Vision Statement

Holy Cross is a Catholic Primary School that strives to create a learning environment based on Gospel Values. We encourage students to achieve to their full potential in academic, spiritual, social and sporting areas so they can take their place as full members of the wider community.

Principal’s Message

The Annual Report to the School Community provides the school community of Holy Cross Helensburgh with information about school performance, initiatives and developments.

The report draws together information of major interest to the school community and demonstrates accountability to the Wollongong Catholic Education Office (CEO) and other regulatory bodies.

This report compliments and is supplementary to school newsletters and other regular communications. The 2007 School Year has been a year when much has been achieved in building community, celebrating learning and giving thanks for the blessings the community has received. On behalf of the staff and students sincere appreciation is offered to all who have supported the school during the year. A special acknowledge is made to Father Patrick for his constant support, leadership and love of the children of Holy Cross.

Student Leadership

One of the outstanding achievements during the year has been the successful formation of student leaders within the school. Leadership teams of about 8 students in a group gave all Stage 3 students a chance to make decisions and be role models for other students. The purpose here was to consider people’s abilities in various ways.

To help students in their leadership roles, they participated in activities that developed team relationships, how to get along with people and how to improve their understandings of leadership. Also, the Restorative Justice Program that was implemented this year at Holy Cross involved training the senior Stage 3 students, who were then able to improve their skills by training the junior leaders. Stage 3 students express their gratitude for being able to carry out roles as school leaders. This allowed them to share their talents with everyone and share role across the school.

Stage 3 Leaders

Parent Involvement

The Parents and Friends Association has been active during the year organising and supporting initiatives such as the Annual School Fete, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day Stalls and an inaugural Wine Tasting event. Parent support is crucial to the life of the school and successful fundraising allows the parent body to make a significant financial contribution to the school, as well as assisting in maintaining a positive climate amongst the school community. Parents participated in fundraising for the school with pride, knowing that their efforts helped make quality Catholic education a continuing reality within the school.

President, P&F

School Profile

Holy Cross is situated in the northern most suburb of Wollongong. It is primarily a single stream school that caters for the Helensburgh, Stanwell Tops, Stanwell Park and Otford areas. Due to its physical isolation, surrounded by national parks, Helensburgh is a very close knit community.
As a systemic, Catholic school within the Diocese of Wollongong, it is an integral part of the Catholic parish of Helensburgh. Holy Cross School was founded in 1900 and run by the Sisters of St Joseph up until 1982 when the Religious Principal was replaced by the first lay Principal.

Holy Cross is a school community committed to the Catholic ethos, values and traditions. The spiritual growth and welfare of each 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.

**Student Enrolments**

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Attendance for 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staffing Profile**

The Staff of Holy Cross School is comprised of 16 teachers in total. There are 5 members of the Leadership team – the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator, Coordinator 2 and Coordinator 1 positions.

In 2007 there were 8 full-time teachers and 8 part-time teachers at the school. These teachers are responsible not only for the 9 home-room classes but also for the Music, Library, Italian and Reading Recovery Programs that run throughout the school. There were 3 specialist support staff and 2 administrative support staff who complement the classroom teachers. There was a balance of experience and youth amongst the staff with 50% of the staff having 20 or more years teaching experience, 25% with between 10 and 20 years experience and a further 25% with less than 10 years experience. All staff had completed some form of post-graduate study, 70% of these involving the participation in a Religious Education qualification, 69% completing a Graduate Diploma in Education or higher and 6% completing a Masters in Educational Leadership.

During 2007, Holy Cross personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes. These included:

A. Holy Cross whole school development days which involved 19 staff. These days focussed on:
   - Restorative Justice
   - Literacy & Numeracy

B. Other professional learning activities provided at school level including CEO run courses were:
   - R.E. Certificate
   - Teachnology
   - Quality Literacy and Numeracy
   - Diversifying the Curriculum
   - Religious Literacy Marking
   - Library Conference

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $4500.00. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the CEO.

In 2007 12.5% of total staff left Holy Cross due to retirement and resignation. The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 96.73%.

**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>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
**Culture of the Catholic School**

During 2007, the Parish Priest, Staff, and Parents of Holy Cross have continued to share the responsibility for the spiritual growth, welfare and education of the students. Liturgical celebrations continued to provide opportunities for members of the community to celebrate their commitment to Christ, looking to Him as our spiritual guide. Students and Staff joined parishioners regularly for Mass and to celebrate special feast days. Throughout the year, significant Church and community occasions including, the beginning School Year Mass, Ash Wednesday, Harmony Day, World Environment Day, Holy Thursday Liturgy, Values Education and Drug Education Assembly and the ceremony acknowledging Commonwealth Government financial support to the school, were commemorated with special assemblies or liturgies.

The school has involved itself in parish celebrations such as Family Masses and most importantly the Parish Sacramental Program. This year we had 29 children receive the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time, 26 children received First Eucharist and 28 children received the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Staff continued their faith formation through weekly Staff prayer and a Spirituality Day was also conducted during the year. This day focused the staff on the benefits of personal reflection on a regular basis.

In Term 3, Senior Stage 3 students spent a day at Doran House at Stanwell Park focussing on Christian Leadership in preparation for Confirmation. This day was facilitated by the R.E. Team from the CEO and involved the children in prayer, reflection, discussion, creative activities and was centred on a physical prayer calling the students to show the Fruits of the Spirit in living a just, faith filled life.

Following the legacy of the Foundress, of the Brown Josephite Sisters, Blessed Mary McKillop, the school continued its support of those less fortunate by donating money raised through whole school activities. These activities were led by Stage 3 students. The Caritas focus this year, called “Pigitas”, was extremely well supported, with the children raising enough to purchase 27 pigs @ $55 a pig. The school also supported the winter clothes appeal and the Christmas Hamper appeal for St Vincent de Paul. Again this year, staff members have donated money to the Caritas Global Gift Appeal.

**Student Welfare**

Holy Cross is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for the school community. In 2007 all staff members were in-serviced and trained in the Restorative Justice Program, which was then implemented throughout the school. There has been a major focus on the Aussie Values, reflected in our Gospel values particularly the value of Respect. As well, in association with Values Education, Holy Cross continued a school based Social Skills Programme, targeting specific skills on a whole school basis.

*(Access to all Policies and Guidelines can be obtained by contacting the school office.)*

A range of programs have been implemented to support the students including, Protective Behaviours, Behaviour Management, Healthy Canteen, Sun Safety and Fire Awareness. Drug Education was part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Program and this was taught in all grades. The Life Education Program was once again a great success.

A Centacare counsellor worked at the school one day per fortnight and provided student counselling when required. The Stage 3 and senior Stage 2 students were supported in their preparation for High School with involvement in a Primary Schools Engagement Program with St John Bosco College. The buddy system operating between Kindergarten and Stage 3 students continued, and this played a valuable role in assisting the transition into school for our Kindergarten students.

The Mission Week activities organised by the Stage 3 Leadership Teams provided an invaluable experience for all students. The range of activities, from Soccer Goal Shoot, Jelly Lock, Coin Toss, Basketball Goal Shoot out, Jelly Snake Guessing Competition, Guess the teacher (from baby photos) captured the imagination and enjoyment of all students and teachers.

The school rules, including the anti bullying policies and procedures, are reviewed annually with a greater emphasis being placed on consistent rules being applied throughout the whole school. The outcome this year was a rewording to focus on: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Kind, and Show Respect. As well, an incursion by puppeteer, Steve Chard, reinforced the signs and effects of bullying and how we can discourage it at school.
Positive behaviour was recognised through the Green Card Awards, Playground Awards and Principal Awards. As well, student achievements are acknowledged through the school Merit Award System. This year, for the first time, a student of Holy Cross will be awarded the Australian Olympic Committee A.S.P.I.R.E. Award which acknowledges a student who shows a positive attitude, sportsmanship, pride, individual responsibility, respect and ability to express themselves.

The Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office 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

### Financial Summary

The Parents and Friends Association was again very generous with their support, allocating $25,000 toward the purchase of computers, projectors and a computer trolley. These funds also contributed to Library resources, refurbishment of the Uniform Shop, classroom readers, maths equipment and resources for the other KLA’s.

The balance carried forward in the accounts was to meet end of year expenses and further costs incurred at the beginning of 2008.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for Holy Cross 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.

#### Income

- Fees and Other Private income: 65%
- State Government Funds: 21%
- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants: 12%
- Government Capital Grants: 2%
- Other Capital Income: 0%  

#### Expenditure

- Salaries, Allowances and Related Costs: 84%
- Non Salary Expenses: 2%
- Capital Expenditure: 14%
Learning & Teaching

Introduction
Quality Catholic Learning and Teaching is a fundamental priority at Holy Cross School. In 2007, the school focus areas and initiatives have reflected Diocesan and National priorities to promote quality learning opportunities for all students.

Curriculum and Pedagogy
Throughout 2007, significant learning and growth has occurred for both students and staff. Board of Studies requirements and courses in Religious Education have been attended to in accordance with Diocesan Policy.

In 2007 there has been encouragement and support for students to be more responsible for their own learning. Inquiry based learning and personal interest projects involving all areas of the curriculum have been a feature of many classrooms throughout the school. The use of Bloom’s Taxonomy, Multiple Intelligence Matrix and Gardner’s Thinking Hats in most classes has broadened the learning spectrum, and allowed teachers to experiment with more diverse teaching strategies. Continuation of professional development in the areas of tiered learning and diversifying the curriculum has enabled teachers to improve their programming for all students, but particularly those targeted as gifted & talented and those needing support in Literacy and Numeracy.

The year has seen continued progress in the use of Information Communication and Learning Technology (ICLT) in classrooms. The financial commitment made by the school and the P&F in providing the necessary hardware and peripheral tools has continued, with the purchase of 2 new projectors, 1 new digital camera, 11 new Macbooks and 1 new DVD/TV unit. The establishment of a gifted and talented class this year saw the students creating their own websites. The myclasses pages have been used extensively throughout the school, particularly in the Values Education tasks completed in each Stage, and the Mission Week Activities. This has also allowed parents access to the content being covered. Many students in Upper Stage 2 also used various forms of technology when completing their Religious Literacy tasks for their Assessments.

Assessment and Reporting continues to be a big focus for professional development at Holy Cross School, with the implementation of the A-E Reporting system. This has prompted much dialogue among the staff and an endeavour to achieve greater consistency in reporting student progress.

Cross-Curriculum
The promotion of Literacy Learning is part of the school’s vision of excellence in education. The current Literacy Plan was implemented throughout the year and funds were provided for the purchase of resources to assist in the Literacy development of students from K-6.

Teachers are continuing to implement the 2004 Mathematics Syllabus and are supported with relevant professional development and staff meetings. Classroom teaching has made a gradual shift toward utilising the strategies developed in the “Count Me In Too” program. Students are carefully monitored and tracked to ensure that they are learning developmentally and are challenged by their learning experiences.

Indigenous Education at Holy Cross permeates the whole curriculum, with a specific emphasis given in Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE). The integration of Literacy, Creative Arts, Science, Religion, HSIE, PDHPE, Maths and Library in Integrated Units of work has ensured that all outcomes are covered in a varied, interesting and relevant manner. Holy Cross is privileged to have both Italian and Music specialists at the school, exposing the students to an even broader range of cultural experiences.

Meeting the Needs of All Students
The learning needs of all students at Holy Cross are a priority. Teachers cater for a wide range of abilities through careful planning and programming. Throughout the stages there is regular tracking of students’ development in Literacy and Numeracy and this forms the basis for the appropriate grouping of students in Literacy and Numeracy groups.

Continued co-operative planning within stage groups allows for teacher expertise and support to influence better student outcomes. The development of the staging at Holy Cross has seen opportunities for cross staging for specific aspects, particularly in Literacy.

The School Review Committee provides teachers with assistance in assessing and monitoring those students who are identified as needing extra support in the classroom. The school also received funding to support 4
students identified with special educational needs. Support for all students requiring individual assistance is given by school support officers working in partnership with teaching staff.

In 2007, 13 students in Junior Stage 1 were successful graduates of the Reading Recovery Program and are now being closely monitored by their classroom teachers. Small group learning in the form of Guided Reading and Writing groups continue to meet specific needs.

In 2007 the school participated in the third year of the Religious Literacy Assessment for Year 4 in the Diocese of Wollongong. Again this year, the students of Holy Cross achieved very high results in both the written test and the class-based student task. 34% of students were placed in the band for Achieving the outcomes and 66% were Extending their understanding. There were no students in the Developing category. The Extended Student Task allowed the students to express their understanding of God’s Creation in a manner appropriate to their learning style.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

To enrich the curriculum, the staff at Holy Cross have provided many and varied opportunities for the students to excel. Students participated in a great variety of competitions. Stages 2 and 3 were given the opportunity to compete in the Australasian All Schools Competitions in Mathematics, English, Writing, Spelling, Computer Studies and Science. This year overall, students received 22 Credits, 11 Distinctions and 8 High Distinctions. There were 58 students who also participated in the Premier’s Reading Challenge which encourages students to read a variety of quality literature.

The staff at Holy Cross have conducted excursions to Parliament House, museums, art galleries, walking tours in our local area, animal farms, aquariums, science centres, Sydney Airport, Sydney Tramway and Hyde Park Barracks. As well, this year the students experienced many incursions such as “Steve’s Unique Puppets”, “World of Maths”, Bike Education Program, Surf Life Savers, Rural Fire Brigade, Mission speakers and City Rail. Children from all stages took part in a Gregorian Chant workshop and the National Literacy Reading Day. The knowledge and experiences gained from such activities further enhance and support learning and growing. In addition, ICLT was utilised as a way to represent their findings in a more innovative and interesting way.

In the sporting arena, Holy Cross has been actively involved and well represented in a great number of sports. Apart from the annual swimming, cross-country and athletics carnivals, there was also the Netball Gala Day. During the year a number of students in Years 3-6 were selected to represent the Wollongong Diocese in sports such as Touch Football, Cricket, Soccer, Cross Country, Rugby League, Athletics, Swimming and Baseball. We were also represented in the PSSA Cross Country and Athletics carnivals. Holy Cross had 5 students nominated for Diocesan Sports Awards this year and the school was proclaimed champion school for winning the Diocesan Athletics Carnival. As well as this, the school has been able to tap into the talents of parents. One result of this was that dancing as part of the PE Program gained an emphasis, and students performing dance on several occasions at school functions.

Holy Cross conducted its own Public Speaking Competition this year for Stage 3 students with a significant number of students vying for selection to participate in the Regional Diocesan Competition. A Senior Stage 3 student went on to win the Regional competition and then came second in the Diocesan Competition.

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 29 Year 3 and 22 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 25% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in reading, followed by writing and language.

Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 29% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Number, Patterns and Algebra, followed by Measurement and Data and Space & Geometry.

Year 5

Literacy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 58% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Reading, followed by Language and writing.

Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 76% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Measurement & Data, followed by Number, Patterns & Algebra 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.

<table>
<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>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>92</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Writing</td>
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<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Results gathered from a survey during 2007 revealed that all members of the school community agree that Holy Cross School helps the students develop a knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition, and that the school effectively communicates information about activities and events. From the survey there was also an indication of a high satisfaction with the opportunities for parental involvement, the genuine interest displayed by the teachers for the welfare of the students, and the safe and supportive environment offered by the school.

The data also revealed a significant percentage of the community that the students are challenged to maximise their learning outcomes, that individual learning needs are catered for and that appropriate information regarding student progress is relayed to the various members of the school community.

However, while staff and students indicated satisfaction with the range of co-curricular activities available within the school, as small percent of parents expressed a feeling that there could be a greater range of activities made available to the students. This aspect of the school will receive some review and reflection in future development at Holy Cross.
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.

- Ensure that Catholic values are embedded in all aspects of school life
- Provide the appropriate support for staff in the exercising of their duty of care
- Further development of programs that cater more effectively for the learning styles of boys
- Maintain the emphasis in curriculum development on health education, healthy lifestyles and physical fitness
- Continue with plan for the improvement of school facilities

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Funding approved for new buildings
- Intensive Values Education program across the school community
- Introduction of a daily skills program for Early Stage 1 and Stage 3
- Implementation of the Drug Education program

Priorities for 2008

- Review the Vision and Mission statement pertaining to the Catholic Life and Religious Education of Holy Cross School.
- Improve the reporting of student achievement as relates to students and their learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of the assessment processes of Holy Cross School through development of pedagogically sound processes.
- Create greater consultation and communication with parents through a more effective program of parent involvement.

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

Mrs Mary Bryant
Principal