2008

Annual Report

St Joseph’s Primary School, Wagga Wagga

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Introduction

St. Joseph’s Primary is a single stream, Kindergarten to Year 6 Catholic school located in central Wagga Wagga.

Our School motto is “All Things for God”. At St. Joseph’s we strive to provide our students and families with a Christ centred, nurturing, happy environment that encourages an ongoing love of learning.

This report is an indication of our achievements during 2008 and focus for 2009 and beyond.

A Tragic Beginning to 2008

On the morning of Sunday January 27th this year an act of arson led to a vast majority of the school being destroyed.

In the ensuing week the school was relocated across the road to the Saint Michaels Parish Centre Site.

All classrooms are accommodated on the site and at the end of Term One the library was located in another room on site and the Offices and Admin area relocated into the adjoining house.

All but the Kinder and Year 4 classrooms are small and some of the donated second hand furniture was usable but not ideal. New furniture has been purchased for Years 4, 5 and 6. Kindergarten and Year 1 are awaiting delivery of their new furniture, Year 2 and 3 furniture was undamaged. While space is at a premium it was seen as more valuable and supportive if we were all located on the one site together.

The process of replacing classroom resources has been ongoing and is complete.

Computer infrastructure is complete and functioning – all classes have cabled access to server and internet with wireless access also available. All damaged computers have been replaced with new machines with Vista as the operating system.

All compliance checks – O H & S etc have been undertaken.

The school playground and external toilets were undamaged and are used at recess and lunch times as well as before and after school.

The site has been cleared with some demolition required and plans have been submitted to Council.

The support from parents and the community has been inspiring. The fact that we were able to begin our school year just on a week after such a devastating fire is testament to the energy and commitment of the Saint Joseph’s School Community.

A working bee held the Sunday before reopening saw around 200 parents, friends and students carrying bits and pieces across the road, arranging furniture, fixing doors, shelves, attaching boards and display lines… That day highlighted who we are as a community.

The community has continued to move forward and we look to 2009 as a year of rebuilding.

A Message from key School Bodies

School Council

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. This year the School Council was responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the funds from the Investing in Our Schools Programme- the second element. The funds were used to purchase 12 laptops and 2 secure laptop trolleys, digital video and stills cameras, Ipods and additional benches for student use during lunch and lessons.

Council members continue to take responsibility for portfolios such as maintenance, grounds etc in order to better utilise talents and share the workload.

The Council provided vital assistance and advice in the ongoing rebuilding project. Members from Council acted as parent representatives on the committee working with the architect. They have also been an important vehicle for information and fielding questions. They will continue to play a vital role during the reconstruction process in 2009.
1. The School

The School

Our Vision and Mission
St. Joseph’s is a Catholic Parish Primary School
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.
It is a happy safe environment for all.

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Parent involvement and Parents and Friends Association

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. Following the fire at the very beginning of the year, parent involvement and support has been even more welcomed and the response has been even more generous! Parents are involved in many aspects of school life. 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. Even though there has been no physical tuckshop due to the fire, the P&F organised alternative lunches for 3 days to support working parents in particular. Parent volunteers were still needed. 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. A group formed from the P&F has catered for parish and Diocesan and Catholic Schools Office events raising funds for the school. A dinner following the Deanery Mass only one week after school commenced at Saint Joseph’s was catered by the group! 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 reflects our school motto, “Deo Omnia”, All Things for God.
2. Information on Key School Programs

School Determined Improvement Targets
A major focus this year has been preparation for School Registration in Term 3. This began with an audit of current documentation to identify areas for development. The executive team, with strong support from our deanery education officer and consultant, worked with staff in the audit process and working with the documentation, planning and programming.
A report following the registration monitoring provided commendations, recommendations and requirements. A timeline has been developed to allow for goals to be set and requirements achieved with the opportunity for all staff to be involved.

2009 will see continued follow up work following the school registration.

In terms of curriculum, Religion and Science and Technology will be prepared for curriculum review.
A focus for professional development will be to work with Bloom's Taxonomy and link this to the development of assessment tasks with an A to E grading. This will initially be undertaken with the Religious Education Syllabus.

2009 should also be an exciting year in the area of Information, Communication and Learning Technology (ICLT) with multimedia, working with Macintosh computers and iPods forming part of our professional development plan initially in years 3 to 6.

During semester 2 of 2009, we will engage with professional development with the First Steps Writing program.
The program 'Making Jesus Real' will be introduced in Year 6 and will support both the Religious Education and the Personal Development programs.

Programs to Support Students
Current Curriculum Initiatives
The school English Policy successfully underwent a curriculum review early in term 4.
A review and development of scope and sequence and assessment plans in most Key Learning Areas was undertaken and will continue in 2009.

In Mathematics, the 'Working Mathematically' strand was a focus for professional analysis and development. A successful application for a grant from the Catholic Schools Office assisted us in our project.
The purpose of the project was to identify and promote effective school and classroom practices to enhance Numeracy learning and teaching.
The staff worked to develop consistency across the school in the use of mathematical language in students and teachers and aimed to strengthen teaching approaches to the strand of working mathematically across the school. To better integrate the working mathematically strand into the content of the other five strands of the Mathematics syllabus. The focus was to do this in a consistent K-6 approach and finally to promote and enhance professional dialogue. This was obvious in the sharing of approaches in staff meetings and conversations. Resources were purchased to assist teachers to achieve this.

Other Learning Support Initiatives
Staffing for 2008 allowed us to offer Reading Recovery. This program targets Year 1 students who, after 12 months of strong teaching, are having struggles with using and consolidating reading and writing strategies.
The fire meant that classroom computers were replaced providing new machines in most classrooms. The other machines are less than 12 months old. Through donations we were able to purchase 4 MacBooks. The Investing in Our Schools Program allowed us to purchase 12 laptops and 2 secure trolleys which, along with 6 second hand laptops donated by State Rail, has given us a portable computer lab. The Investing in Our Schools Program also allowed us to purchase a new digital video camera, 2 digital stills cameras, 2 iPod Nannos and a new portable PA system.

Equity Program Initiatives
Even though there are currently no identified indigenous students, elders have been invited to important school functions to welcome us to Wiradjuri country. Classroom programs, particularly in Religious Education and HSIE incorporate and develop and increase our children's understanding, knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and respect and acceptance of difference.
**Student Support Programs**

Individual Education Programs are developed collaboratively with classroom teachers, special needs assistant and the guidance of our Diocesan Learning Support Education Officer for students with disabilities. These programs are put into place in the classroom as well as in withdrawal situations to support the student’s learning. The ‘Skills For Life Program’, Year 4, were aimed at assisting children in developing relationships, self worth and strategies to deal with conflict.

A successful application through the National School Chaplaincy Program meant that we were able to employ someone for 2 days per week dedicated to pastoral care work with students, families and staff. The work and role of our Pastoral Care Worker is summarised below:

**Services/Programs**
- Support to executive staff when assessing student crises
- Support to teachers and staff who experience personal or professional difficulties
- Connect the school with outside services (e.g. counselling and welfare agencies)
- “Things are Changing” Parent Information Nights (virtue-based sex education)
- Peer mediation/crisis intervention
- Conferencing work between students and with parents
- Student personal growth and development
- Interpersonal relationship and confidence building
- Year 6 transition
- Seasons for Growth (grief and loss program)

**Mode**
- Classroom visitation
- Small groups
- One-to-one personal visits
- Phone
- Regular consultations with parish priests, administration, faculty, and parents when needed
- Referral to priests and Centacare staff
- Debriefing opportunities for teachers and staff

**Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

The first item at all staff meetings is student welfare which gives teachers the opportunity to make staff aware of children who may be having difficulty with their own behaviour or how others may be treating them as well as sharing strategies that are proving successful. A pictorial version of our School Vision Statement was commissioned, in two different forms, and is prominently displayed around the school.

**Student Performance**

**Statewide Tests and Examinations**

The table below indicates the percentage of students who have achieved national minimum standards in literacy and numeracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Punctuation and Grammar</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Punctuation and Grammar</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saint Joseph's School has participated in BST Literacy and Numeracy since 1998 and in BST Writing since 2001. The school monitors Trend Data each year and uses that information to inform its learning and teaching practices for the upcoming year.

Year 3 NAPLAN results for 2008 places them above the State and Diocesan average in overall literacy and slightly below both in numeracy. For Year 5 the overall literacy is slightly below State and Diocesan averages and the numeracy is above.

The trend data for Year 3 indicates a continuing improvement in reading but a greater teaching focus required in writing. The Year 5 trend indicates a greater focus on reading is required and that higher levels in numeracy are being maintained.
3. School Overview

School Policies
Policies are available at the school. School policies are underpinned by the policies and procedures of Catholic Schools Office, Wagga Wagga.

Student Welfare
At Saint Joseph’s we aim to provide a Catholic education for young people to prepare them for the challenges of being future citizens in our society. As such our Discipline Policy is written with the welfare of the child as the highest priority. Based on the premise that all children are innately good our policy aims to ensure that they are treated in a fair and Christian manner. Our policy and attitude promotes self responsibility and care for each other. We are constantly revisiting our Discipline Policy so that it will better reflect the good work that is currently happening in our school.

Open communication is strongly promoted so that any issues or grievances are worked through in a collaborative manner. This may be dealt with on a classroom level with the teacher and parents or on a more formal level with either the Assistant Principal or Principal.

The Saint Joseph’s Discipline / Pastoral care Policy and Serious Offences Policy can be accessed at the school Office.

‘Respect Week’ also gave us an opportunity to highlight the importance of respecting self and others. The theme this year was ‘Plant respect and watch it grow’. The students made hands with respect messages on them and they were staked in one of the garden beds.

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 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 then the Catholic Schools Office may be appropriate.

Enrolment Policy
The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established an Enrolments Policy which is implemented by all schools in the Diocese. Where numbers applying for enrolment exceed places available the order of preference is as follows: in Parish Catholic siblings, in Parish Catholics, out of Parish Catholics, non-Catholic siblings, in Parish non-Catholics and out of Parish non-Catholics.

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>101</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language background Other Than English

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>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Professional Learning
Some staff members are undertaking a Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies. All staff undertook the Senior First Aid and Resuscitation courses. We also engaged in Child Protection and Worker’s Compensation compliance inservices. Year 3 and 5 teachers attended a day focusing on NAPLAN results which took them through a process of how to access a variety of information from the results, what information for teaching can be gained and how to present this information to staff giving a K-6 approach and responsibility. One staff member from each stage went to the Musica Viva workshop and took responsibility for presenting the program to students in their stage.

Teachers and our teacher aide attended workshops related to working with autism and catering for autistic student needs.
The Year 6 teacher attended an introduction to the program 'Making Jesus Real' which will be introduced in 2009.

Our school secretary completed her Certificate IV in Frontline Management and Certificate 1 in Information Technology and has commenced further studies in business management.

**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 (insert school name here).

**Parents**
My child (son or daughter) is usually happy at Saint Joseph's Primary School, Wagga Wagga.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Students**
I am usually happy at Saint Joseph's Primary School, Wagga Wagga.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staff**
I am usually happy at Saint Joseph’s Primary School, Wagga Wagga.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</table>

**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 95.42% was achieved in 2008 by staff at Saint Joseph’s Wagga Wagga.

**Financial Statement Summary**