Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

VISION FRAMEWORK
VISION: To ignite in all our students the passion for learning within a Catholic ethos.

CORE VALUES
FAITH VALUES                               PEOPLE VALUES
Sacredness of each individual               Quality relationships
Traditions and rituals of the Catholic faith Inclusiveness
Community of Stewards                      Respecting the dignity of the individual
Personal spirituality                       Celebrating and supporting
The face of God in actions

LEARNING VALUES
A safe environment, Risk taking, Metacognition, Collaboration, Flexibility, Passion, Purpose
Motivation, Achievable expectations.

MISSION:
Our mission is to develop in our students:

• Active and creative minds;
• Empathy, understanding and compassion for others;
• Courage to act upon their beliefs; and,
• We are guided in our mission by the example of Jesus, and we surround our students with the traditions of our Catholic faith.

Principal’s Message

One of the most exciting things about 2007 has been the infusion of the Habits of Mind into the culture of the school. This has been a big commitment by staff, but there is a belief that the benefits of striving for a mindful school, where thinking habits are explicitly taught, can only improve the learning of all. Indeed learning and teaching with the Habits of Mind has required a shift in the way the educational outcomes for students are cultivate, assessed and communicated.

One of the highlights of the year was the school fete. The efforts of the P&F, and in particular the organising committee, were outstanding. The success of the fete positioned the P&F in a strong financial position to be able to assist the school in a number of areas. The installation of the TV in the library with data facility, the $5000 grant for musical instruments were just two of the contributions.

In the latter part of the year the P&F agreed to help support the ‘Investing In Our Schools Grant’ which was dedicated to building an outdoor learning area. This project is due for completion in December and will be a great acquisition for the school.

Thanks are extended to the outgoing P & F Executive Body for their hard work over the past few years and the school community offers their appreciation to the members of the new committee taking up their roles in 2008. The school community is inspired by the dedication and motivation of the school staff, and believes St Joseph’s is fortunate to have a group of teachers who give generously of their time and talents for the children in their care. The passion staff display for continued learning is a great model for the students. Thanks are also due to Fr Peter, the Parish Council and the Finance Council for their continued support of the school throughout 2007. Special thanks are offered to those members of staff who have served the school and will be moving on in 2008, in particular the school express appreciation to Norma Hollier who retired this year after 23 years of service to Catholic Education.
### Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### P & F President Report

2007 has again been very successful for all the P & F activities, and would not have been possible without the continued generous support of the parents, teachers and community of St Joseph’s. The Easter Fair held in March was an extremely successful event with a record amount of funds raised. These funds have been spent on much needed resources for the School. Coordinators of our Committees (Fundraising, Social, Service and School Support) are to be congratulated for their tireless efforts in the smooth running of many activities within the School.

Thanks are extended to the Staff for their dedication to the teaching of the children and for their open and honest assistance. The parent body believes the school is certainly blessed to enjoy such a great relationship with all the School Staff.

### Year 6 report.

In 2007 Year 6 at St Joseph’s has had many experiences and opportunities, like serving on the School Council, building a sacred garden, going to Canberra and running assemblies.

One pleasing aspect of the school is the new amphitheatre area. This area is like a new outdoor stage, and thanks are extended to the builders who did an excellent job.

St Joseph’s has been using the Habits of Mind, and Year 6 used these aspects of life when considering the construction of the new and improved sacred garden.

The students in the 2007 Year 6 have had a great time at St Joseph’s over the years. While looking forward to moving on to High School the students express their gratitude for everything they have learnt.

### School Profile

St Joseph’s Catholic Parish School was established by the Sisters of St Joseph in 1882. It serves the Catholic Community of Woonona and Bulli and is situated in Park Road Bulli. The school has co-educational classes from Kindergarten – Year 6, and at present it has an enrolment of approximately 230 students.

In the early years, the Sisters of St Joseph built strong foundations for the development of community spirit. This sense of Catholic community has continued to be nurtured over the years and at present this culture reflects a spirit of cooperation, inclusion, recognition of the individual and the involvement of the wider community.

### Enrolments

### Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Staffing Profile

This year, at St Joseph’s, there were 14 teachers and 3 support staff. Two specialist teachers worked with a visually impaired student. Eleven of the teachers have Bachelor of Teaching qualifications and 3 have Masters degrees. Two staff will be taking maternity leave in 2008.

The professional development priorities for 2007 centred around learning and the infusion of the Habits of Mind into the teaching and learning process. Costs for this professional learning for 2007 amounted to: $5146.

### Teacher Standards

Teacher qualifications fall into 1 of 3 categories for all teaching staff responsible for delivering the curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or as recognised by AEI – NOOSR*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition
Culture of the Catholic School

Being a member of a Catholic system the school community follows the Church’s tradition. As part of these traditions the school commemorates Special Feast Days and Holy Days, through prayer and celebrations. Throughout the year, nominated classes led the Morning Assembly Prayer and celebrated the Eucharist with Father Peter and our Parish community.

In 2007 one of the scheduled Prayer and Conversation sessions between Year 6 students and the Bishop of the Diocese, Most Rev Peter Ingham, was held at St Joseph’s. This was attended by six of our local schools, and CEO delegates including our Director of Schools, Mr Peter Turner.

During the year an emphasis was placed on Social Justice through programs and actions. Each term, classes targeted a foundation addressing social justice issues and raised over $3200 in total throughout the year. Harmony Day also provided students with the opportunity to acknowledge people from other backgrounds and cultures, and gave students an opportunity to express their Catholic Faith and identity.

During 2007 the school formalised the acknowledgement of the traditional Indigenous custodians, the Dharwal Nation. This was done by installing and flying the Aboriginal flag, by the acknowledgement of Dharwal custodians at weekly and School Assemblies, and by proudly displaying a commemorative plaque and certificate in our school office. On Indigenous Awareness Day, 20 June, the school hosted a visiting indigenous performer, Lewis Parter, who through theatre, story telling, songs and dance, further informed the community about his culture, environment and spirituality.

This year continued spiritual growth of staff focused on prayer. Each week during Term 1, a member of the Wollongong Catholic Education Office (CEO) Religious Education (RE) Team facilitated our Staff Meetings. During these meetings staff members were provided with the opportunity to explore different types of prayer, as well as being assisted and guided in their own faith journeys. The staff also held a moving spirituality retreat at Camden.

Student Welfare

In implementing the Habits of Mind the school has helped to further promote the welfare of students and staff. The 16 dispositions for learning and living a successful life, have reinforced welfare programs and policies already used at the school. The Safe School Framework and Values for Australian Schools embedded in our welfare programs have reinforced the concept of the rights of students to be supported in a caring and safe school environment.

Centacare has continued to support the school, children and families with the provision of a school counsellor. The counsellor works with individuals and groups to provide programs that support the needs of the students. Year 6 students undertook the “Hit the Ground Running” Program, and a Social Skills Program was implemented in Term 1 for Kindergarten. This initiative provided a strong focus on the teaching of social skills and competencies. The program’s experiences were aimed at setting the children up for successful learning in the rest of their schooling, and this complimented our 2007 Habits of Mind initiative.

In relation to Peer Support, all students focused on a new program written by the school; “Accept Me, Accept You”. This program was underpinned by integrating Habits of Mind into the program. In 2007 the school was also awarded a Schools Healthy Initiative Award.

The Seasons for Growth program provided nominated students with strategies to help cope with grief and loss. Seasons sessions were led by a trained class teacher and held weekly during Term 4. Programs addressing drug education were presented and these gave students and parents the opportunity to learn more about drug related matters and some skills in dealing with drug issues faced by young people today. The school and parish Pastoral Care Team provided support for those in the community who at times needed assistance. The school also raised funds for our local St Vincent de Paul Society through our Christmas raffle and supported other local and international appeals.
Financial Summary

The main source of income to support the maintenance of the school came from SEDSO funds, allocations of funds from the Catholic Education Office and P & F Donations. The school has placed a focus on trying to save funds with the expectation that a building program is in the pipeline. It is hope that the eventuation of this building program will come about in 2008.

This year the school qualified for two ‘Investing in our Schools Grants’; the first worth $35,000. This money was used to part fund an outdoor learning area. The P & F contributed $15,000 towards this project, and the total cost of the project was estimated at $54,600.

The second grant of $22,513 was dedicated to shade structure over the outdoor learning area.

A further $15,000 donation from the P & F enabled us to purchase class sets of bibles, mathematics materials, musical instruments and a large TV Data screen for the library.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, for the year ended 31 December 2007. This data is taken from the 2007 financial return to the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Learning & Teaching

At St Joseph’s in working on the Habits of Mind there is a focus on “thinking happen” This gives the school an educational framework, on which students can be prepared for the 21st Century.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

The Habits of Mind are not solely a curriculum initiative, they form a learning framework which permeates all aspects of school culture. This has been shown this year by the way the staff work together to solve problems, and by the way staff have recognised and rewarded success or learning in its various forms throughout the school.

Staff members have resolved to take the Habits of Mind concept beyond the classroom, to develop a culture of school-wide thoughtfulness and to building a school that is a home for the mind. Processes of higher order thinking, intelligent behaviour, and Habits of Mind have become the targeted content of our school. In this way the Habits of Mind have begun to weave together with other educational theories and initiatives such as, Kath Murdoch’s Inquiry Model of Learning, Di Bono’s Thinking Hats, Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, Thinking Maps and Graphic Organisers, Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe’s work on Understanding by Design and Karen Boyes’ Learning Environments. The school is mindful of the need to continue to learn, to seek out new knowledge about learning, to investigate and reflect on current practices, and more importantly to collaborate with other like-minded schools.
As part of a mindful school process teachers have been applying a consistency of ideology to practice by focusing on the whole child and their learning of the Habits, when recognising and awarding learning each week, when reporting to parents, (particularly in each Semester’s report), and when assessing learning. This has been further strengthened and become more widely applied as teachers have started to programme specific Habits of Mind for specific learning purposes across key areas of the curriculum.

Teachers have endeavoured to match up the potential use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICLT) to goals for learning. This has provided a rationale for teachers to incorporate ICLT into their curriculum approaches. Teachers have specifically been encouraged to use ICLT for learning projects. Laptops have this year been “homed” in all classrooms, therefore encouraging ICLT use as routine by students and teachers during teaching processes and professional work. Staff and students have begun to move from being responsive users of ICLT to becoming producers of ICLT products and services. This has enabled students to better demonstrate their learning, and to use digital tools for “authentic” assessment.

Cross Curriculum
In Literacy, Stage 2 and 3 teachers have aimed to provide real-world contexts for students’ learning. This has enabled new units of work to be developed collaboratively and integrated within other Key Learning Areas. In Stage 1 and Early Stage 1, making explicit the strategies, actions and behaviours to be a good reader and writer has been achieved through a supportive and social model of learning using learning groups. In Stage 2 and 3, learning groups have been utilising reflection and evaluation strategies to monitor students’ own mental strategies, approaches and intellectual behaviours.

In Numeracy, learning groups within Stage 1 to 3 have been supported through collaborative planning and dialogue amongst teachers, and the use of programmes such as the Count Me In Too-Number and Count Me Into Measurement Programmes and a new resource this year titled GoMaths. Numeracy blocks and their specific episodes have been taught more explicitly because of teachers’ better understanding of the Mathematical content and the links with thinking mathematically.

The school’s close association with the University of Wollongong has continued to be strengthened through support visits from Science student teachers. This project has involved students in the designing and making, experimenting and reasoning processes of the Science and Technology Syllabus. This association was further developed when students were mentored as part of their participation in The Wollongong Regional Science Fair.

As part of our commitment to Indigenous Education, an Indigenous Day was held in June, which highlighted the regions traditional custodians and landowners. To support an Asian perspective within the curriculum, a very special day titled “Who is our neighbour” was undertaken in October.

Meeting the needs of all students
At St Joseph’s it is a belief that the relationship between teachers and students, and among students themselves must be a positive and respectful one if the learning strategies employed in the learning and teaching process are to achieve their full potential. To this end in 2007 organisational structures (timetabling) allowed for sufficient time for students to process and practise what they have learned; and specific groups of students have been targeted within Literacy and Numeracy. In Stage 1 to 3; specific programmes have incorporated student’s interests, abilities and learning styles and clear expectations or rules and procedures for behaviour management have been negotiated with students through the Student Representative Council.

Physical structure of learning spaces have allowed for interdependent learning and independent student activity and movement. There is regular opportunity for students to work collaboratively, in mixed learning groups and ability groups, as well as opportunities to work on their own at their own ability level, and utilising their own learning preferences. Students have been provided with opportunities to practice and use learning dispositions with appropriate guidance in a number of different contexts.

Expanded Learning Opportunities
Many opportunities took learning outside the classroom into the real world, with excursions to Sydney Botanic Gardens, our own Slacky Flats, Symbio Wildlife Park, Canberra and Sydney. Many students showcased their talents and gifts in various fields, for example, the Wollongong Eisteddfod, J-Rock and
Wakakirri. Students represented the school at the Diocesan Swimming Carnival and State trials; the senior girls reached finals in an AFL Knock-Out. All students in Stage 2 and 3 and for the first time Year 2, joined the school's own School Public Speaking Competition and from there two students from Stage 3 competed in the Diocesan Public Speaking Competition. During National Literacy and Numeracy Week a School Spelling Competition was held and some students took part in the National Reading Day. Many learning activities were undertaken for Book Week, and students from Stage 2 and 3 completed The Premier’s Reading Challenge. Also a number of students from Stages 2 and 3 competed at the Illawarra Junior Chess Competition, the New South Wales All Catholic Schools Athletics Championship, the Diocesan Cross Country, and the Rugby League and Basketball Gala Days. Two of the senior boys were selected for trials to represent the Diocese in Rugby Union.

The many distinctions and high achieving results gained by students who entered academic competitions in Literacy, Numeracy, Computer Technology and Science Competitions, the Bulli Show Art and Photo Competition and the Australian Stamp Designing Competition gives an indication of the various ways the school provides for the many talents of the students. The parent community also engaged in workshop learning programmes “Helping you to understand your child’s learning” in Literacy and Numeracy.

Professional Learning
The School Leadership Team (SLT) has undertaken a commitment to sustained, collaborative and meaningful professional learning. An initial step in this regard was undertaken by enrolling the school in the Habits of Mind Hub as part of the Australian National Schools Network. This involved five full days of professional learning on the Habits, learning to work with them in productive ways and understanding how to use them and extend them through the school community. To initiate further change eight members of staff were given an opportunity to attend the first Habits of Mind International Expo in Melbourne in October. In Literacy, the school continued to undertake intra-school and Diocesan professional learning through teachers’ attendance of courses, such as Teachnology and Diversifying Learning within the curriculum. As well as this 2 teachers were asked to join special reference groups at the CEO, one in the area of Reporting and Assessment for Kindergarten, another relating to the new K-6 Assessment for Religious Education and yet another teacher was part of a working party formulating the Year 4 Religious Literacy Assessment paper. Diocesan teachers have visited our school to dialogue and share good practices. Also, 1 of the school’s teachers presented at the inaugural University of Wollongong Conference in Mathematics. All this demonstrates commitment to continued professional learning and the good things happening at the school with regard to learning and teaching.

Student Achievement
This year 31 students from Year 3 undertook the Basic Skills Test. These assessments are used for educational measurement and school accountability.

In Measurement students performed higher in the strands of Length, Capacity, Area and Data. Results in Year 3 showed little or no difference between Reading and Language and Reading and Writing. In Mathematics there was little or no difference between Measurement and Data, Space and Geometry and Number, Patterns and Algebra. The overall Literacy percentage of Year 3 students in Skill Band 5 and 4 was 58%; in Skill Band 2 and 1 it was nil. The overall Numeracy percentage of Year 3 students in Skill Band 5 was 34%; in Skill Band 2 and 1 was nil. All students in Year 3 achieved the National benchmarks for English and Mathematics.

In Year 5, 44 students undertook the Writing, Language and Reading Tests.

The overall Literacy percentage of students from Year 5 in Skill Band 6 and 5 was 58% and Skill Band 2 and 1 was 2%. There was little or no difference between Reading and Language and Reading and Writing achievements. In Writing all students in Year 5 achieved the National Benchmark. In Numeracy, areas of Multiplication and Chance, Measurement, Mass, Time, Data and Area, Space and Geometry show strong results. The overall Numeracy percentage of students in Skill Band 6 and 5 was 58%; in Skill Band 2 and 1 was 2%. In Numeracy, there was little or no difference between Measurement, Space and Geometry, Data and Number, Patterns and Algebra. This can be summarised as follows.
**Basic Skills Test**

There were 31 Year 3 and 44 Year 5 students who sat for the 2007 Basic Skills Test. Year 3 is reported in Bands 1-5; Year 5 in Bands 1-6, with Bands 5 and 6 respectively being the highest.

**Year 3**

- **Literacy:** 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 14% of students in Band 5.
- **Numeracy:** 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 34% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Length, followed by Capacity and Data.

**Year 5**

- **Literacy:** 2% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 58% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in writing, followed by reading.
- **Numeracy:** 2% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 58% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Measurement followed by Space & Geometry and Number.

The following graphs give an indication of the learning gains made by students in their journey from Year 3 to Year 5. The Average Learning Gain for Year 5 students in 2007 was 6.75% in Literacy and 4.65% in Numeracy.

![Learning Gain — Literacy](image)

![Learning Gain — Numeracy](image)

**National Benchmarks**

The table below indicates as a percentage the Year 3 and Year 5 of students achieving the national benchmarks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 3 2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Year 5 2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: National Benchmarks not included have not yet been published*

**Parent Student and Teacher Satisfaction**

Results from survey data indicate that the school staff agree strongly that St Joseph’s is a school where the knowledge and traditions of the Catholic Faith are taught well. Individual learning needs of students are catered for and feedback to parents is excellent. One area identified by staff in which some improvement would enhance the school community is to development of better understandings of student rights and responsibilities.

Feedback from students indicates that the overwhelming majority are proud of their school and feel safe in the school environment. Students also feel that teachers support them, and they feel comfortable to approach teachers for help.

Survey data from parents gives a very positive picture of the school from a parents’ perspective. Parents believe St Joseph’s is a school that offers a wide variety of activities, it is a safe environment where the staff care deeply for the students. However, parents have suggested more could be done with regard to developing an increased awareness of individual learning needs of students, and more flexible means of providing feedback on student progress.
School Renewal Priorities

The School Renewal Plan is designed to focus our actions to bring about positive change and growth. The following have been identified as key focus areas for the school during the current cycle of this plan. The School Renewal Plan generally sets directions for a period of 3 – 5 years. It is subject to regular evaluations.

- Maintain the strong connection between school and Parish
- Ensure that the maintenance and restoration of the school remain a priority for the school and Parish
- Continue the close working relationship between parents, staff and students
- Continue to develop the ICLT skills of staff and students in the delivery of the curriculum
- Support the continued Faith development of staff and students

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Close ties between Parish and school continued with school involvement in many Parish activities
- The commitment of Child Centred Learning was a fixture with Habits of Mind underpinning our thinking framework
- Staff professional development around learning and the Habits of Mind helped drive many curriculum initiatives
- The school website was refined to reflect our thinking framework

Priorities for 2008

- Make our school identifiably Catholic and a centre for the New Evangelisation
- Work towards initiating a formal building plan
- Continue the implementation of the Habits of Mind
- Support staff in their understanding of learning to compliment our thinking framework.

The information in this report has been verified and the priorities endorsed by the Director of Schools and the Head of School Services.

Peter Turner
Director of Schools

(Mr) Terry Westblade
Principal