2007

Annual Report

St Michael’s Primary School, Coolamon

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Introduction
This report is an indication of the year 2007 at St Michael’s Primary School Coolamon. St Michael’s is a rural school with a population of 114 students situated 40 kilometres north of Wagga Wagga.

1. The School

The School
St. Michael’s is a co-educational Catholic School providing quality education to Catholic and non-Catholic children from Coolamon and districts.

St. Michael’s is a Learning Community functioning under our Vision and in the belief that children need support and challenge for learning to take place. The relationships developed between staff and students form the foundations to our approach to teaching and discipline.

Religious Education
This year the children have participated in the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Each ceremony was a beautiful spiritual event and the children took on these sacraments of initiation with reverence and great maturity. During the year we celebrated many School masses with the children involved in reading, and singing.

The School also participated in raising money for the Missions through a mufti day where the 5/6 children organised activities for the whole school to participate in and to think of those who are less fortunate than themselves.

We had a number of different fundraisers during the year which the school supported in looking at the social welfare of humans around the world. The Lenten program saw money being raised for those with less resources than ourselves in third world countries through Project Compassion.

The school is an integral part of the Parish as the Parish is an essential part of the school. We have a very good relationship with our Parish Priest Fr Tony Loth who is very supportive of the school and its initiatives. Our link with the Diocese is also very important as it provides us with the support needed to implement quality learning and teaching within the school.

The environment is an important world issue at the moment and through the curriculum, we follow the teachings of Pope John Paul II, “Humanity has disappointed divine expectations.....humiliating......that flower garden that is the earth, our home. It is necessary, therefore to stimulate and sustain ecological conversion.” (January 2001)

We have started to work towards Pope Benedict’s visit next year with World Youth Day and the children and staff see this as an exciting time for Catholics in Australia.

The Arts
Music lessons continued this year, through The Wagga School of Music, once a week. This is voluntary, and a few children are involved and utilised the specialist music teachers.

Sport
Once again 2007 has been a very busy year in regards to sport. Term One saw all three swimming carnivals held; School, Deanery and Diocesan in which St. Michael’s had representatives in all three.

The school also held our cross country in which we ran through Kindra Forest. From this a number of students were selected to compete at the Diocesan carnival in Narrandera. A number of students attended winter sport trials, AFL, Netball and Soccer, with a great deal of enjoyment and enthusiasm. Term two saw our Athletics carnival held. The students practised the various events during physical education and sport time to give them knowledge and skills about each event before the carnival. From this carnival we had a number of students attend the Country Deanery Athletics, it was a very enjoyable day for the students and a number qualified for the Diocesan Athletics in Albury.

Term three and the Diocesan Athletics carnival was held. St. Michael’s had a number of representatives travel to Albury to compete. If term three wasn’t busy enough, we also had Airborne Gymnastics travel out on Friday for sport. The students from K-6 were involved in a variety of gymnastic programs to develop their skills in this area. This was a five week program which the students really looked forward to.

School Initiatives
We had a visit from our prospective Kinder children for 2008 on three occasions this year, which was enjoyable and eye-opening for both students and parents alike. We have eleven new children starting Kinder next year and they will join our current Kinder class in a Year K/1 group.

School Policies
The School Discipline Policy at St. Michael’s Primary School aims to provide a safe, caring and supportive learning and teaching environment. The policy helps students to demonstrate responsible behaviour and a sense of self worth, and respect and consideration for the feelings,
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rights and property of others. It also aims to maximise opportunities for learning and teaching. Corporal Punishment will not be used at St. Michael’s School, Coolamon.

St. Michael’s School has adopted the Diocese of Wagga Serious Offences Policy available at www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

The school has adopted an approach to resolving complaints and grievances that is based on procedural fairness. It recognises that parents/caregivers and students must have access to processes that allow them to resolve concerns in a supportive and conciliatory way.

Parents/students with a complaint are encouraged in the first instance to contact their class teacher. If the need then arises contact with the Principal and the Catholic Schools Office may be appropriate.

St. Michael's School community believes an effective Pastoral Care and Behaviour policy is essential if we are to truly reflect the ideals expressed in the School's vision and to be able to achieve the educational aims of the school.

The Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policy is an expression of the aims of the school community for the development of positive and productive relationships among members of the community. It outlines how the school and teaching/learning can be organised so that most problems are prevented and those that occur are dealt with constructively.

These policies can be accessed at school in the front office or via our website.

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established a Complaints Handling Policy, Pastoral Care and Discipline Polices, Professional Requirements for the Accreditation of Teachers of Religious Education, & Enrolments Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese. The full text of these policies can be found at www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

School Council

The School Council is an integral part of our school set up and decision making processes. The School Council was chaired by Mr Tony Donoghue and consisted of 10 members from our School Community.

Our P&F plays an important role in raising funds for our school and is an essential component of our ongoing growth.

2. Information on Key School Programs

Curriculum Focus

This year our focus has been on consolidating our learning and teaching practices in Creative Arts and Literacy. We will continue our focus on these curriculum areas at the beginning of next year before moving on to Religion and Human Society & Its Environment.

Programs to Support Learning

We have been lucky to have the computer network set up properly from the start of the year. The children have had the opportunity to enhance their technology skills. It has also given the children the opportunity to have online access to resources from the world at short notice. We have utilised our new laptops which can be used in each classroom and hope to purchase more next year with Investing In Our Schools money.

Equity Programs

This year we were allocated funding for teacher assistant time for indigenous students. Mrs Melinda McCarthy worked with our students in a teacher assistant capacity with pleasing results.

Programs to Support Students

With extra funding for students with special needs we have been able to retain in class aide’s in Mrs Andrea Cutting & Ms Melinda McCarthy. Andrea & Melinda work with various children throughout the day helping them to integrate into the school environment and develop their skills, without causing any interruptions to the class. This program is of great benefit to the School and to the community as a whole.

We also had the Reading Recovery program for year 1 children, which was very successful in giving children in need a boost in confidence with their reading skills.

Respect and Responsibility

Last year, we held forums for parents and students on Values Education. These forums have been underpinned by our Values for Australian schooling and National Safe Schools Framework posters displayed at School.

We have continued working with The You Can Do It program in the school, which works on building relationships and children taking responsibility for their own learning through the five guiding principles of Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along and Resilience. The program is still young in its inception but has already had an impact on the children and we especially hope to see the ongoing effect with our
younger children as they progress through the school.

**Student Achievement**

*Statewide Tests and Examinations*

The table below indicates the percentage of students who have 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>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>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Basic Skills 1998 to 2007**

Our School has participated in 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. Next year we undertake National testing in regards to Literacy & Numeracy.

**Staff Achievement**

All staff made little achievements in their own right through the ongoing development of our students this year but some staff need recognition for individual efforts which they have taken over and above their normal teaching load. Staff participated in Basic Skills Test Writing marking as a group which was very rewarding and a great learning process.

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### 3. School Renewal

**Progress of the School Renewal Framework**

Our priorities and challenges for 2007 revolved around catering for the needs of our students in a growing environment. Our school population has grown from 76 students in 2004, to a maximum of 117 students in 2007. Although we have new buildings to cater for the numbers, we still need to provide the resources needed to cater for the extra students. This is an ongoing process which the school, school council, parish and parents are looking to address. We hope to progress further next year as we have been successful with a Government grant for a new classroom and toilet facilities.

The investing in our schools program will be put to great use next year with many initiatives to improve the learning environment of the children being undertaken; including, new technology and equipment to help with the education of our students.

The P&F have achieved their goal of raising funds to put in new blinds in each of the classrooms and next year have committed to assisting the school with funds for the new building development. It is a very exciting time at school at the moment as we are making forward progress with our facilities. Academically we have achieved most goals as we were successful with our Curriculum review in Creative Arts and English.

Our Leadership renewal has taken a fresh step with the appointment of Mrs Anita Stibbard as Assistant Principal next year. Anita takes over from Ken Mooney who is taking on the Principal position at Finley, thus illustrating our school as a great breeding ground for future executives in the Diocese.
4. School Overview

School Enrolment

Enrolment Policy

The accepted practice for enrolment at St. Michael's school is to give preference to children of Catholic parents who wish to enroll their child at the school.

This practice does not exclude the children of any non-catholic parents being enrolled at the school.

The accepted practice is to enroll children who turn five (5) years of age by June 1st.

Children whose birth date is between June 1st and July 31st may be enrolled after discussion with the Principal and counseling concerning the difficulties that may be experienced by such children. The possibility of the child being asked to repeat a grade should also be explained at this time. If the parents wish to enrol their child they are asked to sign a form indicating the steps that have been followed.

Children with special needs, e.g. deaf, partially sighted, or with other handicaps, may be enrolled, but only following careful discussion between parents, Principal and the Special Services consultant of the Diocese of Wagga. Enrolment will depend on the meeting of all aspects of the Diocesan Policy for enrolment of these children.

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 www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

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

Student Enrolment Profile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig*</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language background Other Than English

Student attendance and retention rates

Our student attendance rate for 2007 was 95% and our student cohort grew in numbers again this year.

Structure of Classes

This year, our staffing increased to allow us to have 5 full time classes (K, 1, 2, 3-4, & 5-6). Next year we will have similar staffing unless we have a sudden increase or decrease in student numbers over the break but our class structure will change to K/1, 2, 3, 4, 5/6.

Staff

Teacher Standards

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>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional Learning

Professional Learning in 2007 revolved around Literacy, Mathematics and Religion. The staff also completed modules in English run by the Diocese in order to fulfil the requirements for review in the year.

Literacy was another curriculum area which we addressed in a professional manner in 2007. We are lucky to have an LLTC facilitator on staff and we have utilised her skills with time given from the Office, to provide her time to work with all staff on an individual basis sharpening up literacy teaching and learning especially in the area of reading and comprehension. Staff have also participated in Measurement inservices and been a part of the implementation of the new Religion Syllabus.

Mrs Quinn attended a workshop on Jolly Phonics which is a language program for beginners.

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 97.7% was achieved in 2007 by staff at St Michael’s Primary School, Coolamon.

Parent Involvement and Participation

At St. Michael’s we encourage parent participation in all aspects of school life. Our parents are welcomed into the school at all times as we have an open door policy. Parents are invited to join us for celebrations, masses, plays, carnivals and any other event we have at school.

Yet again the support from the P&F in raising funds was sensational as thousands of dollars were raised for the School.
Parent involvement on excursions was tremendous yet again, whether it be local or travelling away. We had 170 students, staff and parents attend our whole school excursion to Ballarat this year which was sensational.

**Community Use of School Facilities**

Our School facilities are used by the Parish for special occasions with the outdoor facilities and with meetings for certain Parish groups when needed. St Vincent De Paul has used our grounds to provide a shop for a day on a monthly basis at the end of the year.

**Community Satisfaction**

The following information has been provided to the school. It has been a valuable gauge for determining the level of satisfaction our community has with St Michael’s School.

**Parents**
My child (son or daughter) is usually happy at St Michael's 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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33 families replied

**Students**
I am usually happy at St Michael's School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Absent 1%

**Staff**
I am usually happy at St Michael's School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 staff

**Financial Statement Summary**

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.
The total income and expense of the school, that is included in the above, is shown below.

**About This Report**
This report format is in its fifth year at our School. The main focus behind the report is to reflect on the school year, keep the community informed of the direction the school is taking and to highlight achievements within the school community. I would like to thank everyone within the school community for your support of St. Michael’s School as we progress forward.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Jenkins
(Principal)