Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

St Paul’s Catholic Primary School, is one of two Catholic primary schools who serve as an integral part of the Catholic Parish of Camden. With Christ as our model, we seek to educate each student in the Catholic Faith tradition. We strive to provide an environment that will foster sound learning and teaching, encouraging all our students to develop to their full potential.

Principal’s Message

The 2007 school year has been an extremely exciting one for our community at Camden. The building program commenced early in 2007 with the demolition of the old presbytery and the John Purcell building. It is anticipated that Stage One of the project will be completed in March 2008. Stage Two, boosted by a Federal Grant of $1.59 million dollars and generous support by the parent community will commence at the conclusion of Stage One and will be completed by the end of 2008.

The school’s academic results have once again been excellent, as evidenced by the NSW Basic Skills Results and other external assessments. Within the classrooms, the curriculum is being differentiated to cater for the students’ individual needs. The integrated units, Numeracy and Literacy learning experiences are attempting to give students the opportunity to reach their own learning potential. The continued use of restorative justice practices has resulted in improved social skills and reduced discipline problems. Numerous opportunities have been provided during 2007 for students to represent the school. Participation has been strong in representative sport, Public Speaking, Andrew Chinn Concert and School Choir. The new School Renewal Plan was completed early 2007 and implementation has commenced.

Parent Involvement

The year has been a successful one at St Paul’s Camden, characterised by a great sense of community. Monthly Parents and Friends meetings have been attended by parents keen to discuss school matters. Parents have been regularly updated on the building project, School Renewal Plan, proposed new school uniform as well other pertinent issues. Parents have also worked hard during the year to provide resources for the school through the school fete and other fundraising activities. Thank you to the Parents and Friends executive for their support during 2007.

President of St Paul’s Parents and Friends.

Student Leadership

The 2007 School Year has allowed Year 6 students to lead and take responsibility. All students participated in leadership roles within the following groups: Literacy, Pastoral Care, Environmental, Sport and Promotions. Further leadership opportunities were present at the school fete, with kindergarten Buddies, at sporting events, in Public Speaking competitions, meeting Bishop Peter Ingham and through attending the Canberra excursion where the students learnt how to work together as a team. The Year 6 students also developed great relationships with their teachers. This year has been a very successful year for all students in Year 6.

St Paul’s Camden School Captains.
Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>604</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Enrolment Policy and Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: [www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au), then go to the link Policies.

School Profile

St Paul’s Catholic Parish Primary School serves the community at Camden and is a co-educational school with students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The school was founded in 1881 and came under the care and direction of the Sisters of St Joseph in 1883. Following the Sisters’ withdrawal in 1988, the school has been administered by lay Principals. Mr Christopher Paton is the current Principal.

The local community of Camden takes great pride in the heritage, tradition and history attached to the school and is very proud of the students who have graduated from the school in years gone by. The local community is now eagerly awaiting the completion of Stage 1 of the building project which commenced in April, 2007. Stage 1 is expected to be completed by the end of March, 2008.

Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>301</td>
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Staffing Profile

At St Paul’s Catholic Primary School there are 26 teachers who fill a number of full time and part time positions. The School Leadership Team (SLT) comprises the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, four Coordinator 2 and two Coordinator 1 teachers. There are ten ancillary staff members who perform a range of duties at our school. Of these ten staff members, three are employed in the Office, four are school assistants who work mainly with students, one works in the school canteen, one does five hours a week maintenance and one is the school groundsman.

At the end of the 2007 School Year, two staff members will move onto new positions elsewhere. This represents a staff turnover of 5%. A number of staff members are presently engaged in further post graduate study. Our Professional Learning this year has included implementation of the new Religious Education syllabus, participation in the Habits of Mind (HOM) course run by the Australian Schools Network, completion and implementation of our School Renewal Plan and implementation of the school Numeracy strategy within selected grades.

Ten members of our staff attended five days of in-service learning about Habits of Mind. At least another 12 staff attended an in-service by one of the authors, Art Costa. At St Paul’s, HOM has commenced to be infused within the school. A number of habits have been explored through Social Skills programs run in conjunction with Centacare. In 2008, each class will teach a Social Skills program written during the HOM course.

Using Information Communication Learning Technology (ICLT) in the learning and teaching process continued to be a focus in 2007. Staff members have become further skilled in the use of digital cameras, video, imovie, iphoto, myclasses and other software applications.

Besides these areas, individual staff members have attended Wollongong Catholic Education Office (CEO) in-services such as Reading Recovery and the Special Certificate in Autism. School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $11,093. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the CEO.

Teacher Standards

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR*</td>
<td>100 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within 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 experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
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*Australian Education Institution - National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 97.46 %.
Culture of the Catholic School

Prayer is an integral part of school life at St Paul’s. Children pray in classrooms, at Monday morning assemblies, and at liturgies and masses. Teachers gather once a week to pray together and reflect. The school has continued to develop valuable links with the Catholic Parish of Camden. Many of our students are now involved as Altar Servers. School support of the Parish Sacramental program has continued. This year, nine teachers from the school have worked as Sacramental Associates in the parish to implement three Sacramental programs. Seventy two students prepared for and received the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Seventy eight students prepared for and received the Sacrament of Confirmation. A number of students also prepared for and received the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There are firm plans to further develop School/Parish relationships in 2008. Classes have attended weekday Parish Masses, celebrated regular Liturgies of the Word and supported the St Vincent De Paul Society and Canice’s Kitchen.

In 2008 our school has continued to support Catholic Missions. The school raised money and promoted awareness of the missions by placing collection boxes in each class, holding a coin donation during St Patrick’s day liturgy and a collection at the Andrew Chinn Concerts for Canice’s Kitchen, a refuge for homeless people at Kings Cross. A substantial amount of money has been donated to Caritas Australia, Catholic Mission and St Vincent de Paul as well. A large amount of food items and gifts have also been donated to the St Vincent De Paul Christmas Appeal.

The culture of our Catholic school has continued to be guided by our Religious Education program. Implementation of the new Religious Education program during 2007 has continued. All primary classes have textbooks and sets of Bibles. The Year 4 students participated in the CEO Wollongong Religious Education Assessment, and achieved excellent results.

Strong links have been forged with the other primary school and Catholic High Schools in the Parish. All staff from the three schools commenced the school year with a combined mass at Camden. During 2007, a small group of students from Mater Dei attended our school each Wednesday. Mater Dei is a coeducational school catering for students with special needs. In 2007 our Year 6 students hosted the annual “Conversation with Bishop Peter Ingham” which included other Year 6 students from neighbouring Catholic Primary schools.

Highlights for 2007

- The learning growth attained by students at the school, particularly in the Year 3 and Year 5 Basic Skills Tests.
- The financial support of Catholic Welfare.
- The representation of our students in sporting competitions and other events.
- The continued successful implementation of restorative practices within our school.
- The opportunity to attend excursions designed for students to learn in a new educational setting.
- St Paul’s Open Day attended by many parents and friends.

Student Welfare

This year has seen the continued implementation of Restorative Practices across the whole school community. Restorative Practices focus on the development of positive relationships and ways in which damaged relationships can be repaired in a non-threatening, non-judgemental manner. They specifically focus on the behaviour or incidents without blaming, draw out who was affected and how they were affected and direct questions towards the problem to try and resolve what needs to happen to make things right again. These practices have continued to impact greatly on the way conflict situations are resolved.

In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, Corporal Punishment is banned in all schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

In light of the Restorative Practice training, our student welfare policy has been further developed to include “restorative levels” that students progress through if unable to abide by the school behaviour guidelines and expectations. A small number of students progressed through these restorative levels in 2007. The focus is very much on the reparation of relationships while still outlining certain consequences of behaviour. These restorative levels are being used in conjunction with a school merit system which continues to be a great source of recognition and reward for students who are constantly promoting and modelling positive behaviours. This year has seen over 500 students attend Principal’s
morning tea as a result of attaining five Principal awards. This is a wonderful achievement. Many students have received more than one Principal award this year.

In 2006 the school introduced an additional recognition of positive behaviour. The Mary MacKillop medallion has been implemented for students who achieve more than five Principal’s awards during their time at St Paul’s Camden. There are three different Mary MacKillop medals that the students are striving to achieve. This year over 30 students received the Mary MacKillop medallion.

Social Skills programs have been run for students in various grades this year. These programs have been integrated with Habits of the Mind (HOM). These programs, along with the Restorative Justice practices have resulted in an improved level of good behaviour throughout the school.

During the building project, there has been a need to regularly review the physical safety of all students and staff. Where necessary, measures have been implemented to ensure the safety of all members of our school community.

As the 2007 School Year concluded, a Drug Forum initiative of the Federal Government was conducted by our Year 5 students for the benefit of our school community. Students and parents viewed a video by the Year 5 students who included information they had learnt during Terms 3 and 4.

The Complaints & Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then go to the link Policies. Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

**Financial Summary**

Each year, the school budget is determined by the ongoing needs of the school. The Principal, Assistant Principal and Senior School Support Officer set the budget using historical information from the previous year and emerging needs. This draft budget is then discussed with key stakeholders and implemented. A copy of the budget is given to our Parish Priest each month.

In 2007 a surplus was created to assist with the known budget demands for 2008. A contingency amount has been budgeted to cover unexpected costs, eg. Additional furniture and the Official Blessing and Opening of the new buildings towards the end of 2008.

During 2007, additional laptops, sporting equipment, a cool room in the new school canteen and guitars were purchased by the Parents and Friends (P & F) group. This was supported by the P & F raising over $50 000 through the annual School Fete.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Paul’s Catholic Primary School, Camden 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

Introduction
St. Paul’s Catholic Primary School continues to transform approaches to learning and teaching to improve the learning outcomes for all students.

Curriculum and Pedagogy
During 2007, all teachers have continued to implement the new Religious Education Syllabus released at the end of 2005. In Year 4, students again participated in the Wollongong Diocese Religious Literacy Assessment, in which students were asked a variety of questions and produced a major work using technology as well as traditional materials.

Across all stages, units of work have been developed to reflect a more integrative approach to learning. The programs have been devised to allow students to explore a wide range of tasks from a greater number of disciplines. To ensure outcomes are adequately covered, the staff have participated in the development of Scope and Sequence documents mapping the curriculum. The new student school report developed by the staff in 2006 to meet new Commonwealth Government guidelines was further refined to provide parents with more detail about the students’ personal/social and work habits.

Learning and Teaching within the school continued to be enhanced by the use of ICLT including the purchase of three Interactive whiteboards and a number of laptops for classroom use. This technology is being used across Key Learning Areas and grades. Programs such as Garage Band have been introduced to an increasing number of students, while myclasses has continued to be used in most primary classrooms, and research tasks/webquests have been used across all grades.

Innovative mathematical strategies involving an individualised approach to learning have now become entrenched within an increased number of classes. A number of teachers are now leading this exciting approach to teaching and learning Mathematics.

Cross-Curriculum
In the area of Literacy, the school continued to set excellent foundations in the younger grades. Reading materials continued to be purchased to expand the range of books. The Reading Recovery Program continues to expand at St Paul’s with 12 teachers of the current staff all trained in this area.

In the area of Numeracy, a number of additional classes across all Stages have been introduced to the child-centred approach to learning Mathematics. These programs have been developed to meet the specific needs of students in classes, and student feedback has been extremely positive about their new style of learning. This has led to a greater understanding of the concepts explored, as well as greater independence for the students.

During 2007 a School Support Officer (SSO) has continued to work with Indigenous students in classrooms. Indigenous Education perspectives were integrated across all Key Learning Areas from Kindergarten to Year 6. Year 3 attended an excursion to Fitzroy Falls in the Moreton National Park and learnt about Aboriginal Culture in the area.

Multicultural perspectives were a focus of the Year 3 unit, “What’s it like to be an Australian”. These students participated in a multicultural food day to discover the influences of other countries on our food in Australia. The Italian language was part of Stage One, and this lead to a greater understanding of the Italian culture.

Meeting the Needs of all Students
Within each classroom, teachers continued to diversify the curriculum to meet the individual needs of students. In English, the use of contracts, guided reading and guided writing enabled the curriculum to be individualised. In mathematics, the use of investigation tasks allowed students to work at their own pace. Students with particular strengths in these Key Learning were enabled to reach deeper understandings of the subject area.

The Review Committee, which monitors the progress of students who are experiencing some difficulties with their learning, has met consistently throughout the year. This committee has also organised Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings one day per term to allow for parent/teacher feedback. The use of Goalview allowed the progress of the students with special needs to be monitored.

Students with Special Literacy needs continued to be supported by individual lessons or in-class assistance by the Literacy School Support
Teacher and/or a School Support Officer. Students who had successfully discontinued from the Reading Recovery Program continued to be monitored in Stages 1 and 2.

There has been a focus on self-directed learning. Units of work have been developed to allow for a more integrated approach to learning. These units have allowed students to explore a wide range of tasks from a variety of disciplines.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

St Paul’s believes in providing excursion and incursion opportunities that expand the students’ learning beyond the classroom environment. In 2007, these included visits to Canberra & Cooba Recreation and Education Centre, Featherdale Farm, Fitzroy Falls, Sydney Harbour Education Cruises, Bywong Goldmining Town, and Symbio Park. Students also access to an infant Literacy Story Teller and two authors. As part of our link with the local community, all students visited the Camden Show earlier this year.

Students at St Paul’s participated in a school-based Public Speaking competition, and two students were selected to represent St Paul’s in the Diocesan Public Speaking Competition where they presented a short speech to an audience. Many students also participated in the MS Readathon and the Premier’s Reading challenge.

In the area of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education, the students have participated in many activities in 2007. Students competed in a wide range of carnivals, such as Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics, progressing on to represent Catholic Education at Regional, Mackillop and PSSA level. One student represented Mackillop at State level in Cricket.

Students were given the opportunity to represent St Paul’s at Regional and Diocesan Gala days. Students represented our school at the Western Region Soccer Gala Day, State Futsal competition, Netball Gala Days and Tiger Shield Soccer Carnival. In Rugby League, students competed in Modified Touch Rugby League, the Dairy Farmer’s Cup, the Western Suburbs Knockout and the Independent Schools Rugby League competition. The Seven-a-side Rugby League Team won the Brett Hodgson Shield and represented Wests Tigers in the State Knockout. Skills Development days included AFL Paul Kelly cup for Years 3 to 6 and Milo Cricket for Years Kindergarten to Year 2.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

The results of these surveys conducted during the year indicated very position perceptions of the school. Almost 100% of the tree groups surveyed, parents, student and staff, believed the school helps students to develop a knowledge and understanding about Catholic tradition. Over 90% of all students either agreed or strongly agreed with all items. Over 90% of all parents either agreed or strongly agreed with a large number of the items listed while a small percentage of parents indicated that they had concerns with the following three survey items:

Item 3. My child is challenged to maximise his/her learning outcomes.

Item 4. The school strives to meet my child’s individual needs.

Item 5. The school provides appropriate information about my child’s progress.

These three areas will be further explored at appropriate meetings in 2008. Of particular note was the parent response of 98% agreeing that the school provides a safe and supportive environment.

In the area of Creative Arts, St. Paul’s students have had the opportunity to be involved in a variety of competitions and performances, such as St. Gregory’s Art Competition and Christmas Card Competitions. A small number of students were chosen to participate in the “Light up Camden” celebrations. The school choir has led our Masses, school liturgies and participated in the Camden Carols festival. Students also danced at the fete and performed in the St. Paul’s Idol Talent Quest. All students in the school participated in the end of year concert by Andrew Chinn which extended over two evenings.

The students in Stage 2 attended the Camden Art Prize exhibition at the Camden Civic Centre, where they toured the art exhibition and did a workshop with a local artist. Our Kindergarten students presented their art works in an Art show at the School Fete.
**Student Achievement**

The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, portfolios, projects and presentations. The school also participates in the state-wide Literacy and Numeracy testing program for the purposes of diagnosing individual learning needs and reviewing whole class teaching programs. Information on student progress is communicated on a regular basis and external assessment results are discussed with parents on an individual basis annually.

**Basic Skills Test**

There were eighty two Year 3 and eighty eight 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: 8% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 30% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Language, followed by Reading and Writing.

Numeracy: 12% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 28% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Number, Patterns & Algebra, followed by Measurement & Data and Space & Geometry.

**Year 5**

Literacy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 69% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Language, followed by Writing and Reading.

Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 67% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Number, Patterns & Algebra, followed by Measurement & Data and Space & Geometry.

The following graphs give an indication of the learning gains made by students in their journey from Year 3 to Year 5.

**National Benchmarks**

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

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 3 2005</th>
<th>Year 5 2007</th>
<th>Year 3 2005</th>
<th>Year 5 2007</th>
<th>Year 5 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>92.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- Strengthening the Parish/School relationship so that liturgical involvement by students and families is enhanced and becomes more active.
- Further development of a school based “Student Welfare Policy” to support the building of positive relationships amongst all members of the St Paul’s community.
- Continued development of Pedagogy that assists all members of the St Paul’s community understand how students learn best.

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Teachers in Stage 2 collaboratively planned together in most of the Key Learning Areas in preparation for new classrooms and developing pedagogy.
- The first stage of the building project comprising 15 classrooms, new toilets and school canteen is almost complete and should be occupied by March 2008.
- The new Religious Education Syllabus for Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 has been implemented.
- The establishment of Working Parties to support enhanced Parish/School links, greater involvement of parents in the school, design and building of a new playground, which extends learning beyond the classroom, is continuing.
- Ten staff members were involved in Professional learning involving “Habits of Mind”.

Priorities for 2008

- Completion of Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Building Project.
- Implementation of new School Renewal Plan, in accordance with the CEO Wollongong School Improvement Cycle.
- Further development of Pedagogy to support teaching in the new classrooms at St Paul’s Camden.
- Support teachers in the implementation of Creative and Practical Arts within each classroom, with particular attention to Music.
- Improved teaching of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education across all grades K-6.
- Continued use of “Habits of Mind” across all grades.
- Consolidation and expanded use of child-centred approach to teaching and learning of Mathematics across all grades.

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

Chris Paton
Principal