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Introduction
St Mary's is a single stream Catholic school in Griffith in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. With a current student population of 142, St Mary's is small enough to provide a caring, family atmosphere and large enough to provide a diverse range of opportunities. Small class sizes are a feature of our school, with most classes currently ranging from 17 to 20 students. Students travel from all towns and villages in the local area to attend the school.

1. The School

St Mary's School
St Mary's boasts a fine history of academic excellence. The welcoming and dedicated staff set high expectations for student learning. Our school motto is “Do Your Best” and we strive for every student to reach their potential. As a matter of justice it is our goal to ensure that children who need additional help are fully supported in their learning.

We believe that children learn best when they feel safe and happy. Students at St Mary's feel a sense of belonging and are engaged and challenged in a positive environment.

When students graduate from St Mary's we aim for them to have become confident, thinking, caring, global citizens who act with wisdom and integrity, a strong sense of social responsibility, and who can respond with intelligence to the opportunities that their future may bring. It is our great privilege to walk beside them for part of their learning journey.

Catholic Identity

Religious Education:
Religious Education is something that is ‘alive and well’ and at the very core of our Catholic identity at St Mary's School, Yoogali. The school’s Religious Education document is ‘Sharing Our Story’. The teaching of Religious Education occurs daily in classrooms, with children learning about their Catholic faith through the core strands of Prayer, Life in Christ, The Celebration of Christian Mystery and Profession of Faith.

Children in all classes have taken part in many meaningful and joyful masses, liturgies and prayer services over the course of the year. The children enjoy taking on roles of responsibility during both Friday and Sunday masses, such as altar serving, playing musical instruments, singing in the choir or reading.

Sacraments:
St Mary's have celebrated three sacraments amongst four classes this year. Year Two received the Sacrament of Penance in June with the support and dedication of their teachers, Mrs Mary-Jane Simms and Mrs Jane Docherty. The liturgy was a powerful example of the compassion and care the children so proudly display here at our school.

Year Three received the Sacrament of First Eucharist in August this year. The children's mass was a colourful and vibrant experience for all. Mrs Annette Reginato and Miss Leanne O' Connor worked very closely with the children to create a very moving liturgy, enjoyed by our parish family.

Also in August, Years Five and Six received the gifts of the Holy Spirit with the guidance and support of their teachers, Mrs Tricia Marin, Mrs Valerie Moss and Mrs Linda Spiers. Both Confirmation masses were a true celebration of the dedication and faith that has been brought out in these students. Bishop Gerard Hanna assisted Father Jim McGee in two very powerful and holy masses.

Liturgies and Masses:
All classes have participated in school and Sunday masses throughout the year. These masses bring together students, teachers, parents, grandparents and the wider church community we affectionately see as our extended school family. Each term, St Mary's hosts a Sunday mass in our parish. These masses are always followed by a wonderful morning tea provided by the host class and their family! This is just another way for us to come together and celebrate the sense of community St Mary's fosters.

School Choir and Altar Servers:
St Mary's is very fortunate to have such a giving community of staff and students. A school choir has been founded under the talent and guidance of Mrs Annette Reginato. This group meets for practice during lunch times and will often be heard during weekday and weekend masses. The group is well known for it's rendition of 'This Little Light of Mine', a favourite among our student and parish community.
2008 Giving Mass:
Christmas is a time to pause and think about others. It is a time to look into our hearts and give thanks for all the wonderful things we have, and most importantly, give to those who are less fortunate. Each year, St Mary's hosts a 'Giving Mass' where every student brings in a wrapped Christmas gift for a child their age. The gifts are given to the St Vincent De Paul society, who then distribute them to children in need. This is yet another example of the sincere generosity that our school community so willingly displays.

Tamie Bugno
Religious Education Co-ordinator

A Message from key School Bodies
School Council Report
We have had yet another extremely busy and productive year, commencing with the installation of computerised watering system throughout the school grounds; refurbishment of school toilets and finally the construction of the new shed.

This year also saw the purchase of a data projector in the Year 5 classroom, a portable PA system and other important resources that were purchased from surplus funds raised by the fundraising arm of the School Council.

I would like to especially acknowledge our fundraising committee; Louise Vardanega, Daniella Fattore, Linda Pietroboni, Debbie Guertin and Robert Comarin for their continued tireless work in overseeing the fundraising for the year.

Future projects for the School include the erection of a security fence around the school. This will be achieved with generous donations from local businesses being De Bortoli Wines and Casella Wines. Our School has also received a grant which will be utilised to contribute towards this project. We will also be looking at installing two further data projectors in the classrooms and shade sails and seating for outside the library and kindergarten rooms.

At St Mary's, we are committed to providing our teachers and students with up-to-date technology, such as data projectors and computers. We regard these as vital educational tools for our children and we are constantly looking at increasing and upgrading these technological resources.

St Mary's continues to live up to the high standards set in the past, both in its education and also in its spirituality. Our school continues to prosper each year and this in turn benefits the children.

Finally, I would like to thank all the dedicated teachers and staff of our School, especially Mary-Jane and Trish. You are very much appreciated and are the backbone to the high standards here at St Mary's.

FUNDRAISING REPORT 2008
This year has seen many changes and lots and lots of hard work by parents at our school. We have purchased new laser printers for throughout the school and much needed new desks for the Year 5 classroom as well as powder coated tables and chairs for the infants to sit on under the new COLA. All these wonderful inclusions were made possible from our fundraising efforts and surplus funds raised in 2007.

This year we have yet again achieved our fundraising target of $18,000 with an incredible surplus of over $10,000 to spare. This extra money will be used early in the new year to purchase more resources from a wish list compiled from suggestions by parents and teachers. This result can only be achieved by the wonderful dedication and hard work by parents and teachers at our wonderful little school. Much fun and lots of laughter were regular activities when fundraising committees were organising their events and many new friendships have been formed.

Although we are only a small school, the amount of money that we raise each year is amazing and all of this goes back into the school to benefit our children.

We thank all of the parents who have participated in organising and running each of our fundraisers and we look forward to another very successful year in 2009.

Daniella Fattore
Fundraising Committee
2. Information on Key School Programs

School Determined Improvement Targets

**2008 Federal Government Water Grant**
A major project for 2008 was the installation of an inground watering system throughout the grounds and the refurbishment of the toilets.

**Computerised Watering System**
This included contractors installing a water saving, computerised pop-up watering system throughout all play areas. The new system is connected to rainwater tanks to increase our school’s capacity to use water wisely.

**Toilet block refurbishment**
This project included replacing all cisterns, installing timed taps and transforming both the upstairs and downstairs amenities with paint in a range of bright and delightful colours.

These large projects were co-ordinated with great school spirit. In particular the painting of the toilets was a powerful team event. One parent commented, “I actually had fun doing that. It didn’t even feel like it was work!” The vibrant finished product remains a testament to our community’s drive and enthusiasm.

Programs to Support Students

**Current Curriculum Initiatives**

**Jolly Phonics**
In 2008 the Jolly Phonics Program was introduced in all Infants classes at St Mary’s Yoogali. International Research data indicates that this program accelerates development of reading and writing skills. St Mary’s staff undertook training with specialist consultants from Sydney, in order to be trained to commence this program.

**SENA TESTING**

(Individualised Numeracy Assessment)
Students in Years One and Three undertake a full individualised numeracy assessment with their class teacher at the commencement of the year. The information from this test is then used to plan teaching strategies to fully accelerate each student’s skills in numeracy.

Testing is then undertaken at the end of the year, to track student learning. This information is then passed on to the next year’s teacher in order to continue developing each child’s skills.

**2008 Numeracy Grant**
In 2008 St Mary’s attracted a Numeracy grant which provided one-on-one and small group assistance to students requiring additional support in Mathematics. This grant enabled all classes to benefit from additional support. Entry and exit data demonstrated the effectiveness of this project with all participants demonstrating learning growth.

**School Council funded student assistance.**
In addition to the Numeracy Grant, in 2008 the St Mary’s School Council funded three additional hours per week of teacher aide time to support at risk students. This enabled students to receive individual or small group tutorials in areas of need.

**Other Learning Support Initiatives**

**Technology**
This year was the year to set a new standard in technology at St Mary’s. The mobile laptop lab is constantly in use as students develop their technology skills and use technology to enhance their learning. When using the mobile lab, each child in the class has individual computer access and great things are being achieved!

Over the last 12 months Mrs Mary Jane Simms has worked tirelessly on our new website, a website that encompasses everything our school strives to be. It allows new families the opportunity to ‘look us up’ on the internet and see all of the wonderful things the children are learning at school. Mr Gary Bazzacco, a leading professional photographer, donated his time and effort to the project, coming along to many school activities, trying to get that ‘perfect’ photo. In doing so, we now have a website that has many wonderful images showing our students doing their best and having fun.

To visit our website, please go to http://www.smyww.catholic.edu.au
The Year 2008 has also seen us move further along the technology path, with every class now having their own laser printer. This allows the children to publish their work in their own classroom.

Another exciting resource that has been running hot since it was completed, is the addition of another ceiling mounted data projector in the Yr 5 room. Mrs Moss and Mrs Marin (Stage 3 teachers) have made excellent use of this tool in their everyday teaching, encouraging the children to operate it when completing various class activities. It is so exciting to see our new additions working so well.

Prue Brown
ICLT Co-ordinator

Student Achievement

St Mary’s offers students a wide array of opportunities for personal growth and individual achievement within the context of a family atmosphere and excellent pupil teacher ratios. Most classes are between seventeen and twenty students. Our core purpose at St Mary’s is to focus on learning at all times. Any opportunity that arises for our students must pass the following question: Will this be truly beneficial for our students’ learning? If not it is quickly discarded.

2008 Achievements
• Cultural Achievements – Our school choir continued in 2008 under the supervision of Mrs Annette Reginato
• The 2008 School Spellathon was held in Term 3. All classes K-6 participated
• School Disco. Olympics theme
• Italian National day celebrations
• Education Week – Open day
• Book Week – Book Fair and book Parade
• Class Assemblies
• Class/School Liturgies
• Buddy Support Programmes.
• Guest speakers and visiting shows.
• Student Representative Council.

Italian Language Program

In 2008 all classes at St Mary’s participated in the Italian language program. All classes took part in weekly 45 minute lessons each week. Mrs Eleonora Taranto, a specialist Italian teacher visited St Mary’s one day per week to implement this engaging and productive program. The Italian language program is funded by Co.As.It, the Italian Association of assistance and will continue in 2009.

Programs to Support Students

Counselling Service

Each student at St Mary’s is a valued and respected member of our school community. A counsellor is available to support children as needed. This includes areas such as self esteem, family difficulties or building positive and effective relationships.

Respect and Responsibility

Our vision for St Mary’s students reflects the Values for Australian Schools of:
• Care and Compassion
• Doing Your Best
• A Fair Go
• Honesty and Integrity
• Respect and Responsibility
• Inclusion

How these values come to life in our school is explained at class information evenings at the commencement of the year.
Student Representative Council  
Chairperson’s Report

School representative council  
This Year SRC has been very successful. We regularly meet every two weeks to discuss important issues about the school and to organise school fundraisers. 
In our meetings the class representatives are:  
Kinder: Anastasia Comarin  
Year 1: Lauren Zalunardo  
Year 2: Aslann Gesuali  
Year 3: Zander Fattore  
Year 4: Charlie Panarello  
Year 5: Dana Biondo  
Year 6: Nicole Peruzzi  
School Captains: Isabella & Dean Zalunardo  
Teacher: Mrs. Mc Crohan (term 1-2)  
Mrs. Brown (term 3-4)  
SRC chairperson: Nedene Gatto

We have organised many fundraisers and events such as:  

Transition to School Program
St Mary's School offers an innovative program to support preschool children making the transition to primary school.  
Features of the program:
- An Information evening for any families interested in St Mary’s for their child
- Each prospective student and their parents meets with the principal individually
- Pru Brown, St Mary’s Kindergarten teacher and Mary Jane Simms, Principal visited the preschools and early childhood centres to meet each 2009 Kinder student before they arrived at school.
- Each child had the opportunity to join the current Kinder class for part of the day once a week for at least three weeks.
- Two half day whole class orientation sessions
- A barbeque held in December to welcome the Kinder families of 2009. During the orientation sessions each new Kinder student was supported by their Year Six buddy. This partnership, which continues in 2009 greatly assists the formation of positive relationships between the Kinder and Year Six students and is another opportunity for leadership for our senior students.

Sport
The School Sport Program has provided many varied opportunities for the students during 2008.

The School Swimming Carnival began the sporting calendar and saw many students achieve well. This year the introduction of races in the 18m Program Pool at the Aquatic Centre was a particular highlight. It provided an opportunity to develop formal swimming strokes and confidence under racing conditions for many children who are unable to swim the 25m and 50m lengths. Our school is very fortunate, as all children from Year 1 to 6 attend the fun of the carnival day. Infant children participated in the 18m races with enthusiasm, confidence and safety and we look forward to seeing the improvement in our children with this addition to our School Swimming Carnival continuing in years ahead. At the end of the day it was Bingar who took out the winning house accolades.

The Primary students engaged in activities organised to improve their overall fitness levels through various circuits during school sport. Gross and fine motor skills, strength and stamina were also developed during this focus. Whole school endurance training for the cross country made the School Cross Country a very successful day. It was held at the Ted Scobie Oval in Colina with the Infants sections a favourite for all.

The focus during term two included preparation for the School Athletics Carnival. All students from Kindergarten to Year 6 were provided with development of their field event skills and short distance athletics. Cocoparra were the successful team at the School Athletics Carnival, the novelty events a particular favourite for all.

Sport was an important feature in term three. The ten week School Tennis program continued in 2008 under the expertise of Margo Dal Broi at the Yoogali Catholic Club Courts. The lessons are included in our program annually and the development of skills can be clearly seen through the grades with this reinforcement.

Also in term three was the Whole School Intensive Swimming Program. Each day for a fortnight every child was provided with
professional and skilled instruction from the staff at the Griffith Regional Aquatic Centre. Both swimming stroke development and safety were included in their learning, each child provided with a written assessment of their skills.

Levi Seelink, a state league basketballer, provided his expert skills to many enthusiastic students each Tuesday during Term Three.

Students participated in Representative sport at Deanery, Diocesan and MacKillop levels. Particular mention must be made of Melissa Baquero who was chosen to be part of the MacKillop Soccer team and Kate Bond was selected as a representative in the diocesan Soccer team. Ryan Altin also performed well in swimming, competing at MacKillop level as part of the Diocesan team. His role of diocesan flagbearer at the meet was a great honour. The Girls Oz Tag team also reached the second round of competition.

School Sport is an exciting and prominent feature of our learning curriculum at St. Mary's. Both our dedicated and skilled teachers worked with local professionals ensuring that quality opportunities were provided at all levels of learning.

Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

PEER SUPPORT DAY 2008

On November 7 St Mary's was alive with excitement as Peer Support Day was held. In the weeks leading up to the Peer Support day the Year 5 and 6 leaders took part in leadership training with Mrs Marin. This training provided the students with the skills needed to successfully lead a Peer Support Group.

What is the purpose of such a day?
The Peer Support day provided all students with the opportunity to learn and interact with students of all ages from across the school.

Key outcomes from the PDHPE Curriculum such as working collaboratively, taking turns and problem solving with others were achieved throughout the day.

It is critical that our students develop these skills.

Events such as Peer Support Day are a powerful tool in developing these skills. Congratulations must go to the Year 5 and 6 students for their outstanding leadership skills. Each pair of leaders led their group with positivity, confidence and poise.

Student Performance

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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Year 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

St Mary's 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

Writing continues to be an area of great strength at St Mary's with both classes achieving overall results well above the national average. Overall students have performed extremely well in Reading with many students achieving at a very high level.

Basic Skills Trends

Results continue to reflect strong teaching and learning at St Mary's. In all areas our students are well above the national average. Our writing results show a trend of continued strong growth and are the furthest above the national average. In Numeracy also, our results show students are achieving at a high standard and are able to apply their skills as needed in a variety of problem solving situations.

Working Mathematically will be a focus for 2009 with renowned specialist Anita Chin from Origo Education visiting our school to further develop our staff and student’s skills in this area. We look forward to this opportunity.
3. School Overview

School Policies

Discipline Policy
At St Mary’s we believe that children respond best to a discipline approach that encourages and rewards positive behaviour. Our discipline policy is based on this belief.

Student Welfare Policy
We believe that every child has a right to be safe and feel safe. The practices in our Bullying Policy aim are focused on ensuring that this occurs for the students of our school. These policies can be found in the St Mary’s General Policies and Procedures Handbook and can be accessed any time by contacting the school.

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 the Catholic Schools Office may be appropriate. Further information about diocesan policies can be obtained from the Catholic Schools Office website at www.cso.wagga.catholic.edu.au

Enrolment Policy
The Diocese of Wagga Wagga has established an Enrolment 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

Closing dates for enrolments in classes for the following year are advertised through The Area News, feeder preschools and early childhood centres. NSW legislation allows for the enrolment of children into Kindergarten who turn 5 before August 1. At St Mary’s School parents seeking to enrol children who turn 5 after May 30 are advised of possible implications.

Student Enrolment Profile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Indig’</th>
<th>LOTE*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>140</td>
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</table>

*Language background Other Than English

Structure of Classes
In 2008 St Mary’s provided 7 home classes. These small class groups provide excellent student teacher ratios. Kinder - 19 students Year 1 - 20 students Year 2 - 19 students Year 3 - 19 students Year 4 - 17 students Year 5 - 27 students Year 6 - 19 students

In addition classes move into “Fantastic Fridays” every Friday. This different grouping allows the students to engage and interact with children outside their class group as they learn.

Infants have in addition to Fantastic Fridays, Tuesday afternoon groups. Each group takes part in HSIE, Science and PD/H/PE on these days.

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>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
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Professional Learning
Staff at St Mary’s are continually learning in order to best meet the needs of students. As a staff we meet twice weekly for school and class planning and programming purposes. As well as this there are other professional development opportunities for staff. For 2008, these occasions included the following:
- Developing Scope & Sequences for: PD/H/PE, and H.S.I.E.
- Jolly Phonics inservicing
- Creation of ICLT school long term plan
- CPR/ First Aid updates.
- Harassment/Child Protection
- OH&S and Workplace practices
- Administering the Observation Survey
- SENA Numeracy assessment

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 School.

Parents
My child (son or daughter) is usually happy at St Mary’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Students
I am usually happy at St Mary’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>%</td>
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Staff
I am usually happy at St Mary’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>0%</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 carer leave, leave without pay, special leave and accident/workers compensation leave. An attendance rate of 93.47% was achieved in 2008 by staff at St Mary’s Yoogali.

Financial Statement Summary

About This Report
Many thanks to the following members of the St Mary’s Community for their contributions to this report: Student Representative Council Chairperson, Nedene Gatto, staff members Belinda Chapman, Valerie Moss, Tamie Bugno, Prue Brown and Annette Reginato, School Council Chairperson Michael zalunardo, Fundraising Co-ordinator Daniella Fattore. These contributions reflect the teamwork that is a hallmark of this great school.