Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

In accordance with the Mission of the Catholic School as a centre of learning and evangelisation, the staff at St Patrick’s School will continue to create an environment in which the children will be nurtured and strengthened in faith whilst striving to achieve the best possible educational outcomes and personal excellence in all endeavours.

Principal’s Message

2007 has been a year of consolidation and change. The induction of a new Leadership Team saw the arrival of a newly appointed Assistant Principal and the reinstatement of a Religious Education Coordinator. These appointments and the temporary employment of two teachers necessitated a review of leadership roles and the establishment of lines of responsibility within the context of the existing School Renewal Plan.

Much has been achieved during the course of the year due to the operation of positive levels of collegiality and a shared commitment to a distributive model of leadership at St Patrick’s.

Working as a unified, supportive team staff have brought the 2005-7 School Renewal Plan to its successful completion. A range of curriculum initiatives have been implemented and much continues to be achieved in the delivery of quality educational experiences for our students.

Steps have been taken to provide a foundation for the development of a strategic plan encompassing a new vision for the school. This process of renewal will encompass the establishment of new goals for 2008-10 and will require the combined commitment of the school’s major stakeholders, staff, parents and students.

Parental Involvement

Parents were offered numerous opportunities to participate in the life of the school in 2007.

A small committed P&F group met on a regular basis. They conducted a review of the Association’s constitution, examined the role descriptions of Executive members and supported the organisation of a successful program of fundraising activities.

The work of the P&F helped to support student learning through the purchase of equipment and in the maintenance of the school’s current computer technology loan.

Parents assisted in a voluntary capacity in daily reading programs, in the operation of the Library/Learning Centre, at sporting events, in class-based learning, in the Canteen and in major celebrations. Highlights of this year’s social calendar include the “Welcome Evening”, St Patrick’s Day celebrations and Grandparents’ Day.

A rich program of Parent Workshops was offered in a wide range of areas – in Sacramental Programs, Drug Education forums and in an exploration of Behaviour Management. A large number of parents attended the Marist Team’s Restorative Justice session in Term 1.

In the upcoming year we look forward to the establishment of a “Parent Centre” (Old Convent), to the installation of a new P&F Executive Team and to wider support of the Association.

Student Leadership

The operation of a distributive model of student leadership ensured the participation of all senior students in a variety of teams. Working in the capacity of School Captains, Student Representatives, Mission Support Team members, Sports or Bus Monitors, senior
students were called upon to be positive role models throughout 2007. They made a valuable contribution to Social Justice Programs and general fundraising activities. Money raised enhanced the school calendar and financed the purchase of a new, retractable School Banner – coinciding with this year’s launch of a new school logo.

Through the operation of the Peer Support Team, the Student Council and other leadership roles – seniors at St Patrick’s help make life at school better for everyone.

**School Profile**

St Patrick’s School has serviced the educational needs of the Catholic faith community in Port Kembla for over eighty years. During that time it has maintained a reputation for delivering quality educational service to a diverse community.

In this, the school’s eighty-ninth year, the process of creating a new emblem was initiated. The new logo gives expression to the school’s Catholicity, whilst highlighting its three significant historical eras.

Currently St Patrick’s is a single stream Catholic school with an enrolment of 156 students from 113 families. The rich cultural diversity, which has characterised the community since its inception, is less evident today in a population drawn from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and a wide feeder area.

The school is characterised by a strong sense of community and a shared commitment to the provision of quality education.

**Student Enrolments**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>93</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>156</td>
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**Student Attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender (%)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staffing Profile**

There are sixteen teachers employed at St Patrick’s.

The School Leadership Team comprises the Principal, Assistant Principal, Religious Education Coordinator and Coordinator 1. There are ten classroom teachers working on both a full-time and part-time basis. Their work is supported by that of six specialist support staff, including Literacy, Special Education, Reading Recovery, Music, Physical Education and Technology Integration Coordinators.

The Administration Support Team includes a Senior School Support Officer and two School Support Officers.

**Teaching Staff Experience**

Teaching experiences range from 2 to 32 years. Listed below is the teaching experience range and percentage.

- 0-9 years: 13.3%
- 10-15 years: 20.0%
- 15-20 years: 20.0%
- 20-25 years: 13.3%
- 25-30 years: 6.6%
- 30-35 years: 26.8%

**Teaching Qualifications**

Two members of staff have attained Masters in Education status. Six teachers hold Bachelor of Education Degrees, eight hold Diploma of Teaching qualifications, one majoring in Music and the other PE/Health. Seven teachers have been awarded the Certificate of Religious Education, three are Reading Recovery trained and one holds a Diploma of Community Services/Children’s Service. One teacher holds a Certificate in Senior Management while two have attained TESOL training. One staff member has Graduate Diploma/Teacher Librarian status. Two School Support Officers have recently completed Stage 1 of the Certificate III Course at Wollongong TAFE. Another two have undergone training as Behaviour Management Coordinators with the Marist Restorative Justice Team.
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 | % |
| Do not have qualifications as above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context | % |

Staff Retention

At the conclusion of 2007 the retention rate is 100%. The Teacher Exchange Program initiated in 2007 has been extended, allowing the current staffing arrangement in Early Stage 1 to remain constant until the end of 2008. The implementation of the new Diocesan Staffing Formula ensures continuity in relation to numbers of staff allocated to St Patrick’s School.

Staff Attendance

The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 97.01%.

Professional Learning

In accordance with Professional Standards Guidelines, all staff at St Patrick’s was involved in Professional Learning opportunities in 2007. Teachers and School Support Officers attended numerous network meetings and professional development workshops. Most notable of these were the Staff development days focused on Restorative Practices in Behaviour Management with the Marist Youth Care Team, Critical Questioning and Thinking Strategies – Enhancing Inquiry – based Learning with educational leader Michael Pohl and Staff Spirituality. 30% of our teaching staff attended Spirituality courses such as Spiritual Animation, Journey, Bethsaida and Berakah. One member of staff embarked on a Graduate Diploma in Mediation.

School based expenditure on professional learning in 2007 was $6,850. This is in addition to expenditure on professional learning opportunities provided by the Catholic Education Office.

Culture of the Catholic School

St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School provides quality Catholic education. Religious education is taught every day and is based on the Diocese of Wollongong RE Curriculum.

Catholic identity is integral to all strategic enterprise undertaken at St Patrick’s. It is expressed in daily RE instruction across the grades, shared prayer, assemblies, liturgies, Eucharistic and Sacramental celebrations. It is also reflected in the various religious icons and symbols on display throughout the school.

The development and launch of a new school logo was a significant highlight of the 2007 calendar. The revised logo incorporates a number of elements which highlight Catholic identity and give expression to our school’s rich tradition and history. The new logo gives us a sense of where we have come from, who we are and what we stand for.

St Patrick’s is an integral part of the wider Parish community. A close relationship exists between the school and the Parish. Father Hugh Dowdell provides the opportunity for the school and Parish to celebrate Mass, Reconciliation and Benediction on a regular basis. Significant Feast Days and occasions are acknowledged in liturgies to which all parishioners and families are invited. During this, the “Year of Welcome”, the theme “All are Welcome” has been highlighted in many of our liturgies.

Parish based Sacramental Programs are actively supported by the school. Students from St Patrick’s join with Catholic children from local government schools in programs of preparation organised by the Franciscan Sisters and the parish team. Students enrolled in the programs continue to be supported by members of the wider, parish community. All Sacramental celebrations are clearly life giving.

In 2007 awareness of Social Justice and Environmental Stewardship issues were highlighted across the school. Members of the Mission Support Team supported staff in the implementation of a number of Social Justice initiatives – including “Clean Up Australia” and “Harmony Day”.

This year’s fundraising activities have supported the Franciscan Sisters’ Mission - $470, Caritas Australia - $255.
Mission - $200, food and gifts for St Vincent De Paul Society Christmas Appeal.

**Student Welfare**

Stage 2 of the Learning Community Project is one of the most significant initiatives implemented in 2007 to serve the pastoral needs of students at St Patrick’s. Phase 2 of a government-funded project commenced in 2005, this program brought staff into contact with the Marist Youth Care Team in ongoing professional development. This has led to the incorporation of restorative principles into Behaviour Management Policies and Procedures at St Patrick’s. Work undertaken in this area has done much to support efforts to effectively deal with bullying and inappropriate behaviours in the learning environment.

Support is offered in individual sessions conducted by a Centacare Counsellor assigned to St Patrick’s one day per week. Her work has continued to support behaviour management initiatives through the delivery of pastoral care to identified students. A collaborative, team approach is utilised in the remediation of behavioural issues and in the maintenance of a peaceful school environment. Students are encouraged in this shared enterprise through the school’s Merit Award System, in weekly School Assemblies and in the systems of positive reinforcement used extensively.

The establishment of Peer Support Teams, drawn from senior classes, has done much this year to develop a shared commitment to the resolution of issues at both a classroom and playground level. Students facing difficulties in the management of friendships have clearly defined networks of support and simple behaviour management plans at their disposal. Student Survey responses attest to the success of such initiatives – 99% of senior students surveyed, demonstrated a confidence in the knowledge that help was available to them in times of trouble.

The school’s Buddy system was extended this year to support students in transition. Children transferring from other schools are assigned buddies to help them settle into their new school environment. Invitation to lunch with the Principal provides additional support and opportunities to discuss issues of concern. The assignment of Teacher Buddies to mentor students presenting with specific difficulties was an initiative of the Behaviour Management Team that has been particularly effective this year.

A full day training workshop was conducted with the leaders, Years 5 and 6, 100% of the students participated. The children learnt how to look for ways to repair and improve existing relationships. The program is being successfully implemented with the involvement of senior students in Peer Support Teams.

The election of senior students to the position of Games Monitors, the establishment of a passive play area and the use of the Garden Area in Term 4, have been effective in alleviating stresses experienced on the playground.

The success of initiatives implemented in 2007 within the context of the Learning Community funded Behaviour Management Project will be reflected in their continued refinement and implementation. Staff commitment to the operation of restorative justice principles and to the inclusion of parents in the management of challenging behaviour remains high. The operation of current policies of consultation with parents has served to create increased awareness of how we can best support our children in their social and emotional learning.

Further development of current protocols will see the increased use of Independent Behaviour Plans and closer collaboration with parents in situations where entrenched inappropriate behaviours are identified.

In accordance with Diocesan Policy, parents are welcomed into interaction with staff on matters of concern. The Diocesan Complaints and Grievances Policy can be found on the Catholic Education Office website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au. The school’s Behaviour Management Policy, currently under review will be available on the school’s website under ‘Policies’ in 2008.

A parent education evening was offered to the parents. The focus was developing an awareness of the importance of utilising restorative practices to reinforce learning.
**Financial Summary**

The balance carried forward from the December 2007 financial rollover will help meet the end of year costs, pay outstanding cheques and further incurred costs at the beginning of 2008 including the purchase of ICLT equipment and costs of classroom restructuring covered within the Investing in our Schools Project. Additional costs related to the refurbishment work will, with the approval of the Parish Administrator be drawn from the School Enhancement & Debt Servicing (SEDSO) Account.

SEDSO balance as at November 2007 was $25,261. Funds totalling $3213 have been released to date to cover maintenance costs. This has paid for grounds maintenance ($870), security ($1025), plumbing ($845) and electrical work ($473).

Significant additional, unexpected expenditure, paid from school budget covered the cost of PA improvements ($1,877), window security systems ($1,025), excess rates/waste disposal ($817.61), school’s promotion ($1,478.78), refurbishment of the staffroom also drew $3759.91 out of school budget.

P&F Association’s $9120 contribution to the school facilitated the purchase of Library books and playground equipment. It also helped to maintain the Catholic Development Fund ICLT Loan – secured to purchase computer equipment for use in all grades.

In 2007 the school was successful in its application for second-round funding in the Commonwealth Government’s, “Investing in our Schools Project”. The $20,000 allocated is to be used to purchase more computers, extra digital technologies and to support the restructuring of Stage 1 classrooms. Work in opening up the learning space currently being used by Years 1 and 2 will be undertaken in the summer vacation period.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School Dapto 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**

Staff of St Patrick’s School share a commitment to ensuring the delivery of quality learning and teaching – that which caters for the diverse needs of students across the learning continuum.

Curriculum initiatives implemented in 2007 reflect Government and Diocesan priorities. Initiatives successful in achieving nominated curriculum developments have been centred in the core learning areas of Religious Education, Literacy and Numeracy.

The ever-expanding use and integration of Information Communication Learning Technologies (ICLT) has further enhanced student learning. The redefinition of the Teacher Librarian’s role and the increased allocation of her time and talent to the implementation of collaborative, learning sessions based in ICLT have done much to maximise the use of computer technologies across the Key Learning Areas (KLA’s).

**Curriculum and Pedagogy**

All Learning and Teaching programs fulfil NSW Board of Studies and Diocese of Wollongong requirements and compliance in all KLA’s.

Quality assessment practice, lays the foundation for providing students with rich and varied learning experiences appropriate to their developmental stages and individual needs. Assessment occurs in all Key Learning Areas and is clearly defined in teacher programs. A variety of assessment strategies are utilised at key points in the learning and teaching framework. These include teacher observation, anecdotal comments, checklists, written and oral tasks and a range of individual and group presentations.

External assessment continues to be conducted and utilised to support student learning. The range of assessment opportunities include: Basic Skills Testing (BST) in Literacy and Numeracy – Year 3 and Year 5, Religious Literacy – Year 4, Diocesan based Early Literacy Assessment (ELA) – Early Stage 1 and Stage 1, Early Numeracy Assessments (SENA) – Early Stage 1, Stages 1 and 2.

Staff and parents were introduced to the theories underpinning A-E Reporting mandated by the Government for implementation in all schools in 2007.

**Learning & Teaching**

Engagement of staff in professional workshops helped to ensure consistency of reporting across the KLA’s. New formal report formats were issued to parents at the end of Term 4. The distribution of mid-year reports was followed by a timetable of interviews engaging teachers/students/parents in a review of progress made. Such opportunities were offered after the distribution of reports in December and on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

**Cross-Curriculum**

Student Literacy continues to be given high priority within the school. This is reflected in class programs, in the allocation of resources and in the budget allocation to professional development of teachers in the area of Literacy. The 2007 Literacy Plan provided an allocation of funding to support skill development in all stages. Additional books and novels were purchased to complement class libraries and support home reading.

Numeracy continues to be a high priority within the school as students require the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to use mathematical concepts effectively. Teaching staff were afforded valuable professional learning opportunities in this KLA. Years 5 and 6 teachers conducted Stage based mathematics activities. Students, working in ability levels had access to a program offering extension and enrichment in mathematics.

Indigenous Perspectives are implemented and addressed in the K-6 curriculum, primarily in Creative Arts, Human Society and Its Environment and Religious Education. Funding from the Catholic Education Office has supported the implementation of indigenous perspectives across the curriculum. Funding has been provided to improve the learning gains in both Literacy and Numeracy.

**Meeting the Needs of all Students**

Curriculum differentiation has been one of the main priorities for 2007. Teachers have had several professional learning opportunities in the area of Diversified Learning to develop sound teaching practice that will cater for and embrace the individual needs of students. One of the most significant of these was a shared professional development day conducted by Educational leader, Mr Michael Pohl. As a
result of engagement in such courses staff have embedded and implemented a variety of thinking strategies including MI Matrix, Thinker Keys, Bloom’s Taxonomy and multiple intelligences into their class programs and assessment practices.

Staff members have embraced and employed a number of learning frameworks and thinking strategies to enhance student learning. These have enabled teachers to cater for the diverse needs of students and to provide and promote quality learning experiences for all. This, along with meaningful integration of learning across Key Learning Areas has served to enhance learning gains for students.

Individuals identified as gifted or requiring enrichment opportunities have been catered for in class programs. Special needs students are supported by programs devised by a specialist teacher and through School Support Officer scaffolding of class-based activities. The Special Education Coordinator works with teachers and parents in the provision of Individual Education Plans for 7.7% of the student body. The work of the Review Committee Coordinator continues to identify students requiring this level of support and in ensuring the delivery of the most appropriate intervention for students with special needs.

Stage 2 and 3 students have had the opportunity to work with a host of representatives from local sporting bodies – including NSW Netball Association, AFL Development Team and St George Illawarra Dragons. Teams have represented the school in Diocesan Gala Days in Soccer and Netball.

Members of staff have been preparing for the 2008 implementation of an Active After School Program which will afford students the opportunities to participate in structured physical activities aimed at promoting active, healthy lifestyles.
**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 27 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: 29% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 0% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Writing, followed by Language and Reading.

Numeracy: 44% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 4% of students in Band 5. The best performance was in Measurement and data followed by Number Patterns and Algebra.

**Year 5**

Literacy: 4% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 63% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Reading followed by Writing.

Numeracy: 0% of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 38% of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in Measurement and data followed by 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Year 3 2005</th>
<th>Year 3 2006</th>
<th>Year 3 2007</th>
<th>Year 5 2005</th>
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<td>92</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85</td>
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</table>

Note: National Benchmarks not included have not yet been published

**Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction**

Major stakeholders were surveyed on issues pertaining to the education of our young and the general functioning of the school.

Results affirmed the success of behaviour management initiatives implemented in that the vast majority of students felt that support networks were available to them if they needed help. Many staff and parents surveyed agreed that the school provided a safe, supportive environment for students.

In relation to student learning, many parents surveyed agreed that children were encouraged to maximise learning outcomes. The vast majority of staff indicated that they believed the school strives to maximise learning outcomes. All students surveyed agreed that teachers encourage them to learn to the best of their ability.

The vast majority of children surveyed agreed that they felt proud of St Patrick’s School.
**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.

- Promotion of school as a quality educational establishment with a view to increasing enrolments
- Preparation for the introduction of Stage-based approach to quality Catholic learning/teaching practice
- Development of Learning Community Project focusing on the incorporation of Restorative Principles into school-based policies and procedures.
- Integration of ICLT supported resourcing, professional development and restructuring of Teacher/Librarian role within the school.
- Culmination of evaluation of School Renewal Plan 2005-7

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

- Successful promotion of school within the local community reflected in increased Kindergarten enrolments.
- Completion of School Renewal Plan 2005-7
- Development and implementation of Learning Centre Library with a strong focus on the integration of ICLT, team teaching and professional learning opportunities.
- Teacher engagement in professional learning opportunities, focusing on best current theory/practice.

**Priorities for 2008**

- Promotion of St Patrick’s as a quality educational establishment in the Catholic tradition.
- Development and implementation of School Renewal and Improvement Plan
- Stage-based approach across all stages with particular focus on Stage 1.
- Diversification of the Curriculum across all Key Learning Areas with particular focus on Religious Education, Literacy and Numeracy.
- Development of opportunities for curriculum adjustments and establishment of programs for gifted and talented students.
- Evaluation/Refinement of Assessment practices with a focus on the effective utilisation of student data and identified school trends.
- Further development of school’s Ecological Vision reflected in policies and procedures.

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

Bernadette Cooper  
Principal