2005 Annual Report

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, GRIFFITH

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PRINCIPAL’S REPORT TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY, 2005

The Report for 2005 gives the school community an account of some aspects of the life of Catholic High School during this past year. As the school’s professional response in light of the needs and expectations of those we serve, it keeps its community informed of changes and developments at the School, as well as being one of the ways in which we account to the local Church and to various government departments. It is included in the school’s magazine which gives a fuller context to life at the school in 2005 and is a record of the year’s achievements.

The school is in partnership with parents, sharing in the education of their children. Giving an account is fundamental to this partnership and is done, for example, through the weekly newsletter, where are found reports from the School Board and Parents and Friends, and through articles in the local and diocesan newspapers. In July we collaborate with our local Catholic primary schools on the Joint Catholic Schools’ Newsletter, which this year featured the achievements of the Creative and Performing Arts students. The Parent Handbook, given to every parent and available on the school website, includes information on student welfare and discipline and prerequisites for continuing enrolment. The school’s prospectus, also available on the website, provides a context for this information.

This Principal’s Report gives an account of the ways the school is developing in accordance with the forward planning undertaken by the Board and Executive, and includes a financial summary for the 2005 school year.

FORWARD PLANNING - GOALS FOR 2005 AND 2006

There were five priority areas for strategic planning and development as set for attention during 2005 in the 2004 Principal’s Report. You will find the reports for 2002, 2003 and 2004 in the corresponding school magazine and also on the school website. Much of the other continuous ongoing development in the school is not commented on.

1. OUR PARTICIPATION AS A CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN THE EVANGELISING MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Action in 2005

Five teachers gaining formal qualifications in Religious Education were given financial support for course fees. Seven teachers were also given financial support for post-graduate study to complete requirements for accreditation to teach in Catholic schools. All staff participated in a retreat day.

The Stage 6 Religion Studies Course was reviewed and given continued approval by the Board of Studies as a Higher School Certificate Course.

Students participated in regular school and class liturgies. Prayer and sacraments were celebrated in line with the liturgical year.

Following a survey of the school community, a new name, Marian Catholic College, was decided on as a means to more strongly express our identity and heritage.

Planning is well under way for the school’s entry into the Wagga Wagga Diocesan Schools System from the start of 2006.

For ongoing action

- Continue to foster the liturgical life of the school and prepare an appropriate ritual to celebrate the new college name
- Commence review of Religion Studies programs in the light of recently introduced diocesan guidelines
- Continue to provide support to staff gaining accreditation and postgraduate qualifications through the Australian Catholic University
- Continue to provide staff with opportunities for spiritual and faith development.
2. OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD THROUGH CONNECTION TO THE LOCAL GRIFFITH COMMUNITY, THROUGH FOCUS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THROUGH CONCERN FOR THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Action in 2005
Students continued their donations to Marist and Mercy Missions, and also contributed to Jeans for Genes. Groups helped as collectors and badge sellers with the Red Shield and Legacy Appeals. Year 7 and 8 and Performing Arts students participated in Matthew Doyle’s Aboriginal Dance Workshop.

For ongoing action
- Continue to raise student awareness of and involvement in local, national and international humanitarian issues through the celebration of Harmony Day and understanding of other religions through Religion classes.

3. OUR AIM TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE EACH INDIVIDUAL IS LED TO HIS/HER FULL POTENTIAL

Action in 2005
Emphasis was given to regular communication to families of new students about school routines, procedures and special functions. Year Co-ordinators recognised citizenship through the merit system. KLA Co-ordinators led initiatives to promote student involvement in competitions available at the school. Half yearly awards were presented at three ceremonies, one for each of Stage 4, 5 and 6. Sporting awards were presented at the inaugural sports awards ceremony. Regular school assemblies continued to recognise academic achievement, citizenship and participation in competitions and service activities. Student accomplishments were regularly reported in the local press. Planning for TAFE courses reduced disruption to senior classes.

For ongoing action
- Continue current emphasis on recognition of and communication about student achievement
- Expand citizenship awards
- Monitor arrangements for Year 11 and 12 study lessons.
4. OUR AIM AT CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL TO TEACH IN SUCH A WAY THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL IS LED TO HIS/HER FULL POTENTIAL

4.1 Action in 2005 to strengthen teaching expertise

Five co-ordinators undertook a review of their work and were given very positive feedback by the visiting appraisal panels. Staff new to teaching were given intensive support in line with the requirements of the NSW Institute of Teachers.

The school continued its internship programme for a total of two teachers. One of these is now fully qualified and the other, a graduate, is in the process of completing recognised teacher education qualifications. This programme, which has been running in the school for the past five years, is similar to both Commonwealth and State governments’ moves to attract university graduates with a variety of academic expertise into the teaching profession.

The remaining staff is well qualified, with eight with Masters qualifications or better, and nine with a Graduate Certificate or Diploma in Religious Education in addition to their other teaching qualifications. One experienced teacher has industry background and accreditation.

For ongoing action
- Continue processes for support of new staff and staff new to management positions
- Continue processes for performance review of staff in management positions.

4.2 Action in 2005 to strengthen curriculum

Using pupil-free days and Board of Studies inservices, staff prepared for the Stage 4 and 5 syllabuses mandated for introduction in 2006, and reviewed procedures for registration, assessment records and reporting.

The inservice for all staff continued in programme writing for the new syllabuses, assessment of students, literacy and numeracy, strategies to assist students with special needs and the acquisition of skills in Information Technology.

For ongoing action
- Continue professional development in literacy, needs of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, excellent classroom practice, and Information Technology
- Consolidate programming, assessment and reporting for the Stage 4 and 5 curriculum.

4.3 Action in 2005 to ensure strong curriculum through participation in benchmarking

4.3.1 Literacy and Numeracy

Achievements in 2005

All year 7 students were tested for literacy (ELLA) and numeracy (SNAP). Because this state benchmarked testing is done early in Year 7, the results are an indication of the level of students as they enter secondary school and provide us with a basis for programmes based on the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and groups of students.

Year 8 ELLA testing follows the movement in literacy achievement for students tested in Year 7 2004. The effectiveness of the school’s literacy programme was endorsed by the results: 69% of students showed growth in literacy skills greater than NSW state figures would predict, with 35% of these showing growth greater than twice the state average.

The average scores in all areas (writing, reading, language and overall literacy) were just above state average.

There remain a number of students, about 13%, whose results indicate that they still need intensive remedial work in reading and language and a few for whom little or no growth recorded for the past year points to the need for a different approach.

2005 is the first year in which Year 8 students were retested for numeracy. 58% of the students showed greater than NSW state average growth in numeracy skills including 26% with twice the average improvement.
However the average scores of students in all areas (overall numeracy, number, measurement, space, data and numeracy problem solving) was just below NSW state average with boys’ scores slightly stronger than girls. These results suggest a challenge to the school to further develop its numeracy programme to the point where it is as effective as the literacy programme.

For ongoing action:
- Continue inservicing of teachers across the KLA’s through involvement in ELLA and SNAP marking
- Continue to involve all staff in improving overall weaknesses in literacy
- Consolidate existing programs for numeracy development into focused approaches to transition from primary to secondary school and to numeracy remediation in Years 7 and 8.

4.3.2 School Certificate
Achievements in 2005
The 2005 School Certificate completed by 101 students showed excellent outcomes for a variety of individual students, some of whom achieved high results across the full range of courses, other excelled in areas of their particular skill or interest and yet others showed they had made significant learning gains since year 7, often in the face of great difficulty.

The strength of the school in Italian was expected, with 19% of our students completing the School Certificate course, the great majority with excellent results, compared with 2.5% of students across NSW. Other areas of particular strength in 2005 were Food Technology and Visual Arts.

However, the year as a whole was under represented in the top two bands in all of the externally examined courses, English Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Australian History, Civics and Citizenship and Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship. As in 2004, a greater number of students gained marks between 60 and 79 than for the State. Programs of support (see section 4.4) in literacy, numeracy, organization, tutorial assistance and motivation have been in place and expanded since 2002, but these are still failing some students.

A comparison of the 2005 Year 10 cohort with that which sat the 2002 ELLA and SNAP shows a significant change in the student population between Year 7 and Year 10. Of the 25 students who sat these tests in Year 7, but did not continue to Year 10 at the school, 22 scored in the High or Proficient bands in the tests.

Therefore there is need to continue and strengthen existing programs of support in the Year 9 and 10 curriculum. These cater for students with learning difficulties, disabilities and NESB students. They include full staff professional development for literacy and numeracy and the pathways to post-compulsory education program for Year 10 students and their parents.

For ongoing action:
- Revise staff practices about homework and formulate a coherent approach to homework
- Identify and target specific approaches and supports for individual students
- Actively promote, by individual parent contact, greater year 9 and 10 parent participation in report interviews

4.3.3 Higher School Certificate
Achievements in 2005
The Higher School Certificate results were once again pleasing with the great majority of students accessing tertiary courses of their choice. Of the 64 students in the 2005 cohort, 26 different students achieved a total of 57 Band 5 and 6 results in 16 different courses. The objective analysis and comparison of HSC results in which Catholic High School, Griffith participates each year, indicated that the results were generally in the range expected from the School Certificate results of these same students. The most significant learning gains by students identified in the study were in Mathematics, Biology, Business Studies and Design and Technology.
The Principles for the Use of External Assessment Data of the Catholic Education Commission of NSW include the following:

1. Each student is unique individual and must be treated with respect and integrity
2. Each school is unique and has a local context which needs to be recognized

The courses presented by students of the school reflect both of these principles. A much greater percentage of our students were successful in their studies of Hospitality, Drama, Design and Technology, Information Processes and Technology, Business Services and Italian, than across the State.

The 64 students completed a total of 38 different courses, ranging from the academic end of the spectrum (Extension English and Mathematics), two languages other than English, to 15 separate vocationally oriented courses. Some students chose to study a combination of academic and vocational courses. This range and variety of courses was only possible because of great flexibility of course delivery. Of the 38 courses, the College taught 20 face to face and supervised another 5 delivered by Distance Education. The Griffith Link Programme, unique to our area and involving collaboration between the TAFE and all High Schools in the city and Central Schools in the surrounding towns, enabled our students to study a further 12 subjects, and finally one of our students completed a HSC course in a Traineeship.

For ongoing action:

- Continue to analyse school performance in the HSC
- Monitor school processes for assisting students with subject selection
- Continue to inservice teachers through involvement in HSC marking

4.4 Action in 2005 to ensure strong and diversified curriculum according to student need

One characteristic of the school is the rich mixture of cultural backgrounds that can be seen among our students and staff, and which derive mainly from Anglo-Saxon, Italian, Indian, Pacific Islander and African origin. In 2005 there was an Australian Indigenous enrolment of 0.6%. Many of our students (29% in 2005) live in a household where adults speak to them in a language other than English.

A second characteristic of the school is the movement of students to city-located or regional boarding schools during Years 8 to 10, and the number undertaking TAFE courses, gaining apprenticeships or employment at the end of Year 10. For example, a total of 11% of the 2000 Year 7 cohort (2005 HSC class) went to boarding school, and a further 15% left school after completing Year 10. The 2005 HSC class represents 53% of the class which enrolled in Year 7, with enrolments during Year 7 to 12 making this retention rate 57%.

A third characteristic of the school population is the number of students with an identified learning disability (6% of the school enrolment in 2005).

The school addresses the teaching and learning needs of this diverse and rich population through a curriculum which is differentiated and adjusted accordingly. Special emphases are literacy and numeracy in all KLA’s, provision for gifted students, curriculum structure to offer a wide variety of courses and tutorial programmes in all KLA’s throughout Years 7 to 12.

In 2005 individuals and groups of students had opportunities to take part in activities for Literacy, Maths and Science Weeks; in competitions in English, Maths, Science, Writing, Geography, History, Information Technology, Chess and Language; in Mock Trial and Debating competitions, the NSW Youth Parliament; and the Model United Nations Assembly. A six week extension course (Gifted and Talented) ran in Year 7.

Year 7 and 8 students use their own Maths CD Rom for extensions, remedial work, tests and computer activities. Year 7 and 8 students in our Gifted and Talented program competed against six other schools in the History Mastermind Challenge.

Students accessed individual or small group lessons in guitar from visiting teachers.
Students in Years 11 and 12 continued to access VET courses at school or at TAFE. Students in both Year 11 and 12 continued to receive offers of employment as a result of their work placements in Hospitality and Business Services.

Around seventy students comprised the cast and crew of the biennial school musical production ‘Back to the Eighties’, giving a matinee and two evening performances. Year 11 Ancient History and Italian classes will travel on a cultural trip to Italy in January.

HSC Design and Technology was reintroduced in 2004, with the first Year 12 class this year. Their projects were exhibited at the school, together with the HSC Visual Arts works. One D&T work has been preselected for inclusion of the state wide DesignTECH exhibition of HSC works.

There were special programmes of support for students in Years 7 to 10 to strengthen literacy, numeracy and other skills through a variety of Literacy, Maths, English, Science, HSIE and Assignment tutorials both for general help and in preparation for the School Certificate.

Careers activities for Years 10, 11 and 12 helped with their decisions about future study and employment options.

24 students in Years 9 and 10 took part in the STEP programme which provided them with experience in preparing a resume, attending an employment interview and structured work experience.

**For ongoing action**
- Continue to provide resources for these programs
- Continue to provide in and out of school learning experiences for the full range of students
- Pilot a program to develop teaching expertise in catering for the variety of learning styles among students, eg visual learners, boys.

**4.5 Action in 2005 to support curriculum through the maintenance and development of school equipment and facilities**

The building project to include new girls’ toilets, new Drama room, refurbishments to Science labs, Art rooms, and provision of shade areas, parking and bus bays, at an estimated cost of $2.95 million, commenced in November and is scheduled for completion in June 2006.

A review of the computer networks resulted in upgrading of one computer laboratory and replacement of the other with new machines.

The P&F donations provided for yet more seating and for new signage, and the Student Council planted more trees around the oval and near the library.

Grounds staff were increased to meet the need for ongoing maintenance of the upgraded grounds.

There was major maintenance on the stained glass windows in the school chapel/parish Mass centre.

**For ongoing action**
- Continue the building and refurbishment project including shade areas
- Continue the upgrading of IT facilities
- Revisit maintenance audit to plan for staged renewal of heating, cooling, electrical, classroom fittings.
5. THE RELATIONSHIPS IN OUR COMMUNITY ARE CHARACTERISED BY RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS OF EACH PERSON, BY JUSTICE, LOVE AND CARING

5.1 Action in 2005 to provide a safe environment and to comply with relevant legislation
An audit of policies and procedures was undertaken under the terms of the National Safe Schools Framework; students, parents and staff were surveyed, and school documentation updated. One OHS committee member underwent updating in OHS.
An OHS audit of the TAS area showed plant and procedures to be highly satisfactory.

For ongoing action
- Monitor results of NSSF audit
- Continue implementation of OH&S and other compliance requirements.

5.2 Action in 2005 to support parent involvement in the school
As a result of the Board’s initiative in promoting parent involvement, together with better arrangements for awards assemblies, an increased number of parents attended assemblies, parent functions, information sessions and report interviews.
Parent volunteers assisted at the canteen, uniform shop, by transporting and supervising students on excursions, on sports days, and on Founders Day. The P&F, with wonderful support from a large number of parents, ran the Champagne Opening of the 2005 Griffith Antique Fair.
Parents were surveyed on the school name, which will now change to Marian Catholic College from January 2006. The name honours the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of the Sisters of Mercy and the Marist Brothers (whose name derives from Mary), and keeps part of the previous name ‘Catholic’, while recognising our Year 7 to 12 character through ‘College’. The 1974 ex-students donated new banners for the four houses of McAuley, Marcellin, Patrick and Brendan, and these have the insignia of the two religious orders, the Sisters of Mercy and Marist Brothers, and St Patrick’s and St Brendan’s, the schools from which Marian Catholic College was formed.
Parents attended special events: the Year 12 drama performances, the exhibition of Design and Technology project and Visual Arts major works, the assembly to farewell Year 12 and induct the new student leaders.

For ongoing action
- Continue to follow up parent suggestions and concerns
- Continue to create ways to encourage parent attendance at school functions.

5.3 Action in 2005 to foster right relationships in the school
The Student Council took part in training and increased its role through the school hat design competition, visits to primary schools, a recycling project, tree planting, Clean Up Australia and the running of Founders Day. A leadership camp for this group and the Prefects was instituted. Year 11 and 12 retreats, the school musical production and the team sports program gave students direct experience of positive relationships and the chance to develop understandings and skills. Year 7 students were guided through their first days at high school by the Peer Support leaders. Year 10 students were briefed on their rights and responsibilities under Anti-Discrimination legislation and all Year levels had sessions on bullying and harassment.
The National Safe School Framework audit was undertaken.
Regular contact with parents through interviews, letter or phone continued.

For ongoing action
- Continue to give student leaders a stronger role; extend training to house leaders
- Continue to give students opportunities for positive social interaction and team building
- Expand on pastoral and faith development experiences in Years 7 - 10
- Continue to help students deal with harassment and develop awareness of individual and cultural differences by insistence on school policies and through workshops on bullying.
• Continue staff development in pastoral care and classroom management skills appropriate to the multicultural nature of the student population
• Continue communication with and support for parents in communicating with and setting boundaries for adolescents.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE
JANUARY 2005 – JANUARY 2006

CONCLUSION
It is my hope that this report offers members of the school community a context for your own experience of school activities this year. Congratulations to the students on their achievements this year, and thanks to all other members of the school’s community - parents, families and staff - who have made these possible.