Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

A Catholic educational community providing a quality learning and environment for all

Principal’s Message

2007 was a successful year with the school excelling in many areas. Highlights of the year included the Values Education Forum, Book Week, Walk Safely to School Day and the implementation of the School Environment and Management Plan.

The school continued to offer the students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills necessary for living in the world of today. We continually challenged the students to live and give witness to shared values in the home, school and community and incorporated the National Safe School’s Framework to achieve this goal. A copy of this framework can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au

Parent Involvement

St Brigid’s Primary School welcomed the involvement of parents into the life of the school and valued their contributions to the education and welfare of the students. Twenty three parents were actively engaged in literacy and numeracy programs while fifty four parents worked on a voluntary basis in the school canteen. Two parents coordinated and managed the smooth running of the school uniform clothing pool while many others assisted with Book Club, sporting carnivals and events, the general organisation of the library and the publishing of 2007 St Brigid’s Year Book.

Several parents choose to be part of the life of the school through attendance at the P&F Association meetings which were held nine times throughout the year. Parents were given the opportunity to be informed about student education, such as Values Education and Gifted Education at these meetings as well as having the opportunity to plan and be part of fundraising and social events of the school.

Some of these included the P&F Welcome Barbeque, Movies in the Playground, Race Day, Trivia Night, cake stalls and Year 6 Farewell.

Parent/teacher interviews were offered in June while school assemblies relating to Values Education in Term 3 were very well attended. These assemblies were an ideal opportunity for parents to participate in student learning in this area.

Student Leadership - Student Council

Students were given many opportunities to show leadership to their peers. The Student Representative Council met with the Principal twice a term and were invited to discuss new ideas and issues such as bullying in the playground and/or ways in which fellow students could improve their behaviour. Stage 3 students played a vital role with the implementation of the Talent Quest and the buddy link with Early Stage 1. They were instrumental in the continued implementation of the School Environment and Management Plan as well as representing the school at the Anzac Day Memorial Service at McCabe Park in Wollongong.

School Profile

St Brigid’s Primary School is a one stream school that serves the Parish of Gwynneville. It is located at the foothills of Mt Keira and draws its enrolment predominantly from the suburbs of Gwynneville, Mt Keira, Keiraville, and West Wollongong. It was founded by the Sisters of the Order of the Good Samaritan in 1951.
As a Parish school, St Brigid’s Primary School is an integral part of the Parish of Gwynneville and wider community and accordingly, the Parish Administrator, Fr Ron Peters, the staff and parents all share a common responsibility for the spiritual formation and welfare of all students in their care.

2007 Highlights

- Maths Enrichment Day
- Book Week
- Participation in the Premier’s Reading Challenge
- Mission Week Spell-a-thon
- Literacy and Numeracy Week Diocesan Writing Competition

Student Enrolments

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.

### Student Attendance for 2007

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>92.3</td>
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Staffing Profile

There were seven full-time teachers and four part-time teachers at St Brigid’s Primary School. Three School Support Officers provided assistance for students with special needs. All classes enjoyed specialised music and drama lessons weekly and Italian was taught in Stage 2. The Reading Recovery Program assisted students in Stage 1 with reading and writing.

The Leadership Team comprised of the Principal, Assistant Principal and Religious Education Coordinator. The administration staff included a Senior School Support Officer and three School Support Officers.

The teaching experience of the staff varied. Four teachers have been teaching for less than 10 years while another four teachers have been teaching between 15 and 20 years. One teacher had over 25 years of experience while another two teachers had more than 30 years experience. Seven members of staff have post graduate qualifications.

At the end of the 2007 school year 18% of the total staff left the school.

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 96.23%.

In 2007, St Brigid’s Primary School personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes. This included Diversifying the Curriculum, Gifted Education, Autism, Values Education, Information Technology, Supportive Schools Environment and Behaviour Management.

Whole school development days involved 18 members of staff and focused on Values Education facilitated by Kevin Treston, and First Aid Certificate by Peter Keyes. Other professional learning activities provided at school level including Catholic Education Office run courses were Mathematics and a whole school perspective on SENA, Creative and Practical Arts, Information Technology, classroom strategies for gifted students, exploring the Scriptures and Board of Studies Foundation Statements. On average, 12 members of staff attended these courses.

Teacher Standards

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

- **Teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised by AEI-NOOSR***: 100%
- **Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia within AEI-NOOSR* guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications**: 0%
- **Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context**: 0%

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

St Brigid’s Primary School is proud of its identity as a Catholic educational community. The Catholic identity was actively promoted and recognised through the maintenance of religious symbols and sacred spaces in each classroom and was evident in the harmonious relationships that existed among staff, students and parents. Teachers agreed that during 2007 the school had helped students develop a knowledge and understanding about Catholic tradition and faith while 86% of the students stated in a survey that they agreed with this.

Prayer was a feature of the daily life of the school. Morning assembly commenced with prayer and the school community paused at various times throughout the day to pray in a formal manner.

Celebrations that focus on the religious dimensions of Catholic faith and traditions allowed the daily life of the school to be linked in a very real sense to the mission of the Church and the life of the Parish.

Students from K-6 attended weekly the Parish Mass. All liturgical celebrations were thoroughly planned to ensure such celebrations were meaningful to the students.

During the year, the school celebrated the Church seasons of Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas as well as participating in a number of liturgies and prayer services to celebrate special Feast days. The students receiving the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation completed units of work that coincided and complemented the Sacramental Parish Based Program.

All class teachers taught Religious Education according to the current curriculum set by the Catholic Education Office and worked hard to instil in the students a sense of the sacred.

In 2007, the whole school modelled Catholic values by its involvement in activities which highlighted Social Justice. Two large donations of food and goods were forwarded to St Vincent de Paul Society for distribution to those in need in the local community. $2,111.00 was forwarded to Caritas Australia in support of those less fortunate in other countries.

Student Welfare

Throughout 2007, a number of programs were put in place to cater for the welfare and well being of students. In a survey, the majority of the students strongly agreed that they were aware of their rights and responsibilities and a vast majority stated that they felt safe at school.

A Centacare counsellor worked at the school one day per fortnight and provided student counselling when required. The students in Year 5 and Year 2 were involved in the social behaviour programs ‘Tools for Everyday Peacemakers’ and ‘Be Still’.

A buddy system existed between Kindergarten and Year 6 which assisted the younger students with their introduction to primary schooling and provided them with mentors and a support system.

The Peer Support Program was evaluated throughout the year and altered to align itself more fully with the School Supportive Environment Policy. The revised program will be fully implemented in 2008 and will include all students.

Three teachers were involved in a series of workshops the focus of which was Re-thinking Supportive School Environments. As a consequence, all members of staff and the students were also involved in revisiting playground and school rules to ensure that these were continually adjusted throughout the year to accommodate safe and equitable procedures and practices.

Positive behaviour was recognised and encouraged through the School Merit system and at school assemblies. A new Student Council Award was introduced and all students received recognition for their achievements throughout the year.

The school canteen incorporated a preventative approach to obesity by offering healthy food alternatives to the students.

St Brigid’s Primary School fully implemented its revised Gifted Education Policy. Access to all policies and guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.

The Complaints and 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.
Financial Summary

The Parish contributed approximately $9700 towards the upkeep of the building and premises. This included their commitment to the Program Maintenance, electrical repairs and the removal of a tree.

The P&F Association contribution to the school included funding for the purchase of resources of the school library, four laptops, pin boards for the library and classroom, repairs to the shade cover in the infant playground and a changeable school sign.

The school used School Enhancement and Debt Servicing Obligation (SEDSO) funds to repay the loan for the new classrooms and library.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Brigid's Catholic Primary School, Gwynneville 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. Brigid's Primary School is a Catholic educational community which provides a quality learning and teaching environment for all. Regular practices and structures exist which enable students to fulfil their potential. This year, there have been many initiatives designed to create learning opportunities.

Curriculum & Pedagogy

The school implemented all Board of Studies Key Learning Areas, using each syllabus to guide learning and teaching. All classes followed the Diocese of Wollongong Religious Education Syllabus.

In 2007, the school continued to implement the Assessment and Reporting procedures which complied with Federal Government requirements. Student reports, containing the Common Grade Scale, were completed using Filemaker Pro Database and went home in June and December. Teachers continued to utilise class Assessment Plans, which enabled them to plan assessment experiences linked to their teaching program. Individual work samples were collected as evidence of student progress.

Teachers designed work programs which follow the Diocesan Programming Policy. A feature of the programs was the high degree of integration with teaching units including Foundation Statements, Outcomes and learning
experiences across a range of Key Learning Areas.

The school maintained its commitment to promote all aspects of Information Technology. The students were regularly given the opportunity to improve their computer knowledge and skills, whilst completing carefully designed technology tasks. The appointment of a specialist teacher to work collaboratively with Stage 2 and 3 classroom teachers, resulted in students achieving learning outcomes whilst undertaking a vast array of technology projects. Continued financial support provided by the Parents and Friends Association ensured that resources in this area were maintained, which had a direct benefit on learning and teaching.

**Cross-Curriculum**

The Reading Recovery Program is a literacy intervention program for students experiencing difficulty in the early acquisition of literacy skills. Eight Year 1 students were successfully discontinued from the program this year.

The promotion of literacy learning is part of the school’s vision of excellence in education. The 2007 Literacy Plan was implemented throughout the year and funds were allocated for the purchase of resources to assist in the literacy development of students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Numeracy continued to be a major focus for learning and teaching. Teachers implemented the Board of Studies K-6 Mathematics Syllabus, using current teaching techniques and resources, which were updated throughout the year. A strong emphasis was placed on problem solving, both within planned lessons and through the publishing of a Maths Problem in the school newsletter. The school conducted a Mathematics Enrichment Day where Stage 3 students from selected local Catholic schools came together to undertake challenging activities which promoted mental computation and problem solving.

A series of school assemblies were conducted which focussed on Values Education. Each class presented a core value from the National Safe School’s Framework and these presentations supported classroom lessons undertaken in this area. The staff were also involved in a Staff Development Day, which examined the core values from a Catholic perspective.

The school continued to follow its Indigenous Education Plan which specifically addressed ways in which the Diocesan Policy is being implemented. The three year plan, involves the inclusion of cross-curriculum content throughout integrated teaching units from Early Stage One to Stage Three. The Acknowledgement of Country Statement, which recognises the traditional owners of the land where the school is situated on, became a regular feature of school assemblies.

The School Environment and Management Plan was successful in providing direction for a variety of environmental initiatives being carried out by the students. A large emphasis was placed on encouraging the students to take responsibility for the implementation of the plan. This was mainly achieved through the actions of the Environment Club, which involved over forty students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Major environmental achievements at St. Brigid’s Primary School in 2007 included the continuation of the three bin system for rubbish disposal, the maintenance of the vegetable garden, the worm farm and compost bin and the reduction of water and energy use throughout the school.

**Meeting The Needs Of All Students**

Teachers catered for a wide range of student abilities through careful planning and programming. Opportunities were created which enabled students to take responsibility for their own learning through using technology to research and complete work. Students acknowledged this work in a student survey with the vast majority of those surveyed strongly agreeing that their teacher encourages them to learn to the best of their ability.

The school provided a range of experiences outside the classroom including sport, music, chess, environmental initiatives and public speaking. These activities afforded talented students the opportunity to display their competency both at a whole school level and in the public arena. The school developed a Gifted Education Policy which has been carefully designed after due consideration of the Diocesan Policy. All teachers were involved in formulating this policy and parents were consulted via an information evening. The plan was designed to meet the needs of students who display exceptional ability in a wide range of areas and it will be fully implemented in 2008.

Specific student learning needs were addressed in a variety of ways. The Review Committee continued to provide support for teachers in monitoring students with specific needs in
The students received regular help from School Support Officers who met with classroom teachers to plan learning experiences which supported the students and developed their skills. In 2007, five students received specific assistance. GoalView was used by teachers to monitor the students and parents were kept informed of their child’s progress.

Students in all Stages were provided with opportunities to experience self directed learning. Group work, research projects and properties associated with myclasses and myinternet challenged the students to investigate various topics and to develop a greater understanding and knowledge of curriculum content. There were opportunities for students to develop their multimedia skills through the use of the digital still and video cameras to create Powerpoint presentations, web pages, podcasts and iMovies.

**Expanded Learning Opportunities**

Students participated in a wide range of competitions. Stages 2 and 3 were given the opportunity to compete in the Australasian All Schools Competitions in Mathematics and English with some outstanding results achieved, including a High Distinction in the Year 3 English paper. Many students entered various competitions including the Premier’s Reading Challenge, where forty four students read a selection of quality literature. Two Stage 3 students were placed first and second in the inaugural Wollongong Diocese Writing Competition.

The students participated in a wide range of sporting activities at school, regional, Diocesan and MacKillop levels. A highlight of the sporting events this year was the Cross Country team winning the percentage trophy and achieving third placing overall for the second consecutive year. Students who possessed outstanding individual sporting talent were able to vie for selection through Diocesan Trials, with twelve students being chosen in Wollongong Representative Teams. One Year 6 student gained selection in the New South Wales All Schools Basketball Team that competed in the National Championships in Cairns. Throughout the year, various school carnivals were conducted including swimming, cross country and athletics. These events encouraged maximum student participation and developed community spirit.

St. Brigid’s Primary School conducted a Public Speaking Competition for students in Stage 3. Eleven children participated with the winners from each section going on to represent the school at the Regional level.

**Professional Learning**

All staff members have participated in a number of Professional Learning Courses throughout the year. The main emphasis was placed on improving the quality of classroom teaching. Courses attended by staff included Effective Learning and Teaching, Differentiating the Curriculum, TEACHnology, Special Education, Autism, Reading Recovery and Language Strategies for the Classroom.

The teachers participated in regular staff meetings which enhanced their knowledge and understanding of areas relevant to learning and teaching. These included Mathematics Assessment, Information Technology, Gifted Education and Music.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $5,070. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.
**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 25 Year 3 and 26 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: 4% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 17% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Reading, followed by Language and Writing.

Numeracy: 8% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 33% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Number, Patterns and Algebra, followed by Measurement and Data, Space and Geometry.

**Year 5**

Literacy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 68% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Writing, followed by Language and Reading.

Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 46% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Measurement and Data, followed by Space and Geometry and Number, Patterns and 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>
<th>Year 5 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*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.

- Build an authentic Catholic school based on Gospel values, by developing a sense of collaboration between the home, school and Parish community.
- Develop best practice in learning and teaching through the use of integration, Information Technology, professional learning, pedagogy and research.
- Continue the development of St Brigid’s Primary School as directed by our Vision and Mission, our core values and principles and by the direction set by the Wollongong Catholic Education Office.

**Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan**

- Professional learning that resulted in enhanced student learning
- Literacy, Numeracy, Information Technology and Religious Education Plans were fully implemented.
- Gifted Education Policy and practices were completed.
- Parents were informed, supported and included in various learning and teaching initiatives
- Full implementation of the School Environment and Management Plan.
- Review of school behaviour management policies and practices.

**Priorities for 2008**

- Begin the process of School Review and Improvement.
- Analysis of all available data used to inform, drive and improve learning and teaching.
- Continue to implement new learning technologies applications.
- Participation in activities relating to 2008 World Youth Day.

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

Anne McCauley
Principal