Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement
St Michael’s Catholic Parish School was established for the children of the Shoalhaven. Priests, staff and parents strive to provide a Christian learning community, in which the Catholic faith is taught, valued, lived and celebrated and in which children are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Principal’s Message
During the “Year of Welcome” our school community had an opportunity to participate in the sesquicentenary celebrations of the founding of the Sisters of the Good Samaritans. The Sisters had staffed the school for nearly one hundred years until the appointment of the first lay principal in 1992. We pride ourselves in continuing to build on the rich history and traditions of St Michael’s Primary School.

The school has continued to upgrade the facilities with, Stage 3 of the fencing now completed, the refurbishment of gardens and the upgrading of the electrical system in the school, which now allows for extending the air conditioning into more classrooms in the future. The school has successfully received extra funding for several projects, which have enhanced the learning environment as well as further enriching the children’s learning experiences. These were the Investing in our School Program (IOSP), Community Water Grant, Success for Boys – Boys Education Program, the Indigenous Mentoring Program and School Health Incentive Program (SHIP).

We endeavour to instil a culture of shared leadership with all Year 6 students commissioned as School Leaders.

The elected student leadership team, of 20 prefects and captains, has worked tirelessly to assist staff during 2007. They have been excellent role models for the other students in the school. The skills learnt will no doubt hold them in good stead in High School.

I would like to recognise and thank Father Patrick Faherty in the special role as Parish Priest, who with the support of the other Priests in the Parish has shown continued pastoral support, guidance and commitment to the welfare of families, students and staff.

The staff are to be congratulated on their work in showing dedication and commitment to their profession in meeting the education of our students.

School Student Leadership
Highlights of the year for us as School Captains included representing our school at St Mary’s Cathedral for the sesquicentenary celebrations of the Good Samaritan order, meeting our local Member of Parliament and leaders from other schools at a forum to share concerns and ideas, preparing and hosting school assemblies along with the Prefects and Sports Captains and making presentations to guests of the school. We appreciated the assistance given to us by staff and students and we thank them for giving us the opportunity to take on the leadership role.

Parents & Friends 2007 President’s Report
St Michael’s Parents & Friends Association had a very successful year. Our fundraising activities for 2007 were the Diocesan Cross Country canteen, the Easter Egg Raffle, Trivia Night which was an exciting evening and to end our year the Fete and Fair, a fabulous day. The total profit raised for our school, via the Parents & Friends Association, in 2007 was $27,514.50.
St Michael’s Parents & Friends, as a group of dedicated souls, will continue into 2008 with the generous help of our extended school community to support our children in every aspect of their school environment.

School Profile
In 1893, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan established St Michael’s to serve the needs of the Nowra Catholic Community. The school maintains a Good Samaritan tradition.

St Michael’s is a three stream K – 6 Catholic primary school with 504 students. The Parish covers most of the Shoalhaven region and includes five station churches. The school and the Parish share the responsibility of student spiritual growth, working in partnership with parents.

The provision of sound educational practice is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, staff and parents under the supervision of the Catholic Education Office, Wollongong.

There is a Learning Centre for children with special needs. In addition to class teachers there are specialist teachers in Music and Library. All children attend these classes each week.

The Principal is responsible for administering the school assisted by an Assistant Principal, three Coordinators and a Religious Education Coordinator.

Student Enrolments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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.

Student Attendance for 2007

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>92.0</td>
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Staffing Profile
The total number of teachers was thirty six. There were six members of the Leadership Team and twenty nine classroom teachers assisted by eight classroom support staff. There were three administrative support staff. Five teachers have taught for less than ten years. Seven teachers have taught for between eleven and twenty years. Fourteen teachers have taught for between twenty one and thirty years. Four teachers have taught for more than thirty one years.

Postgraduate Qualifications include:

Graduate Diploma in:
- Education (School Administration)
- Religious Education
- Special Education
- Teacher Librarianship
- Computers in Education
- Literacy
- Education of the Deaf
- Certificate of Religious Education
- Certificate in Special Education (Learning Difficulties)
- Master of Religious Education (Theology)
- Master of Literacy
- Master of Education (RE)
- Master of Information Technology
- Master of Education Studies

Teacher Standards

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

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<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>%</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>
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</table>

Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

The average Staff attendance for 2007 was 96.02%.
Professional Learning

During 2007, St Michael’s personnel undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes.

St Michael’s whole school development days involved thirty six staff. These days focused on:

- Rock & Water: Boys Education
- Values Education
- Anaphylaxis – Severe allergic reactions
- Asthma
- Mental Computations, Patterns & Algebra

Other professional learning activities provided at school level including CEO run courses:

- Berekah Spiritual Development (2 staff)
- Quality Literacy & Numeracy All Stages (6 Staff)
- TEACHnology – integrating curriculum and technology (1 Staff)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (4 Staff)
- PART – Professional Assault Response Training (2 Staff)
- Occupational Health & Safety (4 Staff)
- Creative Writing using Art as a Stimulus (1 Staff)
- Earthcare Active School (1 Staff)
- Rethinking Supportive Schools Environment (1 Staff)
- Understanding Boys with Cilia Lashley (6 staff)
- Aspergers Seminar (4 Staff)
- Diversifying Learning Experiences (2 Staff)
- Data Analysis-Basic Skills Results (4 staff)
- PEDACOMP –ICLT (6 staff)
- ‘Dare to Lead’ Conference (2 Staff)
- State Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders Workers conference. (1 Staff)
- Indigenous Language Workshop (2 Staff)
- Aboriginal Reconciliation Conference (4 Staff)

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $13,175. This is an addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by CEO.

Culture of the Catholic School

School and Parish support each other in the Sacramental Programs: Penance in Year 2, First Eucharist in Year 3 and Confirmation in Grade 6. Each Program is enhanced and supported by a retreat day, two parent information evenings and a prayer evening. People involved are the Parish Priest and catechists, teachers and parents. First Eucharist and Reconciliation are celebrated at the Church centres at Berry, Bomaderry, Culburra, Vincentia, Kangaroo Valley and Nowra, and at times, HMAS Albatross or HMAS Creswell. Confirmation is celebrated at St Michael’s as a whole Parish.

Liturgies are planned in liaison with the Priests and class teachers to ensure that liturgical celebrations enable the life of the school to be linked with the Parish community and the mission of the Church. All students attend Parish Masses throughout the year. The school community celebrated the Rainbow Mass, Grandparents’ Mass, the Feast of the Assumption and Graduation Mass.

As Shoalhaven Catholic Schools, St Michael’s, St John the Evangelist High School and St Mary’s Star of the Sea Milton, came together at St Michael’s for a staff family Mass, to celebrate the beginning of the school year.

Our individual project for Catholic Missions was Operation Christmas Child, in which families filled boxes with items for needy children. The school also supported The Winter Warmth Appeal. During our Christmas Pageant we collected for St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal, raising $1,600.00.

Anzac Day was commemorated, with students participating in the Nowra ANZAC Day march and the Dawn Service at Greenwell Point; and members of the local RSL sub branch attending our School Assembly and sharing their stories.

We were proud to celebrate the Sesquicentenary of the Good Samaritan Sisters (founders of our school). Our school Captains represented the school at a Thanksgiving Mass at St Mary’s Cathedral Sydney. Bishop Peter Ingham celebrated Mass at St Michael’s, followed by the opening of the Parish Centre, new Library and Open Learning Space.

A Conversation with the Bishop was held in Milton with a Southern Cluster of Schools of the Diocese. The year ended in a concert led by musician Andrew Chinn in a Christmas celebration involving students, staff, parents and friends of St Michael’s.
Student Welfare

Pastoral Care

Catholic schools are places of Belonging, Respect & Justice, Hope, Celebration and Quality Learning & Teaching. They are based on the dignity of the whole person and provide witness to Gospel Values as a means to living our 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, and approaches to discipline, creating a safe school environment and codes of conduct.

A major focus this year was ‘Success for Boys’ program, for which the school received Federal Government Funding. The staff received professional development in the ‘Rock and Water’ program, in which boys are taught to control and focus their energy to gain self control, self reflection and self confidence.

Behaviour Management and Welfare

Our student Behaviour Management and Welfare Policy aims to make St Michael’s a pleasant and safe place for students, staff and visitors. It focuses on encouraging the students to be accountable for their own behaviour and with a positive approach it facilitates the development of healthy self-esteem and respect.

Appropriate and desirable behaviours are acknowledged and reinforced through a Behaviour Achievement Award system.

All children took part in “Working it Out: Tools for Everyday Peacemakers,” a program designed to raise individual self esteem, and develop resilience skills and effective communication, thus empowering children to deal effectively with situations that arise.

A VIP – “Students are Very Important People”- group was established to support both students and teachers by providing strategies for a positive and supportive school environment.

The Complaints & Grievances Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au at 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 following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Michael’s Catholic Primary School for the year ended 31 December 2007. This data is taken from the 2007 financial return to the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
Learning & Teaching

Introduction

At St Michael’s all aspects of life are valued including the spiritual, physical, the aesthetic and the intellectual.

Curriculum & Pedagogy

Staff new to K-2 completed professional development in the new Religious Education Curriculum. This Curriculum reclaims the important place of “story” in peoples’ experience of God, Scripture, Liturgy or Christian life.

Types of formal assessment utilised by teachers to ‘drive’ their teaching are the Early Literacy Assessment K-1; the Basis Skills Test and Primary Writing Assessment Grades 3 & 5; Grade 4 Religious Literacy Assessment; The Schedule for Early Number Assessment, and Marie Clay’s Observation Survey. The data from these assessments provides teachers with information that will assist them to make informed judgements about the achievements of students and to design more effective learning and teaching programs.

The teaching and learning of Mathematics is influenced by an initial comprehensive assessment of the student, which is ongoing and becomes an integral part of the teaching process.

Integrated Programming took place in K-6 with outcomes from Key Learning Areas Science & Technology, Human Society & Its Environment, Literacy and Creative and Performing Arts. Learning and teaching experiences have been planned based on these outcomes. Integrated units provide students with the opportunity to use skills and knowledge across the key learning areas.

The school’s Information, Communication and Learning Technology (ICLT) Plan has been further implemented with the purchase of more desktop computers and multimedia trolleys for use in classrooms. Stage 1, 2 and 3 classrooms each have two desktop computers and Early Stage 1 has three desktop computers. All classes have access to two pods of laptops, totalling 30 laptops for use within the classroom. All staff use myclasses, an internet-based class resource accessible both at school and home. The sites contain links, information and instructions for tasks based on current classroom work.

Cross-Curriculum

Teachers from all stages attended Quality Literacy & Numeracy in-services.

Staff attended an in-service on mental computation and patterns in algebra, conducted by Anita Chin, who also presented a parent session “Engaging your children in the Mathematics Syllabus”.

During NAIDOC Week, children participated in Aboriginal cultural awareness activities, including a visit from St John’s High School Indigenous Dance Troupe. The activities were organised by the Indigenous Education Committee with the assistance of the Aboriginal Education Assistant who has been working on the development of cross-curriculum content in Indigenous Education.

Meeting the Needs of all Students

The staff continually works through numerous initiatives including: identification of gifted students; curriculum differentiation; myclasses checklists; program models for differentiation; Bloom’s Taxonomy, Personal Interest Projects; and purchasing of resources. The staff discussed identification methods, with a future plan and a policy to be developed in 2008. Enrichment activities are placed in the weekly parent’s newsletter to inform parents as opportunities arise.

The Learning Centre operates daily to provide a supportive environment for children with special needs and is staffed by a full time teacher and School Support Officer. Other special needs children are integrated into classes with School Support Officers. At the conclusion of each term, GoalView interviews and evaluations are held with parents.

Reading Recovery (RR) has continued to be a great support for children with reading and writing needs. In Year 1, 25 students completed RR under the tuition of the two trained RR teachers. This brings the total number of RR trained teachers in our school, to five.

As a component of our current emphasis on Boys’ Education, selected boys participated in Rock and Water groups with the aim of utilising their physical energy to gain self awareness and awareness of others.

The Peer Support program took place weekly over two terms, during which the Respect and Responsibility aspects of Values Education were emphasised.
Expanded Learning Opportunities

The Active After-School Communities, offered for the first time this year, was a funded initiative promoting a healthy lifestyle through exercise and nutrition. The program of free, structured physical activity took place twice a week, under the direction of trained facilitators and supervised by a member of staff.

Students with a particular interest in Art attended an Operation Art day at Huskisson, organised by the Department of Education, where they used a variety of media to create artworks based on different themes. Various art competitions throughout the year, including the Dymocks Golden Paw Award, gave children an opportunity to exercise their creative talents.

Students participated in the annual University of NSW Australian Schools Competitions in Mathematics, English, Science and Computer skills.

Reading and Creative Writing were promoted through the Premier’s Reading Challenge, Book Week activities centred on this year’s theme of “READiscover”; and story writing and poetry competitions, such as the RSPCA writing competition, in which three students received awards and cheques for the school; and the Dorothea Mackellar and Taronga Poetry Competitions.

Children in Grades 3-6 had an opportunity to audition and perform for the school in various items for ‘Busking to the Beat’ supporting the HeartKids Foundation. They also performed in solo or group acts for a Talent Quest organised by Grade 6 students.

The activities offered by the NSW Association for Gifted and Talented Children are regularly published in the parent newsletters.

In Sport, students participated in House Team competitions, gala days, and school, Diocesan, MacKillop and State carnivals, in a wide range of sports. One student was selected in a NSW PSSA team and four were nominated for the Catholic Development Fund Awards and received medallions in both red and blue categories.

Students in the priority Grades 3 and 4 attended skills development clinics run by player representative of Australian Rugby League and Australian Football League.

Indigenous students from Grades 3 – 6 also attended an additional skills development day, the Auskick Gala Day organised by the AFL.

Grade 2 children participated in the Swim Safe Program daily at the Nowra Pool for ten days.

Grade 6 students attended a Dance Concert performed by dance students at a local High School.

Grades 5 & 6 attended an author talk by well known children’s author James Maloney at the Shoalhaven City Library.

In Debating and Public Speaking, all students in Grades 5 and 6 were encouraged to participate. Representatives were then chosen to compete in the Apex and the Catholic Development Fund competitions. One student gained second place and another student third place.

The St Michael’s School Senior and Junior Choirs, under the tutelage of our specialist music teacher, once again competed at the Shoalhaven Eisteddfod with distinction.

All grades participated in excursions to enhance their learning. These included visits to Booderee and Jervis Bay National Parks, Mogo Zoo, Old Mogo Town, Nan Tien Temple, and Planetarium Science Centre in Wollongong, The Rocks area in Sydney, Shackleton’s Antarctic Adventure at the Imax Theatre Sydney, Shoalhaven City Council, HMAS Albatross Museum of Flight and Culburra Surf Lifesaving Club, Werri Beach, Nowra Animal Park, Nowra Museum, Ben’s Walk and Bomaderry Creek Walk.

The Dalwood intensive literacy program was offered to students who had previously attended the Dalwood Assessment Centre.

Six students received after school tutoring in the government funded Reading Assistance Voucher Scheme.

Parent, Student & Teacher Satisfaction

Survey results indicated that all three groups agreed that the school helps children in their understanding of the Catholic Faith.

A large majority of students and staff believe that children understand their rights and responsibilities, and that children are challenged to maximise their outcomes.

Most parents agreed that the school provides various opportunities for parental involvement, and offers a safe and supportive environment. A number of parents did not agree that the school strives to meet their children’s learning needs or provide appropriate information about their progress. These areas will be further addressed in 2008.
**Student Achievement**

The school uses a variety of assessment strategies at key points in the learning framework. These include teacher observation, projects and presentations. The school also participates in the state-wide literacy and numeracy testing program for the purposes of diagnosing individual learning needs and reviewing whole class teaching programs. Information on student progress is communicated on a regular basis and external assessment results are discussed with parents on an individual basis annually.

**Basic Skills Test**

There were 60 Year 3 and 77 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: 23% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 7% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Reading, followed by Language and Writing.

Numeracy: 26% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 17% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Number, Patterns & Algebra followed by Measurement, Data and Space.

**Year 5**

Literacy: 4% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 45% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Reading, followed by Writing and Language.

Numeracy: 11% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 34% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Number, Patterns & Algebra followed by Measurement & Data and Space & Geometry.

**National Benchmarks**

The table below indicates as a percentage the Year 3 and Year 5 students achieving the national benchmarks.

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<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>93</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
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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.

Progress in 2007 towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- Provided Professional Development for staff in Quality Literacy and Numeracy
- Enhanced learning and teaching by implementing the ICLT plan to purchase desktop computers and multimedia trolleys, and completed the ICLT scope and sequence.
- Teachers are collaboratively planning and teaching programs across all areas of the curriculum.
- Supported student based pedagogy, in particular the Open Learning Space in Early Stage 1.
- Participated in the School Review.

Priorities for 2008

- Maintain a sense of collaboration with parents by involving them in all aspects of school life.
- Introduce Restorative Justice philosophy as a means of providing a framework of management that moves away from the traditional punitive response and looks for ways to repair damaged relations and improve existing relationships.
- Continue to implement the ICLT three year plan, providing digital cameras for each grade.
- Develop new School Review process.

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

Irena Blinkhorn
Principal