Annual Report

St Brendan’s Primary School, Ganmain

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Introduction
This report is a summary of the 2008 School year at St Brendan's Primary School.

St Brendan’s Primary School is situated in a small rural community. Our school is part of the St Brendan’s Parish. It is a faith filled community committed to the development of the whole person that is the academic, spiritual, social and physical development.

1. The School
The School
St Brendan’s Primary School is a Catholic systemic school administered and supported by the Catholic Schools Office in the Wagga Wagga Diocese.

Our school is a very important part of the Ganmain community and provides a service to many organisations such as Senior Citizens, Red Cross, CWA and St Vincent de Paul.

Catholic Identity
St Brendan’s does not exist to be different but to make a difference and to present a vision of reality that has its origins in the gospel of Jesus. This year we have endeavoured to live our school vision statement, that we “are a faith filled community, enlivened by Christ and committed to the Church” through our daily practise and prayer.

This year we have fully implemented the Diocesan Syllabus “We Belong to the Lord” into our daily teaching and have found this very rewarding for both staff and students.

This year the children have participated in the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Each of these occasions was a very nice ceremony and celebrated by family and other parish members.

Throughout the year we have celebrated many masses with the children doing the readings, singing and serving on the altar. The staff and students have also celebrated paraliturgies for Lent/Easter and Advent/Christmas seasons.

At St Brendan’s we held several “Mission Days” to raise money for those who are less fortunate than ourselves. The children have had input into the organisation and proceedings of these days and gotten a lot of enjoyment out of raising money for others.

A Message from key School Bodies
School Council Report
The main focus of our School Council this year has been the refurbishment of the school library. This entailed painting, new shelving and display board. In the short term we plan to replace the heater in the library and install a new room divider which will complete the refurbishment.

This year we were able to complete our paving as part of a Commonwealth grant from the Investing In Our Schools project.

Ongoing projects for next year will include installing a new garden shed and replacing concrete steps around the school.

We look forward to the financial support of the Parish in the future to assist us to complete these projects.

Finally, I’d like to thank my fellow Council members for their support and encouragement.

Bede Guthrie. (Chairman)

P&F Report
This year has seen a tremendous effort by our Parents and Friends Association to raise significant funds to support our school. The Parents and Friends Association raises most of it money through catering for functions held within the township of Ganmain, which allowed us to donate $12 000 towards the running costs of the school.

The Parents and Friends Association also contributed $1 200 towards the cost of refurbishments in the library and subsidised the cost of the students participating in a three day excursion to Ballarat.

The families of St Brendan’s are very generous with the time and effort they put in to support our school and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all very much for their continuous support.
2. Information on Key School Programs

School Determined Improvement Targets
This year we have undertaken professional learning in the areas of writing, mathematics and PD/Health.

The whole staff has participated in the First Steps Writing component and are now implementing this in their classrooms. This implementation process will continue over the next two years.

We used the Diocesan Maths Grant to undertake a project called “Bringing Maths to Life” which was targeted at improving the attitudes of the students towards learning in the maths area and in turn also the academic achievements. We held a parent information evening to assist parents with ways to help their children with maths at home. This project was very successful and will continue to flow through our planning for next year.

We have also undertaken a project to revamp our library facilities. We have repainted the room, replaced shelving, culled out of date resources and purchased many new ones. The library is a central part of our school and it is nice to have it very well presented. The students have shown a rejuvenated interest in borrowing books, reading and research.

We have worked closely with Fr Peter Krigovsky this year to build on the partnership between the Parish and the School. This is an important area of development for the school and will continue to be the case in the future.

Programs to Support Students
Current Curriculum Initiatives
This year St Brendan’s has been through the Registration Process which was a very positive experience. It motivated us to revamp and reorganise the policies and procedures used in our school and to assess the state of our resources used to support our teaching and learning.

We also completed Curriculum Reviews on the Key Learning Areas of English, Science and HSIE. Next year we will complete the review cycle with reviews in Religious Education and PD/Health/PE.

In Term Four this year we introduced the Program Achieve program. For the primary aged children this program is better known as the “You Can Do It” program. It is based on five key foundations of ‘Confidence’, ‘Organisation’, ‘Persistence’, ‘Getting Along’ and ‘Resilience’. The positive development of these foundations will allow each person to be the best they can be. This program will be connected into our Personal Development and Health Key Learning Area as we prepare for review in 2009.

Other Learning Support Initiatives
This year we received a very generous donation of six laptops from the State Rail Authority. The memory in these laptops was upgraded and Windows 2007 was installed. They were then added to our school network giving the school a total of 13 laptops all operating on Windows 2007 – a ratio of 2:1. This has allowed the teachers to utilise technology more readily and to build it into our daily learning. The skills of the students have improved immensely because of this more frequent use.

Equity Program Initiatives
This year we used our IESIP funding to assist our indigenous students in the key learning area of mathematics. Mrs. Ros Guthrie worked with a small group of children in stage two on the number strand to strengthen skills in this area and the results where very pleasing.

The whole school was involved in a concentrated study of Aboriginal cultures. We studied indigenous art work, dreaming stories and the art of story telling, food/cooking and the traditional way of life of the indigenous people of Australia. We also attended a Cultural Day held at the Ganmain Public where the children worked with Aboriginal Elders learning more about these focus area.

The students in the primary section of the school completed a study on Mexico as part of the CWA Country of Study project. They learnt about many of the cultural aspect of Mexico along with modern day facts about this interesting country.
Student Support Programs
As mentioned earlier we have undertaken Professional Learning on the You Can Do It program to assist students to develop skills to allow them to be the most successful person they can be. This will be ongoing in 2009 and beyond.

In Term Four we had a visit from the Life Education Van. This reinforced the teaching and learning which has happened throughout the year in relation to drug education and road safety.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility
This year we have taken a whole school approach to developing respectful students. We have focused on anti bullying behaviour and developing positive relationships with other students. This will develop further in 2009 inline with the You Can Do It Program.

Our school has also been involved in a great deal of service to the community this year. We have visited the elderly patients at Allawah Old Peoples Home in Coolamon to perform several items for them and to spend time talking with them. We have entertained the Senior Citizens of Ganmain and surrounding districts on Senior Citizens Day. We have performed for at the Red Cross Convention held in Ganmain earlier this year. The students have enjoyed this and grown from these experiences.

Student Performance
Statewide Tests and Examinations
The table below indicates the percentage of students who have achieved national literacy and numeracy benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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St Brendan’s Primary 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.

Comparison to Statewide Results
Each student in Year 3 represents 33% and thus the percentages compared to the state maybe somewhat misleading. The results of the three St Brendan’s students in Year 3 were quite good in comparison to the state, with a higher percentage in Band 6 for Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and a higher percentage in Band 5 for Reading, Writing, Overall literacy and Number Patterns and Algebra. In Band 4 we had a significantly higher percentage in Numeracy and Measurement than the State but less in the other sections. We had one student fall into the Band 2 for Number, Patterns & Algebra which gave a higher percentage reading than the state in this area. We had no students in other Band 2 areas or any in Band 1 in Year Three.

In Year 5 we had five students sit the test giving each student a 20% weighting. Overall we had most students sitting in the Band 6 and band 7 area with higher than State percentages for these two bands. We had no students achieve a Band 8 and one student scored several Band 4’s and one Band 3 in Writing, which put us above the state average in these areas.

Basic Skills Trends
With such a small cohort of students participating in the NAPLAN Assessment tasks (three Year 3 and five Year 5 students) the trend data is unreliable. It is difficult to actually see trends as true and correct; therefore the school has looked at individual students and pinpointed areas of need for the students who have not performed well.

3. School Overview

School Policies

Discipline Policy
St Brendan’s Discipline Policy aims to provide a safe, caring and supportive learning and teaching environment. This policy enables students to demonstrate responsible behaviour and a healthy self esteem. It assists the students to show respect and
consideration for the feelings, rights and property of others as well as themselves.

**Student Welfare Policy**  
The student’s welfare is of paramount importance to the community of St Brendan’s. Through our Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policies we are able to effectively live out our Vision and Mission of being a ‘faith filled community enlivened by Christ and committed to the Church’ and provide a safe environment which will allow for continued development of the whole person.

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’s teaching and learning can be organised so that most problems are prevented and those that do occur are dealt with constructively.

The 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 all school policies are kept in the front office and parents are welcome to view them.

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established a Complaints Handling Policy, Pastoral Care and Discipline Policies, Professional Requirements for Accreditation of Teacher’s of Religious Education and an Enrolment Policy. These policies along with many others can all be found on the Catholic Schools website at [http://web.csoww.catholic.edu.au/](http://web.csoww.catholic.edu.au/).

**Complaints and Grievances**  

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 constructive manner.

Parents/students with a complaint are encouraged in the first instance to contact their classroom teacher. If the need then arises contact with the Principal should be made. The Catholic School Office is contactable if the complaint is not dealt with to your satisfaction.

**Enrolment Policy**  
St Brendan’s has adopted the Diocesan policy on enrolment which supports our beliefs on student welfare.

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**Student Enrolment Profile:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig’</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
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*Language background Other Than English

**Structure of Classes**

This year our staffing allocation allowed us to have two class groups. The Infants class consisted of 12 students in K, 1, 2. The Primary class also consisted of 12 students from Years 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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Professional Learning
Our teaching staff has been fortunate to have had the opportunity to join with Henschke Primary School to undertake the Professional Learning in First Steps Writing this year. The implementation will require further development and will continue over the next few years.

Mrs. Gunning and Mrs. Guthrie attended the Professional Development on Alignment provided through the Diocesan Religious Education Team. It was fantastic for both full time staff members to attend as this will impact on the assessment and further development of units of work in all KLA's. This Professional Learning will now be presented to the whole staff in 2009 through the use of one Professional Development day and several staff meetings throughout the year.

All staff members took advantage of the opportunity to work with Anita Chin in conjunction with our Maths project “Bringing Maths to Life”. These workshops offered strategies and ideas to use in the classroom to support learning and make learning interesting and engaging.

Mrs Julie Guthrie also attended the Early Literacy Days offered this year by the CSO.

Mrs Gunning attended a Principal's conference on Leadership held in Fremantle. This has been advantageous in her new role as Principal.

Other Professional Learning included mandatory courses in Child Protection, Harassment in the Workplace and CPR, as well as Instruction on administering and analysing SENA tests and analysing NAPLAN results.

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 Brendan's Primary School.

The whole school was surveyed as part of our Annual Report. The following results were indicated in the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
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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 98.77% was achieved in 2008 by staff at St Brendan's Primary School.

Financial Statement Summary

![Financial Statement Diagram]
About This Report

This report has been compiled by the staff of St Brendan’s Primary School in conjunction with the school community. It is a reflection on the school year of 2008. It also highlights the achievements of the school and keeps the community informed of the progress made by the school and direction set for the near future.

Yours in Christ,
Sandra Gunning
(Acting Principal)