2005 Annual Report

St Joseph's Primary School

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1. School Profile

1.1 Introduction

Saint Joseph’s is a Catholic primary school situated in the CBD of Wagga Wagga. We are a coeducational school with single classes from Kindergarten to Year 6.

We believe that:

- We are a Christ centred community which celebrates our Catholic faith.
- Each member of our community is acknowledged and nurtured in a unique, caring, respectful manner.
- We provide a solid foundation for holistic education which encourages an ongoing love of learning.
- Saint Joseph’s is a happy safe environment for all.

The School Motto is Deo Omnia, ‘All Things for God’.
1.2 Student Profile

The following information describes the student profile for 2005:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>LBOTE*</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language background other than English

1.3 Enrolment Policy

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established an Enrolments Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of this policy can be found at http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au/policies.htm

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

1.4 Staff Profile

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
b) have qualifications from a recognised higher education institution 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>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Catholic Life and Mission

2.1 Catholic Heritage
Catholic education commenced on the Johnston Street site in 1874 when the Sisters of the Presentation order opened the original ‘stable school’. Since then, the school has grown and changed. At one time, the school buildings were used by Saint Michael’s Regional High School. The school eventually reopened as Saint Joseph’s Primary School in 1995. Saint Joseph’s is a Parish school in the Saint Michael’s Cathedral Parish.

2.2 Liturgical Life
Sacraments of Confirmation, First Holy Communion and Reconciliation were conferred at different times during the year for Year 6, Year 3 and Year 2 respectfully. Preparation and celebration of the sacraments involved parent meetings, commitment Masses, the sacramental Mass and morning teas or BBQ supper following the event. An Easter paraliturgy was held in which classes, by portraying an important Holy Week event, told the story of the Passion of Christ. Parish Masses were organised in each term in addition to the sacramental Masses providing opportunities for the Parish community to celebrate together. The development of links between the parish and the school community were encouraged by combining the school choir and musicians with the parish organist and parish choir at Masses. As a school, Saint Joseph’s celebrates Mass together very second Thursday. Taking turns, classes prepare the Mass by highlighting a theme, proclaiming the readings, organising reflections, offertory, and hymns. As a school, we also attend Mass on holy days of obligation and other special feast days. Primary classes were able to experience the sacrament of Reconciliation once each term. Opportunities to train as altar servers was provided for Year 4 and Year 5 children with Father Blaise providing the training.

2.3 The School in the Life of the Parish and Diocese
Each term a School and Parish Mass was held on a Sunday with children and parents involved in the Mass with reading, choir, serving and offertory. A school organised morning tea for parishioners and school community followed Mass outside the cathedral. Special St Vincent de Paul feast day Mass with donations of food items to support the work of St Vincent de P Society was held in Term 4. The Saint Vincent de Paul Society utilised the school hall when collecting and organising hampers. Information about Saint Joseph’s School is mentioned in the Parish notices and the School newsletter advertises Mass times as well as special events. Parishioners were encouraged to pray for children preparing to receive a sacrament.

Year 6 children shared their talents by entertaining the elderly at the nearby retirement village.

2.4 Religious Education Curriculum
A course of study (scope and sequence) for K–6 of RE units was written for the new Diocesan Religious Education syllabus ‘Sharing our Story’. This allows for sequential development of all the key strands. Father Blaise began weekly visits to classrooms making a connection with the children and teaching. Each class was visited by Father Blaise once a term.

2.5 Catholic Worldview
Collections for Project Compassion and Missions occurred in Term 1 and 4. As well as collecting money, classes studied aspects of mission countries at levels appropriate to their age.
2.6 Parent Participation

Parents attended School Masses and were involved in the Sacramental Programs with parent evenings. After first Reconciliation, Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation, the community celebrated together on the school grounds. The School and Parish Masses were held one Sunday each term where the school and parish community were able to come together.

2.7 Professional Learning in Catholic Life and Mission

The Diocesan Policy on Professional Requirements for the Accreditation of Teachers of Religious Education can be found at:

http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au/policies.htm
3. Pastoral Care

3.1 Diocesan Policies

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established Pastoral Care and Discipline Policies which are implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of these policies can be found at: [http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au/policies.htm](http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au/policies.htm)

The implementation of these policies is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.

3.2 Pastoral Care of Families

Communication is vital to promoting a positive and healthy environment. Parents are encouraged and invited to contact the school if they have concerns or are experiencing problems. The school is able to draw on assistance from the local Chapter of Saint Vincent de Paul if families are experiencing financial difficulties.

Centacare offers services and programs through the school for both parents and children. Programs such as 1,2,3 Magic assist with parenting skills while other programs help in dealing with separation, loss and trauma.

Our school counsellor is available to assist and work with children and parents. A referral process can be instigated by the school with parental permission or directly by parents. The counsellor is at school on Fridays and sees the children individually. Reasons for referral can include behaviour issues at school or home, self esteem and grief or loss. The counselling also worked in a family therapy model including parents and acknowledging their vital role as first educators and carers.

3.3 2005 Initiatives

Our school Counsellor began visiting classrooms and attending one staff meeting a term in order to build relationships, break down stigma which can be attached to counselling and be seen as a part of the Saint Joseph’s family.

3.4 Resolving Issues

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established a Complaints Handling Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of this policy can be found at [http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au/policies.htm](http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au/policies.htm)

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Catholic Schools Office.
4. Excellence in Teaching and Learning

4.1 Curriculum Overview

The Creative Arts Policy is being reviewed and updated during 2005 and into 2006 in preparation for a curriculum review taking place in August 2006.

During Term 4 a process was begun to review student assessment and reporting to parents. With the assistance and guidance of our Deanery Education Officer, staff engaged in professional development in criterion referenced assessment using Basic Skills Test results as a springboard. We explored the designing and use of rubrics as a tool for assessment leading towards the use of a Common Grade Scale for reporting in 2006.

4.2 Approach to Teaching and Learning

At Saint Joseph’s teaching and learning is based on the principles and effective learning and teaching practices outlined in the CSO document ‘Today’s Children Tomorrow’s Adults’.

“We must hold firmly in place a vision for the kinds of adults our young people need to become, and understand the principles that drive this vision.” (Today’s Children Tomorrow’s Adults page 8) We seek to develop children who will be spiritual, inquirers, thinkers, reflective, adaptable, knowledgeable, communicators, collaborative, principled, caring, global citizens and healthy.

As effective teachers, our learning and teaching practices aim to provide children with opportunities to engage in and develop through meaningful learning, inquiry, communication, collaboration, self-responsibility and human development.

4.3 Significant Initiatives

2005 saw the staff undertake professional development in a number of areas one being that of student tracking. The purpose was to be able to maintain a record of progress through year levels and stages in all key learning areas. The result was a tracking proforma which is added to each year and kept in the child’s file. The record sheet allows for trends in learning to be identified in individuals as well as student groups which can then direct planning and programming.

Inservicing in SENA (numeracy assessment) for our year 3 teacher meant that children in year 3 were able to be assessed. Areas that were being catered for were able to be identified and for those that were lower specific programming and explicit teaching was able to take place.

Exposure to and use of criterion referenced assessments helped to increase understanding of Basic Skills Test results and their impact on teaching and learning for all teachers in all grade levels.

Revisiting and further unpacking of the practices and principles in ‘Today’s Children Tomorrow’s Adults’ lead by our Deanery Education Officer resulted in a booklet outlining Saint Joseph’s Staff own beliefs about what is important for student learning.

4.4 Student Achievement

All children in Year 3 and Year 5 participated in the Basic Skills Test in Literacy and Numeracy.

Year 5 results in both literacy and numeracy demonstrated growth equal to or greater than that required based on their Year 3 results. It was noted that some children exceeded the recommended growth margin by up to 200%.

Year 3 results were particularly pleasing in literacy with 60% of children in the top two bands. Results in numeracy placed more children in bands 4 and 3 highlighting areas for improvement in exam technique.
SENA testing in Year 3 showed that by the end of the year the children had achieved all 7 desired outcomes.

**Targets for 2006**

Studying results and individual responses it is apparent that it is important for the children to have more practise in working under test conditions. One way we hope to attend to this is to increase the number of children taking part in University of New South Wales tests in English, Mathematics and Science. Another is to insist on test conditions being adhered to during unit or class tests, making clear what those conditions are, giving fair notice of tests and the outcomes being assessed.

We look to increase the percentage of children in Bands 4 and 5 in Year 3 and Bands 5 and 6 in Year 5.

Year 6 children will take part in MOPS – Maths Olympiad of Problem Solving.

Year 1 and Year 3 children will participate in SENA where we will continue to achieve all outcomes by the end of 2006.

**4.5 Information, Communication and Learning Technologies**

A staff Myclasses page was developed and the use of email has been promoted for updating information, posting staff meeting agendas, posting events on the calendar property and professional discourse in journal form in dealing with issues such as the procedure for selecting school leaders. Release time was allocated for the school system administrator and ICLT contact person. This time was used for responding to professional learning needs and planning for future professional development.

**4.6 Professional Learning**

The staff at Saint Joseph’s have continued their learning journey through professional development meetings and days including:

- “Today’s Children Tomorrow’s Adults” and the principles and practices of effective learning and teaching.
- Staff retreat with the opportunity to develop relationships and reflect on the humanity of Christ.
- CPR updating
- Harrassment inservice.

Individual staff members have taken up opportunities and challenges by:

- Attending Year 7 ELLA marking
- Through the Literacy Learning and Teaching in the Classroom continuing contact program
- Taking part in the Gifted and Talented program
5. Extra Curricula Program

All children from Kindergarten to Year 6 participated in the Wagga Wagga Eisteddfod with one group receiving a top three placing and several Highly Commended reports. Year 4 also participated in the St Andrew’s speech eisteddfod.

The Student Council organised ‘Jeans for genes day’ and ‘Footy colours day’ with gold coin donations.

Music lessons are offered at school through the Wagga Wagga School of Music and speech through Mrs Jill Tucker.

Children from Year 2 to Year 6 attended ‘Roadzone’, an interactive display developed by Questacon with the support of the N.R.M.A.

Year 6 children painted a mural with resident artist Jenny Newbound. Year 6 students also organised and performed a play for parents raising funds for "Buddy Bear".

The Saint Joseph’s Challenge was held in Term 4. This P&F supported activities day involved students in sponsored games activities and a communal sausage sizzle. Moneys raised went to resources for the classrooms. High parent and grandparent involvement made for an enjoyable and successful day.
6. Strategic Initiatives

6.1 2005 Priorities and Achievements

The need for shade, a long term project, was realised with a permanent shade structure being erected in the playground. The structure easily houses all the children and is utilised both in hot and wet weather. The cost of the structure was generously supported by the Saint Michael’s Parish with a $10,000 contribution from the P&F.

A minimum fixed budget allocation was included in the school budget for library and for the Key Learning Areas. While money was being spent in resourcing these areas no amount had been previously identified in the budget.

As well as the budgeted amounts, the P&F donated $3,000 for classroom resources and $1,500 for library resources. Mathematics and literacy were the main areas of expenditure with an amount put towards renewing sport and play equipment as well as second hand XP computers following a local firm’s upgrade.

6.2 2006 Priorities and Challenges

Mandatory report format will be a major focus for 2006. The important elements of this will be to review assessment practice and in particular criterion referenced assessment and the use of rubrics with an A to E scale.

Develop Assessment and Reporting Policy in line with newly introduced government mandate for reporting on a scale of A to E in all Key Learning Areas. Exploring and programming from the new Board of Studies document “Foundation Statements”.

Professional development and support for staff which will enable the production of computer generated reports and create rubrics for assessing learning. Staff inservice in the use of SAS 2000 allowing staff to keep an electronic attendance record as well as being able to access the contact details of students.

Continue work on the Creative Arts Policy in readiness for a curriculum review in August.

Begin work of reviewing the Teaching and Learning Policy.

Unpack the Diocesan document “Firestick” and the many implication for our current practice.

Capital works with the assistance of the Block Grant Authority will be a priority from the beginning of 2006. The work includes the relocation of the school administration area, refurbishing the old Parish centre and kitchen creating a classroom and Reading Recovery / Special Needs room, as well as refurbishing the existing sport shed. The finished work will provide easy access and entrance to the school from Johnston St., a dedicated sick room and a purpose built meeting room. The technology upgrading will include secure wireless access to the school network.

Improving the school playground will continue to be a focus for the School Council and Parents and Friends. This will include renewing the existing watering system and gardens.

During 2005, a government project called ‘Investing in our Schools’ was announced. This guarantees Saint Joseph’s a one off amount of $46,000. As this needs to be a parent driven response to perceived needs, the challenge for the School Council will be to develop and lead a process to establish priorities. This is an exciting prospect in that it will allow the school to attend to work and purchase of resources otherwise not possible at this point and providing another opportunity for the community to come together.
7. **Parent Participation**

Parent involvement is an important aspect of the Saint Joseph’s School community. Opportunities for parental involvement promotes the continued development of community and the strengthening of relationships.

Parents are involved in many aspects of school life. The School Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month. The Council provides advice to the Principal in areas such as budgeting, school fees, capital development, educational and welfare policies, school maintenance, parent support and fund raising.

The Parents and Friends Association meets every third Tuesday of the month. The P&F responds to requests from the School Council by raising funds for school improvements which could include teaching resources or improvements to school facilities. The P&F has also worked to welcome new families providing social events as opportunities to develop relationships and help parents to feel comfortable as members of our school community.

Saint Joseph’s Tuckshop remains viable because of parent volunteers. The tuckshop was open three days a week. It works to cover costs and strives to improve student diet.

Parents assist as classroom volunteers working with small groups or individuals with work prepared by the classroom teacher.

Sport carnivals would not be possible without the support of volunteers acting as starters, timekeepers, measuring throws and jumps and even participating in novelty events.

Working bees and carrying out jobs around the school are clear and positive examples of the ongoing support and interest in the school. Working bees in 2005 saw the relocation of the school flagpole, cleaning verandahs, spring cleaning of the hall, weeding and clearing of gardens and small repair jobs.

A group formed from the P&F has catered for parish and Diocesan events raising funds for the school.

At times parents have accompanied class groups on excursions making them safer and more manageable.

The time, effort and service our parents provide for Saint Joseph’s models and reflects our school motto, “Deo Omnia”, All Things for God.

### Income

- School Fees: 8%
- Other Fee Income: 5%
- State Government Recurrent Grants: 21%
- Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grants: 66%

### Expense

- Salary and Related Expenses: 85%
- Non Salary Expenses: 15%

This report was co-written by the principal and staff of Saint Joseph’s Primary School.