2008

Annual Report
St Patrick’s Primary School, GRIFFITH

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Introduction
As a Catholic Primary School we are committed to helping our pupils to learn about and live our faith. This is a challenge as increasingly our society is devaluing the need for religious instruction. With around twenty percent of our students being non catholic our challenge is increased. However, all receive the same spiritual education with the exception of receiving the sacraments and we have the same expectations of each family – that they fully support the Catholic ethos and Religious Education Programme of the school. Happily, this is the case and we have a very harmonious and tolerant school community.

As a staff we believe that we are making a concerted effort to help our students find and nurture their gifts and talents. We value effort and achievement and provide a comprehensive curriculum to challenge all our students. We also provide opportunities for physical, cultural and social development as well as emphasising the academic and spiritual dimension.

2008 has been marked by many highlights and marvellous achievements. Many are recorded in this Report but a fuller account can be found in our weekly newsletter located on our school website.

1. The School

The School
St. Patrick's Primary, Griffith, provides education to the children of Sacred Heart Parish as well as the pupils enrolled from the surrounding villages and towns.

The School aims to provide an affordable catholic education to all pupils enrolled irrespective of their faith background or family circumstances.

We are committed to being a community of faith, learning, care and service, embracing our culturally diverse population and living up to our motto,” Do all things well.” We strive to implement our Vision and Mission statement.

Catholic Identity

Religious Education
Religious Education in 2008 again was very busy yet rewarding. We are fortunate to have three priests in our parish – Fr Michael, Fr Rafe and Fr Anthony. Fr Rafe continues to support teachers and students in Sacramental years while Fr Michael provides us with beautiful celebrations. Liturgies and masses play an important part of Religious Education. Daily prayer in classrooms is also of importance.

The Sacramental Programmes of First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation are very always well supported by our Parent and Parish Community. The presence of Bishop Gerard Hanna, prior to, and at Confirmation is very special to the Confirmation candidates and their families. He speaks openly and honestly to the students deepening their understanding of Confirmation.

Raising money for the missions and good works are an important part of St Patrick’s school life. In particular money is raised through special events for Caritas, Marist Brothers and Mercy Sisters as well as our local St Vincent De Paul Society. The SRC organized fund raisers for these charities. We also supported St Vincent DePaul in their Christmas appeal.

Infant classes have special liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Easter and Christmas are all celebrated through music, drama and readings. These Liturgies have amazing support from our parent community.

The internet is fast becoming a major resource tool for teachers when looking for information on units being taught in their classroom. The suggestions from the Resource Centre in Wagga have been invaluable.

We continue to work on building up resources for “Sharing Our Story” and use the “To Know, Worship and Love” resource in all grades.

A Religious Education notice board in the staffroom hosts information for all the feast days and other important events throughout the liturgical year. Teachers are able to access the informative material in their classrooms.
A Message from key School Bodies

SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2008 has been a great year for St Patrick's and the School Council can be proud of their efforts in supporting the school.

A positive this year is that vandalism has become far less of a problem, no doubt in part due to the installation of the fence in 2007.

The School Council started the year with a tour of the entire school and started another meeting in the library. This enabled Council members to be more familiar with the layout of the school and the nature of maintenance and capital priorities.

Projects completed early in the year included upgrading of the air-conditioners in the 100 and 700 blocks and installation of data projectors in all classrooms. The projectors took nearly all year to complete due to cables supply issues. All projectors are now working but there are temporary screens in many class rooms and the issue of glare will need consideration next year.

The School Council was involved in a number of changes in 2008. For Terms 3 and 4 professional cleaners were engaged and feedback from staff is very positive. A new process of managing outstanding school fees was introduced with two Council members chasing up outstanding fees via a series of phone calls. This process has been very successful, and not only has our position in terms of bad debts improved but we have also addressed the perception that the school is soft on the issue to those who do not seek to make arrangements.

The School Council this year granted the P&F an increased level of autonomy by removing the mandatory annual $10,000 donation to the School Council. The School Council will provide direction to the P&F as to funding priorities year-to-year.

Technology has been a priority not only with the installation of data projectors in every class room, but also late in the year with the purchase of 16 laptops with mobile trolleys connected to the school via a wireless network and speakers, Bluetooth keyboards and mice for every classroom. These three items with the data projectors provide 90%+ of the functionality achieved from interactive whiteboards.

The school’s finances have finished in good order despite the on-going drought that continues to grip our region and the global financial crisis. We have been fortunate this year to have received significant government grants, though the positive financial result is just as much a result of good management and reportage by all involved, and the proactive stance on school fees. The school has considerable investments which have been prudently managed to date. The proposed budget for 2009 is not complacent with modest spending and realistic revenue forecasts. For conservatism, Government grants though promised at this stage have not been factored into the budget.

On behalf of the School Council I would like to thank the staff especially Rob Keady and Christine Calabria for their assistance and the faith they place in the School Council and Anna Bordignon for her input throughout the year, always provided without fear or favour.

The School Council would especially like to thank Father Michael Mikulek for his strong support of the school over the past 6 years. The school’s positive financial position is also as a result of Father Michael’s input. This support of the school in every facet has been outstanding and he will be hard to replace. We wish Father Michael all the best.

The School Council would like to congratulate the P&F on an excellent year of fund raising and their support for key projects. This enthusiasm and the amount of money raised, despite all of the external financial pressures provided positive input to the school.

I would personally like to thank all of the School Council members; it is great to be involved with such a diverse group who are all committed to one goal and approach issues from a range of perspectives. Everyone's desire to work together and donate significant portions of their time to the school is greatly appreciated and it makes being involved with the School Council a rewarding commitment.

The school and hence with it the School Council has many challenges ahead. These include the direction of IT, ensuring we choose the best direction for technology given the rapid rate of change. The school is also in the process of upgrading our internal electrical supply system which no longer meets our needs. The ultimate aim of this upgrade is to ensure that no further works are required for the next 20 to 30 years in this area.

Other challenges ahead include staff retention and student numbers. The School Promotions Committee had a very busy first half of the year including an excellent Open Day during Catholic Schools Week in...
April supported by two good publications, a school story book and a school prospectus. Unfortunately this Committee comprised a number of over committed people and momentum was lost in the second half of the year. I believe the School Council should take on the role in 2009 of trying to reinvigorate this Committee to support the school to better promote itself and be an educator and employer of choice.

I would like to close by saying thank you to those retiring Council members. Their participation over many years on the Council is truly appreciated. Brian Davoren and Katie Browne have been with us for the last two years and Katie also represented the P&F the year prior. John Beecher’s time has included two years as Chair and his steady calm input will be missed. Finally, welcome or welcome back to the new Council members, we look forward to your input in 2009.

Michael Ryan
School Council Chairperson

2. Information on Key School Programs

School Determined Improvement Targets

Our School renewal Framework had a number of key components:

1. Being active and visible in passing on our Catholic faith and traditions and striving to act as Jesus taught us.


3. Developing new policies for Human Society and Its Environment and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education for Board of Studies Registration.

4. Implement the Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar programs from Kindergarten to Year 3.

5. Continuing to in-service staff on Information Technology. Provide each class with a ceiling mounted digital projector and ensure all teachers a competent in utilising this devise.

Each component was addressed but we realise that all are on-going.

Programs to Support Students

Current Curriculum Initiatives

At St Patrick’s, all teachers are expected to cover the NSW Board of Studies Syllabus in each of the Key Learning Areas as well as the Diocesan Religious Education Programme. Teachers are able to use a variety of teaching and learning activities to achieve the syllabus outcomes and these are set out in their class programmes.

In October we submitted our Human Society and Its Environment and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Policies to a panel from the Catholic Schools Office as part of the Board of Studies School Registration requirement. Teachers were also required to submit their class programmes, assessments and samples of student work. Both Policies and the implementation by teachers were deemed to be of a high standard and meeting Registration requirements.

The remaining KLA Policies will be developed according to the Diocesan timetable.

Our Assessment Policy as an overarching policy is being implemented. Teachers are expected to assess pupil learning levels before commencing units of work and have an ongoing assessment plan for each Key Learning Area.

Teachers are required to have a Class Programme that implements School/Diocesan and Board of Studies requirements. These programmes are supervised by the School Executive. Programmes have an organizational and KLA section. They contain a timetable, assessment plan, class profile, an outline of how the class generally operates as well as linkage to the school Vision and Mission Statement.

The school is using the Diocesan Report to parents.

Other Learning Support Initiatives

School Initiatives

There are a range of initiatives to support learning across the school such as Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar for Years K-3, Language Classes for both funded and non funded students, continuing the MIA Writing Project K-6 and the Diocesan run Sena Maths Project with Years 1 and 3. English as a Second Language has a specialist teacher as does Reading Recovery for Year One. Pupils who have been nominated as having academic strength are able to work with a specialist teacher in small groups as part of the Personal Interest Program (PIP).
Volunteer teachers take clubs during lunch time. These include Chess, knitting, Guitar, computers, Enviro and Choirs.

**Equity Programs**

Commonwealth and Diocesan funding have been provided for Equity Programmes to improve the learning opportunities for our Aboriginal students and the large number of students for whom English is a second language.

Students having LOTE support were assessed and placed from phase 1 (New Arrival students) to Phase 4 (competent literacy learners working at grade level). The LOTE teacher’s role has been to devise programmes that develop oral and written literacy skills and assisted with understanding Australian culture.

Eight children were funded for Aboriginal Education and all were supported in the classroom with a Teacher Aide.

Riding For The Disabled continued every Monday in Terms 2 and 3 with two of our Special Needs children participating.

**Programs to Support Students**

Students with Special Needs are an integral part of our mainstream school. In 2008, 31 children with disabilities received support. Children worked in the classroom with a Teacher Assistant or were withdrawn, depending on their area of need. Language funded students participated in the Learning Support language Classes. Individual Education Programme meetings for students with disabilities were held twice a year in consultation with Parents, Education Officer, Teacher, Teacher Assistant and Special Needs Co-ordinator.

Additional teacher time was allocated to students in Kindergarten during Term 4 and to Year 1 through the year to support language acquisition and enable small groups to be extended or remediated. Years 3-6 grade for Mathematics and several grades have rotations for various subject areas to enable teachers with an interest to specialise.

Additional Reading Recovery was allocated for the first semester to enable extra students to enter the program. All students made progress with almost all finishing at grade appropriate standard.

Pre and post testing confirms that all students who were enrolled in a specialist support program; Reading Recovery, Language class, Even Start Program (Commonwealth funded program for students who did not reach the minimum benchmark in the 2007 BST testing) and English as a Second Language, made considerable to strong gains on the assessment measures administered.

**Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

The school follows the Commonwealth Government’s directive regarding displaying the Values for Australian Schooling posters and the National Safe Framework in a prominent place.

This year we have been able to access the Commonwealth Government’s Chaplaincy Program. Our school pastoral worker engages with students, parents and staff members on a range of social issues. She deals with families in crisis, absenteeism, bullying and dispute resolution, staff morale and support and ensuring that the catholic ethos is prominent throughout the school.

She also supports our Centrecare employed family and student counsellor with her work of providing specialist support to students with emotional and social problems.

The Seasons For Growth Program was introduced last year and was so successful it will be run each year. We now have 7 trained mentors (2 trained in 2008) running 3 groups over 9 weeks. The program aims to assist students in accepting traumatic events in their lives such as death in the family and divorce. Parents nominate their children and groups cover K-6. Sixteen students participated.

**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>Spelling</th>
<th>Punctuation and Grammar</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparison to Statewide Results
Our school has participated in BST Literacy and Numeracy since 1998 and in the BST Writing since 2001. The school monitors the BST (NAPLAN) Trend Data each year and uses that information to inform its learning and teaching practices for the upcoming year.

Year 3 results were very strong with student achievement level above the State average in all strands. Year 5 were slightly below the State average in overall Literacy and continued to below the State average in Numeracy.

Basic Skills Trends
Year 3 results continue an upward trend over the past 3 years in comparison to the State in all strands. Year 5 were below the State average when in Year 3. 50% showed growth of more than 80 points (2 bands) in Numeracy and 66% achieved similar growth in overall Literacy.

3. School Overview

School Policies
Students enrolled at St. Patrick’s are welcomed from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds. Enrolment procedures are implemented in line with the Diocesan Enrolment Policy.

We expect student behaviour to be of a high standard and the family to support this expectation.

The following policies are available at St Patrick’s and/or on the Wagga Wagga Catholic Schools Office Website.

- Enrolment Policy
- Student Welfare/Discipline Policy

Grievance & Complaints Procedure
The school has adopted an approach to resolving complaints and grievances that is based on procedural fairness. It recognising 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.

Our approach is based on the policy of 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>262</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Language background Other Than English

Structure of Classes
The following table is the number of students within each grade at St Patrick’s School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kinder</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within each grade there are three classes - a total of 21 classes.

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>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional Learning
The emphasis of Professional Learning for all teachers at St Patrick’s has been English and cross grade assessment design. Class teachers continued with the Writing Project begun in 2005. Jolly Phonics and Jolly Phonics were introduced to the K-4 teachers and presenters were brought from Sydney to in-service the K-4 staff during a professional development day in February. All staff attended a workshop ‘Creating the Most Engaging and Challenging Thinking Classroom’ by Ralph Pirozzo in July. Professional Learning using rubrics and cross grade criterion testing for School Reports were ongoing. Preparing for the HSIE and PDHPE (Towards Wholeness) Policy Registrations in November was intense and the extremely positive feedback from the Review Committee was very gratifying. All staff renewed their CPR Certificates as well as many gaining their Senior First Aid. All Staff attended meetings on Harassment and Child Protection which was run by Diocesan Staff. Six staff members undertook the twelve month Diocesan run Literacy Learning and Teaching training course. Staff were involved in Spiritual Renewal, Share Our Story Renewal, Math’s, Reading and Literacy Workshops, Technology courses, ESL courses and Curriculum Alignment Courses as well as taking on managerial roles at Diocesan, MacKillop and State sport carnivals.

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 Patrick’s Griffith

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students
I am usually happy at ST Patrick’s Primary School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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 95.04% was achieved in 2008 by staff at St Patrick’s Griffith

Financial Statement Summary
About This Report

This report was prepared by the Principal, members of the School Executive and teachers with responsibility for specialist learning areas.