Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

Our Vision, inspired by Blessed Mary MacKillop, is that all children who leave our school have a positive sense of community; that they have an appreciation of, and respect for themselves as valuable people; that they have respect for other people and the world in which they live; that they have been given the opportunity to attain their academic potential, and are aware that learning is a life-long experience.

Principal’s Message

As a Catholic school, the school’s primary aim is to provide the best possible Catholic education for Catholic students in the local area. This aim is clearly emphasised in the Vision and Mission Statements, which acknowledge the inspiration of Mary MacKillop and her perspectives are at the heart of all the efforts, endeavours and achievements of the school.

There is a strong belief that the academic, sporting, creative and social achievements are the result of the close relationship of school, home and parish. Staff, priests and students work co-operatively to ensure that students have the best opportunities and experiences in learning whether in the classroom or involvement in spiritual, cultural, intellectual, social, and sporting and community events. These opportunities have been further enhanced through the use of Information Communication Learning Technology (ICLT) which is integrated in all Key Learning Areas.

Parent Involvement

The 2007 School Year has certainly been a great one. The parent body would like to congratulate the whole school community on the successful applications for grants for building and water tanks. As a committee the Parents and Friends (P&F) have had a great deal of pleasure through the year working with the staff and others within the St Michael's Community with regard to many fundraising and social activities.

The P & F began the year with a welcome BBQ in February, particularly targeting the new Kindergarten families, but opening the celebration to all families at the school. The major fundraiser was the 'Christmas in July' dinner/dance on 27 July. The table decorating competition and auction, with lots of great prizes, ensured everyone had a fantastic night. Other events through the year were a bulb drive, Mother's and Father's day stalls, children's discos, pie drive, and 'Monster Garage Sale'. All of these events were successful fundraisers and more importantly fun opportunities to bring the school community together.

Following a successful school development meeting in March, a building committee was selected from interested parents and staff to oversee the design of any new construction and refurbishment of existing structures. Because of this 'whole school' approach, and a desire to actually do something to improve the environment for the children and staff, the P&F were able to target an area for landscaping and as a result the existing 'quiet area' was revamped.

P&F President

Student Leadership

All students in Year 6 at St Michael’s play an active leadership role through the Leadership Groups that were developed this year. Each student was a member of either, the Mission Group, Social Group, Sport Group or Environment Group. Each of these groups was responsible for ensuring that the school was a safe, happy and positive environment for all students.

School Profile

St Michael’s School was founded in 1891 by the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. The school was originally called St Joseph’s School; the name was changed in the mid 1970s to reflect the link with the local parish.
In the past the school catered for both primary and secondary education, and included boarders. The Sisters of St Joseph withdrew from the school at the conclusion of the 2004 School Year.

The school is currently experiencing a period of transition with enrolments. In 2007 two classes for each year level were available, however, in 2008 it is anticipated that there will be an intake of only one Kindergarten class.

The staff of St Michael’s, with the Parish Priest, Father Sean Cullen, and under the direction of the Wollongong Catholic Education Office (CEO), the school seeks to continue to meet the educational and spiritual needs of students from Mittagong and the surrounding villages. The welfare of each child and their family, as well as the development of a deep sense of community, is recognised as the shared responsibility of the priest, staff, students and parents of the school.

Student Enrolments

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

Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
</tr>
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Staffing Profile

At St Michaels, in 2007, a total of 20 teachers were employed on staff, make up a staffing allocation of 17.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers. The FTE included The School Leadership Team (SLT) of a Principal, Assistant Principal, a Religious Education Coordinator and two Coordinator 2s. There were eighteen classroom teachers; including two teachers who job shared, a Reading Recovery Teacher, and two teachers who roles were to supply teachers with relief from face to face teaching and relief from classroom teaching for teachers who had administrative responsibilities. One of these teachers undertook the development of singing choirs from Kindergarten to Year 6. Also on staff, the school has eight School Support Officers who work in the Office, the Library and in the classrooms supporting the learning of children.

The years of teaching experience of staff members varies. One teacher has taught for 3-5 years, one has taught for 11-15 years, three have taught for 16-20 years and 15 teachers on staff have taught for more than 20 years.

In relation to teaching qualifications, four teachers have Masters Degrees, eight teachers have Bachelor of Education Degrees, two teachers have qualified with a Bachelor of Art Degree and a Diploma of Education, five teachers have a Diploma of Teaching, and one teacher has a Diploma of Teaching and a Graduate Diploma in Religious Education.

Staff retention

17% of the staff will be leaving at the end of the 2007 School Year

Staff attendance

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 95.66%.

Professional Learning:

Teachers and School Support Officers have participated in a range of Professional Learning experiences during the year. Learning experiences within the school have also evolved as staff members have shared their expertise with each other and worked collaboratively in various areas.

Staff professional development this year has included in-services on Oral Language, Information Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT), Special Education (Autism), Behaviour Management, Spiritual Animation, First Aid and Effective Learning and Teaching.

Staff based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $7000. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities 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>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</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

Culture of the Catholic School

St Michael’s is a school with Josephite traditions, ethos and history. This perspective is upheld by the staff, students, parents and the parish community, supported by the school’s Vision and Mission Statements and the living out of Gospel values.

The children participate in parish based sacramental programs. Year 6 children received the Sacrament of Confirmation; Year 3 received the Sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion. Parish and the school community are kept informed through the School Newsletter and Parish Newsletter. Once a term a school-based Parish Mass is prepared by a stage, and each term two Masses are celebrated and attended by all the teachers and students.

Religion is taught using the “To Know, Worship and Love” Syllabus in Early Stage 1, Stages 1, 2 and 3. Class liturgies are prepared and taught on special feast days such as Blessed Mary MacKillop, St Michael and St Joseph. In 2007 Mary MacKillop’s Feast Day was celebrated by the whole school with a Liturgy and picnic lunch.

Prayer assemblies are prepared by classes on a rotation basis and presented to the whole school every second Thursday. Each class has the opportunity to prepare an assembly twice a year and to lead the whole school in prayer.

Throughout the school there are religious icons, symbols and statues visible in each classroom. An area in the classroom is set aside for a prayer focus space using the colours of the liturgical season. The school office foyer displays a picture of Mary MacKillop, statues, school candle and the Mission and Vision statement. The school hall has statues and a Twal depicting some historical events of Mary MacKillop’s life.

Each morning the Prayer to Blessed Mary MacKillop is said at assembly and other prayers appropriate to particular feast days. Staff meetings start with a prayer and each term staff have a special prayer and breakfast gathering. Teachers attend spiritual renewal courses such as Berakah, Journey, Bethsaida and the Josephite colloquium. This year the students from our school, St Thomas Aquinas, Bowral and St Paul’s, Moss Vale, gathered together for a combined liturgy and social day.

The strong sense of community support for others is reflected in the attendance of Year 6 at The Abbey Nursing Home once a month. Also, through activities such as sausage sizzles, a mini fete and money raised in class donations of goods were made to St Vincent De Paul and Sunshine Lodge, support provided for Catholic Missions and the Good Samaritan Outreach Program.

Student Welfare

Catholic schools are places of Belonging, Respect, Justice, Hope, Celebration and Quality Learning and Teaching. Central to this is showing dignity of the whole person and providing witness to Gospel Values as a means of living out daily life. These values are captured in the Diocesan and School’s Pastoral Care Policy. The school Based Policy provides information on programs to support students and families, approaches to discipline, creating a safe school environment, codes of conduct and suspension and expulsion guidelines.

At St Michael’s Pastoral Care is at the heart of all loving relationships, and encompasses all that happens in the school. The welfare of the individual is the focus of the approach to Pastoral Care and in particularly how individuals develop interpersonal relationships. This is a key factor in creating the atmosphere here at St Michael’s.

Activities associated with Pastoral Care in 2007 included:
The staff developed a Values Education Program that was taught across all classes.

A program called ‘Tools for Peacemakers’ was implemented in Year 3 using small groups with the support of School Support Officers and Teachers.

The School’s Behaviour Management Policy, which is based on rights, responsibilities and consequence and fosters positive reinforcement rather than punitive action, continued to be implemented. As well as this the school recognised children’s birthdays, academic and sporting achievements and positive playground and classroom behaviour.

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

Financial Summary

The Parents and Friends Association has been very supportive of the school through the major enhancement of the “Quiet Area” in the playground, which included a prayer garden that is dedicated to the Sisters of St Joseph. The Association also remained committed to an ongoing donation to the Learning and Resource Centre and the subsidisation of several class excursions.

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

Expenditure
Learning & Teaching

Introduction

In 2007 staff members have continued to focus on developing their teaching practice with a concentration upon Integration of outcomes within Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and across Stages. There has been a particular focus on the importance of Oral Language in the development of Literacy skills in all Key Learning Areas.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

From Kindergarten to Year 6, each Key Learning Area Syllabus is implemented to meet Board of Studies requirements. At each grade level, assessment is an ongoing process with a variety of procedures used. Assessment is an integral part of the daily learning and teaching experience and involves both formal and informal practices. In reporting to parents we are very mindful of the need to be available at all times to discuss a child’s performance with parents. Parent/Teacher interviews are conducted at the end of Term 2 following the distribution of a First Semester report. Parents are invited to meet with teachers and discuss the Second Semester report, at the end of Term 4.

As a result of related Professional Development Courses taken up by staff members, pedagogical practice continues to change at St. Michael’s School, particularly with teachers working collaboratively in preparing and implementing programs, and the skills, interests and expertise of staff are being more effectively utilised across the curriculum. There is greater evidence of programs being outcomes-based and this is reflected in the classrooms where learning experiences are more child centred and less content driven. Scope and Sequences have been developed ensuring that all outcomes are being covered across each stage.

Information Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT) have continued to be an integral support to the learning at St Michael’s. Teachers’ confidence and competencies with ICLT have grown and they have continued to facilitate a broad range of experiences for the children. A total of forty lap tops are permanently available in the classrooms, and three desk tops are permanently available in the Learning and Research Centre (LARC). A Co-ordinator has continued to work in the area of ICLT in 2007. There is a noticeable growth in the children’s skill level in the use of ICLT in all grades as evidenced by a variety of digital presentations, including some podcasts of children’s work on the school website. There have also been many pieces of writing that have been published using word processing programs. Digital, still and video cameras are also available and they continue to get regular use in the classroom. All children have access to the Internet and this is utilised in a range of ways in the school. Myclasses (an ICLT teaching resource) has been utilised more regularly this year.

Cross Curriculum:

Each day and in each class at St Michael’s, there is a focus on Literacy and Numeracy Blocks and Religious Education lessons. In every classroom there is a commitment to the promotion of Literacy. All classes timetable an English block in the first two hours of each day. A variety of activities are used during this time to focus on the skill level of each child’s reading and writing, and providing children with strategies to improve these skills using a variety of text types. With a professional development focus on Oral Language there has been noticeable improvements in the quality of learning in the Talking and Listening strand of the English syllabus.

The Reading Recovery Program provides 30 minutes of individual teaching every day for an average of 15 weeks to Year 1 children who are experiencing difficulty in the area of reading. This year the school’s Reading Recovery Teacher supported 19 children. This represented 39% of our total Year 1 cohort. The school has five teachers who have been trained in Reading Recovery.

In relation to Numeracy, all staff members continue to focus on mental computation as a follow on from professional learning in 2006. The programming, implementation and assessment of mental computation continue to be a focus in each classroom. Also, some teachers developed Numeracy activities across a whole grade, utilising large spaces such as the hall, LARC and the playground. These opportunities provided experiences for the children to share their skills and learn from a greater number of other students. A teacher was released from class for an additional 3 hours per week for the first two terms to support teachers and students in the implementation of Numeracy programs, and to co-ordinate resources in Mathematics. Four staff member also attended the Effective Learning and Teaching Course which assisted
in developing current skills in the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy.

This year some of the Stage 3 students participated in Wakikirri, a National Creative Arts performance. Performing “Robin Hood: Men in Tights” the students first round of competition was held at the Wollongong Entertainment Centre, from which they made the State Grand Final at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. The school’s Instrumental Music and Recorder Groups continued to practise in their own time and performed at a variety of events. The Instrumental Music Group also played at Liturgies, St Michael’s Feast Day, Kinder Orientation Day and the Carols Night.

Meeting the Needs of all Children:
Eighteen students with particular learning needs currently obtain additional funding under the CEO Special Education Program. As part of this funding and with the support of outside agencies, and in conjunction with specialised staff from the CEO, programs are devised and implemented to ensure these children receive an education appropriate to their needs. Additional support within classrooms is provided by seven School Support Officers who work with individual children or small groups on programs developed by the class teachers.

Expanded Learning Opportunities:
In 2007 children were given an opportunity to participate in a wide range of sports. Children participated in Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country Carnivals at a school level. As well as these three sports, children had an opportunity to participate at Diocesan level at Soccer, Netball, Hockey, Touch, Rugby League and Tennis. Two of our students were awarded a Diocesan Medallion for their achievements in Diocesan sport. Our Years 3/4 Rugby League Team competed in the Hindmarsh Cup and the Years 5/6 Team competed in, and won, the Noble Challenge. Children in Stages 2 and 3 also had opportunities to attend local Gala Days for AFL and Netball and the senior boys represented the school in the Diocesan Rugby Union Knockout.

In 2007 the University of NSW English, Maths, Computers, Science, Writing and Spelling Competitions were open to all children from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The children received 36 Credit Awards and 12 Distinctions. Stage 3 children participated in the Diocesan Public Speaking Competition. Year 6 children appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Outdoors Education Program at the Berry Sport and Recreation Centre; Year 5 visited Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney; Year 4 visited the Nan Tien Temple; Year 3 went to The Rocks Area in Sydney; Year 2 had an excursion to Cecil Hoskins Reserve while Year 1 visited the Aquarium in Sydney.

All children in Year 3 had the opportunity to participate in a Social Skills Program called “Peacemakers.” The aims of this program were to develop students’ appropriate social skills, to assist them to become aware of their own feelings and the feelings of others, and to assist them in promoting their self esteem.

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 38 Year 3 and 41 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: 27% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 11% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Reading, followed by Writing and Language.

Numeracy: 32% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 8% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Number, Patterns & Algebra, followed by Measurement & Data, Space & Geometry.

Year 5
Literacy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 56% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Reading, followed by Writing and Language.

Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 47% 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.

**Learning Gain — Literacy**

![Graph showing learning gain in literacy for Year 3 and Year 5]

**Learning Gain — Numeracy**

![Graph showing learning gain in numeracy for Year 3 and 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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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: National Benchmarks not included have not yet been published

### Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction

Having used a survey as a tool for collecting evidence, we are able to determine that the majority of parents (between 90% and 100%) either strongly agreed or agreed that the school: helps the students develop a knowledge of faith and tradition; offers a range of co-curricular activities; provides a safe and supportive environment; and, displays a genuine interest in the welfare of the children.

Other aspects of the survey showed that between 70% and 89% of those who replied to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that the school maximise student learning outcomes; meets student individual needs; provides appropriate information about child’s progress; and, effectively communicates information about events.

A staff survey, which sought feedback on the same aspects of the school surveyed with the parents, showed that between 95% and 100% of staff who responded to the survey strongly agreed or agreed that the school was effective in providing the needs identified in the items listed the survey.

A similar survey amongst the students indicated that between 77% and 97% either strongly agreed or agreed that the school; helped them in their understanding of the Catholic Faith; encouraged them to learn to the best of their ability; provided a safe school environment; had a variety of activities in which students could get involved; and, provided someone to speak with if they had a problem.
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.

- To develop new facilities and structures within the school;
- To maintain awareness of the Pastoral Care needs of students, parents and staff and work towards meeting their needs within the constraints of the social/cultural environment;
- To develop social skills/interpersonal relationships of students;
- To develop school and parish links;
- To develop a deeper understanding of the learning and teaching process, and to refine pedagogical practices within a team approach;
- To develop the integration of Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and the application of Information and Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) into that process;
- To maintain the charism of the Josephites;
- To review the process of Assessment and Reporting across the school; and,
- To place a focus on the continued personal and professional learning and growth of staff.

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Developed a deeper understanding of the learning and teaching process, and to refine pedagogical practices within a team approach;
- Continued to develop the integration of Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and the application of Information and Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) into that process;
- Undertook Professional Learning about the impact of Oral Language and implemented strategies to improve the overall effectiveness of Literacy in the school;
- Continued the focus on the personal and professional learning and growth of staff through staff inservice;
- Continued to maintain an awareness of the Pastoral Care needs of students, parents and staff and working towards meeting their needs within the constraints of the social/cultural environment; and,
- Developed the social skills/interpersonal relationships of students through a small groups program for Year 3.

Priorities for 2008

- Develop new facilities and structures within the school;
- Provide more opportunities for parents to become aware of the strategies being used in learning and teaching experiences of students;
- Continue to focus on the continued personal and professional learning and growth of staff;
- To implement the Restorative Justice Program within the school’s Pastoral Care context; and,
- As a whole school community to improve the implementation of Numeracy within the school.

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

Paul Moroney  
Acting Principal