching Out To Others:
Giving Mass
At the end of the year, at 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.

Lisa Forwood
Religious Education Coordinator
A Message from key School Bodies

**Principal's Address 2013**

A great school is created, bit by bit, day by day, by sustained effort and focused partnerships between students, staff and parents. The combination of dedicated staff, children who are eager to learn and a parent community that is engaged and supportive of their school. It is a privilege to be a part of this community.

Our 2013 School Council body has done an outstanding job of setting a tone of positive partnership. The School Council’s harmonious teamwork has been a powerful example of what can be achieved through wise planning and organised and sustained effort. Our chairperson’s drive, energy and countless hours of time, sets the commitment bar very high and I would like to formally acknowledge John Matkovic’s efforts.

St Mary’s school is founded on faith. We are blessed to have Father Neru as our Parish Priest. With Father Neru as our spiritual leader, our students have been immersed in powerful liturgies throughout the year which have assisted them to deepen their faith. He is an outstanding example to us all of how to accept and welcome everyone just as they are.

Schools are first and foremost about learning. Our Religious Education, Literacy and numeracy programs are the core of our teaching and learning programs and our staff are very clear in keeping these as our main focuses.

Our literacy project with Speech Pathologist Alison Burcham throughout this year has been an example of sustained focus that has greatly increased our students’ skills. As a result of Alison’s professional development of our staff and her work in each of our classrooms, our students are now equipped with tools for creating quality writing. The improvement in the quality of their writing speaks volumes.

During 2013 our students have also participated in so many additional learning opportunities which have greatly enriched their education. From watching chickens hatch, to performing at the Leeton Eisteddfod, visiting the Art Gallery, sleeping over at school, attending Borambola Sport and Recreational centre or participating in the Milo Cricket clinics, to name but a few, our students have enjoyed a wide range of learning opportunities. Research tells us that students learn when they are engaged. Such opportunities have engaged our students and also provided them with a rich and well-rounded education.

These opportunities are only possible because St Mary’s staff give so generously of their time, expertise and energy. I am blessed to be part of a singularly brilliant team. On behalf of every child and every family, I thank the staff for their commitment to the vocation of teaching.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the executive team. Annette Reginato has continued to carry out the role of Assistant Principal this year with energy, vision and commitment. Annette I thank you for your wisdom.

This year as a school community we say a very reluctant farewell to Rebecca Gornall who will be moving to Wagga. It has been an honour and a privilege to watch Rebecca bloom into the outstanding teacher that she is today.

Our goal at St Mary’s is to assist our students to become caring global citizens. Selfless acts such as Gemma Pastro and Georgia Salvestro’s fundraising for CanAssist this year provided a powerful example to us all of what this can look like in action.

To the leaving families, I wish you well as your family life moves you on to a new and exciting stage. You have made St Mary’s what it is today. You will always be a part of the St Mary’s family.

Throughout 2013 St Mary’s has gone from strength. Each and every one of you is part of that. I would like to thank you for your commitment to St Mary’s throughout 2013. It has been a wonderful year. I wish each and every one of you a Christmas filled with peace and love.

Thank you all and God bless.

MaryJane Simms
Principal
Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing
Student growth from Year Three to Year Five continues to be strong in literacy and numeracy. Whilst student results are comparable with the national cohort for Mathematics, Writing, Spelling and Grammar, Reading achievement levels are lower than the national average and will be a focus in 2014.

Professional Learning
Deepening our understanding of the sacraments
In 2013, St Mary’s staff joined with St Patrick’s school Griffith for a professional development opportunity with Father John Fraunfelder. The focus of this professional development was on the sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism.

Grammar Focus improves students’ writing
During 2013 at St Mary’s, our key learning focus was to improve our students’ skills in grammar and vocabulary.
In order to achieve this, Speech Pathologist, Alison Burcham was employed. Alison provided a series of professional development sessions for all staff during Term One and Term Three.
Throughout 2013, Ms Burcham visited all classes. During these visits she worked with the students and modelled strategies for improving student skills in reading, writing and speaking with a particular focus on grammar. Following the visits to their class, staff met with Ms Burcham to discuss the modelled lessons. Ms Burcham also supported staff in the planning of teaching and learning programs.
As a result of this project a significant improvement in student results in writing was attained, in particular in the students’ ability to analyse the structure of their sentences and their ability to use compound and complex sentences in their writing.

Staff Professional Learning Opportunities in 2013

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<th>A</th>
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<th>C</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder/Year One Literacy Assessment- (Observation Survey)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Start Training (Kinder)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SENA-Individual Numeracy assessment</td>
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<td>Continuing Contact for Reading Recovery teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Partnerships Two Day course</td>
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<td>Curriculum Coordinators Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy Network Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPR renewal</td>
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Student Attendance
Student attendance rates for each Year level and the whole school

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attendance %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>94.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>90.49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>91.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>93.55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>92.14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>89.99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>92.27%</td>
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Student Non-Attendance
The attendance roll is taken daily in each class. Parents who do not supply an absence note with regard to their child’s absence are forwarded a reminder slip.
Staff report to the principal students’ whose number of absences is of concern. These are followed up with the students’ parents by the principal.

Workforce Composition
The St Mary’s Yoogali is made up of 16 full time and part time staff.
The Leadership team includes the Principal, Assistant Principal and Religious Education Coordinator.
Our students are supported by a part time Librarian (0.2FTE) and an Italian Language Teacher (0.2 FTE) Four part time teacher assistants support students with additional learning needs.

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 Kindergarten enrolments open at the commencement of term three. These are publicised in the Area News. Closing dates for enrolments in Kinder for the following year are also advertised through the school and in the Area News.
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>81</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>159</td>
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*Language background Other Than English

Structure of Classes
St Mary’s is a single stream primary school, with one class of each grade from Kindergarten to Year Six.

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. Restorative Practices are the foundation of our discipline policy.

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 founded on procedural fairness. It recognises that parents/caregivers, staff and students must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory way.
Parents or 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 2013, St Mary’s Policies and Procedures were renewed where applicable to ensure that they were in line with diocesan policy, where appropriate.

Improvement Targets
Focus on Grammar in Speaking and Writing
During 2013 at St Mary’s, our key learning focus was to improve our students’ skills in grammar in both oral and written language. In order to achieve this, Speech Pathologist, Alison Burcham was employed to work with staff and students.

Reading Eggs
In response to a goal of improving student reading skills, in 2013 St Mary’s commenced the on-line Reading Eggs program in all
Infants classes. An additional benefit of the Reading Eggs Program is that students can access Reading Eggs at home as well as at school.

**Italian Language Program**
The Italian Language program with specialist Italian teacher Senora Eleonora Taranto, continued in 2013. All classes, from Kindergarten to Year Six took part in weekly instruction in the language and culture of Italy.

**Technology Purchases**
In 2013 as part of an ongoing technology plan, the following purchases were made:
- 21 laptops
- 19 ipads
- 3 data projectors
The purpose of these purchases was to increase student access to online learning resources.

**Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

**Making Jesus Real - A Whole School Focus**
In 2013 at St Mary’s, “Making Jesus Real” was introduced through a whole school approach. This involved the introduction of a weekly “Making Jesus Real” focus such as “Including Others” or “Encouraging Others” at each Friday whole school assembly. The names of students who were observed carrying out the weekly focus were written down and placed into a class “MJR box.” These children were announced, invited to the stage and acknowledged at the Friday assembly each week.

**Lenten focus**
At St Mary’s in 2013 the Lenten focus through Project Compassion was on supporting the children of Mozambique. Our goal was to assist them to gain fresh water and improve their standard of living.

**Mission Week**
Our Mission Week fundraising effort for 2013 aimed to support the disadvantaged children of Mongolia. Each class contributed to assisting the underprivileged orphans of Mongolia through Caritas.

**Supporting Abadi**
St Mary’s Student Representative Council has been supporting Abadi Gebrilisalase, a 12 year old boy from Kenya, since he was four years old. Each term St Mary’s students raise funds through fundraising events such as casual days. The funds from these events help to provide Abadi with food and shelter.

**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 is usually happy at St Mary’s school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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**Students**
I am usually happy at St Mary’s school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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**Staff**
I am usually happy at St Mary’s School.

<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>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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**Financial Statement Summary**

- School Income
  - Fees & Private Income: 15%
  - State Recurrent Grants: 19%
  - Commonwealth Recurrent Grants: 65%
  - Government Capital Grants: 0%
  - Other Capital Income: 0%
About This Report

Many thanks to the following members of the St Mary’s community for their contributions to this report:
Staff, students and parents who completed the satisfaction survey, 2013 Religious Education Coordinator Lisa Forwood, Annette Reginato, Assistant Principal and School Council Chairperson, John Matkovic.