Vision Statement

Our vision is that St John’s Catholic Primary School will be an educating community in which children, teachers and pastor support each other in pursuing the highest quality of Catholic education for each individual child.

Principal’s Message

The year of 2007 has been another successful year for the school community of St John’s Catholic Primary School, Dapto. The Principal, Parish Priest, Fr Doug Rheinberger, the Leadership Team, the staff, parents of the school and Parishioners have all worked together so as to provide quality Catholic learning and teaching for the students.

This Annual School Report clearly illustrates the vast array of learning opportunities provided for the students of the school in the context of a Christ centred collaborative culture of learning.

During the year great emphasis has been placed on maximising student learning. Organised specific intervention, directed to the students that have not learnt what they were required to learn and child centred enrichment learning experiences, have been highlights of the year.

Parent Involvement

Once again the parents of the school community have made a very positive contribution to the success of the year. There has been a high parental involvement with the 2007 Spring Fair being a highlight both financially and socially.

Student Leadership

School Captains, Sports Captains and the Student Representative Council were actively involved during the course of the year supporting all students in the school. They were also called upon to carry out a number of community based and inter-school based initiatives.

School Profile

St John’s Catholic Primary School was founded in 1839 at West Dapto. The Sisters of St Joseph taught in the school from 1880 under the direction of Blessed Mary MacKillop. In 1900 the school and convent were moved to the present site. The anticipated student population will be 481 in 2008.

At present Kindergarten, Years 1, 2 and 4 are located in the Werowi Campus and Year 3 and our Middle School Stage 3 (Years 5 & 6) in the Jerematta Campus.

The beginning of 2005 saw the commencement of Middle School Stage 3. This initiative has been designed to promote and enhance quality Catholic learning and teaching and encompasses student centred, independent and self directed learning.

Students are grouped by age cohort into 19 classes from K – 6. Students continue their education at either St Joseph’s Catholic High School, Corpus Christi Catholic High School, Edmund Rice College, St Mary Star of the Sea College, Dapto High School or Kanahooka High School.

St John’s School received Special Education funding for twenty two children for the 2007 school year.
Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staffing Profile

The School Leadership Team comprises the Principal, Assistant Principal (Director, Werowi Campus), Religious Education Co-Ordinator, Co-Ordinator 3 (Director, Jerematta Campus) and two Co-Ordinator 2 positions.

Total staff comprises 30 teachers. The number of classroom teachers totals 28 with a specialist support staff of 11. Administrative support staff totals 2.

There are three staff members leaving St John’s at the end of the 2007 school year.

During 2007 St John’s Catholic Primary School personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities at school level including CEO run courses related to improving student outcomes. These include:

- myclasses,
- Leadership Conferences,
- Reading Recovery,
- REC Conference,
- Community Languages (Italian),
- Effective Teaching & Learning,
- Learning Communities Project (ICLT),
- Religious Education Curriculum,
- TEACHnology,
- Assessment and Reporting,
- Values Education, and
- Beginning Teachers.

St John’s Catholic Primary School development days involved thirty two staff. These days focused on: Wisdom School Spirituality and Restorative Justice as well as Assessment and Reporting.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $7,245. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning provided by the Catholic Education Office.

Teacher Standards

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI - NOOSR*</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
</tbody>
</table>

* Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 94.77%.

2007 Highlights

- Increased involvement of the school in Parish programs with even greater cooperation between the school and Parish Catechists, St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Women’s League.
- The continued refinement of Middle School and Professional Learning/Teaching teams (Dufour Model) with an emphasis on Self Directed Learning in Stage 2.
- Continued involvement in the ASISTM project focusing on the integration of Mathematics and Technology in an integrated unit under the theme of Environmental Awareness. This project links St John’s with Corpus Christi Catholic High School and two other Catholic Primary Schools in the region.
Culture of the Catholic School

St John’s Primary School has continued to work closely with the Parish and the wider community during 2007 to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. Our Parish Priest, Fr Douglas Rheinberger, works closely with the school to provide the children with the opportunity to attend Mass in both class and whole school groups on a regular basis. The children are encouraged to become involved in the Sacramental Programmes within the Parish on weekends.

In addition to regular Masses, St John’s celebrates significant Feasts and events, such as, Holy Week, Ascension, Pentecost, ANZAC Day, Grandparents’ Day, Mary MacKillop, all the Feasts of Mary and All Saints/All Souls Day in the form of whole school Prayer Celebrations. This year our School hosted the annual Prayer and Conversation with the Bishop. We were joined by four other schools from our region and their Year Six students.

Our school day begins with morning prayer on assembly and each week, on a Thursday, classes are responsible for leading morning prayer time using the children’s prayers. Parents are present at these prayer times. Staff also has a weekly prayer time together.

Staff are encouraged to attend the spirituality courses offered by our Dioceses and staff development days are dedicated to the spiritual growth of each staff member. In 2007 our staff participated in the Wisdom Schools spirituality programme which consisted of four, one hour staff meetings and culminated in a retreat day run by Graham Neist.

Great care is taken to ensure that religion lessons follow the curriculum set down by our Diocese and that staff are suitably qualified to teach the children about their Catholic faith. Further resourcing and familiarity with the K-6 curriculum this year has enriched the teaching of Religious Education. Fifty-five of our Year 4 children completed the Religious Literacy exam this year. Samples of work done in Religious Education are published each term in our Religious Education Newsletter and sent home to our parents.

The Sacramental Programme is Parish based and the children from St John’s join with other Catholic children from the Parish in workshop days and after school lessons. The school works closely with the catechists and Parish Priest on these occasions.

During the month of June, seventy children from St John’s joined with twenty other children from the Parish to receive the Sacrament of Penance for the first time. Fifty-two children joined with eleven others from the Parish in September to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, celebrated by Bishop Ingham. On the Feast of Christ the King, another forty-eight of our children with twelve other children from the Parish received Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion.

The school community of St John’s continues to reach out to those in need. Through Project Compassion the children raised $650 and since then through the efforts of Mission Week and ongoing support of the missions, the school was able to contribute $1,300 to Catholic Missions and has supported St Vincent De Paul in both their winter and Christmas appeals with food and clothing and $600 cash.

In 2008 at St John’s we will strive to continue to witness the values of Jesus Christ and to provide a learning environment where learning is centred around these values.

Student Welfare

St John’s school community continues to place great priority on the welfare of each student. The initiatives that are in place are underpinned by the message of the Gospel and are given direction by the key principles of Restorative Justice and Australian values.

A number of pastoral care initiatives have been implemented throughout the year. In conjunction with Centacare the school offers to all students a counselling service. The service is in place to support students who are experiencing difficulty in relation to family and or school based problems. The service is extremely well utilised and is found to be beneficial by those that seek the support.

Students and families that experience a death or illness in the family are supported by the school’s Care Group. This group of parents coordinated by the Principal discreetly provide meals to families if required.

The school also offers to students the Seasons for Growth Program. This program is based on the belief that change, loss and grief are a normal and valuable part of life. Children need the opportunity to examine how issues such as death, separation and divorce impact on their lives. Seasons for Growth provides the opportunity for each participant to integrate the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand and to cope with change, loss and
The program involves 8 weekly sessions and concludes with a celebration.

During 2007 the school had a particular focus on implementing restorative justice practices. Guided by the Marist Youth Care Group the Leadership Team, followed by the whole staff, were involved in series of workshop sessions and a reflection day to explore the key principles that underpin the notion of restorative justice. Key principles such as inclusiveness, flexibility, problem solving, empowerment of students, teachers and parents, and engaging in forward thinking and optimism will be central to work during the 2008 school year. The intention is to continue to lay the foundations of these principles in a context that embraces collaborative relationships for all members of the school community.

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

**Financial Summary**

During 2007 the St John’s Parents & Friends Association allocated funds towards the following items / projects:

- Hospitality and Welcome,
- Care Group purchases,
- Overhead projectors,
- Literacy & Numeracy - teacher and student educational resources and aids,
- Science - teacher and student educational resources and aids,
- Sporting / School Portable Shade Shelters,
- Information technology camera equipment,
- Interactive whiteboards and accessories,
- Tables for Jerematta Meeting Room, Jerematta Campus,
- Portable CD / radio players used for classrooms,
- Ibimaster binding machine, and
- Water tank, Jerematta Campus.

Finance has been allocated for further expenditure on school premises in December 2007 and to continue into the Christmas holiday period.

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

The learning and teaching at St John’s Catholic Primary School is facilitated in the context of the NSW Board of Studies curriculum. The syllabus documents of each of the Key Learning Areas are followed. The Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Curriculum is given priority and is implemented in all classes.

**Curriculum and Pedagogy**

During 2007 the school community has continued to strive to create a culture of collaborative learning within the school. The school has made significant steps towards fully operating as a professional learning community. This mode of organization is based on the Richard Dufour model and supported by the work of Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan.

The curriculum is implemented by teams of teachers focusing on three key questions. What do we want students to learn? How do we know when they have learnt what is required? and what will we do if students have not learnt what is required?

The learning is outcomes based and is given direction by each of the Key Learning Area syllabus documents.

As a result of the work of the Teaching Teams the students are exposed to a collective pedagogy, which is enriched by a collaborative approach to learning. The skills, talents and specific pedagogy of each of the team members are drawn upon to ensure that students learn what they are required to learn.

A variety of means are used so as to determine whether students have learnt. One of the key tasks for each team of teachers is to design common Stage/Grade assessment tasks. These are accompanied by a collaboratively formed specific marking criteria in school assessment tasks. Basic Skills Testing in Year 3 and Year 5 and the Year 4 Religious Literacy Assessment are all used to monitor student achievement in the context of NSW Board of Studies Foundation Statements.

Student achievement levels are reported to parents in a variety of ways including formal and informal parent teacher interviews and written reports which are issued twice per year. The written report complies with Commonwealth, State and Diocesan requirements and includes A to E grading for each of the Key Learning Areas.

Integrated learning experiences are implemented in various forms for students in Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2. Students in Middle School are engaged in a variety of integrated learning experiences based on Human Society and It’s Environment, Science and Technology and Personal Development and Health outcomes.

Students in all Stages are immersed in a technology rich learning environment. Information Communication and Learning Technology (ICLT) is embedded in most aspects of student learning. This is due to extensive staff based professional learning and strong support from The Parents and Friends Association for the on going purchasing of technology related hardware.

**Cross Curriculum**

St John’s considers the learning and teaching of Literacy as a high priority. Quality pedagogy is continually being refined and developed so as to ensure the needs of all students are being met. Intervention is planned and implemented for the students who have not learnt the aspects of Literacy that they should have learnt. Creative means have been devised involving teaching teams and School Support Officers so as to administer timely, specific intervention for both Literacy and Numeracy.

The Reading Recovery Program continues to be implemented in Year 1 with 26 children participating in the program this year.

Numeracy is also a key component of student learning. The Count Me in Too Program is implemented in Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 2. Ongoing professional learning, collaborative planning and a commitment to updating resources ensures the delivery of high quality Numeracy related learning tasks for all students in all Stages.

In the context of the school’s Indigenous Education Plan the staff continue to utilise culturally appropriate learning and teaching resources so as provide an Indigenous perspective to specified units of work.

An Italian Language Program is taught in Year 3. The students participate in weekly lessons then showcase their work at a School Assembly.

**Meeting the Needs of All Students**

Aspects of various learning theory and higher order thinking skills including Bloom’s Taxonomy, De Bono’s Thinking Hats, Thinker Keys, Multiple Intelligences and aspects of Constructivism are all used to diversify learning.
Stage 1 students have had the opportunity to be engaged in diverse learning tasks within a number of Key Learning Areas. IPod and Garage Band technology have been utilised so as to create individual and class based Podcasts. The Podcasting has enabled students to gather then communicate information on a range of topics. This allowed students to be extended in many ways and also enabled students who experience some difficulty with learning to be fully engaged in the learning.

Stage 2 students have been engaged in a number of learning tasks which cater for a variety of learning styles. These learning tasks integrate practical skill development within the Literacy and Numeracy Programs focusing on cooking and sewing. Students have had extensive opportunity to learn and practise a number of cooking and sewing skills, which are then recorded and communicated using a variety of spoken and written forms.

Stage 2 students have been introduced to a number of self-directed learning skills. The nominated skills which primarily focus on levels of concentration, are the ability to use time productively, the ability to work independently or collaboratively, the ability to produce quality work within a given time and the ability to make positive learning choices. These skills are monitored and graphed by students over a period of time. Specific advice can be then given to students in relation to a specific self-directed learning skill or skills.

Stage 3 students have all been involved in diversified learning opportunities focusing on the process of film production. Small groups of students created ideas that were story boarded, scripted, filmed and edited. This resulted in the creation of a short film. All the short films were showcased during the 2007 FlickFest at a local Cinema and viewed by representatives of the Catholic Education Office, local Primary and High Schools, parents and family members. The students were all engaged in the process of film production which utilised sophisticated Green Screen technology and Final Cut Pro software. The 2007 FlickFest People’s Choice Award was presented to the film titled ‘Mafia’s Secret Pie’.

Stage 3 students were invited to participate in an enrichment learning opportunity funded by the Commonwealth Government titled Australian Schools Innovation In Science Technology & Mathematics (ASISTM). This involved the University Of Wollongong, Corpus Christi Catholic High School, Nazareth Catholic Primary School and Stella Maris Catholic Primary School. The enrichment research based learning project aimed to promote and further develop Mathematics and Science knowledge and skills.

The St John’s project focused on the litter and rubbish generated by the school. The group of students known as Team Bin were engaged in a complex series of tasks that allowed them to work within a learning framework developed by the school for the purposes of extension and enrichment. The students used a variety of means including surveys, observations, filming, on line forums and discussions to gather relevant data. The students analysed the data over an extended period of time then communicated their findings within the context of formal presentations to parents, students, representatives of University Of Wollongong, local Catholic Primary and High Schools and members of the Catholic Education Office. As a result of the work undertaken the students were able to make a number of recommendations about the nature of school based litter management. In doing so they were able to be exposed to and learn complex mathematical and scientific research skills.

The learning needs of 25 Special Education students are catered for across the school by the development of Individual Education Plans. These plans are developed collaboratively in consultation with parents. The GoalView program is used to monitor all Individual Education Plans and update relevant data.

**Expanded Learning Opportunities**

A vast number of sporting opportunities were offered to the St John’s students during the course of the year. Weekly grade based sport, whole school sporting carnivals, inter-school carnivals and gala days were offered. A number of students were selected to represent the school in Swimming, Cross Country, Athletics, Cricket, Rugby Union, Netball, Rugby League, AFL, Basketball, Softball and Soccer. Thirteen students were selected to represent the Diocese while eight students were selected for higher MacKillop representation. Early Stage 1, Stage 1 and Stage 3 students participated in Verse Speaking and Choir in the annual Wollongong Eisteddfod. A Stage 3 student won a national poetry competition organised by the Sisters of St Joseph focusing on Mary MacKillop. Another Stage 3 student won the local Dapto Mall Environment Bag competition. This included a personal prize along with $1000.00 for the school. A number of students entered the National Literacy Week Writing competition, one student being awarded highly commended.
**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 58 Year 3 and 57 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: 9 of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 14% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Writing followed Reading.

Numeracy: 18% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 12% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Measurement & Data, Space and Geometry followed by Number, Patterns and Algebra.

**Year 5**

Literacy: 2% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 42% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Writing and Reading followed by Language.

Numeracy: 5% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 53% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Measurement & Data followed by Number, Patterns & Algebra.

**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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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<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>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>Numeracy</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: National Benchmarks not included have not yet been published

**Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction Survey Results**

In our survey of parents and staff an overwhelming strength was highlighted in the area that the school helps the children in our care to develop a knowledge and understanding about their Catholic tradition.

Other areas of strengths from the parent survey were that the school provides many opportunities for parent involvement and that the school effectively communicates information about activities and events. The school will continue to develop areas of maximising children’s learning outcomes. Results also show that we provide a safe and supportive environment for the students in our care and that, as a staff, we continue to develop in children an understanding of their responsibilities at school.

The student survey showed that our strengths were that the teachers encourage them to learn to the best of their ability and that a number of sporting and other activities are provided for them to become involved. Our future development is to continue to build a support group of people who students can approach when they need help.
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.

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Significant progress achieved in the ongoing development of St John’s as a whole school professional learning community with emphasis on specific learning intervention.
- The development of learning and teaching teams across the school.
- Substantial provision of technological hardware throughout the school, with an emphasis on Middle School.
- Continued nurturing of staff spirituality through the provision of opportunities for the staff to engage in spirituality programs such as Wisdom Schools, Restorative Justice and Diocesan based programs.

Priorities for 2008

- To explore the concept of whole school target setting in reference to student achievement.
- The school’s involvement with the Parish / Diocese in relation to World Youth Day with a particular focus on the visit of the Cross and Icon to the local Dapto Parish.
- Refurbishment of school administration area and the Jerematta Room.
- To further engage in ecological conversation / stewardship through the extension of the school’s environment project to include solar technology.

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

Michael Connelly
Principal