Annual Report
St Mary’s Primary School, Corowa

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Introduction
St Mary’s Primary School is a co-educational K-6 school serving the needs of the Catholic community of Corowa in providing a Catholic education for its students.

St Mary’s is very much a parish school. The school enjoys strong support from Fr Paul Hart P.P., the Sisters and parishioners. Many of the parishioners attended St Mary’s School themselves and there are a number of families who have maintained a direct link with the school over several generations.

St Mary’s is located close to the parish church and is on a single campus. The old convent building serves as the administration and staff area as well as housing one of the classrooms. Six other classrooms are located in the main school two-storey complex with a portable classroom accommodating another class and the music room. The Monsignor Lane Centre, a modern multi-purpose building, currently houses the School Library with a Computer Lab annexe.

St Mary’s draws from Corowa and surrounds including Howlong, Rutherglen and Wahgunyah. The current school enrolment is 181, from Kindergarten to Year 6 in seven classes.

1. The School

VISION STATEMENT
We believe St Mary’s Primary School is a community in which:

❖ Jesus is our prime focus enabling us to be active members of a faith-filled community.

❖ Children are prepared in a collaborative, cooperative and supportive environment, for the changing world, through the promotion of a comprehensive quality curriculum.

❖ The dignity of each person is upheld and respected, and where the ideas of compassion and justice are allowed to flourish.

❖ Parents, parish and teachers work towards total development of the child in a safe, cooperative and collaborative learning community.

MISSION STATEMENT
St Mary’s Primary School is committed to being:

A Community of Faith
Jesus is our prime focus enabling us to be active members of a faith-filled community, witnessed by:

❖ Implementation of a spiritually rich, well informed, relative and flexible Religious Education curriculum.

❖ Class Masses

❖ School Masses

❖ Anointing Masses

❖ Paraliturgies

❖ Classroom Prayer

❖ Ecumenical Services

❖ Sacramental Preparation

A Community of Learning
Children are prepared in a collaborative, cooperative and supportive environment, for the changing world, through the promotion of a comprehensive quality curriculum, witnessed by:

❖ Investing in independent thinking, and the development and application of targeted skills

❖ Provision of quality learning experiences in Key Learning Areas:
  Religious Education
  English
  Mathematics
  Science and Technology
  Human Society and Its Environment
  Creative and Practical Arts
  Personal Development, PE and Health
Other Cross Curriculum Areas
Computers and related technology
Cultural Performances
Excursions/Outdoor Education
Sport
Perceptual Motor Programme
Gymnastics Program

A Community of Care
The dignity of each person is upheld and respected, and where the ideas of compassion and justice are allowed to flourish, witnessed by:

● A Positive Pastoral Care programme
● The Peer Support programme
● ‘New Beginnings’ – Kinder Transition Program
● Buddy Program

A Community of Service
Parents, parish and teachers work towards total development of the child in a safe, cooperative and collaborative learning community, witnessed by:

● A commitment to the community by servicing a wide range of community based projects, for example:
  - Anzac Day March and Ceremony
  - Remembrance Day Ceremony
  - Visits to Karinya House
  - Project Compassion and support of Missions
  - Caring for our school and local environment

● Specifically encouraging parental involvement in school life including:
  - Active participation in Key Learning Areas
  - Improving our school environment
  - Enhancing our outdoor education program
  - Contributing to the liturgical and pastoral life of our school

daily in classrooms, with children learning about their Catholic faith and covering the strands of God, Jesus, Church, Sacraments, Scripture, Christian Life and Prayer.

In 2008 the school conducted a variety of liturgical celebrations. Each class prepared their Class Mass in Terms 1, 2, 3 and 4. Mass was celebrated to mark the beginning and end of the School Year, and the school participated in Masses at various times throughout the year to mark significant feasts and observances.

Senior children attended Parish Anointing Masses during the year. Children often assisted in the preparation of Masses and were involved in Liturgy of The Word, altar service and as choristers. During Holy Week all school children participated in the Holy Week Liturgy which celebrates the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. Staff and children are involved in the preparation of school and class liturgies.

The Sacramental Program included regular liturgical celebrations in students’ homes as well as in St Mary’s Parish Church, with each program culminating in the celebration of the particular sacrament (Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation).

Children raised money for Catholic Missions throughout the year, through Project Compassion during Lent and out of uniform days. Money raised assisted the poor in Australia and abroad.

Children made visits to Karinya House, the local nursing and retirement home, to meet with and entertain the elderly residents.

In 2008 the ‘Seasons for Growth’ Program was established at St Mary’s. This program assists children who have experienced grief and loss, through group discussions and regular meetings with the program co-ordinator (the school REC).

A Message from key School Bodies

St Mary’s School Council Chairperson’s Report 2008
School Council operates as an advisory group to the principal to discuss issues surrounding the efficient running of the school. This year's members were:

- Phil Taylor (School Principal)
- Fr Paul Hart (Parish Priest)
- Louise Forrest (Chairperson)
- Paul Schnelle (Treasurer)
- Shelley Chandler (Secretary)
- Teacher representative (different member each term)

This report covers the main activities conducted in 2008 by St Mary's School Council with the support of the school's P&F Association.

During the first half of the year the funds allocated by the Federal Government through the 'Investing in Our Schools' (IOSP) program were used to complete the landscaping around the school, provide seating and tables for the children to eat lunch, paint the stairwells, provide new grandstand seating, update the sound system and public address system, improve the computer facilities and upgrade the guttering.

The Council received the funds from the Federal Government Community Water Grant earlier this year and work has been in progress during the year utilizing this money. This has included: putting in two new tanks, pumps and pipes to collect rainwater and then distribute to the toilets and irrigation system; upgrading the toilets, troughs and taps so that they are more water efficient; installing an automatic underground irrigation system which will utilize the rainwater to irrigate the oval. The installation of these new systems will help to make St Mary's School a more environmentally friendly and water conscience facility.

The Council has also been involved in ongoing maintenance around the school buildings and grounds.

Another very successful fete was held again this year which raised over $12,000. Thank you to all in the school and wider community who have helped on the day and leading up to the day, along with all of those who generously donated goods and services. The proceeds from the fete will benefit the children of St Mary's in the coming years.

It is with regret that we say farewell to Phil Taylor at the end of this year. Phil is moving to Cardiff in Newcastle to take an executive position at St Kevin's Primary School. Phil has been Principal at St Mary's for the last four years and during this time has co-ordinated many positive improvements and changes to the school along with running a well organized, productive and happy school environment. We wish Phil well with his move to St Kevin's Primary School.

We look forward to working with Jan Lowden as Acting Principal and Joanne Schmidt as Acting Assistant Principal in 2009.

**Louise Forrest**  
Chairperson St Mary's School Council 2008

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**P & F Association**

The St Mary's School of Corowa have a wonderful P&F group that acts as a fundraising and social body within the school community. Thanks go to the officer bearers in the P&F, especially the secretary (Lynda Green) and treasurer (Peter Hughes).

In 2008 we had some successful fund raising efforts. A very successful fete, on Sunday 2nd November, raised over $12,000. In addition to the fete the other successful fundraisers were the Easter raffle and SPC. All our fundraising efforts are wonderfully supported by the School, Church and extended community of Corowa.

We have put the money raised to good use during the year, with the purchases of security fence (along John and Alice St 4.8m high by 35 m long); a laptop and data projector for the library; readers and maths equipment.

Other avenues of fund raising are the School canteen which is all voluntary run and staffed. Thanks to Casandra Hughes for the wonderful role that she undertakes. All the children of the school appreciate the efforts of parents who work on the tuckshop. The special days during the year were very well received, especially the breakfasts.
All in all a successful year, that we hope to again improve upon next year. That improvement will hopefully come by way of more family involvement and participation throughout the whole year.

Meredith Christy
St. Mary's P&F President

2. Information on Key School Programs

School Determined Improvement Targets
The School Renewal Framework Targets for 2009 include:

- Further development of the Learning Agenda: shared vision and agreed practices for teaching and learning - engaging all children in the thinking / learning classroom, using the professional development learnings from inservices with Ralph Pirozzo and others.
- Whole-school implementation of the First Steps Writing Program to enhance the teaching and learning of writing skills within the English curriculum. Teachers were inserviced during 2008.
- Use of the underground automated irrigation system using harvested tank water and use of recently installed water efficient systems in the school.
- Curriculum Review in the area of Human Society and Its Environment and Religious Education.
- Student Welfare Policy Review to improve practices and communication.

School beautification and improvement of facilities continue to be high priorities and the school's parent representative bodies, the P&F Association and School Council, are involved in the planning and development of ongoing maintenance and special projects.

Programs to Support Students
Current Curriculum Initiatives
The teaching and learning process is a high priority for staff. In 2008 teachers participated in two days of professional learning with Jan Lowden, Assistant Principal and First Steps Writing Facilitator, on the First Steps Writing Program which aims to further develop children's writing skills and enhance teachers' skills and classroom practice. The Program will be implemented from Kindergarten to Year 6 from 2009.

In 2008 the school utilized funding from the Catholic Schools Office - Wagga Wagga for the Numeracy Project. This project identified and promoted effective school and classroom practices to enhance Numeracy learning and teaching, through pre and post assessment, targeted programs for individuals, resource acquisition and professional learning. The Numeracy Project will continue in 2009.

Other Learning Support Initiatives
The school's learning support initiatives include:
- Current technology, including the use of DVDs, scanners, photocopiers, digital cameras, laptops, the interactive whiteboard and use of internet and intranet for learning.
- In 2008 an additional interactive whiteboard was installed in the Year 3 classroom. The children and teacher use the whiteboard daily for lessons across all Key Learning Areas.
- Reading Recovery Program, to support reading skill development for children 'at risk' in the early primary years.
- Peer Support Program, assisting self-esteem, self awareness, communication skills and group co-operation.
- PMP (Perceptual Motor Program), to develop co-ordination and motor skills of the infants children.
- Gymnastics Program from Kindergarten to Year 6, to develop children's co-ordination, flexibility and balance.
- S.P.O.T. Program, to teach infants children about safety and correct care and handling of dogs and cats.
- Students in all classes experienced music lessons with the Principal and a variety of activities in visual arts, dance and drama with their class teachers.
- St. Mary's School was involved in numerous sports in 2008. Our major events were swimming, AFL football, netball, cross country and athletics. Carnivals were held for cross country, swimming and athletics with points awarded to all children who participated. Overall team winners were also acknowledged as well as age champions and children were selected for deanery carnivals.
- Sporting trials were held to select children for deanery and diocesan events.
such as netball, cricket, Aussie Rules, hockey and tennis. Students who displayed excellence in a sport or represented the diocese in the MacKillop team for 2007 were acknowledged at our school's final assembly.

- Year 4, 5 and 6 boys played AFL in the Paul Kelly Cup (Southern Division) against other schools in the region.

Senior girls and boys competed against other diocesan schools in the Frank Kelly Shield (AFL and Netball) at Finley.

Girls in Years 4, 5 and 6 participated in the Jackie Murphy Netball Challenge.

Equity Program Initiatives

- Aboriginal Education, supporting indigenous students' access to the curriculum through provision of a teacher assistant and individual education plans
- Centacare, supporting students and parents through provision of guidance and counselling services
- Multicultural Education, supporting Catholic principles of awareness, respect and understanding of people from different backgrounds and cultures

Student Support Programs

- Students with disabilities are supported through special education programmes tailored to their individual needs and the provision of a teacher assistant. Indigenous students are supported in their learning in a similar way
- The Drug Education Program is supported by ‘Life Education’ sessions for all children
- The Values Education Program promotes the ‘Values for Australian Schooling’ initiative of the Federal Government and is reinforced through the school’s Vision and Mission Statements in daily practice
- ‘Teachable Moments’ – Catholic Personal Development / Sexuality Program. Sessions for students and parents
- Student Representative Council, which forms part of the student leadership team in the school
- Peer Support Program, assisting self-esteem, self awareness, communication skills and group co-operation
- ‘Buddy Program’ - for senior students to assist the new Kindergarten children with their transition to school. This begins in Term 4 during the ‘New Beginnings’ sessions for new Kindergarten children and continues in the new school year
- ‘Seasons For Growth’ Program, which assists children who have experienced grief and loss, through group discussions and regular meetings with the program co-ordinator (the school REC)
- ‘New Beginnings’ Program, initiated in 2008, which is a transition to school program for children enrolling in Kindergarten the following year. The children visit the Kindergarten classroom over several weeks to become familiar with school life and personnel.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

- Drug Education Program supported by ‘Life Education’ sessions for all children
- Values Education Program, including a weekly classroom focus on one of the Values (‘Values for Australian Schools’) and highlighting the important aspects of the Value in the weekly newsletter for parental information
- ‘Teachable Moments’ – Catholic Personal Development / Sexuality Program. Sessions for students and parents
- Student Representative Council, which forms part of the student leadership team in the school
- Peer Support Program, assisting self-esteem, self awareness, communication skills and group co-operation
- ‘Buddy Program’ – for senior students to assist the new Kindergarten children with their transition to school. This begins in Term 4 during the ‘New Beginnings’ sessions for new Kindergarten children and continues in the new school year
- Children raised money for Catholic Missions throughout the year, through Project Compassion during Lent and out of uniform days. Money raised assisted the poor in Australia and abroad.
- Children made visits to Karinya House, the local nursing and retirement home, to meet with and entertain the elderly residents.
### 3. School Overview

#### School Policies

**Discipline Policy**

The Catholic ethos of the school means that respect for and responsibility of all people is a core value in all dealings with all people and is reflected in the school policies.

Students are helped to develop respect and responsibility through the implementation of the Student Welfare and Discipline Policies.

In framing the Discipline Policy, St Mary's Primary School is basing the decisions on the beliefs that:

- Jesus is our prime focus enabling us to be active members of a faith-filled community.
- Children are prepared in a collaborative, cooperative and supportive environment, for the changing world, through the promotion of a comprehensive quality curriculum.
- The dignity of each person is upheld and respected, and where the ideas of compassion and justice are allowed to flourish.
- Parents, parish and teachers work towards total development of the child in a safe, cooperative and collaborative learning community.

No changes to this policy occurred in 2008. The full text of this policy can be accessed using the following link:


**Complaints and Grievances**

The school has policies for dealing with complaints and grievances, in accordance with the Catholic Schools Office - Wagga Wagga, which has established a Complaints Handling Policy implemented by all schools in the Diocese.

The full text of this policy can be accessed using the following link:

[www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au)

**Enrolment Policy**

The school also has an enrolment policy in line with that of the Catholic Schools Office - Wagga Wagga.
The link to the school’s Enrolment Policy is: http://web.smcoww.catholic.edu.au/

The full text of the CSO policy can be accessed using the following link: www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

Student Enrolment Profile:

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<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>98</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>181</td>
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* Language background Other Than English

Structure of Classes

In 2008 there were 7 class groupings: Kindergarten, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 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>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Professional Learning

2008 staff professional learning included:
- Child Protection
- Duty of Care
- CPR / First Aid
- Workplace Relations
- Teaching and Learning: First Steps Writing Program – 2 day Inservice

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 Mary’s Primary School, Corowa.

Parents

My child is usually happy at St Mary’s Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Students

I am usually happy at St Mary’s Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</table>

Staff

I am usually happy at St Mary’s Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</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 97.70% was achieved in 2008 by staff at St Mary’s Primary School.
Financial Statement Summary

- Income:
  - School Fees: 2.4%
  - Other Fee Income: 14.7%
  - State Government Recurrent Grants: 7.1%
  - Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grants: 10.8%
  - Capital Income: 55.6%

- Expenses:
  - Capital Expenditure: 3.6%
  - Non-Salary Expenses: 74.2%
  - Non-Salary Expenses: 21.1%

About This Report
This report was written with input from the staff, Parents and Friends Association and School Council.