2006
Annual Report
Mater Dei Primary School

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INTRODUCTION

I present to the Mater Dei School community, the 2006 Annual School Report. It has certainly been a most productive and fulfilling year, as our school continues to grow. I thank all who have helped provide an environment that has been conducive to student learning and development. I invite you to take time to read our report for the year.

THE SCHOOL

School Vision Statement
Mater Dei Catholic Primary School is a Christian environment, where the relationships between staff, children, parents, clergy and the community are underpinned by Gospel values.

Mater Dei Catholic Primary School is a faith community, which is committed to the development of the whole person.

Mater Dei Catholic Primary School is committed to developing life long learners, who will become contributing members of society.

Patron and Logo
Our school name “Mater Dei”, is Latin for “Mother of God”. This means we have a special devotion to Mary, Mother of God, who is our school patron. Our school motto, “One in Spirit” is something we try to instil within the school community.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school has worked closely with Father Plunkett and the Sacred Heart Parish, in providing opportunities for the students to continue their faith development. Sacramental programs were the main focus for our Year 2 (Reconciliation), Year 3 (First Holy Communion) and Year 6 (Confirmation) classes. The students and teachers put a lot of time and effort into preparation for these sacraments, and were joined by family and friends to celebrate these special occasions.

A desire to have students develop closer links with the Sacred Heart Parish, has seen two of our four whole school masses, held at the Parish Centre this year. This is something we would like to continue, and perhaps extend next year. Class masses are also held regularly in our school, and the infant’s paraliturgies are always a favourite with parents and grandparents.

We were all delighted that Father Plunkett was awarded the Order of Australia for his spiritual, pastoral and community work, over fifty years as a priest. This is worthy recognition to someone who has devoted their life to helping others.

The pastoral component of our faith, saw children raise over two thousand dollars through their involvement in the World Vision 8 Hour Famine, missions fundraising, project compassion and other charitable events throughout the year.

Our staff was very thankful to have the opportunity to be involved in a spiritual renewal day, led by Lyn Kelly from Canberra. This was certainly a most rewarding day for all concerned.
THE ARTS

The children have been exposed to a good variety of musical activities, through specialist teacher Marg Harris. Across the grades the children explore, create and perform different styles of music.

Students in our primary grades, continue to take advantage of the opportunity of musical instrument tuition, through Mater Dei Catholic College. Many of our Stage Three students, also take the opportunity to become part of the Junior College Band and have performed at different functions and also participated in local eisteddfods. Other students from our school learn the keyboard here at school, under the instruction of Mr Chapman during their lunchbreak.

A number of our class groups participated in the Choral Speech section of the Wagga Eisteddfod, where we again achieved outstanding results. Our thanks to the classroom teachers and Angie Crosthwaite, for their assistance with the preparation of these groups.

Thanks to the generosity of one of our teachers, Bridgette Veneris, sketching lessons were provided for primary students in Terms 2 & 3 on Thursday lunchtimes. These certainly proved most popular with students.

Many students in our school continue to take advantage of speech and drama tuition through Angie Crosthwaite. Children here were given the opportunity to participate in eisteddfods, Restaurant Theatre, concerts and ASCA exams.

Year 3, 4 & 5 children were provided with Dance tuition through Mina Saville. Years 3 & 4 focused on Hip Hop and Funk and Years 5 on classical and jazz. Parents certainly enjoyed the evenings where the children show-cased the dances they had learnt.

SPORT

Children in our school were involved in a variety of sports during the year. Carnivals for swimming, athletics and cross country were held in Term One. The children participated with great enthusiasm and spirit, with Bowyer house being the dominant house this year.

Many children attended Diocesan trials in Australian football, netball, rugby league, hockey, soccer, cricket and touch football. Zac Keogh was selected to represent NSW in the National Australian Football Championships in Darwin.

We also had two children selected in MacKillop teams, Dougal Howard in athletics and Sebastian Wrobel in Tennis.

All classes participated in Gymnastics for one term, which they really enjoy.

The boys in Year 5 & 6 enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the Mortimer Shield, and Paul Kelly Cup. Our Year 5 & 6 girls participated in the Aus-tag competition held in conjunction with the Mortimer Shield.

For the first time, our Years 3 & 4 students participated in the Trent Barrett Shield, rugby league for the boys and Aus-tag for the girls.
Unfortunately, our annual netball trip to Sydney was cancelled due to wet weather, but the girls from Years 4, 5 & 6 were able to participate in the Diocesan netball competition. With the likely expansion of this local netball day for the girls, our continued participation in the Sydney carnival will be reviewed.

**GENERAL AND SPECIFIED SCHOOL INITIATIVES.**

As part of the overall orientation process for intending Kindergarten children, we this year provided extra opportunities for new students to come to our school to familiarise themselves. Whilst of obvious benefit to the students, it also gave our Kindergarten teachers an insight into the needs of the children for next year.

Open day sessions, interviews and an information evening, continue to be part of our Orientation process.

The Student Representative Council continues to give the children of our school a voice on school matters. Members of the SRC have also assisted with the organisation of a number of charity fundraisers and other events.

The Peer Support program was run in the school again this year, with Year 5 children being trained as co-leaders with the Year 6 students. This year’s module was Optimism, which focuses on the children taking on a positive attitude.

Mater Dei took part in a weekly chess competition against other Wagga schools, as well as a tournament for individuals held at Turvey Park School. Our students certainly enjoyed the challenge.

Under the guidance of Mrs Harris, our Teacher/Librarian, the majority of students in our school took the opportunity to participate in the Premier’s Reading Challenge. This is a program designed to encourage children to read and has been a popular initiative in the school.

Also under the guidance of Mrs Harris and Mrs Johnson, all students participated in a number of Book Week activities. These included our Book Character Parade, which the children were most enthusiastic about and a Book Fair which was a huge success.

Discussion took place with parents, staff and students, about a trial in Term One 2007, where we intend swapping lunch and recess times. The main purpose of such a change, is to avoid having children in the sun, for long periods during the hotter part of the day of the summer months.

**SCHOOL POLICIES**

Our school is committed to the development of the whole person: body, spirit heart and mind. Through the development of appropriate welfare, discipline and complaints and grievances policies, we aim to establish a community of care through:

- welcoming and including students and their families
- respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each student
- providing a safe, secure & stimulating environment conducive to learning
- ensuring fairness & justice within appropriate discipline structures
promoting self-esteem and critical thinking in students
processes that allow parents to express their concerns or grievances

Our School continues to develop and review policies on each of the curriculum areas, as well as policies on enrolment, programming, assessment, homework, student welfare, technology and many other areas. Copies of these policies are kept in the School Office and parents are welcome to view them.

A copy of the Diocesan Policy on Enrolment, Discipline, Complaints and Grievance Resolution can be found on the following link to the Catholic Schools Office - Wagga Wagga website: www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

**School Council Report**

The role of our School Council has certainly been a significant one again, with much happening within our school community.

With our school growing at such a rapid rate, the provision of suitable resources and facilities has again been a focus for our Council. Occupation of our three new classrooms has certainly been a highlight this year. These are wonderful facilities, of which we should be very proud.

The development of our second playground is progressing, with both a sprinkler system and fixed equipment area installed late in the year. A second car park will also be completed early next year and the extension of the Collie Courtyard will also take place in 2007.

Our on-going maintenance program, has seen gas heaters replace existing electric heaters in four classrooms, as well as carpeting and painting of Year2/3 block, before the beginning of 2007.

The Council’s on-going commitment to technology in the school was highlighted, with the purchase of a trolley of laptops, which has proved to be a wonderful resource for all classrooms.

I would like to thank my fellow Council members, for the vision and expertise they continue to give. I would also like to thank Father Plunkett and the Sacred Heart Parish, for their spiritual and financial support, as well as our school families, who take such an interest in our school. Finally, my gratitude to the staff, for their outstanding commitment and enthusiastic manner.

Mark Ellul
Chairman

**Presidents P&F Report:**
This year has seen a tremendous effort by our Parents and Friends Association, to raise significant funds to provide extra resources for our children and teachers. The Parents and Friends Association is not entirely focused on raising money. During the year we conducted a number of social events, to bring parents and friends together in a social atmosphere.

The last twelve months has seen our Spring Art Show raise in excess of $8,200, which brought our fundraising for the 2005 school year to well over $26,000. So far in 2006 we
have raised over $33,500 from our fete, as well as other smaller fund raising activities. I would at this time, like to acknowledge and thank all those parents and friends, who assisted in all our fundraising activities during the year.

I would personally like to thank the other executive members of our Parents and Friends Association, for the fantastic support they have provided to me during the last twelve months - Vice President - Anna Keough, Treasurer - Liz Pangallo, Secretary – Cathie Morton and our School Board representative – Maree McAuliffe, as well as those parents who attend our meetings. I would like to take this time also, to acknowledge the continual support provided to the Mater Dei Parents and Friends Association by our school’s principal – Danny Malone and our Parish Priest Fr. Plunkett.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the wonderful support given by all our school’s parents and friends. We, as the executive, are aware of the competing needs experienced by parents when our meetings come around, and would like to thank all those who cannot make our meetings, but never hesitate to respond to either one of Danny’s noticeboard requests, or a phone call from the Parents and Friends Association seeking help.

Tom Murphy  
President

INFORMATION ON KEY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Curriculum Focus

Federal Government requirements in regard to the new assessment and reporting procedures, meant that a lot of focus in the early part of the year, was devoted to preparation and training for this.

These requirements had to be implemented, for our reporting to parents at the end of the first semester. Teachers deserve to be commended for their ability to implement such major changes, in a limited time frame. We very much appreciated the assistance of Michael Hopkinson, from the Catholic Schools Office, for his support and expertise in this time.

A most productive Professional Development Day was spent with Ralph Pirozzo, ensuring that we are catering for multiple intelligences and the different learning styles of students within each classroom.

Teachers have since begun designing integrated units, that incorporate a range of activities to cater for these different abilities and preferred learning styles.

An audit of our English policy was conducted late in the year to give us the focus for next year, when English will be a curriculum priority for our school.

PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT LEARNING

The school continues to focus on early intervention and hence have an emphasis on extra support in the early years at Mater Dei. Kate Le Brocque is utilised as a Resource Teacher in the Infants grades, working with classroom teachers in meeting the needs of children. Reading Recovery is another program, aimed to support children in Year One, who
experience difficulties in the literacy area. This year, we were able to employ Di Chambers for some resource time for primary students as well.

It is always pleasing to see the large number of children in our primary classes, who participate in the University of NSW competitions each year. These competitions are most challenging and yet, we have had students achieve a large number of distinctions and credits. I applaud all of the children who enter these competitions, as it exposes them to another form of testing, which can only benefit them as they progress towards high school. Separate competitions are held for English, Maths, Science, Computers, Spelling & Writing.

The School Council’s commitment to technology continued this year, with the purchase of ten lap-tops and a trolley, which provides easy access to each classroom for these computers. We have also installed a wireless network, to allow these to work in all areas in our school. This and other purchases over the last three years, means that we have spent approximately $100 000 on technology in that time and certainly, this is being reflected in the skills and knowledge our children are gaining in this area.

The Tournament of Minds competition provides an avenue for students in primary grades, to work together in a team situation to produce presentations and find solutions to very challenging problems or themes. This competition requires children to really incorporate higher order thinking skills and to work collaboratively in an effective manner – this in itself provides an interesting challenge. I applaud those students who took on this opportunity and thank Mrs Le Brocque for the guidance she gives and for co-ordinating this program in our school.

EQUITY PROGRAMS

As part of our HSIE studies, each class selects another culture to study. Cultures that are studied include Aboriginal, Korean, Balinese, Egyptian, French and Japanese. This enables children to gain a greater understanding of other cultures, from countries within our region.

PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

Peer Support was provided again, with the focus for the unit being “Optimism”. This program, which brings together students from K-6 in small groups, and is led by Year 6 students, is aimed at providing strategies for children to take on a more positive outlook. Besides building these skills, the structure of the groups allows students to build up a network of support across the grades.

Our buddy system continues to be a successful way to orient new Kindergarten children into our school. Children in Year 5 and 6, are paired up with children from Kinder. The older children certainly relish this opportunity.

The Life Education Van visited our school again in 2006 and it provides an opportunity for children to look at appropriate health and lifestyle choices, which will affect their long term well-being. Units of work are undertaken in individual classes in the weeks following the visit, to reinforce the concepts introduced.

Students with special needs again received funding from the Catholic Schools Office, to allow teacher assistants to work with them in classrooms, to enhance learning. Another Diocesan initiative has been the formation of Language classes in schools to assist “at risk”
children in this area. Eleven children from our primary grades, have benefited from these classes run by Mrs Le Brocque.

**RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Throughout the year, our staff participated in a National Safe Schools audit, to give us direction for our future policy development and procedures, as part of this framework. A forum will be held in our school next year, where parents will be given the opportunity to give input into strategies, to continue to develop respect and responsibility in our school community.

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

Our school has participated in Basic Skills Testing (BST) Literacy and Numeracy since 1998 and in BST Writing since 2001. The school monitors the BST Trend Data each year and uses that information, to inform its learning and teaching practices for the upcoming year.

It was most pleasing to note that Year 3 and Year 5 classes as a whole, performed above the state average in all components of Reading, Language, Writing, Number, Measurement and Space. Whilst this is most encouraging, we as a school will look at the feedback to our school, to guide teaching.

**Basic Skills Benchmarks**

The following tables outline the percentage of Mater Dei students in Year 3 and Year 5 who achieved national literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

- **Year 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Year 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other achievements**

Many children also took the opportunity to challenge themselves, by competing in the University of NSW competition in English, Maths, Science, Computing, Spelling and Writing. Our involvement with these, saw our school achieve many distinctions and credits, but most importantly, it gave many students the opportunity to experience a different and challenging form of testing.

Although an extra curricular activity in our school, many of our children achieved outstanding results in the Australian Speech and Communication Association exams, which are held in conjunction with the tuition that Angie Crosthwaite does in our school.
SCHOOL RENEWAL

Every year the school, through consultation, must determine priorities for development in categories including Policy, Administration, Professional Development and School Facilities. Priorities for our school included the implementing of the new assessment and reporting procedures, inserviceing of staff to provide strategies to better cater for the different learning abilities and learning styles of students and the continued development of facilities and resources, to cater for our growing student numbers. This included second playground development (sprinkler system & another fixed equipment area) and plans drawn up for another car park and also for the extending of our undercover area.

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Enrolment Policy
Mater Dei school has developed its enrolment policy in alignment with the Diocesan Enrolment Guidelines. Priority for enrolment is given to Catholic families living within the Mater Dei School zone. Should there be more applicants than vacancies, places will be determined on age and readiness. Should there still be vacancies, Catholic families outside our zone, or non-catholic families may be enrolled. Full details of the enrolment policy, are clearly outlined in our school prospectus, enrolment brochure and our website: www.mdp.wagga.catholic.edu.au
Diocesan Enrolment policy can be accessed through the following link: www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

Student Enrolment Profile
The continued double intake of Kindergarten students in 2006 saw our enrolments grow from approximately 248 in 2005, to approximately 270 this year. It is anticipated that the school will continue to grow until it becomes double–stream from K-6 in 2010.

Structure of Classes
Classes are divided into the seven different grades, with Kindergarten to Year 2 being double-streamed and Years 3-6 single stream. The maximum class size at the school is 30 students.

Staffing
Our school staff consists of a principal, ten permanent full-time teachers, four part-time teachers, two teachers assistants and four support staff. All of these personnel have the appropriate qualifications and clearance screening required, to fulfil their duties in our school.

Teacher Standards
All teachers at Mater Dei Primary School have the necessary qualifications to teach in Diocesan Schools. A breakdown of qualifications is outlined in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching qualifications from a recognised higher education institution</th>
<th>Qualifications from a recognised Higher education institution but no formal teaching qualifications</th>
<th>Have relevant successful teaching experience and appropriate knowledge but no formal teacher qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Year One and Year Three teachers from our school, were involved in SENA Numeracy Professional Development throughout the year, which focused on providing the training and time for thorough assessment of children and the planning of specific learning and teaching activities to meet their needs.

As mentioned previously, assessment & reporting was a large focus for professional development, as the new reporting system had to be implemented for semester one reports.

Our ability to try to address the different learning abilities and preferred learning styles, was enhanced after our Professional Development Day with Ralph Pirozzo.

Other professional development included Literacy days, Religious Education syllabus & assessment of work, CPR, Child Protection update, Duty of Care requirements, National Safe Schools Program introduction, Disability Inservice, Anaphylaxis Awareness and Training, Jolly Phonics Grammar, Speech Therapy practical strategies, Boys in Education Seminar and a Spiritual Renewal day for all staff.

Teacher Attendance and Retention

The federal Schools Assistance Act 2005 requires that each school report on the average attendance rate of staff members in a given school. The end figure is determined by calculations including certain periods of absence due to sickness, personal carers leave, leave without pay, special leave and accident/workers compensation leave. An attendance rate of 96.5% was achieved in 2006 by staff at Mater Dei Primary School, Wagga Wagga.

Parent Involvement and Participation

An outstanding characteristic of our school, is the significant parental involvement within our school community. This was evidenced in the magnificent response to P&F fundraising activities throughout the year, which saw over $33 000 raised.

Other involvement included, classroom assistance, canteen, sports carnival assistance, excursions, school fete and other fundraising events, School Board, P&F, Canteen committee, school banking, uniform shop, book club, office volunteers, and book covering sessions, social evenings and working bees.

Community Use of School Facilities

A variety of community groups took advantage of our school facilities throughout the year including touch teams, Lakeside Revellers cricket teams, primary school aged netball teams and MDCC for sport and training purposes.
Community Satisfaction

As part of our school’s Annual Report, a cross section of our school community was asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement with the following statement.

**Staff**
I am usually happy at Mater Dei Catholic Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</table>

**Parents**
I am usually happy at Mater Dei Catholic Primary 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>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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**Students**
I am usually happy at Mater Dei Catholic Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Financial Statement Summary

See Appendix A

About the Report
This report has been compiled with the assistance of appropriate school and Diocesan personnel and encompasses educational and associated activities of our school community in 2006.

The above report has been made a compulsory requirement to all government and non-government school beginning in 2004. Copies of this report are to be accessible to all school parents, the Catholic School’s Office in Wagga and appropriate government bodies.

Regards,
Danny Malone
Principal.
APPENDIX A

This data shown below is a summary of Diocese of Wagga School System income and expense and includes income and expense of all system schools.

System Income 2006

- Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grants: 57%
- State Government Recurrent Grants: 21%
- Other Fee Income: 5%
- School Fees: 14%
- Capital Income: 3%

System Expenses 2006

- Salary and Related Expenses: 73%
- Non Salary Expenses: 20%
- Capital Expenditure: 7%
The total income and expense of the school, that is included in the above, is shown below.

**Income**

- Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grants: 58%
- State Government Recurrent Grants: 22%
- Other Fee Income: 8%
- School Fees: 9%
- Capital Income: 3%

**Expenses**

- Salary and Related Expenses: 78%
- Non Salary Expenses: 18%
- Capital Expenditure: 4%