Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement
St John the Evangelist School strives to be a Catholic school community that promotes excellence in a learning environment based on Gospel values. Our mission is to provide a quality Catholic school that enables each person to reach full potential in the light of our school motto, “Walk in Peace and Joy.”

Principal’s Message
The 2007 School year was another successful year at St. John’s. Enrolments continue to increase, our building program was completed and parent involvement was excellent, particularly through our Reading Support Program and continuing support for our school fete.

The completion of the refurbished Library provides all students with an outstanding facility of which the school community can be proud. This facility will serve to enhance the learning environment for students for many years to come.

Parents and Friends Statement
The Parents and Friends Committee worked well together and received great support from the wider parent body for a number of fundraising events held during the year. These included Mothers and Fathers Day stalls and Student Discos, a shopping trip for Mums and Dads and of course, the main fundraiser, the Annual Fete which again exceeded expectations, raising well over $30,000. The great work done for the school by so many parents during the year is acknowledged and appreciated. This includes all those within the school community who assisted with sports carnivals, gala days, in classrooms and in a various other ways.

During 2007 approximately $ 47,000 was donated to the school by the P&F Association which contributed to the provision of reading materials, mathematics equipment, classroom furniture and computers.

P&F President

School Captains
The 2007 School Year was a great year at St John’s and is one the students will remember as being very eventful. Years 5 and 6 really enjoyed the new building and used the new, larger space very effectively. Students appreciate having such an excellent learning environment at the school.

Students have learned many of new things because of the learning resources available at St John’s, and have been able to have fun while learning. Once again, the students welcomed a number of new children to the school. Highlights for Year 6, in 2007, included the overnight excursions to Kurrajong in Term 1, where students developed their leadership skills, and the trip to Canberra in Term 3, which was part of learning about the nation’s capital and Federal Government. Year 6 students will also remember their Thanksgiving Mass and the dinner at the Campbelltown Catholic Club.

Year 6 Leaders
School Profile

St John’s is a three stream Catholic Parish School, located near the centre of the city of Campbelltown. As the first Catholic school in the region, St Johns has a long and proud tradition of providing an excellent Catholic education to children from a number of parishes within the Macarthur. St John’s had its beginnings as early as 1849 when Archbishop Polding blessed the cornerstone of the building now known as Quondong. Then it was St Patrick’s School, the first Catholic school built by private enterprise in the colony. A number of dedicated Irish lay teachers ran the school until the Sisters of the Good Samaritan took charge in the late 1880’s.

The school transferred to its present site in 1914. The school name was also changed at this time. Throughout the ensuing years the school has grown and flourished under the guidance of successive principals and dedicated teachers. Many local parents and parishioners have played an active role in the school’s development as has the Campbelltown Catholic Club.

As a Catholic Parish School the spiritual growth and welfare of every student, along with sound educational practices is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, staff and parents under the supervision of both Catholic and Government Educational authorities.

School Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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.

Staffing Profile

In 2007 a total of 29 teachers worked at St Johns including, 21 classroom teachers, 3 executive support teachers, 2 teacher librarians, 1 CAPA (Creative and Practical Arts) teacher, 1 Reading Recovery teacher and 1 Principal. As well as this the school employed 7 School Support Officers and a Canteen Supervisor.

The teaching staff is comprised of teachers with a range of years of experience, some in their early years of teaching and some with several years of experience. The average number of teaching years experience being 15 years. A number of teachers either have post graduate qualifications or are in the process of obtaining them. No permanent staff members left the school at the end of the 2007 school year.

During 2007 staff members were engaged in a variety of professional learning experiences both within the school and beyond, including attending Diocesan based professional growth courses and programs. These had a particular focus during 2007 on some key areas, including Religious Education, Literacy and Numeracy, Information Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT), Learning Pedagogies, Assessment and Reporting and Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S). School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $6,600. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Wollongong Catholic Education Office (CEO).

The average daily attendance rate for staff was 96.47%.

Teacher Standards

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<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>0%</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>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>93.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>93.5</td>
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</table>
Culture of the Catholic School

The Catholic culture at St John’s has continued to grow throughout 2007. The staff, students and parents together with the wider community have joined on many occasions to share, work and celebrate.

The spiritual and prayer life of the St John’s school family has been deepened throughout the year with many beautiful celebrations. These include the weekly gathering as a whole school praying for special intentions or to reflect on scripture, and the celebration of the Eucharist with the students from each grade joining with the wider parish community and their parents and friends. In December, staff enjoyed a prayerful reflection day facilitated by Head of Religious Services, Mark Raue.

The school was able to support the Parish Sacramental Programs, of Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. These occasions were highlights of the year. Many students received the sacraments in their own neighbouring parishes as well as within St John’s Parish itself.

Other highlights included whole school masses to both open and close the 2007 School Year, the Christmas concert held in the school playground and the Year 6 Thanksgiving Mass which celebrated the completion of their primary education.

The relationship between the school and St John’s parish continues to be very positive with staff regularly attending the Parish Mass on Friday mornings before school, and with Fathers. Michael and George both providing support and pastoral guidance for staff and students. Also, in May Bishop Peter Ingham presided over the official opening and blessing of our new buildings and refurbishments.

In 2007 the school supported a number of charities and organizations including, Jeans for Genes, Mater Dei School, Fight Against Cancer, the St Vincent de Paul Society, Caritas and Catholic Missions. Donations totalled approximately $3 500. Students from Mater Dei school participated in various classes at St. John’s during the year and were wonderful ‘guests’.

Student Welfare

Once again there have been many significant highlights during 2007. Mini Vinnies has continued this year, with Year 5 and 6 students meeting once a week with the guidance of teachers, to promote activities that reflect the ideals of service to others within the school. Fundraisers were held to support the work of St Vincent de Paul within the Parish through food drives for the needy and the Winter Appeal. Once again, the Christmas appeal was supported by our whole school community with families bringing a gift to the Christmas Concert.

The Peer Support Program was again run in Term 3 with the Years 5 & 6 students leading our 48 groups of all students from K-6 on a weekly basis. Anti bullying has been the focus of this year’s program through the module ‘Speaking Up’.

Buddy classes have run successfully across the school with many joint experiences being held, including, grade religious celebrations as well as classroom and whole school experiences. The friendships that develop across the grades contribute to social cohesion among students. Year 6 students participated in a Leadership forum at Homebush, which was once again well received by the student leaders attending.

To support our behaviour management policy, leadership team members were assigned playground duties. This was to support students who may have experienced difficulties with social skills on the playground. This initiative has been successful for these children and for the smooth running of playtime. Good Samaritan Awards continued in 2007 and these were presented weekly to promote and acknowledge excellent behaviour and school spirit amongst the students.

Students from Mater Dei School participated in a variety of activities in a number of classes on a regular basis during the year. This initiative has allowed our students to interact with students with significant disabilities, and has assisted students in developing an understanding and appreciation of difference, and the integration of such students into mainstream schooling.

‘Hit the Ground Running’, a program delivered in partnership with the school’s Centacare counsellor took place in Term 4. This initiative
assists Year 6 students in their transition to high school. A program of transition to school for students with special needs was held for students enrolling in Kindergarten, 2008.

The Life Education Program was again a very successful complement to the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) Program for students, and involved all classes, K-6. This program took place in Term 2.

The 2007 School Year saw the introduction to all classes of the ‘Habits of Mind’, an initiative designed to equip all students with insights and strategies resulting in a positive individual approach to learning. Teachers engaged in considerable professional development in order to successfully implement this initiative.

The Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then go to the link Policies.

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

Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

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Financial Summary

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St St John’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

Introduction
The delivery of quality learning and teaching at St John’s has continued to be our objective and this has been pursued in many ways throughout the year.

Curriculum and Pedagogy
The K-2 Religious Education curriculum that was introduced for Infant students at the beginning of 2006 has continued to develop, with a focus on the particular ways young children learn. Teachers received an introduction to the syllabus as well as having a resource book ‘To Know, Worship and Love’ for each of the students. Additional resources have also been purchased to enhance the teaching of Religious Education in the school.

Curriculum integration has become a stronger focus in teaching/learning programs as teachers plan in order to integrate outcomes in light of the Primary Foundation Statements which set out a clear picture of the knowledge, skills and understanding that each student should develop at each stage of primary school. These statements provide a basis for assessing, reporting and discussing student progress. In light of these Foundation Statements and the federally mandated reporting procedures, teachers have reported student progress to a common grade scale A-E. Opportunities were also given to the parents to meet and discuss each report.

The continued use of ICLT as a tool to enhance learning has further directed pedagogical thinking in the classroom, particularly in Stages 2 and 3. Teachers have adopted a more student centred approach to learning, integrating the use of ICLT so that students are able to follow an inquiry style model of learning allowing greater self direction and the opportunity to work more independently. Those students requiring greater scaffolding to support their learning have been able to access explicit teaching and direction from the teachers present in the team teaching environment which has been in place throughout the year, particularly for Stage 3 students.

The 2007 School Year has been the first full academic year in which learning and teaching has taken place in the Stage 3 purpose built learning environment. This structure has greatly supported the pedagogical changes that have been in place for Years 5 and 6 for a number of years now.

Cross-curriculum
During this year there has been a continued focus on early Literacy. This focus has involved reviewing and updating current resources, monitoring the reading levels of students at frequent intervals throughout the year and supporting and assisting teachers in planning and implementing specific Literacy programs. A Reading Support Program was initiated during the year as a means of increasing reading opportunities for our younger students. Both parents and parishioners were part of this very successful program that resulted in improved oral reading for our students and an opportunity for local community participation in school. The reading tutor workshop that assisted in training our program volunteers was highly valued as it enabled parents and grandparents to learn strategies that could be used in supporting our readers and their own children alike. Our Literacy program continues to be supported by the Reading Recovery Program with fifteen students receiving intervention through this program during 2007.

In 2007 a focus was placed on the thinking skills of all students and to this end the Habits of Mind initiative was adopted. The Habits of Mind are explicit descriptions of intelligent behaviours. The students have been encouraged through a whole variety of activities, to construct an awareness about each habit, and helpful strategies that will assist them in learning tasks and challenges utilising the appropriate thinking disposition.

The school’s Indigenous Education Policy identifies where this aspect of cross-curriculum content has been covered through the teaching of the various Key Learning Areas. Additional resources to support the teaching of an Indigenous Education perspective K-6 have also been purchased this year.

Meeting the Needs of all Students
All teachers plan and assess in order to meet the needs of all students. Learning experiences are designed to be relevant and purposeful so that students are supported in their learning. In this way, all students are able to make learning gains, regardless of their level of achievement or competency. A more open and negotiable manner of teaching and assessment has allowed teachers to meet more accurately the needs of individual students and this has
certainly complemented the pedagogical thinking and style of learning generated in Stages 2 and 3.

Staff development has resulted in a greater ability to meet all the needs of all students. The move from the conventional presentation of classrooms, in Stage 3, is one way in which the school has met the needs of those senior students. This has allowed greater independence for some students and the opportunity for those students requiring greater structure and direction to work more readily, one on one, with a teacher.

The needs of students stretch beyond the academic and our sporting program and opportunities for school and Diocesan representation allow students to develop and nurture their sporting abilities. Peer Support is an integral part of the school calendar and this provided another specific opportunity for peer relationship building during Term 3. Our school counsellor has once again supported those students seeking one-on-one help to discuss issues and work with strategies to assist in overcoming students’ individual concerns or difficulties.

Expanded Learning Opportunities
Throughout the year the students have been given the opportunity to attend excursions as a grade. These were planned as extended learning opportunities to support an area of study within the classroom. The senior students travel the furthest on such outings, and Grades 5 and 6 participating in overnight excursions. Other grades were able to visit the local council offices, Campbelltown Bike Track, Bicentennial Park Field Centre and City Farm as well as school incursions including ‘Life Education’. Our Peer Support Program, ‘Speaking Up’ focussed on anti-bullying behaviour and strategies.

Senior students were given the opportunity to participate in the Diocesan Public Speaking Competition held during Term 4. Towards the end of Term 4 students were involved in the school Christmas Concert. Stage 3 participated in a dance program, ‘Hip, Hop, Rhythm and Rock’ over a period of ten weeks, enjoying the expertise of a trained dance instructor. In a similar way, grades Kinder, 1, 2, 3 and 4 were involved in a gymnastics program, again utilising the skills of an instructor and the equipment necessary to nurture and develop fundamental movement skills. This latter program also ran over a term with a one hour session planned for each week.

In the sporting arena, St John’s has been actively involved and well represented in a great number of sports. Apart from the annual swimming, cross-country and athletics carnivals, there were numerous Gala Days attended by our students involving sports such as AFL, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Netball and Cricket. The school’s sport program also included a Swim Program for Grades 2, 3 and 5 during Term 4.

Other sporting successes during the year included, members of the Rugby Union Team winning the Diocesan Knockout Gala Day and progressed to the State Final where they were narrowly beaten, and the open Rugby League team made the final of the All Schools Rugby League Gala Day. The Girl’s Cricket Team also featured, being crowned Campbelltown Zone champions and the team was invited to play at the SCG in January 2008 during the Australia versus India Test Series.

During the year a number of children in Year 5 and 6 were selected to represent the Wollongong Diocese in sports including Softball, Hockey, Rugby League, Rugby Union and Cricket. Several of these children were selected for Mackillop Teams to compete at PSSA trials. One student gained selection into the NSW Cricket Team. At the Annual CDF Diocesan Awards ceremony, six of St John’s students received Primary medallions and trophies in recognition of their outstanding achievements in sport.

In school, several health initiatives have been promoted and have been adopted by classes, as students have been encouraged to increase their levels of exercise and to monitor their eating habits. ‘Munch and Crunch’ is the opportunity for students to have a healthy snack. This has been maintained in 2007 and at approximately ten o’clock each day is offered to children to help energise them.

Student Achievement
The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, 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 74 Year 3 and 76 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: 15% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 16% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in reading, followed by language and writing.

Numeracy: 24% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 16% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in number patterns and algebra, followed by measurement, data and space.

**Year 5**

Literacy: 1% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 40% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in reading, followed by writing and language.

Numeracy: 3% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 40% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in measurement and data, followed by number patterns and algebra.

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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<th>Year 3 2005</th>
<th>Year 3 2006</th>
<th>Year 3 2007</th>
<th>Year 5 2005</th>
<th>Year 5 2006</th>
<th>Year 5 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>99</td>
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<td>92</td>
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<td>91</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: National Benchmarks not included have not yet been published.
Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction
Results obtained from a survey in 2007 indicated quite high satisfaction rates for the school among parents, teachers and students. The school’s ability to help children to develop a knowledge and understanding about the Catholic tradition was seen as a strength by all three groups. Students state that they are proud of their school. Some parents indicate that they would like further information regarding the progress of their child.

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. Key components of the plan are to:

- Build a genuine community of Pastoral Care
- Build a sense of collaboration between parents and school
- Develop a contemporary pedagogy to enhance learning and teaching
- Ensure that school facilities meet contemporary learning and teaching requirements
- Develop staff and student spirituality

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Refurbishment of school library completed
- Significant area of school playground resurfaced and decorated
- A range of programs were provided to deliver quality pastoral care for students
- Staff engaged in further professional growth relating to authentic student centred learning
- A positive relationship between school, parents and parish was maintained

Priorities for 2008

- Upgrade classroom furniture and student learning environment
- Continue to provide a range of quality pastoral care programs
- Maintain productive relationships between school, parents and parish
- Further acknowledge and celebrate indigenous culture
- Engage in ongoing professional development particularly as it relates to student centred learning and thinking dispositions
- Re-connect with our Good Samaritan heritage

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

Peter McKenzie
Principals