2007

Annual Report

Mater Dei Primary School, Wagga Wagga

CONTACT DETAILS:

PRINCIPAL: Danny Malone
ADDRESS: 328 Gregadoo Road,
          Wagga Wagga
PHONE: 02-69262060
FAX: 02-69223242
EMAIL: dmalone@mdp.wagga.catholic.edu.au
1. The School

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 that 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, Father Matt 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 us hold our whole school masses held at the Parish Centre this year. Class masses are also held regularly in our school and the infant’s paraliturgies are always a favourite with parents and grandparents.

Sadly, our Parish Priest Father Plunkett will retire at the end of January. Our school would most likely never have become a reality without the vision that Father had almost twenty years ago. The spiritual, pastoral and financial support he has shown to our school has been just amazing and we will be forever grateful.

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

Our staff was very thankful to have the opportunity to be involved in an inservice day led by John Goonan. This Day had as its focus “Understanding the Scriptures” This was certainly a most rewarding day for all concerned.

The Arts
The Infants classes have been exposed to a good variety of musical activities through specialist teacher Marg Harris. The primary grades worked with Mark Grentell doing drama in Semester One and music in Semester Two. Across the grades the children explore, create and perform different styles of music and forms of drama.

Students in our primary grades continue to take advantage of the opportunity of musical instrument tuition through Mater Dei Catholic College. A number 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 her assistance with the preparation of these groups.

The Wagga Wagga Choral Festival was held this year with our Junior and Senior Choir groups performing. Our Singing Group also performed and individual item at these concerts.

Thanks to the generosity of one of our teachers, Bridgette Veneris, landscape painting classes were provided for primary students in Terms 2 & 3 on Wednesday afternoons. These certainly proved most popular with students with some outstanding landscapes produced.

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 & 5 children were provided with Dance tuition through Mina Saville. Year 3 focused on Hip Hop and Funk and Year 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. Dougal Howard and Patrick Killalea were selected to represent NSW in the National Australian Football Championships in Sydney.

We also had two children selected in MacKillop teams, Dougal Howard also represented MacKillop in Athletics while Tom Keogh was selected for Australian Football.

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, Paul Kelly Cup and Rugby Union Gala Day. Our Paul Kelly Cup side made the Regional Grand Final, going down to the combined Holbrook side. Our Rugby Union side won the regional final against parish neighbours Sacred Heart. Year 5 & 6 girls participated in the Aus-tag competition held in conjunction with the Mortimer Shield.

Our netball teams did extremely well at the Diocesan Netball Carnival. One of our Year 4 & Year 6 teams reached the Diocesan Final with our Year 4 team being successful and our Year Six team finishing Runner-up.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIED SCHOOL INITIATIVES.

Our extended Kindergarten Orientation process continued this year with all new students being given the opportunity to attend three sessions.

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 “Promoting Harmony” which focuses on the children building positive relationships with one-another.

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 many 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. A number of our students also participated in the MS Readathon.

Also under the guidance of Mrs Harris & Mrs Johnson, all students participated in a number of Book Week activities.

We initiated this year for the first time the swapping of recess and lunch times for Term 1 only. 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. Most people felt that this was a beneficial concept and it will be continued again in first term next year.

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.  
http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

School Council Report

The main focus of our School Council this year has been the addition of appropriate facilities and resources to meet the growing school population.

We were able to complete our second playground development including our water tanks and sprinkler system with the help of a Commonwealth Water Grant. We also undertook the building of an under-cover area adjoining the Collie Courtyard with the assistance of almost $35 000 from the Investment in Schools Program. The other major work was the extension of our main car park area.

The planning and tendering of our next stage of building development has also been a priority. Two classrooms, a toilet block and a teacher’s work room will be built on the northern side of the Infant’s quadrangle. It is anticipated work will begin in March or April so that the classrooms will be ready for occupation in 2009.

Our on-going maintenance program has seen gas heaters replace existing heaters in the Library, as well as carpeting in the Year2/3 area.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the wonderful commitment of our much-loved Parish Priest, Father Plunkett, as he prepares for retirement early in the New Year. The commitment and service he has given to the Church in over fifty years has been extraordinary and the support given to the development of Mater Dei Primary has been just marvellous. We wish him well in his retirement and hope that he drops in occasionally to check over things.

I would like to thank my fellow Council members for the vision and expertise they have given to me in my initial term as Chairperson. I would like to recognise the efforts of Mark Ellul, our previous Chairperson who, with his family, moved to Melbourne earlier this year.

Richard Harrison
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, we were the sounding board for the introduction of new initiatives and procedures within our school.

The last twelve months has seen our families most generous and industrious in their fund raising efforts. Our Spring Art Show raised in excess of $11 000 and our walkathon approximately $14000 which brought our fundraising for the 2007 school year to well over $37 000. I would at this time like to acknowledge and thank all those parents and friends that 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 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 to also 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 meant that we held a Values Forum involving parents and staff of our school. This gave us some good insights into current school programs and other initiatives we could undertake in terms of agreed values and student welfare

Rob Periera visited our school and worked with students, staff and parents on aspects of bullying, particularly the crucial role of the bystander.

An English Curriculum review of policies and practices in all components of English was conducted in Term 4.
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 experiencing difficulties in the literacy area. Kate has also taken small groups of primary students for Language classes with the main purpose being to improve students skills in reading, writing and the talking and listening areas.

This year we were able to employ Di Chambers for some resource time for primary students as well which will continue in 2008.

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 high distinction, 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 another computer for every classroom and two more for the Library. A digital projector was also mounted from the ceiling in the Library to assist lessons.

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. Our team was successful in winning the Regional Championship and enjoyed the opportunity to attend the state finals in Sydney. 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 “Promoting Harmony”. This program which brings together students from K-6 in small groups and is led by Year 6 students 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 2007 and it provides an opportunity for children to look at appropriate health and lifestyle choices that 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. Eight 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 Values forum to give us direction for our future policy development and procedures as part of this framework. A similar forum was held with parents who gave us their insights as well.

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 so well in comparison to state averages. Whilst this is most encouraging, we as a school have used the feedback to guide teaching.
Basic Skills Benchmarks

- **Year 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</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>97%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although an extra curricular activity, 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 reviewing our existing English, a day on better understanding the scriptures and how we can incorporate this into our religious education lessons and the continued development of facilities and resources to cater for our growing student numbers. This included completion of second playground development, the extension of the under-cover area and the construction of our carpark extension.

**SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

**Enrolment Policy**
Mater Dei school has developed its enrolment policy in alignment with the Diocesan Enrolment Guidelines. It is clearly outlined in our school prospectus, enrolment brochure and website. Diocesan Enrolment policy can be accessed through the following link: [http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au](http://cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au)

**Student Enrolment Profile**
The continued double intake of Kindergarten students in 2006 saw our enrolments grow from approximately 270 in 2006 to approximately 297 this year. It is anticipated that the school will continue to grow until it becomes double-stream from K-6 in 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Standards**

<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>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

Year One, Year Three, Year 4 & Year 5 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.

Kathy Hopkinson was trained by the Diocese as a First Steps facilitator. Our whole staff will undergo this training in 2008 incorporating two Professional Development Days and several staff meetings.

Our Kinder & Year One teachers have also taken advantage of three Early Literacy Days offered this year. These days offered strategies and ideas for the teaching of Literacy in the classroom. All teachers involved found this opportunity most beneficial.

Other professional development included Religious Education syllabus & assessment of work, CPR, Child Protection update, Asthma training, Values forum, IT in the classroom, Workers Compensation, Harrassment in the Workplace, SENA Numeracy Program, Gifted & Talented support, Website Publishing and Boys Education.
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 95.7% was achieved in 2007 by staff at Mater Dei Primary School, Wagga Wagga.

Parent Involvement and Participation
An outstanding characteristic of our school continues to be 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 $37 000 raised.

Other involvement included, classroom assistance, canteen, sports carnival assistance, excursions, Spring Art Show, walkathon 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, touch football teams and MDCC for sport and training purposes. The Kooringal Chapter of Saint Vincent de Paul also used our school facilities to sort and compile Christmas Hampers and gifts for needy families.

Community Satisfaction
As part of our school’s Annual Report, a cross section of our school community is being 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>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The total income and expense of the school, that is included in the above, is shown below.

**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 2007.

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.