Annual School Report 2007

Vision Statement

“A Catholic school community of faith, love and learning.”

Principal’s Message

This Annual School Report is an opportunity for this community to recognise and celebrate the achievements that have occurred this year. The core business of the school is to provide quality Catholic learning and teaching in a Catholic tradition to each member of this community in an environment where individual differences are acknowledged and celebrated. The school strives to be a place of respect where each person feels valued and supported in achieving their full potential.

The members of staff are grateful for the continued level of support from the Parish Priest and the parents and friends who make up this community. The level of support offered, enables the staff to provide a number of exciting and wonderful learning initiatives. There are many cultural and sporting experiences which see this community working together in a spirit of collaboration.

Thanks are extended to the members of the School Leadership Team (SLT) and all staff for the role they play in leading and managing the school. Their commitment and dedication ensure that the school meets its educational goals. Staff members have engaged in a range of tasks which fall outside the scope of the normal classroom, but are of immense benefit to the school community. Our Lady Help of Christians (OLHC) community is most fortunate to have such a dedicated and professional school staff.

Parent involvement

Many events have been held throughout the year which have been supported by the Parents and Friends (P&F), the biggest being the Biennial Fete held in March. Other events included: the Mothers’ and Fathers’ Day stalls, the movie night, the Gday morning tea and working bees which are held each term. Funds raised through the P&F have been used to contribute to the purchase of classroom laptops which are used daily. Some $20,000 in funds have been allocated towards the purchase of new playground equipment which will be installed in January 2008. (President P&F)

Student Leadership

The 2007 Year has enabled the Year 6 students to demonstrate their leadership skills and show responsibility. Roles were not only available to captains, but to all students in Year 6. The students in Year 6 took on responsibility for welcome and hospitality, fundraising, social skills, environmental initiatives, library assistance and playground improvements. In all, students who would not normally be selected to captain positions were able to exercise their leadership capacity. (School Captains)

Significant Highlights

- Choirs placed in the Macarthur Eisteddfod
- The School Fete raised approximately $30,000
- The school musical “Kids in Camelot” was a huge hit
- The school hosted ‘A Prayer and Conversation’ with the Bishop in June
- A new student leadership structure was introduced in Year 6
- School hosted the MacAbility Awards in December
- New sacred space at entry to the school was blessed by Bishop Ingham.
School Profile
The school was established in 1989 to meet the demand for the growing local community. A rich cultural heritage exists exhibited by 18 nationalities within our school. The school is an integral part of the parish and of the wider church community. The spiritual growth and welfare of every student, along with sound education practices, is a shared responsibility of the Parish Priest, Principal, staff and parents under the supervision of both Catholic and Government educational authorities. The school has 14 mixed ability classrooms and a Learning Centre, which supports the needs of students with an identified learning disability.

Student Enrolments
The Enrolment Policy and Procedures can be found on the Catholic Education Office (CEO) website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then go to the link, Policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>381</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>392</td>
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Student Attendance for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>90.6</td>
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Staffing Profile
The school leadership structure consists of the Principal, the Assistant Principal, a Religious Education Coordinator and three Coordinators, who have special responsibilities in areas including, but not limited to, Pastoral Care, Information and Communication Learning Technology (ICLT) and curriculum initiatives involving Literacy and Numeracy.

Our school is staffed by 20 qualified teachers, 4 of which are part time. In 2007 there was one class where job share arrangements existed. One of the part time teachers has been employed to provide administrative release to the SLT and support special programs which operate in the school. Each member of the SLT is entitled to a period of administration time to carry out their executive duties.

Three of our part time support officers are responsible for school administration and 5 other part time support officers aid the delivery of learning in classrooms and the school library. The main support function is in the delivery of Literacy and Numeracy tasks for students who are experiencing difficulty.

Members of the teaching staff are highly qualified with 76% of staff achieving a Bachelor of Education or equivalent 4 years of training and 19% staff have achieved the equivalent of 5 years training to a Masters level. One member of staff has a Diploma in Teaching. Staff members continue to develop themselves by attending a range of professional learning courses. Along with these qualifications, the teaching staff have logged many years of teaching experience with 33 % of teaching staff with 20+ years, 38% with between 10 and 20 years, 10 % with between 5 and 10 years and 19% of teachers with less than 5 years experience in the classroom. Thus, the school has a balance of youth and experience among the teaching staff. Teaching staff leaving our school community in 2007 is 24% of the total teaching staff, while 9.5% of the teaching staff will be returning from approved leave in 2008 and a further 2 staff members will continuing their leave arrangements in 2008. The average daily staff attendance rate for 2007 was 97.07%, a figure which is based on approved sick leave.

Professional Learning
Staff had the opportunity to complete personal and professional goal setting in order to align their professional development with their own needs and to those of the school. Personnel from OLHC undertook a range of professional learning activities related to improving student outcomes. These included:

A. Whole school development days which involved all staff. These days focussed on the spirituality of staff within the area of environmental sustainability and ecological stewardship, gifted and talented education and differentiation of the curriculum to support all learners.

B. Other professional learning activities provided at school level, including CEO run courses: 5 staff were involved in the Habits of Mind Hub, 15 teaching staff were involved in the analysis of BST results and the development of action plans, 3 teachers were involved in an extended course for new scheme teachers.

The average expenditure by the school on professional learning per teacher was $890.

In addition, professional learning opportunities were provided by the CEO.
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>%</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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* Australian Education Institution – National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition

Culture of the Catholic School
The strong links between the Parish and the Parish school have continued to be a major part of our Catholic life in 2007. Students, staff and parents have enjoyed many opportunities to celebrate and share their faith together, illustrated best through the schools support for the Parish Stewardship Renewal Program.

Many aspects of the Liturgical Year were the basis of our celebrations, beginning with Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, where the Stations of the Cross were highlighted through a journey around the school grounds. The Resurrection and the time leading to Pentecost were celebrated with a Liturgy where grades presented significant events. The Feast of the Assumption and the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians were shared with John Therry High School (JTCHS). The GDay, beginning and end of year Masses and graduation, were shared with the wider community.

Mary MacKillop’s Feast Day was again marked with a walk-a-thon and Liturgy depicting key aspects of her life. Students in K-6 also attend the Parish Masses on Wednesdays and Thursdays and Benediction on the first Friday of the month. A stage Mass once a term at the 9am Parish Mass was introduced in Term 3, where the students celebrate with their parents, teachers and the Parish community.

Our school was fortunate to have had our Bishop, Peter Ingham, visit us a number of times this year. He presided at the blessing and opening of the new sacred icon and garden, Confirmation celebrations and the Year 6 Prayer and Conversation with the Bishop. This event was hosted by our school and we welcomed and celebrated with approximately 400 Year 6 students from surrounding Catholic schools.

Many of our students participated in the Parish based sacramental programs which were supported by the Religious Education Curriculum during class time. The Parish and school program, known as Stewardship, was the main focus for teaching during the first five weeks of Term 4. Staff, students and parents learned about sharing their time, talents and treasure. A toy drive was held, where the students brought unwanted toys to school and sold them, raising $500 for Childrens’ Missions. The sum of $1170 was raised for the St Vincent de Paul Christmas appeal by the students and staff sharing their talents at the end of year musical. The audience contributed their treasure in appreciation. In 2007 our school donated a total of $4,468 to church and charity.

Student Welfare
In 2007 we have maintained the services of a school counsellor from Centacare who attends the school for one day each week. Appointments with the counsellor assist to ensure that there is a forum for students and families who may be experiencing difficulties.

Seasons for Growth Program was offered once again across all grades for those students who have experienced grief and loss through family breakdown, separation, divorce or death. The program teaches students strategies to adjust to the changes in their lives and enhance their resilience to these changes. In 2007 a further 2 teachers trained as facilitators for the program. Unfortunately, due to a limited response, we were unable to cater for those who applied for program placement.

There was an increase in the nature of communication about student welfare through supplements which accompanied our newsletter. The upgrade to the school website also provides useful information to parents on policies and procedures regarding student welfare.

Child Protection Week was highlighted with a visit from a Police Liaison Officer who spoke to students about Protective Behaviours. Year 3 classes entered a poster competition where 6 students received awards, which were displayed in the local shopping centre. The school continued its support group for families with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The program was extended to
include a staff member to facilitate preschool and junior sessions each week, while our seniors were given the opportunity to travel to Magdalene Catholic High school for a weekly session.

Student leadership saw a significant boost in the number of opportunities available to the senior students. Along with formal captain roles and the Student Council, Year 6 students were able to take on areas of responsibility aimed at improving facilities and life at school. In addition, Year 5 students took on the role of buddies for the new Kindergarten classes.

The introduction of Habits of Mind (HOM) has had a significant impact on our reward system and the activities offered during break times. The Pastoral Care Policy now incorporates the Habits of Mind and students who are recognised as managing their impulsivity are rewarded with a special certificate and treat for displaying positive behaviour on the playground. In Term 2 structured activities at lunch time were introduced for students who find it hard to make friends, need some time out from the larger group, or a more structured environment to work in. The types of activities have included a Lego club, science group, fundamental skills, Mary MacKillop social justice group, and a computer group. The response from the students has been positive.

In compliance with the NSW Reform Act 1990, all corporal punishment is banned in all schools within the Diocese of Wollongong.

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish School is committed to a safe and supportive environment, characterised by fairness, mutual trust, respect and reconciliation. Any parent, student, or community member who has a complaint or grievance has the right to have this addressed. The Complaints and Grievances Procedures can be found on the Wollongong Catholic Education office website: www.ceowoll.catholic.edu.au then go to the link ‘Policies.’

**Financial Summary**

Through the generous support of the Catholic Club we have been able to refurbish the school library/resource centre. $35,000 was spent on new shelving, pinboards, new furniture and on the installation of an integrated Audio Visual System. A new brick wall and garden was erected at the front of the school. Concrete has been installed under the pergola to the front of the school to ensure a safe playing area under the shelter. The cost of this work was $8,000. New tapware and bubblers, in all student bathrooms, ensuring automatic shut off, are helping to preserve water. The cost of this was approximately $6,000. Furniture was purchased for the Stage 3 classrooms and funds have been set aside in 2008 for a continuation of this upgrade in Stage 2. Over $7,000 was spent in providing Literacy and Numeracy resources in the K-6 classrooms. Plans have been finalised and funds set aside to complete the installation of new playground equipment.

Architects have developed plans for refurbishment and extensions for approximately $1.5million. The refurbishment aims to improve the learning spaces available in Stage 1, to provide a large creative learning area, improved administration and storage facilities and sheltered walkways between buildings. Work is expected to commence in the 2009 School Year.

The following graphs reflect the aggregated income and expenditure for Our Lady Help of Christians 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

The delivery of quality Catholic learning and teaching has remained a priority for our community. The assessment and reporting plans established last year were refined and staff engaged in meaningful professional dialogue to ensure that processes and expectations were both effective and efficient. Ongoing reflection will continue to enhance the pedagogy of all teachers.

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Learning outcomes are taken from the syllabus documents for each Key Learning Area (KLA). All classroom teachers have continued to teach Religious Education programs based on the syllabus. The children are given opportunities to celebrate their faith in class activities and are fortunate to be able to attend Mass, Reconciliation, and Benediction throughout the year. Fr Sarkis and Fr Daly visit classes each Friday. Year 4 students participated in the Religious Literacy Assessment and produced a range of diverse presentations. The students achieved pleasing results.

Members of staff were involved in planning days centred around investigating and refining Literacy practices. Each stage had the opportunity to discuss their practices and plans in light of the Basic Skills Test data. As a result, the Scope and Sequence for English was adjusted and plans for more explicit teaching in grammar and spelling were implemented. Inquiry Based Learning continued to be a focus but with more explicit teaching and scaffolding to ensure more meaningful experiences. Following this, all Scope and Sequences for KLAs were reviewed and adjusted to better reflect what was happening in the classroom and to align more closely to syllabus documents. ‘Habits of Mind’ (HOM) was integrated into learning and teaching experiences. The HOM are based on research by Art Costa and Bena Kallick into what attributes lead to people being highly successful and effective in what they do in life. A HOM means having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems, the answers to which are not immediately known. These habits are skills for life and staff have introduced the 16 different habits into class life and they have become a part of playground management.

Professional development in the area of Gifted and Talented Education and the need for a differentiated curriculum provided staff with more information and support in catering for the diverse needs of students along the spectrum. Information and Learning Communication Technology (ICLT) continued to be used to promote learning opportunities for students. A Year 6 team of students undertook to produce powerpoint presentations for the office foyer to showcase their talents and depict school life. In Term 4 Year 5 students had the opportunity to continue the link with JTCHS through the Transition to Technology Program. Students were able to participate in experiences including cooking, dancing, music and design technology. Their efforts culminated in a showcase of talent at the end of the term. Students had the opportunity to participate in the University of NSW testing program and some excellent results were achieved. Personal Development evenings were held for senior students and parents to familiarise them with content covered in class.

Cross-Curriculum

The teaching of Literacy and Numeracy was a high priority. The focus on the integration of Literacy continued and the implementation of a consistent block throughout the school will be reviewed and evaluated next year. In Numeracy, staff continued to support the concept of a Numeracy Block and drew on the Count Me In Too resource. The school’s ‘Kids’ Corner Preschool Reading Program’ continued to have a positive impact. Sharing Days and Special Interest Groups provided students with the chance to showcase and experience a variety of skills and talents.
Meeting the Needs of all Students

Teachers are committed to ensuring that all students’ needs are met. Students with special needs are identified through a variety of assessments and observations. Teachers employ a range of learning and teaching experiences and methodologies taking into account the individual learning styles of the students in order to meet the needs of individual students. Differentiating the curriculum supports those students in most need whilst allowing for more challenging experiences for those students who are more able. The Reading Recovery Program continued to support students in Year 1 with an intensive 1-1 daily reading program. In 2007, 38% of students in Year 1 took part in the program and were successfully discontinued. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are developed for those students needing more specific support and the class teachers, in conjunction with the School Support Officers, provide 1-1 and small group assistance as needed. The school Review Committee met regularly to communicate with, and support, teachers of students who were experiencing difficulties accessing the curriculum. The meetings provided the staff with a range of strategies to support those learners in their classrooms.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

All grades were involved in excursions and incursions this year. These included: Musica Viva; West Tigers’ visit; Book Week activities; Healthy Food Days and Joey League Skill development. Years 5 & 6 also participated in Public Speaking at a school level and 2 students participated in the Regional Finals, presenting a short talk to the audience. In the area of Creative Arts, our students participated in the Doodle for Google competition and the MacAbility Poster Competition in which two students were placed first in their category. The school also performed a musical, ‘Kids in Camelot’, which was a wonderful display of talent and teamwork. The school choir also had success in the Macarthur Eisteddfod. In the area of Physical Development, students participated in a number of school sport carnivals, Diocesan Gala Days and Diocesan carnivals for swimming, cross country and athletics. In 2007 we entered the Mark Taylor Shield Cricket competition for the first time. Students from Year 4 also organised a stall at the School Fete.

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 50 Year 3 and 56 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: 30 % of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 10 % of students in Band 5. The best performance was in language, followed by reading and writing.

Numeracy: 36 % of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 14 % of students in Band 5. The best performance was in measurement and data, space and geometry, followed by number, patterns and algebra.

Year 5

Literacy: 2 % of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 60 % of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in language, followed by writing and reading.

Numeracy: 0 % of students were in Bands 1 and 2, with 59 % of students in Bands 5 and 6. The best performance was in measurement and data, followed by space and geometry and number, patterns and algebra.

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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 3 2005</th>
<th>Year 3 2006</th>
<th>Year 3 2007</th>
<th>Year 5 2005</th>
<th>Year 5 2006</th>
<th>Year 5 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Parent, Student & Teacher Satisfaction

A survey of parents, staff and students was carried out during the year to gain feedback on the school’s performance. Returns from parents representing 33% of the students, indicated that 99% of the parents were satisfied the school helped develop the student’s knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Three areas of significance were identified for further investigation: 27% felt we did not meet individual needs, 28% believed we did not give appropriate information about their child’s progress and 21% believed that the school did not offer a range of co-curricula activities. The latter was counter claimed by information returned from students where 95% believed there were sporting and cultural activities for them to be involved in. In relation to the students, 106 survey response were received, with 99% of respondents claiming their teachers encouraged them to work to the best of their ability. Areas identified by the students that require some attention were student safety and having a person available to approach if someone requires help with a problem, 15% of students responding in the negative to these statements. In the staff survey, 2 felt that the students did not understand their rights and responsibilities, which impacted on the ability of students to being challenged to maximise their learning. It is anticipated that the development of a new strategic plan, using the School Review and Improvement Framework, will enable the community to further explore the issues raised through the survey.
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.

- School enhancement through the development of plans aimed at improving school facilities
- Establishment of a common disposition to learning by engaging the whole school in Habits of Mind
- The implementation of the new diocesan approach to School Review and Improvement

Progress in 2007 Towards Achievements of School Renewal Plan

- We have provided increased opportunities which enable the teaching staff to make staged based decisions in relation to learning and curriculum delivery.
- The school has provided a significant number of professional learning and growth sessions aimed at increasing awareness of students in the area of gifted and talented education and in the need for a differentiated curriculum to accommodate particular needs within individual students.
- The senior students have been provided with a range of meaningful leadership roles which have enabled many students to display and cultivate their leadership potential.
- The school has commenced the process of embedding the Habits of Mind into the culture of the school by providing ongoing professional support to teachers in the implementation of the HOM into the curriculum.
- New plans for an upgrade of the school facilities and timelines for their completion have been established.
- The school has supported the Parish in raising awareness and support for ‘Stewardship’ as a committed way of Christian living.

Priorities for 2008

- The development, through a process of consultation a school mission statement which reflects adequately the actions of the school in creating the vision of a Catholic school community of faith love and learning
- Commence a whole School Review and establish a strategic plan, through a consultative process using the new diocesan School Review and Improvement document
- Explore ways of implementing the Diocesan Learning and Teaching Framework to bring about an increased understanding of teacher effectiveness in the classroom
- Maintain leadership structures and increase opportunities among the students which aim to develop capacity among senior students
- Commence a research project with the Australian Catholic University known as Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners (LTLL) which aims to promote authentic learning
- Continue the work undertaken in developing the learning dispositions known as Habits of Mind
- Reviewing the whole school approach to behaviour management, and explore the principles of restorative justice

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

Kevin Devine
Principal